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SCIENCE

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

BY: FIRITO KASSA

MAY (2022)

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BY: FIRITO KASSA

THESIS ADVISER: ROBEL .F (PHD)

CO ADVISER: Mr. TANO.G

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WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled, An Assessment on the role of National Dialogue in Ensuring Democratic Political Transition in Ethiopian since 2018, is my original work and has not been submitted and presented for any degree award or any other purpose in this University or any other University. All materials, secondary or primary used for the study have been appropriately cited and acknowledged.

Firito Kassa Nigusu

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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 that the 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 parties' 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

1.1 Background of the Study

National dialogue is the inclusive process for building national consensus around social, political, or economic concerns through an open and tolerant exchange of ideas and, concerning addressing national issues, on a national scale through involving honest and constructive dialogue. These dialogues are established when the nation confronts problems that cannot be resolved in established institutions or through existing procedures because those institutions are weak, absent, or suffering from lack of legitimacy, or because they are not adequately inclusive or flexible (Murray, 2017). The national dialogue has a variety of mandates that include political reform, constitution-making, and peace-building, longstanding causes of conflict that have been brought to the fore by political protest or armed insurrection. National Dialogues ensure democratic political transition by providing an inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation framework capable of resolving political crises and guiding countries toward democracy (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

National Dialogues have been held throughout modern political history and across the world under different names in various contexts. Scholars argue that national dialogue in the form of the national conference in world political history is associated with different waves of political transitions. In the early 1990s, to handle the major political upheavals caused by the breakdown of communism in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, (East) Germany, and Bulgaria, including many Latin American countries, like Bolivia, Colombia, held a series of roundtables, opening democratic politics to newly emerging actors and agendas, and held consensus-based constitution-making processes in an attempt to strengthen participatory governance and development (Blunck et al., 2017).

In the early 1990s, national dialogues were a popular format for political processes initiated in several African countries. For instance, Benin, Gabon, Republic of Congo-Brazzaville, Togo, Mali, Niger, Zaire, leading to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Chad used inclusive constitution-making negotiations by taking the name of National Conferences and had the

mandate to facilitate peaceful and sustainable political reform processes (Paffenholz et al., 2017). Similarly, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many authoritarian rulers in Sub-Saharan African nations recognized the need to regain legitimacy by opening up the political system and establishing a discussion with opposition forces on democratic reform. The utilization of national conferences was one method that aided this process. By bringing together different political parties and civil society organizations, these conferences created a platform for political discourse and consensus (Lund & Santiso, 1998).

Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country, experienced an ambitious attempt at democracy through a political transition in the early 1990s, as did most African countries (Ottoway, 1995). After the overthrow of the military regime in 1991, Ethiopia practiced the first act of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia through a national conference by including a council of representatives that initially included a wide range of political groups (Lyons, 1996). Additionally, the adoption of the transitional charter was notable for providing some legal ground for the democratization process in terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), such as freedom of speech, expression, and association; the introduction of the multi-party system; and the legalization of Ethiopian peoples' rights of nation and nationalities (Shimelis, 2017).

This process, however, is criticized by many scholars, claiming that the democratic transition to power in Ethiopian politics has failed and obstructed the entire democratic process. And the May 1991 political transition was devoid of change because all processes failed to assert the democratization process. The hope of a democratic transition publicly inaugurated in May 1991 at a London conference did not achieve what was expected of a democratic political transition. Because the ruling party's first major step resulted in the marginalization of the opposition, repression of the emerging civil society as well as independent presses, and violations of human rights (Merera, 2001).

The second Ethiopian-praised political transition in reform structure both internally and externally has existed since April 2018 with the election of Abiy Ahmed by Ethiopia's parliament as the first political transition after the (EPRDF) took power. The power transition

seems democratic and peaceful due to the release of thousands of political prisoners and the invitation of exiled opposition politicians and major opposition political parties, including those engaged in armed struggle, to return home and participate in politics, and the move to lift the terrorist designation to participate in peaceful political activities (Badwaza, 2018). Another significant accomplishment of the 2018 political reform was the acceleration of regional diplomacy. Prime Minister Abiy takes the initiative to end years of hostility between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as conflicts between Djibouti and Eritrea, Somalia, and Kenya, and has even dabbled in the South Sudan peace process (Temin & Yosaph, 2019).

Despite the prevalence of those noble political developments during the transition's honeymoon period, the country was rocked by ethnic tensions, the war between the TPLF and the central government, intra-party infighting within the ruling party, and a high rate of inflation. 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 villages; the massacre of ethnic and religious minorities; the destruction of property; the crackdown on key opposition politicians; and a full-fledged war in the northern region of Tigray (Worku & Epram, 2020).

Scholars emphasize that addressing multidimensional problems through calling for national dialogue is more imperative than ever in Ethiopia. For the political transition process to be successful and national consensus and reconciliation to be fruitful, the government and major political forces such as civil society, media, women, and youth must include national dialogue criticizing the opinions of officially appointed committee members, experts, and opinion leaders. In the context of this research problem background, the current research works on the role of the national dialogue for democratic transition and sustainable peace in Ethiopia by aiming to explore the agenda of the national dialogue and reconciliation practices to contribute to the current national dialogue and reconciliation initiative in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Ethiopian history has been subject to contradictory interpretations and biased interpretations, creating enmity among groups as if they had taken comparative advantages at the expense of other groups. Some ethnic groups have been treated as oppressors and subjected to different

forms of rights violations over the years (Aweke, 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 in Ethiopian (Mabratu,2021).

Scholars state that this political transition creates 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 villages; 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 Mohamed 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 prospects. To some extent, Abdulqadir Adem tried to show the role of national dialogue towards sustainable peace and

democratic transition in Ethiopia, but the researcher couldn't address the factors that will affect 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 to explain the context or the nature of the variables under investigation. Qualitative research uses 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 reports (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 on 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 a 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 known (Kumar, 2011). In other words, in nonprobability sampling, the organizers of the investigation purposefully select specific units of the universe for constituting a sample on the basis that the small mass that they so select out of a large one will be typical or representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004:59). Accordingly, by applying the above sampling technique, this study employed in-depth interviews and focused group discussions purposively to address the research problem and research question properly.

Since this study was not undertaking calculations to select an adequate sampling size like qualitative research, the researcher applied the principle of data saturation. The notion of data saturation entails bringing in new participants and adding respondents until complete data is collected continually in the study. In other words, saturation is reached when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added (Kumar et al., 2020).

1.6.3. Sources of Data Collection

The researcher collected qualitative data from different sources that would be analyzed qualitatively in the text. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection employed under investigation. In-depth interviews with key informants and focused group discussions used as a major source of primary data collection purposively selected. The researcher also collected secondary data's from various published and unpublished materials such as reports, conference papers newspapers, books, working papers, articles, journals, reports, news, etc.

1.6.4 Methods of Data Collection

To conduct this study the researcher applied qualitative data collection method as a means of data collection instrument. The researcher collected primary data through the semi-structured interview from key informants, and focus group discussants. Beside, written and unwritten materials which are supportive of primary data were collected as secondary data. The researcher discusses the methods applied to collect data as follows.

1.6.4.1. Key Informants In-depth Interview

The researcher used a semi-structured interview data collection method to collect primary data from key informants. The semi-structured interview is possibly the most common qualitative research data gathering method. According to Hancock et al. (2007), in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on an original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee.

This study involved key informants for in-depth interviews from different political affiliations, civic involvement, and professions. The researcher selected eight (8) political participants from both ruling and opposition political parties and four (4) for each: government officials, particularly: the ministry of peace, national reconciliation commission, and opposition political parties, both national and ethnic-based, respectively. The second category of interviews was conducted with civic organizations or non-state actors, both domestic and international. Under this category, four (4) interviews were accompanied by non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations like United Nations experts, African Union experts, the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, and traditional and religious fathers. Six (8) interviews were also conducted with public opinion makers, like activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and legal experts. And five (5) interviews were also conducted with academicians from political science, peace, and conflict resolution studies based on their high involvement in national dialogue studies. Thus, the total number of informants from the aforementioned institutions and individuals was 25.

1.6.4.2. Focused Group Discussions

The researcher also used the FGD method to collect detailed data about the issue under study. In this research, two focus group discussions were held; each group had six members. The first FGDs were held with academicians. And the second group discussion conducted between traditional and religious fathers. Focused group discussions will help the researchers to obtain detailed information about the concern given by the ruling party and the composed committee and its mandates, and roles for facilitating the dialogue process for overcoming democratic political transition in Ethiopia, and to examine challenges, and prospects that this dialogue will face.

1.6.4.3. Document analysis

The aim is to source different related literature as a source of secondary data help the researcher to understand what kind of knowledge is developed about the topic of the study and also to discover the method, procedure, and tools used to solve research problems (Belay, Abdinasir, 2015). Accordingly, secondary data's were collected and reviewed from various published and unpublished documents, research reports, policy briefs, conference papers, newspapers and journals, and other documents relevant to this study as secondary sources of data. To provide the basis for recommendations for future practice, and to clarify the determinants of outcomes of national dialogues previous research and reports that have been done in different countries were systematically reviewed and analyzed. Additionally, documents and research relevant to the national dialogue and reconciliation practices and the reform agenda in the country were reviewed and analyzed.

1.7. Methods of Data Analysis

The researcher employed a thematic analysis for this study. Thematic analysis is an accessible, flexible, and increasingly popular method of qualitative data analysis. It is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Focusing on meaning across a dataset allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The data collected from both the primary and secondary sources analyzed was 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. So, the researcher employed thematic analysis methods for data analysis.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

To a certain extent, the researcher was challenged due to the broad nature of the study and the large number of actors that should be engaged in the study. Because of conflict and war, it was difficult to include key political participants in the data collection process, particularly some armed opposition parties like TPLF and OLF. Related to materials, the researcher was challenged to find written materials related to national dialogue in the case of Ethiopia, because

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 literature and 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 anonymity and confidentiality is another ethical issue. The research participant's identity did not link with their responses and free to give and withhold as much

information as they wish. Research participant's private information such as beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and records did not beshared without their knowledge or consent. The last but the most important ethical issue is researchers free from bias. The study selected the research participants based on inclusiveselection criteria. They were from different professions and political affiliations. Finally, theresearcher was free from personal bias and emotion in analyzing the collected data.

1.11. Organization of the Study

This study was organized into four different but interrelated chapters directed toward the main the objectives of the study: The first chapter deals with the introductory part of the study of the study and has two sections. The first section deals with the introduction part of the study, other objectives of the study, and the statement of the problem, and the second section deals with the research methodology and the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review. In this section, the study reviews related literature, which deals with conceptual and analytical issues that are relevant to the issue under investigation. Chapter three of the study focused on the discussions and findings portions of the study. It deals with exploring the major findings of the study and discusses the research questions in detail. Chapter four is the final section of the study. It deals with the conclusion and the recommendations part of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Dialogue

Etymologically the word dialogue is derived from two Greek words, Dia and Logos. Dia is a means through which, between, across, by, and of, suggests a passing through and Logos to speak. Thus, dialogue means a speech across, between, or between two or more people, or more specifically, passing through, as in the use of language as a symbolic tool and conversation as a medium (Crapanzano, 1990). As a result, dialogue involves sharing through the use of language as a cultural symbol and conversation as a channel for sharing and the flow of ideas. Dialogue is a discussion or exchange of ideas aimed at achieving mutual understanding through the exchange of viewpoints. Dialogue is a non-adversarial, open procedure for learning about other groups' beliefs, feelings, interests, and needs, usually with the assistance of a third-party facilitator (Snodderly, 2011).

Dialogue is a transformative process in relation to the creative actions of individuals through collective communication; the sharing of thoughts and knowledge by individuals as the generative materials to transform existing beliefs as well as create new innovations and cultural artifacts; and strategic or positional processes by implementing innovation or introducing new thoughts and knowledge into a cultural setting (Banathy & Patrick, 2004). Democratic dialogue can also be used to create corporatism. In effect, by involving various civil and political institutions and sectors, each with their own sectorial and specific visions, we can overcome those limitations by taking into account the interests of other groups and facilitating the construction of a more or less common ideal that transcends these differences.

Dialogue is a collaborative, open-ended process in which two or more parties work together to reach an agreement. Dialogue to expand, potentially change, reveals assumptions for re-evaluation, and fosters an open-minded attitude: openness to being mistaken and to change. In dialogue, one gives his or her finest thinking, trusting that other people's views will assist to strengthen it rather than destroy it, and one looks for strengths in the opposing positions.

It entails a genuine concern for the other person, as well as a desire not to offend or alienate them. Dialogue presupposes that many people have parts of the solution and that they can put them together into a workable solution if they work together (Quamber, 2013).

2.2 Concept of National Dialogue

National dialogue encompasses a wide range of viewpoints, ideas, perspectives, and experiences. In times of serious political crisis, post-war scenarios, or during far-reaching political transitions, national dialogues are locally controlled political procedures aiming at generating consensus among a diverse group of national stakeholders. National dialogues are a valid means to resolve internal rifts and restore relationships between the state, its institutions, and diverse groups in a war-torn society to ideally reach a new social compact amongst the various interest groups in the conflict. National dialogues can generate meaningful discussion about the root causes of conflict and how to solve these challenges holistically. It is becoming more diverse (Blunck et al., 2017).

National dialogue, as a democratic discussion process, can be considered a strategy as well as an outcome. Dialogue is a method of encouraging citizen ownership of a country's institutions and the formulation of its public policy. It is a way of recognizing and bringing people's goals together, as well as incorporating them into national and subnational government goals and programs, as well as government decision-making. The national debate is a consistent process that produces long- and short-term results by clearly and actively including political parties, but without enabling them to monopolize the forum. The tools allow for a broad discussion of societal challenges and encourage future government action (Barnes, 2020).

Under various labels, national dialogues take place in a variety of methods and on a variety of types of platforms (e.g. round table; national conference; political dialogue; National Dialogue). They are sometimes based on long-standing procedures and have the traditional names *bosberaad* in South Africa; *Loya Jirga* in Afghanistan (Christina, 2017). National dialogues are not democratic processes: rather than direct one-man-one-vote elections, its members are appointed or picked via caucus-style districts that are smaller than the entire population of voting age. In their debates, national dialogue processes typically do not follow parliamentary or other recognized procedures, instead of devising their debating and decision-

making rules. National dialogues, on the other hand, attempt to avoid the elitism of peace negotiations while failing to provide for a fully democratic method to carry them out (Papagianni, 2013).

National dialogue shares some fundamental aspects, through the diverse natures of national discussion systems and circumstances. National dialogue is procedures for bringing together all main political decision-makers and stakeholders following a major dispute or when parliament, government, or the constitution fails to satisfy the needs, rights, and expectations of all groups and communities. They supply and form political representation that reflects all of society's key interest groups. They are non-constitutional and provisional to ensure implementation. They create and agree on enforceable frameworks for political reform and constitutional change, with the parties determining the process, decision-making, and implementation procedures (Siebert, 2015).

2.3. Types and Objective of National Dialogues

National dialogues as a political process have been used and refined over time to achieve a variety of goals, depending on the setting. Based on the starting and facilitating players, Odendaal divides political dialogues into four complementary categories. A 'summit dialogue' is a high-level sort of dialogue or summit dialogue that involves the highest leadership of contending sectors of the population and is instigated by the international community, as in Kenya 2008 and Lebanon 2008. The second track involves civil society organizations intervening to provide discrete and generally low-risk opportunities to examine ideas and build trust and skill in the discussion process. Another type of dialogue is Multi-level dialogue is held at multiple levels of society to engage citizens in establishing a sufficient national consensus on critical problems. In this situation, a political dialogue is an important part of the peace-building and state-building process (Odendaal, 2011).

The national dialogue is classified as short-term and long-term political process. Short-term discussion effort, and undertaken strategically as a way of resolving or preventing military conflict. This sort of national discussion has limited mandates, smaller sizes, and shorter durations, and tries to break the political gridlock and re-establish political understanding among

political actors. Tunisia is a good example of this form of national dialogue, which is a shorter-term activity conducted strategically to break political deadlocks and re-establish minimal political agreement with more limited mandates to resolve or avert the eruption of violent violence. These are usually smaller in size and last for a shorter period (Blunck et al., 2017).

Dialogue can be viewed as either consultation or action, depending on its character. Dialogue as consultation is typically used in reaction to a specific situation, emergency, or pressure. Dialogue as action, on the other hand, lasts longer since it necessitates more time and more procedures for monitoring, supervision, and assessment to ensure that the agreements are upheld and institutionalized. In any event, we must emphasize that monitoring, verification, and evaluation can be carried out by official entities or civil society organizations without the necessity for a legal entity. During the conversation, a compliance timetable can be devised, including suitable sessions for analyzing progress. In addition, depending on the purpose, national dialogue might be restricted or broad, tangible or intangible, or a combination of the two. The development of a new government, constitution, sectorial policies, institutional strengthening, and/or draft legislation are examples of practical goals. National reconciliation, building a common vision, developing relationships among actors, and resolving specific rifts and/or tensions are examples of intangible goals (Harlander, 2016).

2.4. National Dialogues and other mechanisms for conflict resolution

To manage political crises and achieve peaceful political transitions, a variety of strategies and procedures are employed, the most common and popular of which are mediation, negotiation, and national dialogue. Dispute stakeholders and practitioners can choose the most appropriate mechanism for a particular conflict and political situation by understanding the merits and drawbacks of each negotiation, mediation, or national dialogue. Negotiation is a process in which a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage, or resolve a conflict by assisting them to develop mutually acceptable solutions; negotiation can be broadly defined as a process in which states and/or other actors engage each other directly, without the assistance of a third party, to exchange proposals in an attempt to reach an agreement around a matter of interest or way forward in the context of a dispute or conflict (Blunck ,et al., 2017).

National Dialogues are a type of inclusive negotiation that is typically used when the entire social contract is rethought and renegotiated. Unlike negotiation formats that seek broader inclusion through consultations or referendums, national dialogues typically bring together a diverse range of societal actors, including representatives of political parties and armed groups, at a table with powerful political elites to address the dimension of exclusion at the root of a conflict and renegotiate a more inclusive social contract or political settlement (Paffenholz & Nick, 2011). The process allows parties to admit historical wrongdoings, pave the path for restorative and redistributive justice and reconciliation, and lay the groundwork for a new, more inclusive national conversation. A sequence of multi-level, multi-format socio-political discussion is either expressly produced inside or stimulated by the formally formed national dialogue to foster constructive contact within society across conflict divisions, so developing greater trust and linking social capital (Barnes, 2017).

To achieve a long-term settlement to a dispute, a variety of tactics and processes should be used. National Dialogue can occur concurrently with mediation and negotiation, or before or after a negotiated or mediated peace process. A national dialogue is a better method of resolving political difficulties. National Dialogues are processes that are self-organized and facilitated by national actors. External third parties have a different role in National Dialogues than they do in mediation. By definition, negotiations take place without the intervention of a third party. Negotiations, by definition, take place without the involvement of a third party. In most cases, third-party mediators are international or national actors. Internal third parties (commonly referred to as "insider mediators") or other national players, on the other hand, arrange and manage national dialogues, often with an intricate structure to aid chair and oversee the process. National dialogues are procedures that are self-organized and facilitated by national actors (Blunck et al., 2017).

2.5. Key Principles for National Dialogues

2.5.1 Inclusiveness

By bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders for a deliberate process, the national dialogue should be inclusive. The process should include religious, ethnic, or tribal minorities, civil society, companies, labor unions, women, or youth to enhance the dialogue's capacity to

address the true sources of conflict and to make national dialogues a popular tool for structural reform. They are frequently engaged in such initiatives because they see them as opportunities to fight for their interests in national discussions (Harlander, 2016). In all phases: preliminary, process/negotiation, and implementation, inclusivity is critical. The credibility of the process and a sense of ownership could be compromised from the start if an inclusive approach is not taken in the preliminary phase and in the makeup of the preparatory body (Blunck et al., 2017).

Stakeholder acceptance of the mandate and agenda, as well as other decisions, is influenced by the degree of inclusiveness. It tries to bring all relevant national stakeholders and actors together under a broad mandate in order to foster nationwide consensus on key conflict issues. Inclusivity is a good tool for increasing public engagement and assisting in the development of a new social compact. The number of delegates, their mode of participation, and the architecture of the decision-making process, all of which are chosen in advance, are all critical to the level of inclusion during the national dialogue (Planta et al., 2015). Yemen's national dialogue in 2013–14 was notable for bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, including women and youth, as well as traditional leaders and the political elite. Although relations between these groups were difficult at the start of the NDC, the presence of atypical elites allowed for a more representative discussion and may have helped to create the political space for future engagement of women, civil society, and youth (Stigant & Murray, 2015).

2.5.2 Legitimacy, and accountability

Even if all main interest groups are included in the dialogue, it risks losing legitimacy; hence, accountability and ideal representativeness of participants should be incorporated. Because a community's diverse interests, values, and viewpoints are common, a representative will often implicitly select those who would "stand for" him or her in the decision-making forum. The "ideal type" of representation in a national dialogue process would most likely involve representatives actively seeking out constituents' interests, views, and ideas rather than assuming they already know them, and transparent mechanisms for relaying ideas and proposals emerging from the talks back to constituents for further consideration (Barnes, 2017).

2.5.3 Ownership

Contesting organizations agree to engage in dialogue with one another to address contested issues; they may be moving away from a winner-take-all competition and toward shared responsibility for finding mutually beneficial outcomes. This could be the start of a shift away from unilateralism and toward acceptance of interdependence in a shared future. Thus, if those who have been split by conflict can experience joint ownership of a process, it could signal the start of a shift in interdependence awareness. Tensions are likely to arise as a result of procedural conflicts over the process's mandate, substantive agenda, who participates and in what roles and capacities, and the facilitation and administration of the process in the extremely unstable circumstances in which national dialogues are held. They're essentially bargaining shared ownership of the process while considering the possible outcomes (Barnes, 2017).

Throughout the process, the primary agents must be parties from the country involved. While international participation in the form of observer status and/or financial and technical help may provide legitimacy, international actors must acknowledge the country's national interest as paramount. Participants must believe that the outputs and outcomes reflect the interests of the entire country, not just the interests of a few elites or the foreign community. Inclusivity, engagement, and openness all play a role in fostering a sense of national ownership of the conversation (Guo, 2016).

2.5.4 Credibility

Trust must be built before formal dialogue can begin, because without it, a dialogue can be extensive but not viable. This is founded on the notion that if the opposing sides don't trust each other, they won't be able to come up with a shared vision or carry out any decisions made. We anticipate a period of trust development (Elayah, et.al, 2020). Credible convener is critical; the convener should be well-liked by the majority of residents and should not have any political ambitions or goals that would create a clear conflict of interest. The credibility of the conveners is credited with much of the effectiveness of recent processes in Tunisia and Senegal. Four civil society organizations convened Tunisia's national dialogue in 2013-14: the general workers union (UGTT), the employers union (UTICA), the Tunisian Bar Association, and the Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH). This combination of groups was considered as credible by a

major percentage of the Tunisian population due to its long-standing moral authority and vast constituency base (Stigant & Murray, 2015).

2.5.5 International and regional support

External actors can play a variety of functions, including donors, observers, advisers, consultants, guarantors, administrators, facilitators, mediators, and, on occasion, spoilers. Parties; offering facilitation and expertise to break through deadlocks; providing money for various components of the national dialogue process; and assisting in the monitoring and implementation of the dialogue process's outcomes (Blunck et al., 2017). International guarantors, mediators, and facilitators help ensure a national dialogue by increasing international political leverage and pressure on participants to participate meaningfully in the dialogue. Third parties can include representatives of foreign states, nongovernmental organizations, or international organizations (Gaston, 2014).

External actors can also be classified by function, such as actors who are attempting to influence the process' outcome; building support for the process and encouraging parties to participate; providing technical expertise; and observing the process, which may help to build confidence among participants. Regional conflicts, for example, have a substantial impact on domestic affairs in Yemen. As a result, regional participation (i.e., direct participation of regional powers Iran and Saudi Arabia) in the national dialogue process may be required to address many of the disagreements (Elayah et.al, 2020).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) provided significant assistance, attention, and at times political pressure in the planning and holding of the national conversation, however the entire process fell apart a few months later (Harlander, 2016) Third-party facilitators may also be able to assist parties in resolving conflicts and breaking through deadlocks during national talks. For example, in Kenya, Kofi Annan and the Panel of Eminent African Personalities were tasked with mediating the National Dialogue and Reconciliation following the post-election violence in 2007(Haider, 2010).The level of skill and competence demonstrated by the facilitator determines the credibility of the national dialogue. Facilitating a meeting between people who come to the table with deep levels of suspicion, anger, fear, and even hatred is a difficult task. Further, there

will always be a power imbalance between the persons involved, which must be effectively managed (Odendaal, 2011).

2.5.6. Transparency and Dissemination of Information

The players and the nation's larger citizenry's perceptions of legitimacy are critical. Transparency encourages accountability and reduces the risk of mistrust among stakeholders. When there is accountability, society may be more likely to accept that the public good is being pursued rather than the selfish interests of a few. Greater transparency also encourages a greater sense of national ownership of the outcomes. National conversations aim to increase both vertical and horizontal trust and confidence. The former indicates people's faith in the government, whilst the latter aims to instill trust and confidence in the general public. As a result, the national dialogue's proceedings and outcomes should be made public (Guo, 2016).

To provide equitable chances for broad-based representation, it is critical to provide enough information about national dialogues to all key segments of society. If the public is uninformed of the national discourse, it will be unable to contribute ideas or feel compelled to advocate its outcomes. In Iraq, for example, there was no effective public information campaign or public debate, and the media paid little attention to the national dialogue. Because of the absence of information exchange, opposition parties and civil society were unable to participate meaningfully, resulting in a restricted, politically one-sided process involving only the immediate political elite (Blunck et al, 2017).

Furthermore, in order to disseminate information across the country, rural populations must be kept informed of ongoing national dialogue processes through the use of media such as television, radio, and newspapers. In particular, in metropolitan regions, social media can be a beneficial tool. National conversations aim to increase both vertical and horizontal trust and confidence. The former indicates people's faith in the government, whilst the latter aims to instill trust and confidence in the general public. As a result, the national dialogue's proceedings and outcomes should be made public (Guo, 2016).

2.6. Mandates of National Dialogues

The mandate of a National Dialogue refers to the specific objectives of the dialogue process, as well as the degree of authority delegated to the dialogue. The mandates of national dialogues varied depending on the context that national dialogue intends (Paffenholz, et al., 2017). There is no blueprint for a national dialogue. A wide variety of national dialogues have been organized, with diverse mandates, rules of procedure, compositions and outcomes. This diversity reflects the unique political experience and needs of the society and state for which they are designed (Harlander, 2016).

Designing the mandate of national dialogue include different criteria. Any mandate should clearly state the purpose of the process: this can vary greatly, ranging from agreeing on future negotiations, to amending a constitution or adopting a transitional body, or to drafting an entirely new constitutional framework. Additionally, the mandate should identify preliminary agenda, which sets a range of topics for discussion. In addition, guiding principles for the conduct of the conference should include, as well as the anticipated institutional structure. Lastly, mandates include a reference to framework conditions, such as modalities on selection procedures, and also duration and sometimes finances (Blunck, et al., 2017).

2.6.1 The origin of national dialogue mandate

Several approaches have been used, from the formally mandated national dialogue. The mandates of national dialogues often originate in a formal agreement between some of the conflict parties, such as the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, in the case of the Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ) in Mediation Practice Series Afghanistan or the Lusaka Agreement of July 1999 and, for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD). Mandates can also result from an inclusive consultation which included political parties, civil society organizations and trade unions. Such as in Togo, where the mandate of the dialogue resulted from negotiations between the government and the so-called Collective de opposition Democratic (COD) originated. In other cases, a mandate can result from a unilateral decision by the incumbent authority, such as in Nigeria in 2014, although discussions with other stakeholders usually precede such a decision (Harlander, 2016).

2.6.2. The scope of national dialogue mandate

The scope of national dialogue is other characteristics that different national dialogue process by having very limited and wide mandates. The scope of a national dialogue mandate can determine whether the process will be purely advisory or have executive or legislative powers. For example in In Togo, the Conference National had a mandate to discuss and decide on all questions of national interest. This mandate included the power to legislate and stipulated that decisions by the Conference were sovereign and legally binding. Contrary, Mandates can also be very specific and limited, as in Iraq, where the Annex to the Law for the Administration of Iraq in the Transitional Period, issued in 2004, limited the mandate of the national conference to the selection of the members of the Interim National Council (Harlander, 2016).

The main aim of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference (NDC) was to produce a new social contract. The mandate was broad, reflecting a range of expectations and irreconcilable objectives among various groups. The process was connected to the existing political institutions/system in that the government was to be bound by the NDC's outcomes and the new constitution if they were put into effect through a national referendum. Contrary Kenya's National Dialogue and Reconciliation process was more limited in aim and scope. It specifically addressed the issue of electoral violence and deep cleavages between the main parties. The participants were clearly stated: all from the major political parties (Blunck, et al. 2017).

Overall, three different mandates were evident among the national dialogues studied: Political reform aiming to improve the current political system and initiate democratization, Peacemaking aiming to end violence, prevent further escalation of armed conflict, ease mounting tensions to establish lasting peace, Constitution-drafting or amending a constitution are among dominant mandate of national dialogue process (Paffenholz, et al. 2017). National Dialogues provide an inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation framework, which can resolve political crises and lead countries into political transitions. They are convened to address issues of national concern, typically longstanding causes of conflict that have been brought to the fore by political protest or armed insurrection. With mandates that include political reforms, constitution-making, and peace building (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

2.6.3. Political Mandate of National Dialogue

National dialogue processes have had a variety of mandates in transitional settings. In some cases, they kick-started political transitions: they appointed transitional governments, transitional constitutions, and constituent assemblies. In other cases, they have themselves drafted constitutions, while in other cases; they have drafted constitutional principles which were handed over to a constitution-drafting body (Papagianni, 2013). A national dialogue as variety of mandates in constitution making producers and 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 for a future constitution, and it can provide a model of deliberation that facilitates productive discussion and decision making in a constitution-making process (Christina, 2017).

National dialogues are negotiating mechanisms intended to expand participation in political transitions beyond the political and military elites. Their ambition is to move away from elite-level deal-making by allowing diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations. National dialogue processes can create a forum to support the transition from autocracy and/or armed conflict. National dialogue can serve as a way for stakeholders to begin the process of developing a path forward out of the crisis of a debilitating political deadlock and, potentially, to craft a framework for more fundamental change and used to create a larger consensus on major structural reforms to the state (Barnes, 2017). For instance in Benin National Conference mandated to established a transitional government which, in turn, established the Transition Constitutional Commission. However, the committee of the National Conference that decided on transitional government structures considered various arrangements for the post-transition constitution, including the future system of government and the Conference also mandated a large number of constitutional institutions including a constitutional court to act as checks on executive power (Seely, 2009).

National dialogue processes have taken place in a number of countries going through political transitions and have influenced the outcomes of these transitions. Several West African countries held national conferences in the early 1990s as they moved from authoritarian to democratic governments (Benin, Togo, Congo Brazzaville, Niger, Mali and Zaire, among others). Following

the 2003 Bonn Agreement, the Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas were held in Afghanistan and contributed to the design of the transitional process National Dialogues often take place as part of a larger transition framework (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen) or alongside other major political processes, such as peace negotiations (Sudan, Colombia, Guatemala) (Papagianni, 2013).

2.6.4. Peacemaking aiming to end violence

National dialogues do not definitively solve conflicts, but it can initiate a reconciliation process. The exchange and socialization elements of the process through which values and norms are being shared and assimilated, as well as the expression of past and present grievances, can work as a catharsis and, as such, may be excellent conflict-management tools (Harlander, 2016). National dialogues are an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and managing political transformation. It can broaden debate regarding a country's trajectory beyond the usual elite decision-makers. It is one of the tools used to build consensus among contending political forces to resolve major political differences and avoid violent conflict.

National Dialogues have been used as an instrument to resolve political crises and pave the way for political transitions and sustainable peace. In a post-conflict situation, peace must be consolidated and various aspects of national life must be reconstructed. Dialogue makes it possible to gather differing opinions from people, and to create a shared vision of the future, which must be the basis for any common approach to integral development (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

2.7. Contexts national dialogues Involves

National dialogue takes place in a variety of contexts, situations, and causes. Nationwide dialogue is typically convened at historical moments when pro-change and anti-change forces emerge, regaining legitimacy by controlling the negotiating process and outcomes to redefine the future of the state. It is also imperative when resistance to the existing order is typically channeled through self-determination, democracy, or possibly a revolutionary struggle, often waged both through armed uprisings and through non-violent mass protest movements, leading to political exclusion. These dialogues are established when the nation confronts problems that

cannot be resolved in established institutions or through existing procedures because those institutions are weak, absent or lack legitimacy, or because they are not adequately inclusive or flexible, for instance (Barnes, 2017).

National dialogue reduces tensions, finds political compromises, or even reestablishes a new institutional structure in these situations, performing a crisis management function and abolishing political deadlocks or paralyzed political institutions. A national dialogue is held in the aftermath of civil wars and political changes when traditional political institutions have been delegitimized and more comprehensive methods are required. In this function, dialogue enables ownership of a new political, economic, and social system by establishing new institutions and negotiating an updated social contract between the state and its population (Barnes, 2017).

A number of countries used national dialogue used when the very foundations or survival of a government is threatened and is used to resolve political crises, improve the legitimacy of institutions, and lead countries into political transitions (Harlander, 2016). National dialogue take place within a broader context: at the end of an armed conflict which led to the ousting of a government such as in Afghanistan (2002), within a post authoritarian transition such as in Yemen (2013–2014), or following the de facto failure of an autocratic state, such as in Benin (1990). National dialogues are organized in states with contested, weak or failed institutions, or where institutions are deemed not inclusive enough and require reforms to increase their legitimacy (Papagianni, 2013).

Most often, national dialogues were a response to domestic rather than international pressure and usually occurred in the context of political crisis. This was especially true when issues of fundamental national concern arose or the survival of a ruling government was in question. At times of breakdown, such as a severe crisis or disconnect in governance between the state and its society. They intend to redefine the relationships between the government, political actors, and society through the negotiation of a new social contract. This process also offers the potential to restore state society relations and re-establish a government's legitimacy through broader representativeness (Paffenholz, et al. 2017).

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 processes 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 ‘national leap’. 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 robust civil society played an 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 unions and some of its business 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 critically 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 (Harlander, 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 (Blunck 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, rules of 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, the 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 (Barnes, 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

Information sharing and public consultations Support structures. The agenda for a National Dialogue process outlines the substantive topics the content to be deliberated during the talks. Closely connected with the mandate for the talks, which outlines the overall aim for the process, the agenda typically outlines the specific themes to be addressed by the participants in dialogue. The agenda of a National Dialogue depends on the overall aim of the process. It sets out topics for discussion in more detail and should also specify whether the decisions reached under each topic are to have the status of recommendations or are considered binding (Blunck et al., 2017).

In this stage finding a trusted and credible convener, is important and national dialogues are generally convened under the authority of a central figure or body. The key function of this individual or institution is to preside over the process, sometimes even act as a facilitator. The choice of the convener is often a powerful signal as to what can be expected from the overall process. In National Dialogue, it is through the convening individual or institution that legitimacy is established. The reputation and perceived legitimacy of the convener is likely to convey powerful signals about the process and its likely outcomes (Barnes, 2017).

During national dialogue phase there is a tendency to determining participation size, the appropriate size of the process and participation depends on the objective it seeks to achieve. Determining the number and background of those participating depends on the specific political, cultural, ethnic, and sectarian, etc. There is no ideal size: they can be small (the 12–34 participants in the Eastern and Central European roundtables), medium-sized (the 565 participants in Yemen) or large (such as the 1,600 participants in Afghanistan’s Loya Jirga). Characteristics of the country in which the National Dialogue takes place in societies which tend to have a culture of consensus-based decision-making and a culture of broad-based consultations, the number of participants tends to be high(Blunck et al., 2017).

2.11.1 Selection of participants

The selection of participants involves defining constituencies, selection criteria and the selection process. National Dialogue processes have to be designed in a way that reflects the social make-up of a society related to the issues to be addressed.

Participant selection is one key instrument to ensure that National Dialogues are broad based and inclusive (Blunck et al., 2017). The transformative potential of National Dialogue processes may only be realized if they: include those groups affected by the issues addressed, are ‘owned’ by the main stakeholders, are legitimate in the eyes of their constituent base and the wider society, and they unfold within a process that is able to help balance power asymmetries so as to enable collective engagement in generating mutually agreed outcomes (Barnes, 2017). The composition of a National Dialogue should be a microcosm of the societal strata relevant for addressing the issue under discussion. Importantly, they should always include key stakeholders that are ‘entry points’ to the larger population, or to key stakeholder groups, have leverage to influence opinion or affect change, and must be part of any agreement if it is to be sustainable (Blunck et al., 2017).

Key considerations for selecting participants experience shows that a National Dialogue’s legitimacy depends on the selection process and the participants who are eventually chosen to represent the interests of a cross-section of society. Transparency: This should apply in relation to identifying constituencies and to selection criteria as much as to the actual selection procedure. Fair representation: An honest assessment of each party’s influence should determine the allocation of seats. Processes opting for a ‘same seats for all approach when dividing opposition seats create an artificial symmetry inside the National Dialogue that does not reflect realities on the ground (Stigant & Murray, 2015).

Decision-making in National Dialogues is usually based on consensus, often complemented by other pragmatic mechanisms where deadlocks need to be broken. Moreover, transparent decision-making rules are an important feature of National Dialogues, but in the case of hard negotiations during key political moments, crucial decisions are taken behind closed doors, often through majority voting or elite consensus. The use of consensus-based decision making nevertheless fosters democratic participation. If practiced well, it fosters legitimacy and a deep commitment by a wide range of actors to the process and its outcome (Thomas, 2007).

2.12. The Implementation Phase

The implementation phase is dedicated to executing the decisions taken during the negotiations. The implementation of a national dialogue’s recommendations or decisions represents the final

challenge for parties and facilitators and should be planned carefully during and after the dialogue (Harlander, 2016). The implementation phase needs careful planning and designing. Depending on the objective and mandate of the National Dialogue, planning for implementation happens during the process phase or even as early as the preparation phase. Continuing with the spirit of the process and designing the implementation phase in an inclusive and participatory manner can further support thorough implementation and strengthen change processes (Blunck et al., 2017). The implementation phase is facilitated by infrastructure, mechanisms and forums.

In some recent national dialogues the conclusion of the national process led to the creation of ongoing dialogues on specific issues or to participatory mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the dialogue's outcomes. These follow-on processes can further participatory and inclusive governance, and provide an example of the ways that a national dialogue process may make indirect contributions to the foundations of a sustainable peace. Ideally, the implementation phase of a National Dialogue should not be about 'closing down' but rather opening up the space for continuous dialogue at multiple levels (for example, nationally and informally among the dialogue participants). For a sustainable structure, the concept of Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) may be worth considering (Stigant & Murray, 2015).

2.12 Factors Influence National Dialogues

2.12.1 Political contexts Factors

2.12.1.1 Popular Support

Public support or lack thereof is important element that either enables or constrains progress in the national dialogue process. Public support during a National Dialogue as well as the implementation phase is important for the sustainability of outcomes. Opening media platforms to different opinions at the national dialogue also increased its perceived legitimacy. 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 (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

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, 2016). 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 logic of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ and that ‘if you get what you want, we cannot get what we want’ and vice versa. The strategy of most contending 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 an 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 regular 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 US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council, was a failure because the organizers exercised such one-sided control over the process that it pre-empted 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 engage openly in the dialogue and eventually 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 country 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 downsides(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(Haider,2019).

2.12.1.5 External 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, and mediated the dialogue between the two major parties. The Union Panel's skilled 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 of an 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. Process factors of national Dialogue

Alongside political context factors, the design or process of a national dialogue will determine the success or the frailer of national dialogue. Key process factors include: the degree of

inclusion and participation; representation and selection criteria; objective and scope-setting; institutional framework and decision-making procedures; confidence-building measures; and provision for implementation(Harlander, 2016)The neutral party's selection of mediators and facilitators, as well as the duration of national dialogues, Coalition-building: international, regional, or non-governmental support structures for involved actors; coalition-building among involved actors(Papagianni, 2013).

2.13.1. The degree of inclusion

The degree of inclusion and participation: the vast majority of literature emphasizes that the transformative potential of national dialogues can only be realized if they are genuinely inclusive of society. In order to be truly inclusive, it is necessary to help balance power asymmetries and ensure actual decision-making power. Highly inclusive and participatory national dialogues may render discussions wildly, however, and make it difficult to resolve key political questions. The success of national dialogues can depend in large part on finding the right equilibrium between efficiency and inclusiveness (Haider. 2019)In Yemen, women and youth were effectively included in the national dialogue process through a quota system; whereas Jordan did not establish a mechanism for including women or young people adequately, which discredited the overall process (Blunck et al., 2017).

Decision who to include or exclude is key to the success of the process, but is in itself often controversial and a source of tension, not only between participants, but also between the international community and local actors. In principle the decision who should participate in dialogue belongs to the participants, those who should own the process. It is not a decision that should be imposed by external actors or the facilitator. However, given the fact that the success of a dialogue is determined by its level of inclusiveness, facilitators should ensure that decisions regarding inclusion have been informed by relevant and valid concerns and principles. It is an area that may be in need of substantial dialogue on its own. What is, however, not acceptable is that issues of inclusion and exclusion in internal dialogues are determined by the political agendas of external actors (Odendaal, 2019).

Key challenges to inclusion, Balance of power issues, Fair representation efforts to include different segments of society will not necessarily create an environment conducive to successful dialogue, as persistent imbalances of power in the community often persist, with certain actors having overarching control over everything in society (Elayah et al., 2018). As such, the transformative potential of national dialogue processes may only be realized if they help to balance power asymmetries, enabling collective engagement and generation of mutually agreed outcomes (Barnes, 2017).

The inclusion of women, young people and marginalized communities in the national dialogue process, for example, needs to extend beyond mere presence to enabling them to voice their concerns, engage in decision making, and influence the process. The absence of such meaningful participation can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction; and may increase the possibility these actors becoming spoilers of the process instead (Blunck et al., 2017). The composition of delegates, their form of participation and the design of the decision-making process, decided in preparatory phases, are all essential to the level of inclusivity during the national dialogue itself. The degree of inclusiveness affects whether stakeholders accept the mandate and agenda or other decisions made (Planta et al., 2015).

2.13.2. Adequate preparation

Adequate preparation is an important determinant factor that will affect national dialogue process. The responsibility for preparation rests with the facilitation team, but they have to negotiate every step of the process with all the prospective partners. Reigning conditions will determine what is possible, but ideally the facilitation team should work with a group of people representative of the main participants to ensure that the concerns of all parties regarding the process are addressed. The preparation process is therefore a dialogue about the dialogue. The participation and transparency achieved in this way are important for building confidence in the process (Papagianni, 2013).

2.13.3. The issue in Objective on national dialogue process

The objectives of the dialogue should be not only being clear but also be shared if a dialogue wants to address the root causes of conflict, especially the ‘protracted ones’ as they are deeply

rooted and reflect identity problems like tribe, community, religion or nation. This is particularly of importance as there may be a long history of ethno-political conflicts within a nation-state. A dialogue's objectives should provide for substantive 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. All the related factions involved in the dialogue have to share the same objectivity as the dialogue as a whole seeks to reach agreement on key issues facing a country (Elayah, et al 2020).

2.13.4 Mandate of national dialogue process

National dialogues benefit from a clear, manageable mandate and a well-defined relationship to ongoing political processes which are negotiated prior to the commencement of the dialogue (Papagianni, 2013). Very broad and narrow scope of mandates of national dialogue is also important to explain the successes of national dialogue implementation stage. A mandate which is too broad risks triggering lengthy debates during the actual process to redefine the exact terms of the mandate and trigger the opposition of existing institutions and parallel processes and it will be the cause for collapse or failure of national dialogue during the implementation phase. A narrower mandate can be an efficient way to avoid the 'inflation in prerogatives' of a national dialogue. On the other hand, a narrow mandate might greatly limit the room for change, as in Afghanistan where the Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ) of 2002 was not mandated to amend the transitional agreement, despite the eagerness of delegates to do so (Harlander, 2016).

2.13.5 Agendas of national dialogue process

The agenda of national dialogue must be very carefully structured. A poorly-constructed agenda will only lead to conflicts. There are some issues that cause polarization. The idea is to have a comprehensive agenda that allows the forum to move forward gradually. There are some issues that simply cannot be avoided, but if they are placed on the agenda at the outset, they will lead to the radicalization of postures during the debate (Stigant & Murray, 2015). Objective and scope-setting: it is important to avoid overburdening mandates and agendas. It can be challenging to strike a balance between the breadth of the mandate, efficiency, and independence. While a narrower mandate can be more manageable and efficient, it can limit the room for change and may contribute to the persistence of an elite-led process. Clarity and relevance to local

populations are key characteristics to adopt 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 sub-divide 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 caucus-type 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).

2.14 Political 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 of the

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 a political limbo in between an authoritarian regime and a consolidate democracy. In countries under “gray zone” characterized by limited 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 erupts 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 to 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 yields four different modes of transitions: ‘Pacts are elite-dominated 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 emphasize 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

struggle against the authoritarian government and on behalf of establishing democracy. Labor unions peasant groups, neighboring associations, and church groups played prominent parts in straggles that ended authoritarian rules (Schott, 1989).

2.14.3 Political transition and national dialogue

The “transition paradigm” points to three sequential phases on which, more often than not, democratization appears to build: opening, break-through and consolidation. The opening stage is a period of democratic ferment and political liberalization in which cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime, with the most prominent fault line being that between hardliners and soft-liners. There follows the breakthrough, the collapse of the regime and the establishment of a new democratic system with the coming to power of a new government through national elections and the establishment of a democratic institutional structure, often through the promulgation of a new constitution. Finally consolidation comes, in which democratic forms are transformed into democratic substance through the reform of state institutions, the regularization of elections, the strengthening of civil society, and the overall habituation of the society to the new democratic rules (Barnes, 2017).

Both peaceful and negotiated or cooperative transitions are qualified by removing or reforming the existing regime and replace it with something more democratic and are characterized by a duality of purpose to remove or reform the existing regime and replace it with something more democratic. In peaceful transitions powerful incumbents negotiate a democratic opening, they may attempt to use their leverage to design electoral rules that benefit them the most under a democratic system and that favors their continued rule. On the other hand cooperative transition is where opposition groups unite in their quest for democracy and incumbents are willing to work with opposition groups, where institutions are inclusive and adapted for competition (Guo&Gary, 2002).

National dialogues are negotiating mechanisms intended to expand participation in political transitions beyond the political and military elites. Their ambition is to move away from elite level deal making by allowing diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations. At the same time, national dialogues are not purely democratic processes: their participants are not

chosen through direct one-man-one-vote elections, but are either appointed or selected by caucus-type constituencies that are smaller than the total population of voting age (Papagianni, 2013).

National dialogue processes have had a variety of mandates in transitional settings. In some cases, they kick-started political transitions: they appointed transitional governments, transitional constitutions and constituent assemblies. In other cases, they have themselves drafted constitutions while still in other cases they have drafted constitutional principles which were handed over to a constitution drafting body. In yet other cases, national dialogues have simply, but usefully, engaged all actors in a political process and designed future negotiation processes which took binding decisions. In these latter cases, the goal of the dialogue was to build enough trust and to design the process through which the country might resolve some of its most contentious problems (Papagianni, 2013).

National dialogue processes have taken place in a number of countries going through political transitions and have influenced the outcomes of these transitions. These processes have differed in their legal status and mandate, their independence from the government, their inclusiveness, and the role they played in the transition. Several West African countries held national conferences in the early 1990s as they moved from authoritarian to democratic governments (Benin, Togo, Congo Brazzaville, Niger, Mali and Zaire, among others). Following the 2003 Bonn Agreement, the Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas were held in Afghanistan and contributed to the design of the transitional process. Finally, the National Dialogue Conference was launched in Yemen in March 2013 as part of the November 2011 Implementation Mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative, which put in place a two-year transitional process in an effort to end the conflict in the country (Papagianni, 2013).

2.14.4. Political Transition in Ethiopia since 2018

Different scholars stated that Ethiopian recent political condition since 2018 is more reform than transition by its structure. Political reforms aim at opening the democratic space of civic participation and involve comprehensive reforms of the state institutions and the constitutional, legal, and policy frameworks. But political transition implies regime change and is often

associated with the transition from military or civil authoritarianism to democratic, competitive political systems (Mohamed et.al, 2018). So that why scholars conclude in Ethiopia there was a reform of institutions and policies in the same political situation. I argue that political transition more inclusive process that will be processed by different methods as I stated above like reform, election, and military action so it is a political transition through reform to overthrowing the authoritarian government of EPRDF.

The appropriateness of political transition through reform in Ethiopia is inevitable, because of unfavorable conditions to democracy during the ruling of EPRDF. The imbalance of power between the ruling party and opposition parties, the fragmentation of the political arena, the weakness of civil society, the domination of corruption and, economic crises lead the ruling party to be authoritarian (Ottoway, 1995). As crisis group reported that the fundamental cause can be summarized as the popular uprising, mainly in Oromo and Amhara regions, and internal conflict among party members and economic crises. The first Protests erupted in Ethiopia's largest and most populous regional state, Oromia, in April 2014, in response to the federal government Addis Ababa Integrated Regional Development Plan which aimed to widen the capital city's jurisdiction over parts of Oromia. Protesters opposed not only what they perceived as continued Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF) domination of federal political, economic, and security institutions, but also corrupt (OPDO), which they accused of selling off Oromia's resources land in particular (International Crisis Group, 2020).

The other main factor is an internal problem within a party and dominance of TPLF's within the EPRDF the ruling, elite's determination to protect their positions, and their economic interests in particular, and prevented a dynamic, reform-oriented response to the popular unrest. Action taken against allegedly corrupt ministers and officials appeared selective and politicized, leaving the public again skeptical of the party's commitment to change (ICG,2021).The issue of unemployment and high living condition one of the main responsible factors that make political change inevitable in Ethiopia. Many universities and college graduates become unemployed even feeding empty belly becomes difficult in the country.

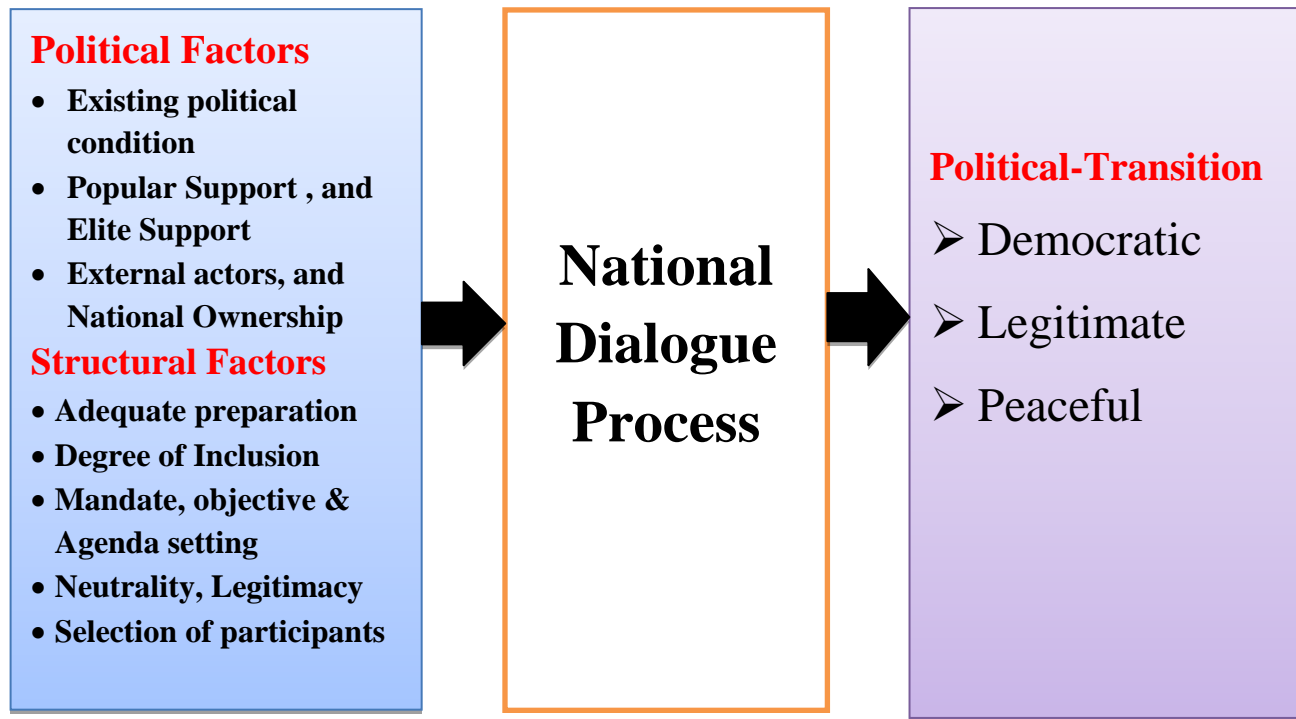
Additionally, the absence of well-established democratic institutions, independent judges, human rights institutions, civil society that works on advocacy of human rights, and democracy led the party to the high tendency of dictatorship driving factors to stand for reform (Worku& Ephrem, 2018). Without 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 conditions may 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 part 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 the national dialogue for sustainable peace -building in Ethiopia.

3.2 The 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).

The optimism initially generated by Ethiopia's much-praised political transition that started in 2018 has diminished. The rivalry has grown between the federal government and some regional states, and political understanding of other forms of violence has become a recurring problem. The national dialogue is increasingly seen as an option to redress deep-seated political and security problems. Ethiopia's violence and instability have their roots in long-standing state-building deficits. These primarily include divergent interpretations of the country's political history; a lack of social cohesion; and an absence of national consensus on major state symbols and institutions (Meressa & Dawit, 2020).

Both peaceful and negotiated or cooperative transitions are qualified by removing or reforming the existing regime and replacing it with something more democratic. They are characterized by a dual purpose of removing or reforming the existing regime and replacing it with something more democratic. In peaceful transitions, powerful incumbents negotiate a democratic opening, and they may attempt to use their leverage to design electoral rules that benefit them the most under a democratic system and that favor their continued rule. And, the democratic transition is cooperative; opposition groups unite in their quest for democracy and incumbents are willing to work with opposition groups, where institutions are inclusive and adapted for competition (Guo & Gary, 2002).

National dialogue in Ethiopia will help to cultivate a culture of democratic and peaceful political transition. Building on democratic culture, dialogue has the potential to transform conflicts into opportunities and solve problematic issues peacefully. And, as a democratic process, dialogue has a paramount role in changing conflict situations into peaceful conditions through discussions. It has the power to change the culture of political participation from a low level to one of active and full participation. The participants of dialogue should include basic principles during the dialogue process. They should start looking forward rather than just arguing about the past. In the national dialogue process, the ideas brought to the table should be argumentative, logical, and easily understood by all reasonable participants (*KIA, 1, 2022*).

According to Merera, an academic turned politician, Ethiopian history for the last quarter of the 19th century and the whole of the 20th century indicates, a lack of political will, as well as the existence of little sense of history by the country's dominant elite of the day, its determination to play a zero-sum game politics to the endgame, its lack of the art of compromise, its indistinct vision of the future regarding the larger societal goals, its propensity for hegemony, its vanity of grandeur, and above all its successful failure to learn from past mistakes and history, are all the hallmark of the succeeding generations of Ethiopian elites (Merera,2001). So to address this deep-rooted political problem emanated by the absence of democratic political culture to compromise different ideas national dialogue will play an irreplaceable role.

National dialogue in Ethiopia will set a cornerstone for the democratic political transition by creating a political condition more cooperative, and peaceful. It also set a foundation for replacing the existing regime with a more democratic and peaceful one. Why because genuine dialogue will abolish the senses of enmity and the politics of conspiracy and increase the rational, and tolerance political conditions that dominate legitimacy. The planned national dialogue in Ethiopia must set a platform to build a democratic culture and fostering the democratization process is an important solution to tackle political or identity questions (*KIG 1, 2022*).

Additionally, some political leaders confirmed that...

The planned national dialogue in Ethiopia will play a significant role to address controversial issues that caused for conflict for decades. By being open to express all kinds of ideas that are the reason for conflict, and disagreement the dialogue will play an undeniable role. The national dialogue has the potential to transform conflicts into opportunities and solve problematic issues peacefully. Through national dialogue polarized; extremist issues will come to a table for discussion and will find a solution by accommodating and compromising polarized ideas at the national level (*KIPP,1, 2022*).

Ethiopia was in the situation of a fragile or failed state over the past four years. There were mass protests against the government. There were mass killings and tortures by the government military forces to stop the protests. After the Tigray war, the path to building a democratic future will be enormously difficult, and the country was full of chaos and on the verge of collapse. But it is still possible what Ethiopia needs now is an inclusive national dialogue that would serve as an instrument of constructive engagement to secure a new political settlement that would allow Ethiopians to live together in peace and equal dignity. But doing so requires, among other things, confronting Ethiopia's complex past and imperial legacy.

National dialogue in Ethiopia is needed more than ever in Ethiopia to reach an agreement regarding Political change or end the political crisis, to address major national issues thus are controversial and cause conflict. The national dialogue will create the opportunity to discuss and address the major national issues through comprehensive and all-encompassing discussions. The discussions might include several actors from opposition political parties to civil societies and religious leaders. Genuine National dialogue is very important to increase the legitimacy of a different government institution. By giving a chance to make comments, and criticisms, in this case, the elected ruling party can use the dialogue as a positive instrument to resolve conflicts easily through discussion (*KIPP, 2, 2022*).

Journalists and human rights activist similarly confirmed that...

The planned national dialogue will play a significant role to resolve controversial and extreme views expressed by different groups. Thus the issues of federalism and constitution are dominating. Only after such an honest and open dialogue can the country make progress in solving its problems and moving forward. Thus, if Ethiopia is to avoid another destructive civil war, and get on a path to sustainable peace and prosperity, honest national dialogue between many opposing voices in the country is a necessity. Now that the imminent existential threat facing the state appears to be averted, it is time for antagonist groups in Ethiopia to come together to discuss their different visions for the country and listen to each other's (*KIJH, 1, 2022*).

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. 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 (KIPP, 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 primary role 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 agendas. Pre-negotiation 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, I, 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 war 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 return a country to a crisis if they fail to gain legitimacy through popular participation and consensus-building by the people. For a constitutional reform exercise to be considered legitimate, the processes leading to a new or revised constitution must be inclusive, participatory, and transparent, and the outputs must be based on popular consensus (Nyei, 2015).

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 it 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 M-19 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). The 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 quarrels 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 or not well represented in the drafting process of the constitution, and there was no public consultation and discussion during the drafting of the constitution. These groups believe that the current constitution is generating a fertile ground for ethnic-based politics rather than politics based on political ideology.

The subject of public discussion on the draft constitution in Ethiopia is a key concern among various actors. Many actors believe that the general population was not briefed about the 1995 constitution, specifically each item of the national constitution. They said that the constitutional drafting process was not open to the people and was not participatory. The average person does not find it legitimate or acceptable. As a result, it is regarded as the constitution of the ruling party rather than the state constitution. The planned national conversation in Ethiopia should address the country's contentious constitutional issues (*KIG 2, 2022*).

Two extreme and overlapping conceptions of Ethiopia's federal constitution hampered the 2018 political transition. Ethiopia's current federal constitution has received mixed reviews from the public and elite. One group claims that the constitution is the best tool for managing cultural and ethno linguistic diversity while still protecting individual and group rights. This

group thinks that certain parts of the federal constitution should be implemented in its "true letter and spirit." If any changes are required, they would be to include more federal working languages in addition to Amharic. Contrary to others Ethiopian constitution should be completely abolished because the entire process of drafting the constitution was not inclusive and participatory and all-encompass. Because they claim that the current constitution is not the real representation of Ethiopians rather it is mere represent specific group interest.

The planned national dialogue must consider the issues of the constitution as a major legal national dialogue agenda. And it must play a significant role in resolving controversy on the question of the federal constitution. The national dialogue could also help address existing demands for constitutional review or amendment by providing inclusive and compressive discussions among antagonistic groups at one table and providing an adequate solution (*KIPP, 3, 2022*).

3.2.2 Federal Structure

Similarly, with Ethiopia's federal constitution, the current federal structure of the Ethiopian government is controversial and has been criticized by many actors and political parties. The two extreme groups of political elites are playing the major political game under the umbrella of Ethiopian politics. The major cause of their arguments is the nature of federation or federalism. These groups, the ethnic-nationalists, and ethno-nationalists, are always justified in the ideas they have towards federalism or the nature of the federation. Ethno-nationalists argue that the ethnically based arrangement of state structures exacerbates the conflicting interests of regional states and, thereby, nation-nationalities.

The unlimited and antagonistic nature of the arguments between ethno-nationalists and ethnic nationalists would pose a significant challenge to the sustainability of the current political reform. The unmanageable competition of these two competing groups, which are not based on democratic culture, would affect the political transition and the democratization process in Ethiopia. It should be controlled and managed based on rules and discipline (*Ademo, 2019*). Hence, this arrangement should be revised and the nation's nationalities must convene at the national level to resolve conflicts. Additionally, national dialogue must play a vital role in addressing this kind of polarized issue democratically.

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

The federal system is one of the contested issues in Ethiopia that should be addressed through national dialogue and consensus. There are two extreme groups in the current Ethiopian political arena. One group is a supporter of ethnic federalism and the other group is against the current federal system. Those groups who are against ethnic federalism argue that this system will make the nations and nationalities selfish and think only for their groups. This might make nations and nationalities not fight for common goals. On the contrary, the supporter of ethnic federalism argues that the current federal system of Ethiopia is helping the nations and nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to cultivate their culture, preserve their history, and protect their religions and customs (*KIG, 3, 2022*).

The state administrative structure is another major political issue that needs national consensus. Just like the issue of federalism, two divergent groups are arguing for the current state modality and against the current state structure. Public dialogues and inclusive discussions are imperative to bring these two ideas into the roundtable discussions and address the issue.

All-inclusive and comprehensive national dialogues are an important mechanism to reach an agreement and reach a national consensus. The result of national consensus will bring sustainable peace, and this, in turn, will help to foster the national economy. The biggest issue that needs to be addressed through national consensus in Ethiopia is the modality of the country's administrative structure and putting an end to the extreme options floating for several decades. The economic and other issues I

hope can be addressed within a normal government operation rather than national consensus (*KILE, 1, 2022*).

Historical narratives about Ethiopian state-building are one of the major national issues that should be addressed through the planned national dialogue. Having a common understanding of history and historical narratives is very important to bring sustainable peace to Ethiopia. This can be achieved through national dialogue. The past and the way it's transferred to the current generations have multiple impacts. It has both positive and negative impacts. Positive and correct historical narratives have the potential to create unity and togetherness. On the other hand, historical narratives based on false sources or written in an unbalanced way would foster conflicts and also endanger the existence of common states. Historical narratives that are written based on facts and in a balanced manner would strengthen the people's relationships in the state. Studies show that the conflict in Liberia has its origin in the history and founding of the modern Liberian State (TRC, 2009).

Historical narratives were the causes of conflicts in different times and places. One of the major factors in current ethnic-based conflicts is also driven by these kinds of historical narratives. Historians and politicians have been writing Ethiopian history from different perspectives. However, the way these historical books were written was controversial and debatable, and also prejudiced. Some consider that the narratives are biased and do not show the past historical injustices and brutalities. It only glorifies the good deeds of the kings and their regimes. It doesn't show how those kings were exploiting and discouraging the identity, culture, history, language, and religion of other peoples in the Ethiopian empire. Different state-building narratives are sources of bloody conflicts in different parts of the world.

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

There are also the same narratives in the southern parts of Ethiopia. In contrast to this narrative, Menelik II is revered as a hero in Ethiopia's north (*KIPP, 4, 2022*).

Many Ethiopians don't know the truth, especially when it comes to our history. What passes for facts is what the government has carefully selected. Ethiopia's history is better recorded than any in Africa, yet for over 30 years now Ethiopians have been exposed to a distorted and invented history of its people. They are fighting amongst themselves about history that has been created by politicians to serve a specific agenda. It would seem that many are unaware that history is being rewritten. The new generation does not read, cannot read, or does not have access to historical facts. It accepts what the leaders of the various factions are telling them. Now the truth is being lost (Dawit, 2021).

Ethiopian histories contribute to a decisive role in ethnic tensions. People of any country have both dark and bright sides to history. Unfortunately, politicians have been exploiting the dark side of our history to gain political support by demonizing others. On the other hand, there is a need for intensive research to rewrite if there are distorted realities. National reconciliation is critically important to rectify our conflicting histories. There is a need for the implementation of national projects which promote unity, equal economic benefits, and opportunities (*KIA 3, 2022*).

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

3.2.3 Socio-cultural Issues

Socio-cultural issues have been the cause of conflict and disagreements in Ethiopia for years. Because of different social and historical fabrics, Ethiopian societies have been deeply divided among different groups and factions. The differences in socio-cultural issues are very broad, but this part of the analysis identifies and addresses the major socio-cultural issues that need to be addressed to overcome democratic political transition and particularly sustainable peace. Consequently, the planned national dialogue agenda must address major socio-cultural issues. Conflicts are erupting many times in different parts of the country and costing the lives of many individuals. Due to the absence of a culture of tolerance and harmoniously living together is becoming challenging. Once conflict erupts in one place, it immediately changed to ethnic or religious conflicts and devastates lots of things. Through national dialogue and having intensive discussions, we should identify what erodes the culture of tolerance and how increasing the tolerant generation is essential to bring sustainable peace and strength to our relationship.

Ethiopian peoples were living together for a long period peacefully and tolerantly. However, this culture of peace and tolerance is decaying from time to time in line with the current political development in Ethiopia. Stereotypes, generalization, and discrimination are some of the causes of conflicts in Ethiopia. People who were living together are killing each other. The atmosphere of revenge and brutality is surrounding the country's environment. The bad perception toward each other should be solved through national consensus as soon as possible (*KPOM, 2022*).

On the other hand, socio-cultural issues such as political culture, the culture of tolerance, and promoting cultural identity are major issues that should be solved and addressed through national dialogue. Deep and genuine discussions on how to improve our political culture and how to increase our social cohesion would foster the reform underway, and sustainable peace should be the main concern of the intended national dialogue. Apart from the democratic political culture, there is a culture of disrespecting our common icons, including national events and national heroes. We have a culture of dishonoring our common heroes and national icons. We focus on our differences rather than our common history and good times. Having a bad perception of each other should be discussed and addressed. Having debates and

discussions on these issues will bring national consensus and help us stand together as one nation.

The country needs to have a common hero or national events like Adwa's victory. Our common national events or heroes can be a symbol of our unity in diversity. Besides, there are controversial issues regarding Ethiopian history. Their controversy is between 3000 and 100 years old in Ethiopian history. Discussing and debating the history of Ethiopia is very important to stretch the national consensus (*KIG 1, 2022*).

Political culture is a major socio-cultural issue that needs open discussions and debates. Our culture of imagining politics should be changed. In our political history, we prefer killing each other for the sake of power rather than peaceful political participation. Exploitation and political participation based on conspiracy were our political culture for many decades. Ethiopia as a country loses so many young political leaders and individuals who envision a prosperous Ethiopia because of the conspiracy political culture. This issue needs special concern and attention. The public should discuss and debate the issues of how to change and improve this culture of democratic bargaining.

The planned national dialogue should address major national issues, by intending to resolve deep-rooted political crises and conflicts, and lead countries into political transitions said the political party leader. From these major national issues, the issues of creating a national identity and creation of the platform to how national and ethnic identities can process parallel. The main agendas of the national dialogue should focus on common challenges that every Ethiopian faces, not only concentrate on particular, group-based grievances (*KIPP,1, 2022*).

3.3 The role of different stakeholders in the national dialogue

In theory, national dialogues are supposed to be inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation platforms that aim to resolve deep-rooted political crises and conflicts and lead countries into democratic political transitions. National dialogues typically involve principal national elites, including the government and the largest armed or unarmed opposition parties,

and occasionally the military. Other groups who participate include those representing wider constituencies such as civil society, women, youth, business, and religious or traditional actors. The wider population is often indirectly included through broader consultation processes. To maximize the dialogue's potential to address the real drivers of conflict; all key interest groups should be invited to participate. The initial decisions on the shape and structure of a national dialogue and, in particular, who is invited to participate, can be as intensely political as the dialogue itself. So, before the process and consultative preparatory phase, there should be critical analysis to identify who will participate (Murry, 2016).

National dialogue in Ethiopia should allow for the expression of divergent viewpoints. It must be inclusive, and all main stakeholders should come together and explore critical national issues to arrive at a shared and sustainable political settlement. Visions of the future that exist in the country also depend on the agreement of the future. 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 (*KIPP, I, 2022*).

3.3.1. Political Parties

Political parties play a pivotal role during the transition in providing the vehicles to mediate between different shades of political opinion, aggregate public opinion, and provide policy alternatives for governing. Effective and well-functioning political parties can serve as a safety valve by which social tensions and frustrations can be channeled through peaceful means. Political parties provide opportunities for social cohesion, minimize the possibilities of open conflict, and facilitate a peaceful resolution of conflict in multinational federations. Political parties are the primary means of representing public concerns and are crucial in the negotiation of new political structures. The political parties' performance will be critical in the establishment of the quality and durability of the new political settlement.

Democratic transitions need to involve fully tolerant, inclusive, orderly, and public-minded political parties. Elite consensus, meanwhile, reduces the likelihood that a political party will

use ultranationalist claims to gain the upper hand over rivals. However, in the case of Ethiopia, there is no tacit agreement between the government and opposition on the most appropriate reform measures. The relationship between political parties is often characterized by suspicion and antagonism, which often led to a destructive and violent engagement. In addition to the absence of common interests shared by the political elites, political stability also rested on a lack of a spirit of compromise between the government and opposition political parties (Ayenew, 2021).

Yoseph (2020), claims that weak political parties are obstacles to the 2018 political transition in Ethiopia to ensure a democratic political transition. The political opposition lacks a clear vision, and their failure to stand behind stated goals and hold their leaders to account has left these groupings without a solid support base. Instead of seizing and making maximum use of political openings that come along once in a generation, the opposition often engages in personal squabbles, spouts ethnic and territorial rhetoric, and pursues parochial interests. They are often not clear-eyed about the immensely asymmetrical nature of the power relationship between them and the government and fail to pursue political tactics responsive to that reality. They are overly focused on power-sharing arrangements with the government, rather than on efforts to secure institutional reforms that will ensure free democratic discourse and competitive elections. Opposition political party leaders also confirmed that effective national dialogue is also determined by the level of democratic political parties. It is time for a national dialogue among political parties to detach from the vicious circle of old-fashioned political conspiracy among the political elites and political parties.

As the main actors incorporated with other main stakeholders, Ethiopian political parties play significant roles in the planned national dialogue in different ways. Thus, the important thing is to identify agendas that the national dialogue should address to resolve deep-rooted conflict and war in Ethiopia. Political parties are responsible for providing constructive ideas for the discussion table to address the question of the interests of society rather than using national dialogue as an instrument to fulfill their political interests. All political parties should come to the table with the positive intent to compromise polarized views through logical argumentation by providing rational evidence and strong arguments. They should accept the principle of a good argument

in the dialogue process, make constructive comments, and try to tolerate their differences (*KIAI*, 3, 2022).

Generally, from the collected data, political parties in Ethiopia should play a significant role in breaking from the previous undemocratic political culture. Ethiopian political elites should abolish the following undemocratic political culture and when both ruling and opposition political parties come into a discussion, they should abolish this undemocratic political culture: politics of enmity, conspiracy, lack of positive will to listen to and respect each other's ideas, and understanding another idea by distorting the original idea and using the distorted idea for political interest. However, Ethiopian political parties, both opposition and ruling, should prioritize the interests of society; they should try to come up with accommodating, compromising polarized and extreme perspectives.

3.3.2 Media

The weakness of the media, which is the oxygen of democracy, is another challenge to the democratic political transition process. Both the private and public media in Ethiopia have become weak in loudly and impartially exposing immediate, timely, and important information to the public. Rather, polarization grows gradually, and, implicitly, private media means becoming an opposing government while public media means disseminating the government's good side. In this way, the promised development of the media following the promulgation of freedom of expression and the press under article 29 of the FDRE constitution fails to contribute to the realization of the democratization process in Ethiopia as expected (Shimelis, 2017).

Still, to address the problem of democracy and the democratization process in Ethiopia, the media should play a vital role. The National Dialogue Commission Chairperson, Professor Mesfin Araya, said national dialogue is a vital step to addressing differences of opinions and disagreements among various political and opinion leaders. Though the commission is tasked with resolving differences and disagreements through broad-based inclusive public dialogue that engenders national consensus, the role of the media and communication in this regard is vital as media organizations can reach the grassroots level. Since the role of the media is to

disseminate truth, knowledge, brotherhood, cooperation, and peace in various native languages and mother tongues, its role is crucial in trying to make the commission a success.

The media play a supportive role as the right hand of the facilitator of the dialogue process by informing the public and the international community. All types of media, including print, broadcast, and online, have an irreplaceable role in the successful national dialogue in Ethiopia. The primary role of different types of media is to disclose information about the entire process of dialogue. Both private and public media should be very critical to identifying the root cause of conflict by involving the local investigation and pointing to studied experience for the public as well as for the direct participants in the dialogue (KIJH, 2, 2020).

The use of the media for promoting key information messaging presents a powerful opportunity; "needs-based" information, for instance, aims to provide credible public interest information ranging from conflict resolution to mass health campaigns and disseminates specifically designed messaging using conventional journalism, advertising, or even mass entertainment, such as soap operas or songs. Quality journalism, notably radio and television programs, such as the BBC's "New Home, New Life" in Afghanistan, has proved highly effective in keeping local populations informed. It has been used effectively in many other conflicts or post-conflict situations around the world, such as Benin and Somalia (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

The Prevalence of Media Extremists Among others, one of the major challenges that hamper the journey of political reform is the presence of extremist groups who disseminate their pseudo propaganda to escalate the difference between preaching peaceful existence via electronic and non-electronic media. The hate speech was repeatedly written via social media and prompted one ethnic group to stand over the other. As a result, enacting hate speech laws in the media and convincing extremists to calm down and refrain from hate speech is a challenge for the reform (Worku & Epram, 2020).

The mass media should work towards the creation of awareness of the commonalities of the Ethiopian people rather than preaching about their differences that lead to tension by disseminating fake news. The media are also key actors in the dialogue process by creating much discussion about the process by engaging different stakeholders. By thus discussing with the public, the facilitator or the commission of the process will find constructive ideas, comments, and subjects to create a cooperative process to correct mistakes and hindrances (*FGD 2, 2022*).

3.3.3. Government

The government plays the decisive dual role of creating an enabling environment and actively participating. It should take the lead in demonstrating its commitment, sincerity, and readiness to participate in and support the implementation of recommendations that come out of the national dialogue. Incorporating different participants to ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the process is a task that is incumbent on the government.

As one competitive political party leader said,

The situation in Ethiopia could only benefit from a new genuine all-inclusive national dialogue process if and only if the government is not intervening in the mandate of the convener and the entire process of the national dialogue to impose agendas. For obvious reasons, the government should not influence a national dialogue process and cannot be a convener. Nor should it have any role in the selection of the participants in the national dialogue. If the national dialogue process was organized, run, and managed by the government, the dialogue could be described as a government monologue. It is very risky if the government tries to impose its agenda on the proceedings and leaves almost no room for other stakeholders' input into the process. A few pre-consultations were held, but they functioned as more of a smokescreen as everything had already been decided in advance (*KIPP, 2, 2022*).

The 2018 political transition in Ethiopia was challenged by the absence of the rule of law. The federal and regional governments cannot ensure the rule of law. Even the federal and regional

governments themselves are part of the problem because, for this reason, mob justice has prevailed in the country. Many innocents were killed and displaced, and their right to movement was mitigated. As a result, people began to pine for the old ruling system. At least there is relative peace. So, ensuring the prevalence of the rule of law is a challenge of reform that requires much (Worku, 2022).

The government of Ethiopia should play a vital role by respecting its obligation. The government should respect the rule of law and resolve security issues for the whole country. To have an effective national dialogue process, there should be stable, peaceful political conditions in the country, so the government is responsible for managing conflict and violence. Because if there is the absence of the rule of law and the domination of the rule of man, the public will lose access to the role of dialogue and the dialogue will lose legitimacy (KIA, 1, 2022).

Based on the collected data, the role of the Ethiopian government cannot be a convener, nor should it have any role in the selection of the participants of the National Dialogue for obvious reasons. The government shouldn't restrict freedom of speech and should provide the political space for discussion without any frustration from participants. National Dialogue cannot take place in a country that routinely imprisons activists, journalists, and anyone perceived to be anti-establishment. To this end, the Ethiopian government should work to maintain the rule of law, mitigate ethnic and religious tensions, and provide space for open dialogue on the country's deep-seated political culture, such as a winner-take-all political system and the mindset that an enemy of my enemy is my friend. In doing so, the government must work to ensure the creation of a free and fair environment for the upcoming national dialogue.

3.3.4. Civil societies

Civil society plays a crucial role in peacemaking and constitution-making as well as political reform processes, often making it an important player in national dialogues. Civil society plays an important role in the national dialog process by initiating it; the dialogue is the first and most important one. Kenya's vigorous civil society played an 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. Civil society actors sustained the pressure for a political settlement by disseminating information and analysis to the public while providing regular briefings to the panel and the international community (Sanghrajka, 2021).

Including civil society organizations will enhance public support for the peace process by introducing greater public involvement in the process, which increases its legitimacy, accountability, and public perception in the national dialogue process. At the table, civil society organizations can act as a counterweight to the interests of political elites, ensuring that broader public concerns are addressed. Furthermore, the presence of some civil society organizations could help to temper or engage potential spoilers. Furthermore, civil society can generate local knowledge and a deep contextual understanding of the barriers and opportunities to peacemaking at the local level, allowing civil society groups to have an impact by initiating or supporting bottom-up processes and encouraging societal ownership of the peace process (*KPPO, 3, 2022*).

The inclusion of clan elders and religious leaders proved important when there was a political stalemate because such individuals are more widely accepted as mediators and can also transcend clan divides to apply pressure on different groups. In addition, the included religious leaders and clan elders embrace a customary role in social reconciliation initiatives, and they have supported forms of reconciliation that have included women. For example, married Somali women have a traditional mediation role given that they can be members of both their father's clan and their husband's clan, which they have used to push for peaceful solutions (Paffenholz et al., 2017). National reconciliation, consensus, and dialogue do not occur naturally or through a mere desire to have them; instead, they require active efforts and planned interventions that include active involvement in The efforts of different civil societies and joining an organization (MIND) or Political Parties' Joint Council, Destiny Ethiopia, and YehasabMa'ed (the plate of ideas) in concert with the Ministry of Peace, plans a national

dialogue initiative dubbed Multi-stakeholder Initiative for National Dialogue (MIND-Ethiopia) shouldn't be undermined.

The legitimacy of the national dialogue will increase by including civil society. Civil society and its organizations enforce the dialogue process to address the entire Ethiopian people's problems apart from political interests and prioritizing the culture of democracy. Including them will increase the degree of the credibility of the process. To bring contentious issues to the table and discuss them one by one to create a common understanding step by step led by civil society, MIND aims to build confidence in the concept of dialogue among participants. An inclusive national dialogue could help MIND strengthen its attempts to resolve challenges to peace and security (*KIA, 3, 2022*).

Women are included in National Dialogues either as a distinct group or as delegates in the same capacity as their male counterparts. In the first scenario, women are formal representatives of women's organizations or delegates for networks and coalitions. In other cases, women are participants just like men. They are selected to be part of their delegation by political party, governmental delegation, or civil society by the same selection criteria as male delegates. However, their selection is often positively influenced by a quota. Aware of this, gender quotas, either encouraging or binding delegations to select a certain percentage of women, as well as independent women's delegations, have been implemented in some national dialogues, such as in Afghanistan (both dialogues), Nepal, and Yemen. While women's participation has been accepted in cases where they have had traditional authority and experience in conflict resolution, their participation has been challenged by the main political parties in most national dialogues (*Paffenholz et al., 2017*).

Including women and youth in peace and conflict resolution is very important because they actively exist in a situation of conflict. The most important effect of women's engagement in peace processes is not just greater attention to gender-related elements in the deliberations and the text of peace agreements, but a shift in dynamics, a broadening of the issues discussed, increasing the chances of community-buy and addressing root causes, and greater pressure on the parties to reach an agreement or go back to the negotiating table when the talks have faltered (*KIG, 4, 2022*).

However, including women is not sufficient in the discussion of participants but also in the whole process of dialogue. Even though the NDC in Yemen made efforts to include participants beyond the political power centers, particularly through the inclusion of women, who had traditionally been excluded from political decision-making, and young people, who had been the most active members of the protest movement, the conference allocated 20% of the seats to youth delegates and 30% to women. They consisted of independent individuals and party supporters with different political orientations. While the central political bargain was still negotiated by small groups of core political actors, many of the recommendations from the National Dialogue conference touched upon the war-to-peace transition and wider considerations of development, civil rights, and provisions for female participation in government and security sector reform (Gaston, 2014).

Women should be active participants in both inclusion mechanisms, either by being as independent individual delegates or as party supporters like men. They must include the whole process of national dialogue. Women must be included in the preparatory process, dissection-making process, or implantation stage. In the case of Ethiopia's intended national dialogue, the role of women should be critically considered as participants in some political groups, as civil society members, and importantly, as an influential segment of society. However, the mere presence of women at the discussion table does not, per se, increase their influence on the process. Experiences of some national dialogues show that the simple inclusion of women in the national dialogue is not a sufficient condition for the success of the national dialogue, as other participants' women must participate in decision-making power in the implementation stage as well (KIA, 2, 2022).

In Somalia (Djibouti), the agreement reached in the National Dialogue failed in the implementation phase, leading to the reoccurrence of violence. Despite this development, the women's coalition (Sixth Clan) continued their work within Somali politics, and in 2004, their leader, Asha Haji Elmi, became the first woman in the history of Somalia to sign a peace agreement after Eldoret/Mbagathi National Dialogue. As such, the unexpected benefit of the Djibouti process was the empowerment of the women's coalition to take on an influential role

in the subsequent Eldoret/Mbagathi process and Somalia's political sphere more broadly (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

Women will influence dialogues directly from the negotiation table, or through other inclusive platforms such as consultations or commissions. And apart from their direct contribution to the dialogue process additionally including women will empower women and increase the sense of ownership of the process and implementation (*FGD, 2.2022*).

From civil organizations, traditional fathers and religious fathers are also significant contributors to the national dialogue process in different dimensions. The inclusion of traditional elders and religious leaders proved important when there was a political stalemate because such individuals are more widely accepted as mediators and can also transcend clan divides to apply pressure on different groups. In addition, the included religious leaders and traditional elders embrace a customary role in social reconciliation initiatives and they have supported forms of reconciliation that have included women. For example, married Somali women have a traditional mediation role given that they can be members of both their father's clan and husbands' clan, which they have used to push for peaceful solutions (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

Religious leaders and institutions can offer to promote peace and reconciliation in a national dialogue. They consider it a moral warrant for opposing injustice on the part of governments. They can have a unique influence on promoting reconciliation among conflicting parties, including an ability to dehumanize situations that have become dehumanized throughout protracted conflict; the capability to mobilize community, nation, and international support for a peace process; the ability to follow through locally in the wake of a political settlement; and a sense of calling that often inspires perseverance in the face of major, otherwise debilitating, obstacles (*KIA, 2, 2022*).

Trade unions are also other main stakeholders identified through collected data, secondary and primary data will play important role in the dialogue process. Tunis national dialogue was a good example of the active participation of Trade unions. A quartet of four civil society

organizations was most powerful of which was the Tunisian General Labor union (UGTT) invited all sides to participate in its national dialogue and find common ground. Most parties accepted and signed a roadmap that identified key goals and a timeline provided by UGTTs. Credibility was enhanced by the fact that the organizations were formally independent of the political parties and was not perceived to be under foreign influence. By enhancing the bargaining leverage of secular groups while serving as the ultimate arbiter between those groups and their Islamist rivals, the UGTT and its partners helped break a dangerous stalemate. For this remarkable achievement, the Quartet was awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize (Murry,2021&).

Two local civil society groups were instrumental in building the momentum for mediating the crisis civil society actors (including civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, women's groups, youth groups, the media, and the business community) also had diverse motivations. Elders, through the traditional Ethiopian system of mediation and dispute resolution known as *shmingling*, and organizations such as the Inter-Religious Council can play a useful role in pursuing consensus on this highly sensitive issue.

Including traditional and religious fathers in the conflict resolution mechanism and mediation process for a country like Ethiopia which is a religious and traditionally rich society will play an irreplaceable role. Religious and traditional fathers are much respected, and they consider neutral and credible mediators apart from, biases and prejudices. The national dialogue process should include neutral bodies like traditional and religious fathers. Including them in the direct dialogue process or through other inclusive platforms such as consultations or commissions is beneficiary because they influence antagonist groups to omit dialogues negotiation tables and resolve their problem peacefully (*KIPO, 3, 2022*).

3.3.5 External Actors

Kestement claims that (2018) external actors can play a constructive and effective role in national dialogue processes if they develop a strong relationship with the country involved in a national dialogue and have considerable influence in the region, which can help to pressure conflict parties into participating in national dialogues fairly and sustainably. Additionally,

they will expand connections with civil society organizations and opposition parties, which can strengthen their facilitating role and bring various actors to the table. External actors also provide financial support to help the national authorities ensure the provision of basic services to the population. Without attention to such services, national dialogue processes can lose legitimacy. Providing technical support and expertise to reduce power asymmetries and ensure participants with inadequate training and know-how can act on equal footing with other parties' external actors will enhance the success of national dialogue.

External actors will support the dialogue process by pressuring conflict parties to accommodate their differences and provide a considerable outcome for the success of national dialogue in Ethiopia. They will provide financial support to help the national authorities ensure the provision of basic services to the population. Without attention to such services, national dialogue processes can lose legitimacy. Additionally, external actors from different levels will offer technical support and expertise to reduce power asymmetries and ensure participants with inadequate training and know-how can act on equal footing with other parties (*KIA, 4, 2022*).

During the Kenyan National Dialogue, the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by Kofi Annan, mediated the dialogue between the two major parties. The Union Panel's skilled negotiators mediated between the two conflicting parties throughout 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 (Murry, Stigant, 2021).

3.4 Identifying factors affecting national dialogue in Ethiopia

Among national dialogue studies and practical experiences, the success of national dialogue will depend on the existing political condition of the country and the national dialogue design and process. The political context in which a national dialogue takes place can affect the likelihood of success or failure of the national dialogue. The key factors include political will; links to other transitional processes; common ground among parties; public buy-in; learning from experience; and the role of external actors and national ownership. Alongside political context factors, the design of a national dialogue shapes the level of representativeness and the

distribution of power within the process. The key process factors include the degree of inclusion and participation; representation and selection criteria; objective and scope-setting; institutional framework and support structures; the role of authority figures; decision-making procedures; confidence-building measures; and provision for implementation (Haider, 2019). By taking this secondary and primary data analysis and practical experience of national dialogues, in the following discussion part, the researcher identifies factors that will affect the success of Ethiopian intended national dialogue.

3.4.1 National Dialogue Process

3.4.1.1 The Degree of Inclusion and Participation

The degree of inclusiveness, and the extent to which different political actors and segments of society are included, significantly shapes whether stakeholders view the national dialogue as a valid way in which to address their grievances and aspirations (Blunck et al., 2017). The majority of informants also confirmed that the degree of inclusion and participation of key actors will influence the success or failure of Ethiopia's planned national dialogue. The vast majority of literature on national dialogues also emphasizes that the transformative potential of such dialogues can only be realized if they are genuinely inclusive of society as a whole.

To resolve deep-rooted political crises and conflicts and lead countries into political transitions, the intended national dialogue in Ethiopia is expected to be inclusive, broad, and participatory. The national dialogue must include each stakeholder who can contribute to the success of the process. So the principal national elites, including the government and the largest (armed or unarmed) opposition parties, and occasionally the military, should be involved. The wider population must often be indirectly included through broader consultation processes. Other groups that participate include those representing wider constituencies such as civil society, women, youth, business, and religious or traditional actors (*KIA, I, 2022*).

In intending national dialogue in Ethiopia, the issue of inclusion and participation of armed groups like TPLF and OLF is very controversial. Various groups expressed polarized views on including armed groups. Some informants argued that the exclusion of armed groups, such as the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), from the process might deem it a

failure from the start. However, for other groups, the exclusion of armed and terrorist groups like TPLF and OLF is not an obstacle to the success of the national dialogue.

Inclusion is important in the planned national dialogue process, and broad-based consultations are necessary if people are to feel they are represented in both the process and the outcomes of the dialogue. Why because if critical participants are excluded from the process, the credibility and legitimacy of the process will be reduced. In this context, it is impossible to define the process currently underway in Ethiopia as a genuine national dialogue. By excluding the TPLF and OLA from the planned national dialogue, the government can't achieve sustainable peace and lead the country into a negotiated political transition (*KIPP, 3, and 2022*).

Yet, for some groups, the national dialogue's success is not tied to the participation of armed groups actively fighting the federal government like OLF and TPLF, but rather their exclusion can help the process succeed. The exclusion of armed groups like OLF and TPLF is not an obstacle to the success of the problem. Several religious leaders as well as cultural and business elites have tried to resolve the political disagreements between the TPLF, OLA, and the federal government through diplomacy and civil discussions. The government even pushed for the formation of a commission of national reconciliation back in 2018 to listen to the grievances of ethnic groups and end ethnic violence. All these efforts failed, primarily because Tigrayan elites refused to acknowledge the government's authority in any shape or form. Groups like the TPLF and OLA not only refused to engage in any meaningful negotiation or dialogue but took up arms against the federal government, leading to the devastating events of the last 14 months (Yohannes, 2022).

Inclusiveness is not a one-time issue and ends in one dialogue stage but also it proceeds in all national dialogue processes: in the preparatory, process, and implementation phases. Inclusivity relates to 'process inclusivity' (the level of societal and political representation) in the preparatory and actual dialogue phases; and to 'outcome inclusivity' (the level of inclusiveness created by the national dialogue's outputs) in the post-national dialogue/implementation phase (Planta et al., 2015).

National dialogue in Ethiopia should include main stockholders in all stages. Inclusiveness will increase the degree of legitimacy of the entire national dialogue process. If there is the question of inclusiveness in the first stage of the national dialogue, the issue of ownership also comes into question. Because if some groups consider that they didn't express their ideas, they may feel that the process is an instrument for some groups' manipulation and imposition of their interests (*KIPP, 3, and 2022*).

From the initial stage, the inclusiveness of selection conveners and proclamation content of the national dialogue in Ethiopia failed under criticism. From the start, the national dialogue is not inclusive of opposition political parties and other major stakeholders, and this undermines the demand for discussion and the inclusion of their comments on the draft proclamation.

The government completely disregards the role of political parties and the principles of inclusion and participation, which are the cornerstones of successful national dialogue and without reaching any form of consensus, the parliament went ahead and approved the proclamation. Such exclusion undermines the process. Major stakeholders have been denied the opportunity to assist in drafting the proclamation and nominating the commissioners. This sidelines the ideals that those who have been excluded and the public who support them have embraced for years. This is a damaging repeat of past failures in a country where political exclusion by the incumbent has been a norm (*KIPP 1, 2022*).

The principle of inclusiveness is a demographically important issue and should be added. Thus, the question of including women and youth is dominant. Women and youth are the social groups that take a lion's share of the population, so the planned national dialogue should include women and youth in all stages. The role of women seems undermined in the initial stages of the process. This is a criticism raised by the leader of political parties in Ethiopia. Ethiopian women's groups advocated early on for a gender quota to be included in the law establishing the commission. When this failed, they called for the selection process to nevertheless ensure equal representation, for women's organizations to be

represented in the nomination process, and for them to have the opportunity to participate in the screening process. None of this happened either.

Not long after, a coalition of Ethiopian women's organizations issued a joint statement calling for the meaningful representation of women in the new body. Yet when the lawmakers narrowed the pool of 632 potential commission members, who were nominated by the public, to 42, only 4 women remained. The final list of 11 commissioners includes 3 women. The prospect of a male-dominated commission when there is no shortage of competent women indicates major flaws in the selection process. This should be addressed before the commission proceeds with its work (*KIPP, 2, 2022*).

3.4.1.2 Objective and Agenda scope-setting

Setting the objective and agenda of national dialogue is a very critical issue that needs adequate preparation because the objective and agenda of national dialogue are the nucleus of the whole process. It is important to avoid overburdening mandates and agendas. A key consideration for the national dialogue process should be to avoid overburdening agendas. While it is often the case that during times of transition, a whole range of topics about state reform seems important, tabling all items for discussion would raise expectations that cannot be met by a time-bound national dialogue. Rather, agenda items should be feasible and doable in the limited time frame (Blunck et al., 2017).

There should be a pre-dialogue to consult stakeholders and to raise views on the central issues to be addressed. These consultations should also inform the dialogue's design. The design of the dialogue needs to consider structure and rules; the core agenda; criteria for determining the participants, who may include, but not be limited to, political parties and armed groups; seating arrangements; and a realistic timeline, all outlined in an implementation roadmap. A sound communications strategy is vital to build and maintain trust, publicize progress, address dis- and misinformation and where necessary, change behavior (Emebet, Mehari & Yohannes, 2021).

The objectives, agenda, and scope of the dialogue must reflect the prevailing national imperatives and evolve within a wide consultation process. However, care must be taken not

to tackle too many issues and there must be a balance between the breadth of the mandate and its efficiency. For example, the issues could be categorized as either short or long term. In Ethiopia, a national dialogue could meet both these short- and long-term objectives. Reasons for instituting such a process range from addressing immediate issues such as emerging political violence and instability. National dialogue in Ethiopia could be justified for at least four inter-related reasons. The first refers to the need for a short-term, narrow, substantive dialogue aimed at creating consensus about the transition process.

National dialogue in Ethiopia is needed to deal with both narrow as well as broad-based political predicaments. The narrow objectives could include issues like identity politics, constitutional amendment, the federal experiment, security arrangements, emerging political violence, instability, etc. while broad-based objectives may include building a new political system and developing a new social contract. The proposed national dialogue in Ethiopia could have the following short-term and long-term objectives.

Build the capacity of political parties' long term objectives by negotiating a new social contract at national and regional levels redefining state-society relations that will lead to a new level of democratic system Establishing new political institutions and establishing better security arrangements Determining the process through which reforms will take place, facilitate constitutional amendments. Short-term objectives; achieve sustainable peace and stability Building trust among political parties and other stakeholders of Ethiopian politics. Draw a road map of Ethiopia's political process. Lay the foundation for the election to get legitimacy from the voters, observers, and contending political parties (*FGD, 1, 2022*).

The objective of national dialogue is used as an instrument by different groups to fulfill some group interests than resolving the different problems in the society is very difficult. Similar to the inclusiveness of the national dialogue in the selection process of facilitators, the issue of, the objective is also debatable by some groups.

From the initial stage, the initiative of the dialogue process fails it to criticism, by believing that "national dialogue" can be nothing but a tactical gimmick. The primary objective of Abiy's National dialogue agenda appears to be easing the mounting diplomatic pressures on

his government. The objective of the dialogue is to decrease the international pressure and concrete measures taken particularly by the US against Abiy's government to resolve the war between TPLF and the federal government. By establishing a Commission for National Dialogue, which does not even have the mandate to initiate negotiations between warring parties, Abiy is now trying to create the false impression that he is doing something to end the violence to convince the US to lift its sanctions against his government. The second goal of the proposed dialogue is to buy time for military preparation in anticipation of a deepening civil war.

It can be challenging to strike balance between the breadth of the mandate, efficiency, and independence. While a narrower mandate can be more manageable and efficient, it can limit the room for change and may contribute to the persistence of an elite-led process. Clarity and relevance to local populations are key characteristics to adopt in deriving a suitable mandate and agenda. Addressing development issues and peace dividends at the outset can be important to the success of national dialogues (Haider, 2019).

The mandate and official status of the national dialogue should be clarified at the outset to avoid ambiguity. Suggested mandates and objectives for the Ethiopian process could include developing consensus, developing a clear framework that supports truth and reconciliation efforts, playing an advisory and, consultative role in issues of political transition, peace-building, democratization, transitional justice, and institutional reforms, and developing a roadmap and institutional framework that informs the process of amending the existing constitution (*KIPP, 1,2022*).

3.4.1.3 Representation and selection criteria

The process for the selection of delegates is one of the most important steps in organizing a national dialogue. Experience shows that the established selection criteria and procedures for participants in national dialogues can support or hinder the broad representation of different social and political groups and thus, the inclusivity and legitimacy of a national dialogue process. In Tunisia, for example, the Quartet a group of four civil society organizations brought with it historically established societal ties and broad-based acceptances that benefitted the process at large (Paffenholz et al., 2017). Transparency in the selection criteria is

significantly important, such that the public can understand how and why people got selected and see a fair chance of getting their candidates elected. In Jordan, the hand-picking of candidates gave the impression that the process is biased from the start. In Yemen, the allocation of the seats was contested and required transparent communication and elaborated mechanisms (Blunck et al., 2017).

Inclusion and neutrality alone cannot guarantee a legitimate and successful National Dialogue. The stakeholders and the public at large need transparency. Transparency is paramount at every step of the process. If the selection process was not participatory, inclusive, or transparent the legitimacy of the entire process will be questioned. The public does not know how exactly the public allegedly nominated 632 people to the commission nor how 42 were shortlisted before parliament made its selection of the final 11 commissioners. Generally, there was a lack of transparency and clarity in the selection criteria: how it would be applied, how civil society would participate, and how the process would be managed (*KIPP, 3, 2022*).

Major selection criteria should be technical intelligence, an in-depth understanding of Ethiopian politics, a known track record of integrity, and no current active political roles or ambitions that might interfere with the integrity of the national dialogue. A rigorous consultative and transparent vetting process is essential. Conveners must be endowed with political, administrative, and financial autonomy independent from executive control and oversight. One suggested option for convening a national dialogue in Ethiopia is that an association of conveners is selected, comprising key religious figures and organizations, CSO representatives, universities, and think tanks (*KIPO, 1, 2022*).

Rahel Bafe, chairwoman of the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council (EPPJC), a coalition of more than 50 opposition groups, said the Prosperity Party is approaching the dialogue as the arbiter of the process, rather than as another equal stakeholder against whom accusations will eventually be leveled. She is critical of the selection process that appointed the national dialogue's 11 commissioners. They were chosen on 21 February from a 42-person short-list issued by parliament, which was itself based on a longer list of 623 candidates. Rahel says the selection process for the commissioners was "not clear" and claims that opposition parties were not consulted. Others see the final 11 commissioners as mostly sympathetic to Abiy's

government, a perception that prompted one observer to describe the national dialogue as “an intra-party negotiation within the ruling Prosperity Party that will not resolve the country’s intractable political debates.

The composition of the national dialogue commissioners is inadequate and apart from the principle of inclusiveness. But the initial stage of the process is not adequately composed of important and main stakeholders even if the selected commissioners are technocrats and very intelligent and, experienced. At least, civic organizations and well-respected religious, and traditional, nationally respected individuals should include. If the composition is inclusive the legitimacy of the dialogue will increase and public ownership also increases. Additionally, the memberships of the politically affiliated individual directly or indirectly will challenge the legitimacy of the commissioners. If the members are a participant in previous existing politic the participant who comes to the table for discussion will not as such comfortable raising their ideas, by believing there will be political affiliation. Because of this the dialogue process will fail on disagreement by loss of legitimacy (*KIPP, 4, 2022*).

3.4.1. 4 credible conveners and facilitators

To secure the participation of a wide variety of stakeholder groups and to avoid perceptions of bias, a credible convener is of the utmost importance. This convener may take the form of a single person, a group of people, an organization, or a coalition of organizations. The convener should be respected by the majority of citizens and should not have any political aspirations or goals that would present an obvious conflict of interest. Recent processes in Tunisia and Senegal owe much of their success to the credibility of the conveners. In Tunisia’s 2013–14 national dialogue, four civil society organizations the general workers union (UGTT)³, the employers union (UTICA), the Tunisian Bar Association, and the Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH) served as the convening entities. With long-standing moral authority and broad constituent bases, this coalition of organizations was seen as credible by a significant proportion of the Tunisian population (Murry, 2016).

Select neutral conveners are important the need for neutral, legitimate, and able conveners or facilitators cannot be emphasized enough. Trust between the facilitators of

a National Dialogue process and the public is a condition for the dialogue to achieve meaningful outcomes. If this trust is not established, then it can cause frustration that discredits both the current and most recent National Dialogue process, and can also create a lasting distrust that may influence future processes. A credible convener is very significant for a national dialogue to succeed; aspects must be considered. The credibility of the conveners: Public trust in who convenes a national dialogue is especially critical in a deeply polarized society like Ethiopia. The whole process depends on the integrity, impartiality, and public perception of the convener (*interview with academician,1,2022*).

Having credible conveners also enhances the legitimacy of national talks. Consultation methods, vetting, selection, and appointment of the organizers are essential to the integrity of both the process and its outcomes. Sudan and South Sudan's dialogue conveners were appointed by those countries' presidents, with limited or no consultation with opposition parties and armed groups. In Kenya's case, the organizers were the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan. This helped largely insulate the KNDR from accusations of partiality. It did however raise questions on the principle of local ownership (Dawit & Merressa, 2020).

According to the proclamation of national dialogue, commissioners are independent and neutral convener who facilitates the entire process of national dialogue. The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, an impartial and independent organ of the Federal government with its legal personalities has been established by establishing proclamation. The commission is accountable to the House of People Representatives.

The legitimacy of national dialogue depends on a convener that creates strong trust among participants by being neutral. It is a stepping-stone for consensus-building, which guarantees the process's neutrality, legitimacy, and dependability. Each of these phases reinforces or undermines the other. A commission is needed to draw a roadmap that may include rules and regulations, institutional arrangements, and objectives of the dialogue. It must consist of members of the opposition, government, civil society, international bodies, and so on (*KIPO, 3 2022*).

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 party. Thus, the commission's formation was not 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 the 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 be an 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. Mainstream media, like television, radio should play a vital role in conveying the objective, and importance of the dialogue process in ruler areas of the country, and the commission or the facilitator of the intended national dialogue process also will be transparent, and supportive of informing the public(*KIPPI*, 3,2022).

Public support or active participation of the public in the entire dialogue process will also affect by the existing pre-political condition of the country. 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 in Guatemala, the threats, kidnapping, and torture committed against some participants, as well as the quickly deteriorating security situation, limited the participants'

willingness to engage openly in the dialogue and eventually led to the termination of the unfinished conference.

A satisfactory National Dialogue is highly unlikely while war is raging and major opposition leaders are sidelined or in jail. Peace is the essential precondition for a successful National Dialogue. The government of Ethiopia released several opposition leaders and activists from prison after the attorney general dropped the charges against them. The release of different opposition political parties, and other detainees, is intended to enhance and broaden the inclusivity of an envisaged national dialogue to build consensus on the country's future. But still, thousands of people remain behind bars. Government critics, journalists, and activists, have not been released (*KPPP, 1, 2022*).

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, which in its article III-19 stipulated that a national dialogue was to be organized for a "new political dispensation and national reconciliation in the DRC." 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(Harlander,2021).

The purpose of any dialogue should be to stop people from going to the battlefield and healing the wounds of war. But before that happens, first we need a ceasefire, humanitarian access to conflict areas, and the withdrawal of forces. Ethiopians cannot find common ground on the future of the country by engaging in half-hearted and exclusionary processes. Crucially, genuine dialogue cannot unfold while major armed conflicts are ongoing. The government must seek a peaceful end to the conflict with some armed groups like TPLF and OLF, and other armed groups in the country. Federal authorities stand the primary responsibility for building trust and confidence and creating the conditions necessary for a comprehensive, inclusive, and credible national dialogue (*KIA, 3,and 2022*).

Additionally, the planned dialogue should be very critical to reflect the real existing problem on the ground. This idea is confirmed by some opinion-makers and human right defender as well...

A national dialogue is the best option of all, but the condition that Ethiopian politics revolves will question the success of the process. Further, the process must account for realities on the ground, in particular, the war in Tigray and conflicts elsewhere in Ethiopia, the detentions and stuffing of critical voices in the political opposition, political prisoners, and recent violence, assassinations, and displacement will not necessarily resolve all the problems Ethiopia faces. With the existence of all of these undemocratic political conditions, the public will lose the initiation to participate, so importantly government and other main stakeholders should understand the existing situation; like humanitarian aid, security, and respect for rule of law(*KIHD,2,2022,*).

Popular discussions can help with disseminating information and receiving input feedback into the process. They are particularly important when a national dialogue seeks fundamental change. Such consultations can take place throughout the whole process (e.g. South Africa), or before (e.g. Colombia), during, and after (e.g. Mali) national dialogues (Blunck et al., 2017).

Setting discussion at local and national level is very important to disclose information about the dialogue, objective, mandate, and the process stages, identifying an agenda that needs a priority, and long and short term concerns, selection of participants, and the implementation stage to apply the final discussion. Through public discussion at a different level, the commission can take constrictive inputs for the success of dialogue, and identify the root cause need to address on the identified agendas. Importantly national dialogue must be a self-reflected process because by its nature it is more nationally owned, so to take comments, and suggestions need to correct the process and need to add additional issues will only address by public discussion, and support (*KIA, I, 2022*).

3.4.2.2 National elites' resistance or support

The attitude and behavior of national elites understood as groups in society who have a disproportionate amount of political, social, and economic power compared to the rest of the society was found to be the single most important factor influencing the chances of National Dialogues to reach and implement agreements. Their support for, or resistance to, a National Dialogue is the most crucial element before and during negotiations as well as in the implementation phase.

For decades, our social political and historical discourses have encountered major polarization of history and historical analysis. Ethiopia's identity -based political discourse that has been at the center for the last three decades has polarized history and created irreconcilable disparities in society. Historians, community leaders, and stakeholders must find an amicable way of reconciling our history and moving forward. It must be noted that elite consensus in a fragmented country like Ethiopia plays a central role in building sustainable and lasting peace. It should also be noted that these steps are not exhaustive but can provide a precursor to look ahead and start our journey to achieve sustainable peace.

All elites at the national level from this distinction should support the dialogue process in Ethiopia. The role of political elites has an irreplaceable role, by being an active participant in the process, and by providing constructive ideas that can resolve conflicts and differences. Additionally political elite should be very critical in pointing out constrictive comments, and as much as possible they should set on dialogue dissection with a positive will to respect others' idea and tries to tolerate different views. National dialogues need to be embedded in larger change processes to promote real structural change (*KIA, 5, 2022*).

The contributions of the political elites have also been the biggest and take a lion's share to decide on the fate of the country. The elites have the capabilities and potential to mobilize the people to transform the current political problem. One of the mechanisms to transform political reform is the national dialogues, consensus, and reconciliation among the political elites. However, the readiness and willingness of the political elite's sides are very low to address the major national issues through inclusive dialogues, consensus, and reconciliations. There are

willingness and readiness 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 (*KIPP,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, et.al & 2020).

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 governance 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's groups, a national dialogue is unlikely to 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 (*KIA, 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 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 (Harlander, 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 some strategic, political, and economic interest, and if their 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 appears, they may be the 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 true 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 proponent biased news which was very different from the existing truth (*KIPP*, 8, 2022).

3.4.2.5 Learning from past experience

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

to the report Institute for Security Studies (ISS) compare to national dialogues in Kenya (2008), Sudan (2014–16), and South Sudan (2017–2020). Ethiopia can take some lesson intending to draw lessons to support such a process in Ethiopia. The need for national dialogue in Ethiopia is now urgent, both to prevent crises and to help make long-term changes. Should the country opt for talks, the Horn of Africa could offer critical lessons. Experiences from the region included the importance of wide consultation in initiating the dialogue, creating a common understanding among key stakeholders on expected outcomes, and clearly defining the objectives of the process (Marissa, & Dawit, 2020).

National dialogues have benefitted from existing dialogue expertise in a country, such as experiences with local-level mediation. To bring parties together to a position of consensus Prior experience with national dialogue negotiations has also helped in terms of learning from the country's own or from other countries' successful and unsuccessful experiences and avoiding the repetition of prior mistakes. National dialogues have benefitted from dialogue expertise and learning from past national dialogues (*KIPP, 4, 2022*).

3.5 National Dialogue and Sustainable Peace Building

By addressing broad political issues such as political reforms and constitution-making processes, national dialogue provides intangible outcomes such as conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building through processes to transform their countries from fragile to stable political systems. National dialogue is a key mechanism for addressing major conflicting national issues through inclusive dialogue, forgiveness, and transitional justice and leads countries to sustainable peace and stability. Some states have successfully transformed their political systems by using national dialogue and resolving differences and conflicts through genuine dialogue and debates. In this part of the analysis, the study focused on exploring the role of the national dialogue for national consensus and reconciliation, toward sustainable peace-building in Ethiopia. Finally, the study explores the national dialogue model that should follow to consolidate consensus and reconciliation and sustainable peace-building in Ethiopia by analyzing the experience of different countries.

4.5.1, National Dialogue, and Sustainable Peace

Sustainable peace-building is the process of encouraging harmonious social relations by reducing, preventing, or changing harmful conflict and violence. Its goal is to deal with the root causes of institutional violence, injustice, and oppression. Long-term peace can only be accomplished by removing violent mechanisms inside the social fabric and recreating a culture of peace (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). National dialogues have been used to resolve political crises and pave the way for political changes and long-term peacekeeping. The national dialogue is a tool used by democratic governments to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, such as rebuilding fractured communities, political reconciliation, security sector reform, reintegration programs, and a stronger role for civil society in conflict and post-conflict situations. National dialogue also supports democracy and national unity by offering institutional means through which various ethnic groups can express their views and influence the country's political decision-making process (Cheema, 2005).

National dialogue contributes to peace-building, democratic consolidation, national consensus, and sustainable peace by rallying different parties around a discussion table to discuss and resolve their differences through inclusive dialogue. The national consensus, which is the result of inclusive and comprehensive dialogues, would foster sustainable peace, reduce the reoccurrence of violent conflicts, improve economic development, and inspire a culture of tolerance (*KIPO, 2, 2022*).

Sustainable peace-building requires the establishment of multidimensional institutions that promote a culture of peace while deterring a culture of violence. To this end, functional institutions, agencies, and organizations that champion and promote human rights and social justice play significant roles in fostering and sustaining peace. Building sustainable peace requires a kind of institution that understands violence and its multidimensional ramifications in the social structure. Furthermore, implementing functional conflict resolution strategies is an integral part of a sustainable peace-building process (Fisseha, 2022).

A committee of 11 people selected to lead the national dialogue in Ethiopia with a mandate to resolve the deep-seated challenges to move the country forward has a

responsibility to create such a functional institution. The national dialogue commission has monumental tasks to identify and rectify the multitude of challenges that would pave the way for lasting peace in the country. In this regard, some of the major tasks of the commission must understand the scope, scale, complexities, and challenges of sustainable peace-building in Ethiopia (*KIA, 5, 2022*).

Fisseha (2022) claimed that for far too long in Ethiopia, we have been utilizing dysfunctional conflict management strategies to deal with conflicts. We commonly apply coercive power in a dysfunctional manner to deal with conflict, which leads to further damage to our relationships (at personal, communal, and societal levels) and maintains the vicious cycle of violence. It should also be noted that a dysfunctional conflict resolution strategy is not capable of addressing the root causes of destructive violence. Rather, it nurtures trauma, destruction, and negative relationships among parties. Contrary to this, a functional conflict resolution strategy plays a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of violence (past and present) and fosters a culture of peace moving forward. As such, understanding, developing, and utilizing functional conflict strategies are critical in building sustainable peace. In line with tis FD participants claim that...

The national dialogue commission should facilitate what sustainable peace-building needs: a critical investigation of the causes of conflicts and violence and their multidimensional consequences at different levels of social structure. And most importantly, identifying functional conflict resolution strategies can thus address the root cause by exploring what a country needs first. It should also be noted that this process requires an ongoing, rigorous, and collective effort from the government and public and private stakeholders to succeed. Furthermore, implementing functional conflict resolution strategies is an integral part of a sustainable peace-building process(*FGD, 2, 2022*).

Sustainable peace-building needs different levels of reconciliation processes like vertical and horizontal reconciliation processes. Vertical reconciliation refers to the reconciliatory process between the government entities (local, regional, and federal) and the victims (individuals and groups who are the victims of government-perpetuated violence). In doing so, the government

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); restitution programs that seek to return dispossessed housing, land, and property; truth-telling initiatives that investigate and report on periods of past abuse; and justice-sensitive security system reform that seeks to transform the military, police, and judiciary responsible for past violations 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 peace-building 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 on-court contributes to an end to the conflict and sustains peace (Eastmond & Stefansson, 2010).

In the case of 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 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 the effect 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 county riches 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 sense of ownership of the entire process of reconciliation (*KIA,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, co-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 there can never be reconciliation without justice. 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 human beings 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 relation 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.

To overcome Ethiopia's democratic and peaceful political conditions, a genuine national dialogue process should be conducted in which major national issues should be addressed through broad debate. These major national issues are major legal, political, and socio-cultural issues. The planned national dialogue must address long-term and short-term issues concerning the FDRE constitution, federal structure, and administration, as well as historical, social, and democratic political culture. The national dialogue commission must classify national dialogue agendas based on the sensitivity of the issues that need to be addressed. The first agenda items must include issues that need a fast response, like stopping conflict and war among different groups at different levels. The second type of agenda should include very controversial and time-consuming issues and thus needs wide discussion. The issues of the constitution, federal

government arrangements, political and historical narration, and socio-cultural issues should be the focus of this category.

National dialogues in Ethiopia are supposed to be inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation platforms that aim to resolve deep-rooted political crises and conflicts and lead countries into democratic political transitions. It must include all important key players, including political parties, the government, civil society, the media, and external actors. Political parties must play a vital role in minimizing the possibilities of open conflict and facilitating a peaceful resolution of conflict by being tolerant, inclusive, orderly, public, and open-minded. Additionally, they should provide important agendas and solutions on the discussion table. The Ethiopian government should work to maintain the rule of law and not interfere with the entire process of the dialogue. Civil society is another main party that must be included in the dialogue by pressuring the conflicting parties to come to discuss and resolve their problems peacefully. External actors will support the dialogue process by pressuring conflict parties to accommodate their differences. Additionally, external actors from different levels will offer technical support.

The success or failure of national dialogue in Ethiopia will be determined by the nature of the existing political conditions and the design of national dialogue. If the political situation is fraught with conflict and violence, the public will lose interest in participating and regard the process as dysfunctional. The commission, the government, and other parties should work to keep the political situation peaceful. All elites at the national level should strive to contribute to the success of dialogue by being active participants in the entire process. The facilitator of the dialogue process must work to balance the roles of external actors and national ownership. Local ownership is crucial for the success of any national dialogue process.

The design of national dialogue will contribute to the success of the dialogue or be an obstacle to the complete process. The broad inclusion of main stakeholders in the national dialogue process will increase the legitimacy, public support, and credibility of the dialogue process. In contrast, the exclusion of interested parties will decrease the success of the dialogue. In Ethiopia, national dialogue must include the main national elites: government, armed or unarmed opposition parties, and society; women, youth, business, and religious or traditional actors; the role of

women and youth, in particular, should not be underestimated. A credible commissioner is very significant in increasing public trust and support.

National Dialogues and conflict resolution have a direct contribution to sustainable peace-building in Ethiopia. National dialogue can be used as an instrument to resolve deep-rooted conflicts among different parties by promoting genuine discussion. National dialogue can be used as a tool for conflict prevention, management, and resolution, including rebuilding fractured communities and political reconciliation. National consensus and reconciliation and national dialogue have circular relations: national reconciliation and consensus will enhance the success of national dialogue, and national dialogue will contribute to reconciling conflict parties through peaceful discussion. A national dialogue commission in Ethiopia can foster reconciliation and sustainable peace on different levels through a genuine national dialogue process. To address various crimes and grievances, the NDC must include a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) and work on transitional and restorative justice. The national dialogue commission in Ethiopia should take a lesson from the case of Rwanda and South Africa's national reconciliation process by contextualizing and using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to build sustainable peace building.

4.2 Recommendation

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

- ❖ The FDRE Constitution, government structure, the issue of building independent institutions, administration issues, the democratic culture, the national flag, emblem, and heroes' major political agendas should be addressed in the national dialogue.
- ❖ The national dialogue commission, incorporated with other main stakeholders, should work to address the issues of historical narratives, past regimes' injustices, and social cohesion. Ethnic-based extremism and socio-cultural issues must be the concerns of planned national dialogue through a participatory official national dialogue process.

- ❖ Political parties, civil society, the mainstream media, the government, and external actors must all play an important role in confirming the democratic political transition through effective national dialogue.
- ❖ Both the ruling and opposition political parties must play a significant role in the national dialogue process by being active, fully tolerant, orderly, and public and open-minded participants. When political parties come to the dialogue table, they should be willing to compromise on their differences through discussion.
- ❖ All types of media, including print, broadcast, and online, have an irreplaceable role in informing the public and the international community about the national dialogue process. The media expects to be supportive and lend a hand to the dialogue facilitator by disclosing information to the public, setting a platform for discussion, and identifying the causes of conflict through critical investigation.
- ❖ The Ethiopian government must stabilize and create peaceful political conditions suitable for genuine dialogue. The government should be committed to respecting the rule of law, maintaining peace and security issues in the whole country, ending armed hostilities between different parties, and managing conflict and violence peacefully.
- ❖ Civil society should play an important role in mobilizing local and international support for crisis-response action; civil society actors are responsible for bringing conflicting parties to the negotiating table and ending political settlement through negotiation. So the commission should be very critical of including civil society in each level of dialogue.
- ❖ Women should be included as delegates of various stakeholders and as representatives of women's organizations in the preparatory, process, and decision-making processes and implantation stages. Because including them will increase the extent to which the root cause of the conflict and its resolution are addressed. Besides, including women will increase public support and empower women by increasing the degree of women's participation in decision-making power by increasing the sense of ownership of the process and implementation.

- ❖ 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 informants and FGD participants in order to identify the role of national dialogue towards democratic political transition in Ethiopia since 2018. Specifically to identify major national dialogue agendas should include on the 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 address?
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 the role 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 is the 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	KIPP,1	Addis Ababa	Opposite political leader
2	KIPP,2	Addis Ababa	Opposite political leader
3	KIPP,3	Addis Ababa	Opposite political leader

4	KIPP,4	Addis Ababa	Opposite political leader
5	KIG,1	Addis Ababa	Government official
6	KIG,2	Addis Ababa	Government official
7	KIG.3	Addis Ababa	Government official
8	KIG,4	Addis Ababa	Government official

Key: KIPP: key informant political party leaders

KIG: key informant interview government official

Appendix 2: List of Key Informant Interview Academician

No	Code of the Interviewee	Place of Residence	Rank
1	KIA1	Addis Ababa	Researcher
2	KIA2	Wolkite	Researcher
3	KIA3	Wolkite	Lecturer
4	KIA4	Addis Ababa	Lecturer
5	KIA5	Addis Ababa	Lecturer

Key: KIA: key informant interview with Academician

Appendix 3: List of Key Informant Interview with Public opinion Makers (Civil Societies).

No	Code of the Interviewee	Place of Resident	Rank
1	KIPO,1	Addis Ababa	Activist
2	KIPO,2	Addis Ababa	Religious leader
3	KIPO,3	Addis Ababa	EIRC leader
4	KIPO,4	Addis Ababa	Activist
5	KIPO,5	Addis Ababa	Journalist
6	KIJH 4	Addis Ababa	Human right defender
7	KIJH 4	Addis Ababa	Human right defender
8	KIJH 3	Addis Ababa	Journalist
9	KILE,2	Addis Ababa	Legal expert

10	KILE 1	Addis Ababa	Legal expert
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Key: KIPO,2: key informant religious leader

KIPO3: Ethiopian Inter religious member

KIPO4:key informant Activist

KIJH:key informant Human right defender and Journalist

KIJH:key informant Legal expert