

Ethnic Decentralization and Negotiating Statehood in Urban Ethiopia: A  
Case Study of Adama and Hawassa Cities

Dissertation

zur Erlangung der Würde eines Doktors der Philosophie

vorgelegt der Philosophisch-Historischen Fakultät

der Universität Basel

Von

Demissie Ferdissa Bekele

Von Äthiopien

Nov. 2019, Basel, Switzerland

Genehmigt von der Philosophisch-Historischen Fakultät der Universität Basel, auf

Antrag von:

Professor Dr. Laurent Goetsche

Ass. Prof. Asnake Kefale

Dr. Didier Péclard

Basel, 26.November 2014

Die Dekanin Prof. Dr. Barbara Schellewald

## **STATEMENT OF THE AUTHOR**

I hereby declare that the thesis contains no materials accepted for other degrees in any other institutions, or for other purposes. It contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgements are made in the form of reference.

## Preface

This study examines the implementation of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its effects on state-society and inter-society relationships in urban areas of the country. My interest in state and its effects on society grew out of a cumulative personal experience that goes back to my childhood days. One of these relates to my family background. I am from a family who fought both for and against the foundation of the modern Ethiopian state. On the one hand, my mother's grandfather, Bareda Dhuga, was a prominent local *balabbar*<sup>1</sup> from the upper Gibe river region who in collaboration with the conquering forces of Menelik II<sup>2</sup> confronted the Italians at the battle of Adwa in 1896. In participating and sacrificing his life in the war, he contributed not only to the foundation of the country but also he inherited his family the right of ownership to land, which was decidedly meaningful to the life of the Ethiopian society in economic and social terms. Oppositely, my father's grandfather, Bay'ee Afataa, was among the local rebels who fought against the invading forces of Menelik II in 1880s. His death in the war of resistance (particularly with post-Menelik settlers) left his only son (my grandfather) posthumous, fated to suffer in the hands of the conquering forces in revenge. Such contradictory involvement of the society in state affairs have been essential in Ethiopia, even to the present; and may be taken as one of the major problems in the country's security and development processes.

Any ways, belonging to and being brought up amongst families of such contradictory background in terms of their relations with the state was of an enormous opportunity for me to be exposed early to the issues and politics of state-society and inter-society relations. Of all, it planted in my mind an interest in state- society relations, particularly a curiosity to wonder the meaning and effects of societal inclusion and exclusion from state power.

Having started this way, my interest in state-society and inter-society relations in Ethiopia, particularly in the post- 1991 context, has grown more and more fed by different encounters. One of these goes to a drastic 'social change', which took place in my elementary school town in the early 1990s- located in western part of the Oromia regional state. In those years, all of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Refers to local Oromo people who lined in the side of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century conquering forces of Menelik II; and hence were incorporated in the economic, social and administrative benefits rendered and protected by the state.*

<sup>2</sup> *Emperor Menelik II (1889 - 1913) was the one who headed the late 19<sup>th</sup> expansion of Ethiopia to South, East and West, and hence was responsible for the formation of the modern Ethiopian state.*

sudden, *Afaan Oromoo* replaced *Amharic* in schools and in towns, such as for school instruction, administration.<sup>3</sup> I also remember, an occasion in which materials written in Amharic were collected and burnt publicly, convicted as language of ‘the oppressors’. As school children, we were wondering about such developments without realizing what they really were. It was only gradually that I came to realize that the changes were the consequences of the introduction of ethnic decentralization to the country. Ever since, consciously or not, the theme of this work, which is about the effects of ethnic decentralization on state-society and inter-society relations in the country, has been in gestation in my mind.

The other encounter that inspired me to study about the political development in the post – decentralization Ethiopia relates to one of my journeys to a small town called Waliso in 2006, about 125 km to the South- West of *Finfinnee* (Addis Ababa). The aim was to visit my girl friend (now my wife) who by then was a student at Waliso Technical School. During my stay in the town for two weeks, I witnessed a sort of skirmish between the hosting Oromo community and the Guaraghe-Silte<sup>4</sup> settlers engaged in urban business activities. The Oromo community of the town complained that the Guraghe and Silte were engaged in resource plundering without meaningful return to the town’s development, such as in the form of investment. The reaction from the other side (the Guraghe and Silte business elites) was that they had no guarantee to their property to invest in the ‘alien land’.

In such an urban skirmish, what caught my attention was the diffusion of the quandary down to the household level, particularly to the family who rented a living room to my girl friend. The husband and the wife belonged to different ethnic groups - Oromo and Guraghe, respectively. Every evening, their natter and sometimes quarrel was related to the mentioned inter-ethnic skirmishes, siding with the causes (claims) of their respective ethnic groups. Indeed, it was from this moment onwards that the theme of this study began taking shape in my mind. Now has come the time to do the job.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Until this episode, the town had been known for its cultural difference from the surrounding villages, as Amharic language was widely spoken and Orthodox Christian faith professed in the town differently from the practice in the surrounding rural areas where Afaan Oromoo (Oromo language) was spoken and Waaqefannaa (Oromo religion) professed. In school, Amharic was also serving as medium of instruction.*

<sup>4</sup> *Guraghe and Silte are among the ethnic groups in Ethiopia. In the current ethnic federal arrangement of the country, they form part of the SNNPR at zonal level of self-administration. These people have been known for their engagement in urban business beyond their ethnic border.*

## **Acknowledgements**

In the course of writing this dissertation, I have been the recipient of the help of many institutions and individuals. I am thankful to all of them including those whose names I cannot mention here.

Primarily, my gratitude goes to the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR North–South) for funding this project. I am also indebted to Basel University for providing me with various academic facilities. Swiss Peace Foundation in Bern, Centre of African Studies and World Peace Academy (both in Basel) are also among the institutions I am indebted to for their various academic assistances. Wollega University, my home institution, also deserves my utmost thanks for releasing me for this study. I am also thankful to urban bureaus of Oromia and SNNP regional states, as well as city administrations of Adama and Hawassa cities for their administrative facilities in the processes of data gathering.

The help of individuals was also invaluable in the completion of this project. In particular, my thanks go to Professor Doctor Laurent Goetschel of Basel University, my main promoter, for his guidance. I really enjoyed an autonomous line of thinking under his guidance. Co-supervisors, Dr. Didier P´eclard from Swisspeace and Dr. Asnake Kefale from Addis Ababa University deserve my utmost thanks for their constructive comment and criticism on the major themes underlying this thesis. Didier’s role was more for me, and I say to him thank you again.

Still are individuals who deserve my special thanks for their contributions to this work in various ways. Berhanu Debele, coordinator of NCCR South-North of the Horn of Africa, deserves my gratitude for his keen administrative helps all along. Colleagues from my home university, the late Dr. Manoj Kumar, Mr.Ibsa Wakwaya, Mr.Mulugeta Lamessa and Mr.Fanta Ragassa had contribution in this work in many ways. Alemayehu Fayera and Monenus Hundara from Ambo University helped me in gathering relevant books and articles for which they deserve my gratitude. I would like to give thanks to Befikadu Dhaba for his comments on some chapters of this thesis. Desalegn Hedeta helped me in editing the thesis, for which I owe my utmost gratitude. I am also deeply indebted to individuals from Swisspeace foundation: Rina Aluri, Liliana Rosier, Sandra Pflunger and Tahir for their assistance in various administrative and technical issues. My thanks and respect goes to all informants who unreservedly shared their

view with me as well as to individuals who assisted me in data gathering. Some of them paid dearly with me in the processes of data collection. In their interest, I kept them all anonymous.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and deep gratitude to my family, especially to my wife Alamitu Kitessa for her special love and care for our kids: Kaayyoo, Ibsinuuf and Ilillii. I could complete this dissertation because she did everything else. Her family, Badhane Ol'ana and Kitessa Ganfure along with their whole family, took the responsibility to care of my three kids. I thank them all for their contributions. My mother and father, Kumbe Wakgari Tolera and Ferdissa Bekele Bay'e, deserve my heartfelt thanks for their love and tireless assistance throughout my academic life.

While acknowledging the inputs of the aforementioned institutions and individuals, I declare that all responsibility and errors in this work remain mine alone.

September, 2014

Final version, November, 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

*Since 1991, an ethnic-based federal form of decentralization has been in place in Ethiopia mainly as means for ethno-cultural diversity accommodation and decentralization of power, and thereby foster peace and development in the country. This study examines the implementation and effects of this new political order in multiethnic cities of the country, particularly in Adama and Hawassa cities. The study was mainly a qualitative approach, and used both primary and secondary data. Accordingly, the study reveals out that while Ethiopia's ethnic federal decentralization processes might have shown some progress at national level in terms of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation, its relevance and feasibility in urban centers appears to be problematic. In the context of the two case study cities, evidently the country's ethnic federal order fails to provide relevant and competent political designs or institutions that could accommodate the various urban identities and interests. Rather, the prevailing federal political order has resulted in the exclusion of some interests (and identities) and inclusion of some others in the two case study cities, mainly based on ethnic and political affiliation. Among others, the major causes for this were limitations in the philosophy of ethnic federal decentralization, gaps in the federal and regional constitutions, untamed power relations, historical burden, and the rural- biased national development policies of the ruling regime. Such an exclusionary nature of the country's ethnic federal order in turn has ushered in significant political changes and development in state-society and inter-society relationships in multiethnic cities. One of these was the development of societal engagement in contest and bargaining over state power, resources, symbols, identities and citizenship, or in negotiating statehood, as it is preferred to be called in this study. Such developments, the study argues, contradict the pre-1991 political culture of the country whereby state related political conflicts and negotiations had been confined mainly to the elite and national level.*

*Central to this study, therefore, is that instead of, or more importantly than state power, the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia have resulted in the 'decentralization' of conflict and bargaining over state power, resources, identities, down to the local community, which more or less are similar in both cities. In terms of development implications, the study argues that such changes may have salient meaning and implications for socio-economic and political development process in the country, especially in the long terms, since societal political awareness and engagement could be taken as prerequisite for socio-economic and political development, even for state-building processes in general. However, since the ethnic federal - induced political engagements unfold beyond the scope and even against the norms and principles of the formal institutions, it could lead to unpredictable political and security crises in the country, especially in the short term. The study, therefore, suggests the need to reinvent the country's ethnic federal political order in a way it could accommodate the various urban identities and interests, and also institutionalize the resultant conflicts of statehood. Doing that may help to expedite the development of the long-coveted democratic and inclusionary state in the country.*



# Contents

STATEMENT OF THE AUTHOR .....	iii
Preface .....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
Figures.....	xi
Tables.....	xi
Pictures .....	xi
Acronyms .....	xii
Map I: Locations of Adama and Hawassa cities within the ethnic <i>administrative division of Ethiopia</i> . .....	xiii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2 The research problem.....	4
1.3 Research objectives.....	7
1.4 Research Questions.....	8
1.5 Scope and significance of the study.....	9
1.6 Methodology of the study .....	10
1.6.1. Methodological approach.....	10
1.6.2. A Case study research design.....	11
1.6.3 Methods of data collection and analysis .....	13
1.6.4 The Case study area selection: the rationales.....	15
1.7. Organization of the study.....	17
Chapter Two.....	19
Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks .....	19
2.1. Introduction.....	19
2.2 Conceptualizing Decentralization and Ethnic federal decentralization .....	19
2.2.1 Meaning and definition of decentralization .....	19
2.2.2 Categories and forms of decentralization.....	20
2.2.3 Federal form of Decentralization (Federalist Decentralization) .....	22
2.2.4 Ethnic decentralization (ethnic federalism) .....	25
2.3 Arguments for and against federal forms of decentralization .....	27

2.3.1 Why federal decentralization? The advocate view .....	28
2.3.2 Why not federal decentralization? The critics .....	29
2.3.3 The ‘conditionalist’ perspective on the effects of ethnic decentralization.....	31
2.4 Conceptualizing multiethnic and secondary cities .....	35
2.4.1 Conceptualizing multiethnic cities.....	35
2.4.2. A contextual understanding of secondary cities.....	39
2.4.3 Accommodation of secondary cities of multiethnic composition in ethnic federalism: literature review.....	41
2.5 Negotiating Statehood.....	43
2.5.1 Defining Statehood .....	43
2.5.2 Conceptualizing Negotiating Statehood.....	53
2.6 Society-in-state as an analytical framework towards understanding state-society relationships in contemporary Africa .....	56
2.6.1 A short Review of theories of state-society relationships .....	56
2.6.2 Society-in-state synthesis as an analytical framework.....	60
2.7 Decentralization and societal engagement (in negotiating statehood) .....	68
2.7 Conclusion .....	71
Chapter Three .....	72
Ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: Historical background, Origin, Essence, and the major effects.....	72
3.1 Introduction.....	72
3.2 History of state, state-society and inter-society relationships in Ethiopia: precedents for the emergence of ethnic decentralization.....	72
3.2.1. Origin and development of the Ethiopian state: contested interpretation .....	73
3.2.2. Major effects of the evolution and development of the modern Ethiopian state .....	77
3.2.3. Some salient features of state - society relationships in Ethiopia: the pre-1991 experiences ...	83
3.2.4. Some salient features of inter – society relationships in Ethiopia: the pre-1991 experience....	95
3.3 Ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: origin, objectives, essence and effects.....	103
3.3.1. Origin and rationale of ethnic decentralization (federalism) in Ethiopia.....	103
3.3.2. Instituting ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: processes and consequences .....	107
3.3.3. Some basic features of the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization.....	113
3.3.4. Effects of Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization: focus on wider national context .....	118
3.4 Conclusion .....	129

Chapter Four .....	131
The Status and Challenges of Urban accommodation in Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization .....	131
4. 1 Introduction.....	131
4.2 Understanding the concept, categories and distribution of urban centers in Ethiopia .....	131
4.3 History of urbanization and urban governance in Ethiopia and their political implications.....	135
4.3.1 History of urbanization in Ethiopia and its major political implications .....	135
4.3.2 A short review of the history of urban governance in Ethiopia .....	140
4.4 Urban accommodation in the ethnic federal Ethiopia: status and challenges .....	142
4.4.1 Legal/constitutional aspect of urban accommodation.....	142
4.4.2. The Political aspect of urban accommodation .....	149
4.4.3 Urban accommodation in socio-economic development policies (strategies) .....	156
4.5 Conclusion .....	159
Diversity accommodation and political engagement in (negotiating statehood) in Adama city .....	161
5.1. Introduction.....	161
5.2 Background information about Adama city.....	161
5.2.1 Location, area and population.....	161
5.2.2 Origin and Development of Adama city .....	162
5.3 Diversity and its accommodation in Adama city: Legal and political environment.....	164
5.3.1 Ethnic diversity of the city .....	164
5.3.2 Legal and political conditions of the city (and the region) for diversity accommodation .....	166
5.4 Societal engagement in negotiating statehood in Adama city .....	172
5.4.1 Elite engagement in struggle for power: Powers, interests and their relationships.....	172
5.4.2 The consequences of power relations in the Adama city: domination or negotiation?.....	185
5.4.3 ‘Symbolic’ forms of political engagement (in negotiating statehood) in Adama city .....	189
5.4.4 Use of economic resources for negotiating legitimacy and its contribution to political engagement .....	196
5.4.5 Political Consumerism and Political marketing as means of political engagement.....	203
5.7. Conclusion .....	207
Chapter Six .....	209
Diversity accommodation and political engagement (in negotiating statehood) in Hawassa city .....	209
6.1 Introduction.....	209
6.2 Background information about Hawassa city.....	209

6.2.1 Location, area and population .....	209
6.2.2 Origin and Development of Hawassa city .....	210
6.3 Diversity and its accommodation in Hawassa .....	213
6.3.1 Ethnic composition and its dynamics in Hawassa .....	213
6.3.2. Legal and Politico- administrative set up and diversity accommodation in Hawassa .....	218
6.4 Engagement in Negotiating Statehood in Hawassa city .....	222
6.4.1 Engagement in negotiating ‘regional statehood’ in Hawassa city .....	222
6.4.2 Engagement in negotiating over city “ownership” .....	232
6.4.3 Engagement in negotiating ‘citizenship’ .....	243
6.5 Explaining the characteristics of political engagement and negotiation in Hawassa .....	259
6.6 Conclusion .....	264
Chapter Seven .....	266
The Meaning and Implications of the Ethiopia’s ethnic federal decentralization for Political and Socio-economic development in Adama and Hawassa cities.....	266
7.1 Introduction.....	266
7.2 Meaning and implications for political development .....	266
7.2.1 The case of Adama city.....	268
7.2.2 The case of Hawassa city.....	271
7.3 Meaning and implications for socio- economic development .....	279
7.3.1 The Case of Adama.....	279
7.3.2 The Case of Hawassa .....	285
7.4 Conclusion .....	291
CHAPTER EIGHT.....	293
SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION .....	293
8.1. Ethnic federal decentralization and urban accommodation in Ethiopia.....	293
8.2. Ethnic federal decentralization and negotiating statehood in Adama and Hawassa cities.....	299
8.3. The meaning and implications of negotiating statehood in Adama and Hawassa cities for political and socio-economic development .....	304
8.4. Points for Future research .....	308
Reference .....	311
APPENDICES .....	339

## Figures, Tables and Pictures

### Figures

Figure 1: Cyclical relationships between exclusionary political institutions and dynamics of statehood (de)construction in the contemporary Africa. ....	65
Figure 2: Administrative Structure of the Ethiopian ethnic federal government (as of 2012/2013).....	124
Figure 3 : Public institutions that offer employment opportunity in Hawassa city.....	248

### Tables

Table 1: Urban population by size of urban settlement across the country.....	339
Table 2: The Distribution of towns across the regional states of the Ethiopian federation .....	340
Table 3: Ethnic composition of Adama city in time perspective.....	341
Table 4: Distribution of women entrepreneurs.....	342
Table 5: The Ethnic and Religious composition of Hawassa city in pre and post 1991 times.....	342
Table 6: Hawassa city council ethnic representation as of 2013.....	344
Table 7: Employment statistics in public institutions in Hawassa city .....	344

### Pictures

Picture 1:: Picture depicting conflict and co-existence of two different symbolic identities in Adama city. ....	345
Picture 2: A picture symbolizes Abba Gada, traditional Oromo political leader.....	346
Picture 3: The Statue of Abba Gada at center of Adama city serving as cultural center .....	347
Picture 4: <i>The Ethiopian Orthodox church at the center of Hawassa city</i> .....	348
Picture 5: <i>A monument under construction but the construction stopped this time due to contest over it,</i> .....	349
Picture 6: <i>A monument completed with its length shortened.</i> .....	350
Picture 7: <i>A picture representing conflict and co-existence of two different cultural identities in Hawassa city</i> .....	351

# Acronyms

AAPO- All-Amhara Peoples Organization

ANDM - Amhara National Democratic Movement

CSA - Central Statistics Authority

CUD - Coalition for Unity and Democracy

E.C- Ethiopian Calendar

EPLF - Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

FDRE - Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

MEISON- Mellaw Ethiopia Socialist Niknake/

MOFED- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

OLF- Oromo Liberation Front

ONC- Oromo National Congress

OPDO - Oromo People's Democratic Organization

SEPDF- Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front

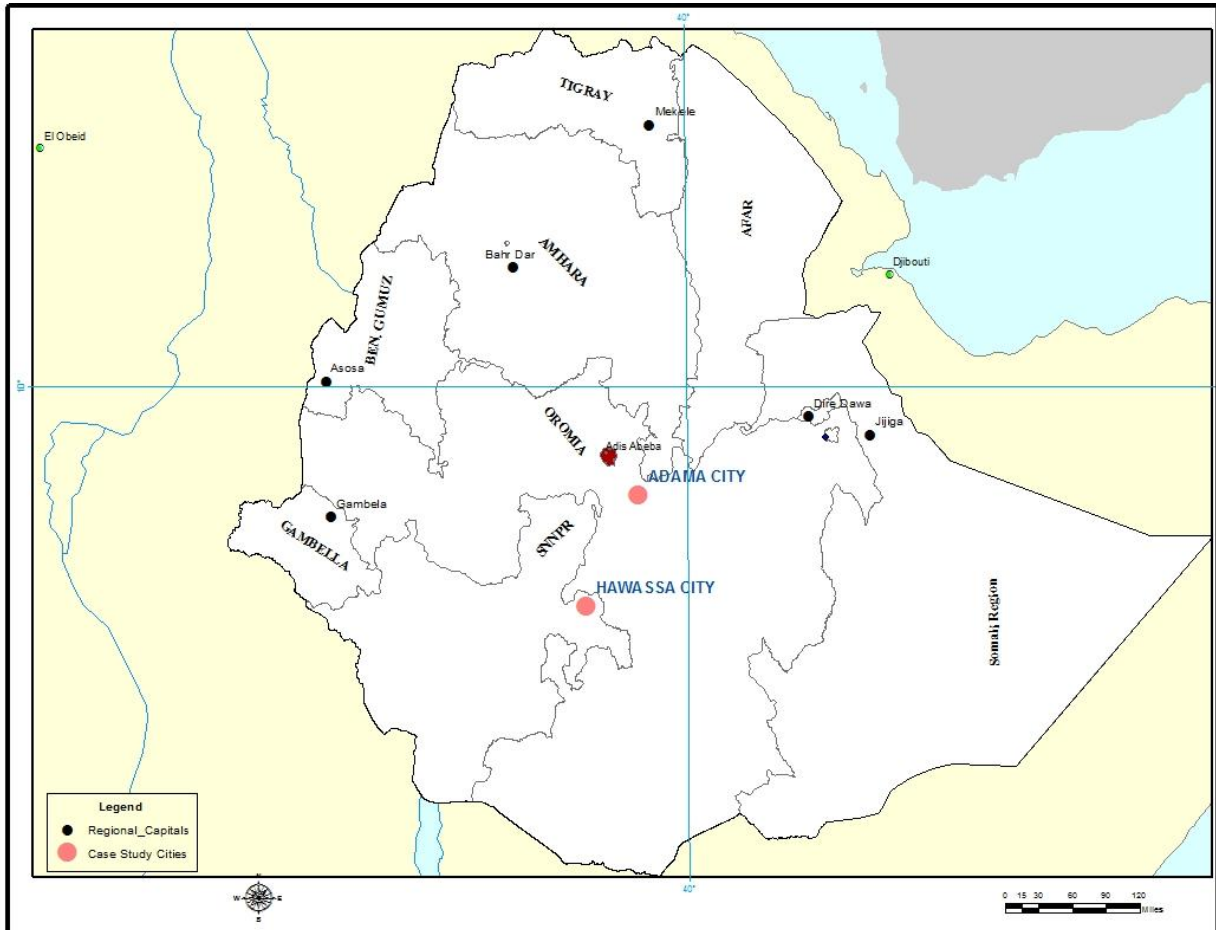
SNNPRS - Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State

TGE - Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front

WPE - Workers Party of Ethiopia

Map I: Locations of Adama and Hawassa cities within the ethnic *administrative division of Ethiopia*.



## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Since 1980s and more intensively after the end of the Cold War, decentralization has become a popular form of government all over the world as panacea for various quandaries of state-society and inter-society relationships. Concerning state-society relations, one of the main assumptions is that decentralization brings government closer to the society, and then allows societal participation in decision - making processes over issues that directly concern or affect their lives (Treisman, 2007). It means that in a decentralized political system, government becomes representative of and responsive to the needs and interests of society. With this premise, it is widely believed that a decentralized form of government secures state legitimacy in the eyes of society and thereby contributes to political stability on the one hand, and promotes social and economic development on the other. With regard to inter-society relations, the conjecture is that decentralization can alleviate ethnic conflicts by promoting inter-ethnic equalities and autonomy. Especially, in ethnically plural society, decentralization is believed to encourage various ethnic groups to live together peacefully by way of addressing their diverse needs and interests (see Horowitz, 1985). With this advantage, decentralization is seen as the most important instrument that promotes political development, which in turn is expected to expedite socio-economic transformation.

Particularly, a decentralized form of government has been prescribed to developing countries where state-society and inter-society relationships were assumed to be in deep crises. Driven by these and many other interests, a large number of African countries have moved to decentralize their government, *albeit*, in different forms, contexts, structures and with varying degrees (Crawford and Hartmann, 2008; Litvak *etal*, 1998; Tordoff, 1994). This has raised a hope for the continent to (re)negotiating state power and resources between the centre and local communities on the one hand and among societies (including at local levels) on the other, these being precondition to (re) legitimize the state and expedite socio-economic development.<sup>5</sup> Ethiopia (African's historic statehood) may be mentioned at fore front in adopting a unique form of

---

<sup>5</sup> *Following the end of the Cold War, there was a widely held view about the alienation of society from state and the irrelevance of state to society in Africa, widely known as the state failure discourse (see for example, Baker, 2000; Zartman, 1995; Rotberg, 2004).*



decentralization since 1991.<sup>6</sup> After seventeen years of guerrilla warfare, a coalition of national liberation movements called EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) controlled state power in 1991 by overthrowing the socialist *Derg* regime.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, the new regime restructured the state along ethnic lines by what may be called ethnic federal form of decentralization, claiming that such political measure would ensure inter-ethnic equalities, guarantee societal self-rule and reduce poverty in the country.

The ethnic decentralization processes of the country have been launched in three phases. The first phase took place during the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1994). In these periods, the country was organized into fourteen ethnically based self-governing units (see, Proclamation, No.7/1992). Four years later, as the second phase of the country's decentralization processes, federal constitution was enacted which has reconfigured the state into nine ethno-regional states and two chartered cities (Proclamation No.1/1995).<sup>8</sup> The constitution confers to the ethno-regional states the right to self-determination up to and including secession, up on the fulfillment of certain conditions (see article 39 of FDRE constitution). Pursuant of these constitutional rights, the ethno-regional states have developed their own constitutions and legislative, judiciary, and executive institutions to run their internal administrative affairs. The third phase of the country's decentralization processes was launched in 2001 to further devolve powers and responsibilities to the lower level of government, especially to *woreda* (district) administrative units. While the first and second phases of decentralization processes focused on relationships of power between center (federal) and regional governments, the third phase is about power restructuring within regions. In other words, this latter phase is about devolution of power and responsibilities from regional governments to their lower administrative units, particularly to *Woredas* (districts) (Tegegne and Kasshaun 2007).

As Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher states, such political measures were hoped "to bring about harmony and cooperation between different groups and promote local self-rule" (2007: 1). However, both at theoretical and practical levels, there have been no consensus among scholars

---

<sup>6</sup> *It is unique because ethnicity is taken explicitly and officially as state building block and also the right for self determination including secession has become a constitutional right(see Turton, 2006:1; Dickovick and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, 2010: v).*

<sup>7</sup> *Was a regime that ruled Ethiopia for seventeen years(1974-1991), succeeding the 1974 revolution*

<sup>8</sup> *The reduction of ethno-regional states from fourteen to nine was due to the merger of some regions in the southern parts of the country to form the present SNNP regional state.*

on the effects of decentralization. At theoretical level, skeptics contend that decentralization increases the risks of ethnic and civil conflicts, even secession (see Treisman, 2007; Falleti 2010). There is also a contention that decentralization can lead to the strengthening of the hold or control of central government over local community (Riker, 1964). In this case, the critic is that decentralization may serve for prolonging the rule of the central government. In practice, too, especially in the Ethiopian case, there have been contentions about the effect of decentralization on state-society and inter-society relationships. On the one hand, there are scholars who see positive achievements. For example, according to Alem Habtu, “Ethiopia’s multicultural federalism averted the collapse of the state in 1991 and has successfully restructured state-society relations. Such federalism has secured stability over the past two decades, providing the longest peace since World War II...” (Alem, 2010:27). He adds that the new political arrangement of the country has ensured “ethnic rights, language rights, cultural equality, religious equality, and gender equality” (ibid.). According to the observer, the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization measure “is now making Ethiopians more and more comfortable with one another” (ibid: 30). He goes on arguing, “Federalism [in Ethiopia] has released the potential of popular movement for public accountability, local development, investment and self-rule” (ibid.31). See also David Turton (2006) and Kifle Abraham (1994; 2001) who more or less share similar view points.

Equally remarkable, there is a vehement critic against the achievements of Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization. For example, scholars like Jon Abbink (2009) observe the attrition of sense of common nationhood among the Ethiopia societies, which according to him has been replaced with Fragile “Social Contract”. There is also a perspective that observes the development of one party controlled politics in the country (Aalen, 2002, 2008, 2009; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010; Samatar, 2004). Other scholars observe the supremacy of one group (the TPLF) over the political economy of the country (Abbink, 2009; Merera, 2003; Vestal, 1999). The other observation is the view that Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization has generated inter-ethnic conflicts in various parts of the country (Abbink, 2006; Asnake, 2009; Dereje, 2003; 2006).

As observed above, there are huge variations and contradictions in the observation and interpretations of the performance of decentralization in general and in Ethiopia in particular. While it is not uncommon for scholars to disagree, the Ethiopian case seems to have gone

extreme causing confusion, perhaps as much as it is illuminative and informative. One possible explanation for this contradiction, I believe, rests on too much generalization or lack of contextualization. In that case, Goodin and Tilly (2006:4) are right when they argue “how political processes actually work and what outcomes they produce depend heavily on the contexts in which they occur”. Yet, most scholarly works on the Ethiopian decentralization have focused on the wider national canvas, which in effect fail to ask contextual questions such as, for example, the urban cases. Urban areas, which are the concern of this study, exhibit very different historical, social and spatial settings, which merit special consideration in studying the application and effects of decentralization processes in Ethiopia. For example, most urban centers in Ethiopia, of course as elsewhere, are known for hosting multiplicity of ethno-cultural identities dwelling urban in propinquity (proximity), which as shall be clear, have its unique implications for the application and effects of decentralization processes, especially for the ethnic form of decentralization such as pursued in Ethiopia since 1991. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the application and effects of Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization in the urban context, particularly in the context of secondary cities of multiethnic compositions.

## 1.2 The research problem

It is now more than two decades since the ethnic form of federal decentralization has come into scene in Ethiopia mainly as a means for ethno-cultural diversity accommodation and decentralization of power, and thereby foster peace and development in the country. This study seeks to examine the application and political effects of the county’s ethnic decentralization processes in urban areas, particularly in secondary cities of multiethnic compositions.

Seemingly, in the processes of reconstituting the Ethiopian state into ethnic federation, urban centers of the country were treated in three different ways in practice. One case in point is the city of Harar, which was accorded the status of regional statehood in the name of the Harari people’s right for self-determination. The second category is chartered cities like the city of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa<sup>9</sup>, which became part of the federal jurisdiction. The third approach is the one in which most cities and towns of the country were designated as the administrative

---

<sup>9</sup> *While Addis Ababa has constitutional base of foundation (FDRE constitution, article 49), the foundation of Dire Dawa city as self-government unit is with special proclamation.*

part of the ethno- regional states in which they are geographically located, implying that they belong to and be governed by the constitutional and administrative frameworks of their respective ethno-regional states. Almost all urban centers of the country (save the three cities mentioned above) fall under this category.

Apparently, from this can emerge a number of concerns one of which is about the criteria employed to treat cities and towns of the country that way. The other, which is a core of this study, is the third category, which is about cities and towns which are placed under the ethno-regional states. Put differently, it is to problematize the relationships between ethnic decentralization and regional cities of multiethnic compositions in the country. There are at least six grounds to justify the concern, each of which bears strong academic and policy interests. Firstly, it seems that ethnic decentralization (federation) and cities of multiethnic compositions are incompatible to each other. This is so because the logic and formula of ethnic decentralization in general and that of the Ethiopian model in particular is meant to promote and defend the political, economic and social rights (interests) of the territorially defined (demarcated) ethnic groups. This means ethnic decentralization is both ethnic and territorial by its very nature (Ghai, 2000; Kymlicka, 2005), which by no means fit to the social composition and territorial settings of multiethnic cities. On the one hand, most regional cities in Ethiopia host various ethno-cultural groups which are ethnically exogenous to regions where they are situated. On the other hand, in multiethnic cities various ethno-cultural groups live inter-mixed in urban centers that makes it impractical to territorially separate and confer the right for self-rule for each and every ethnic group. These suggest that cities of multiethnic composition do not readily avail themselves to conform to the logic of ethnic decentralization. Therefore, it is apposite to ask as to how these contradictions were reconciled in the current political settings of the country.

Secondly, urban centers of the country, especially those conquered and incorporated regions in the late nineteenth have fallen under the control of the conquering northern settlers, or at least believed to be so (see chapter four for the details). However, one of the primary objectives of ethnic decentralization as its architect (EPRDF) claims is to ‘liberate’ communities of the ‘South’ from the century-old ‘alien’ domination and then promote inter-ethnic equity and harmony. Apparently, this tempts one to ask and explore how (under such a historical burden)

the questions of power relations and citizenship in general have been (re) negotiated in multiethnic cities of the country, particularly in the two case study cities.

Thirdly, as Peter John (2009) rightly observes, urban center is characterized by propinquity or the closeness of the urban space where actors are close together. In our case, the notion of propinquity connotes closeness of the state to society on the one hand and closeness of the society to one another on the other, implying a higher degree of frequency of interactions. Obviously, such a feature of urban settings makes the study of state-society and inter-society relationships so tangible and interesting.

Fourthly, cities of multiethnic compositions may be represented as microcosms of the country in hosting as many ethnic groups as the country itself within small and limited urban space. As discussed above, this creates an opportunity for frequency of interaction among the various urban ethno-cultural identities in political, social, cultural and economic realms. Knowledge of how these urban diversities behave in their relationships at urban space may give some clue about the conditions or status of inter-ethnic relationships at the wider national level, such as in state building processes.

Fifthly, at present Ethiopia is urbanizing at the faster rate, and an exploration of urban political settings (especially the nature and status of state-society and inter-society relationships) can positively contribute to the urban development processes such as by way of identifying challenges that demand timely corrective actions.

Lastly, despite such interesting points that it makes, the link between ethnic decentralization and multiethnic cities has not attracted scholarly interests. In fact, an introduction of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia has developed scholarly interest and much is written about it including its implementation and effects. However, there has been very little research concerning its application and effects in urban areas, particularly in the context of multiethnic cities. Even, the few available studies have focused on service delivery aspects of decentralization, such as housing, transport and communication infrastructures, health care, water and electricity supply (Meheret, 2008; 1999). Still there are few studies on urban governance issues (see for example, Minas, 2003; Minas and Tamirat, 2000). Yet these and other studies have never dared to ask such fundamental political questions like as to how the urban diversities are accommodated in

the country's ethnic federal political , as well as to how the state power, resources, symbols, and citizenship in general are negotiated in the urban centers in such ethnic federal political arrangements. By asking and exploring such key questions, it is hoped, this work will contribute to filling scholarly gaps in the area.

### 1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the application and effects of ethnic federal form of decentralization in urban parts of Ethiopia particularly in the cities of Adama and Hawassa in order to learn:

- the relevance of ethnic decentralization for urban diversity accommodation,
- the dynamics and development of 'state-society' and 'inter-society' relationships in urban parts of country,
- how statehood (such as power, resources, identities and citizenships) is contested and negotiated in the urban centers of the country, particularly in the case study cities

#### **Specific objectives of the study are,**

- to explore the relevance of Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement for ethno-cultural diversity accommodation in the context of multiethnic cities.
- to describe the status, nature and challenges of urban accommodation in the Ethiopia's ethnic federation in the contexts of case study cities .
- to find out how and to what extent statehood, namely, citizenship, power relations, identity and symbols are (re) negotiated at local (urban) level among the various ethno-cultural identities and interests in the Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement
- to assess the effects of ethnic federal decentralization on state-society and inter-societal relationships in urban parts of the country with particular reference to selected cities.
- to elucidate the meaning and implications of the post-decentralization political changes (developments) for political and socio-economic development processes in urban parts of the country, particularly in the case study cities.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

In order to meet the aforementioned objectives, the study poses and addresses the following sets of questions. The first question relates to the relevance of ethnic decentralization to ethno-cultural diversity accommodation in the context of multiethnic cities. In this regard, we ask how and to what extent is an ethnic federal decentralization relevant to urban centers of multiethnic composition in terms of diversity accommodation in Ethiopia? How has the ethnically based decentralization processes of Ethiopia applied (implemented) in urban parts of the country, particularly in secondary cities/towns of multiethnic compositions? What were the approaches of urban accommodation in the country in ethnic federal political framework? To what extent have the various urban identities and interests been recognized and accommodated in the country's ethnic federal political framework? How is local citizenship negotiated, power is shared and domination is established in urban areas under the ethnic based political arrangement? What were the major challenges faced the country in applying ethnic decentralization in multiethnic secondary cities as a means for ethno-cultural diversity accommodation and governance?

The second question is about the political effects of the country ethnic decentralization processes. Once in place, any political system will have effects. So is the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization. Hence, this thesis asks the following questions. What were the effects of ethnic decentralization on multiethnic cities of the country in general and with respect to state-society and inter-societal relationships, in particular? Has it brought real and meaningful political changes in state-society and inter-society relationships in urban parts of the country? If so, what are the changes (developments) and how have they come about?

The third research question relates to the meaning and implications of the country's ethnic decentralization processes for the overall political and economic development processes in urban parts of the country. By design, any political system seeks to render certain forms of socio-economic and political development. So is the Ethiopian ethnic federation. Thus, the thesis asks such major questions as: what were the effects and implications of the post-decentralization political changes and developments for the political and socio-economic development processes in urban centers, particularly in multiethnic cities and towns? Has the ethnic federal political arrangement created conditions for societal engagement and participation in political and socio-economic activities, as per its promises?

### 1.5 Scope and significance of the study

This study aims at examining the application and effects of ethnic federal decentralization in urban parts of Ethiopia to learn how urban diversities and interests are treated and how statehood (power or domination, resources and citizenship in general) is negotiated in urban centers of the country. For this purpose, multiethnic cities are selected due to their relevance to the theme of the study. Such cities are located in the so-called ‘conquered’ parts of the country like Oromia and SNNP; hence, geographically the study intends to represent areas, which are conventionally marked to be so. Time wise, the coverage of the study is the post- 1991 developments, except tracing back some key issues having strong connection with the current development such as the history of state-society and inter-society relationships, as well as the history of urbanization in the country. Content wise, the main focus of the study is on ‘political issues and developments’, along with their meaning and implications for socio-economic development. Hence, social and economic issues do not constitute the core of the study. In fact, this is not to claim that the thesis has covered every political issue and development in the specified time and area but only issues promised in this introductory part.

There are polarization of views and perspectives regarding the introduction of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and concomitant effects. Consequently, it remains controversial for scholars, the public at large, and even policy makers. To say the least, Ethiopia’s ethnic federal decentralization has already become subject of debate and conflict for politicians and political parties in the country. In this context, the study is believed to contribute some basic information to the subject. What makes this study more significant, however, is its unique focus on urban, which is less covered in the scholarly works. Yet, urban areas have been and still are centers of controversy and conflict in Ethiopia after the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country. It is likely even to be complicated more in the future. Thus, the present study uniquely captures and analyzes the urban political changes and developments, and as such may serve as one of the sources of information for researchers and policy makers.



## 1.6 Methodology of the study

### 1. 6.1. Methodological approach

This study is about ethnic federal-induced political development in urban Ethiopia conducted in a political and social environment inconvenient to research. Politically, during the time of this research, there were limited freedoms to conduct research of this kind in the country, especially at local level as people were not willing to speak their minds for fear of political intimidation. In social terms, there were volatile inter-ethnic relations in the country as formidable challenge for research. In meeting people for information for this research, everyone was cautious of ethnic identity matters, including the identity of the researcher, and then make necessary adjustment accordingly. In fact, such political and social contexts play great role in research such as in influencing a methodological choice.

Scholars are well aware of factors that influence a methodological choice in research such as epistemological matters on which the study should anchor, which in turn influence the method or tactics of a research (see McNabb, 2004). However, less emphasized factor in shaping the methodological choice in research is the context in which the research takes place, like for example, the political and social settings revealed above. The effect of social and political context on the methodology of research is more visible in the study of politically sensitive issues such as this. Therefore, one can imagine how difficult it could be to conduct a research with a political theme in such political and social challenges.

In fact, overcoming challenges such as this is part of a research. One of the possible solutions to overcome, at list minimize the risk of political and social challenges in research is to employ a relevant research methodology. Obviously, relevant methodology in the context sensitive environment such as this is a qualitative research.<sup>10</sup> As Lawrence Neuman (2014) argues, the qualitative research methodology is a foundation of social research techniques that are sensitive to context. There are at least three major reasons for the choice of the qualitative method of research for this study purpose. In the first place, due to its flexible quality, the qualitative research allows a researcher to make a necessary adjustment to the environment of research.

---

<sup>10</sup> *This is not because quantitative research is not important, but qualitative study is more appropriate for the question at hand due to the complex nature of the theme and context of the study.*

Secondly, a qualitative research method allows the use of multiple research methods and techniques which help both to enrich and triangulate data.

The third reason goes to the philosophical assumption of qualitative research, which is interpretive epistemologically. The interpretative research is an approach that helps a researcher ‘achieve understanding of actions of people in social circumstances and situations, which is arrived at through an interpretation of social phenomena by developing subjective meanings of social events and actions’ (McNabb, 2004: 344). An interpretative research “looks at the way human make sense out of events in their lives as they happen, not as they planned” (Ibid. 145). According to McNabb, “research can be classified as interpretative when it builds on the assumption that humans learn about reality from meaning they assign to social phenomena such as language, consciousness, shared experiences, publications, tools, and other artifacts” (ibid). In political science, this method has been used extensively for the understanding of human political action and political institutions (Moon, 1975).

The interpretive approach is relevant to this study because statehood in Ethiopia, which is the core of the study, is full of contest and controversies mainly due to the conflicting perceptions and interpretations of state in the country including the established domination, symbols, history, and identities of the state. Therefore a qualitative research is useful in examining the processes and dynamics of societal engagement in contest and bargaining over power, resources, symbols, citizenship, identity and history in urban Ethiopia context. It helps to record and interpret the perception and actions of the people towards statehood in urban Ethiopia, including state related power, resources, citizenship, history, symbols and memories.

#### 1.6.2. A Case study research design

For this study purpose, the case study method, which has long been one of the most popular method in political science (McNabb, 2004), is used to study how statehood in urban Ethiopia has been contested and negotiated in ethnically decentralized political environment. The case study method is “an intensive and detailed study of a case in its natural and contextual settings to develop as full understanding of that case as possible, which also serves as an example of similar cases” (Punch, 1998: 150). According to McNabb, with the primary purpose to identify what is common or specific to the case, the case study method serves the political scientists “to learn

about political events, agencies, and levels of government and politics around the globe” (2004: 357).

A case or cases in a case study method of qualitative research may be: a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, a city, a nation or any other unit of social life. Or as Lang and Heiss (1990) conceptualize, case studies is an intensive studies of one or a few exemplary individuals, families, events, time periods, decisions or set of decisions, processes, programs, institutions, organizations, groups, or even entire communities (cited in McNabb, 2004:358). It could also be a decision, or a policy, or a process, or an incident or event of some sort, and there are other possibilities as well (Punch, 1998:152).

In this study, a case study research design is relevant at two levels. One is general and related to the choice of the two case study cities. And the second one is specific and related to cases or issues (events) studied to verify the arguments of the study, or it can be taken as cases within a case. For more clarity, there is a need for further elaboration of these two levels of cases. We begin with the rationale and objectives for which the Adama and Hawassa cities were selected for this study purpose.

Generally, depending on their rationale and objectives there are three types of cases: instrumental, intrinsic and collective (Punch, 1998: 152- 153; McNabb, 2004:358). The instrumental case is the one that is used “where a particular case is examined to give insights into an issue or to refine a theory” (Punch: 1998: 152). According to McNabb, “it is conducted because it promises to provide insight into an issue, not for any specific interest in the case itself” (2004: 358). The intrinsic study design, on the other hand, is when the researcher wants more and better information about the case (ibid). The objective in this case is not to study the case because it illustrates some specific characteristic or problems but it is undertaken because the researcher thinks that it is interesting or because it will provide better understanding of the phenomenon(ibid). The subject case is expected to contribute to a greater understanding of a topic of interest.

The collective case study type, which is also called a multiple-case or cross- case study is used , “where the instrumental case study is extended to cover several areas, to learn more about the phenomenon, population or general condition” (Punch, 1998: 152). In this design, groups of

similar cases are studied in order to study a particular phenomenon. According to McNabb, this design is used to suggest whether a characteristic might be common to a larger population of similar cases (2004). “The cases selected may be chosen because they are similar or different. They are selected because the researcher believes that understanding what is going on in those cases will result in better understanding about a larger group of case” (ibid: 358). This type is often used in comparative political studies.

For this study purpose, the combination of these three categories of case study methods are in use because of their special merits individually and in combination. As an instrumental case study, findings in Adama and Hawassa cities help to appraise the relevance and validity of the prevailing theories and assumptions about the nature and dynamics of state-society relations generally in Africa and particularly in Ethiopia. This study is also intrinsic case study method for the two cities are chosen not on the assumption that they exhibit specific characteristic or problems, rather for it is believed that they provide better understanding of the phenomenon under study. More interestingly, the multiple-case or cross case study methods applies more to this study as the two cities were selected for comparison over similar cases. It is in this logic that the two cities: Adama from Oromia regional state and Hawassa from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and people (SNNPR) were selected.

As to what cases were studied, or data were collected, the study focused on different decisions, events, processes, symbols and the like. For example, decisions and processes as to how and why the two case study cities were assigned to be part of the regional government were examined. Similarly, major events with respect to contest and negotiation among the urban community over state power, resources, citizenship, symbols were also critically selected and studied.

### 1.6.3 Methods of data collection and analysis

According to Punch (1998), multiple sources of data and multiple methods of data collection are among the basic feature of case study research design. Also, for Arneson (1993) one of the hallmarks of a good case study is the selection of two or more of research methods (cited in McNabb, 2004: 3650). That is, in the case study research design, various sources of data and different methods of data collection can be used. In this study, three major categories of data collection methods are used: open interview, observation, group discussion and document analysis (McNabb, 2004).

An interview is one of the main data collection tools used in this study, mainly in collecting data from government officials, elders and scholars. In the first case, officials at different levels of government were included in the interview. Selection procedure in each case was a combination of convenience and purposive based. In the first case, willingness and availability matters were considered, where as in the second case, representation of ethnicity and inclusion of the different levels of government were meticulously considered. Data saturation level was considered in limiting the number of the interviewees. The central focus of the point of discussion in this case was to solicit the views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences and opinions of the interviewees over the matters at hand.

Focus groups discussion was the other data gathering techniques widely and deeply used in this study, but with full of challenges, and yet with important insights about the nature and status of intra and inter-ethnic relations in the two case study cities. On the one hand, the selection of the group members was made from similar ethnic groups but with differences in education level, age, and livelihood so as to evaluate if they share similar political view points over the major themes of the study, such as the question of statehood in Hawassa, ownership issues in the case of the two cities (Adama and Hawassa), and the overall perspectives on the Ethiopian statehood including the ethnic federal arrangement in place in the country. The most challenging task in this focus group discussion technique of data collection for this study purpose was the difficulty to have members from different ethnic backgrounds. Unless there were certain strategic alignment between some ethnic groups of the cities, it was unthinkable to put them together for discussion on issues at hand due to rivalries among them. An attempt was made but ended with no fruit, due to either unwillingness or disagreement among the members. Anyways, such experiences gave the researcher a lesson about inter-ethnic relations in the case study cities.

The other tool used for generating qualitative data in case study research is observation. It helps to study how people interact, form relationships, and accomplish meaning in their lives. It is used to study the forms, structures and patterns in social interactions (Punch, 1998:184). A.L.Lowell, for example, says, “The main laboratory for the actual working of political institutions is not the library but the outside world of political life” (cited in Johari, 1989: 38). According to Saint, such facts of political life can be developed through observation (cited in Johari 1989:38-39).

This observation method is also used in this study, such as for example, attending cultural ceremonies, observing symbols and monuments of weighty political bearing.

Documents are also a rich source of data in political science research. In most cases, these include diaries, letters, essays, personal notes, records related to the meetings of ethno-social groups on some contesting issues, biographies, institutional memoranda and reports, and governmental pronouncements and proceedings, news papers and so forth (Punch, 1998:190). Documents were also used to supplement the information acquired by interview or by observing in a situation (McNabb, 2004: 365). For this study purpose, documents relating to federalism and urban issues including constitutions (federal and regional) and proclamations were consulted. The researcher feels that these all sources along with scholarly publications enriched data sources for this study.

The data collected in such multiple ways involved multiple ways of analysis and interpretations including descriptive, narrative, interpretive methods in accordance with their necessity and relevance.

#### 1.6.4 The Case study area selection: the rationales

Broadly taken, in terms of ethnic composition urban centers in Ethiopia may be grouped into two: ethnically homogenous northern towns and ethnically heterogeneous southern towns (see CSA, 1994; 2007). These variations, as discussed in chapter four, were the effects of various historical, political and economic precedents and factors, which are mainly related to the state formation processes since the late nineteenth century. As the focus of this study is on the multiethnic cities due to their unique impacts on the effect of ethnic decentralization processes (see section 1.2 above), the ethnically homogenous northern cities were not considered at all in this inquiry.

Rather, the choice is among the multiethnic cities of the south, where Adama city of Oromia and Hawassa city of SNNPR are located. A combination of factors make make these two cities eligible for this study purpose, especially when they are compared with cities located in regions of similar history. In the first place, they are from the two big regions (Oromia and SNNPR) which together host more than half of the population of the country. They also host people who are almost from all ethnic groups of the country. Still important, they both serve as capital for

their respective regions, though this capital issues is de facto and also very controversial in the Adama case.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the criteria of their selection are not because they are unique from other towns of the southern regions in terms of ethnic composition and even in political processes and dynamics. Rather they both manifest two special features. First, as the center of political seat for their respective regional states, they are centers from which all other towns are governed and hence can be exemplary for understanding the nature and status of the link between ethnic decentralization and urban centers of the country. Secondly, as the center of political seats for their respective regional states, these two cities play mediation roles between the central and local governments. Indeed, these two cities are junctions between the central and local governments where bottom - up and top - down issues and policies are processed and negotiated. Given that, they offer opportunities to examine issues and events in question. Therefore, the fact that they both host various ethnic groups, serve as regional capital of their respective regional states, located in the historically conquered and marginalized regions, situated at the most resourceful parts of the country, and their designation as cities of the historically oppressed and marginalized nations (Oromo and Sidama), are among the similarities that both cities share in common.

Equally important, there are a number of points to contrast, as well. First, is the number of ethno-cultural groups they host. As a capital city of SNNPR,<sup>12</sup> Hawassa hosts a number of ethnic groups, and hence is more heterogeneous than Adama in terms of ethnic composition. In contrast, as the city of Oromia (a region occupied mainly by the Oromo community) Adama hosts relatively few ethno-cultural groups. As shall be seen, such variation has its own impact on the nature of inter-ethnic relationships, and degree and variety of interests vested in the two cities. The second contrast to be made between the two cities is political settings of the regions in which they are located. In Oromia (that hosts Adama), the main political question is self-determination including secession from the Ethiopian state and hence is against the ethnic federal

---

<sup>11</sup> *The question of capital city for Oromia region has remained to be controversial, for it has not yet been settled. From 1991-2000 the regional government made its base in Finfinnee (Addis Ababa); in 2000 a sudden decision was made to relocate it to Adama which faced resistance from Oromo community and claimed lives of many. And to the surprise of many, once again the regional government shifted back its seat to Addis Ababa following the 2005 controversial election. Ever since, Finifinne (Addis Ababa) and Adama serve the region as de jure and de facto capitals, respectively.*

<sup>12</sup> *Since its formation in 1994 by merging various nations, nationalities and peoples, SNNPR is home to not less than forty-five ethnic groups*

political order, where as in Sidama (which hosts Hawassa), the political question and struggle is mainly for regional statehood seceding from SNNPR but within the ethnic federal political framework of the country. Such political conditions have had various political impacts, especially in connection to relationships between the federal and regional governments, as well as to attract and maintain investment from outside their respective regions.

Still important to mention is the boundary settings of the two cities. Adama is totally located within the territory of the Oromia regional state. However, Hawassa city shares boundary with other regional state, namely Oromia region. As discussed in chapter seven, by virtue of sharing this boundary, Hawassa city has become a political of inter-regional relations, namely between Oromia and SNNPR.

### 1.7. Organization of the study

This thesis is organized into eight chapters including the introduction and conclusion parts. The first chapter introduces research questions, objectives, and methods of the study. The second chapter is concerned with conceptual and theoretical framing and underpinnings. Accordingly, in the conceptual part, key concepts including ethnic federal decentralization, statehood and negotiating statehood, political engagement, and multiethnic and secondary cities are clarified. In theoretical part, competing theories of state-society relations are briefly reviewed, and in so doing, a theoretical analytical approach useful to understanding and analyzing the nature and dynamics of state-society and inter-society relationships in urban Ethiopia is synthesized, especially in the context of ethnically decentralized political order.

Chapter three is about the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization processes and the underlying historical settings. The historical part takes up the nature of state, state-society and inter-society relationships in the country with two objectives. First, it expounds the historical background that had given rise to ethnic decentralization in the country. Second, it serves as benchmark for comparing the post and pre decentralization nature of state-society and inter-society relationships in urban parts of the country. The chapter also deals with the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization process focusing on its rationales, basic features, institutionalization and major consequences in a wider national canvas. Discussion on these points serves two purposes. Firstly, it highlights political changes that followed the ethnic decentralization processes of the country. Secondly, it



also serves as a framework within which to understand and examine the application and effects of ethnic decentralization in urban parts of the country.

Chapter four deals with the nature, status, challenges and dynamics of urban accommodation in the Ethiopia's ethnically decentralized political framework. Chapter five and six represent the most empirical part of the thesis, and deal with Adama and Hawassa cities, respectively. In these chapters, themes of the study are explored, which, among others, include about status, processes and challenges of urban diversity accommodation in the ethnically based federal decentralization; and the political consequences of ethnic federal political order on state-society and inter-society relationships in multiethnic cities. In so doing, the two chapters validate the core arguments of the thesis that an implementation of ethnically based decentralization in multiethnic cities as means of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation is challenging, which in turn ushered in societal engagement in contest and bargaining over state power, resources, urban citizenships, and symbolic identities. Chapter seven is about the analysis and interpretation of the meaning and implications of the country's ethnic decentralization processes for political and socio-economic development in the two case study cities. The last chapter is the synthesis and conclusion of the thesis. Equally important, in this last chapter, some important issues and points for future research are mentioned.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks**

#### 2.1. Introduction

As it is stated in the introduction chapter, this study is about the advent of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its effects on state-society and inter-society relationships in urban parts of the country, particularly in secondary cities of multiethnic composition. This chapter seeks to establish conceptual and theoretical frameworks useful to examine the central themes of the study. Accordingly, among others, conceptual clarifications are given pertaining to key concepts like Ethnic federal decentralization, multiethnic secondary cities, statehood and Negotiating Statehood. Equally important, the chapter synthesizes a theoretical and analytical framework useful to capture and analyze political development and dynamics in urban parts of Ethiopia after the advent of ethnic decentralization in the country.

#### 2.2 Conceptualizing Decentralization and Ethnic federal decentralization

As this study seeks to examine the application and effects of ethnic decentralization in multiethnic cities of Ethiopia, it is essential to conceptualize the notion of decentralization in general and the ethnic-based one in particular in the context of federalism.

##### 2.2.1 Meaning and definition of decentralization

It is difficult, perhaps impossible to state a single definition of decentralization that may capture each aspect of it. However, one thing is clear about decentralization as far as the existing literature is concerned. Decentralization is about the form of government that involves the transfer of power and responsibility from central government to subsidiary levels. As Treisman (2007: 2) notes, decentralization may mean “different things to different people”. But the general idea of decentralization that most would agree about is that it is about distribution or transfer of power, responsibilities, resources, functions and services from the centre to local units of government which may be regional, municipal, local or others. Stren and Eyoh (2007:3), for instance, define “decentralization as the transfer of power and functions, along with the fiscal responsibility to carry out these powers and functions, from the national to the local level of government”. For Gordon Crawford and Christof Hartmann as well, decentralization “entails the transfer of power, responsibilities, and finance from central government to sub-national levels of

government at provincial and/or local levels (Crawford and Hartmann, 2008:7). Similarly, Tullia G. Falletti considers decentralization as “the downward transfer of resources, responsibilities, or authority from national to sub national governments” (Falletti, 2010: 1). Urs Geiser and Stephen Rist also share similar understanding when they define the notion of decentralization as “a shift in government from rather centralized, state - controlled regime to more decentralized arrangements based on local forms of governance” (Geiser and Rist 2009: 16).

Obviously, these definitions give a general understanding and impression about the notion of decentralization. However, they may not yet yield a clear understanding of the subject such as in this study context because of a number of reasons. Firstly, they are too general and conflate the various aspects of decentralization together. Secondly, the aforementioned definitions do not make clear about how and on what basis decentralization takes place. Thirdly, definitions such as these leave open about the nature and characteristics of the central and local governments between whom the decentralization processes unfold. By way of explaining such fissure we set in the notion of decentralization applicable for this study purpose.

### 2.2.2 Categories and forms of decentralization

As Crawford and Hartmann (2008) note, decentralization greatly varies in different aspects. Cognizant of this, Treisman (2007) states that instead of squeezing the several aspects of decentralization under a single label, it is helpful to discern its different categories and aspects. Truly, scholars in the field classify decentralization in various categories based on various factors. The commonly known forms of decentralization are administrative, fiscal and political (see, Manor, 2000; Treisman, 2007).

Administrative decentralization (also called deconcentration) refers to the transfer of responsibility in the provision of services and human management resources among different levels of government (Manor, 2000). This is a case in which “the central government delegates some policy responsibilities to its appointed local agents but retains the right to overrule its agents” (Treisman, 2007:2). In this type of decentralization, the central government gives some autonomy to its local offices that are appointed by, and are accountable to the higher hierarchy (Litvack, et al, 1998), and hence local authorities lack both legal existence and autonomy of power (Hueglin and Fenna, 2006). Fiscal decentralization, on the other hand, refers to the downward transfer of decision making powers over funds to lower levels. Crawford and

Hartmann (2008: 9) remark that in fiscal decentralization “authority over budgets ceded to deconcentrated officials and/or unelected appointees or to elected politicians’. In sum, it refers to system in which financial resources are transferred to local authorities so that they could raise taxes and use them as seems appropriate and necessary to their local context.

The third and perhaps the most important type of decentralization is the political one, or devolution as it is widely known. For Crawford and Hartmann (2008:9), devolution (also called democratic decentralization) is the “transfer of power and resources to sub-national authorities that are both (relatively) independent of central government and democratically elected”. In this case, the lower tiers of government are established by law and enjoy an independent legal existence. As well, the local units are autonomous over action in their internal matters (Treisman, 2007). Equally important, in political form of decentralization local officials are elected locally, and that why it generally called democratic (ibid).

Despite such categorizations, most agree that decentralization in practice conflates all together. For example, in federal form of decentralization (to be discussed later), they all work hand-in-hand. It works in such a way that devolution (political decentralization) applies between the centre and the union regions, whereas deconcentration applies to internal administrative affairs of regions, while fiscal decentralization remains a crosscutting issue. This makes each of this aspect of decentralization relevant to our study context.

In addition, two more issues of decentralization are important to this study. One is the notion that the forms of decentralization can vary in nature based on the form of government in which it operates. These forms of government include unitary, federal and confederation types. Decentralization vividly varies with respect to each of these forms of government. A unitary form of state is one with only a single, centralized, national tier of government (Mahler. 1987:24). In this type of government, regardless of the actual status of any of its parts, its entire territory constitutes a single sovereign entity and by virtue of this, the central government exercises sovereign power over its whole territory. The administrative type of decentralization we discussed above mostly, if not exclusively, belongs to this form of state. A confederation is a union of sovereign units that retain their sovereignty and powers, but that agree to coordinate their activities in certain respects, such as in areas of mutual defense and common currency (ibid). Hence, it is more than decentralization (Kamis and Norman, 2005).

A federal form of governance, which lies between the unitary and confederation form of state (Freeley and Rubin, 2008; Watts, 2005) is the concern of this study. It is in this federal form of state that we discuss the decentralization process. Decentralization in federal political arrangement (federal or federalist decentralization) exhibits some distinct aspects in various domains. Thus, it requires further explanations in order to be used as a conceptual framework for this study (see section 2.1.3 below).

The other case in which decentralization can vary is related to the nature or identity of local units to which power devolves (Kemp, 1999). As Roger L. Kemp clearly puts, the subnational units can be cities, regions, counties (ibid: 1), and the concern of this thesis is with urban centers (cities and towns). In terms of social composition, urban centers could be either of heterogeneous or homogenous type, relatively speaking. As discussed in the introduction part, of interest for this thesis is the former one. Still important, regional or local units to which state power devolves may be organized either on ethnic, geographical or functional bases. Where the local unit to which self-governing right and power is bestowed is ethnically based, it may be called ethnic decentralization, and it is this kind of decentralization that has been in place in Ethiopia since 1991. Therefore, ethnic decentralization in federal political arrangement and multiethnic cities form central concepts in this thesis and hence need further discussion.

### 2.2.3 Federal form of Decentralization (Federalist Decentralization)

As we discussed above decentralization may take place in different forms of governments including a unitary, federal and confederation. Central to this study is decentralization as it operates in the federal form of government. This type of decentralization, which we call federalist decentralization, exhibits certain distinct features as discussed below.

Understanding federal form of decentralization (federalist decentralization hereafter) requires conceptualizing federalism. Scholars in the field have ascribed a wide variety of meanings to federalism (see Karmis and Norman, 2005), yet there are certain common features that characterize federalism (Coddling, 1977). Here we note four of the core defining features of federalism, which are helpful to grasp the unique feature of federal form of decentralization. One of these is the notion that federalism is a kind of government based on the principle of shared rule and self-rule (Wheare, 1963; Riker, 1964; Elazar, 1987; Watts, 2005). Put in the words of Ronald Watts, in a federal political system is “there are two or more levels of government which

combine self-rule for the government of the constituent units with elements of shared-rule through common institutions” (Watts, 2005:234). Although there might be great varieties among federal states in degree, the notion of shared and divided power is fundamental to defining a federal form of government (Riker, 1964). However, in defining the federalist decentralization this study tends to focus more on the devolution (self-rule) aspect of power rather than on its shared aspects for obvious reason that decentralization is more about the devolution of power.

The second core-defining feature of federalism is that the share and division of power mentioned above needs to be formal, usually constitutional. That is, as Carl J. Friedrich (1963: 597) noted, a federal system is “a particular kind of constitutional order”. It means that in a federation, the division of power between federal and regional governments is usually outlined in the constitution. Thus, in federalism, constitution is supposed to be a contractual agreement that provides for the share and division of power between the central government and its constituent units.

The third defining feature of federalism is that in addition to constitutional share and division of power, federalism requires drawing boundaries (Kymlicka, 2005). This means that federalism is territorial in essence, which Ferran Requejo (2005:311) puts as: “Federalism is fundamentally a territorial model”. Similarly, for Hueglin and Fenna, federalism is “a spatial location or territorial” (2004: 31) political architect. This means that federalism grants “autonomy to geographically subdivided subunits of the polity” (Freeley and Rubin, 2008:12). Ghai (2000) and Lemco (1991) in their part also emphasize the requirements and distinction of territorial and spatial division in the federal political system. According to this viewpoint, federal form of government demands definition of territorial boundary within which certain groups exercise certain right of self-government. The fourth requirement for federalism as Riker puts is that it needs to have a minimum of two levels of government (1964:11), among whom power is to be shared and to which power of self-governance is to be devolved. As shall be clear, in our task to examine the advent and the effect of federal decentralization in Ethiopia, these four defining elements of federalism would be essential.

Yet, there are two more issues, which still need conceptual clarity with regard to the federalist decentralization. One is about how this form of decentralization comes about. The other is about the territorial unit to which the federal form of decentralization is to be bequeathed. Based on the

manner of their establishment, for instance, federation may be identified as centralist or decentralist (Mahler, 1987:15). A centralist form of federation is that develops in search for unity between various independent units (ibid.). It is a kind of federation in which two or more independent states come together to establish a union in the form of federation for various purposes (Riker, 1964, King, 1982 see also Coddington, 1977: 326). The motives for this type of federation vary from the desire for military and political strength to the desire for economy and market advantages. This type of federalism aims to integrate independent entities in one bigger federal state, following which some scholars label it as federal integration (see Weinstock, 2001 cited in Asnake, 2009: 26) or as Alferd Stepan (2005) prefers to call 'coming together' federalism. Early federations more or less belong to this category, including that of the United States and Switzerland.

In contrast, the decentralist federation refers to those who seek the transfer of power from central authorities to local units (Mahler, 1987). It is a situation where originally unitary states come to be restructured into federation. It comes about through the restructuring processes of the unitary and centralist state. The primary purpose of this type of federation is "to allow ethnic or other groups claiming a distinct identity to exercise direct control over affairs of special concern to them" (Ghai, 2000: 8). In the case of ethnic federalism (that is discussed below) the decentralist federation intends to solve national and interethnic conflicts by accommodating the claims of ethno national or ethno-linguistic groups within the framework of a single state.(Kymlicka, 1996). Usually, it is the threat of disintegration and the need to maintain unity that lies at the center of this type of federation (ibid). Alferd Stepan (2005) labels this form of federation as the 'holding together' model. Most of the post- Second World War and post Cold War federal states belong to this category. The Ethiopian federalism as we shall discuss later may best fit to this category.

In most cases, it is common for centralist/integration federation to be brought into being through bargain among a number of formally independent states from below, while the decentralist/restructuring type of federation is often created through a process of imposition from above (Ghai, 2000). However, it has to be clear that in the case of decentralist federalism states may not voluntarily decentralize power to their constituent units. Usually, decentralization in this case is the effect of conflicts and wars, or the response to that. As Kymlicka (1996: 39-41) notes,

in multiethnic societies federal restructuring usually took place “not as a matter of normal democratic politics to be negotiated and debated, but as a matter of state security.” That might be among the reasons why the centralist federation appear to be more democratic today.

Scholars agree that the centralist federalism may be preferable to the decentralist one in the perspective of their effectiveness and stability (see Stepan, 2005). This argument begins down from the comparison of their fundamental motives. The centralist federalism aims to integrate various independent units into one state usually based on consent of the federating units. The notion of unity for strength and merger by consent gives it special credence over the decentralist federation whose source is war and conflict and whose primary motives is state security. Cognizant of this, Stein Rokkan and Derek U. Urwin (cited in Asnake, 2009: 27) call these opposing approaches of forming federation as organic and mechanical, respectively. In the first case, there are elements of consent and representations of interests. In contrast, the latter case involves coercive force to uphold the federation. As Kymlicka (2007) notes, in this latter type of federation, priority is given to state security than real intention for the equality and freedom of its citizens<sup>13</sup>. Scholars widely agree that the Ethiopian case largely shares many characteristics with the latter category (see for example, Aalen, 2002; Merera, 2003).

#### 2.2.4 Ethnic decentralization (ethnic federalism)

The other most important aspect of the category of federalism concerns the nature and type of its constitutive units. In this case, the territorial division of the federation may be marked based on historical, geographical, economic, ethnic and some other factors. A kind of federation whose subjects are ethnic units may be called ethnic federation. It is this aspect of federalism that is of interest in this study.

Ethnic decentralization as used in this study refers to the decentralization process in which the right for self-rule is constitutionally granted to ethnic groups<sup>14</sup> who occupy defined territorial

---

<sup>13</sup> *However, this is not to conclude that decentralist federations are always problematic, ineffective and undemocratic. Even if there might be limitation in its establishment, through a process of democratic bargaining, it may be improved to better performance gradually.*

<sup>14</sup> *The concept of ethnicity is elusive and defined in various ways. Especially, there is seemingly irreconcilable debate between the primordial, constructivist, and instrumentalist school of thought on the notion of ethnicity. Regardless of the debates and their policy implications, it seems that in present Ethiopia ethnicity is understood and treated more as primordial type. Yet, one should not overlook its instrumentalist role in the country's political economy.*



regions in a given state. In line with our discussion above, in this study we use ethnic decentralization and ethnic federalism interchangeably as it deems necessary. Since it forms the cores of this study, we discuss further some important aspects and notions of ethnic decentralization. Virtually an ethnic form of federalism (decentralization) shares the core defining elements of federalism. At the same time, it also exhibits some distinctive defining features (Ghai, 2000:11). Here we focus on three basic distinctive aspect of ethnic decentralization.

Primarily, the ideological base of ethnic federalism is 'ethnicity'. As its core ideology, ethnic federalism primarily recognizes ethnic diversities (Burgess 2006). As Y. Ghai puts, "Naturally, ethnic federations emphasizes diversity and multiplicity of values" (2000:11) Moreover, it promotes ethnicity as the chief instrument of state organization and mobilization (Hendricks, 2004: 113). Ethnic markers (such as language, religion, common history and culture) are fundamental requirements in mapping the federal administrative units and in granting the right to autonomy or self-government. In ethnic federalism, administrative boundaries are set up along ethnic lines, and "ideally, a region is supposed to provide ethnic homogeneity" (Ghai, 2000: 11). It is this ethnically- defined people associated with designated territory that is entitled to enjoy the right to autonomy or self-government within their jurisdiction on the one hand and to share power collectively at central level on the other. That is, ethnic groups in an ethnic federalism are subjects of the federation with the ultimate bearers of sovereignty. Institutional arrangements and administrative structures follow this logic of ethnicity. Thus, ethnic federalism may be understood as an arrangement and functioning of federal institutions based on ethnicity.

In this connection, it is possible to discern two types of ethnic federalism: congruent and incongruent. A congruent ethnic federation is the one where each of the federal constituent unit contains a relatively homogeneous ethnic group. On the other hand, incongruent federalism refers to federation where different states or regions of the federation composed of heterogeneous ethnic groups within their jurisdiction. It is in this latter type of ethnic federation that the question of diversity accommodation and governance comes fore.

The second distinguishing features of ethnic federalism lies in its character of territorializing ethnicity and 'ethnicization' of territory. In other words, in ethnic federation political administrative boundaries are drawn along ethnic lines in which every ethnic group put claims of

ownership on it. Even in some cases, such as in Ethiopia, majorities of the regions are labeled after the names of the dominant ethnic groups who in majority occupy or control the area. Thus, in ethnic federalism territory comes to play critical roles. Moreover, ethnic federalism is known to politicize identity and to ethnicize politics. As Fearon, (2006: 853), notes, “Ethnicity is politicized when political coalitions are organized along ethnic lines, or when access to political or economic benefits depends on ethnicity”. Similarly, P. G. Das notes that ethnic politics arise when the “members of [certain] ethnic groups are vociferous to get certain political privileges and [when] only the political authority is eligible to meet these demands or to allow the members of the group to enjoy or acquire the privileges” ( Das,1996:438). In ethnic federalism, ethnic based parties are common, and access to political and economic benefits is frequently structured and arranged along ethnic lines (ibid). In the political environment where the allocation of political and economic benefits is formally structured along ethnic lines, it is likely for ethnicity to be politicized and for politics to be ethnicized (Bangura, 2006).

Obviously, such distinctive features of ethnic decentralization imply a number of political meanings for state-society and inter-society relations, especially for the governance of the ethnically mixed societies. For example, the processes of ‘ethnicizing’ territory and ‘territorializing’ ethnicity imply the inevitability of inclusion and exclusion among ethnically diversified societies such as cities. As a process of boundary creation between various ethnic groups, ethnic federation develops or at least formalizes the distinction between natives (insiders) and aliens (outsiders) to that particular area of land. It marks off natives from aliens in an ethnically defined territory. This may raise questions pertaining to citizenship, and the right of access to power and resources in that particular ethnic jurisdiction. It is sobering to study how and to what extent the so- called ethnic outsiders enjoy identical/ equal rights and obligations with the natives. Such a paradoxical issue of urban relationships with ethnic federal political arrangements forms the core of this study.

### 2.3 Arguments for and against federal forms of decentralization

There have been arguments both for and against federal form of decentralization (see Karmis and Norman, 2005:3). In between, we also have scholars who prescribe some contexts and factors for its success or failure. As we argue here, there is also a point (assumption) that the two contradictory viewpoints (critic and advocate) share in common.

### 2.3.1 Why federal decentralization? The advocate view

Varieties of explanations have been given to justify why federal form of decentralization is deemed a desirable form of government. However, as Filippov et al (2004) rightly put, several of the justifications can be roughly grouped into economic and political realms.

On economic side, the main argument is that compared to the centralized form of government federalism and decentralization meets economic complexities such as by way of stimulating 'development' and poverty reduction. As a mechanism that promotes more direct citizen engagement in the processes of decision-making, federal form of decentralization is believed to create conditions of participation and partnership between various levels of government, state and society and among society on development issues (see Treisman, 1999).

Moreover, as fiscal federalism theory suggests federal form of decentralization enhances efficiency and accountability of government at the sub national level (Oats, 1972). The most basic observation here is that local governments will have better information than distant central governments about local conditions and preferences (ibid). Consequently, it is assumed, local political leaders maximize the welfare of their constituents (Oates, 1999). As Oates argues, if appropriate tasks are devolved to local level, "local governments, being closer to the people, will be more responsive to the particular preferences of their constituencies . . ." (ibid: 1). It is also assumed that decentralization has potential to render competition among local units for mobile citizens and firms, and in so doing enhances economic efficiency.

On the political account, there are varied rationales for federal decentralization. In this case, the popularity of decentralization primarily derives in part from the perception that decentralized form of government helps to manage the multitude of demands of diverse groups in geographically large and ethnically diverse states. There is a persuasive argument that decentralization provides the best government possible for societies of considerable ethnic, regional or religious disparity (Elazar, 1987). Similarly, there is a belief that decentralization enhances participatory governance by bringing government close to the local community (Manor, 2000). The belief here is that local government is more likely to be accountable to its constituency. Decentralization is also considered to be an important means of conflict resolution by accommodating conflicting interests, and thereby contributing to state building in plural societies (Horowitz, 1987). Decentralization (especially its federal form) is considered as one of

the better devices to mute conflicts between/ among groups both horizontally and between the central state and sub-national vertically. For example as Donald L. Horowitz claims, federal institutions can minimize conflict and create an environment of cooperation across ethnic groups, such as by way of changing the institutional format in which conflicts occur, by altering the structure of incentives for political actors (1997:121).

For others, federalism is believed to maintain right balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces (see, Rodden, 2006). In many societies where the centripetal and centrifugal forces are at odds with each other, the adoption of federal form of decentralization is sought as a solution. Hecter (2000:142-145), for example, considers federalism as a device that can reduce the demand for secession meeting the claims for autonomy by concession instead of repression. Federalism is also believed to improve contentious centre-periphery relations, in countries where there is a history of protest against centralized rule and forms of cultural hegemony. Here the emphasis is decentralization has potential to deflate national level inter-group conflict for power, resources, and control, particularly in nations with diverse ethno-religious groups, which are regionally concentrated.

Still important, decentralization is seen to serve as bulwark against tyranny (, Hueglin and Fenna, 2004:41; Elazar, 1987). It is believed that by the virtue of its division of sovereignty between higher and lower levels of governments, and through the guarantee of autonomy, decentralization prevents tyranny.

To sum up, in political terms, proponents of federal form of decentralization view it as an appropriate device in which the rights and identities are protected, autonomy is maintained, and conflicting interests are accommodated and mediated. Obviously, this implies its quality to maintain peace and democracy, equality and justice in geographically large and ethnically diverse political entities (Elazar, 1987; see also Freeley and Rubin 2008; and Rodden, 2006).

### 2.3.2 Why not federal decentralization? The critics

Regardless of such an enthusiastic argument in favour of federal decentralization, there were also critics against it. The critics, of course, are many, and range from those who question the fundamental and intrinsic values of federalism to those who question it from the perspectives of the complex conditions and preconditions to be fulfilled. Harold Laski (1939), R.J Harrison

(1974), and David Mitrany (1977), were among the early authors who rejected the fundamental tenets of federalism. For Laski, federalism was an obsolete form of government structure to effectively function in the twentieth century political dynamics and complicities, mainly because of its compartmentalization functions, rigidity and conservatism (cited in Lemco, 1991: 8).

Mitrany's critic of federalism is from the viewpoint of its static and restrictive nature. For him, no political system is as fixed and delimiting as federal constitution. According to Mitrany, the primary purpose of federalism is to delimit the power and competence of the various organs and levels of government. This handicaps them from taking actions. For him, it is also true that federalism; especially its constitutional bases are so fixed, disabling it to cope up with the dynamically changing environment. According to this critic, a federal government is not a hand free actor. He further goes to attribute causes for the failed federations, those federations who faced civil wars, secessions, or ended up in fist unitary state, to these drawbacks of federalism (see Coddington, 1977:339).

In concern with local context, Harrison (1977) argues federalism in practice never remains a guarantee for local autonomy, individual freedom and even of democracy. He goes on to argue that the specification of powers in a formal constitution does not mean there will be an absence of conflict over jurisdictions or that there will be no actual encroachment( *ibid*). Harrison's argument tends to divert too much reliance on constitutional structures and provisions in political analysis, especially if the role of the constitution in a particular political system is not prominent, or if the constitution itself does not reflect the manner in which the political system really operates.

Even scholars enthusiastic to the federal form of government note some problems with it. Riker (1964), for instance, was skeptic to the view that federalism guarantees freedom. For him, those federal constitutions have been more concerned with practical considerations of expanding government rather than the ideological considerations of guarding freedoms. As Aalen (2002: 20) notes, such an argument implies that federalism in the first place reflects values and interests of political leaders who seek to benefit from state building and institutional reconstruction, rather than considering the moral and philosophical virtues of freedom and justice. Similarly, McGarry and O'Leary (2007) note that federalism has not been successful in resolving conflicts in multiethnic states because minorities are still outnumbered on the federal level. Kymlicka (1998)

is also of the view that federalism does not prevent secession. As he notes, groups who are opting for independence can hardly be satisfied with the federal political solutions. In this regard, there is an assumption that the presence of regional autonomy in federal states increases the desire for more autonomy, even for secession or independence. For example, Alfred Stepan argues, “The greatest risk [in federalism] is that federal arrangements can offer opportunities for ethnic nationalists to mobilize their resources” (2005:255) such as for secession.

Especially, the ethnic form of decentralization is criticized for deepening ethnic, regional, or communal identities and aggravating conflicts between them that are antithetical to national building (Hechter, 2000; Kymlicka 1998). It has also been argued that federalism undermines democracy by transferring of power and resources to undemocratic social forces such as chiefs (Jackson 2007), or provide a sphere for domination of minority groups by majority groups at the local level (Horowitz 1991). In economic arenas, there is also a critics that federalism, especially the ethnically - based one is full of development risk. This is so “because it can limit the mobility of capital and labor required to take advantage of economic opportunities, create entitlements based on ethnicity that can undermine rational allocation of scarce capital budget resources, and lead to irrational use of energy and resources” (Cohen, 1997:141).

The controversial point regarding the merits and demerits of federal form of decentralization is not only the difference that prevails among scholars but also its mixed results (of failure and success) in practice. Several decentralization and federal experiments have failed either by breaking apart or by becoming fully centralized unitary states. At the same time, there have been also countries with positive record in adopting and maintaining federal form of governance. This begs a fundamental question as to why decentralization (federal decentralization) results in different and opposing consequences. In this case, we have scholars who pinpoint to some contexts and factors determining the success or failure of federal decentralization. We look at some of these contexts or factors that are relevant to our study context.

### 2.3.3 The ‘conditionalist’ perspective on the effects of ethnic decentralization

In between the above two contradictory viewpoints there are perspectives holding the view that the outcomes of decentralization are determined by a number of factors. In this case, the idea is that the success of decentralization such as in federal context depends on various factors and contexts. Four major viewpoints may be discerned in this regard. One is the notion that maintains

that the fate of decentralization rests on the quality of constitutional and institutional arrangements. Among others, these may include the status and competence of federal constitutional (institutional) arrangements to contain and entail core federal values including details on arrangements for sharing the powers and duties between the central and regional governments (Wheare, 1963; Duchacek, 1987; Lemco, 1991). In this connection, scholars have tried to provide federal institutional arrangements that may lead to outcomes of success or failure. In support of this stance, for instance, Jonathan Lemco (1991) claims that the federal arrangement that retains a strong central government and weaker levels of constituent units is more likely to succeed. For King (1964), too, federalism works where it is well crafted institutionally and constitutionally, implemented in the way they were designed and 'sold' to the populace. This implies that federalism is the function of the structure and content of its institutional/ constitutional arrangements and commitment to the principle of constitutionalism.

The second perspective of the 'conditionalists' view is which focuses on the importance of the nature and structures of society. For example, Livingston (1956) places the success/ failure of federation on nature and patterns of the societal social and economic organizations. According to Livingston, the success of federalism depends on its quality to articulate and accommodate its major linguistic, cultural, ethnic, economic interests and identities. That is, federal political system that reflects or corresponds to the real nature of the societal division is more likely to succeed. Some other scholars including Livingston himself, point out that the diversities should not be mutually exclusive to the degree that there is no room for mutual accommodation and political integration. Lipset (1960), Watts (1977), and many other scholars have argued that the lack of overlapping or cross cutting cultural, economic, and social cleavages is among the main reasons for the disintegration of federations. Thus, according to this view, to be viable the federal structures need to correspond to or reflect the social, cultural, and economic realities of the concerned societies.

The third viewpoint is that emphasizes symmetry and asymmetry questions, especially in terms of size (population, territorial, and wealth) as factors determining success of federal decentralization. Symmetrical federal model refers to cases in which the constituent units have relatively equal size of territory, population and resources. Where there are differences in these factors among the federating units, it may be called asymmetric (Lemco, 1991). There are studies

that consider such disparities as a threat to federal stability. Tarlton (1965) and Lemco (1991), suggest that the higher degree of symmetry a federal system has, the more likely it is that the federation will be successful.

In substantiating this argument Lemco asserts,

*Large constituent units, because of their size and importance, naturally expect to have greater influence on decisions than small units. Indeed, they may be able to ensure that policy is formulated according to their own interests. The small units, on the other hand, often expect equality of influence (1991:43).*

According to this argument, its most populace and resourceful components may dominate asymmetric federation in the end, which in turn leads toward disputes that threaten the existence of a federation. In fact, it was in fear of such a risk, particularly the risk of threat to the central government, that the boundaries of the three dominant ethno-groups in Nigeria (Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba) were redrawn into smaller fractions (Suberu, 1996). Scholars like Christopher Clapham also tend to prescribe same policy to Ethiopia to undermine the Oromo and the Amhara regional states (2006: 233-234) --the two bigger regions in the Ethiopian federation.

Others, like Ivo Duchacek, make a counter-claim. Duchacek argues that since federalism from the beginning is “based on the sincere decision to grant concessions to a group’s desire for territorial identity and autonomy no group entirely rule out the possibility that the federation will in the long run be dominated by its most energetic, populous, or developed components” (cited in Lemco, 1991: 43). It is also common to observe in federations like Ethiopia where smaller federal units happen to dominate the larger units and the entire system (Merera, 2003; Samatar, 2004; Abbink, 2006a). Given that, if asymmetry matters in federalism, what needs a scrutiny may not be only differentials in population, resources or territorial size. It is also important to look into the nature of actual power distribution among various groups and interests (Kymlicka, 2005). This leads us to the fourth condition that is supposed to determine outcomes of the decentralization processes, which relates to the issues of power distribution.

There are scholars who maintain that the asymmetry (symmetry) of power distribution is more important than size (see, Kymlicka, 2005). In federal political arrangement, there might be cases in which some groups possess more political power and resources. In such cases, of interest in inquiry would be structure of power rather than the formal elements of law (see, Filippov, et al,



2004). Filippov, et al (2004), grasp this asymmetrical relation of power between actors in a federal political system. They seriously suggest that a successful design of federalism requires something more than institutional parameters and socioeconomic circumstances. For them, what matters more is not “the mere negotiation of regional versus central authority or the establishment of a ‘fair’ system of regional representation in the national legislature-common foci of federal constitutional craftsmanship” (ibid: ix). Moreover, they note that “the institutional parameters most commonly assumed to be critical to federal success are not sufficient to implement a successful design and even may not be the ones that are of primary importance” (ibid). Instead, they underline,

*... if in attempting to implement a stable federal state, we assume that only directly manipulable institutional parameters are at our disposal then in addition to the usual variables of federal designs we must consider seemingly tangential matters such as the authority of the federal centre’s chief executive, the timing of regional, local and national elections,... (ibid: x), emphasis added.*

This argument emphasizes the importance to look into the actual experience and behavior of the players within the federal network, as far as an understanding about the success of federalism is concerned. This becomes necessary because, according to Filippov, *et al*, (2004), the federal constitution does not necessarily reflect the manner in which the political system really operates. In federations, there is always discrepancy and tension between the formal institutional frameworks and the actual experience and behavior of the players within them. The federal institutional design for them is vulnerable to manipulation and waywardness, in which the powerful actors can systematically manipulate it for their overt or covert ends. Put in their own words, “the essential difficulty with [federal] political design generally is that political institutions are by their very nature redistributive-different institutions imply different winners and losers...” (ibid: x). It means that the powerful actor(s) can use a coercive or persuasive power to impose their will in the process.

Similarly, Ghai (2000) notes, federalism can be used for ‘subtle forms of control’. Filippov, *et al* suggests that “manipulating only a limited subset of institutional parameters labeled “federal” is unlikely to yield an adequate result” (Filippov, *et al*, 2004; x). Frank observes “the absence of [such] a positive political or ideological commitment to the primary goal of federation as an end

in itself among the leaders and people of each federating units...make success [of federation] improbable, if not impossible”(quoted in Mahler, 1987:23). Or else, it ushers in dissatisfaction with the polity that eventually leads to conflicts including demands for secession. This is because federalism is the synergy of its constituent units and hence it requires the free will and commitment of every member. Therefore, if federalism were to be genuine it would not be a result of force and coercion from above or sustained by the threat of military power.

Now, let us move on to summarizing these contending viewpoints on federal form of decentralization, especially in the perspectives of their relevance to our case study. As various scholars suggested above, decentralization like any other political processes (see Tilly and Godin, 2006) is contingent, hence its outcomes are determined by different factors and contexts. Most of the factors discussed above have much relevance to the effects of ethnic decentralization on urban centers in Ethiopia, since urban areas exhibit a unique context. Specifically, as shall be clear later, the most relevant factors in shaping the decentralization processes in urban Ethiopia context include the form of decentralization itself<sup>15</sup>, constitutional issues, the urban social reality, historical matters and development policy issues. As this thesis promises to reveal, owing to these factors and conditions, federal decentralization in Ethiopia has produced very complex outcomes in the country in general and in urban areas in particular.

## 2.4 Conceptualizing multiethnic and secondary cities

As it is introduced before, the theme of this study is to examine the relationships between ethnic decentralization and multiethnic secondary cities. In the preceding section the notion of ethnic decentralization as it works in federal political order is clarified. This section discusses the concepts of multiethnic cities and secondary cities in a way it is used for this study purpose.

### 2.4.1 Conceptualizing multiethnic cities

In general terms, the social composition of urban centers, namely that of cities and towns is assumed to be heterogeneous (Frey and Zimmer, 2001; Monterescu and Rabinowitz, 2007). Types of diversity that urban areas hold may be race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, profession or others. Ethno- cultural diversity, which is the core of this thesis, is among the basic factors that constitute the social diversity in cities and towns. For some scholars, ethno-cultural diversity

---

<sup>15</sup> *As discussed above the form decentralization in place in Ethiopia is ethnically based one with its own unique nature and with complex consequences, especially in the urban social context.*

is taken to be the standard measure of the “cosmopolitan nature” of urban centers (Frey and Zimmer, 2001). By multiethnic cities, we mean urban centers, which host various ethno-cultural groups. Yet, this superficial description may not be enough to understand the concept of multiethnic cities and towns. To understand the matter, it needs to explain what really account multiethnic cities, their sources as well as the nature, structure, and patterns of relationships and interactions among the urban ethno-cultural groups on the one and their relationships with the state on the other. Thus, by discerning such issues we set out the notion of ethno-culturally plural society in urban context.

What accounts ethno-culturally diversified towns, then? Ethno-cultural diversity refers to the presence of a variety of ethno-cultural groups within a given society such as in urban centers (Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2006; *Lähdesmäki, 2010*). It is a condition where “several distinguished cultural collectivities exist side-by-side, but not as merged to each other” (*Lähdesmäki, 2010:3*). However, according to Bhikhu Parekh (2006), the mere existence of ethno-cultural diversity by itself may not qualify certain society as multiethnic or multicultural. Parekh believes that in modern society the notion of ethno-cultural diversity involves “the acceptance, respect and even public affirmation of their [cultural) differences” (ibid: 1). He further notes, “While acceptance of differences calls for changes in the legal arrangement of society, respect for them requires changes in its attitudes and way of thought as well” (ibid: 2). In this case, Parekh draws attention to the importance of accommodative societal attitude (and legal (and political) arrangement to define and sustain social diversity. The first point relates to inter-community relations while the second relates to state-community relationships, and both of these are important to defining and discussing the notion of multiethnic cities in our study context.

In the later case, the notion is that in a society that defines itself as ethno-culturally plural it is a requirement to have legal and political policy that recognizes and accepts the right of diversities not only to exist but also to “exist equally and in dignity and security” (Premdas, 2006:114). According to Ralph R. Premdas (2006:113) these issues of policy accommodation has two sides: ‘symbolic and substantive’. The symbolic expressions of diversity such as in urban centers include the presence and free expression of one’s own cultural and symbolic substance in the urban centers. In connection to state practice, Premdas argues that in multiethnic and multi cultural society “the state’s symbols must not neglect or marginalizes the presence and practice

of other communities in the official ceremonies of the state in the celebration of festivals and holidays, and the observance of religious events” (ibid: 111-112). According to same author, symbolic right of self-expression is not sufficient to qualify for ethno-cultural plurality unless augmented by substantive rights (that is, equality of access to state resources such as material and power (ibid). It is in light of this understanding that we explore the nature of ethno-cultural plurality in urban Ethiopia, particularly in our case study cities. Especially, understanding the notion of ethnic diversity in such symbolic and substantive matters urges to enquire into how these same elements are negotiated in urban centers such as in the context of our case study cities.

A number of factors may determine the nature of relationships among ethno-cultural groups as well as with the state such as in urban areas. One of these relates to how ethno-cultural diversity comes into being in cities. Different scholars have discussed different sources of diversity. For instance, Kymlicka (2005) notes two basic sources for cultural diversity in given societies: conquest and migration. Put in his own words, “Immigration and the incorporation of national minorities are the two most common sources of ethno cultural diversity in modern state” (Kymlicka 2005: 270). In the first case, cultural diversity comes from migration in which significant numbers of migrants settle permanently in areas inhabited with people of different culture from theirs. Whereas the second case refers to conditions where one or few ethnic group expands, conquest and incorporate different distinct ethnic group under one polity or state. In the former case, ethnic diversity is attributable to very roots of state formation, where as in second case, the focus is on population movements (mobility) that brings together people from different languages, ethnic and religious backgrounds for economic, social or security reasons (Gurr, 1997). Although this notion is used in the wider national context, it also applies to cities and towns.

In African context, of several factors that have given rise to urbanization (O’Connor, 1983: 28-41), conquest, migration, and trade might be considered to take central place. Like the states themselves, most of modern cities in Africa are colonial in origin (Simone, 2005). They were established originally by the conquering colonial forces to serve the colonial political interest (ibid: 2). But gradually, for various economic, social or other reasons, cities have attracted migrants of different socio-cultural backgrounds to themselves from different parts of the

country. If not similar with the Euro-African colonial sense, the place of conquest in urbanization processes in Ethiopia is also significant. Most cities and towns in Ethiopia were the outcomes of expansion and conquest that led to the formation of the modern Ethiopian state since the late nineteenth, particularly in the southern, western and eastern parts of the country (Mekete, 1997; Ottaway, 1973).

The relevance of migration to urbanization and urban social diversity is also important (O'Connor, 1983). Migration, of course, is the main factor of urbanization. To a large degree, the source of ethnic diversity in cities has been the “outcome of waves of migration” (Frey and Zimmer, 2001:141). For various reasons (political, security, economic and social), people migrate to urban areas. Urban migration may have different origins and forms. Migrants to urban areas may be from nearby areas of similar culture or from far off areas with different cultural identity. This latter type of migration is the main source of cultural diversity in urban areas. International migration is also common. Migration may also be either permanent or temporal. Permanent migration to cities is when the migrants or commuters make their living in the city for generations. Therefore, migration, especially the permanent one has been one the major sources ethnic diversity in cities like conquest and settlement. Such different sources of ethno-cultural diversity as we shall see in the Ethiopian case have had their own implications for inter-ethnic relationships as well as for state -society relationships.

The other point that needs to be borne in mind is that while ethnic diversity is central defining feature of urban centers the nature of this diversity may vary. Yusuf Bangura (2006) summarizes typology of ethnic diversity as: unipolar (those in which one ethnicity is overwhelmingly dominant, bipolar (those in which there are only two groups, or two roughly equal groups predominate in a multi-ethnic setting, tripolar (those in which there are only three large groups in multiethnic setting, and fragmented (which deal with cases in which the ethnic structure is fragmented. Including our case study cities, these categories reflect the nature of urban ethnic composition in Ethiopia.

Most of all, what is essential in understanding ethno-culturally plural urban area is the implications that these diversity pose for diversity accommodation and governance such as in ethnically federated political arrangements. Because based on the nature of their accommodation and governance ethno-cultural groups may stand in conflict to each other and then adversely

affect urban stability and development or in harmony with each other to positively contribute to urban development processes.

#### 2. 4.2. A contextual understanding of secondary cities

In examining the effect of ethnic decentralization, the study focuses on multiethnic secondary cities because decentralization mostly concerns secondary towns rather than the primate ones. What are secondary cities, especially in the Ethiopian ethnic federal political context? Cities may be categorized as primate and secondary (Brunn *et al*, 2003). However, it is not an easy task to conceptualize what secondary or primate cities are. The reason is that there are no common criteria or standard to categorize cities in general. In common usage, a primate city refers to the largest city within a nation which dominates the country in most aspects, like politics, economy, media and cultural issues. A primate city is “exceptionally [disproportionally] large, economically dominant, culturally expressive of national identity” (Brunn, et al, 2003:18). Primate city serves as hubs of economic and political activity. By definition, a primate city is supposed to be at least twice larger than the following or second largest city (*ibid*). In most cases, primate city refers to capital cities. However, there are cases in which a country may have more than one primate cities such as where there is division of political, economic, and cultural power among various cities of a country (*ibid*). Example for this is Washington and New York in United States of America, Berne, Geneva, and Zurich in Switzerland.

Below the primate city (primate cities) there may be also different categories and grading of towns. Towns, which come next to the primate city in terms of political, economic and cultural role, are usually considered as secondary. In this case, “size and function’, are the main defining criteria to characterize primate and secondary cities. There is also another means of classifying cities based up on their legal- administrative status. The issue of classifying cities in this case has to do with charter, particularly the national constitution (see Bowman, 1997; Kemf, 1991). Cities, which are established by charter and having official legal personality with the certain right and autonomy of self-government, are called chartered or municipal cities. As Ann O’M. Bowman defines, “Cities are chartered governments (Bowman, 1997: 131). That is, cities are created by legal personality, while towns usually are not (*ibid*). However, this issue of legal personality distinguishes city from town, rather than secondary cities from the primate one.

The legalistic distinction between primate and secondary cities rather relates to the national constitutions. This is particularly a case in a federal form of government. In federal form of government, cities can be either the creatures of the federal state or regional states. A State (region) created cities are those established and governed by the regional states in which they are located, usually in consistency with each regional state's constitution and statutes (Kemp, 1997: 1). According to Roger, L.kemp, cities of this sort are responsible to their regional governments (states) as the amount of power they should exercise is determined by their respective states. Cities can also be established by the federal constitutions and hence are directly responsible to the federal government rather than the regional governments. This latter forms of cities can be considered as primate as far as the nature of their legal base is concerned where as the former type is of secondary status.

In this study context, the concept of secondary city denotes cities or towns, which fall under this secondary status in legal and politico-administrative sense, as well as which are far less in size and concentration of function than the primate or the capital city. In the Ethiopian federal political and legal settings, variation between cities is not only in size where the capital city (Addis Ababa) is far larger than other cities and towns of the country. Similarly, it is the only city in the country that has been accorded national (federal) constitutional status as a separate and self-governing entity. Therefore, in both cases (size and function, and legal base) Addis Ababa is truly a primate city in the country.

Below this primate and national capital are regional capital cities. As will be discussed later cities and towns of this category have no expressive recognition in federal constitution. Rather they are subordinate to and governed by their respective ethno-regional states. Basically, it is to this kind of towns that the concept of secondary city refers to in this study. As explained in the introductory part, these secondary cities, including our case study towns seem to be of multiethnic composition. It is at this juncture that the question of relationships between the ethnic federalism and multiethnic secondary towns comes to forefront. How ethnically defined ethno regional states accommodate and govern their multiethnic towns is really a problem of research both at theoretical and empirical levels, and that is what this study is all about.

#### 2.4. 3 Accommodation of secondary cities of multiethnic composition in ethnic federalism: literature review

In this section, which of course is among the core themes of the study, the focus of the discussion will be on issues pertaining to compatibility or incompatibility between multiethnic cities and ethnically based decentralization at the philosophical level.

As Will Kymlicka rightly observes, “many federal systems were not designed as a response to ethno-cultural pluralism- for example United States or Australia” (2005:269). He further argues, “the most famous and widely studied federation-the American system-makes no efforts to respond to the aspirations of national minorities for self-government” (ibid: 273) but to divide and diffuse power among “a single national community” (ibid: 276). However, this notion concerns only the oldest federations. Other federations like Canada, Switzerland as well as many countries that recently adopted federal political formula were primarily meant to accommodate and govern their ethno-cultural diversity by way of legally recognizing their distinctive cultural identity and according them the right of self-government (ibid). Therefore, in its modern sense, federal form of government is supposed to be a panacea for ethno-cultural diversity accommodation through ensuring different groups desire of cultural distinctiveness and political autonomy (political self-governance). Now the question is if these premises work for multiethnic cities. In other words, does federal political system, particularly its ethnic variant have space for the accommodation of multiethnic cities?

Our argument in this regard is that while federal form of government is widely considered as panacea for accommodating and governing ethnically plural society, especially in contemporary thinking, there is limitation on its relevance to multiethnic cities, even at philosophical level. Put differently, the general assumption that federalism is a best form of government for plural society does not readily apply (fit) to the ethno-culturally divided cities and towns (see, Ghai, 2000; Berman, 2004; Kymlicka, 2005). One reason for this is that by its very philosophical root, federalism is ‘territorial’, that is, it works for the territorially concentrated ethno-cultural groups (Treisman, 2007). Berman (2004:19) similarly puts that federalism “work where groups are more or less territorially concentrated”. Similarly, Yash Ghai comments, “A major limitation of territorial devolution of power is that it is restricted to circumstances where there is a regional concentration of an ethnic group” (2000:9). Similarly, in multiethnic urban centers ethnic settlement is not territorial but intermingling or mixed. Therefore, this seems to be the major



philosophical gap between federalism and multiethnic towns in view of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation. How has the prevailing literature reacted to this limitation?

As Freeley and Rubin (2008: rightly observe there is no shortage in scholarly works on federalism. Yet, it seems that relationships between federalism and multiethnic cities are generally under theorized. The tension between ethnic federalism and multiethnic cities has not attracted scholarly attention. As well, there are few studies devoted to explore the practice and experience of urban governance in countries ruled by federal political system. One of this is Donald L. Watts endeavor to highlight issues and challenges of governing capital cities in federal political system who has argued, “every federation faces the difficult task of deciding how its federal capital should be governed” (1999:79). Watts identifies three types of arrangements in which federal capitals may be governed along with their merits and demerits. These include, “a federal district, a city-state and government under the jurisdiction of one of the states” (Ibid: 79).

Watts has also noted few non - capital cities that have been accorded a privilege of federally chartered city status, example, Dire Dawa of Ethiopia. He also points out to few non-capital towns which have been accommodated into federation as full-fledged member states (example, Bremen and Hamburg in Germany, and St. Petersburg in Russia) (ibid: 80). Indeed, except such description he did not go further to theorize about urban diversity accommodation in federation. Thus, one can fairly put that scholarly works in federalism has been insulated from reflecting on status of multiethnic towns in ethnic federal political context.

Two factors might justify why relationships between federalism and urban centers are under-theorized, especially in the ethnic federal political order. One is that ethnic form of federalism has not been popular after, even before the disintegration of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the epitome of unsuccessful ethnic federation. The other relates to perceiving urban centers as expression of “modernity”. Indeed, urbanization is one of the manifestations of ‘modernization’ (Deutsch, 1961; Huntington, 1965). There was a widely held view that ‘modernization’ in general and urbanization in particular would make ethnic identity less relevant. In particular, the ‘modernization’ school of thought considered urbanization as a process and means to control or override ethnic or communal identities (see Hunington, 1965, 1968). As Huntington noted, ‘rationalization’ is central to modernization school of thought, which “involves movement from particularism to universalism, from diffuseness to specificity, from ascription to achievement,

and from affectivity to affective neutrality” (1965; 387). In this sense, the expectation is that urban way of life, and the concomitant social movements and interactions were supposed to ‘liberate’ individuals from traditional values and belief systems. However, contrary to such claims modernization and urbanization have had unintended consequences in instigating the development of ethnic consciousness rather than eradicating it. Robert Gurr states this as,

*One of the unintended consequences of the last half-century of political and economic development is that these processes have brought diverse peoples into closer contact with one another and thus increased their self-awareness of these [ethnic] differences (1997: 4).*

Consequently, the place of multiethnic cities in ethnic decentralization has remained least theorized and less studied. Especially, this gap is critical in ethnically decentralized forms of governance. In other words, the question of urban diversity accommodation in ethnically decentralized forms of governance remains unaddressed in theoretical explorations. In the context of this philosophical gaps it tempts one to ask how ethnic decentralization works when it dissolves into multiethnic cities such as in Ethiopia where ethnically based federation has been operative since 1991.

As argued in this thesis, the consequence of ethnic decentralization in such condition seems to be complex. That ethnic decentralization engenders societal engagement in “negotiating statehood” is central to this study<sup>16</sup>. But what is negotiating statehood?

## 2.5 Negotiating Statehood

Central to this study is the thesis that ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia has engendered societal engagement in negotiating statehood at the local community level, particularly in multiethnic cities like Adama and Hawassa. Such a responsibility requires clarifying the notions of statehood and its negotiation.

### 2.5.1 Defining Statehood

The concept of negotiating statehood is a marriage of two words: statehood and negotiation. To understand this phrase, it may be important to conceptualize first what statehood means. In a very simple understanding, statehood refers to a condition or status of being a state. Yet, as

---

<sup>16</sup> *As is discussed in section 2.6.3, this aspect of decentralization is what both the critic and advocate of decentralization share in common.*

Timothy Mitchell rightly observes the concept of state itself “has always been difficult to define” (1991:77). At least over the last 300 years or so the so-called state has been central in the practice and study of politics (Migdal, 2001), however, as Philips Abrams rightly remarked, the definitions of state have been “exhausted rather than solved” (1988:60).

The aim here is not to delve into such exhausted and exhausting business but demarcate the kind and aspect of statehood this deals with. Particularly, in this exercise, we discern and explain three essential points that are useful to conceptualizing state and by extension statehood. The first one relates to the dichotomy and interplay between the idea (image) and practice (prudential) aspects of state (Steinberger, 2004; Abrams, 1988). Secondly, we look at the key defining elements of statehood that are subject to negotiation. The third point is about how the notion of sovereignty, which is the core-defining feature of statehood, is to be conceived. It is through explaining these issues that we set out the concept of statehood for our study purpose.

We begin our definition of statehood with its accounts of idea (image) and practice (prudential) (Steinberger, 2004; Abrams, 1988; Migdal, 2009). According to Peter J. Steinberger, there are two ways of understanding state: state as a ‘political practice’ and state as an ‘idea (image)’ (2004: 1). As Steinberger defines, the political practice (the prudential state as he would like to call it), refers to the activities taking place in a political community called state, the authority that a state exercises within and outside its territory, as well as its internal constitution (ibid). Basically, this concerns about internal organization and structures of political society that is mainly associated to the various activities that compose the political life of state. In particular, it concerns activities related to and undertaken by government or the ruling body of state (ibid).

On the other hand, as Steinberger conceptualizes, idea *state* refers to the metaphysical theory and ontological concept that describes the essential nature of state common to all. He describes this idea state as,

*It [idea state] purports to describe, among other things, those features of particular states that are common to all and that determine the fundamental nature of each. It seeks to indicate what we mean when we refer to something as a state, when we talk of the activities or reasons of state, when we speculate about the authority of the state, and so on (ibid.).*

According to Steinberger, the notion of the idea of state “does not entail and depend on any specific forms of government, nor with the proper scope and direction of governmental activity” (ibid). Rather, it is independent of particular public policies and forms, capacities and effectiveness of state government. It has “little to do with the degree of peace and development that prevail in a given state” (ibid). As Steinberger puts, the state as an idea is quite generous regarding government and governmental activity, i.e., it can embrace many different kinds of government and regime types.

Philip Abrams also makes similar distinction of state when he states that: “There is a state system: a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society. There is, too, a state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in different times” (1977:58). Abrams’s category of the state as, *the state system* and *the state -idea*, more or less, corresponds to Steinberger’s categorization of state as *prudential state* and *idea state*, respectively. For him, as well, the state system refers to the tangible (pragmatic) aspects of state, mostly government and government related institutions, whereas the idea state is what is generally expected to make up the state (ibid).

Similarly, Joel Migdal (2009) categorizes the state as *a practice* and as *an image*. The image aspect of state, according to Joel Migdal refers to what states are or “supposed to look like and what they are supposed to do” (ibid: 188). By this understanding, he focuses on certain elements, forms and symbol common to all states, such as state’s , territorial boundaries, flags, executives, bureaus, legislatures, judiciaries, schools, prisons, armies, police forces and so on. On the other hand, Migdal’s understanding of the practice of state refers to the actual practice and functions of state and state institutions mainly referring to government and government activities (ibid: 168).

For Alexander Wendt (1999) as well, a state has two dimensions, which he describes as, ‘essential state’ and ‘structure or form of state’. The first refers to the idea or image of state discussed above, whereas the second notion refers to state in practice (government and government activities), which according to him could be “democratic, monarchical, communist, and so on” (ibid: 201).

According to these thinkers image (idea) aspect of state is universal. As Migdal argues, the image of the state has become widely shared in different cultures and continents. He argues, the image of a state has become remarkably similar across the globe, at least since the middle of the twentieth century (2009: 166). Migdal goes on to argue, “it is the case that populations the world over have developed common understandings about what states are supposed to look like and what they are supposed to do, even if practices fall far from their hopes and expectations” (ibid:188).

According to this notion, the image (idea) of state is printed or inculcated in everybody’s mind everywhere. It is omnipresent (Morris, 2004). Everybody everywhere feels and senses something about the image of state and the world of state. It has for long been inculcated in the minds of people everywhere across generation in different ways, mainly through activities and practice of government. In support of this view Ted Robert Gurr notes, ‘‘From the time children enter their first elementary – school classroom and see a world map divided into colored blocks of territory, they are being socialized into the international state system’’( 1997:3).

On the other hand, as discussed above, states do vary greatly in practice, such as in forms, and structures of their government, in ideologies and policies that their governments follow, and yet more importantly in the degree and capabilities of their administrative control over society (Migdal, 1988). As Kopstein and Lichbach (2005:1) note, “within our world of states no two are ruled in exactly the same way”. In terms of their governance, some governments may be democratic while others may not. Still some states may be unitary in administrative structures while others are federal. Presidential, parliamentary or mixed type of government may also be another factor of classifications among states.

As Steinberger rightly remarks, many of scholarly works fail to grasp such a dichotomy of state. Rather most studies focus on the power relations (government) aspect of statehood. Put in his own words,

*a great many political theorists today devote themselves almost exclusively to the pragmatic or prudential study of policy and government, focusing in particular on issues internal to the political life of modern liberal societies and avoiding, or attempting to avoid, larger questions about the idea of the state itself (Steinberger:2004: 5).*

As Steinberger rightly observes it is this latter account of state that is outshining in people's perception of understanding and interpreting state. Steinberger remarks, "all too often, state is defined in strictly government terms, as if the government (power relationships) alone defines statehood" (Ibid.)

In fact, the internal constitutions or government aspect of state is an important and central aspect of statehood. But understanding state only in terms of power relationships (government) does not give a full picture or account of statehood. It ignores one of its important part; the image, the idea and symbolic aspect of the state in society or what Wendt (1999) calls 'symbolic and discursive identity' of the state by which it is represented in society. The conception of state only from the perspective of its political practice (government) remains narrower only to lead to a blemished interpretation of facts about state and state-society relations. For instance, this could be one of the reasons for scholars to wrongly interpreting the nature and dynamics of state-society relationship in contemporary Africa as *state failure* (Rotberg, 2004; Zartman, 1995; Hopking, 2000), societal disengagement from state (Baker, 2000), an estrangement of society to state and societal alienation from state (see Bratton, 1994). As we show later, societal problems with the ruling regimes (governments) does not necessarily represent or reflect realities of societal relations with state as idea or as a fundamental political organization. In local Africa, at least in Ethiopia the idea of state in society and societal attachment with state seems to be strong, withstanding the aperture between society and government.

In this study, the dichotomy of state as an idea (image) and practice (government) is helpful at least for three main reasons. First, it helps to grasp the strongly inculcated and deeply entrenched idea/image of state in local community. Second, the dichotomy between state and government helps for grasping patterns and dynamics of societal engagement in state and government such as in our case study context. Lastly, it enables us to comprehend how the discrepancy between the image (idea) and practice of state cause conflict over statehood, and then lead to societal engagement in state politics, or in what we call negotiating statehood such as in urban parts of Ethiopia.

Yet, to better understand the notion of statehood it is also important to look at the interplay between the idea (image) and prudent (practical) aspect of state. While Steinberger's distinction between the two dimension of state is definitely important in understanding statehood and state-

society relationships there are however some inherent problems in it. First, he conceives the idea (image) state as ontologically fixed. Second, he takes the ‘universality’ of the image (idea) of state for granted. Third, he tends to completely detach the idea and practice of state by arguing that they both are “sharply distinct from one another both methodologically and substantively” (2004:4). These notions however seem to be somewhat problematic in understanding the nature and dynamics of state in relations with society.

A counter argument can be made here against these three extreme views. First, the image of state is subject to change. Second, there are also some peculiarities of an image of state in society. Third, the image and practice of state are closely related in a way they mutually influence and shape each other. We address these points by conflating them together. To begin with, mostly it is a case that an idea/ image of state are primarily developed in society by the kind of state (or government in this case) that a given society experiences. That is to say that depending upon their experience of state (government) people does construct the image of state. In this respect, for example, it is likely that a ‘good government’ develops positive image of state in society, while a ‘bad’ government does the opposite. This does not, however, mean that everyone all over the world develops or holds similar and same image of state. For example, citizens of democratic states may not have similar image of statehood with citizens of oppressive regimes. Even more so, citizen under one political roof may not develop or hold similar image or outlook with respect to the state they are subjected to. On the one hand, that section of the society who have been affiliated or favored by the state will develop positive feelings and image about the state. On the other hand, those who felt that they were disadvantaged or exploited by one particular government would obviously develop a negative image of state. For example, the image of black South Africans towards the Apartheid state of South African may be completely different from that of the white minority. In Ethiopia, people in the conquered parts of the country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have developed a very different image (negative) towards the Ethiopian state mainly due to the exploitation they experienced as compared to citizens who belong to the conquering group. As a result, it is difficult to consider the idea or image of state as necessarily universal.

It is also true that constructed image of a state (positive or negative) can endure. In most cases, the image of a state that a government creates in society lasts long and plays crucial roles in influencing even shaping state-society relations. However, it can also change. A ‘good’

government can change a negative image of a state into positive or the vice versa. It means that as much as the image of state can be constructed it may also be susceptible to deconstruction and reconstruction. As such, in the real world, the idea or image of state and its practice (government) influence each other and hence their distinction may not be taken for granted. Therefore, along with conceptual dichotomy between the image and practice of the state we also take note of what they bear to each other in examining state politics in our case study.

With this, we come to the second notion of statehood that is a subject of negotiation. This relates to the defining elements of state including territory, population (citizens), legitimacy, sovereignty and government. These elements are among the widely accepted defining elements of statehood. They were also enunciated in the Montevideo convention of 1933. As is discussed in our case study context, most of these aspects of statehood have become objective of negotiation in our case study. In addition to these, every state has its own unique symbolic and historical identities in which it is peculiarly known, and these can be expressed in flags, emblems, colors, holidays etc. These elements of state can also be objects of negotiation among state's citizens, as is discussed in our two case study cities.

The question of sovereignty, which is the most defining element of state, is also a subject of controversy in scholarly works and needs conceptual reflection in line with how it becomes an issue of negotiation. Indeed, sovereignty is supposed to be a key notion that distinguishes state from other forms of human associations that also possess territory, population and administration elements. As important as it is, the notion of state sovereignty however has been highly problematized. Sovereignty may be defined in different ways and under different contexts. However, as a key defining element of statehood it refers to the supreme power of state with its territory.

This notion of statehood is a version of Max Weber's well-known definition of the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (quoted in Morris, 2004:195). As Christopher W. Morris rightly captures, in the sense of this definition "A human community is a state if and only if it successfully claims to possess two things: a monopoly of force and the sole right to determine who may legitimately use force" (ibid: 195-196). Thus, this way of conception assumes the state



as an institutionalized organization that actually exercises authority from border to border within its territory in recognition of no authority other than itself.

Outstandingly, this Weberian notion of state seems to be the gold standard to measure up modern states (Migdal, 2005). Essentially, this conception is central to people's image of what a state actually is, what it does in society. As Migdal rightly puts "Big or little, rich or poor, strong or weak, old or new, all states should conceivably measure up against this single standard" (Migdal, 2009:162). More importantly, it is also this definition that has been used as analytical lenses through which scholars understand and interpret statehood and state-society relationships around the world (see Haggmann and Peclard, 2010). For instance, it is owing to their deviation from this standard that African states were disqualified an entitlement for 'stateness' in the eyes of many scholars (see Chomsky 2006; Jackson 1990; Rothberg, 2004; Zartman 1995).

Though widely used for the understanding of modern state, especially in the European context, this way of understanding statehood has faced critics of being "standard enough for the nearly 200 states that exist today" (Migdal, 2009). Migdal puts it more clearly as,

*[The] gold standard or template of [the Weberian definition of state], has had difficulty being standard enough for the nearly 200 states that exist today. In particular, the rush of state creation after the two world wars, coming in the wake of collapsing empires, produced states for which scholars have been at pains to apply the standard template. Even when we look at states as unified, purposive organizations, whose structures are so remarkably similar across the globe, their actual practices vary so markedly as to seemingly make them almost impossible to compare, to measure against a single standard. Scholars have often felt that they are comparing apples and oranges (2009:162).*

Gledhill adds, "the modern state looks a very different animal when it is viewed from the perspective of, say, Africa or Latin America rather than that of the West" (2005:1). The implication of this critic is that the state can and should be defined in a variety of ways—especially in its contextual reality, rather than being held up by a single template. In turn, this has necessitated an alternative way of looking at state.

Joel Migdal (1988, 1994, 2001, and 2009) is among the fore front scholars to break through it. In contrast to the Weberian notion of statehood, Migdal identifies at least two important entry points to understanding state in the developing regions of the World. One is the notion of

dispersed *domination* that sharply contrasts the *Weberian* language of domination and monopoly. The other is the existence of multiplicity of actors competing for domination among society. For Migdal (1994, 2001, 2009), social control in society is fragmented rather than monopolized by the state. Instead of monopolization, he conceives that in the real world political power resides at numerous locations within the society. This is to emphasize that public authority does not always fall within the exclusive realm of government institutions (see also Lund, 2010). The idea is that, as competition and conflict for social control is intense within the society, it is less likely for one single body to claim exclusive power of control within the society. In view of African context, Bratton also makes similar claim, “state elites do not automatically enjoy a monopoly of political power, but must bid for it in competition with an array of formal and informal political organizations” (1994: 234). In similar vein, Parekh asserts, “The state is not fully sovereign over its territory and shares it with local and supranational agencies... (2006: 194).

Particularly, this viewpoint of divided sovereignty is relevant in contemporary era of globalization where “states faced covert and overt challenges to their power” and autonomy from various global and internal forces (Migdal and Schlichte, 2005:1). Such conception of divided sovereignty in conceptualizing contemporary state reveals realities in Africa including Ethiopia where the power and loyalty to guerrilla and other forces are so prominent. Equally remarkable, the notion of shared sovereignty or dispersed domination applies in countries ruled by federal political order (Trudeau, 2005) which also applies to present Ethiopia. Therefore, conceptually and analytically instead of the monopoly of power it is the notion of dispersed *domination* and multiplicity of actors vying for domination that is more relevant to defining and understanding state for this study purpose.

Still important, there are scholars who observe different forms (categories) of power implying that is less likely to be held or monopolized by one actor in society. Lasswell and Kaplan (1952), Robert Dahil (1961; 1998); Michael Mann (1993) and many other scholars offered different forms of power. Chiefly, a context and an issue of inquiry determine classification of power. For instance, Lasswell and Kaplan categorize power as “A may be exercising power over B because of his economic position, X over Y because of his control over the instrument of violence, and still another power holder may owe his power to particular skill” (1952: 85-86). This category of power more or less refers to political, economic and administrative forms of power, which are

also relevant for our case study purpose and hence is essential to briefly reflect upon these different forms of power.

The politico-military form of power relates to the making and enforcement of law (see Mann, 1993). This is closely associated with Foucault's sovereignty model of power, which "equates power with rule and law" (Brown, 2006:67). According to this viewpoint, he who possesses this form of power (individual or institutions) has the capacity to enact rules with its political machineries and to execute them with its coercive forces, such as the military, police, prison, court etc. Administrative model of power, on the other hand, relates to a mandate competence of implementing policy rather than its making. Similar to the administrative form of decentralization (Treisman,2007), one who exercises this form of power is not an independent decision making body but only entitled to implement policies enacted by some other higher authority, usually by the political power holder. This form of power is different from political power in that it lacks autonomy to initiate and enact rules. However, it is connected to political authority in that it derives its administrative authority from the politically powerful body.

Economic power is another model of power with great relevance to our case study. As Kenneth E. Boulding understands, "Economic power is mainly a combination of productive and exchange power, mostly embodied in power over objects in the form of goods and services" (1990:58). According to the author, this form of power is particularly the "characteristics of institutions such as the household, the firm, the corporation, the business, and the financial-banks, insurance companies, stock markets, and so on" (ibid:30). As Boulding notes, economic power relates to an exercise of control over production and distribution of goods and services (ibid).

In urban context, too, the issues of power distribution in society have been strongly debated among urban scholars (see Eisinger, 1997). In particular, there are three competing theories in explaining about the distribution and structure of power within the urban communities: elitist, pluralist and regime theory. Elite theorists observe that power in urban areas is highly stratified in which a small group of elites at the top control power (Hunter, 1953). On the other hand, the pluralist theorists reject the elitist view, and instead they see the decentralization of power among the urban society. Pluralist theory of urban politics believe that urban society were "fractured into congeries of hundreds of small special interest groups with incompletely overlapping memberships, widely diffused power bases, and multitudes of techniques to exercise influence

of decisions salient to them”(Polby, 1980:118; see also Dahl, 1961; Polby,1963). From the perspective of regime theory (see Stone, 1989), urban political structure is very complex issues involving various actors and interests with interrelated networks. This later notion of understand power urges to consider power in terms of coproduction between the economic and political elites.

For the purpose of this study, the notion of division or dispersed power seems to be more relevant for two cases. First, it reflects realities of power distribution in our case study cities. Second, in statehood context, processes of negotiation usually involve actors with certain negotiating power even if not on equal terms (see Zartman, and Rubin, 2002; Hagmann P´eclard, 2010).

#### 2.5.2 Conceptualizing Negotiating Statehood

An attempt is made above to conceptualize state and statehood. But, what is negotiating statehood? What are the objectives, forms, strategies, and arena of political engagement (in negotiating statehood)? These are among the core questions this section seeks to address.

Literally, the phrase of negotiating statehood refers to processes and acts of contest and compromise between various forces and interests over statehood, which as we defined above contain various elements such as image (idea), symbols, power relations or domination, territory, population (citizenships) of state. Objects of negotiation in this study context, therefore, include but not limited to such key elements of state. However, as used in this study, the concept is a bit complex and hence worth some more detail explanations. We begin the task by describing the concept of negotiation as it applies to state politics or state formation processes.

Literally, negotiation is conceptualized as a peaceful means of resolving points of disagreement among various conflicting actors and interests, usually in round table. For example, as Frank R. Pfetsch (2007: xii) defines “Negotiations are a way of finding solutions to conflicts of antagonistic interests without the use of violence”. In a dictionary of Diplomacy Berridge and A James (2001; 166) defines negotiation as “Discussion, or ‘talks’, between the representatives of two or more states which is designed to produce an agreement on a point which is either of shared concern or at issue between them. Zartman, and Rubin, in their part define negotiation as “a joint decision making under conditions of conflict and uncertainty, in which divergent

positions are combined into a single outcome” (2002: 12). Zartman and Berman also define negotiation as the “process by which conflicting positions are combined to form a common decision” (1984:1).

However, these literal definitions of negotiation does not fit straight to the study of state politics or state formation processes such as in our case. This is so mainly due to four major reasons. The first is that in the sense of this definition emphasis is put only on peaceful strategies and means of negotiations. Secondly, arenas of negotiation in these understandings are round table. Thirdly, actors who involve in the processes of negotiation are supposed to be representatives of groups in conflict. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly in this literal definition it is conceived that the outcomes of negotiations are usually fixed and pre-determined. That is to say that an outcome of negotiation is always conclusive; it results in either achievement of agreement (successful negotiation) or failures (unsuccessful negotiation).

If we apply this concept of negotiation to state, formation processes may not be helpful. Because it appears that the processes of negotiation between various political groups of conflicting interest over statehood, be it about the image, identity, memory, history, of the state or about the distribution and arrangements of state power and resources - usually by peaceful means on bargaining table and with predetermined outcome - possibly agreement or failure to agree. In fact, in political science this idea of negotiation has been widely used, mostly in field of international relations for the analysis of inter-state relationships and international organizations, as well as at the very local level, such as in the analysis of conflict resolution between ethnic or other groups relating to conflict over resources, identity, boundaries and the like.

However, in arenas of state formation processes negotiation in a way conceived above represents only one approach, because as Charles Tilly (1975) notes, state formation processes (construction and deconstruction of statehood) have never followed only a peaceful course. In other words, this is to note that state making processes have involved some use of violence and threat (ibid). As well, actors who involve in state formation processes and arenas of engagement may be multitude and hence difficult to comprehend them all, consequently, perhaps it may be untenable to apply the literal meaning of negotiation in studying state formation processes. Especially, it becomes less relevant to capture the processes and dynamics of state formation in conflicting political arenas, such as in Africa. Cognizant of this deficit, recently Hagmann and

Péclard (2010) came up with the concept of ‘negotiating statehood’ which is quiet remarkably (if not exclusively) different in perspective to understanding state formation processes in post-conflict political settings. .

Conceptually, the term ‘Negotiating statehood’ as Hagmann and Péclard define it refers to is “the dynamic and partly undetermined processes of state formation and failure by a multitude of social actors who compete over the institutionalization of power relations” (ibid. 539). According to this definition, state formation or disintegration is a dynamic and constantly changing process with no conclusive end. This contradicts the prevailing view that state formation and by implication the negotiation processes over statehood have fixed end (outcome). Rather, in this sense, statehood is conceived to be in a constantly formative process (Doornbos, 2010) with no determined or predictable outcome (Hagmann and Péclard 2010). Still importantly, as conceived by Hagmann and Péclard , processes of negotiating statehood go beyond (outside) the narrow circles of government, political parties and guerrilla fighters and include a multiplicity of actors ranging from local to international level (Hagmann and Péclard , 2010). It does not point at state actors and institutions as the only relevant actors and arenas of negotiation over state resources, power, image, symbols and the like. Rather, it recognizes a wide range of actors, interests and tables that in one way or another involve in processes of state formation and disintegration. These scholars duly recognize both the formal and informal political rules and games that involve in setting or in shaping the rules for constructing or deconstructing power relations among society (ibid).

In summary, the dynamics of the processes of state formation with no clearly predictable outcome, multiplicity of actors, and diversities of tables and arenas of negotiation are central to the negotiating statehood framework to understanding the nature and dynamics of state-society relations in developing countries. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of political developments in developing world requires grasping “who negotiates statehood (actors, resources and repertoires); where these negotiation processes occur (negotiation arenas and tables); and what these processes are all about (objects of negotiation)” (Hagmann and Peclard, 2010: 539). In this perspective, the nature and dynamics of state-society relations in contemporary Africa can better be understood by grasping and analyzing the actors and their resources/repertoires, the arenas and tables where the conflict and negotiation occurs and

the objects for which the conflict and negotiation take place (Doornbos, 2010). In the words of Doornbos, the processes and dynamics of state formation may better understood by distinguishing and analyzing “different categories of *actors*, and of *resources* and *repertoires* and also by distinguishing between *negotiating tables* and *arenas* when identifying the locus and context of such negotiating processes” (ibid:750).

According to Doornbos distinguishing and analyzing actors, resources and arenas for contest and negotiation, among others, facilitates exploration of contested dimensions of statehood such as, political identity, authority structures and resource struggles (ibid). As Doornbos underlines, the usage of the concept and analytical framework of negotiating statehood can be applied in many different contexts, at different levels and for many different issues. Such conceptual framework is also helpful to comprehend the processes and dynamics of societal contest and bargaining over state power, resources, symbols, identity, history, and citizenship in multiethnic cities of Ethiopia. Of course, it is to these processes of conflict and contest, bargaining and compromise between the various interests and identities over the image, symbols and identity as well as social, economic, and political resources of the state that the phrase negotiating statehood refers to in this study.

## 2.6 Society-in-state as an analytical framework towards understanding state-society relationships in contemporary Africa

We are of the view that there is certain gap in the literature of state-society relations in substantiating the contemporary dynamics of state-society relationships in contemporary Africa, particularly in Ethiopia. By reviewing existing literature, we synthesize a relevant theoretical and analytical perspective that would help capture and analyze the development and dynamics of state-society relationships in the continent, focusing on the present Ethiopian context.

### 2.6.1 A short Review of theories of state-society relationships

Recently, there has been a shift in scholarly studies of state-society relations. It is a shift from state-society dichotomy to state-society mutual ‘embeddedness’.<sup>17</sup> Some define the shift as the move from the “first state debate” to the “second state debate” (Hobson, 2003:3). John M.

---

<sup>17</sup> The traditional perspectives were the society-centered approach, which places society at the centre to understanding the socio-economic and political dynamics and the state-centered approach, which emphasizes on state autonomy and importance to shaping society.

Hobson further notes, “Now the debate [about state-society relations] has shifted away from ‘state versus society’ to one based on ‘state autonomy and society’, with the central question revolving around the issue: *to what extent do states structure society and to what extent do societies shape states?*” (ibid), Emphasis original. Among scholars sharing this viewpoint are Mitchell (1991); Mann (1993); Migdal, (2001); Migdal *et al* (1994). Yet Joel Migdal’s ‘state-in-society’ theory seems to be developed into somewhat a comprehensive approach in defining and understanding the characteristics and dynamics of state-society relationships in developing countries (Migdal, 2001, 1988; 1994, 2009). There are visible points that Migdal’s theory shares with and differs from the mainstream theories of state society relations, especially the so-called the society-centered and state-centered perspectives. With the statist approach, Migdal state-in-society theory shares the view that state has potential to shape and transform society (see Migdal, 2001; 1994). Joel Migdal notes, “States have always been critical and direct agents of socioeconomic change, and this has been especially true in the twentieth century” (Migdal, 1994: 2). For him, “even weak states have had continuing and profound effects on numerous aspects of social life” (Migdal, 2001:42).

However, Migdal questions how far state is autonomous from society and how capable enough it is in shaping society (2001). In the first place, his critic is against the statist view that treats the state as given, autonomous, and impenetrable. He maintains that state is part of the society (made up of society) and hence it becomes difficult to put sharper distinction (boundary) between the two. Migdal is also critic of the statist assumption that entails the “capabilities and proficiency of state in achieving a fixed set of goals and in implementing formal policies” to the direction wanted and to the level desired (1994; 2). For him, states have inherent limit of power and capability to translate their policies into “effective action” (2001:42). According to him, the main cause for state limit such as in capability of policy implementation has very less to do with poorly designed policies, incompetent officials and insufficient resources. Rather, as he argues, it is due to various forms of resistance that a state faces from various social forces and interests competing for social regulation and domination (2001:12). He asserts that due to the resistance of various forces it is not possible always for the state to function as dominant power in society as well as to implement its policies effectively. This is a point at which Migdal brings into play the influence of society over state, and in doing so he reveals his overlapping interest with the society-centered understanding of state-society relations in developing countries like Africa.



This perspective tends to balance between the society-centered and statist perspectives, and is helpful in many ways to the understanding and explanation of state-society relationships in contemporary Africa, particularly in the post-1991 Ethiopia context. In the first place, it rightly captures the fact that state is embedded in society explicating the relevance and importance of state in society. In political systems like Africa where autocratic forms of government reign, marginalizing the role and relevance of state in society does not give full picture about the nature of state-society relations in the continent (Herbst, 2000). As well, in the continent where a patrimonial system of rule has predominated (see Bayart1993), it appears to be difficult to distinguish between state and society, public and private life. Secondly, it rightly posits the influence of societies on state by expounding the multiplicity of social actors in society that in resistance, conflict and collaboration with state affect, change and shapes state policies and decisions to indeterminate end. Truly, the role and influence of society in state politics sounds right in the African social context, where there is an extreme plurality of interests, cultures, and identities. For example, as argued in this thesis ethnic plurality was one of the main factors that led to the advent of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia 1991. Equally important, the advent of ethnic federation in Ethiopia in turn brought about new changes and developments to state-society and inter-society relationships such as in urban areas.

However, Migdal's state-in-society theory seems to be inadequate to probe some aspects of state-society relations in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia, especially with respect to the interpretation of societal relations with state. That is, while Migdal rightly captures state's penetration and presence in society, for example in the form of an attempt to impose domination, regulate social relationships, mould social behavior, extract or use resources, he however tends to overlook societies interest in state and engagement in state political processes. The focus of Migdal's state-in-society theory is on state's interest in society but not the vice versa, especially in developing countries such as in Africa. This perspective seems to support the widely held view of societal disinterest in state and alienation from state political activities.<sup>18</sup> This can be witnessed in the following two statements that he makes. One is what Migdal argues as, "People [in Africa] do not automatically consider the state to be the proper authority to settle the crucial

---

<sup>18</sup> *Presently, especially since 1990s it has been common a large number of literature portraying African states as failed institution (see for example, (Zartman, 1995; Rotberg, 2004; Stewart and Brown, 2009; Jackson, 1990).*

questions or even the appropriate forum within which various social groups will struggle over the future course of the society. The role of the state is itself an object of struggle” (ibid: 10).

The other statement by which Migdal tends to undermine the depth of societal relations with state in Africa is that “States [in Africa] are like big rocks thrown into small ponds; they make waves from end to end but they rarely catch any fish” (1988: 9). The first point vividly exposes how Migdal is disheartened to recognize societal interest in state in Africa. In the second case, he attempts to show state’s penetration and presence in society but not the vice versa.

As Migdal argues, societal resistance of state or disinterest in and disengagement from state have been among the fundamental problems that African states have faced in “building the capabilities to change their societies in particular ways” (1988: 10). This viewpoint has also been held and reproduced by a number of scholars (see for example, Boone, 1994; Kohli and Shue, 1994; Chazan, 1994; Bratton, 1994. For Migdal and other scholars who adhere to this line of thinking, social forces and social institutions that resisted state domination and hence acted outside the existing political order were taken as evidence for society’s disinterest and disengagement from state. In most cases, such social forces were considered as if they had no motives and interests in state (Migdal, 1994; Bratton, 1994; Baker, 2000). Bratton, for instance, strongly argues that there are parts of society in Africa who aspires to “remain determined to preserve a realm of authority beyond the reach of the state within which they make decisions and lead their own life” (1994: 231). This implies state system of governance has not been valued as such among African societies.

However, we are of the view that this notion does not seem to account for realities of local politics in Africa across regions and time. For example, it does not seem to explain the characteristics and dynamics of political development in present Ethiopia, where an advent of ethnic decentralization in the country ushered in societal interest in state and engagement in state political processes such as in processes of contest and bargaining over state power, resources, citizenship, identity, history, and symbols. This compels us to propose and develop a perspective that emphasizes and enlightens societal interest in state and engagement in state political processes. It is to capture such a point that the phrase *society- in- state* is synthesized in this study.

### 2.6.2 Society-in-state synthesis as an analytical framework

The phrase society-in-state is coined here just to emphasize the depth and complexity of society's interest and engagement in state. For various objectives, people develop interest in state and engage in state political affairs. Indeed, in contemporary times it is hardly possible for society to ignore state. This also holds true for African societies. Driven by various internal and external factors the level of societal political awareness and engagement in state has been increasing from time to time in the continent. The popular political movement during the independence episode of 1950s and 1960s from the European colonial rule might be taken as manifestation of these political developments, as the objectives were clearly to establish 'independent' statehood. Followed by, in 1980s and 1990s the rise of popular political awareness and engagement in state politics challenged regimes and political order of the time in the continent from one corner to another. Unable to accommodate the rising political demands, most regimes in the continent entered various changes and transformations. Due to popular pressure, in some countries regime changes took place. In others such as in Somalia, Liberia, DRC replacement of new regimes after ousting the old ones pended for some years leaving their society in transformative crises (see, Hyslop, 1999). These latter developments are results of the failure of the existing institutions to entertain the popular demand, be it due to unwillingness or institutional irrelevance and incompetence.

In Ethiopia, which is the focus of this study, mass mobilization based on ethnicity resulted not only in change of regime but also change in territorial sovereignty. Eritrea became an independent state seceding from Ethiopia. Internally, the state has been restructured along ethnic lines by what might be called ethnic or national federation since 1991. These political developments in the country were largely the effect of the rising societal political engagement on the one hand, and on the other hand, they were causes to usher in new forms and dynamics of political engagement such as (re)negotiating state power, resources, symbols, history, identity, and citizenship down to the local level.

Unfortunately, the existing theories of state - society relations are not much helpful to grasp and explain such dynamics of societal interest in state and engagement in state politics such as in Africa, specifically in post- 1991 Ethiopia. A perspective that we develop here, labeling it as a *society-in-state synthesis*, is believed to capture the development and dynamics of societal

interest and engagement in state politics. Basically, the 'society- in- state' synthesis is coined to enlighten local community's interest in state and engagement in state politics, notably in negotiating statehood in various forms and arenas, at different level of state, for various political objectives (goals) and using different strategies.

Among others, three main assumptions underlie the society-in-state assumptions in expounding the depth and complexity of society's interest in state and engagement in state politics. The first one is the value or interest that society place in state, mainly engendered by the state itself. This is to underscore that state declares its presence and importance among local community of Africa in ways that they (local people) cannot ignore it. As one scholar asserts,

It is hard to ignore the state or government... Almost wherever we find ourselves today we find government. Some have urged that the state be kept out of our lives, or at least our bedrooms, but to little avail. The state is omnipresent. States appear as much in our dreams and nightmares as in our lives. Movements of 'national liberation' typically aspire to a state of their own; secessionists seek independence in order to found a new state (Morris, 2004:195).

As the above quotation attests and also as it is well noted in the conceptual part of this study, presently the idea of state is a phenomenon that every society everywhere feels and lives. There is no reason why Africa is or should be different. As Christian Lund (2006) rightly argues, African societies have been conjugated with the idea and image of state. The task of describing factors that have contributed to the inculcation of the image or idea of a state in society in Africa may require us to go long distance, for example, back to the time of mass mobilization for struggle for independence from European colonialism that arguably increased society's awareness about state politics and nationalism. However, noting on the very recent factors is suffice, which Christian Lund states as,

*...the state invaded these [locals] arenas in a more subtle way in the form of an idea. The exercise of power and authority by these local institutions [non-state institutions] was bolstered by references, implicit and explicit, to the state. When a lineage leader refers to himself as lineage chairman, it implies a certain wish for state recognition of his position (thus indicating the state's importance which he tries to emulate); when churches define themselves as NGOs, they implicitly, and in a convoluted way, bring the idea of the state to the local arena; and when a new party champions the idea of 'good governance' in World Bank speak, it also instills the idea of state in its sphere of operation. Thus, by constant reference to the (idea of the) state, these organizations manage to 'bring the state back in'... (2006: 687).*

As the above quotation illustrates, there are different cases in which the image of state penetrates into local community in the contemporary Africa. However, the factor that we emphasize as the main cause to the development of societal interest in state and engagement in state political activities is the state itself, mainly through its policies and actions. Truly, state penetration in society and the development of societal interest in state such as in Ethiopia largely emanated from states policies and actions. In so arguing, the focus here will be on the accommodative and exclusionary nature of state policies in treating its citizens, namely in terms of the distribution of resources (material and non-material) among the society. Usually, in the continent the institutionalization of statehood (or institutionalization of certain forms of power relations) is too much restrictive in a way it excludes interests of majorities. This is what Chazan, (1999:7) put as “access to the political centre [in Africa] has been severely circumscribed.” Similarly, John Markakis (1994) rightly argues state power in the continent has never been available to many at all in Africa. Instead, state remains a very precious resource that most fight for and few succeed in winning it. In what he calls ‘restrictive political structure’, Kamrava (1993) puts such an exclusivist nature of state at the core of politics and political crises in developing countries. As he argues, coming and going governments in “Third World” countries design institutions that serve limited interest (Kamrava; 1993:2).

Such exclusionary nature of state in Africa and may be elsewhere has its own impact and contribution to the development of societal interest in state. That is that state policies that develop or come out of such exclusionary state usually serve few interests. However, states in the continent for long have controlled the production and distribution of material and non-material resources (Markakis, 1987). Therefore, interests and identities of groups in command of state power are well served, promoted and defended through and by state machineries. By any standard, it is generally true in Africa that groups who control (ed) state power were/ are, more advantageous than those who did/ do not in promoting and defending their interests, economic or otherwise. During and after the colonial periods, access or inability to get access to state power really brought about political, economic and social difference among the African societies.

As John Markakis argues in the Horn of Africa context, an exclusion from state power correlates with exclusion from access to material and social resources controlled by the state (Markakis, 1994). Probably, there is no much alternative to African societies rather than the state if they

need to promote and defend the material and social interest of their members so effectively and powerfully. Other institutions were /are there in Africa but none is as powerful, as important, and as instrumental as the state to promote and defend group interests. Given that the needs for statehood and an aspiration for access to state power is highly felt in every corner of the continent by most segments of the societies. Consequently, every society in the continent has come to recognize that the state is the most important locus of power to promote, maintain and enhance self and group interests.

In this connection it also important to note that the exclusionary and accommodative nature of statehood in the continent is not only the cause for the development of societal interest in state but also it has been a pivotal factor for societal engagement in state political processes, such as in contest and negotiation over state power and resources. Put differently, sources of conflict and contest, bargaining and consensus among various actors and interests over state power, resources, identity, symbols, and the like are mostly the function of the accommodative and exclusionary nature of statehood in Africa<sup>19</sup>, particularly in Ethiopia. This is to explicate that discriminatory nature of state policies in treating its citizen's generates community's engagement in state politics, but in a very different contexts.

In different contexts, both the accommodated and excluded interests engage in state politics. First, as noted above, given the dominant role that the state plays in the production and distribution of material and social resources, and the significant differences that it makes among the societies in terms of access to material and non-material interests, it is less likely for African society to afford avoiding the state. On the one hand, the accommodated interests engage in state politics to maintain the *status quo*, which accommodate and serve their interests. On the other hand, excluded interests do engage in state politics, mainly in search for access to state power

---

<sup>19</sup> *By accommodation it means the processes in which identities and interests of certain groups of society are identified and maintained, defined and articulated, and represented and integrated into the processes of institutionalizing power relations (or in the constructions of some distinctive forms of statehood) (see Kellas,1998:178-180). Accommodated groups, then, refer to those groups whose interests are represented or being served in the established or institutionalized power relations. Conversely, excluded interests denote groups whose identities and interests are not respected or represented in the institutionalization of statehood, hence are at odds, and even in conflict with the prevailing political order, and even seeking an access to state power in resistance to domination by those controlling state power.*

and resources, usually by redesigning the prevailing order. As such, the discriminatory policy of the state in Africa engages the society in state politics either in support of or in opposition to the prevailing social, political and economic order. However, it needs to underscore the various forms, strategies; objectives and arenas of political engagements (see Baker, 2000).

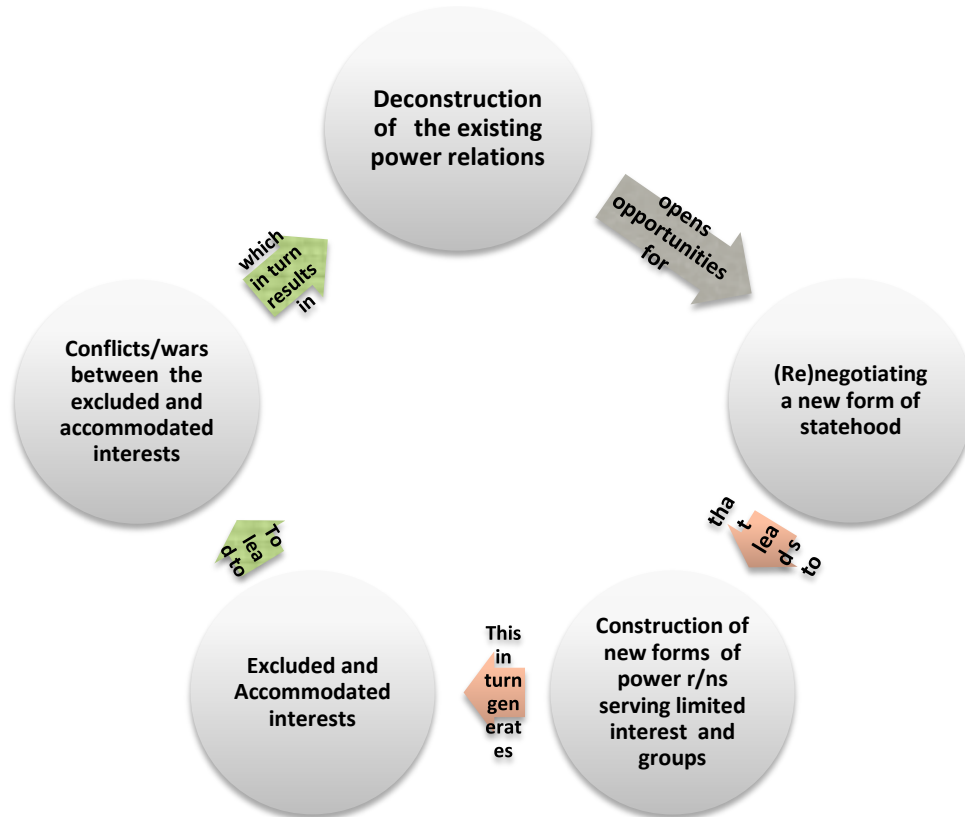
The second, assumption of the society-in-state synthesis is that the essence and dynamics of political changes in Africa rest on the persistence of conflict between the excluded and accommodated social forces. It is to assert that in Africa the main driving force of political changes such in power relations has been the result of conflictive relationships between social forces which were excluded(alienated) from the state power and hence engaged in struggle for it and those which were accommodated in state power and hence work to defend the position. In fact, the degree and frequency of change in statehood (notably power relations) is determined by the degree of balance of power between the contending forces and interests. That is to say, where the powers of the accommodated forces are stronger than the excluded forces, it is likely that the life span of the regime in control of state power will be longer, and the vice versa (Hicken, 2009:2; Lipset, 1960). As Hicken (2009) rightly claims, the most important source of power or strength for a given regime or political institutions is the function of its capacity to accommodate diversities of interests. In similar line of argument, Kamrava (1993) notes, what really determines political processes, particularly the nature of regime stability in the developing world is the extent to which its political institutions accommodate/exclude interests. The stability of statehood according to his argument is the function of its capacity to accommodate diversified interests. The same author goes further to claim that accommodation and institutionalization of interests determines the extent of solidity and linkage between state and society (ibid: 3). Put in his own words,

*It is indeed...the extent of institutionalization [of diversified interests] that to large extent determines the viability of regimes and the measure of their popularity [legitimacy] among those they govern. The greater and more in-depth the institutional bonds between state and society, the less likely it is for political alternatives to gain hold among the popular classes (Kamrava, 1993:3).*

What this argument emphasizes is, the more a given political institution is accommodative, the more likely it will be stronger in power, and the longer it grips in power (see also Anderson et al, 2005:6). On the other hand, political institutions that fail to accommodate varieties of interests are feeble, threatened, and subjected to shorter life span.

Fundamental changes to the nature and structure of power relations in any society come when the excluded forces succeed. The irony is that the political institutions that emerge after the disintegration of the old statehood, itself may not be designed in a way that it accommodates and serves diversified interests. Instead, once again they generate accommodated and excluded interests, in which the new institution comes to serve only limited interest, usually the interests of groups who win the political race. In turn, the excluded groups (old and new) emerge to launch the struggle or competition for access to state power. As such, the dynamics of statehood (de)construction processes go on and on in shaping and reshaping state politics in many of African states, typically in Ethiopia. The following figure may illustrate the cyclical relationships between political exclusion/inclusion and political changes in Africa, at least in Ethiopia.

**Figure 1:** Cyclical relationships between exclusionary political institutions and dynamics of statehood (de)construction in the contemporary Africa.





### **Source: Author's own development**

This figure illustrates the cyclical relationship between statehood (de)construction due to conflicts between excluded and accommodated political interests produced by exclusionary nature of state institutions. On the one hand, the processes of institutionalization of power relations (formation of statehood) generate accommodated and excluded groups. On the other hand, the processes of statehood (de)construction themselves are the effects of the conflict and competitions between the accommodated and excluded forces. This argument also indicates how and why statehood (de)construction is a constantly changing process in the contemporary African politics. Above all, it shows how important the excluded and accommodative forces are in determining the dynamics of state politics in Africa. More importantly, the central thesis of this argument also construes the extent to which interest accommodation is an essential factor in the contemporary Africa for state stability. This suggests the need to improve the degree or extent of exclusionary nature of statehood in Africa for better legitimacy and stability of the continent.

The last assumption that underlies the society-in-state synthesis relates to an interpretation of political conflicts over statehood in the African continent. In this regard, the assumption is that the dynamics and development of politics in contemporary Africa including the various deadly conflicts, especially in relation to state may be considered as the processes of state formation rather than state failure. In fact, the African continent has been drawn into very complex political problems and crises these days. Most of these crises, in one way or another, were related to state, such as access to state power and resources. Truly, most of the major conflicts have related to and revolved around the claims of access to or the redesign of the state (see Ghai, 2000). However, it seems not tenable to interpret such conflicts and transformations as state failure because as Charles Tilly (1990:28) noted, “state building meant war and its preparation”.

Sandbrook (2000:1) succinctly captures this line of thinking as,

*Should we be surprised that disorder, conflict and economic disarray mark the postcolonial histories of Africa's new states? State-building and nation- building have everywhere been violent and disorderly matters. In Europe through the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, monarchs, Princes, lords, and parliaments fought to control and expand proto-states. Peasants and town-dwellers were embroiled in these labyrinthine wars, or independently rebelled against the exactions of ambitious and ruthless rules. Politics then-and indeed well into the twentieth*

*century in some regions-was a dismal tale of revolts, assassinations, pacification campaigns, and wars. ...Why should the history of Africa since independence in the 1960s, be any different?.*

Alex Thomson strengthens this viewpoint by strongly arguing that:

*(T)he practice of politics on the African continent is not so different from political processes found elsewhere in the world. It is still about power, ideas, resource distribution and conflict resolution, as well as the governments that oversee these processes. In this sense, Africa may be a unique stage on which political transactions are carried out, but the actual processes themselves have more similarities than differences with other continents. Note, for example, how socialism (Eastern Europe, for instance), issues of ethnicity and class (Belgium and Britain respectively), military coups d'état (Portugal), state collapse (Yugoslavia), newly formed democracies (Spain) and one-party states (East Germany) have all been features within European politics during the same postcolonial period under scrutiny(2004:3-4).*

Indeed, in Africa, state has been in the processes of formation and the prevalence of political conflicts over statehood largely reflects this reality. The continent is the land of social divisions based on ethnicity, religion, class and race and these diversities are formidable challenging for political leaders to maintain political order, and for state building in general. All these diversity and the problem that they pose to state do exist on the continent from time to time, because as Bellamy (1999) rightly observes, plural societies mean divided loyalties, interests, ideals and identities. This generates rival claims, and conflictive and incompatible interests. To coexist as one polity, these diversities inevitably require appropriate form of political engineering and state institutions where these diversities are negotiated and treated, cultural values are represented, where there is fair share and distribution of state power and resources across diversities. In general, in diversified society there is a need for state that will represent, reflect, and serve the identities, values, and interest of all. What Africa lacks and looks for today is such polity, especially a political design that will break the vicious circle of political exclusion and the conflict it generates, as it is discussed above. Otherwise, as Alex Thomson rightly concludes, “Africans are innately no more violent, no more corrupt, no more greedy, and no more stupid than any other human beings that populate the planet” (Thomson, 2004: 2). As same observer concludes, Africans “are no less capable of governing themselves” (Ibid).

This is what is really going on in urban Ethiopia, especially following the introduction of ethnic decentralization to the country. As shall be clear in the sections and chapters to follow, the ethnic

decentralization processes of the country have ushered in societal engagement in negotiating statehood in multiethnic cities of the country mainly because of its exclusionary and inclusionary nature.

## 2.7 Decentralization and societal engagement (in negotiating statehood)

As it is discussed above, there are different factors that could usher in societal engagement in negotiating statehood. Central to this study, however, is the decentralization induced one, with particular reference to its ethnic federal brand. The foregone sections of this chapter have discussed widely and deeply about the various contending perspectives on the nature, objectives and effects of decentralization. In any cases, each perspective construe to the point that decentralization would lead to societal engagement in state politics, such as contest and bargaining among different sections of society over state power, resources, symbols, identities and the like, albeit in different context. For example, the general notion of decentralization that entails the transfer of power, responsibilities and finance from central government to sub-national levels of government at provincial and/or local levels implies the expansion of opportunity of access to state power and resources. Seen this way, decentralization is meant to increase the number of actors involving in decision-making processes, which indicates the role of decentralization in engaging society in politics.

Still important, the role of decentralization in engaging community to state politics is not limited to the government or the power aspect of state. It rather includes conditions in which decentralization opens up spaces for societal engagement in every aspect of statehood including power or domination, territories, citizenship, symbols, identities and the like. In what supports this view point, Hans Hurni suggests that in some countries the processes of decentralization have led to renegotiating, even re-inventing the “ very basic philosophical notions [of state] such as citizenship [and] the meaning of state...”(2009:9). Urs Geiser and Stephan Rist also add that “decentralization is not primarily a managerial challenge (i.e. to introduce improved governance mechanisms), but is inherently political, influenced by interests and agency” (2009: 15). Obviously, such suggestions hint at the possible links between decentralization and state formation processes, especially cases in which the decentralization can generates conditions for (re)negotiating over state identity, territory, citizenship, power and the like. In substantiating this notion, we focus on the ethnic type of decentralization, because it is likely for such type of

decentralization to render redefinition and re- negotiation of citizenship and identity on the one hand and articulation of interests and values, and restructuring of territory and power relationships on the other (see section 2.3.4 above).

As this thesis argues, decentralization engages community in state political activities including in negotiating statehood is the view that both advocate and critic of decentralization more or less share in common but in a very different contexts. To substantiate this matter it perhaps demands us to conceptualize the notion of political engagement very broadly. Scholars have long identified two major types of political engagement: conventional and non-conventional (see Ekman and Amnå, 2009; Lamprianou, 2013; Martiniello, 2005). According to Iasonas Lamprianou (2013), the conventional political engagement is the lawful and peaceful aspect of political participation within the framework of an established “legal frame and the institutional practices” (Ibid: 24). Acts of involvement in election and various forms of participation in decision making are among the major forms of conventional form of political engagement. In most cases, the objective of engagement in such type of politics is to maintain status quo, or to influence, shape or change government decision- making processes (Huntington and Nelson, 1976; Verba, etal, 1995). In most cases, that part of societies who engage in such kind of politics are those who have interest in and legitimacy for the political order in place. The advocates who argue that decentralization brings government closer to local ambit and then enables the local community to participate in decision-making processes obviously support this dimension of political engagement. Therefore, in this case decentralization is seen as an important mechanism for engaging community in decision- making processes by bringing government closer to local community.

However, as Iasonas Lamprianou (2013) argues, in its broader term political engagement may include the so-called non-conventional and informal forms of involvement in politics (see also Martiniello, 2005). In this sense the concept of political engagement, include a variety of forms and strategies including secession movements, guerrilla fighters, or any other form of violent forms of political engagements. Usually the objective of engagement in this case is to change the existing order and replace it with another for it is considered as irrelevant to and harmful for groups concerned.

On the other hand, as discussed above federal decentralization may lead to secession demands, inter-ethnic wars and conflicts. In broader sense of the term, such acts are also part of political engagement. As Christopher W. Morris rightly argues “Movements of ‘national liberation’ typically aspire to a state of their own; secessionists seek independence in order to found a new state” (2004:195). Thus, the critic’s view that federal decentralization reinforces the demands of ethnic groups for regional secession supports the notion that decentralization may generate political engagement. This form of political engagement is particularly relevant to Africa where national movement and guerrilla wars have been common in regime changes and access to state power. These broader concepts, therefore, are relevant for our case study purpose in illustrating the links between ethnic decentralization and political engagement, such as in negotiating state power, resources, symbolic identities, citizenship, territory, and the like.

To substantiate further, it deems important to briefly discuss how and why ethnic decentralization engenders political engagement in multiethnic societies and how these engagements in turn relate to negotiating statehood. As discussed throughout this thesis, there are challenges to apply ethnic decentralization in multiethnic societies of no territorial demarcation such as in urban context as a means to accommodate the heterogeneous identities and interests. The reason is that such local social reality is full of competing and conflicting interests, identities and history. For example, in our case study context, there are such diversities as indigenous and settlers, conquered and conquerors. As Urs Geiser and Stephan Rist rightly argue, these varieties of interests and identities have different expectations and stakes in the decentralization processes (2009:46). They further elaborate that “State decentralisation (and specifically devolution) is to empower the local level, but as ‘the locals’ are socially heterogeneous, decentralisation becomes inherently contested” (2009: 48). In other words, decentralization may not have similar taste among the local community for it may not provide equal opportunities among the ethnically diverse society. As a result, there might be processes of accommodation and exclusion of interest in decentralization (ibid).

This study grasps these inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of decentralization as the main factor for societal political engagement such as in contest and bargain over state power, resources, and citizenship and identity issues. As seen above, the accommodated interests usually engage in state politics in support of the *status quo*, where as the excluded interests engage in

politics such as in the form of resistance and even change of the prevailing political order. And it is likely that such political engagements, especially engagement based on conflicting objectives can lead to (re) negotiate interests, power relationships, identity, resources and the like. As seen in the last chapters, this is exactly what the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia rendered in multiethnic cities.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Most of the existing concepts and theories exhibit huge gap in understanding and explaining politics and political developments in Africa in general and in contemporary Ethiopia in particular. This is mainly so because on the one hand, there is a tendency to treat African politics as something unique coming from other planets, on the other hand there is a tendency to apply copy paste concepts and theories in the study of African politics. None of this fits the purpose such as this. Similarly, anyone interested in the study of the relationships between ethnic decentralization and multiethnic cities, such as this, automatically faces the same challenge. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to refining and contextualizing relevant concepts and theories relevant to explaining the contemporary political developments and dynamics in urban Ethiopia.

The main objective of the chapter is to identify and customizes concepts and theories to study the themes at hand. In conceptualizing the federal form of decentralization, it is underlined to be critical of the context from which it emerges and operates. In conceptualizing ethnic federal form of decentralization, its inherent value to ethnicize territory and territorialize ethnicity is underscored. In defining statehood, it is underlined to distinguish between the various aspects and nature of statehood such as the image (idea) and practice (government) aspects of state along with what they bear on each other. In many ways, this helps understand state - society relations such as in Ethiopia. Understanding the state that way, for example, is useful to grasp how the image or idea of state has swept societal imagination down to the local community level and thereby contribute to the development of societal interest in state. The notion of the phrase negotiating statehood is conceptualized as contest and bargaining between various social actors (including state) over state power, resources, history, identity, citizenship, and symbols. The issues of negotiation is conceived as very complex processes involving multiplicity of actors with multiplicity of objectives, forms, strategies, resources and arenas of engagement. In order to grasp such complex matters, an analytical tool, labeled as society-in-state is developed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: Historical background, Origin, Essence, and the major effects**

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, an attempt is made to establish conceptual and theoretical frameworks with which to capture and analyze the implementation of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its major effects on state-society and inter-society relationships in urban parts of the country. Among others, these include the notion of ethnic federal form of decentralization, statehood and negotiating statehood, multiethnic and secondary cities. This chapter discusses about ethnic decentralization process in the country focusing on its origin, objective, essential features as well as processes in which it has been instituted. Equally important, the major political effects that this new political order brought to state-society and inter - society relationships is discussed in this chapter with emphasis on the wider notational level. Doing that would serve as background to understand and explain the application and effects of the country's ethnic decentralization in urban parts of the country, such as in the two case study cities.

As decentralization neither emerges nor operates in historical vacuum, it may also be necessary to present some historical precedents such as history of the state, and the historical nature of state-society and inter-society relationships in the country. Doing that may serve two purposes. First, it helps decipher changes that came into being in the country after the advent of decentralization. Secondly, since the bearing of history on contemporary political development of the country is so significant, it is desirable to review some historical precedents such as the history of state formation, the nature of state-society and inter-society relations in the Ethiopian context.

3.2 History of state, state-society and inter-society relationships in Ethiopia: precedents for the emergence of ethnic decentralization

This part of the study discusses about background to the advent of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia focusing on history of the state, and the nature of state-society and inter-society relationships in the country.

### 3.2.1. Origin and development of the Ethiopian state: contested interpretation

When and how did the Ethiopian state emerge? How has it developed or evolved into its present status? What were the impacts of its evolution and development on the country's politics in general? In the study of state politics, it is inevitable to ask such questions. To address them, however, is not an easy task in countries like Ethiopia with "a long, varied and troubled history" (Ofcansky and Berry, 1991:16). The challenge of understanding state history in Ethiopia emanates not from the lack of literature on the subject matter as questions such as these have often been asked, broadly discussed and hotly debated both in academic and practical political arenas (Levine, 1974; Markakis, 1974; Teshale, 1995; Asafa, 1993; Holocomb, and Sisay 1990; Merera, 2003; Bahru, 1991; Henze, 2000; Messay, 1999). Rather, the problem, to a larger degree, is rooted in the lack of consensus in literature (academic or otherwise), mainly due to politically driven interpretations (Bairu, 1994; Teshale, 1995). This is what Bairu Tafla captures as, "In Ethiopian tradition, the study of history meant meddling in politics" (1994: 1).

In an endeavor to understand the genesis of the Ethiopia's state, it is inevitable to confront multiplicity of contending interpretations. Truly, a head of this work is this challenge, and it is must to delve into it. However, the interest to meddle in this issue is not to engage in such endless debate for self-positioning. Nor is it to make a very detailed and exhaustive review of the prevailing viewpoints on this subject matter. Because doing that does not contribute much to the theme of this study. The purpose rather is to elucidate how issues relating to the origin and development of the Ethiopian state have been and still are far from consensus and hence remain to be sources of political conflict and negotiation in the country.

Let us consider the following two remarks about the controversy of Ethiopia's state history as entry point to our discussion. First, is what Teshale Tibebu remarked as "Ethiopian history is as old as one wants to be" (1995: xi). Second, is Christopher Clapham's statement that "There is nothing ... [that is] historically fixed about the creation of the Ethiopian state" (2002: 41). These statements indicate the susceptibility of the country's history to various interpretations. As Teshale identifies there are three essential versions of Ethiopia's political history. These are:



“(1) Ethiopian history is 3,000 years old; (2), it is 100 years old; and (3) it is 40 years old” (1995: xii). As the same author elaborates,

*The first ... is that of Ethiopia’s self-declared 3000 years history of independence; the second is that of Ethiopia’s modern form given by emperor Menelik; and the third is Eritrea’s incorporation with Ethiopia as a federal unit under the imperial crown[of Haile Sellassie regime] in 1952 (ibid).*

If not the only, the three contending views have been the heart of political contest in Ethiopia both in academy and in actual political practice at least since the second half of the twentieth century. After the independence of Eritrea, it is the first two perspectives that still resonate in the country’s political scene and hence merit some more elaboration.<sup>20</sup> In what follows we describe some basic claims and counter-claims that each of this perspective makes along with their underlying political interests and motives.

In view of the first perspective(the 3000 thesis), the roots of the Ethiopian state goes back “to the ancient empire of Axum, which flourished from the first to sixth centuries and was based in what is now Tigray, a northern region of the present state”( Sorenson, 1993: 40). According to this viewpoint, no matter how “Ethiopia has passed through various periods of contraction and expansion” (Crummey, 2000:5), the state has continually preserved its independence and national integrity throughout history by forging a distinct national identity (Henze, 2000; Levine, 1974; Marcus, 1994; Walle, 1993).

According to Bahru Zewde (1991), what accounts the origin of the so-called Axumite state is mainly a myth with difficulty to be historically proven. Indeed, in the Abyssinian tradition<sup>21</sup>, it is mythology rather than the conventional theories of state that has widely been used to narrate about the origin of the ‘Axumite state’. According to the legend, the Axumite state was founded by Menelik I, the son of Queen Sheba and King Solomon of Israel born after the queen paid a visit to Jerusalem at about tenth BC (Braggs, 2005; Marcus, 1994). It seems that many have accepted this legend, even to the present time (see Messay, 1999). Except for the reign of the

---

<sup>20</sup> *This does not mean that Ethiopian relations with Eritrea have got final solution as the two countries are still engaged in conflict with each other.*

<sup>21</sup> *The term Abyssinian refers to parts of Ethiopia occupied by Amharic and Tigrinya speaking people*

Zagwe dynasty (c 1150-1270), almost all emperors who ruled the empire claimed to be the direct descendant of this family.<sup>22</sup>

In sharp contrast, from the viewpoint of the second perspective ('Menelikst' thesis), the Ethiopia state was created at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Emperor Menelik II through colonization and annexation of the independent peripheral people of the Oromo, Sidama, Walayita, etc (Asafa, 1993; Holcomb, and Sisay 1990). In this case, the assumption is that modern Ethiopia is a product of the nineteenth century scramble for Africa in which Emperor Menelik II conquered and annexed massive regions in the South, East, and West to establish the modern Ethiopia with the support of the European imperialist powers (Asafa, 1993; Holcomb and Sisay, 1990; Merera, 2003).

The issue of contention between the two perspectives in an interpretation of the origin of Ethiopia's state is not only about the question of time. It is also about processes in which the state was created, 'developed' and maintained. For the 'Axumites thesis', the state formation process in Ethiopia has been one of 'natural' and 'evolutionary type' in which the state was created through gradual, long time and continuous interactions and intermingles among peoples of diversified origin, culture and identity (Levine, 1974). This perspective views Ethiopia as a vital historical organism, with no problem of national identity. On the other hand, for the 'Menelikst thesis', the Ethiopian state has been epitomized as an empire created and maintained by force, hence needs to be decolonized and reconstituted (Asafa, 1993; Lenco, 1999).

Apparently, the two opposing views have been mutually exclusive having no space for accommodating each another, and this mutual exclusion has been a source of various problems and conflicts in the country. On the one hand, the historic Ethiopia, or the Axumite based version of Ethiopia's state history, has become a source of a considerable pride for the people of Tigray and perhaps to the Amhara. However, this may not have much link with people in south, west and east parts of present Ethiopia, namely those conquered and incorporated into the Ethiopian empire in the late nineteenth by Emperor Menelik (see Clapham, 2002). Leave alone to represent people of the conquered land, scholars like Alemseged Abbay (2004) tend to deny the Amahara's share in the Axum civilization. For him, "Axum had only Eritrea and Tigray as its

---

<sup>22</sup> *This viewpoint tends to externalize the root of the Ethiopian state.*

core region” (2004: 594). Be it as it may, what is relatively clear enough based up on the existing literature is that part of the country conquered and incorporated since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century constituted no part of the Axumite Empire. As most agree, the incorporation of the south into the Abyssinian polity is the late nineteenth century phenomenon.

Such a north-south dichotomy in reference to the history of the Ethiopian state has had grave implications for the politics of the country (both in the past and at the present). In the first place, as Christopher Clapham describes,

*From the viewpoint of the great tradition, Orthodox Christians, and notably those who speak Amharic and Tigrinya, are Ethiopia, whereas other peoples merely become part of Ethiopia, either at times when they are incorporated within the boundaries of the modern Ethiopian state, or else when they associate themselves with that state, through conversion to Christianity, use of the Amharic language, or employment in some capacity by the state itself. Or to put it in a slightly different way, Amharas and Tigrayans have a history, whereas other peoples have only anthropology, or at best a kind of sub-national sub-history that eventually gets subsumed within the national epic (Clapham 2002:40).*

As Clapham rightly illustrates, in reference to the history of the Ethiopian state and people’s association with it, there have been two categories of citizenship in Ethiopia: ‘authentic’ and ‘synthetic’ Ethiopians. Belonging to the first category are the Tigray and Amhara people who for long have held the position of first class citizenship and hence controlling the political economy of the country (ibid.). In the second category are people of the peripheral south, west and east who were conquered and incorporated into the empire and subsequently accorded second-class citizenship and subjected to domination and exploitation in the hands of the former throughout twentieth century (Addis Hiwot, 1975; Asafa, 1993; Markakis, 2002; Merera, 2003).

Equally important is also to look into the exclusivist nature of the second perspective in interpreting the Ethiopian political history. It totally denies recognizing Ethiopia’s history of antiquity. Such a view point dashes the historic achievements of the Abyssinian polity which the whole African people see it as a source of pride for the black human race (Henze, 2000). As the proponents of ancient Ethiopian thesis misused the golden history of the state for domination purpose, this latter viewpoint deciphered and used the historical injustice done to them for state disintegration purposes. As such, the country has failed to produce an all-encompassing national history, a national history that reflects the high caliber and achievements

of all ethnic groups in the country. In short, Ethiopia had a history that tends to divide rather than unite its people. Consequently, as it shall be clear in the course of this study, such contending views of the Ethiopian history have been translated into actual wars and conflicts of nationalism that have plagued the country for long. However, state-related conflicts and discourses for long had been confined to elite and national level to a great extent. As is discussed in the case study chapters, with the advent of ethnic decentralization in the country such political issues have become point of contest at local ambit, as well.

### 3.2.2. Major effects of the evolution and development of the modern Ethiopian state

As discussed above, the history of state formation in Ethiopia is a source of profound conflict and contention both in academy and actual practice. Obviously, these conflicts create confusion from where to start discussing about effects of the state formation processes in the country. Scholars like Christopher Clapham believe that “the starting point for any analysis [of Ethiopian politics] must...be the historic Ethiopian state and the social bases on which it is rested” (1994:28). This assertion may be useful in some contexts, but not much for studies such as this because the southern region of present Ethiopia (where our case study towns are located) came to be part of the Ethiopian state only in the late nineteenth century, specifically with the emergence of the modern Ethiopian state by war of conquest and incorporation. Therefore, it is logical to begin our description about the effect of the state formation in Ethiopia from its modern history.

Yet, it needs to be clear that the origin of modern Ethiopia itself had two phases of development. As Amare Tekle rightly observes, “The first consisted of attempts to create an absolutist state in the northern parts of the present territory. [And] [t]hese attempts were made by Tewdros II, Yonannes IV, and Menelik II, and the task was successfully completed by Haile Sellassie I “(1990:32).

The second development according to same author was the “colonial expansion in the south, south east and west and was carried out by Menelik II who conquered and subjugated hitherto independent principalities and polities” (ibid). For reasons mentioned above our starting point to explain the major effects of state formation in Ethiopia will be from this second development or the Menelik’s expansion to and conquest of the southern regions which “gave Ethiopia its present form” (Bairu, 1994:3).

The formation of the modern Ethiopian state through war of conquest and incorporation has had various weighty effects that have been and still are significant in the politics of the country. We mention and explain some of these effects. One is that the conquest and incorporation of the land in south, east and west parts of the country since the late 19<sup>th</sup> had tripled the size of the Ethiopian state (Levine, 1974). This highly increased the human and material resources of the country that immensely helped Emperor Menelik himself and other succeeding regimes in securing the independence of the country from both external aggression and internal threat. For instance, as many scholars agree the Ethiopian victory over Italy at the battle of Adwa in 1896 was largely attributable to the material and human resources of the conquered regions (Azlan, 1997; Kidane, 1997; Messay, 1999). Focusing on the contribution of Oromo land to this victory, Azlan Tajuddin, for instance, comments “The famous Ethiopian victory over the Italians at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 was largely financed by resources plundered from Oromo lands”( 1997: 11). Indeed, as Kidane Mengisteab (1997) notes firearms used for this and other wars that the country waged against external and internal forces were obtained in exchange for resources from the conquered lands.

The second major consequence of Ethiopian state expansion was urbanization processes, which of course is the focus of this study. To a large degree, this is particularly true in the conquered parts of the country. For instance, Addis Ababa city, which has been serving as a national capital since 1888 itself, is the effect of these processes. A detail discussion on the relationship between state formation and urbanization processes in southern parts of Ethiopia is provided in chapter 4.

The third effect of the state expansion in Ethiopia since in late 19<sup>th</sup> is the emergence of the state as multiethnic nation. Because of the conquest, there are more than 80 ethnic groups in the country today with their distinct language, culture and identity out of which at least 75 (or about 94 %) are from the conquered land. However, to accommodate these diversities and create a viable state has been a key political challenge throughout the history of the country, because the subsequent administrative policies of the country have never recognized this multi-faceted reality (see, Alemseged, 2004). Instead, the state policy has been one of discriminatory favoring only one or few groups (ibid.).

Still many more effects of the state formation processes in Ethiopia are there to mention, even with more weighty impacts on the political landscape of the country. Worth mentioning here

are: the 1974 revolution which brought to an end the imperial rule in the country, the emergence of the ethno-national movements which plagued the country for the most part of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the introduction of ethnic federalism to the country since 1991. These three political events, in fact, were also very much inter-linked with each other as much as they did with the state formation processes. We briefly look at how these influential political events have related to the state formation processes of the country on the one hand and to each other on the other.

To begin with, as Bairu Tafla notes, “While the Ethiopian political organ succeeded in bringing about a large state, it failed to develop a mechanism by which that state could be maintained permanently” (Bairu, 1990:7). Truly, the Menelik government was by far effective in bringing that huge land mass of diverse population, culture and identity under his empire in that short period of time but not in handling its governance. Neither could regimes who came to power after him manage to craft a state out of such a multitude of nations. Instead, down from the beginning, the conquest was appallingly bloody in most regions (ibid). Worse still, the administration processes that followed the conquest and the incorporation were oppressive and exploitative, to sow a fertile seed for the future national conflict in the country.

To say the least, for instance, in the conquered regions, the people lost their land to the conquering northern settlers. Soldiers, administrators, clergies, churches and the like shared the conquered land among themselves with little or no share to natives (Markakis, 1974). Following the loss of the land, the conquered people were subjected to alienation and exploitation in the hands of the conquerors economically and politically. Worse still is that during the Haile sellassie regime, peoples of the conquered region were subjected to cultural domination in which they were expected to give up their identity and language and “ assimilate into the culture of the dominant nations, mainly the Amhara nations” (Kidane, 1997:120; Alemseged, 2009; Keller, 1981). An important point to underscore here is that major political crises in the country, including those mentioned above, in one way or another, directly or indirectly had been associated with these combined or cumulative effects economic, political and social/ cultural injustices.

For example, in terms of cause, central to the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia were land and nationality questions (Andargachew, 1993; Keller, 1981). Demanded at the time by the

‘revolutionists’ were ‘land to the tillers’ and ‘national equality’. Because it was believed that the prevailing injustice in the country in relation to land - holding system and patterns of inter-ethnic relations since Emperor Menelik had kept Ethiopia in a backward stage of development. Realizing the prevalence and agony of the land related exploitation as well as the depth of nationality oppression in the country various political movements emerged in the country. For example, EPRP and MEISON (both of which were emerged out of the 1960s student movement that disposed the Emperor in 1974) proposed and included in their political program solutions like the recognition of the right to self-determination up to secession for Ethiopian nationalities and a program/policy of redistributing land to the tillers .

However, it was the socialist *Derg* regime, which came to power following the revolution of 1974, who took radical measures concerning these problems, especially in relation to the questions of land. With the 1975 land proclamations, rural land was nationalized. The measure practically and effectively released the southern people from the long established agony of serfdom. It “largely freed the southern tenants from the bondage of the landlords who were mostly descendants of the occupation troops and administrators (Kidane, 1997: 121). Though not as much effective as the rural land (we shall see this later), urban land was also nationalized in 1976 (Keller, 1981).

Nevertheless, the performance of the *Derg* regime in handling the nationality question was one of poor record. In fact, the regime took some measures including the recognition of equalities of nations and nationalities in the country. Especially, in the April 1976 NDR programme the *Derg* government expressively recognized the issue of ‘self-determination to nationalities’ as a legitimate demand and a right of oppressed ethnic groups. Furthermore, the regime encouraged the use and development of local languages other than Amharic (Keller, 1981; Young, 1997). In many local areas, adult education was offered with respective native languages. Moreover, Institutes of Nationalities was established at Addis Ababa University in 1983 to promote or develop the languages and cultures of various nationalities in the country. Even if too late, towards its end the regime established some autonomous regions in the country as well. Frankly

speaking, these were among the radical measures to depart the *Derg* regime<sup>23</sup> from its predecessor as far as issues of nationality question in the country were concerned.

Yet, unlike its radical land policy measures, the *Derg* regime's approaches to the national questions were unsatisfactory to many. The *Derg* regime was effective in distributing land rather than genuinely recognizing national identities and devolving state power. Policies and measures that the regime pursued to resolve the national question in the country fueled the problem rather than resolving it. As a result, various national liberation movements proliferated almost all over the country, albeit in different times, with different claims and varying capacity to challenge the regime. Among others, worth mentioning here are EPLF, TPLF, and OLF, which together shaped the pre and post 1991 politics in Ethiopia and the Horn as a whole (see Cliff, 1999). There were also other similar political organization like ONLF and SLM. Though these national liberation movements had a common interest to fight against the *Derg* regime they all were different from each other in interests as well as in social and political background.

The EPLF, for example, represented the Eritrean people which itself is composed of more than nine ethnic groups (Tekest, 1996). By origin the Eritrean question for self-determination predates the 1974 revolution. It openly started in 1962 following the Haile sellassie arbitrary end of the federation that tied Eritrea to Ethiopia in 1952 by the UN decision (Kidane, 1997). Though the root of the disputes can be historical (Bereket, 1980), the Eritrea's immediate cause was associated with the imperial regimes abrupt and perhaps unwise "abrogation of the UN-instituted federation with Ethiopia" (Kidane, 1997: 120-121). It related to the change of Eritrea's status in Ethiopia from one of Federation to that of a Province. Began this way the Eritreans fought the 30 years war of independence with the two successive Ethiopian regimes and eventually won *de facto* independence in 1991 and *de jure* in 1993 under the leadership of the EPLF.

The TPLF that controlled state power in Ethiopia since 1991 had a different history of origin (see Aregawi, 2008; Young, 1997). As discussed above, Tigray was a core or at least one of the core that constituted the ancient Abyssinian polity. Particularly it is believed that Tigray was the centre of the Axumite Empire. However, as the centre of the Ethiopian state moved farther and

---

<sup>23</sup> *It is an Amharic word to mean a committee*



farther to the south the region came to be distanced farther and farther from the country's political and economic power. Politically speaking, the place of the Tigray people in Ethiopian political leadership declined with the decline of Axum. The Tigreans were pushed back to take only junior position in the political history of the country, except for the periods when a Tigrean emperor, Yohannes IV (1872-89) ruled some parts of modern Ethiopia.

With the rise of Emperor Menelik II and the formation of the modern Ethiopian state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Tigray people's political and economic status deteriorated further (Young, 1997). In or following the processes, political power came to be monopolized by the Amhara of north Shewa origin. Furthermore, as the centre of the state moved to the south making its destination Addis Ababa, the heart of Oromo land, some economic advantages and development processes came to be concentrated in the south. Consequently, the Tigray region took only marginal position in the political economy of the country. Indeed, after the rise of Menelik, Tigray was no more the core to the Ethiopia state (Ibid). Neither Axum of the Axumite Empire nor Mekele of Yohannes was central to the Ethiopia state. None of cities and towns in Tigray anymore came to be the locus/hub of economic and political power of Ethiopia. It seems that this came to be a source of discontent among the Tigray people. TPLF, which controlled state power in the country in 1991, was born out of this dissatisfaction (ibid).

The other significant national liberation movement was the OLF, which claimed an independent statehood for the Oromo nation (Asafa, 1993). Its claim for independence of Oromia is grounded on the late 19<sup>th</sup> century political events of the country in which the Oromo were forcefully conquered and incorporated into the Ethiopian state. Indeed the Oromo were subjected to all round exploitation under the Ethiopian empire, especially until 1974. As some argue, some Oromo individuals took part in the expansion and occupation of the southern regions including Oromia itself. Yet, that did not spare the broader Oromo community from exploitation by the Ethiopian state. The Sidma Liberation movement (SLM) and ONLF were also among the national liberation movements representing the Sidama and Ethiopian Somali peoples, respectively.

The *Derg* regime finally failed to withstand all these political forces and unseated from power in May 1991. Followed by Eritrea became an independent state. Under the leadership of TPLF, the remaining part of the country entered into new political metamorphosis, mainly through an

ethnically based federal political arrangement. The core of this study is about the effects of these changes. Before proceeding to these issues, we see the nature of state-society and inter-society relationships in the country.

3.2.3. Some salient features of state - society relationships in Ethiopia: the pre-1991 experiences  
As one of the main objectives of this study is to examine the effect of ethnic decentralization on state-society relationships in Ethiopia, it requires describing the historical setting of state-society relationships that the country had experienced.

Ethiopia is considered as a unique state on the continent of Africa mainly based up on three accounts: that it is ‘ancient’, ‘colonial- proof’, and ‘autochthonic’. Automatically, these can give an impression that there have been well-established relationships between state and society in the country. Apparently, in a country that is ancient origin, self-making’ and enduring independence, it is quite normal to expect, for instance, such corollary political developments as internal political cohesiveness, state legitimacy as well as societal engagement in state political processes and affairs. However, as discussed above the history of the Ethiopian state is contested and has been a source of various problems and conflicts in the country. Various studies have already exposed the deficits of society-state relationship in Ethiopia in pre-1991 periods, namely deficiencies of nationalism (population’s attachment to and identification with the state) and state legitimacy crises (see for example, ; Assafa, 1993; Merera, 2003; Sisay and Holcomb, 1991).

The aspect of state-society relationships that we emphasize here is the nature and dynamics of societal engagement in the country’s state political processes and affairs as it is the theme of this thesis. The argument in this regard is that there had been minimal, even insignificant degree of societal involvement in the country’s major political processes. Instead, as we shall illustrate, state political affairs had been largely confined to national and elite level effectively excluding the masses from engagement in major political processes. It is also the argument if this study that major difficulties of political development in the country may be attributable to such problems of societal engagement in the country’s political processes. Why that? In other words, this is to ask how and why societal engagement in state politics remained so minimal in Ethiopia despite its long years of existence as an independent state. In addition, one can also tempt to ask effects of such a nature of state-society relations on political development processes in the country.

Scholarly studies on Ethiopia's political history largely attest the notion that societal engagement in state politics is trifling. For example, according to Gebru Tareke, whose work is devoted to refute the notion of peasant passivity and disinterest in Ethiopian politics, the Ethiopian society was "noted for their relative passivity, deference and "habitual submission" to authority" (1991: xiii). Alemseged Abay on his part observes, "Ethiopia's peasants believe that God, not them, decides who will be their leader (2009: 177), and hence have passively suffered under the authoritarian and highly exploitative regimes.

To support this view he quotes the Tigrean people's proverb as, *Zebereqetsehayna, zenegessenegusna*, which means it is God who decides who will be elected

Similarly, René Lefort (2010:439) describes the political culture of Amhara peasant as,

*Their culture includes the unshakable belief in the omnipotence of God, who dictates their whole existence and governs their entire environment. Thus, power is considered divine by essence because like everything it ultimately proceeds from Him. To obey [political rulers] is therefore to submit to God's will. 'We are people to be ordered', they generally say. Emphasis added*

There is also an Amhara proverb, which supports same notion, read as, *Samay aytasesim, Nigus aykesesim*, to mean: *to prosecute the king is as impossible as to plow the sky!*

To a large degree, these proverbs illuminate reality of state-society relations in most parts of the country. The actual political practice confirms this. As these and many other scholars observe, the Ethiopian society were politically passive with very less historical record of active involvement in the country's political activities. There were no or little historical records in which the people have imposed control over the political processes in the country including those taking place in their names, for example, like the 1974 revolution. Let us point up the validity of this argument by first putting into perspective some important political processes such as enthronement and dethronement of regimes. One can easily notice the low level of society's engagement in politics in Ethiopia in these critical political affairs of the country as we describe here.

As Christopher Clapham (2004) rightly notes, election and party politics have been irrelevant to Ethiopia's political history. Same observer remarks that prior to 1984, "no political parties were allowed to form" in the country (ibid: 73). Equally remarkable is that "not until after 1991 did

Ethiopia hold its first elections to be contested between rival parties” (Ibid). This clearly illustrates that Ethiopia has missed big opportunities that the electoral processes and party politics offer in politically socializing and mobilizing the society. From this can emerge the question: What other means and strategies were there in Ethiopia to enthrone and dethrone governments rather than election? What was the role of the masses in such non electoral political activities? Christopher Clapham succinctly addresses the question as,

*No Ethiopian government... has ever gained power by election and over the last century and a half succession to power has almost invariably been determined by force. Rulers have been overthrown by external invasion (1868, 1936, 1941), by civil war (1855, 1871, 1889, 1991), and by coup d'état (1916, 1974 (twice), 1977). Only in 1913 and 1930 were there 'legitimate' successions, in each case after the death of the incumbent. Ousted leaders have been killed (1868, 1889, 1974 (two), 1977), imprisoned (1916) or gone into exile (1936, 1991); no Ethiopian ruler has ever continued to live peacefully in the country after losing power, as happened even after transitions as momentous as those in Zimbabwe in 1980 and South Africa in 1994. This is a tough record to break and makes it difficult to establish the expectation of peaceful succession on which democracy depends (Ibid). Emphasis added.*

Indeed, as the above quotation depicts, royal succession and foreign intervention were the major factors that have played key roles in the processes of changing regimes and governments in the country throughout its modern history.

Still important to inquire into is the nature of societal involvement or engagement in the non-electoral political activities. In other words, to what degree did the Ethiopian masses involve in the rise and fall of emperors, empress and presidents in the country, namely Tewodros (1855-1868), Yohanis IV(1872-1889), MenelikII (1889--1913), Iyasu (1913-1916), Zewuditu (1916-1930), Haile Sellassie I(1930-1974), and Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974-1991)? We have no belief that the society at large have played influential roles in the struggle for state power and have had a substantial impact on the processes that led to the enthronement and dethronement of the regimes. Strictly speaking, the role of the masses in these political processes seems to be minimal.

In ascending to power, Tewdros relied much upon few organized military forces, called Shifta (Bandit) (Bahiru, 1991). Donald Crummy argues that banditry in Ethiopia history was “important for the expression of dissidence, but not necessarily for popular resistance” (1990: 112). Similarly, Tewdros’s dethronement was the result of the British expedition led by Napier (Marcus, 1994; Bahiru, 1991). Tewdros’s death offered Yohannes an opportunity to claim

emperorship position, whose regime in turn ended in 1889 with Mahadist invasion from Sudan. In his place came Menelik II through the exploitation of opportunity created by the death of Yohannis, capture of foreign armies, and looting resources from the conquered south. After Menelik's natural death in 1913, *Lij Iyasu* came to power by succession, but he soon became the victim of the 1916 palace coup organized by the Shewan nobility in collaboration with Britain and France (Lentakis, 2005). Aside Zewuditu's succession and her nominal presence, the 1916 coup opened wider and longer opportunity for Teferi Mekonnen (later Haile Sellassie I) to rule the country for nearly half a century. The 1974 revolution, which brought to an end the imperial regime, gave rise to the socialist *Derg* regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. As such, the enthronement and dethronement of political leaders in the country had remained the business of few section of the society. As discussed below, what might be slightly different in engaging broader mass in state politics was the 1974 revolution.

As well, the state governance system of the successive Ethiopia regimes had also very limited popular base. They were dependent on few elites and external support for state governance. After conquest, Menelik II depended on northern settlers such as soldiers, clerks and co-opted local elites (commonly called *ballabats*) to govern the conquered lands such as through land bribery, which by then was the main source of power and privilege (Markakis, 1974). Marriage arrangement with influential local elites was another important means to govern peripheral parts of the empire both during Menelik II and during Haile Selassie's regimes. Haile Sellassie regime was highly beneficiary from external forces not only to administer the empire but also for security of the regime (Keller, 1981). Haile Sellassie's regime was also dependent on few educated elite for state administrative affairs. However, these intellectuals were from aristocrat families and represented not the broader masses, especially the poor (Clapham, 2006; Balsvik, 1985).

This, however, does not mean that societal engagement in state political affairs in the country was absent altogether. There were cases to be mentioned here. For example, in the conquered part of the country, societal engagement in state politics began with or during the processes of Menelik's conquest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in two opposite ways. One was the case in which the co-opted local rulers (*balabbats*) involved in the state formation processes and later in its administration affairs. The other was through war of resistance against the invasion. In the

war of resistance, local elites mobilized local masses against the invading forces. However, because of imbalance of power and the co-optation of local elites the political importance of the masses in the conquered land diminished. Furthermore, land alienation changed the masses to tenancy life and confined them to economic struggle. In particular, the changes in land ownership and the introduction of tenancy lowered the political role and engagement of the population in the conquered parts of the empire.

The Italian occupation of the empire (1936-1941) was another historical episode in Ethiopian history to mobilize and politically engage the masses in two mutually opposite ways. On the one hand, the resistance forces (commonly known as the Patriots' Resistance Movement) made an effort to politicize and mobilize the masses against the invading fascist Italy. On the other hand, the Italians put effort to mobilize masses in the conquered parts of the country against the Ethiopian state (Sbacchi, 1985). They approached the mass as 'liberator' from the invading Ethiopian state in general and from exploitative northern settlers (ibid). To that end, in some places, they returned land to the natives and also rearranged the administrative structure of the country in which the previously disadvantaged sections of the society took part in state governance (Bredin, 2005; Marcus, 1994). One of the consequences of these measures was the development of national political consciousness among the masses. For example, there was Italian contribution to the emergence of the Western Oromo confederation as movement for independence from the Ethiopia Empire in late 1930s (Ezeskiel, 2002). However, with the restoration of Emperor Haile Sellassie in 1941, the imperial control over the masses re-established in a way it would keep the masses away from actively engaging in the political affairs of the empire (Kasahun, 2009).

Post-restoration periods in Ethiopia were characterized by absolutism perhaps more than ever before producing various resistance movements (Keller, 1981; Bairu, 1991). Some of these resistance movements had characteristic of societal engagement. To mention some, these include the peasant revolts in some parts of the country (in 1940s and 1960s), the 1974 revolution, and the post - 1960s ethno - national liberation movements. If to mention any, these are the most important political events in the country that have been considered as having popular and local base. Because each of these events have directly involved non-elite actors like peasants (Gebru, 1991). In fact, they signaled not only the direct participation of common people but also to a

large degree reflected problems, needs and interests of the local people. Let us shortly look at each of these events to understand their strength and weakness in terms of mass engagement.

To begin with the peasant revolts, we have only few experiences in Ethiopia, notably the 1943 Weyane rebellion in Tigray, the 1963-1970 Bale peasant movement in eastern part of the present Oromia and the 1968 peasant uprising in Gojjam in the present Amhara Regional State. One cannot deny the fact that these events to some degree had involved non-elite parts of the society such as the peasants especially at their initial phase (Gebru, 1991). Primarily and initially, they were peasant movement in response to harsh economic and social conditions in their respective regions. According to John Markakis, the Weyane movement “rose in rebellion against the re-imposition of the Amhara rule and taxation after the hiatus of Italian occupation” (2003:7). In describing the cause of the rebellion in Gojjam, Markakis notes “the peasants objected to the reform of the traditional land tenure system and the privatization of landed property”(ibid). In Bale, the peasant movement was primarily an economic and social demand, until it later took political dimension, expressed in terms of ethnic and religious conflict (Gebru, 1991).

However, one does not dare to conclude that these peasant movements represent popular movement. First, they were time and geographical specific, covering only short period of time and representing few areas, Secondly, as Gebru Tareke argues “Peasants alone did not initiate, organize and direct the revolts” (1991: 195). Even, among the peasants themselves the local traditional elites took the leadership positions in the movement (Markakis, 1987). Thirdly, and most importantly at their initial phase each of these movements had economic and social orientation rather than political orientation. But later on, except perhaps in the Gojjam case, the peasant movements in Oromia and Tigray fully transformed into political question by gradually developing or at least laying a ground to the development of national liberation movements such as TPLF and OLF(see Markakis, 2003 ). This happened due to the intervention of elites who took control of the movement and directed the matter to political, religious and ethnic dimensions. Gebru Tareke argues, “The religious and ethnic orientation of the revolt [such as in Bale) does not detract from its essentially peasant character” (Gebru, 1991:159). However, contrary to this assertion, the revolts and movements were totally overtaken by the elites who manipulated and changed them into political businesses of national movement. Even in some

cases, like the Bale movement, it involved the external forces, especially from Somali (Mohamed, 1996).

Like the peasant movements, the 1974 revolution had some affinity with the local masses. Its core demands like 'land to the tillers' and a 'question of national equality' were directly concerned with the society at large, especially the population of the conquered south. Better than its precursor (i.e., the 1960 aborted coup which was entirely conceived and led by the imperial body guards), the 1974 revolution broadly involved different sections of the society to some degree and at some stage (Kasahun, 2009). Especially it involved students and some sections of urban dwellers. It also involved "radical peasant action in some rural areas" (ibid: 116). Christopher Clapham even argues that the revolution incorporated "the masses into political life in a way that was never possible before" (Clapham, 2010:76). This might be true to some extent and at some point in the processes of the revolution. Yet one may argue that the revolution, both in its processes and aftermath, were definitely controlled by elites. For example, the main actors in the processes of the revolution were students and the low ranked military officers (Markakis and Nega, 1986).

Eventually, the revolution was usurped by the low and middle ranked military officers, named *Derg* (committee in Amharic) who ruled the country until 1991. This in turn resulted in the exclusion of other actors including the students and the various political organizations that the students formed later such as the EPRP and MEISON. The infamous 'red terror' (1977-1978) further alienated the masses from political processes that the revolution ushered in. Siegfried Pausewang (2009:71) affirms this as "The Red Terror of the Derg regime in 1977-1978 had destroyed the urban opposition".

Indeed, some post-revolutionary political developments had a role to play in politically engaging the masses such as through student campaign to rural areas, the land nationalization policies and formation of different urban and rural associations. For example, as Alemseged Abbay rightly argues, "For the first time in their history, Ethiopian peasants were introduced to the notion of organization in the late 1970s when the radical land reform involved peasant associations structured at local, district, provincial and national levels"(2009: 176).



The declared purpose for the establishment of peasant association (as well as urban association) was to enable them to “run their own affairs, solve their own problems and directly participate in political, economic and social activities” (Zemelak, 2011:7). However, as Alemseged (2009) notes these associations “they ended up being the official agencies that fulfilled the Derg’s programmes such as conscription and villagization (ibid) rather than to serve as means or forum of mass political participation. According to Kasahun Berhanu (2009:119) due to Derg regime’s excessive centralization of power, “a situation of antipathy prevailed as the dominant feature of state-society relations in Ethiopia”.

Following the revolution, the usurper of power by the military junta, the trends of state domination over masses continued. As time went on, the regime’s strong hand over the mass aggrandized the already evolving national liberation movements, which were to overthrow the regime from power in 1991. What about the condition of societal involvement in the political processes of national liberation movements that had raged the country throughout the second half of the twentieth century?

While national liberation movements emerged almost in different parts of the country since 1960s and 1970s, their capacity to mobilize the masses against the *Derg* regime was limited in most cases. Even the TPLF and EPLF, which were supposed having strong popular base managed to attract the larger community only towards the end of the *Derg* regime, or at the time when it became clear that the *Derg* regime was on the verge of death. Several factors might be attributable to the trivial involvement of the Ethiopian masses in national liberation struggle along with their respective ethno-regional movements. These factors may vary from place to place and from culture to culture. Degree of people’s political consciousness, heavy hands of the successive Ethiopian regimes in intimidating and controlling the masses, limited capacity of the national liberation movements to reach the mass and communicate their programme may be stated as the main factors for less involvement of the masses in national struggles for self-determination in the country.

In addition, in Southern parts of Ethiopia such as in Oromia it has been widely argued that the Derg’s land nationalization policy, which liberated millions of peasants from tenancy, have hindered massive involvement in political program of OLF and other political organizations of the south. While this may be true to some degree, the main reason, however, seems to be the lack

of communication between the National Liberation Movements and the masses they claim to represent. For example, in the case of Oromia, the Oromo land has been the centre of the country's political and economic power where most government institutions such as the police and military forces were based. The government institutions' concentration in the land in turn highly affected opportunities of contact and communication between the national liberation movements and the masses. In contrast, those movements operating at periphery like TPLF in Tigray and EPLF in Eritrea were better in organizing the mass into their political programme. One possible reason for this could be their distance from the centre where the control of the national government was so strong.

It is important also to see a question about causes for the low level of societal engagement in state politics in Ethiopia in general. In fact, scholars have long identified various factors that determine the nature and degree of community's political engagement. Among others, these include literacy level, the 'political culture' of society concerned, and condition of trust or confidence in political leaders and institutions. In the African context, problem of political engagement is prominently attributed to two main factors: the authoritarian nature of the state and the 'parochialist' culture of the society. In the first case, the assumption is that owing to the authoritarian nature of political system in the continent the society at large were kept at bay from political activities. The second case is the notion that characterizes the African society as parochial community having no political interest that evince beyond their narrow ethnic bond.

These two basic factors were also assumed to apply to the Ethiopian state and society. Abbink (2006), Lovise Aalen (2000), Merera, (2003) have well studied the impact of the authoritarian nature of the Ethiopian state in barring the mass from political engagement. On the other hand, scholars like Donald Levine characterize the Ethiopia society especially in the southern region as agglomeration of traditionalist society having no or little awareness about politics (1974). Donald Levine tends to portray, people of the south as lacking knowledge about and enthusiasm for politics. There are also scholars who advocate this point of view to the present. For example, scholars like Michael Lentakis argues that there are "ethnic groups in the south and south west of [Ethiopia] that do not actually know what they want or understand what is happening [in the present ethnic federal political processes of the country]"(Lentakis ,2005: 7).

It is not difficult to understand the adverse impact of the authoritarian political system on societal political engagement in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Baseless, however, is the view that connotes the Ethiopian society as parochial community unqualified for the 'business of politics'. This notion seems to serve the purpose of justifying the domination of one group over many others rather than characterizing the real nature of the Ethiopian community.

In this work, we take somewhat a different approach to understanding the underlying causes for the low level of society's political engagement in Ethiopia. In particular, we argue that the problem lies in the 'externalities' of the state formation processes in the country. Anywhere in the world, the state formation processes have had both internal and external dimensions. Indeed, state formation processes were complex phenomena that involve a combination of internal and external actors, interests and stimuli (see Tilly, 1975). However, there are cases in which either the internal or the external factors overweigh in the processes. In some instances, the contribution of external forces in the state formation processes might be dominant, such as for example in Africa during the colonial periods. In contrast, in the Ethiopia case the state formation processes were attributed to internal forces (Bahru, 1991; Ivo Strecker, 1994).

However, one should not overlook the role of external forces in the Ethiopian state formation processes, as well as its impact on state-society relationships (Asafa, 1993; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1991; Keller, 1990). Let us explain this case. These externally based explanations of state formation processes in Ethiopia may be seen in mythological and military (war) aspect. The mythological case is that dawn from its ancient origin or the Axumite period, it was claimed officially that the root of the Ethiopian state was not internal but external, that is from Solomon of Israel (See Henze, 2000; Levine, 1974; Marcus, 1994). This myth played key roles in barring the society from participating in state politics. According to this myth, only certain section of the society who could 'rightfully' claim Solomonic lineage were supposed to rule or even deserve the business of politics and the rest were expected to give their consent and obedience to political rulers no matter how cruel and ineffective the rulers might be. Rightly, contest and bargaining over state power took place between/among few sects of the society claiming the Solomonic lineage. Until very recently, perhaps even to these days such claim has resonated in the country's politics. In the 1931 and 1955 constitutions, Emperor Haile Sellassie claimed that source of his power was 'God' not the Ethiopian people (Marcus, 1994). The

Ethiopian Orthodox church on its part was also playing key roles in socializing people of the country to the myth, which in effect aimed at making the mass obey the rule of kings. There were possibilities for such measures to produce politically docile community (Merera, 2003).

In the military aspects, the external dimensions of the Ethiopia state formation processes is also worth considering in the perspectives of its impact on state-society relationships. We can see this issue from two angles. One is the country's dependence on external military assistance for survival. For example, Portuguese saved the country in 16<sup>th</sup> century from Ahmed Gran expansion; Britain assisted in liberation of the country from fascist Italy during the WWII, USSR and Cuba spared the country from Somalian invasion in the aftermath of the 1974 revolution. As well, the US technically helped the country to survive following the end of the Cold War. Even, Menelik's conquest of the south and the battle Adwa might be difficult without the external military assistance in some way.

Secondly, the formation of the modern Ethiopian state, especially the Menelik's expansion, conquest, and incorporation of many nations in the south were partly in response to the European incursion into Africa for colonial occupation. Similarly, the Ethiopia statehood took root in reaction to external stimuli such as external aggression by different forces at different times (Bahru, 1991). Of all, the Ethiopian victory over Italy in 1896 at the battle of Adwa immensely cultivated external legitimacy and recognition for Ethiopia to exist as an independent statehood (Keller, 1990). As well, the Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1941) to some extent helped the development of Ethiopian nationalism, especially in rendering resistance movements.

Partly influenced by the above events, the successive Ethiopian regimes have given a very high regard for external legitimacy. Later, Emperor Haileselassie was also devoted much of his time to building the external image of Ethiopia with very little consideration to internal issues. Similarly, the socialist military regime of Mengistu Hailemariam depended on USSR and its allies for both ideological guide and military assistance. Such an external dependence syndrome critically and adversely affected mass participation and engagement in state political affairs. That is, a high regard to external aspect of legitimacy seems to have led to overlooking the importance of internal legitimacy whose base or source is the society and their political engagement.

Thus, the externally - based or the external dependence of the Ethiopia's state formation processes therefore has been detrimental to mass political involvement. Firstly and principally, it laid a ground for the development of unbalanced power relationships between state and society. Being dependent on external military and technical assistance, regimes in Ethiopia established hegemonic control over society so that people had no meaningful say in the political life of the country. Secondly, instead of the people, the external military assistance came to be the source of power to successive regimes in the country. The principle of legitimacy, which is based on the assumption that government and state in general derive their authority from the people they represent, lacked relevance in the Ethiopian polity. This in turn, not only discredited the role and contribution of the masses in the country's politics, especially in being sources of power to government, but also it greatly contributed to the country's political and economic underdevelopment (Dessalegn, 2008; 2009). Next, we briefly see how and to what extent the minimal level of societal engagement in the country's political life has affected economic and political development in the country.

Popular engagement is an indispensable factor for country's economic and political development. One can imagine the deficit of this in Ethiopia where the masses were barred from political participation. Dessalegn Rahmato (2009) may be right when he attributes Ethiopia's economic and political underdevelopment to the hegemony of state over society and hence to the minimal level of societal engagement in the country's political affairs. Taking the problem of rural economy into consideration, he argues "an important contributing factor for the stagnation of rural economy and social formation has been state hegemony and peasant subordination (Dessalegn, 2009: 347). According to him, "State hegemony has inhibited a possibility of a dynamic impulse from emerging and the seeds of change from taking root" (Ibid).

Similarly Christopher Clapham argues, though the ruling regimes in Ethiopia had power over society they did not use it well for development processes but "for protection against outsiders and to impose central control over other rulers and peoples" (2006: 109). Clapham further argues,

*The central paradox here is that if power was indeed the key to development, then Ethiopians should have been extraordinarily good at it, and Ethiopia should rapidly have emerged as a great African powerhouse, rather than as a global synonym for famine, war*

*and destitution. Ethiopia is by a long way the oldest and most authoritative state that black Africa has produced (ibid: 109-110).*

Christopher Clapham strictly believes that the state rulers have been “capable of implementing ‘development policies’ that strikingly demonstrate state power, even if they have been much less effective at producing ‘development’”(ibid:110). These failures may be, at least partly, attributable to the inadequacies of societal engagement or involvement in the development processes due to lack of conducive and enabling political environment.

Similarly, the state hegemony over the society and the minimal level of societal engagement in state political affairs is supposed to be one of the main contributing factors for ‘political underdevelopment’, such as democratization processes in the country (Ibid). Instead of development processes the state hegemony over society created conditions that made the masses subject not citizens of the state in the country. The unbalance of power between state and society definitely led to the unbearable exploitation of the society by the state. Particularly, the effect of state on society was worse in the conquered southern parts of the country as they “were subjected to economic, political, and social domination by both the Orthodox Church and the state that the Amhara dominated” (Alemseged, 2009: 175). This subjugation tightly held the masses from political engagement, which in turn produced various political consequences. One of these is the emergence of ethno national movements who overruled the Derg regime in 1991 and then introduced ethnically based federation to the country. As shall be seen later this study is devoted to the analysis of the effects of this ethnically based decentralization on the nature of state-society relationships discussed above as well as on the nature of inter-society relationships to be discussed below.

#### 3.2.4. Some salient features of inter – society relationships in Ethiopia: the pre-1991 experience

It is one of the objectives of this study to examine effects of Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization on inter-societal relationships. As a base for this, this section attempts to describe features of inter-societal relationships in the country in historical perspective. An argument made here is that due to the exclusion of the broader masses from taking part in the country’s political processes and the floating of state political activities at national and elite level, inter-societal relationships in pre-1991 Ethiopia had been limited to non-political issues such as social, cultural, religious and economic affairs.

To describe the nature of inter-society relationships it is necessary to first contextualize the concept of society. Apparently, a society is a human organization occupying defined area and embodying various components and divisions. The major components in a given society are ethnic, religious, class, age, sex, occupation (livelihood) and the like. To function as community, these groups of society interact in different ways as well as for different reasons. The notion of inter-societal relationships therefore refers to various forms of interactions between the various sections of the society either individually or in-group. Each of these divisions of the society has been central to shaping inter-societal relationships in the country. These categories of societal components have been sources for societal interaction either in the form of cooperation and conflict.

For example, religion, namely Orthodox Christian and Islam have been central in the Ethiopian history to unite and divide the Ethiopian population. In northern Ethiopia, the Abyssinian core, the Orthodox Christian faith had been a unifying factor. Islam had also played similar roles in eastern and southeastern parts of the country. At the same time, these two major religions had been source of inter-societal conflict in the empire.

Class division was also another source of conflict and cooperation among the Ethiopian people, especially since the expansion of the country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the south, east and west parts. This had its root in the establishment of landlord-tenant relationships. Class division was a source of cooperation in the south between northern settlers and the co-opted local elites called *balabbats*. In collaboration, the two interests controlled and ruled over the conquered people. Yet, such class division between the upper class and the tenants had been a source of conflict in the country, even substantially contributing to the 1974 revolution. The notion of class division in the Marxist sense had also been the main issue of political organization and governance in the country during the Socialist *Derg* regime (1974-1991).

However, in discussing the issue of inter-society relationships our focus is about its ethnic aspects on two accounts. First, in the post- 1991 Ethiopian context, the ethnic aspect of society otherwise called nations, nationalities and peoples has been central in the country's politics. As Tom Pätz rightly notes "Ethiopian federalism has ethnicity as its underlying organizing principle. Ethiopian citizens are categorized into their different ethno-linguistic groupings"( Pätz : 2002:3). This is based on the assumption that ethnicity (especially inter-ethnic domination) had been the

main cause for political unrest in the country, and believed that the ethnic federal political arrangement would solve the problem. Secondly, the other aspects of society such as sex, occupation and class and the like were included in ethnicity and discussed where and when necessary. In the remaining part of this section, we therefore describe the nature and dynamics of the ethnic dimensions of inter-society relationships in the country focusing on the pre-1991 experiences.

Despite long years of interaction between peoples of the country (Levine, 1974) patterns of settlement in Ethiopia are largely ethnically- based. Hence, arenas of inter-ethnic relationships in the country had largely been confined to two arenas. One is to border areas where two or more ethnic groups share common territorial boundaries. The other is in urban centers where various ethnic groups share common living space. These two areas are ideal places where one can readily find the nature and pattern of inter-ethnic relationships in the country. Of interest for this study is urban. Nevertheless, as this section is a background work for that purpose, too, our discussion here is mainly concerned with the general and wider dimension of the subject under consideration.

The Horn of Africa has been home to many ethnic groups. In Ethiopia alone, it is assumed that there are more than 80 ethnic groups. Before the formation of states in the region by the European colonial powers and the Ethiopian expansion, the various ethnic groups lived independently at least politically speaking. During those periods, there were different kinds of interactions among different societies in the region such as in the forms of migrations, wars, trade, marriage and the like (Levine, 1974). The introduction of Christianity and Islam religions to the region, respectively in fourth and seventh centuries A.D might have also contributed to enhance the extent and degree of interaction among peoples of the Horn region.

For Doland Levine, “More intimate relationships among different ethnic groups in Ethiopia have been formed through processes of migration and inter-marriage” ( Levine, 1974:44). While the immense contribution of migration to inter-ethnic relationships in Ethiopia and the Horn is undeniable, the relevance of conquest in playing key roles in this regard should not be overlooked. Particularly in the Ethiopian case, one can argue that of all factors of inter-ethnic interactions, perhaps migration and conquest could take a lion’s share. Focusing on the area presently known as Ethiopia and Eritrea, Walle Engedayehu (1993: 34), for example, identifies



the following migratory directions that have contributed to the interaction if not integration of ethnic groups in the region.

1. *The Beja migration from the lowland areas between the Red Sea and the Upper Nile Valley into the Eritrea (Tigray) highlands during the closing centuries of the first millennium A.D.;*

2. *The Agew migration from the Lasta highlands into the Tigre-Beja lowlands in the North during the closing decades of the thirteenth century;*

3. *The medieval expansion and consolidation of the highland-based Ethiopian multi-national state over the entire north-east African region between the 13th and 16th centuries;*

4. *The great ethnic migrations and expansion of the peoples of the southern and eastern regions, such as the Adal, Somali, etc. ... and the last and most extensive of all, that of the Oromo people from their ancestral homelands into the central, northern, and western parts of Ethiopia between the 16th and 17th centuries;*

5. *The reunification [sic] and centralization of the multi-national state of Ethiopia under the successive leadership of Emperors Tewodros II, Yohanes IV, and Menelik II during the second half of the last century.*

To these major history of migrations in the region, scholars also add the migration of Semitic people (now Tigray and Amhara people) from Arab to present day northern Ethiopia, who in assimilation with or in conquest of indigenous African population groups established the Axumite empire (Fattovich, 2000).

Whatever the factors might be, the inter-ethnic contacts and interactions in the region had had lasting impacts: positive as well as negative. In positive terms, cultural and material exchanges took place (Levine, 1974). On the negative side, displacement, wars, conquest, even the extinction of some ethnic groups did happen in the region and in Ethiopia itself (ibid). For example, the Abyssinian conquest of the southern Ethiopia that appeared *reunification* to Walle above and of course to many others scholars (Henze, 2000; Marcus, 1994), has got lasting impact on inter-ethnic relationships in Ethiopia as well as in the Horn region as a whole .

Since the occupation and partitioning of the region by the European colonial powers and the Abyssinians in the late nineteenth century, forms, structures and objectives of the interactions among the various ethnic groups in the Horn of Africa have come to change very dramatically and permanently. Some of these basic changes are worth mentioning here.

In the first place, the formation of states and its attendant political developments such as territorial sovereignty, state boundary demarcations and the like produced two contradictory

developments in the region as far as inter-ethnic relationships were concerned. On the one hand, same ethnic groups were partitioned among different European colonial powers and Ethiopia; while on the other hand different ethnic groups were placed under the jurisdiction or administrative rule of one state. Belonging to the first category are the Somali who were “divided among not less than five states: Ethiopia, French Djibouti, British Somaliland, Italian Somalia, [and] British Kenya (Markakis 1993; 3); the Afar - who were divided among Ethiopia, France (Djibouti), and Italy (Eritrea); the Oromo who were shared between Ethiopia and British (Kenya). As well, there were other ethnic groups partitioned between Ethiopia and British (Sudan) from the western corner.

Since its creation in the late nineteenth century, ethnic plurality has become the central feature of Ethiopia. The root of this plurality is primarily attributable to conquest and incorporation. This history of conquest and the inter-ethnic domination that it produced have largely shaped studies and assumptions about inter-ethnic relationships in the country. The conventional assumption about inter-ethnic relationships in Ethiopia is about the Amhara domination over all other ethnic groups in the country and the inter-ethnic conflict that the domination has produced. More specifically, the Amhara and to lesser degree Tigrean hegemony over access to political, social, cultural and economic resources (both at national and local levels), and the inter-ethnic conflicts that such inequalities have generated have received much scholarly attention (Keller, 1981; Markakis, 1974; Merera, 2003). This is true to a greater degree and hence deserves due attention. However, this alone is not enough for the full description about the nature of inter-ethnic relationships in the country in all places and all the time.

In particular, there are two major gaps in this assumption. One is that it focuses only on public sector, and does not explain about the nature of inter-ethnic relationships in private and daily life of the society. Secondly, the assumption focuses only on ‘north-south’ inter-ethnic relationships or between the conquering north and conquered south. Such an assumption, however, definitely excludes the other dimension of the story such as, for example, the nature and pattern of inter-ethnic relationships among ethnic groups of the south and ethnic groups of the north. In other words, the conventional knowledge about the nature and pattern of inter-ethnic relationships in Ethiopia, which focuses on north-south relationships, excludes the south-south and north-north dimensions.

Focusing on these gaps, we demonstrate how, to a greater degree, inter-ethnic relationships in pre-1991 Ethiopia had been non-political in content at the local community level. Let us begin with south-south perspective of interethnic relationships. Out of 80 or so ethnic groups in the country, at least 75 of them are located in the conquered regions of the south. Both before and after the conquest, there have been different kinds of interaction among these ethnic groups. Yet in terms of content and objective, these relationships never had a political dimension. Indeed, some kingdoms (eg. Jimma and Kaffa) emerged in the region before conquest to extend hegemonic control over the relatively weaker neighborhood groups. Yet, such hegemonic expansion may be explained in terms of economic interest rather than political. It seems that in the southern Ethiopia there was no one ethnic group who managed to control and dominate over the other permanently and this can partly explain why the southern Ethiopia today is ethnically more heterogeneous than their northern counter-part.

After the conquest, almost all the southern people were subjected to the domination of the northern settlers and hence none of them had had the political or economic power to dominate the other. Yet interactions have continued in the region among various ethnic groups. While some groups like the Oromo and Sidama were relatively stable others like Gurage and Walayta moved outside their homeland in search for employment (private and government). In relative terms, it seems that the Oromo and the Sidama were self-sufficient community because of a better endowment with natural resources. Instead, the Oromo and the Sidama lands became a destination for many of migrants, both from the north and the south. Moreover, partly due to their rich resources and partly for their strategic importance, the Oromo and Sidama lands became the centre of urbanization and industry in the country to attract people from other places (of far and near distances). As we shall discuss it later, due to these and other factors Oromia has become the centre of the country where the capital of the state, Addis Ababa city is located, and Hawassa city in Sidama land came to be the centre of political administration in the south both before and after 1991. As a result, the Oromo and the Sidama lands, especially in urban areas have become ethnically heterogeneous. Yet inter-ethnic relationships, even in these areas had had not meaningful political dimension before 1991, especially in connection to and in the context of the modern Ethiopian state political affairs.

In contrast to the south, the northern part of Ethiopia (commonly called historic Ethiopia, or Abyssinia) hosts only few ethnic groups today. Due to the long time inter-ethnic interactions, assimilation did occur in this part of the country. Consequently, today only two ethnic groups: the Amhara and Tigray are dominant. These people share many things in common including history, religion and common ancestry. Until very recently, specifically until the rise of EPLF and TPLF), there was no much record of inter-ethnic strains between these two groups, namely at the level of common people. Despite wars and conflicts between regional lords for long periods of time(see Greenfield, 1965), relations between the Amhara and Tigray ethnic groups had been limited to economic, cultural and religious affairs, especially at local and mass level.

With this much reflection on south-south and north-north aspects of inter-ethnic relationships, let us turn back to the north-south aspect of the story to show some non-political elements in it. Indeed as many scholars have argued, relationships between the northern settlers and the southern natives were truly political. It is political mainly because the move to and the settlement of the northern people in the south had political mission of state expansion. Moreover, the settlers including the soldiers, the administrators, clerks and priests- all who were destined to settle in the south following the conquest and incorporation were state agents or actors. Because, they played the role of state governance that mainly included tax collection, judiciary services and above all control of any nonconformists to the rule of the day. Even more so, religion and marriage affairs between the conquering north and the conquered south were primarily political (Sereke-Brhan, 2002). Marriage was a political game as it was used to take place between the settlers and the co-opted local *balabbats*, for political reasons (Aleme, 1984). In religion case, priests played key political roles in socializing peoples of the south to the northern dominated socio-economic and political order (Alemseged, 2009). In that condition, one can better describe the relationships between the northern settlers and the southern local people as state-society relationships rather inter-society relationships.

However, even in this case, as time went the political content of inter-ethnic relationships in this part of the country declined gradually because of three major reasons. First, attracted by various economic fortunes in the south, people from the north had migrated more and more to the south. This was due to better job opportunities in this particular region created by some industrialization processes and as well as due to the relatively richness of this part of the country in natural

resources. This time the northern migrants in the south were not state actors but simply individuals in search for jobs. Relationships between this group of northern migrants and the native southern people came to take non-political affairs such as social, cultural and economic elements.

The second factor to be mentioned here as a cause for the decline of the political content of inter-ethnic relationships in the south is directly linked to the rise of Haile Sellassie I to power and the centralization policies that the regime pursued. Upon coming to power as an emperor in 1930, “Sellassie had begun to enhance his authority” through centralization of state power (Keller, 1981: 320). According to Edmond Keller,

*The most significant of his early reforms [planned to enable him control state power] was the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy in 1931, the first document of its kind in Ethiopia, clearly designed to strengthen his position against the religio-traditional classes. In effect, this lessened the role of the Church in legitimizing the Emperor, and centralised more power in the hands of the absolute monarch (ibid).*

The centralization of power and with it the declining of the political power of the landlords over the local population had got very significant implications for relationships between the northern settlers and the native people in the southern Ethiopia. Apparently, once they were dispossessed off the state mandated political power, the local and regional landlords turned to maintain their economic and social status. They turned to act more and more on economic issues rather than political affairs. Once the modern bureaucrats overtook their administrative power, the political significance of the settlers in the south was highly eroded.

The third factor for changes in the relationships between the northern settlers and the southern people from political to non-political affairs was the 1974 revolution. As Christopher Clapham notes, the land nationalization measure of the *Derg* regime “destroyed the power base of the landlords” (Clapham, 2002: 15). As result, settlers were assigned to land almost as equal as their tenants were. While the Haile Sellassie I centralization policy eroded the political base of the landlords in the south, the 1974 revolution further eroded their economic and social power through nationalization of the land which was the social, economic and political power of the landlords.

In reaction, and also for fear of revenge from peasants (see Pausewang,1997) most landlords or masters left for towns , while others had chosen to remain in the countryside and began to live as common citizens with some social and economic interactions with local people. In rural areas, the northern landlords who chose to stay finally were socialized to the culture and norm of the local community. As such, north-south interethnic relationships in the southern part of the country had come to take more and more of non-political dimension until the 1991 political transformation. This was mainly a case in rural areas where the settlers and local masses came nearly equal in economic status. In urban areas while there was nationalization of urban land as in rural, which abolished private land ownership. However, unlike in rural areas, such measures only diminished not abolished the power base of settlers in urban centers. One case for this is that only extra land was nationalized. As Donald Marcus (1994) rightly illustrates, the northern settlers in the conquered south retained private urban land up to 500 square meters. Secondly, in cultural and administrative issues the dominance of the settlers continued in urban centers. This along with their previous better economic status maintained the economic supremacy of the settlers in urban south. As this urban issue is central to our study, we offer more explanation on it in the next chapter.

### 3.3 Ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: origin, objectives, essence and effects

As it is well stated in the introduction part of this thesis central to this study is to examine the implementation of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its effects on state-society and inter-society relationship in urban areas. Such a task naturally requires understanding first the origin, the objective, essence and effects of the country's ethnic decentralization processes at the wider national context. This is what this section of the chapter is for.

#### 3.3.1. Origin and rationale of ethnic decentralization (federalism) in Ethiopia

Ethiopia adopted an ethnic based decentralization in 1991 in which the state and society have been reconstituted along ethnic lines. Seemingly, such political development came about under two strange circumstances. First, as Will Kymlicka (2006) notes the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia was adopted at the time when countries practicing similar state governance system (namely Yugoslavia and USSR) disintegrated. Secondly, the notion of ethnic decentralization had never been on the political menu of the architects of the system, namely the TPLF (Young, 1997), and OLF (Merera, 2003). In their long time struggle, these two political

organizations were dedicated to the complete independence (separatism) of their respective regions, Tigray and Oromia (Young, 1997; Asaffa, 1993). What was the rationale for the introduction of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia under such outlandish circumstances? What were the claims that the architects of the system (especially the EPRDF) makes in introducing such a political order (arrangement) to the country? What were the major critics to it? In this section we dwell on these and related issues.

Motives for ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia were many and complex. Some of these merit brief discussion. First, there are groups who have attempted to put and see it in the wider international context of the decentralization processes that swept the world in 1990s (Paulos, 2007). In this perspective, the decentralization processes in Ethiopia is considered as part of the worldwide move towards a decentralized form of government. According to this perspective, the decentralization processes in Ethiopia was mainly a result of external pressures. This notion to some degree sounds valid as like any other African countries Ethiopia was under the pressure of the international monetary institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank which strictly demanded decentralized polity in return to giving loan (ibid,2007). However, an exogenous reasoning for the emergence of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia does not offer full explanation on the matter, mainly due to two reasons. First, it fails to acknowledge the pressure posed from within, especially from that of regional and ethno- national liberation movements that for long demanded and struggled for autonomy and secession. Secondly, it does not fully explain why exceptionally ethnicity has been chosen as the main, if not the only, criterion to restructuring the state.

The second point of view concerning the introduction of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia is an explanation in terms of the social and political settings of the country. Ethiopia is a multinational state. For some scholars, therefore, ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is reflecting the inherent diversity of its population (Andreas 2003). In this respect, what explains the development of ethnically based federalism in Ethiopia is not ethnic plurality per se but also the prevailing inequality of inter-ethnic relationships in which one or two ethnic groups has been dominant in the political economy of the country (see Alemseged, 2009, Merera, 2003). In Ethiopia, interethnic domination along with centralized form of government is generally believed to be the main cause for political and social ills in the country, including war of national liberation

movements (Kidane, 1997). The advent of ethnic decentralization to the country in 1991, therefore, was meant to resolve the interethnic domination (1991 Transitional Charter; 1995 federal constitution). According to this perspective, the need for ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia is largely a response to the widely recognized discontent of various ethnic identities against the discriminatory and repressive state. This viewpoint is what the EPRDF officials (the architects if not the promoters of the system) strongly claim in justifying why ethnically based decentralization is necessitated in the country.

There is also a third explanation to the emergence of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia, which is connected to ideology of EPRDF. There are groups who observe ideological antecedents to the EPRDF's ethnic decentralization that relates to the Marxist-Leninist ideology and its conception of addressing 'the national question' by 'self-determination'. The discourse on nations and nationalities right to self-determination including and up to secession (the core of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism) came into being in Ethiopia in 1960s and 1970s with the student movement in the country. Influenced by the Marxist-Leninist ideology, in their struggle to overthrow the Haile Selassie regime, university students placed the national question at centre stage. As a result, the rights of nations and nationalities to self-determination, including secession were introduced and popularized in the country. Consequently, most political organizations, grown out of the student movement at the time, including the multiethnic ones like EPRP and MEISON, and ethno nationalist's political organizations like TPLF and OLF recognized and included the nation's right to self- determination in their political programme. In controlling state power in 1991, EPRDF, the core of which is TPLF, quickly institutionalized nations, nationalities and peoples' rights to self-determination including and up to secession and this has become central to state politics in the country ever since.

Such ideological antecedent and their influence to transform Ethiopia into ethnic federation cannot be undermined. However, as David Turton (2006) argues, it needs to be noted that even though some clauses in the present Ethiopian constitution, including that of the secession clause have already been introduced to Ethiopian politics at the discourse level, ethnic decentralization that we see in the country since 1991 is new and unprecedented.

Fourthly, there is also a 'political necessity' account for the advent of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia in 1991. 1980s were tough moment for Ethiopia. It was a time when the country was



bitterly plagued by famine and wars of national liberation movements. They together weakened the military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. When the USSR and other socialist countries assistance to the regime waned in the late 1980s, the socialist Derg government was no longer in a position to manage the country. Failed to withstand the power of national liberation forces, especially that of TPLF and EPLF from the north, and OLF and ONLF from the south, Mengistu's regime collapsed, consequently "[t]he country was verging on disintegration along ethnic lines" (Alem, 2003: 11) in the absence of effective central government. Given that, "[a]t the time it was unlikely that the TPLF and its coalition partners would succeed in replacing the collapsed military regime in power and rule the country without addressing the demands of the identity-based political organizations"(ibid). Many have believed including the EPRDF officials that this political pragmatism propelled the EPRDF to decentralize the country ethnically (ibid.).

For example, Siegfried Pausewang remarked that given the political condition of the time "A far-reaching decentralisation was, at that moment, the only chance to keep Ethiopia together. It would be denying realities to ignore this need" (1997:7). This means that the introduction of ethnic decentralization to the country is used as means or strategy of maintaining unity and averting the disintegration of the country.

The fifth and last explanation to the advent of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia is what was forwarded by opponents. Opponents of the EPRDF's ethnic decentralization conceive it as means of 'divide and rule' purposely designed by TPLF to assure the dominance of the Tigrayan people in the political economy of the country. According to this viewpoint, Tigray people are minor ethnic group in the country and ethnic federation is the appropriate means for them to control state's political and economic power (Merera, 2003; Messay, 1999).

To conclude about the rationale of ethnic federation in the country, each one of the above account has its own merit. Yet it seems that there is no consensus among scholars and in popular discourses on the real motives for the country's transformation into an ethnic federation. Be it as it may, ethnically decentralized form of governance has been the political reality of the country since 1991. In the section to follow we discuss processes in which this ethnically based decentralization has been installed or institutionalized in the country and the implication of that processes for legitimacy and credibility of this newly established political system .

### 3.3.2. Instituting ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia: processes and consequences

As discussed in theoretical part of the thesis, a number of factors contribute to the federal arrangement to attain its stated goals. One of these is the degree of its inclusiveness in the process of its formation for it creates a consensus on rule of the term. In this section, we discuss about processes of the establishment of the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization and their legitimacy consequences. In particular, we illustrate the extent to which the processes of establishing or instituting the ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia have been accommodative (inclusive) of a variety of political actors and interests to win support.

As we briefly discussed in chapter two, theoretically federal type of decentralization may be instituted either by imposition from above or through bargaining and negotiation from below; each of which has sturdy implication for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the federal arrangement (see Stephan, 2001). Imposed federalism entails the lack of participation from the part of the concerned political actors and interests in the processes of negotiating and establishing the federal political arrangement. In question in this approach is the willingness and consent of the society to obey the established rule. Federalism by negotiation on the other hand involves a voluntary participation of contending political interests with agreement to make federal arrangements. In this discussion, we note which of these categories may apply to the Ethiopian case along with their consequences.

According to J.Tyler Dickovick and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, "The official version of Ethiopian federation is that the federation is created voluntarily by regional governments, which implies federation from below or "coming together" (Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010: 21). Indeed, there was certain bargain in instituting the federation. For example, after ousting the communist - military government of the Derg regime from power in May 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) convened a National Conference on Peace and Reconciliation in July of that year which resulted in adoption of Transitional Charter Government. In the processes of adopting the Transitional Period Charter that laid the foundation for the future establishment of ethnic federation in the country, different political organizations were invited. The intention to invite the various political organizations was to create a political formula acceptable to the country's former rebel forces and numerous political groups (Kinfе, 2001). Accordingly, about twenty-seven political organizations participated in the adoption of

the Transitional Charter (Aaron, 2002, Alem, 2003; Kinfu, 2001). The involvement of various political organizations in establishing the political rule is a novel and an important step forward in introducing the culture of doing politics by discussion and bargaining in the country. Kinfu Abraha reflected on this as,

*It (the July conference)...was the first multinational convention [in political history of the country] where delegates of various nations and political, religious, social and professional organization were given a fair and equal chance to voice their unrehearsed view, without suspicion of how their views might be construed(2001: 443).*

While Kinfu's point of view in elevating the conference to an absolute democratic stage is open for critics (Merera, 2003; Young, 1998), frankly speaking, Ethiopia had never had such a participatory experience in politics until then, especially when seen from the perspectives of the number and varieties of actors involved.

Despite such achievement, it is widely argued that “[t]he process of introducing federalism in Ethiopia is [considered to be] more of a federal imposition than a federal bargain” (Aalen, 2002:48). Many have condemned it as an imposed and exclusionary type (see Abink, 2006; Young, 1998). One of the important factors for this is that it has excluded the non-ethnic political organizations from participating in the formulation of the federal political rule (Seyoum, 2010; Young, 1998). This was a case in drafting both the July 1991 transitional Period Charter and the 1994 federal constitution. With regard to the Transition charter, one foreign observer states,

*Shortly after EPRDF forces entered the capital in May 1991 talks were held with a large number of opposition groups interested in attending a transitional conference, but significantly those encouraged to participate were predominantly nationally based, either liberation fronts, or groups organized just before the conference. Class-based movements, such as the leading parties of the student movement[ such as EPRP, MEISON] and the Derg's Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE), were not permitted to attend the conference and have to date not been allowed to participate in the political life of the country(Young. 1998: 193-194).*

The second point of critic to the bargaining quality of the Ethiopian federation is that “there were minimal discussions on the issues around the principle of national self-determination and devolution of power along ethnic lines” (Aalen, 2002: 41) even among the groups participating in the conference. According to Lovise Aalen, “The outcome of the transitional conference, the transitional charter [that affirmed reorganizing the state structure along ethnic lines ], is ... more a result of an agenda predetermined by the EPRDF and partly by the OLF, rather than a pact

between all the organizations that participated in the conference (Ibid:). Similarly John Young argues the conference essentially approved the charter that had been prepared earlier in negotiation between the OLF and TPLF (1996: 536). Berhanu Gutema on his party also affirms,

*The transitional charter ... was exclusively authored by TPLF/EPRDF with a minor role from other ethnic organizations like OLF (which withdrew from the transitional government after a year) but with the exclusion of many pertinent groups and most importantly without a genuine and free participation of the Ethiopian people” (2009: 16).*

Kinfe Abraha(2001), the leading pro-EPRDF ethnic political order, even admits but argues that “although aspects of transitional charter were proposed by the EPRDF, but, they were subsequently discussed, amended and approved by the all nationalities convention including the Oromo, Amhara, Afar, Tigray, Somali, and the southern peoples movements in July 1991” (ibid:498-499).

However, critics deny such a claim. If any, a genuine negotiation in reordering the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines is the bargaining that took place between the TPLF and OLF just before bringing the matter to the July 1991 conference (Lenco, 1999). Otherwise most of the political organizations taking part in the conference were created over night on the eve of the conference (Alem, 2003: 13; Samatar, 2004), and hence lacked the negotiating capacity (power) as well as genuine representation of the community.

Thirdly, critics expose that most of the national/ethnic based political organizations including members of the EPRDF such as the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and South Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (SEPDF), lacked base of support from the people they claim to represent (Merera, 2003; Young, 1998). They are criticized of not representing the communities that they claim to govern. According to Merera Gudina (2003:123), these groups are “not locally and independently initiated political groups but TPLF created... [them] for the control of non-Tigrayan ethnic groups of the country”. This argument implies that the problem of accommodation and consensus over the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization involves not only constraints of consensus between elites of various ethnic groups but also constrains of relationships between the ruling elites and the ruled masses (Clapham, 2006; Young, 1998).

Fourthly, the establishment of the ethnic decentralization is defined as exclusivist on the ground that it represented only the three big ethnic groups, namely the Tigray, Amhara and Oromo (Tecola, 1995). According to Tecola Hagos this is so because “a coalition government [EPRDF] representing three main interests: the Oromo interest, the Amhara interest, and Tigrayan interest, with others...being considered important but secondary” (1995:97). Indeed, many political organizations, which are supposed to represent many other ethnic groups, were created much later than the establishment of the 1991 Transitional charter and still many others have emerged after the drafting of the 1994 constitution. For example, SEDM which is supposed to represent and promote the interests of the Southern ‘Nations’, ‘Nationalities’ and ‘Peoples’ was organized in 1994, and hence did not participate in the 1991 conference that drafted the Transitional charter.

Fifthly and lastly, the foundation of Ethnic decentralization in the country labeled as exclusionary type for it excluded non-ethnic identities and interests, such as the ethnically mixed cities and towns of the country. As this constitutes the core of the study, we offer detail discussion on this matter in the chapter to follow.

The drafting of the December 1994 constitution, is the second offer for ‘federal bargain’ (Aalen 2002). “The Ethiopian Constitution [of 1994]... presents itself as the result of a bargain, freely entered into by the ‘Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia (Turton, 2006:18). However, critics consider it as even more exclusivists in comparison with the 1991 Transitional charter. Indeed, the constitutional drafting commission, which was established in 1993, attempted to bring the matter to be discussed in public meetings, international symposium and diplomatic missions by producing booklets. Yet like its predecessor (the Transitional Charter), the constitutional drafting process was criticized on the ground that it was exclusively monopolized by TPLF/ EPLF (Berhanu, 2009). Berhanu argues further that “the whole process [of drafting the constitution] was controlled by the EPRDF [and hence] no substantive feedbacks were included from the public discussion” (Ibid: 16).

Furthermore, OLF, one of the key players in drafting the Transitional Charter (the first official decree in laying down the foundation for restructuring the Ethiopian state in a federal line), was militarily crushed by TPLF in league with EPLF, and did not take part in the processes of drafting the constitution. This is one of the basic illustrations for the 1994 constitution drafting

processes to be labeled as more of exclusionary than the 1991 July conference. In making comparison between the Transitional Charter and the Federal Constitution in terms of their accommodative quality, Lovise Aalen states,

*It is apparent that the process behind the new constitution was even less inclusive and participatory than the process behind the transitional charter. Although the transitional conference was marked by a "one-party dynamic" (Vaughan 1994:60), at least several political parties, organisations and individuals participated, and the fiercest competitor of the EPRDF, the OLF, was an important part in the process. In the constitutional process, the EPRDF totally dominated the scene. It is therefore impossible to conclude that the final confirmation of the federal solution through the constitution was based on a pact or covenant between contending political forces (2002: 42).*

Like the Transitional charter, and even more than that, the constitution is condemned for lack of participatory character. For example, John Young states,

*Constitution making under the EPRDF has little in common with the bargaining, trade-offs, and compromises that usually typify such processes; rather it reflects the weakness of the country's democratic institutions, the political objectives of the governing party, and its position of dominance within a state where serious opposition had been crushed or marginalized (Young, 1998:195).*

John M. Cohen makes similar remark "Ethiopia's federal system was created by the center, posing the ever present threat that at some future date the center could declare a return to a unitary state" (1997: 143). Sarah Vaughan and Kjetil Tronvoll share this view point when they argue,

*Although the departure of Eritrea and the introduction of ethnic federalism at the beginning of the 1990s marked a welcome swing in favour of decentralisation, the point at which coercion can, or is likely to be dispensed with remains far in the future. This is a situation which poses profound obstacles to the development of inclusive and egalitarian systems and practices of decision-making or resource allocation (2003:151).*

Christopher Clapham concludes,

*Ethiopia still (after the introduction of ethnic decentralization) lacks an adequate political process, through which its diversity can be accommodated within a set of effective and consensual mechanisms of governance. The development of such process is the most important task that the country faces (2004: 82).*

He further remarks that once again government in Ethiopia came to be conceived "as essentially a matter of control rather than negotiation" (2006:240).

In the views of the above scholars, the institutionalization of the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization processes have been exclusionary and imposed type. However, in this connection it is important to put one remark. That is, it is less likely to find political system that may be fully accommodative or fully exclusionary. The same might hold for the institutionalization of the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization. As seen above, scholars have well researched the exclusionary aspect of the institutionalization of the Ethiopia's ethnically based federal political order. It is also equally important to consider its accommodative aspects.

Indeed, there were certain accommodative elements in the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization processes. One is the case of the 27 political organizations, which took part in the 1991 national conference and gave their consent for the establishment of TGE. In fact, as some argue these political organizations might not be genuine representative of interests of the community they claimed to represent; yet they were from and part of the community. The same is true for the various political groups and interests involved in the drafting and ratification of the 1995 federal constitution.

To understand the other aspects of the accommodative elements of the Ethiopia's ethnic federation is to be able to distinguish between the accommodation (also exclusion) of political actors (political organizations) and political ideology (political program). Because there are conditions in which exclusion of political actors does not necessarily mean exclusion of their political program. For example, while EPRP and MEISON were not allowed to participate in the processes of negotiating the establishment of ethnic federalism in the country, some of their political program has been included in the 1995 FDRE constitution, such as the right for self-determination up to secession. As well, while ethnic political organizations like ONLF and OLF were excluded from the system most of their political agenda have already become part of the constitution, including the question of self-determination, use of own language, recognition and promotion of cultural values. Indeed, the 1995 constitution is an extension of the 1991/2 negotiation in which these and many other political organizations took part (see Tsegaye, 2003). Moreover, the federal constitution embodies the fundamental democratic and human rights principles overarching to encompass political interests of various political organizations. Still important, the constitution guarantees for the protection of human rights and the establishment of democratic institutions and elections (1995 constitution of FDRE).

Arguably, the main source of opposition to the Ethiopian ethnic federation in general and to federal constitution in particular is related more to the exclusion of political actors rather than problems of political content. An evidence for this is the nature of political opposition, whose main claim rests on problem of implementation of the constitution. Only few political organizations did oppose the ethnically- based federation of the country in principle (see, Aalen, 2002).

In any cases, the exclusion of important political organization in the processes of instituting the ethnic federation seems to have had significant legitimacy implication. As Margaret Gilbert rightly argues it is when they become members that societies “are jointly committed to uphold its political institutions” (2006: vii). This is what the Ethiopian ethnic federation lacks today. Indeed, the exclusion of some political organizations from participating in (and contributing to) the institutionalization of the ethnic federation left the EPRDF alone to implement and guard the system. The exclusion of some important political actors in the making of the federal constitution (see Seyoum, 2010) left the EPRDF the sole custodian of the constitution and the federal political order in general. <sup>24</sup> Definitely, this affected the country to harvest some political blessing that such political system offers. If not corrected soon, it might produce fatal political results to the system and to the country itself.

### 3.3.3. Some basic features of the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization

It is already marked that the core of this study is about the Ethiopia’s ethnic federal form of decentralization. Indeed, the notion of ethnic federal decentralization is well conceptualized in chapter two. This section deals with some basic distinguishing features of the Ethiopian ethnic federal form of decentralization, because as we shall see later these features have got significant effects and implications for the accommodation and governance of urban centers of the country.

As Alem (2006:333) and Tsegaye Regassa (2004), clearly state a number of characteristics may make the Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization unique. What we consider here, however, are only its two basic features. One is the fact that it is an ethnically based political and territorial arrangement. The other is the right of self-determination up to and including secession as boldly

---

<sup>24</sup> *Cognizant of these challenges, scholars including the ardent supporters of the system (see for example, Alem, 2010) cast doubt if the federal constitution would survive the end of the incumbent regime.*



enshrined both in the 1991 Transitional Charter and in the 1995 Federal Constitution. These are what David Turton confirms as,

*The transformation that has taken place in the political structure of Ethiopia since 1991 has been both radical and pioneering. It has been radical because it has introduced the principle of self-determination for federated regional units in a formerly highly centralized and unitary state. It has been pioneering, because Ethiopia has gone further than any other Africa state, and further than 'almost any state worldwide' ... in using ethnicity as its fundamental organizing principle (Turton, 2006:1).*

Given the key roles that they have been playing in the country's political scene since 1991, these two key distinguishing features of the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization deserve some explanation. To begin with the issue of ethnicity, there is very less disagreement among scholars that ethnicity is a pillar of state politics in the country since 1991. Truly ethnic ideology and principle have guided the country's politics since it has taken centre stage twenty years ago. From the start, ethnicity (or 'nations, nationalities and peoples' as it is preferred to be called in the constitution of the country), is the founding principle of the Constitution. In its preamble and in its other articles, the 1995 Federal Constitution boldly states the primacy of ethnic identity or Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as the bearer of ultimate sovereign power. More specifically, article 8 of the Constitution states that "All sovereign power resides in the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. This Constitution is an expression of their sovereignty". As such in Ethiopia "Ethnicity is elevated to the building blocks from which the new federal system has been constructed" (Clapham, 2004: 78).

As one of the expressions of these sovereign powers, the territory of the country is divided (demarcated) along ethnic lines and then designated to each nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. Consequently, no part of the country, except perhaps Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (which belong to the federal government) was spared from being divided among ethnic groups inhabiting the country.

To rule over their territory, it inevitably required the ethnic groups to be politically organized along ethnic lines. Political organization, such as party formation based on ethnic homogeneity, therefore, has come to be another political fate of the country. Most political parties in the country, including EPRDF (the ruling party) organized ethnically. So are other political organization such as, the national liberation movements demanding complete self-determination

or secession through military means such as OLF and ONLF, and the legal opposition parties that have been proliferated in the country since 1991 and performing within the ethnic federal framework. Definitely, ethnicity has come to be the most important criteria of membership in political party formation. Still significant in this connection is that such ethnically based political parties seek to represent or pursue or defend primarily the interests of the ethnic groups for whom or in whose name they have been established. This is what Christopher Clapham describes as: “Not only are the units in the federation ethnically based...but political parties seek only to represent the claims of different ethnicities (2004:78). In these ways, ethnicity has been elevated in the country to unprecedented level in terms of its political significance.

In a way that amplifies the place of ethnicity in the country’s politics, the territorially demarcated ethno-national groups without any discrimination are constitutionally accorded the right to self-determination including secession. Under article 39(1) of the federal constitution, it is stated, “Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession”. Such an explicit recognition of ethno-regional groups’ right for secession has come to be the other important distinguishing feature of Ethiopian decentralization.

According to Will Kymlicka (2006), in no part of the world one finds (at least presently) a country whose constitution explicitly recognizes a right of secession for all and every ethnic group other than Ethiopia. Indeed, as Kymlicka comments, the Ethiopian Federal Constitution is a unique case in according the right of self-determination including secession to all and every ethnic group which inhabit the country. The uniqueness of the Ethiopian federal constitution on the issues of self-determination, emerges not much out of its explicitness in according right of secession. Somewhat in similar way, in some Western countries such as Canada, Britain and the united states, “the legitimacy of a democratic secession has been accepted” for particular groups and territories such as for Quebec in Canada, for Scotland in Britain, and for Puerto Rico in USA (Kymlicka, 2006:55). What distinguishes the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization in relation to the issue of self determination rather is “a general statement that all ethno-national groups have a right of self-determination” (ibid) regardless of their size, level of political consciousness or mobilization, and economic and political viability. Indeed, in Ethiopia the constitutional right to self-determination is, “in conjunction with a census of ethno-linguistic groups” (ibid).

This notion of self-determination is at the level of constitutional principles. Let us see it now from the practical perspective, particularly how the notion of self-determination has been interpreted and implemented actually on the ground. In fact, the notion of self-determination in Ethiopia has different meaning and application that range from local autonomy to complete independence. In the first place, apart from Eritrea, all other ethno-nationals of the country have been accorded the right of self-determination only within the country's ethnic federal political framework and hence are 'self-determined' internally. There are, even, great variations in applying this internal self-determination itself. Some nationals were 'self – determined' at a regional state level and established their own regional states with their own Flags, along with their own legislative, executive and judiciary organ of government. Included in this category are the Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromo, Somali and Harari nationals. Others like Sidama, Wolayita, and Guraghe etc are accorded the right of self – determination at 'Zonal' level of self-administration, which in terms of administrative hierarchy falls below or within the regional state. Still some other ethnic groups are self-determined at 'special woreda level'.

Paradoxically, there are still many "ethnic groups without having been accorded their own self-administration status, which is promised in the federal and regional constitutions" (Berhanu, 2007: 208). Majorities of these ethnic groups are found in SNNPR. Like the Federal constitution, SNNPR Constitution provides the right of self determination to nations, nationalities and peoples in the region. Specifically, in its Art 45 (1) the SNNPR Constitution (2001) ensures that the nations, nationalities, and peoples in the region will have their own zonal or special *woreda* administration. But against this constitutional promise, of about 60 officially registered ethnic groups in this region only about 21 have been accorded "their own ethnically delimited self-administration status at zonal or special *woreda* structures" as of 2002"(Berhanu, 2007: 208).

In this connection, it is interesting to ask two fundamental questions. One is what accounts such variation of self-determination in ethnic federal Ethiopia. Put differently, why the notions of self-determination in Ethiopia have been differently applied while the Federal Constitution grants equal rights to all nations and nationalities and peoples of the country? Secondly, one may also ask if the ethno- groups were satisfied with the level of self-determination they have been accorded.

While varieties of self-determination have remained the political reality of the country, it is difficult to understand factors or criteria in which these differences have emerged. For example, it has remained puzzle to many as to why Harari with population of about 20, 000 thousand has been accorded self-determination at regional state level; while others like Sidama and Wolayta with much greater population and territorial size were accorded the right of self-determination only on zonal status. Some EPRDF government justifies such variation in terms of population and geographical size. This means that those ethnic groups with a large population and with a large geographical area are allowed to be self-determined at regional state level while those with smaller population and territorial size are entitled to zonal and special *woreda* level of self-administration. Population and territorial size are also supposed to be the distinguishing factor between the zonal and special *woreda* level of self-administration (see Zemelak Ayele, 2008).

Nevertheless, the reality shows that such criteria do not uniformly work practically on the ground, as there are cases in which ethno-groups with more population size and larger geographical size are accorded only zonal self-administrative status while others with less population and territorial size are accorded the right to self-determination at regional state level. Such irregularity and inconsistency in conferring rights of self-determination to ethnic groups in the country has come to be one of the major sources of conflict in the country. For example, in Oromia and Somali there is still demand for complete independence or secession from Ethiopia (Mohamed, 2002; Samatar, 2004). Still important, there are ethnic groups like Sidama who have been expressing a demand for regional statehood level of self-determination seceding from the SNNP regional state.

Such demands and the conflict that they generate have remained to be so challenging in Ethiopia and there is no sign that the problem ebbs in the near future. More challenging, however, is the secession demand with no room of negotiation from both the government and the liberation movements. Rather there is good sign of hope with regard to entertaining the quest for autonomy short of secession as there are some cases in which some ethno-groups have demanded and won it, such as Wolayta and Silte case who came to establish their zonal level of self-administration seceding from North Omo and Gurage zones respectively(see Vaughan, 2006). There were also ethno-groups who were successful in establishing their own self-

administration at special *woreda* status, such as Alaba nationals in SNNPR. To the opposite case there are also some ethnic groups whose status of self-governance reduced from regional state level to zonal level such as the Sidama since 1994(see chapter 6).

As discussed in the case study chapters, these features of the country's ethnic federation (namely, the notion of ethnicity and self-determination) have had direct impact and implications for urban accommodation and governance.

#### 3.3.4. Effects of Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization: focus on wider national context

Once in place any political order inevitably will produce certain effects, be it in line with the intended objective or otherwise. In this section of the thesis, we explore effects of Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization on state-society and inter-society relations in a wider national level.

Indeed, scholars have already presented various effects of the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia. We highlight some of scholarly reflections before proceeding to making a self-thesis. First, there is a perspective that observes the development of one party dominated political scene in the country (Aalen, 2002, 2006; 2008; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010; Samatar, 2004). The second observation is that ethnic decentralization has resulted in supremacy of one ethnic group, particularly the TPLF-led Tigraway (Abbink, 2009; Merera, 2003; Vestal, 1999). Thirdly, there is a viewpoint that underscores the development of culture of "living with conflict" (Tsegaye, 2010).

Fourthly, some understand the post -1991 political development as erosion of common national identity of 'Ethiopian statehood', and replacement with Fragile "Social Contract", (Abbink, 2009). In his article entitled "The Ethiopian Second Republic and the Fragile "Social Contract", John Abbink argues, in Ethiopia "the core elements of republicanism were "ethniced", (2009:10). In stating the cause for this, he notes

The new post-1991 state narrative was that there was no state narrative: Ethiopia was to be seen as a loose collection of peoples/nations/nationalities (essentially the Stalinist definition), units that are to be identified primarily with their own language, body of historical mythology, or culture, and not with the state or with 'Ethiopian identity' (Abbink, 2006:392).

Fifthly, there is an observation about the effects of ethnic decentralization in terms of breeding inter-ethnic conflict, especially at local level (Abbink, 2006; Alem, 2006; Asnake, 2009; Dereje, 2003; 2006).

There are also some positive appraisals about the effects of the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization processes. Example, David Turton claims,

...when one considers the level of internal conflict, military violence and repression by agencies of the state that characterized Ethiopia under the previous regime [the Derge], the restructuring of Ethiopia as an ethnic federation has been undeniable success. It has not only prevented the violent dismemberment of the country but also provided peace and security for the great majority of its population... (2006:1-2).

Lovise Aalen, somewhat shares this view when she states,

*On the positive side, some achievements regarding the rights of minorities have been made since the introduction of ethnic federalism. Previously neglected or oppressed minorities have gained confidence in their own language and culture and have obtained their own administration. The majority of the Ethiopian people have the chance to speak their own language in education and administration and are, at least in theory, able to take part in governmental affairs in their ethnic community like never before. A major attainment for people in their everyday life is that when they take a case to court they are able to follow the procedures in their own language. When comparing the situation of ethnic liberation struggles during the previous regimes, it seems however that the most important achievement of the current system is the absence of destabilising ethnic conflicts on the state level(2006: 256-257).*

For some other scholars there is big variation from place to place with respect to the effect of the ethnic decentralization processes in the country, especially across the ethno-regional states. For instance, dawn from the beginning, John Young (1996) observed regional variations as “While the EPRDF remains committed to the devolution of state power, the success of regional administration, apart from Tigray, is uncertain (1996:538). As Young argues, the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization was relatively fruitful in Tigray because the region according to him was a “base of dedicated and talented party personnel to draw upon and regional and local levels of government” (ibid), which other political organization forming EPRDF (ANDM, OPDO and SEPM) had lacked. Recent study Kaatje Segers, *et al* (2008:3) supports this viewpoint in arguing “Decision making in Tigray is ... more participatory than in other regions as a legacy of the early TPLF’s commitment to grassroots democratic control”. According to this viewpoint, “decision making in Tigray is indeed more democratic and grassroots-based than in other regions”(ibid:4). Edmond J. Keller and Lahra Smith (2005) also share this view by arguing that regional capacity

variation is among serious obstacles to successful implementation of a power-sharing arrangement in the country.

Instead of delving into the appraisal of such a voluminous scholarly conclusion, we bring into play important but overlooked and/or misinterpreted political developments in the post-1991 Ethiopia. These are the ‘localization’ or devolution of contest and bargaining over state power, resources, identity, symbols and citizenship from national level to local ambit, and consequently the engagement of local community in state political activities.<sup>25</sup> It should also be borne in mind that these changes and developments, as argued in this study, are major departure from the pre-1991 political culture of the country, which we have characterized as national and elite-centered. A detail argument and evidence on this point is provided in the case study chapters. Here is only the highlight of the matter with special emphasis on contributing factors.

A number of factors might have contributed to political developments such as mentioned above. However, we limit our analysis on few cases. One of these is ideology of ethnicity that the EPRDF regime has followed insistently. As discussed above, the ideology of ethnicity refers to ethnically- based political organization including ethnic political party formation and ethnically based territorial demarcations. These aspects of ethnic ideology have been central to the Ethiopian politics since 1991 and have played key roles in politically mobilizing (engaging) the masses (Young, 1996). According to John Young, in contrast to class - based political ideology of the *Derg* regime, the TPLF’s ethnic (nationality) based mass mobilization “approach was to prove effective” (ibid: 534). As John young observes, the EPRDF’s nationality (ethnic) political ideology is one of the major factors to politicizing and politically engaging the Ethiopian masses in state politics. This is mainly so because ethnicity has strong emotional charge to attract the masses to politics (Berman, 2004). Let us see these contributions first from the perspective of ethnically based political party formation.

---

<sup>25</sup> *The notion of ‘localization’ refers to arenas of political engagement, in this case the devolution of political struggle from national to local level. On the other hand, the concept of political engagement denotes actors who involve in the state political processes. In this case, the argument is that following Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization actors engaging in state political affairs (namely, in struggle for state power, resources, symbols and identities) have largely increased such as by involving local masses. See chapter two for details about the concept of political engagement.*

It is generally believed that political parties do play key roles in politically engaging, at least mobilizing masses, such as through recruiting membership, political socialization and election processes. In fact, popular participation in state politics is more likely in a multiparty political system rather than in 'no party' or 'one party' ones because the former opens up an opportunity for alternative policies. Definitely, this is what Ethiopia lacked in pre-1991 periods (Clapham, 2010; Wondwosen, 2009). However, the 1991 political changes in Ethiopia resulted in the proliferation of various political organizations- both in support of and against the political order in place (see Aalen, 2002; Wondwosen, 2009). Most of these political parties including EPRDF were organized ethnically (Alem, 2010). There is at least one political party for every ethnic group of the country and hence the number of political parties in the country at present is as many as, even more than the number of ethnic groups the country hosts. As we discussed above, about 27 political parties of different views and interests were formed and participated in the July 1991 Conference that established the Transitional government. Increasing from time to time the number of political parties in the country reached about 92 by 2010, most of which were ethnically organized.

In various ways, these ethnically based political parties have contributed to politically engaging the community. One of these was through the recruitment of memberships. For example, as of 2010 the ruling party (EPRDF) alone claims to have about six million members, each of which, one can imagine, has been politically indoctrinated. Every party member makes financial contribution to the party, which itself is one of the expressions of political engagement. According to the EPRDF officials, the increment in EPRDF membership is achieved due to a 'wonderful' performance of the party that laid a ground to attract masses. However, critics make a counter argument on this matter. According to critics, the main reason for enlargement of membership in the ruling party is an enforcement and intimidation in different ways. For example, party membership has become the main criterion for opportunities of access to employment for the educated section of the society. Equally important, it is must for farmers to be a member of the ruling party to get access to agricultural inputs (such as fertilizers and seeds) (see the details in Aalen and Pausewang, 2002). Whatsoever the cause might be, the boost up in party membership has immensely contributed to politically engaging the community in various ways. For example, being a party membership entails political indoctrination and rendering support such as during election periods.



Competitions and conflict among various ethnic political organizations such as over state power, resources, history and identity (see Triulze 2002) have also been another means to engage the community politically. Most cast doubt on the organizational strength/capacity of these parties to influence the political life of the country, but when seen from the perspective of engaging the masses in state politics their role may not be undermined. By way of drawing membership, through political campaign they have made during election, these political parties have contributed much in engaging the masses in state politics in the country since 1991. Evidence for this is the 2005 election, which both in processes and effects, reached and engaged every individual persons and households in the country (Aalen &Tronvoll, 2009; Alamseged, 2008).

In many ways, the 2005 national election in Ethiopia contributed to increasing political orientation of the masses including at local arenas. One way in which it has done so is described by Lovise Aalen &Kjetil Tronvoll(2009: 195) as,

*For the first time all the contending parties were able to campaign and disseminate their programmes through government owned national media and public campaign rallies. In the last weekend before the elections, the capital hosted large mass rallies in favour of the two major competitors, the CUD and the EPRDF. This opportunity led to an unprecedented level of openness and had a big impact on people's consciousness about the elections (emphasis added)*

Focusing on rural areas Dessalegn Rahmato similarly remarks,

*For the first time ever, peasants all over the country with access to radio were able to listen to live debates between the government and the Opposition and to campaign speeches by candidates highly critical of government policies and programs. There was thus a massive grassroots interest and high expectations in rural areas in particular that was not apparent in any of the preceding elections (2009: 189-190).*

The impact of the 2005 election on politically indoctrinating the masses went beyond the issue of election or competition for state power as the campaign extensively and intensively dealt with various aspects of the country's political life including the history of the state itself. For example, Lahra Smith observes,

*Contentious and previously unresolved national issues, such as land and economic development; the institutional and constitutional structure of the Ethiopian state; and the best way to ensure equality of ethnic and religious communities, were brought to the fore during the past [2005] election cycle (Smith, 2007:1).*

Almost political parties taking part in the 2005 electoral processes represented the various views and perspectives about the past and present political condition of the country and these all reached the masses (urban and rural) in one way or another and hence enhanced the level of local community's political awareness.

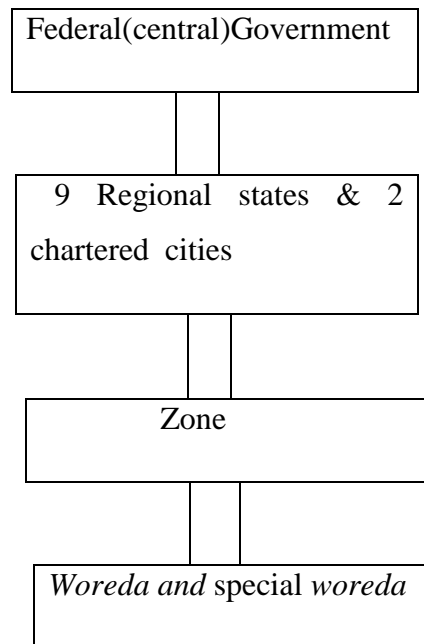
There is also another way in which the ethnically based political parties contributed to the expansion of political engagement in the post -1991 Ethiopia. This relates to competitions and conflicts of intra ethnic political parties. To highlight some, in pre-1991 Ethiopia there were ethnically- based political organizations, almost all of who were national liberation movement. However, only one or two political organizations were there acting in the name of and/or representing one ethnic group. However, a new development in post-1991 periods is the emergence of different political organizations from one ethnic group or claiming to represent same ethnic groups. Majorities of these political organizations were antagonistic to one another, example OPDO and OLF in Oromia regional state, ONLF and SPDL(SPDP) in Somali regional state(Samatar, 2004), SLM and SPDO in Sidama. Each of these parties was doing its best to win support from their respective ethnic groups at the expense of its rivalry. In the processes, their contribution to politically mobilizing (engaging) the community was so high. As well, in multiethnic regional states of the federation (example, SNNPR, Gambela, and Benishangul Gumuz), the contest and conflict between various ethnically based political organization over state power and resources played key roles in politically mobilizing the community of their respective ethnic groups(see Dereje, 2006; Vaughan , 2006).

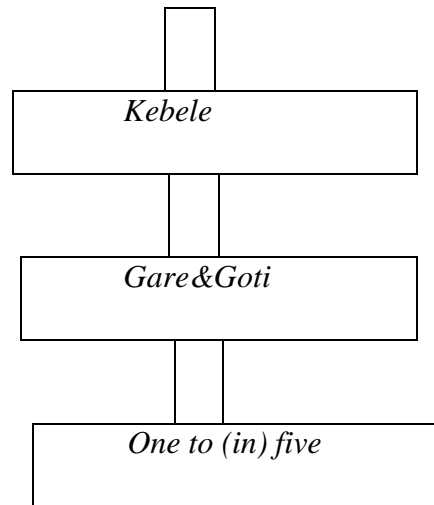
Ethnically based territorial demarcation could also be mentioned as another factor in politically engaging the local community. Administrative boundary demarcation in federal Ethiopia followed ethnic lines. Dividing the country into ethnic regions, zones and *woredas* increased political awareness in the local community in a number of ways. First, each of these divisions is named after the names of the inhabiting ethnic groups, such as for example the Oromia regional states and the Sidama zone. Evidently, this contributed to increasing the political engagement of the masses such as by increasing sense of ownership over the territory and by involving local elites in administrative issues. As well, the ethnic boundary divisions generated inter-ethnic boundary conflicts in a number ways, which in turn led to ethnic mobilization (see Asnake, 2009).

Students are also among the main actors to politicize and politically engage the local masses in the country. In fact, in the political history of the country students have played a conspicuous part (Balsivik, 1985). In post -1991 periods, this has been significant in some regional states, like Oromia. There has been restless student revolt and protest against the OPDO (EPRDF) in this region. This involved not only higher academic institutions such as universities and Colleges but also secondary and elementary schools. Confrontations between students and the government resulted in deaths, imprisonment, torture, expulsion or suspension of students from school (Ethiopia Zare 10 April 2008; Sudan Tribune 9 September 2006). Such student-government confrontation in one way or another has involved families, which in turn politically charged the local people, at least families who have had sons or daughters in schools. Every day student went home with political issues and once it became family discussion almost all over Oromia.

The administrative structure of the EPRDF regime may be taken as another factor for devolving the national and elite based state politics to local level and thereby engaging local community in state political activities such as in negotiating statehood.

**Figure 2: Administrative Structure of the Ethiopian ethnic federal government (as of 2012/2013)**





As the above figure illustrates, there are about seven hierarchies of administrative structures in the present government of Ethiopia. However, some are not constitutional or formal. Constitutionally and formally, there are five tiers of government in the present federal political arrangement of the country, the lowest of which is the *kebele* administrative unit (Meheret, 2007; Tegegne and Kassahun, 2007). However, practically the hierarchical arrangement of the government extends to seven, which shows how the state is deeply entrenched into society. The two main developments with regard to the post-1991 administrative structures of Ethiopia are the enlargement of administrative units horizontally and its entrenchment deep into local community level vertically. These changes played key roles in localizing political engagements in the country. As we illustrate here, while the horizontal state structures have contributed to the enlargement of political engagement such as through the enlargement of enrollment into state governance, the vertical entrenchment of state administrative structure led to the penetration of government hands to household level. Let us see first how the horizontal expansion of the administrative structures of the state contributed to political engagement.

As can be seen in the above figure the present Ethiopia is organized into nine regional states and two chartered cities. The national regional states are divided into zones, and there are about 66 zonal administrations in the country at present (CSA, 2007). The zonal administrations in turn are divided into *woredas*(districts) and it is estimated that there are about 557 *woredas* in the country(ibid). By design, these different units and levels of government have greatly changed the quantity and quality (kind) of personnel involved in the state administration. Qualitatively

speaking it was the local (native) community who largely filled the new political and administrative posts. In other words, this is to note that the post-1991 political change in the country has created an opportunity for local community to hold and fill administrative and political posts. The choice of local language by various local governments for administrative and school purposes has largely contributed to this. Obviously, this contrasts the previous experiences in which local administrative and political posts were filled by appointees of central government from dissimilar origin and identity.

Quantitatively speaking, the establishment of the different administrative and political posts contributed to open up wider and new opportunities for employment in government posts. Though it is not easy to illustrate in number, it is clear enough to assert about the enlargement of administrative and political posts in the country, which in effect implies an increment in the number of people being engaged in the state administrative processes.<sup>26</sup>

Having said this much on issues of societal involvement in state administrative affairs due to the horizontal expansion of state administrative structure, let us now turn to the entrenchment of state administrative structure down to grass root level and its contribution to localization of political engagement. In this case, our focus will be on the three lower units, namely *kebele*, *Gare-Goti* and *five in one* administrative settings.

*Kebele* is a local administrative structure introduced to Ethiopia by the Derg regime and inherited by the current regime. The *kebele* administration, though it varies from region to region, within region and between urban and rural areas, is roughly composed of about 5000 heads of family (Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). This in turn is divided into *Gare-Goti* administrative unit of less than 100 populations. Officially, this unit of administration is meant to exercise the role of tax-collection, local based security issues and some developmental issues. Below the *Gare-Goti* administration is *one in five*, a kind of people's association with five members. Unlike the other administrative units, criteria of membership to this association is not necessarily geographical but occupational in which citizens of the country in every walk of life is required to be organized with five members. Students in class, teachers at school, farmers, and civil servants - all are grouped in to five. Such an attempt to group the Ethiopia society (of more than 80

---

<sup>26</sup> **What makes employment issues political in the present Ethiopia is requirement of party membership to get employment in public post..**

million) into five has been the post- 2005 election development in the country, though the program advanced over the last three years or so.

It is important to inquire into the need for this local organization that penetrates the Ethiopian society to family unit level. From the EPRDF government perspective, the need to penetrate the society to an individual level emanates from the desire to enable and/or ensure every citizen's participation in self-government, access to state resources, and involvement in state – led development processes. Thus ,according to the EPRDF officials, the administrative structures that have been designed to penetrate the society to individual household level is a means of mobilizing people for development and self-governing.<sup>27</sup> In spite of such a declared objective of the government, critics, however, claim that the necessity to establish government tiers to the grassroots and individual level is merely a means of control over society (Zemelak, 2011). Particularly, the Kebele and other administration units that lie below it are considered as “coercive control mechanisms rather than mobilization” (Aalen and Pausewang, 2002). Most scholarly findings suggest that the current Ethiopian government structure has been designed as a means of controlling political deviants rather than enhancing or instilling grassroots democracy (Dessalegn, 2009; Pausewanget al 2002).

In fact, as Aalen and Pausewang well studied, in post-1991 Ethiopia the lower administrative units “have great impacts on the everyday lives of Ethiopians” (2002: 180). Both in rural and urban areas it has been entirely difficult to get access to any services and jobs without the permission of the *kebele*, which in turn requires membership to EPRDF or at least to be ‘conformist’. Such important issues as entitlement to identity card, which is essential for employment and free movement, also require the same criteria. The following quotation captures the role of local unit of administration on local community life.

*The house belongs to the kebele. If I need to repair it, I need to get approval from the kebele. If I get sick, I have to pass through the kebele to the hospital. If my sons and daughters are looking for a job, they have to go to the kebele first. Unless and until we follow the orders of the kebele we have no services.( quoted in Aalen, 2009:42).*

This is a view of one urban citizen of Ethiopia captured by Lovise Aalen. Truly, this is a fact of political life in the country today. What is not clear so far, however, is the effect of such a

---

<sup>27</sup> *This in five organization is called development task force in the regime language*

penetration of the government deep into every life of the local community. The EPRDF government believes that such a penetration and intervention in societal life has led to mobilization of the masses into development and democratization processes. On the other hand, critics argue that the government's overly penetration of the masses has come to be more of a challenge to democratization processes in the country. Taking the *Woreda*( district) level decentralization into consideration, Dessalegn Rahmato argues, “ at the moment it[local level decentralization] has not led to the democratization of decision making in local affairs.[ For him] [t]his is mainly due to the overriding authority of the ruling party whose sway extends down to the community level” (2009:260). The overall assumption here is that these lower levels of government units are instruments of political control and created problems of political participation and democratization processes.

Be it as it may, what is significant for our purpose here is the role that such deeply entrenched government structures has played in rendering political engagement. More and more penetration of the masses by the government implies more and more engagement of the local community in state political affairs, which, of course, could be either in support of or in opposition to the penetrating political order. Here in our case, both seem likely.

On the one hand, the EPRDF government penetration of the masses using the aforementioned government structures has increased the number of the local people joining the party. While many have focused on the coercive means of attracting membership to EPRDF, the role of incentives has also been so significant. For example, the *Woreda* and Kebele cabinet are highly paid to the level that it voraciously attracts local community to the party. On the other hand, through various means, the local level government officials have largely benefitted such as in job security for themselves, their family and relatives, as well as in access to other facilities such as housing. For the poverty-stricken community such as Ethiopia, such economic advantageous have strong magnetic force to attract memberships and support to the party in power. Government admits such favor and privilege but claims that it is to increase the quality of administration, while critics disclaim this assumption and instead see it as the means to win loyalty from the local masses.

However, this does not mean that every Ethiopian citizen at present is EPRDF party member and engaged in politics in support of the ruling party. Even if there is no statistical evidence for it,

there could be as much opposition to EPRDF government as its supporters. This was demonstrated in the 2005 national election in which many voted against the ruling party, particularly in urban areas. While it remains vague and complex to estimate how many Ethiopian citizens have engaged in state politics either in support of or in opposition to the EPRDF government, one may be sure that societal political engagement has been a reality in the local areas of the county either in support of or in opposition to the political system in place. <sup>28</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the history of state and its governance in Ethiopia both before and after the introduction of ethnic federal decentralization in the country. Accordingly, it is found out that everything of the state in the country, including its origin, evolution, even its futurity, has been subject to contest and confrontation among various interests across history. The confrontations, the chapter argues, have caused some major interrelated political events in the country, such as the 1974 revolution, the emergence various liberation fronts and the introduction of ethnic federal decentralization. Each of these political events has been not only the effects of contested statehood, but also they in turn have opened up venue for contestation over statehood.

The other focus of the chapter is about arenas and actors in state contest in the country. In pre-decentralization, the chapter argues, contestation over statehood in the country had largely been limited to national and elite level. Consequently, the level of societal engagement in state political activities (especially at local ambit) had remained trivial, which in turn adversely affected the positive political development processes. Equally remarkable, due to the floating of state politics at national and elite level, inter-societal relationships were largely dominated by non-political activities, such as in economic, cultural and religious affairs.

However, the ethnic decentralization processes have importantly changed such nature of state-society and inter-society relationships in the country, more importantly in the late nineteenth century conquered regions. For example, the degree of societal engagement in state politics, such as in support of and in opposition to the established ethnic federal political order has increased.

---

<sup>28</sup> *The case study chapters offer detail evidence and explanation about the link between ethnic decentralization and political engagement in urban context.*



As well, inter-societal relationship seems to have highly politicized, and consequently politics (more importantly ethnic politics) seems to dictate inter-ethnic relationships such as at local units, especially in multiethnic social composition. As argued in this chapter, several factors have contributed to these new political events to develop. These include ethnic political ideology, the proliferation legal and illegal political organizations and the expansion and deepening of state institutions. As shall be discussed later, such phenomena are visible more in multiethnic cities of the country.

## Chapter Four

### The Status and Challenges of Urban accommodation in Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study is an exploration of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its effects in urban parts of the country. To this end, the last chapter has discussed background information about the introduction of ethnic federal decentralization in the country focusing on the history of state and the nature of state-society and inter-society relations. Still important, the chapter has discussed about the country's ethnic decentralization with particular emphasis on the main features, the processes of its institutionalization, and the major effects. The present chapter is the extension the previous one, and is concerned with the link between ethnic decentralization and urban centers in Ethiopia. Specifically, it deals with the status and challenges of urban accommodation in the country's ethnic federal political order <sup>29</sup> and the objective in this regard is to give a general picture of the relationships between ethnic federalism and urban centers in terms of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation. In complementary to this, the chapter offers conceptual and historical information about urbanization processes and urban governance in Ethiopia.

#### 4.2 Understanding the concept, categories and distribution of urban centers in Ethiopia

In this part, we highlight the meaning and categories of urban in the Ethiopian context. Doing that is important for this study purpose in many ways. For example, it helps understand the degree or level of urbanization in the country. It also helps sketch a very general picture about the condition and categorization of the country's urban centers. Still important, the task of urban conception and classification would give some important clues about the position, status and ranks of our case study towns in the country's overall urban setting.

---

<sup>29</sup> *There are two ways of understanding the concept of "urban accommodation" in this study. The first one is concerned with how urban centers (cities and towns) have been accommodated or treated in the country's ethnic federal political framework. The second one is related to how cities and towns themselves have accommodated the ethno-cultural diversities they hold within the context of the country's ethnic federal political order. The main concern here is the first version of the concept since the second one is discussed in detail in the case study (empirical) chapters.*

Urban centers are defined by combined factors of size, density, heterogeneity and some sort of economic activities (Höjer, Mattias et al. 2011; Wirth, 1956). While it is generally true that these criteria have widely been used to define urban, it seems, however, that there has never been a standardized size of population or degree of heterogeneity and density that are uniformly applicable to countries all over the world across the time. As Assefa Damte observes, “An area considered to be urban by some may not be viewed the same by others” (1993:50). Even within one country itself, it is sometimes common to encounter different criteria of defining urban centers, which is also the case in Ethiopia (see Schmidt and Mekamu, 2009).

The challenge of defining urban in Ethiopia is due to both historical and modern cases. In historical sense, Peter P. Garreston once commented that “Ethiopians, especially during the reigns of Emperor Yohannes and Emperor Menilek (1872-1889 and 1889-19130), had no clearly identifiable concept of a town in the European sense of the term” (Garreston, 2000: xv). Even to these days, it seems that different criteria are used to identify certain settlements as urban in the country. For instance, in official documents an urban center of the country is defined as “any locality having a municipal administration or a population size of 2000 or more inhabitants of which at least 50% of its labor force is engaged in non-agricultural activities”(Federal Negarit Gazeta, Proclamation No.721/2011: 6221). Similarly, the Central Statistical Agency of the country (2007) measures urban areas as “all administrative capitals of regions, zones, and *woredas*, as well as localities with at least 1,000 people who are primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities, and/or areas where the administrative official declares the locality to be urban” (Dorosh and Mekamu, 2010: 17; see also CSA 2007).

In the above sources, one can note that there are differences in conceptualization of urban in the country. In the former case, the conception of urban is any settlement of 2000 and more population on condition that half of its population is engaged in non-agricultural economic activities. In the latter case, settlements with less than 2000 population are identified as urban on account of political and administrative issue of the day i.e. the ethnic federal political system that recognizes the right of ethnic groups to be organized as self-governing units down to local level with their own administrative centers. Regardless of their size, areas that would serve such administrative purposes came to be defined as urban (for details see table I and II in the appendix).

In any cases, there are about 925 settlements that are categorized as urban centers in the country presently (CSA, 2007; MWUD, 2006; see also table I and II in the appendix). Out of the estimated 81 million of the total population of the country, only 13 million or 16% were living in urban centers (CSA, 2007). This figure is minimal even when it is compared to that of the Sub-Saharan Africa, which on average constitutes 30 percent (Dorosh and Schmidt, 2010).<sup>30</sup>

Obviously, with this low level of urbanization the contribution of cities and towns to the country's socio-economic developments has been insignificant (Berhanu, 2003). For example, in economic terms, the contribution of the urban economy to the country's GDP was about 66%, which still is minimal when compared to Sub-Saharan Africa that is 79 % on average (MWUD, 2010:3). In some other sources, the share of urban economy to the GDP of the country is estimated to be much lower than the above figure. Paul Dorosh and Emily Schmidt (2010), for instance, estimated it to be only 52% for the year 2006. In either case, Ethiopia's urban share in the country's GDP remains to be the lowest even in African standards (ibid: 2010:1).

The limit of urban contribution to the country's development is beyond the issues of size. Other factors such as quality and spatial distribution of cities/towns in the country could also be mentioned as well. The quality of cities as centre of innovation and industrialization is also limited in Ethiopia (Minas, 2003). Instead, "Ethiopia's urban centers are characterized by a poorly developed economic base, a high level of unemployment, and a worrying incidence of poverty and slum habitation" (MWUD, 2006:3). In illustrating the magnitude of urban poverty, the same source mentions that for the years 2005-2009/2010 "Nearly 40% of the nation's urban dwellers live below the poverty line" ... [and].... about 70% of the urban population is estimated to live in slum areas" (MWUD, 2009:3).

Moreover, the urbanization processes in Ethiopia have been characterized by territorial imbalance in which the urbanization and accompanying facilities like school, health, industry and etc., for long have been concentrated around the capital and few secondary cities (Berhanu, 2003; Markakis, 1974; Schmidt and Mekamu, 2009; Tibebe, 2003) see also table II below for

---

<sup>30</sup> *Although Ethiopia is still one of the least urbanized countries in Africa, there has been faster rate of urbanization processes in the country at a rate of 4.2 percent per year; and this calls attention to urban areas.*

details). In the present federal structure of the country, it is observable that major cities are based in few regional states (see table I and II in the annex for details). Consequently, most rural parts of the country had lost towns that could have served “as a strong market for the development of the surrounding rural areas” (Berhanu, 2003:16). Even, the same author tends to attribute the underdevelopment of the country to its under-urbanization (ibid).

It may also be important to look at the categories of urban centers into primate and secondary. One of the key features of the urban centers in Ethiopia is the dominance of Addis Ababa, the national capital, in many aspects. For example, in terms of population size, Addis Ababa contains population of about 3 million, which is nearly 25% of the total urban population in the country (CSA, 2007). It is 10 times larger than the second largest city in the country, Dire Dawa (Berhanu, 2003). Therefore, it is a true primate city. As Dereje and Wondimu rightly put it, “[t]he pattern of urbanization [in Ethiopia] is ... characterized by the dominance of a primate city on the one hand a number of small towns, with only very few medium towns on the other” (2003: 426). As some argue, due to the domination of the primate city (capital), many other towns in the country have lagged behind.

However, following the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country in 1991 and the accompanying decentralization processes, the role and status of some cities, especially those chosen as capital cities for the ethno-regional states have been increasing. For example, according to Alem Habtu (2010: 31) the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia has resulted “in fast urbanization and speedy growth of many cities”. This is especially true in primate city(the national capital) and secondary cities (regional capitals). For various reasons (see case study chapters), such cities have attracted population, infrastructures and other amenities that have contributed and still are contributing to their urban growth. Consequently, the regional states capitals are becoming alternative urban sites in the country for investment, residence, recreation and other purposes. Distinguishing themselves from other smaller towns, these regional capitals have taken the secondary positions of urban categorization processes in the country.

However, it should be noted that there are great variation among regional capitals in terms of urban size and quality of infrastructures. Even, there are some non-regional capital towns, which in any measurement are bigger than some regional capitals. Yet, if one takes political definition

into consideration, regardless of their size and several other variations, all regional capitals will comfortably take secondary position as they all host the second tier of government in the federal government structures as discussed above. The capital cities of Regional states regardless of varieties in size and facilities or level of development has similar status in hosting or serving as the seat of regional political powers. These towns mainly include Hawassa of SNNPR, Mekele of Tigray, Adama of Oromia<sup>31</sup>, Bahir Dar of Amahara, Semera of Afar, Gambella town of Gambella, Asossa of Benishangul Gumuz regional states. Adama, the *de facto* capital of Oromia regional state, and Hawassa, the capital city of SNNPR, selected for case study purpose in this thesis are categorized under such secondary cities of the country.

#### 4.3 History of urbanization and urban governance in Ethiopia and their political implications

Discussing about the history of urbanization and urban governance in Ethiopia is useful for this study. For instance, by discussing history of urbanization we can note factors that had affected the origin, growth and developments of urbanization in the country. As it is discussed below, the history of urbanization and associated factors has been a formidable challenge to accommodate and govern urban centers (particularly multiethnic cities) in the ethnic federal political arrangement of the country. Similarly, the history of the country's governance system does have its own impact on the current processes of devolution of power to secondary cities and towns of the country.

##### 4.3.1 History of urbanization in Ethiopia and its major political implications

Like the state formation process itself, urbanization has begun earlier in Ethiopia. Evidence for this is the city of Axum, one of the most important and technologically advanced civilizations of its time. Later coming cities like Lalibela in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, and Gondar in 17th century can also be exemplary for the early beginning of urbanization processes in the country (Merid, 1984; Crummey, 1987; Akalou, 1967; Baker, 1986).

Yet, like the state building process itself, the urbanization process in the country has remained stagnant and thwarted throughout most of the history of the country. They were in no way pro-development and pro-democracy. As a result, the country has remained b the least urbanized even in the sub-Saharan African standard (Jean-Marie Cour, 2003; Shumiye, 2003), and hence

---

<sup>31</sup> *The issue capital city for Oromia Regional State is still subject to debate as the region favours the capital itself. See the next chapter for details*

missed opportunities and benefits that urbanization offers to the socio-economic and political development of the country. What we describe here is the major factors for the origin, growth and (under)development of urbanization in Ethiopia, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century incorporated parts of the country.

As elsewhere, several factors can be attributable to the origin and development of urbanization in Ethiopia. Yet there is no agreement among scholars with regard to the main contributing factors to the urbanization processes in the country. Some scholars like Donald Crummey (1987) put much emphasis on the Ethiopian Orthodox churches for the Ethiopia's urbanization processes, while some others like (Abdussamad, 1987; Getahun, 1987) attribute it to trade and trade routes. Still for some others, central to the origin and development of urbanization in Ethiopia is political processes (Akalou, 1967; Horvath, 1969). While recognizing the importance of several factors to urbanization processes in the country we, however, give much of the weight to political factors not only as the main contributing factor to urban development but also as one of the major factors for the under-urbanization of the country. Equally important, we argue and illustrate here that political essence, which underlies the history of urbanization processes in the county, is still a formidable challenge for diversity accommodation and governance in urban centers.

To begin with, in terms of origin and development even the old cities like Axum were largely dependent on political factors. The city of Axum was related to the rise and fall of the Axum political kingdom (Kobishchanov, 1979). As political power shifted to the south in Agaw land(Henze, 2000), not only the politico-economic role of the Axum city declined but also the city was destroyed by political rivals in the south( Marcus, 1994 ). In its place, following the footsteps of political seat in Agaw, Lalibela city emerged as an important political and economic urban center in the empire whose significance in turn ebbed with the dislocation of political centre to somewhere else in further south. Similarly, with the shift of political power to the place, Gondar became an important city in the country, whose role once again became insignificant when it ceased to be the national capital. Addis Ababa, both in its foundation and development was also directly related to politics, particularly to Emperor Menelik's expansion to and occupation of the Oromo land and people (Foucher, 1986; Gerretson, 2000).

The wandering capitals (to use Horvath's expression), therefore, have affected the urbanization processes in Ethiopia both positively and negatively. On the positive side, with the shift of political seat from place to place, various towns emerged. On the negative side, old cities (capitals) ceased to function to the worst, and remained stagnant in development, to the best.

In fact, the relevance of politics in directly affecting urbanization processes in Ethiopia is related not only to capital cities in the country but also smaller and medium sized towns in the country (past and present) have had political account in their (under)development processes. For instance, the origin of most of smaller and medium sized towns in the present day northern and central Ethiopia are directly associated with the emergence of several regional lords during the Era of Princes (Abir, 1965). However, the emergence of a highly centralized power, started by Emperor Tewdros and advanced by Haile Seelassie I, effectively deprived the power of regional lords, the role, influence, and development of regional towns declined.

In the south, too, and even more importantly than in the north and central Ethiopia, the emergence and growth of towns was directly related to some sort of political processes. There are two aspects in this case. First, few towns which preceded the nineteenth century invasion and incorporation, such as Naqamtee in the west, Jimmaa and Bonga in the south were directly attributable to the emergence of regional political powers (Benti, 1987; Guluma, 1987). Second, during and/or following the incorporation, a number of towns with greater political meaning to these days have emerged. As this latter point has much relevance to our study area, they deserve some detailed discussion.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Abyssinians under the leadership of Emperor Menelik II expanded to the south, southeast and southwest directions of the empire, and conquered and incorporated the regions into the north Ethiopian core. This resulted in the establishment of a series of garrison towns. Merera Gudina (2003:67) affirms, "Ketemas (garrison towns) sprang up everywhere [in the conquered land] to support the occupation and pacification processes by the empire builders". Where there was no military bases, the Abyssinian settlers established their own villages, which were similarly grown to township.

Originally meant for military, political and administrative purposes, such as to control, exploit and quiet the newly conquered people and lands, the military garrisons gradually evolved into



township. Many of the present cities and towns in southern regions including Addis Ababa (the capital) were the results of these processes of expansions and annexation (Harvath, 1974; Ottaway, 1976). Therefore, in the southern parts of Ethiopia, the origin and root of urbanization primarily lies in political and administrative motives. This means that towns were primarily established for political and administrative purposes; namely, for controlling and governing the newly conquered southern regions of Ethiopia by Abyssinians.

To large extent, these processes and motives have had direct bearings on state-society and inter-society relationships in the urban parts of the country, which is the core of the study. Thus, it merits some explanation here, with particular emphasis on its impacts.

Jonathan Baker's (1986: 43) is right when he argues,

The territorial expansion of the ancient Solomonic kingdom into non-Christian and non-Amhara-Tigrean areas in the latter half of the nineteenth century introduced *a completely new and dynamic phase in Ethiopian urbanization, the result of which have had direct and lasting impacts on the contemporary urban scene.* Emphasis added.

As the above quotation hints, the development of towns in the southern or conquered parts of Ethiopia has had enduring impact on urban scene to the present. One of these impacts was that urbanization processes of such model have led to the settlers' control of urban life by marginalizing the native community first physically, then culturally, and economically. Indeed, the northern settlers in the south absolutely controlled the urban areas in all aspects.

Several explanations may be given as to why people of the conquered regions were marginalized from towns. One could be the issue of social status, which Markakis and Nega put as "Generally, the landowners congregated in the newly established towns that served as garrisons and administrative centers, and had little social intercourse with their tenants whom they regard as their subjects" (1986: 27). The second explanation may be cultural, where the urban culture and language were completely alien to the natives as they were dominated by that of the conquerors. Economically, the conquered regions could not afford the urban life, as the warriors had already reduced them to tenancy after forcefully confiscating their land. Lastly and to the worst case, tenants had no freedom of movement (including to urban areas), as they were under the tight control of their masters for whom they were assigned to serve.

The cumulative effect of these processes was that towns became the exclusive possession of the settlers. The northern settlers became the exclusive beneficiaries of the urbanization processes in southern or the conquered parts of Ethiopia (Getahun, 2002). As a result, historically cities and towns in the southern parts of Ethiopia have been considered as the exclusive possessions of the northern settlers.

Indeed, this character of towns of the country was challenged in different times such as during the years of Italian occupation and the 1974 revolution, both of which challenged the urban dominance of northern settlers. Especially, the 1974 revolution and attendant changes like nationalization of rural and urban land caused some improvements in terms of allowing the southern natives to join urban life. First, the nationalization of rural land which liberated the tenants from the yoke of landlords created opportunities of movements to cities and towns. After the revolution (relatively speaking), peasants were free to move to the urban areas provided that they could afford it economically and socially. Secondly, the nationalization of urban land, which confiscated extra land and houses to a large degree, decreased if not destroyed the economic and political power of the northern settlers in urban centers. This somehow eased the settlers grip on urban economic and power and then created some opportunities for the so-called natives (local) people to go to and live in cities and towns. While some scholars strongly believed that the *Derg* policy thwarted urbanization processes in the country (see for example, Assefa, 1993; Meheret, 1999), it ,however, played positive roles for the so called natives in terms of offering them access to towns such as by freedom of movement after debilitating the yoke of tenancy.

Yet, unlike in rural areas the dominance of northern urban settlers in economic as well as cultural terms continued. Even, some towns became the concentration of the former landlords who escaped to towns the revenge of tenants in rural areas (see Clapham, 1993). Such settler dominated urban character has had several enduring impacts. For instance, despite the multiplicity and complexity of factors for the emergence and developments of towns in the conquered regions of the country, the notion of conquest and domination predominate popular discourse even to this date (see case study chapters). Including the latter coming cities with various factors and history of origin (such as Adama and Hawassa), there is a widely held view that urban centers in the country have been home of the northern settlers. As discussed in the

empirical chapters, this perception is among the chronic challenges for urban centers of the country to accommodate and govern their diversities.

In post -1991 periods, there seems to be some changes in such urban landscape of the country. Following the post 1991 ethnic decentralization processes that offer a right of self-governance to nations, nationalities and peoples of the country, it happened that the local community has come to join urban centers located in their ethnic territory. Influenced by this ethno-political system, there emerged a claim of ownership by respective ethnic groups over towns and cities located in their respective regions. Consequently, they influentially migrated to urban centers. This has come possible for two reasons. First, the urban administrative affairs have been taken over by local elites, which for many reasons attracted the local community to urban centers including for employment and similar purposes, and secondly the new political order created opportunities for the local people to speak their language and develop their culture within their jurisdiction including in the urban areas. Once the local community joined urban centers, the settlers are no more in position to be dominant in cities and towns of the south at least culturally and administratively. Such dynamics ushered in processes of contest and bargain among the various urban identities and interests such as between the historically dominant groups and the emerging local (native) interests. Indeed, it is to such development that the notion of negotiating statehood (domination) refers to, and hence forms the core of the remaining chapters.

#### 4.3.2 A short review of the history of urban governance in Ethiopia

As one document states, “Ethiopia had a tradition of centralist government structures until 1991. Municipal structures were established in some cities, but the mayors were centrally appointed and municipalities were treated as branches of central government” (MWUD, 2006:4). As the above quotation reveals true to the very character of centralized and non-democratic state, cities and towns in Ethiopia remained under the tight control of the central government. This is what most of scholarly findings reveal. For instance, according to Shewaye Tesfaye,

*... they [towns in Ethiopia] were considered as annexes of [central] government administration, which centralized their functions and operations. As a result, there was interference in their internal affairs by officials and authorities in various ways. Municipalities have made to focus on political ideology and objectives the various proclamations issued during successive regimes, whereas major service delivery was relegated as a secondary functions (2003: 145).*

Similarly, Minas Hiruy argues,

*Cities in Ethiopia have been downtrodden for decades. They have been denied their autonomy and as such their personality. Being regarded as an extension of central or state government and operating within a policy atmosphere of rural bias, they have not as such emerged with personality of their own. Unrecognized and unexploited for what they really are, cities have not attained the development status they could have (2003: 123).*

Two important points can be made out of the above quotations. First, cities and towns in the country have been considered as extensions of central administrations. As a result, they have not been accorded political and administrative autonomy. Instead, the administrative institutions and structures of cities and towns have remained to be a replica of the centralized administrative culture of the state. Like the state administration itself, the nature and structure of urban administration in Ethiopia has remained under the tight control of the central government, being denied autonomy. Second, as result of the lack of political autonomy, and with the heavy political and ideological burdens, cities have not well developed to contribute significantly to the national social and economic development.

Though the ambition and practice of centralized rule in Ethiopia was not a new phenomenon, a highly centralized form of urban government in the country has taken root during the era of the imperial government (1930-1974). Widely known by a highly centralized rule (see Messay, 1999), the imperial regime put cities and towns under the tight control of the Emperor. The Emperor introduced the first municipal regulation with administrative decree of No. 1 of 1942 to administer urban centers. This proclamation, “for the first time mentioned the need for establishing municipalities, mayors, and town officers to manage the day to day activities of urban centers (MOFA, 2003: 23). Accordingly, cities and towns were recognized as part of the national system of governance, in which all the mayors were to be appointed by the Emperor upon the recommendation of the ministry of interior. To ensure a tight and close control over cities and towns, Addis Ababa was put under the control of Ministry of interior, while all other cities and towns were subordinated to governor general of their respective provinces.

After the 1974 revolution, fundamental political and administrative measures were taken by the socialist regime concerning urban administration. Driven by the Marxist ideology, urban association dwellers (UDAs) were formed for the first time in the history of the country. Some

have observed that these associations played key roles in representing urban interests (Dessalegn, 1984; Pausewang, 1983). However, later on, the associations were changed and became instrument of control over the urban community, such as for tax collection, personnel recruitment for military purposes, and above all as a channel of implementing the socialist political and economic programmes of the *Derg* regime. It was in this politico-administrative context that ethnic decentralization has come to apply in urban Ethiopia with the objective to accommodate diversity of interests and to decentralize state power to local administrative units. In the next section discussed is the application and challenges of ethnic decentralization to urban centers in the context of such historical backgrounds.

#### 4.4 Urban accommodation in the ethnic federal Ethiopia: status and challenges

As is discussed in the conceptual part of this study, urban accommodation in ethnic federation is challenging even on theoretical and philosophical basis. As hinted above, the burden of history of the urbanization, which was highly related to state expansion and conquest, has been another formidable challenge for the governance of multiethnic towns in present Ethiopia. Besides the theoretical limitation and historical burdens, there are also other issues such as political and development policy matters, which need to be considered in exploring the nature and status of urban accommodation and governance in the ethnically federated political system of the country. In the remaining tasks of this section, we explore, among others, the legal (constitutional), political and development policy aspects of urban accommodation in the country's ethnically decentralized political arrangements.

##### 4.4.1 Legal/constitutional aspect of urban accommodation

Legally and constitutionally speaking, there are at least three approaches in which urban centers have been accommodated in the ethnic federal Ethiopia.<sup>32</sup> One is the approach in which a city of Harar has been accorded the regional government status of self-administration in the name of the Harari ethnic group's right for self-determination. The city of Harar constitutes, therefore, one of the nine regional states in the country's ethnic federal political arrangement in the name of the Harari people's right to self-determination (see FDRE constitution, article 47(9)).

---

<sup>32</sup> *Even if not legal/constitutional, there is also a fourth approach for urban accommodation in the Ethiopian ethnic federation such as for example Moyale town in southern tip of the country, which is administratively divided between the Oromia and Somali Regional States.*

The second category is chartered towns, namely Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa which are categorized as federal territory and “are accountable to the federal cabinet”( Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010: 8). The two cities have been recognized at the federal level as autonomous and self-governing entities but in different legal contexts. Accordingly, they are neither regional states nor belong to any of the nine regional states. Addis Ababa, the national capital, was established as an autonomous entity with the right of representation in the House of Peoples’ Representatives in accordance with article 49 of the federal constitution. Moreover, the city of Addis Ababa was established as a chartered city in accordance with the Revised Charter Proclamation 361/2003 (EC 1995). Like Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa is also a federal territory directly answerable to the federal government. However, unlike Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa has no direct federal constitutional base of foundation. Rather, it was established as self-governing entity with special proclamation (Federal Charter Proclamation 416/2004 (EC 1996). Any ways, these two city administrations form part of the Ethiopian federation on their own terms, if not on equal terms with the ethno-regional states.<sup>33</sup>

The third category is regional towns, which is central to this study. This is, an approach in which all other cities and towns of the country ( other than those mentioned above), were designated to be the administrative part of the regional states in which they are geographically located, implying that they would belong to and be governed in or within the legal or constitutional framework of their respective regional states. Cities and towns of this category have no federal constitutional base to be named an autonomous entity (see Minas and Tamirat, 2000; Tegegne and Kasahun, 2007). As Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher and Kasahun Berhanu argue, “The Ethiopian decentralization scheme, including the constitution of 1995, did not recognize municipalities as an independent entity to which power and resources can be devolved” (2007: 30). Similarly, Minas Hiruy argues, “Within the current [pre-2002/3] context of agriculture-led development in Ethiopia, cities have not figured permanently in either federal or state constitution” (2003:123) because as he asserts, “The federal constitution does not mention them at all” (ibid).

Similarly, Theo van der Loop(2002: 90) argues,

---

<sup>33</sup> *For example, the two cities are not represented in the House of federation, the second and upper house. As well, unlike the nine regional units which are federating entities these two cities have not their own constitutions*

*Municipal/urban management and governance is a generally neglected area in the present federal structure in Ethiopia, which is the more problematic since urban growth is rapid. It needs to be pointed out that the constitutions of both the Federal Government and the Regional States express the right for self-rule and administration at all levels of government. However, there is a serious gap in this arrangement because the role and responsibilities of municipalities as well as their place in the broader realm of administration were not clearly and adequately stated in any legislation. This has resulted in the apparent neglect of municipalities as separate units of governance within the Ethiopian State structure. In particular this implies that municipalities (urban centers) are not recognized as distinct units of governance and their authority and functional relationships with the federal and regional governments, zones and woredas have not been legally defined. This has handicapped municipalities from delivering services and infrastructure to urban residents.*

In fact, as noted above almost all scholars agree on the fact that urban centers in this third category lack a direct constitutional foundation, which would secure or guarantee an autonomous existence. Only few studies are there that disagree with this notion. One source to mention in this regard is MWUD (2006) which relates some articles in the federal Constitution to the establishment of municipal government. These articles include 50(4), which stipulates about granting of adequate power to the lowest levels of government; 52(2a), which states the power of regions to establish administration that best advances self-government; and above all 88(1), which states that “Government shall promote and support the people’s self-rule at all levels”. Thus, according to this study, although there is no clear statement in the federal Constitution, urban centers or municipal governments, are entitled to the protection and support of the federal Constitution. In other words, this is to mean that articles of the federal Constitution such as those mentioned above can be mandates to legislate cities into the status of an independent existence. Yet as the MWUD (2006) document itself admits there are constitutional gaps and obscurities in expressively mentioning the autonomy of cities and towns. Cognizant of such gaps, the MWUD study has emphasized “the need to be more explicit in the regional constitution regarding municipal governments” (Tegene and Kashaun, 2007: 30).

It is the conclusion of many, therefore, that most cities and towns in Ethiopia do lack an explicit and direct legal personality that is laid down in the federal Constitution. Rather, it seems that issues of urban affairs apparently “fall under the jurisdiction of the regional-states government” (Minas and Tamirat 2000:44). This in turn can tempt one to ask two fundamental questions. (1) What were/are the criteria used to classify Ethiopian cities into federal and regional? (2) What is the legal status of regional cities within the constitutions of their respective regional states? In

other words, this is to ask: to what extent do the regional states' constitutions recognize and accord rights of autonomy to cities and towns falling within their jurisdictions?

Concerning the first question, there are several issues that remain obscure. As we discussed somewhere above, the decision to accord the right of self-determination to the Harari city still remains a point of debate because as discussed in chapter three, in number the Harari population do not form majority in the town. The justification provided with respect to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa is that, they are multiethnic in social composition and hence belong to no one regional state but to the federal government. John M. Cohen, for example, notes that these “two urban regions that were too diverse to be subdivided by cultural-linguistic identities” (1999:140). Similarly, J. Tyler Dickovick and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher (2010:8) argue that, “Two city administrations—Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa—are accountable to the federal cabinet, largely for demographic reasons (most notably including their large population sizes, but also because the cities are quite diverse in terms of nationalities/ethnicities”.

However, it remained a point of debate if an account of ethnic plurality is the sole criteria to classify cities into federal and regional jurisdictions. For example, the number of Oromo population in both Dire Dawa and Adama cities is more or less comparable, about 48% in both cases (CSA 2007). Yet the former is a federal city and the latter is categorized as regional. This can raise a question about the validity of ethnic plurality as the criteria of classifying urban centers into federal and regional jurisdiction. There seems also to be political, security and economic interests in it. For example, in connection to ownership, there has been conflict between Oromia and Somali regional state over the Dire Dawa city. As well, being one of few industrial centers in the country, Dire Dawa city is also economically attractive to the Federal government.

In fact, from the very beginning there have been two conflicts whether to place cities under federal or regional governments. In first place, there is a viewpoint that supports the political arrangement that has already placed urban centers under the jurisdiction of regional states. According to this point of view, to place urban affairs under the regional governments' jurisdiction is an expression of respecting the democratic rights of regional states to self-government as it is bestowed to them by the Constitution. Otherwise, it could entail unconstitutional interference into internal affairs of regions. Zemelak Ayele puts this view point,



“as in each state there are diverse interests which need to be addressed in different ways, it was better to regulate the matter through regional state constitutions by taking into account the special situations prevailing in each state” (2008: 23). This latter understanding is to express the notion that urban centers are rooted in different socio-economic circumstances of regions and they require a separate and contextual treatment. Put differently, this is to advocate treating cities in their own regional context instead of placing them under the federal government.

In contrast, there is a second view that argues in favor of placing the administrative affairs of cities under the federal government. In expressing the view points of this argument, Zemelak states, “unless the status of local government is regulated in the federal Constitution, the states will not be willing to devolve sufficient powers and resources to local level”(ibid). In other words, it is to propound that in the absence of legal provision in the federal Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, urban centers or cities and towns would be subjected to domination and manipulation of regional states elites. The other argument forwarded in favor of this notion is that as most cities in the country are multiethnic in social composition, it would become difficult to accommodate and govern them under the jurisdiction of ethno regional states.

Such conflicting views are not limited to the level of idea or discourses. As it is discussed under the case study chapters (i.e., in the Adama and Hawassa cases) it has become a real source of conflict among the urban population. On the one hand, the natives including ruling elites and perhaps the common people, too, strongly hold the view that cities should remain under the jurisdiction of the regional states. Whereas, on the other hand, settlers or people who do not ethnically belong to the region but still making their residence there, opt to have cities placed under the federal government. It is also worth noting here that there is a widely held notion among the population of cities that there is a tendency or intention from the federal government side to re-centralize some major urban centers through bringing them back to the jurisdiction of the federal state. Materializing this intention would be to the best interest of the settlers who strongly feel that they have been marginalized from urban resources, especially from access to political and administrative power because of the ethnic decentralization process. However, whether or not this intention is real and viable to materialize is open for debate. Any ways, issues and debate about the legal status of cities as such stand far from completion. Seemingly and more likely, it will remain to be a key national political agenda in years to come.

This leads us to the second question raised above which is about the legal status of cities within the constitutions of their respective regional states. This is also an important question to be addressed in understanding the nature and extent of urban centers' accommodation within the Ethiopian ethnic based federal political arrangement. As noted above, the nine ethno-regional states were formally established by the 1995 Constitution with the right of autonomy including secession (Article 39 of the Constitution). Followed by each regional state has institutionalized its own constitution which is expected to endorse the political objective of the federal Constitution. Therefore, legally speaking the question to what extent have the regional states recognized and accommodated municipalities in their constitutions becomes a point of inquiry.

To address this question in a way it encompasses all regional states seems to be difficult because of varieties and vastness. However, as Minas Hiruy and Tamirat Delelegne rightly observe, with regard to urban affairs the constitutions of the regional states exhibit much more similarities (2000:45). This point of similarity is the marginalization or neglect of urban centers that Minas Hiruy, for example, remark as "though cities are said to be the creature of states, to date, no [constitution of the] regional state ... makes a reference to them" (2003:123). He adds, "It is striking to note that none of the regional constitutions - - - accords express constitutional guarantee to municipalities and cities" (2000: 46). For Minas Hiruy, "The express recognition of the constitutions extends only to Regional, Zonal, Woreda and Kebele hierarchies" (bid) but not to cities and towns. Truly, as it was the case at the level of federal government, urban centers have not got priority of recognition at the regional level, too, in the constitution enactment processes. This is affirmed by Dereje Taddese and Wondimu Geleta as "Although the process of decentralization in Ethiopia was affirmed by the constitution of FDRE in 1995, both the federal and the subsequent regional constitutions remained silent about the role of municipalities" (2003: 434).

What also appears to be more striking about this matter is the absence of other legislations that govern the urban centers, especially until 2001 (National Urban Planning Institute, April 2002). At least for a decade or so no significant measures were taken by most of the regional governments to enact any legislations that would "define the roles and responsibilities of cities and towns in a strong and well articulated manner" (Ibid.). Almost for a decade, (1991-2000) cities were subjected to arbitrarily rules of their respective ethno-regional states, in a

condition where there were no established institutional and legal frameworks for urban governance. The following quotes from one official document attests the institutional and legal framework vacuum in urban Ethiopia from 1991-2000 as:

*Under the highly centralized Derge regime (GC 1975 to 1991), Ethiopia's municipalities were marginalized and did not function as independent local authorities. However, since 2000 national decentralization policies have formed part of a large scale reform of government resulting in the creation of institutional and legal frameworks for urban local government authorities ( MWUD, 2006:4), Emphasis added*

Moreover, the same document attests that “The government initiated its focus on Ethiopia’s cities and towns after GC 2000 (EC 1991)” (MWUD, 2006: 7). The above quotations squarely affirm that there was no significant urban reform under the ethnic federal Ethiopia until the year 2000. An important point to note here is not only urban centers were neglected for long years under the ethnic federal Ethiopia but also the possible consequences that such negligence has had on the development processes in the urban parts of the country(see Minas 2003).

However, since the turn of the twenty - first century, it seems that some improvements have been achieved with respect to urban governance , which Tegene Gebre-Egziabher and Kashaun Berhanu, for example, claim, “Beginning from 2001, municipalities have started to be revived in Ethiopia”(2007:31). This is so because with the beginning of the *woreda* (district) level decentralization in 2001,

*Many regional governments resorted to reforming their municipalities by enacting municipal legislations that define the legislative system that clarifies the position of municipalities within the decentralized governance. The Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and SNNP regions have enacted municipal proclamations. The proclamations define the governance structure and the various roles and responsibilities of municipalities (Ibid).*

Similarly, Serdar Yilmaz and Varsha Venugopal note,

*A complementary element of the current phase of decentralization [Wereda level decentralization beginning from 2001] is the reform of municipalities or urban centers. In parallel to wereda decentralization, the Government launched efforts to modernize the legal, fiscal and administrative systems of municipalities that govern urban centers and their rural hinterlands. The ongoing restructuring efforts seek to empower municipalities to undertake service delivery and economic development activities necessary for sustainable and complementary development of urban centers” (2008:4).*

As can be referred from the above quotations, since 2001, urban centers have got at least municipal proclamations that to a certain degree authorized them to run their own administration. These proclamations are novel in defining the structure, powers, functions and duties of urban centers. Accordingly, as Tegene Gebre-Egziabher and Kashaun Berhanu(2007) note, a Council-Mayor system of urban governance structure which includes a Council and its speaker, Mayor and a Mayor's Committee ( an executive body) was adopted by most regions.

However, regardless of such achievements, still there are criticisms against the legal status of urban centers in Ethiopia. Many have argued that urban centers have still missed priority of recognition in the constitutions of the regional states. Zemelak Ayele , for instance , argues, “an overall observation of the constitutional and legal framework regulating local government [including urban centers] reveals that local government is not adequately institutionalized to exist as an autonomous level of government”(2011:11). Despite their revision since 2001, regional constitutions have not made urban centers their priority. Rather, they “speak of urban administrations only indirectly” (Zemelak, 2008:42). To some degree, the Amhara regional State constitution may be different in stating that cities and urban centers may have their own councils. Otherwise, the legal framework for urban governance has been limited to regional states proclamations, not in regional states constitutions. Moreover, there is a practice of lumping together of municipal administration with state government administration. Such experience, however, does not insulate municipalities from being dependent on the state, especially from the zonal and *woreda* level of regional government.

Observing these situations scholars have come to conclude that urban governance in Ethiopia were demoted to “secondary level” (Meheret, 2007: 84), implying that there is still a work to be done to develop legal and administrative backing to the urban development processes in the country. Moreover, as is discussed in empirical chapters such legal and constitutional gaps have remained to be challenging in multiethnic cities to accommodate and govern their ethno-cultural diversities.

#### 4.4.2. The Political aspect of urban accommodation

Obviously, politics is about the regulation of conflict of interests and identities in a given society. Hence, a given political system is accommodative when it accommodates the varieties of interests and identities. Indeed, in an accommodative political system, government institutions

are expected to produce political environment of institutional competence within which political bargain and interest articulation takes place among different actors of conflicting political interests. Similarly, in urban Ethiopia there have been conflicting identities and political interests. This section attempts to highlight the nature and extent to which the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization processes have accommodated and regulated these conflicting political and identity interests in urban centers of the country.

Most observers of Ethiopian politics agree that the EPRDF's ethnic political project has not been in good terms with the urban population, which propounds that there were certain gaps in politically accommodating urban centers. Alem Habtu, for instance argues, "The imposition of ascribed ethnic classification [in Ethiopia] is a source of common complaint..., among urban folk..." (2003:22). Similarly Belachew Gebrewold, notes "... urban elites consider the current government a traitor of Ethiopian national identity" (2009: 79). Siegfried Pausewang also observes, "This [ethnic decentralization] policy was violently attacked by a majority of the urban and educated opposition ... as a "divide-and-rule" tactic of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), trying to set the different ethnicities up against one another, to be able to control the country (1997:6). Christopher Clapham on his part observes, "For several years, it has been clear that urban dwellers have been deeply alienated from the [EPRDF] regime" (2005:2).

More importantly, the EPRDF's government itself admits that it has certain problems with the urban population. For instance, the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenaw admits, "We have ... witnessed that the substantial portion of the society [especially in urban areas] has had grievances on EPRDF..." (Ethiopian Herald, September 25, 2005:5). The Prime Minister offered this point in connection to the result of the 2005 parliamentary election that clearly revealed the huge political gap between his government and the urban community in which the party was voted out in almost all major cities and towns of the country. From the EPRDF government perspective two main arguments were in place with regard to the problem of state-society relationships in urban Ethiopia since 1991. First, according to the EPRDF government, the problem relates to "poor implementation of policies" (Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Ethiopian Herald, September 25, 2005:5). In this case, it means that an improvement in urban policy implementation, especially in urban service delivery can solve the problems of government relations with the urban community. Secondly, the EPRDF government considers that urban

centers host 'enemies' of the democratic and federal government, which according to them constitutes the former *Derg* officials who advocate unitary state and the Amhara elites who are coveted to resurrect the pre-1974 Amhara dominated rule in the country (Ethiopian Herald, September 2, 2005:5). While the former is related to administrative issues, this latter problem of relationships between the urban community and the ruling regime concerns issues of political power relations.

From the above viewpoints as well as from the prevailing general notions, it is possible to discern at least three aspects (components) of political gap between the urban community and the EPRDF regime: ideological, power-relations and policy implementation aspects of politics. The ideological notion of political opposition in this context suggests two views that oppose the ethnically -based political thinking and organization as recipe for state disintegration. The power relation aspect of political opposition concerns the urban groups' dissatisfaction with a share and distribution of power in the ethnic federation of the country. Opposition in relations to policy implementation is related to administrative performance in terms of fulfilling material and social needs and interests of the society. Each of these political components is relevant in exploring the problem of political relationships between EPRDF regime and the urban dwellers.

Before proceeding to this exercise, it may be important to take note of the following two important points. First, it does not seem that the urban communities across the country and even in one city have a common cause of discontent against the EPRDF regime. In some cases, urban communities are at odds with each other as much as they are with the regime. Secondly, it also needs to be clear that not every urban dweller is at odd with the EPRDF regime and its ethnic federal policy, as there are certain interest groups and identities in urban areas who lend support and sympathy to the regime. Truly, in multiethnic cities of Ethiopia, there are no common political preferences among the different ethnic groups as well as within the same ethnic group itself. To avoid generalization it is, therefore, important to look into the matter from the perspective of the different urban ethnic identities by way of identifying their particular interests with respect to the EPRDF government and its ethnic federal political project.

One of these is the Amahara urban elites who are perhaps the main opponent of the EPRDF government and its ethnic federal political project (Pausewang, 2005, 2007; Young, 1998). John

Young partially describes the theme of conflict between the urban Amahara elites and the EPRDF's ethnic federal politics as,

*Opposition groups and many of the country's intellectuals [most of them are urban Amhara elites] have vehemently opposed EPRDF plans to devolve powers to ethnically based administrations because of concerns that these moves would bring about the dismemberment of Ethiopia, although the Front argues that such criticisms represent a rearguard attempt to protect Amhara hegemony( Young, 1998:194).*

As John Young notes, the urban Amhara elites oppose the EPRDF's ethnic federal policy out of the fear that it is divisive and a recipe for the disintegration of the country (Keller, 2002). This view is widely held by the urban Amhara elites living outside the Amhara regional state, such as in the regional states of Oromia and SNNP (Pausewang, 2005; Keller, 2002). This leads us to ask: why are the Amhara urban elites in general and those living in cities outside the Amhara regional state concerned more about the Ethiopian state and then oppose the ethnic federal formula of the EPRDF government?

The following statement by Siegfried Pausewang gives partial answer to this question:

*As an ethnicity, this urban Amhara elite group continues to be quite distinct from the rural Amhara, who remained peasants with a high level of illiteracy. [And] ... why this group adopted pan-Ethiopian nationalism [is] built on a vision of a strong central state with Amharic as integrating language and urban culture. The urban Amhara would emerge as its (Ethiopian state) natural leaders (2007: 67).*

Siegfried Pausewang's argument is that the urban Amhara elites' concern for Ethiopia's unity emanated from the historical reality. That is, they are the direct descendent of those Amhara class who built the modern Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century by invading the southern parts of the country, hence they are burdened with a historical duty to defend the state built by their forefathers and maintained by their fathers.

For John Young, however, the concern of the Amahara elites for Ethiopia and their ground to oppose the EPRDF's ethnic federation is related to the advantages and benefits they lost due to the ethnic decentralization process both at local and national levels. According to him, at the local level due to the ethnic decentralization process the Amhara settlers in the southern parts of Ethiopia lost "many of the advantages they had enjoyed since Menelik's expansion into these areas a century ago" (Young, 1998:198). In this connection, it becomes imperative to illustrate some important advantages that the Amhara settlers have lost in southern cities since ethnic

federalism has been in place in the country. One relates to the language policy that has given right to regional states to use their own language for school and administrative purposes. According to John Young, “The emphasis on indigenous languages in the schools has raised the ire of many Amhara and others from the north living in the towns of Oromia, the south, and other parts of the country who do not want their children educated in 'local' languages” (1998:202). Moreover, following the introduction of ethnic federalism administrative posts in urban centers in southern parts of the country have by far been filled with the so-called indigenous employees (ibid). In addition, as it is discussed above, after 1991 the number and involvement of the so-called indigenous people in urban life and business has dramatically increased in southern cities and towns. All these developments were to the disadvantage of the Amharas for they have lost their long time advantages of control over the urban economic, social, cultural and administrative power in the southern cities and towns almost since the time of Emperor Menilik II.

Similarly, at national level, too, the Amhara elites feel that they lost state power to Tigrean elites. Belachew Gebrewold attests this by arguing that “The Amhara are discontent because of the political power they have lost [after the introduction of the ethnic federal politics to the country] (2009: 88). John Young summarizes the concern and problem of the Amhara in southern and Oromia cities since the introduction of ethnic decentralization as,

*... there are already indications that the growth of national consciousness in some parts of the country is leading to expressions of resentment against non-indigenous government employees, teachers and merchants. Because of these changes some Amhara and other migrants to these areas appear to be leaving the regional and zonal centres. Their numbers in turn are being replaced by local people from the countryside who see greater opportunities for employment in trade and government in the towns (Young, 1998: 198-199).*

These processes apparently have created grievances among the urban Amhara, especially among the ethnic Amhara living in Southern cities including Addis Ababa. Consequently, the EPRDF government has started facing open oppositions and resistances from the urban Amhara elites beginning from the early 1990s. To reverse the EPRDF’s ethnic federal project some urban Amhara elites formed a political organization called All Amhara People’s Organisation (AAPO) (Aalen, 2002:42). As Lovise Aalen notes, AAPO is/was hostile to the Ethiopia’s ethnic federalism altogether (ibid). According to same author, such a total rejection of the Ethiopia’s ethnic federalism by AAPO has the support of the urban Amhara elites (ibid). Besides their main



goal to restore the Amhara dominated unitary state, this political organization is widely assumed of having a political objective to defend the Amhara interest in the non-Amhara regions. This is noted by Pausewang,( 2007:68) as, “this All Amhara movement became organized for the first time in defense of the "Amhara" who were mistreated, evicted, and persecuted in Southern regions. Busloads of young Amhara volunteers traveled to Arsi to defend their Amhara brethren.”

Very recently, for the same cause, the urban Amahara elites formed a strong but short-lived political organization called the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) in not more than six months before the 2005 national election. In fact, the CUD claimed that it was a party of multiethnic composition working for the interest of the whole Ethiopians. Yet, it is widely assumed that CUD represented an urban Amahara movement for the Amhara cause. For instance, Siegfried Pausewang notes, “The CUD as a political movement is the direct heir to the urban Amhara political protest which emerged in the wake of the fall of the military regime in 1991” (2007: 67). He further explains,

*The CUD can best be characterized as an urban Amhara populist movement to the right of the political centre. It is important to note its urban characteristics for two reasons: 1) it represents and gives voice to the interests of urban intellectuals, bureaucrats and business people, and 2) it is attractive even to the urban poor who hope for a business boom that might offer them jobs and opportunities.. More specifically, the CUD represents the urban Amhara to clear up the ambiguity in Amhara identity (ibid: 66).*

J. Abbink also makes similar statement that the CUD was an urban-based Amhara political movement “with a largely urban and business-class constituency — civil servants, teachers, professionals, university lecturers, traders, shopkeepers...” (2006:181). It was with this urban social base (real or perceived) that the CUD participated in the 2005 national election and registered an amazing victory over the ERDF candidates in almost all major cities (ibid). In Addis Ababa it won almost all the seats but one. Siegfried Pausewang states the CUD victory in urban areas as: “The CUD had won all seats from Addis Ababa except one in the House of Representatives, and victories from other towns; from Amhara and Gurage areas were reported” (2007: 64). In addition, the CUD scored a significant victory in some cities of Oromia and southern regional states in the 2005 election.

Why the CUD party won support of the urban Amahara is clear for reasons discussed above. Rather what remains controversial is how the CUD managed to draw support in Oromia and other Southern cities. What makes this a puzzle is that as Siegfried Pausewang observes, “Among the non-Amhara ethnicities, this [CUD’s] vision revives fear of a return to the defunct imperial, order which would once again deprive them of their freedom to develop their languages and cultures, and would bring back their erstwhile landlords, with their hated *neftegna* (gun-men) rule” (2007: 68). If not really in the sense of fear of return to imperial regime, there was a popular suspicion on CUD (especially among non-Amhara community) on the assumption that CUD’s political victory meant a return of the Amhara dominance in the political economy of the country. In such condition, it is legitimate to ask why CUD scored a significant victory in 2005 election in southern and Oromia cities.

One of the areas where CUD scored a decisive victory over the EPRDF in the 2005 election was in Guraghe areas. Two main reasons might be mentioned as to why the Guraghe community lent their support to CUD. One reason could be the feeling among the Gurghe that the ethnic federal arrangement in the country hampered the highly mobile and business oriented Gurage people from free movement to settle in other regions, particularly in business lucrative areas. The other could be that, of the four political parties that merged to form CUD, one party was established and led by Berhanu Nega, a well-known economist of Gurage origin (Abink, 2006). In the case of Oromia, Siegfried Pausewang offers two explanations. One explanation is that victories to CUD “... came from predominantly urban areas and from constituencies with a large component of non-Oromo immigrants “(ibid: 64). The second explanation offered by Siegfried Pausewang reads as, “the peasants [and urban dwellers] were so fed up with the administration of the *kebele* or peasant associations that they felt anything else could only be better than the OPDO, and voted for the CUD instead”(ibid). Similar explanations may also apply to the other southern parts of the country concerning this subject matter.

On their part, other ethnic groups of urban base such as the Oromos, the Somali, Sidamas and etc do have their own causes that pit them against the EPRDF regime and its ethnic federal political arrangement. The problem between the urban Oromo elites and the EPRDF regime is largely related to the distorted relationship between the TPLF and OLF. Problems of relationships between the EPRDF regime and urban Somali elites have to do with harsh

relationship between the regime and ONLF (see Samatar, 2004). As well, as discussed in the last chapter of the study, in Sidama there are multiple issues that have distorted political relationships between the urban Sidama people and the EPRDF regime including the exclusion of SLF and the rejection of Sidama quest for regional status of self-government.

Different ethnic groups do have their own cause to oppose or support the EPRDF regime and its ethnic based political arrangement (see Merera, 2003). Whatever the case might be, political opposition to the regime is a reflection of gaps in political accommodation. Such a gap is among the major factors that generate contest and negotiation over statehood (domination) in urban areas of the country.

#### 4.4.3 Urban accommodation in socio-economic development policies (strategies)

The EPRDF (especially its core TPLF) was a rural-based liberation movement (Young (1997). After controlling state power in 1991, the EPRDF government has made rural and agricultural development its top policy priorities as national strategy to address the economic development problems of the country. This national development strategy, named Agriculture Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), has given considerable priority to agriculture and hence “remains to a large extent rural oriented” (Cour, 2003:31). The premise for ADLI, according to the government, is that agricultural transformation provides the highest benefit to largest number of the country’s population, as about 85% of the population earn their livelihood from the agricultural sector (EPRDFs Five Years Development program: 1996; EPRDF’s Rural Development policies, Strategies and Instruments, 2001).

Tsegaye Tegenu, farther describes,

*The ADLI strategy was based on using agriculture as a primary stimulus to generate increased output, employment and income for the people, and as a springboard for the development of the other sectors (2006:60). As Berhanu Nega explains based up on this conviction, “the government invested a lot of human, financial, and political capital in implementing the strategy for the past eight years or so and still believes that it is the fastest and surest way to economic development for the country(Berhanu, 2003:5-6).*

Of course, to a larger degree this rural and agricultural-oriented development policy and strategies look sounding since the majority of the Ethiopian population are rural –based and derive their livelihood from agricultural activities. Yet, against such a claim of the government, there have been pronounced criticisms one of which is based on the notion that urban centers

have been marginalized in this agriculture-led Development strategy. Berhanu Nega, for instance argues, “For a better part of the past decade Ethiopia followed a development strategy that gave a considerable priority to agriculture to the almost complete neglect of urban development” (2003:5). Similarly, Minas Hiruy, argues that the EPRDFs agriculture-led development strategy in Ethiopia has largely neglected, urban centers (2003). Without denying the need to focus on agriculture and rural population, many however hold the view that the rural development strategy should consider cities as its development partner (Berhanu, 2003; Minas, 2003). In this connection, Minas Hiruy makes a strong argument as follows.

*The rural sector certainly needs all the attention, as the sparks of modernization are not there for the most part. But the economic logic of it is that the rural sector cannot emancipate from the backwardness it finds itself in without urban development. [Therefore]The rural - urban integration or interdependence is inherent and hence attention to cities needs to get a fair share for cities to be the useful partner of rural development (2003:123).*

Similarly, Emily Schmidt and Mekamu Kedir suggest, “it is important that Ethiopia set in place the policies needed to incentivize city growth while also supporting the agricultural backbone of the Ethiopian economy” (2009: 20).

From the EPRDF government perspective, the widely held view is that although the government has placed a primary emphasis on rural and agricultural led development, the ADLI is “a broad based and sustained economic growth”, aiming to economically transform the whole country inclusive of urban centers (MOFED, 2012:1). The assumption is that rural economic transformation and growth can lead to the urban transformation and development (ibid). According to official documents, the due concern given to rural areas worked well in dropping rural poverty rate (ibid). Same source states,

*The decline in rural poverty can be attributed to the wide-ranging and multi-faceted pro-poor programs that have been implemented in rural areas such as extension of improved agricultural technologies and farming practices, commercialization of smallholder farming agriculture, rural infrastructural development and a range of food security programs (productive safety net programs, provision of credit etc)(ibid: 8).*

Emily Schmidt and Mekamu Kedir state, “While rural poverty rates have dropped from 48 to 39 percent from 1995 to 2005, urban poverty rates have increased from 33 to 35 percent over the same period” (2009: 18). Same authors remark, “These figures suggest that although investment

in agriculture remains a priority, investments in urban areas may need to be re-evaluated to address underperformance in poverty indicators in the cities” (ibid).

Relegating urban development issues to a position of secondary importance in the country’s development policies and strategies adversely affected the urban development processes as well as relationships between the ruling regime and the urban community. On the one hand, due to less concern given to urban development the urban poverty has increased. See, for example, Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher who argues “In Ethiopia urban poverty, in comparison to rural poverty and national level poverty, has increased over time” (2006:1). One official document attests this as “Nearly 40% of the nation’s urban dwellers live below the poverty line” (MWUD, 2006:4). On the other hand, it reinforced the rift between the urban community and the EPRDF regime as clearly observed in the results of the 2005 election and its aftermaths. Above all, the country loses opportunities that urban development offers to national development.

Cognizant of these, it seems that since 2005 the EPRDF-led government has turned its attention to urban centers, which one document characterizes as “milestone in the government’s ... urban development initiatives” (MWUD, 2006:8). *It is so because,*

*The Ministry of Works and Urban Development was created to bring a stronger focus to urban development, taking over responsibility for urban affairs from the Ministry of Federal Affairs. At the same time the government’s development of the five year Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty explicitly embraced an “urban agenda” that recognised the current and potential contribution of towns and cities to national economic and social development. During late 2005 and the first half of 2006 the new Ministry developed the Urban Development Package and the Urban Good Governance Package that build on the urban development policy adopted in March 2005, for implementation as part of the government’s overall PASDEP (Ibid).*

As the above quotation explains, since 2005 the ruling party’s interest in urban matters has developed, which led to the creation of the Ministry of Works and Urban Development, embracing urban concern in the national poverty reduction strategy. This was followed by drafting Urban Development Policy of two packages: Urban Development Package and the Urban Good Governance Package.

The first package is concerned with what the government should do for urban development processes. Accordingly, it focused on service delivery issues including jobs, houses, roads, schools, clinics, water supply (ibid). On the other hand, the good governance package focuses on how to effectively and efficiently deliver the public services, and this package included five

pillars: Administrative and Fiscal Decentralization, Sustainability Equity & Participation, Efficient & Effective Service Delivery, Transparency & Accountability, and Rule of Law and Security(ibid:40).

Together the Urban Development and Urban Good Governance Packages were supposed to put the urban development processes in the right track. The government believed that these measures would improve urban development including poverty reduction. One official document puts,

*Urban poverty declined substantially between 2004/05 and 2010/11. The decline in urban poverty incidence and gap could be attributed to the pro-poor activities undertaken in urban areas since 2005 including the on-going efforts waged by the government to creating favorable environment for private sector investment, job creations and distribution of subsidized basic food items provided to the urban poor in times of inflation over the last five years (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, March 2012: 8).*

To popularize the Ethiopian government's concern for and commitment to urban development agenda, there was also another measure taken by the ruling party since 2009, that is, the decision passed to celebrate a 'city day' in the country every year on 23 October. This is what the then Minister of Ministry of Works and Urban Development, Dr. Kassu Ilala, confirmed during the first year's celebration held in Addis Ababa on 23 October 2009(see Ethiopian Herald, 25 October, 2009). The second Ethiopian city days was celebrated in 2010 in Hawassa under the theme "Rapid Urban Development/Growth for Rapid National Development". The third, fourth and fifth were celebrated in 2011, 2012, 2013, respectively in Mekele, Adama and Bahir Dar cities.

All these efforts show a good trend in terms of progress in accommodating urban interests in the country's development policies and strategies. However, how far these policies have worked and will work in practice remains open for debate, given the complexity of political, constitutional and historical relationships between state and society in urban centers as discussed above.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the status and challenges of urban accommodation in the Ethiopia's ethnic federal decentralization. In so doing, the focus is made on legal/constitutional, political, and development policy aspects. In each case, certain visible accommodation gaps and challenges were identified. On constitutional matters, both in federal and regional constitutions

there were no expressive recognition of regional cities and towns as autonomous self-government units. In various ways, these gaps created problems in urban governance, and consequently the federal government responded by enacting different urban proclamation such as in 2001 and 2006. However, the new urban proclamations focus only on issues of service delivery, ignoring fundamental political and legal question, such as in the areas of autonomy.

In politics (power relations and legitimacy), some urban elites consider the ethnic federal arrangement of the country as an instrument of control rather than as a means of representing and regulating diversity of political interests. Consequently, as observed during the 2005 election, there were strong oppositions to EPRDF government and its ethnic federal politics in urban centers. This shows how the legitimacy of ethnic federalism in urban settings has been undermined.

Equally important, the chapter investigated that in the national development policies of the country urban centers were relegated to secondary importance and this further complicated the accommodation and integration of cities and towns in the country's ethnic federal political arrangements. Since the 2005 election, it seems that the EPRDF government turned its attention to urban areas but with long distance to move. One of the challenges with the reform is approaching the matter from the point of view of establishing control over the cities rather than genuine democratization.

Obviously, such loopholes in urban governance would have multifaceted political and development implications to be seen in the remaining chapters.

## Chapter Five

### Diversity accommodation and political engagement in (negotiating statehood) in Adama city

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter is one of the empirical parts of the study, and is concerned with Adama city of Oromia regional state. In this chapter, two of the central themes of the thesis are substantiated. The first one is the argument that the application of ethnic decentralization in multiethnic cities as means of ethno-cultural diversity is challenging. The second is the statement that the application of ethnic decentralization in multiethnic cities such as in Adama has engendered societal engagement in negotiating statehood, i.e., contest and bargaining over state power (domination), territory, citizenship, identity, history and symbols.

#### 5.2 Background information about Adama city

To help the aforementioned objectives, we need to offer some background information about the town, namely its location, area, and origin.

##### 5.2.1 Location, area and population

Adama city<sup>34</sup> is located in Oromia regional state (see map I in the appendix), at about 100 km from the national capital (Addis Ababa) to the South- East on the railway road that connect Addis to Djibouti. As of 2011, the land coverage area of the town was about 13366.5 hectare (Adama city profile, 2003 E.C).

According to the 2007 population and housing census of the country, the city had a population numbering about 222,035 thousand (CSA, 2007). In 2009 this figure increased to 243, 919 (Adama city profile, 2003 E.C). With the inclusion of rural *kebeles*<sup>35</sup> the figure still increases to 300,000. Accordingly, 81.1% of the population of Adama city was urban and the rest 18.9% constituted rural. In terms of sex, male constitutes 120467(49.4%) and female 123452(51.6%). In

---

<sup>34</sup> *The name “Adama” is assumed to have originated from an Oromo word—“Adaamii” ( “cactus” tree in English), originally found in plenty around Adama areas. Being named so by Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1944, it had been known as Nazireth until the 1991 political change in the country.*

<sup>35</sup> *Presently, the city has about 18 kebele administrations, four of which are rural.*



terms of population size Adama stands third and first at national and regional (Oromia) level, respectively (CSA, 2007).<sup>36</sup>

### 5.2.2 Origin and Development of Adama city

By origin, the city goes back to 1916/17. This coincides with the arrival of the Ethio- Djibouti railway construction in Addis Ababa. Many sources associate the emergence of the town with the construction of the railway.- Similar to other towns which are located along this railway line, such as Dire Dawa, Awash, Modjo, Bishoftu, and others, Adama is supposed to have emerged as railway station (node) (Atnafu, 1972; Gutema, 1996; Kassahun, 2000; Adama city profile, 2003 E.C).

As well, economic issues along with hospitable climatic conditions were identified as the main contributing factor for the growth and development of the town (Atnafu, 1972; Kassahun, 2000). Kassaun Argaw(2000), for example, has presented about seven economic factors that he believes have immensely contributed to the development of the town.<sup>37</sup> None of these factors, however, considered the contribution of political issues. This means that by origin and growth Adama town is different from other cities of the ‘South’ whose origin and (under)development have enormously been rooted in political processes and factors, particularly in the establishment of military garrisons following the expansion of the Ethiopian state to the area in the second half of the nineteenth century ( see chapter four).

However, as we argue and show here, economic and climatic accounts constitute only one aspect of the story as there were also a number of key political elements that have substantially contributed to the emergence and growth of the city. The first political factor relates to Menelik’s soldiers settlement in the area in the late nineteenth century. As Gutema Imana (1996) describes, the area around the present Adama town was settled by Menelik soldiers who marched to the place to subdue the Arsi Oromo who did fiercely resist submitting to the invading force.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *According to the 2007 national population census, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities take first and second position in terms of population number.*

<sup>37</sup> *The economic factors include the plantation of Wonji sugar factory, the establishment Koka hydroelectric power, and the Tandaho and Awash agro farming.*

<sup>38</sup> *The Arsi Oromo community resisted to submit and militarily confronted the invading Abyssians forces in 1880s. Even if the invading forces won, the resistance endured to later grew to the famous*

Later on, majority of these soldiers were entitled to lands that were confiscated from the Oromo community of the area (Gutema, 1999). For instance, the land over which the town was to be established later belonged to one of Menelik's general called Garmame Woldehawaryat(Ibid). Soldiers under his command were camped around the area who eventually settled in and around the present town of Adama (ibid).<sup>39</sup>

Being the only big town in the region, Adama had gradually attracted landlords from the surrounding areas, most of them belonging to the northern conquering settlers. Of course, this is of no surprise since at the time it was only people of this category who were entitled to and affording urban life. Consequently, dawn from its origin the town had fallen under the control and domination of the conquering northern people. Such historical facts, then, compels us to see Adama town not differently from other towns of the South, which had had their origin in the form of military garrison.

The second political factor that could help explain the development of Adama town concerns the Italian occupation. During the five years of Italian occupation Adama town had served as an important military and political centre for the invading force (Kassahun, 2000; Gutema, 1996). As it was the case in many urban areas of the country (Assefa, 1993), the invading Italy had changed the urban landscape of Adama. Gutema Imana has observed the contribution of the conquering Italian forces to the development of Adama town as,

*...it was the Italian who clearly saw its potentials as an important regional centre. They did not only formulate the first coherent town planning for its future development, but during their very short period of occupation, they transformed it into their most important administrative, economic and military base on the railway line between Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Gutema, 1996: i).*

After the restoration of Emperor Haile Sellassie's regime in 1941 and throughout the socialist *Derg* regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam(1974-1991), the town continued playing key political roles as an administrative centre of the region. These in turn created wide opportunities for the town to attract various government and non-government, business and religious institutions

---

***Bale rebellion of the 1960s, which in turn laid a ground for the emergence of national liberation movements in Oromia.***

<sup>39</sup> ***Informant-Ya'i Bonsa (age 78) also confirmed this viewpoint; May 29, 2011, Adama***

thereby contributing to the processes of development in the town. Therefore, this may be taken as the other political factor for the development and growth of the town.

As can be seen in the sections to follow, the post -1991 political changes in the country further contributed to the development and growth of Adama city. Therefore, perhaps not less importantly than other factors, political events have contributed to the development of Adama city. As well discussed in this chapter, such political factors have had their own roles or impacts in political processes undergoing in the city presently.

### 5.3 Diversity and its accommodation in Adama city: Legal and political environment

#### 5.3.1 Ethnic diversity of the city

As discussed in chapter four, there a general belief that the conquering settlers from northern Ethiopia dominated urban centers in the late nineteenth century conquered parts of the country. This northern domination over urban centers was multidimensional: demographical, economic, political and cultural (see Getahun, 2002). As shall be seen below, Adama city is not exceptional to this general fact. However, since the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country, there have been essential changes in the ethnic composition of the town (see table III in the appendix).

As can be referred to the table III in the appendix, in pre-1991 periods true to many other towns in the region, the population of Adama town was demographically dominated by the Amhara ethnic groups. In 1970, the Amhara constituted 68%. Given the political condition of the time, the position of this ethnic group in controlling the political, economic and cultural life of the town might be more than the numerical figure (see Getahun, 2002).

However, there have been visible impacts of ethnic decentralization on ethnic composition of Adama city. As can be seen from the table, after the advent of ethnic decentralization in the country the number of Oromo community began to rise in the town, as perhaps could be the case in many other towns of the region. For example, as shown in table III, the number of Oromo population in the city rose up to 26 % in 1994 and to 46% in 2007. In contrast, the percentage of the Amhara population dropped to 44.42 % in 1994 and then to 31.6% in 2007. In this connection, it seems important to raise the following questions. How and why the number of the Oromo community increased in the town in such a short period? What kind of demographic

change really is it? What are the impacts of these changes on inter-ethnic relationships, particularly in political, administrative and economic arenas? Has the demographic change also caused meaningful changes to political and economic relationships in the town? How urban and regional institutions regulated these changes? We believe each of these questions is addressed in this chapter but in different sections. In this section, for example, the first two questions are dealt with and the rest will be part of the other sections to follow.

Partly, of course largely, the rise of the Oromo community in Adama city is associated with the processes of ethnic decentralization in the country. In the first place, the ethnic decentralization processes and the attendant political developments lifted up (at least partially) the historical, political and cultural burdens that had kept the Oromo community away from urban life. The decision to make the city the capital of the region in 2000<sup>40</sup>, had also attracted the Oromo community (rural and urban) to the city in search for employment and other related opportunities. Curbing of towns within the ethnic territory of national groups have also largely attracted the local national groups to the city (such as the Oromo to Adama) through fostering the sense of ownership over the city. Moreover, the use of Oromo language for administrative and school purposes played key roles to attract the Oromo to urban life in Adama and other towns of the region.

The other key factor for the rise of the Oromo community in Adama case is the inclusion of some rural *kebeles* under the city administration especially since the 2005 parliamentary election. As indicated above, there are about four rural *kebeles* administered as part of the city constituting about 18 % of the urban population. This rural population of the city ethnically belong (at least in majority) to the Oromo community and that is why the proportion of the Oromo population in that town is boosted as such. Minus this rural population, the number of Oromo community in Adama city still is below or nearly equal to their Amhara counterparts. Moreover, the relevance of this rural part of the city in influencing the urban political economy as it stands today is not much significant. This figure, therefore, illustrates a balanced ethnic composition of ethnic groups in the town, particularly between the Oromo and the Amhara. This suggests a change in

---

<sup>40</sup> *From 2000- 2005 Adama city served as capital of Oromia regional state. But with sudden decision the seat of Oromia regional state council was relocated to Finfinne (Addis Ababa). Ever since, Finfinne(Addis Ababa) and Adama serve the region as de jure and de facto capitals, respectively.*

ethnic composition of the city from ‘unipolar’ domination to ‘bipolar domination’, as far as demographic composition is concerned, because as can be inferred from table III the composition of other ethnic groups seems insignificant numerically. Unlike the pre-1991 periods, the Amhara could not claim a majority position today. Even it seems likely for the city to be dominated by the Oromo, at least demographically.

It needs to be noted that demographical minority does not necessarily imply economic and political minority, especially in Adama city context. This is so because as discussed in this chapter, the role of some of the numerically smaller ethnic groups has been so substantial in the economy of the city. To sum up, as far as the ethnic composition of the town is concerned Adama may be characterized as a ‘bipolar’ multiethnic town in which two ethnic groups dominate demographically. However, characterizing the present Adama as ‘bipolar’ multiethnic town is only concerning number. When seen in terms of engagement in and influence on the political economy, the town appears to be under the influence of at least four ethnic groups. Thus, this leads us to addressing the question of diversity accommodation and governance in the city.

### 5.3.2 Legal and political conditions of the city (and the region) for diversity accommodation

The multiethnic city of Adama is located in Oromia regional state, the region which was established to guarantee the right of self-government for the Oromo nation with its own constitution, legislative, judicial and executive power. It needs to be borne in mind, therefore, that the issues of ethnic diversity accommodation in the city of Adama cannot be sufficiently explained without locating them within the larger Oromia regional state context because Adama city is part of the Oromia regional state with no special legal and political treatment in terms of diversity accommodation.

As Christophe Van der Beken (2007) rightly argues the Oromia regional state was primarily established for the political, economic and cultural interests (rights) of the Oromo nation. However, as the 2007 population census indicates, there are various dispersed ethnic groups in this region, particularly in urban areas such as, for example, in the case of Adama city as seen above. It is at this juncture that the question of diversity accommodation comes fore for discussion in the context of ethnically diversified urban centers.

In what may be said all in all, scholars are skeptic about diversity accommodation in Oromia regional state based on either constitutional and practical political considerations or both. For instance, Christophe Van der Beken (2007) condemns constitutional flaws of diversity accommodation in Oromia regional state. By comparing with the constitution of the Amhara regional state, he states that there are ‘...different constitutional attitudes towards diversity: a positive attitude in Amhara, a negative one in Oromia’ (Beken, 2007: 119). Beken believes that the Oromia regional state’s constitution is negative towards diversity because it “... pays no attention to the representation of minority groups; the association of the region with the Oromo people leaves no room for it [diversity]” (ibid: 120). He goes on to argue, “In the Amhara constitution, sovereign power in the region is exercised by the different peoples, in Oromia by the Oromo people” (ibid: 119-120). Similarly, Tokuma Daba claims, “The 2001 Constitution of Oromia claims the region as it is established solely for Oromo people. To this effect, the constitution expresses itself as it is a pact among Oromo people despite important presence of other ethnic groups in this region” (Tokuma, 2010: 79).

On the other hand, oppositely, Berhanu Gutema (2007) hails the constitution of the Oromia regional state as diversity inclusive but sees problems in its application. For instance, referring to Article 33 of the 2001 constitution of the region, he claims,

*...concerning the rights of citizenship, the Oromia constitution states that every Ethiopian national who reside in the State and can speak the working/official language of the State has the right to be elected and employed in any public or government office (The Constitution of Oromia 2001, Article 33). This article implies that discrimination based on ethnic category is unconstitutional; therefore a non- Oromo resident who speaks Oromiffa can have equal rights as an Oromo resident. However, putting aside constitutional pledges, the actual practice is very far from such constitutional pledges due to many factors (ibid: 227-228).*

Therefore, for Berhanu the problem of diversity accommodation in the region is rooted in practice rather than in legal or constitutional matters. The practical factors impeding diversity accommodation according to him are two: ethnicity and political outlook. He argues that the rights of non-Oromo residents in Oromia even including those who can speak very well the State’s official language(*afaan oromoo*) have been abused such as in getting access to employment opportunities in government institutions due to their ethnic background. On the other hand, Berhanu maintains that due to their political outlook, “... many qualified Oromo

professionals have been mistreated and their constitutional rights curtailed because of their alleged link with the ‘illegalised’ Oromo Liberation Front...” (ibid: 229). And he concludes, “Generally, putting aside the constitutional commitment, the Oromia regional government massively abuses the rights of both the non-Oromo as well as the Oromo residents in the region in various ways” (ibid). Therefore, according to this assumption, conditions in Oromia are hostile to diversity accommodation both for “ethnic insiders” and “ethnic outsiders” but due to different cases.

It is important, therefore, to question the above two remarks on the problem of diversity accommodation in the region and the alleged causal factors, especially in the context of urban areas such as in the Adama context. The reflection on the matter is that there are some key elements from both sides to be accepted and rejected at the same time at least pertaining to actual practices in Adama city.

First, true to Beken’s assumption the Oromia regional state was primarily established for the Oromo nation, which constitutes nearly 90% of the total population of the region (see CSA 2007). This is clearly stated in the 2001 constitution of Oromia region as; “sovereign power in the region resides in peoples of Oromo nation” (Art .8 of the 2001 Oromia constitution). In its preamble, the constitution considers Oromo people as a sole maker of the constitution. This is the fact that Berhanu Gutema overlooks. Implications of the logic of the constitution for political and administrative practice, especially for diversity accommodation should not be underestimated.

However, this is only one aspect of the reality of Oromia constitution regarding issues of diversity accommodation. In contrast to Beken’s argument above, in a number of ways, the constitution recognizes diversity and guarantees certain citizenship rights for them as well. For example, as Berhanu observes, one of these is Art. 33 of the Oromia Constitution which states that “any Ethiopian resident in the region and who speaks the working language of the region has the right to be elected or employed to any public office in the region.” However, there are some points that need to be underscored with respect to citizenships right of “ethnic others” in the region as stated in the article mentioned above. First, it is an obligation to command the regional state’s language; the other is that the constitution in this article guarantees individual right rather than territorial and group rights for non-Oromo citizens of the region.

With this in mind, it is important to briefly look at the practice of diversity accommodation at wider regional level before proceeding to the Adama city's case because it gives hint about the context in which diversity accommodation in the town works. To begin from the political practices one can see both aspect of accommodation and exclusion of non-Oromo ethnic groups in the region. The accommodation side is what Tokuma Daba states as,

*Equal participation in politics is also guaranteed in directives passed by the ruling party, OPDO, in which any Ethiopian citizen who accepts the program of the ruling party can be a member of the Caffee, executive and the judiciary without any discrimination if he speaks the working language of the region The practice reflects the same as there are Amahra, Tigrain, Gurage and others who are members of OPDO. On top of this, there are non-Oromo... who have assumed key political positions in the region. During recruitment to the judiciary, the public prosecutor and police officer no regard made to ethnic background of a person to be recruited(Tokuma:2010: 88).*

Berhanu Gutema (2007) seems to share this viewpoint when he argues that for the OPDO what matters more for membership to the party is not ethnic identity but political loyalty if the language condition is fulfilled. Nevertheless, this may be challenged on two grounds. One is that while it may be possible for non - Oromo individuals to be accommodated as party members in OPDO, it remains open for debate if it is legitimate to ascend to the top position and rule over the Oromo community unless they conceal their ethnic identity such as by adopting authentic Oromo names. Secondly, individual accommodation does not imply group accommodation. For instance, Tokuma Daba argues that the non-Oromo community of the region has never had group representation in any level of power in the region (2010). According to him, one of the challenges for this is “the dispersed nature of ethnic diversity” in the region (Ibid). Put in his own words, “the dispersed nature of ethnic diversity in Oromia made it difficult to extend territorial based protection to non-Oromo ethnic minorities” (ibid: 87).

Practices of diversity accommodation in employment opportunities in public institutions also exhibit both accommodative and exclusionary nature in the region. On the accommodation side, Tokuma mentions,

*In Oromia civil service of the total 204129 employees the Oromo, Amhara and the Gurage constitutes 184868(90.56%), 15793(7.74%) and 1182(0.58%) respectively. Currently, around 10% of the total civil servants of the region are non-Oromo ethnic groups. The Amhara and Gurage which constitute 7.2% and 0.9% of the total population of the region constitute 7.74% and 0.58% of the civil servant of the region respectively.*



*This indicates that more or less those ethnic groups proportionately employed in the civil service. Even the Amhara people are over protected (Ibid.).*

As the figure in this quotation shows there is fair opportunity of employment in the region though the type and level of positions remain open for scrutiny. Berhanu Gutema explains the discrimination side of the story as,

*Too many non-Oromo individuals who cannot speak Oromiffa are working in various regional government offices at a position of technical experts and other, but it is very difficult for these professionals to get promotion, scholarship and other benefits even if their service years and contributions have made them to qualify for such promotions and benefits( 2007:228).*

In this quotation, Berhanu observes both the positive and negative side of diversity accommodation in the region in the case of employment opportunities. On the one hand, he calls attention to discrimination and prejudice in promotion and related advantages. On the other hand, he shows possibility of employment opportunity in the region even for those who cannot command regional language, which Tokuma also asserts as,

*There is also a case where those who are loyal to the policies and programs of the ruling party but hardly speak the working language is going to be employed in Oromia institutions such as Oromia Rural Road Authority, Hospitals and others since knowing of the Oromo Language is not as such a determining factor(Tokuma, 2010: 88).*

Similarly, mixed scenario is observable in other sectors such as in language and school educations. For instance, constitutionally the working language of the region is *Afaan Oromoo* (Article 5 of the 2001 constitution of the region). Some interpret this as discriminatory approach to ethnic diversity accommodation. However, in practice, other languages, especially Amharic is widely used, namely in urban areas such as in Adama. In offices, oral communication is bilingual. Out of government offices, such as in social affairs and marketing, Amharic language is not less influential in the city than *Afaan Oromoo*. In urban areas, there are also Amharic schools financed by the regional government. Tokuma asserts this as “In practice; primary education is delivered either by Oromo language or Amharic depending on the preference of the students” (2010: VI). In Regional Television broadcast, there is also Amharic program, centered in Adama town. Nevertheless, there is also as much exclusion, such as with regard to ethnic groups other than Amhara. In addition, the Amhara community in rural and smaller town has no opportunity to learn in their language.

Such complex aspects of diversity accommodation practices were observable in urban parts of the country, including Adama city. However, the matter gets more and more complex in urban areas for two reasons. In the first place, as discussed in the Adama case above, in most of the towns of the region the “ethnic others” have significant roles in number and in economic roles. Secondly, an establishment of local government in Oromia regional state has been guided by logic of ethnic homogeneity. Put differently, local government restructuring arrangement in the region was not with a view to accommodate diversity but to expedite administration for the regional government. Consequently, until 2001 local government units in the region including municipalities had not been recognized as independent unit. Moreover, towns including Adama, municipalities were appendage to zonal or the Woreda administration. Specifically, the city of Adama was administrated as part of the East Shewa administrative zone of the region.

In that case, let alone to be concerned about the question of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation, the town itself was not recognized as autonomous entity. Following the 2001 constitutional revision in the region, local government in general and municipal administration in particular were restructured. Consequently, most towns and cities in the region including Adama were organized as self-governing units with their own legislative, executive and judiciary government organs. Still, there is no point in it at least expressively about ethnic diversity recognition and accommodation in legal and administrative framework of municipality governance. This was really posing challenges for diversity accommodation or management in urban Oromia including Adama. As Tokuma rightly points, currently there is a discourse in the region to recognize the existence of ethnic diversities in urban Oromia and “representation of non Oromo-ethnic groups ... in City council of 1st and 2nd grade cities” (2010: VI). Yet, it remains unclear, how to put it in practice given the complex historical and political precedents.

It seems that such legal and political complexity of the region have generated complex political developments such as societal engagement in contest and bargaining over state power, resources, symbols and identities. The remaining sections of this chapter are concerned with these political developments.

#### 5.4 Societal engagement in negotiating statehood in Adama city

This is a section that substantiates one of the arguments of the study that the ethnic decentralization process in Ethiopia has generated societal engagement in negotiating statehood, i.e., contest and bargain over state power, symbolic identities, and citizenships. As it was hinted above, in the context of Adama city state power, resources and symbolic identities are among the essential object of contest and negotiation among various interests and actors. In sections to follow, we look at these issues.

##### 5.4.1 Elite engagement in struggle for power: Powers, interests and their relationships

Central to decentralization, especially political decentralization is division of power. Particularly, decentralization in federal context involves constitutional share of power among different layers of government. Chiefly, it was for this same goal that Ethiopia adopted the ethnically based federalism in 1991, at least rhetorically.

However, contrary to this, most literature is skeptic about real division of power in the country. Almost the literature on post - 1991 Ethiopian politics agree that the EPRDF particularly the TPLF, the core and founder of EPRDF, has controlled state power at all levels of government (Aalen, 2002; Abbink, 2009; Merera, 2003). Such a notion not only contradicts the EPRDF's claim that decentralization in Ethiopia has brought about the real share of power among various nations and nationalities of the country on the one hand and between different layers of government on the other. It also revokes the fundamental tenet of federalism, which is about the share of power

To certain level, the notion of power concentration and domination in the present political setting of the country may be true, especially in the wider national context. However, in local arenas such as in Adama city, there are certain practices in which power seems to be dispersed and negotiated rather than concentrated. Yet, as it shall be made clear, the division of power is not in a democratic and constitutional sense. The pages to follow illustrate the non- constitutional

dispersion of power among various actors and the engagement of various interests in negotiating for domination.<sup>41</sup>

To follow this line of argument it is worth remembering the various forms of power unpacked in the conceptual part of this thesis, namely politico-military, administrative and economic forms of power. As we argued before, in urban parts of the conquered regions of the country (including Adama), the different forms of power were largely concentrated in the hands of the northern settlers, especially the Amhara ruling elites before 1991. However, as it is illustrated here, the ethnic decentralization processes of the country led to the division of power among different actors. Who are the main actors among which the power is apportioned in the city? How these divisions of power came about? What was the base or sources for each of the power? Finally, what are the nature of relationships between the various actors and interests? These are among the core questions that this sub-section seeks to address.

Who are the main actors among which the power is apportioned? An identification of actors of power in a given society depends on the type of issue in question. For instance, if we see this in relation to arenas of competition for power, particularly in Adama town context we find relatively few key actors at least at fore front. However, as we shall see later, in some other political issues the non-elite populations of the town also have roles to play in the city.

Accordingly, we may identify at least three influential loci of power in Adama town each exercising some form of influence over one another and over the town as a whole. One is the city administration exercising administrative power. Since OPDO members staffed the city administration from top to bottom, we prefer to refer to it as OPDO. Two, is the business elites who monopolized the urban economy. Our particular reference in this case is the Amhara, Guraghe and silte business elites since they together dominate the urban economy. The third category of actor of power in the town is TPLF-led central government (EPRDF), to which

---

<sup>41</sup> *However, it needs to be borne in mind that the kind of power divisions and the arenas of negotiation for domination do not necessarily corroborate with what the country's formal or constitutional framework envisions.*

OPDO is also a part.<sup>42</sup> Besides, there were also other actors (local, national or even international) in the town, but most of them are in ally with either of the major actors mentioned , and included in our discussion only where and when necessary.

Based on this categorization, we now discuss in some detail the specific power that each actor wields in the city under consideration. To begin with, the case of the urban administration, the OPDO, through its members, has controlled the municipality administration. In Adama city, every workers of the municipality including guards, cleaners and *gandaa (kebele)* leaders and councils were party (OPDO) members at least formally. Totally, the OPDO party and its members control the urban bureaucracy and hence it is very difficult to differentiate between the Party and city administration. For example, the city council has 81 seats (Adama city profile, 2003 E C) all of which is held by the OPDO party members. An OPDO-led municipality administration of Adama exercise power over such administrative issues as tax imposition and collection, land administration and human resource management, and overall city administration affairs including urban service deliveries.

However, among others, there is one basic point where the city administration seems to lack competence. That is, the competence to enact urban policies that reflect the ‘will and interest of the people’, or at least it has never done one so far. Generally, the urban government in Adama city runs short of decision-making power over essential affaris affecting urban life. Even if not constitutional, it has been a case that the central government has enacted urban policies. Almost every policy, rule and regulation including the 2002 and 2006 urban proclamations were enacted at central government levels; and thereby translated to regional languages and put on the table for implementation at urban levels. In what may be called ‘extra constitutional’, divisions of power, the central government exercises policy and decision making power while regional and/or urban governments work out on its implementation, in a way it contradicts with the main tenets of federalism.

It is extra constitutional because of its incongruity with the kinds of division of power promised in the country’s constitution. According to the federal and regional constitutions, Adama city

---

<sup>42</sup> *OPDO is one of the four ethnic political organizations who formed EPRDF. Yet, its role and influence is more important at regional and local level rather than at national level.*

squarely falls under the jurisdiction of the Oromia regional state, implying that there is no legal ground for the central government to play key roles, political or otherwise, in the city. However, in the context of the Adama city, it seems that neither the city administration nor the regional government (both run by OPDO) has the competence to enact city regulations in a way it would reflect the needs and interests of the local/urban community. In other words, this is to note that the key political powers in Adama such as legislation of urban policies largely fall under the influence of the central government mainly through the regional governments.

It seems important to discuss further about the means and strategies in which the central government exert political influence over local or municipal governments via the regional governments. Of course, different scholars identify different reasons, ways and means in which the central government exercises such power. Abdi Ismail Samatar (2004:1131), for example argues, “the federal ruling party tightly controls regional political authorities. Federal domination of regional governance is partly the result of the ineptness of local elite”. With regard to the means of control, for instance, Lovise Aalen (2002) and Merera (2003) noted that the central government of Ethiopia controls regional political affairs directly through appointment of key politicians to every region in disguise of advisory role. Similarly, John Abbink states, “Behind the visible office holders who come from the states themselves (i.e., being of the “right ethnic background”) stand advisors and policy makers linked directly to the federal EPRDF offices elite” (Abink, 2009:13). This implies there is direct control of the central government on the political conditions and actions of regional governments.

However, this does not mean that scholars have no sight about indirect control of the central government over the regional and local government in the country. Lovise Aalen (2009: 40), for example, argues, “The regional governments in Ethiopia today are in practice directed by representatives from the EPRDF, if not from the TPLF, who have no formal positions, but still have the authority to intervene and make final decisions” (ibid.).

Still what seems more important in understanding the political influence of the central government of Ethiopia over the Oromia regional government and through it over Adama town, however, is what Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall (2005) define as ‘institutional and structural arrangement of power’. According to Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall,

*Whereas compulsory [direct] power entails the direct control of one actor of the conditions and actions of another, institutional power is actors' control of others in indirect ways. Specifically ... the formal and informal institutions that mediate between A and B, as A, working through the rules and procedures that define those institutions, guides, steers, and constrains the actions (or non-actions) and conditions of existence of others, sometimes even unknowingly (2005:15).*

According to this understanding, A possesses “the institution that constrains and shapes B” (ibid). As Steven Lukes (2005) discerns, in these conditions of institutional power arrangement B obeys the power of A either knowingly or unknowingly. According to Lukes ,the first case exists when B (the subordinate) is well aware of the influence, even control of A( the power holder) but still is induced to act in power holder’s interest, because resources, such as wealth, charismatic claims, or the threat of violence, allow power holders to control subjects against their will. In addition, Lukes defines such kind of power as decision-making power. In the second case, and in what he calls systemic power, Lukes maintains that the power holders benefit by structural arrangements, such as the distribution of wealth or superior political organization in which the subordinates may not be aware of mainly due to ideological indoctrination to accept the authority of the power holders.

Scholars have argued that mainly because of these institutional power arrangements OPDO has become politically inapt to independently run its internal affairs such as urban administration in the case of Adama. Some literature associates the source of this problem with the origin of the party that it was created by the TPLF in 1989 from the Oromo prisoners of war in Eritrea and Tigray region (Pausewang, 2009; Young, 1997). According to this viewpoint, such kind of dependence dawn from inception has always made the OPDO officials psychologically inferior, militarily weak and politically dependent (Leenco, 1997; Merera, 2003; Young, 1998). Consequently, it has remained to act as a regional agent of TPLF (overcoated EPRDF), which in effect limits its mandate mostly to local administration position.

In contrast, some OPDO officials rejected such notion and presented their party as an autonomous political entity.<sup>43</sup> Some others, however, were both aware of and admit the relative political weakness of the party but located the sources of the weakness of the party in the lack of support from the Oromo community, especially from lack of intellectuals rather than dependence

---

<sup>43</sup> *Interview : two top OPDO officials in Adama (age 40, 48), May 28, 2011.*

on EPRDF.<sup>44</sup> This also makes some sense in that among the political organizations that constitute EPRDF, OPDO is the one that suffers so much from the lack of intellectual membership because some remain outside the party and some others joined it mainly for the sake of fulfilling their economic interests (Young, 1998). Still some others, especially those qualified for political rule have betrayed the party and sought political asylum in foreign countries (Gow, 2002; Mohammed, 2009).

Whatever the cause might be, OPDO practically has inherently fails to build a political capacity in the region (as well as in the city), and consequently it has remained to exercise mostly the administrative power in the city. Nevertheless, the good thing is that in relative terms the party enjoys administrative autonomy in Adama city, such as over land and human resources administration, tax imposition and collection, implementation of some economic, social and cultural policies. Thus, fundamental to OPDO in Adama city is control of administrative power and being responsible for implementing policies and directives, and service delivery roles. One tempts to ask how and why OPDO has secured the administrative power in towns such as in Adama. In other words, why other power actors such as the central government and the urban business elites did not show much interest in sharing the urban administrative power with OPDO?

For various practical reasons it is less likely for the federal government to directly involve in local administrative issues of regional and local governments. For instance, one informant who is expert in the science of governance presented two reasons why the central government is disinterested in intervening in the local administrative issues such as in Adama.<sup>45</sup> Firstly, the expert claims, it requires a huge number of employees, which the central government may not afford. Secondly, most administrative issues of urban areas are concerned with routine and tedious tasks and this might not be so attractive to the central government actors. Surprisingly, the informant, of course as many others do, never considered the constitutional right of regions to rule over their internal affairs. As the informant claims, given its political supremacy the central government could control the local administrative affairs. In that case, our informant may be right when he ignores the competence of the constitution as a constraining factor for the

---

<sup>44</sup> *Interview: three middle level OPDO official in Adama town (age 32, 24, 37), May 28, 2011.*

<sup>45</sup> *Interview: a lecturer in Adama University, June 21, 2011, Adama.*



central government intervention in regional administrative affairs. However, it may not be tenable to conclude that the administrative autonomy of regional governments is to the mercy of central government. Rather, we argue and demonstrate that the reason for the OPDO's relative autonomy from the central government, especially in being able to control the regional and municipal governance, is a result of the structurally 'negotiated power' between the central (EPRDF) and OPDO. That is, a kind of power relationships such that one exists only by virtue of its relations with the other. This is to argue that, EPRDF's political control over Oromia regional state is likely due to the devolution of administrative power to OPDO's on the one hand, and OPDO existence as a political organization and thereby exercising administrative power in Oromia regional state is due to its dependence on and support from the EPRDF government, on the other.

It is also equally important to explain about the minimal level of the urban business elites' (especially the Amhara, Guraghe and Silte) involvement in urban administration processes such as in the city of Adama. There might be different causes for their disinterest in administrative issues in the Adama context. From the perspective of the Guraghe and Amhara communities of the city, the main reasons were language and ethnic factors.<sup>46</sup> To some extent, the language issue may make sense, as the working language in Oromia regional state is *Afaan Oromo*. Definitely, this can negatively affect the non-Oromo communities in the region for job opportunities. This is a challenge for those who could not speak the regional working language. Otherwise, in practice anybody who manages the regional language can be recruited to administrative posts. Arguably, in Oromia regional state, an *Afaan Oromoo* speaking person showing political loyalty to OPDO and by extension to EPRDF has a priority of employment more than a person of Oromo origin but disloyal to the party (see Tokuma, 2010).

However, this does not mean that Oromo and non-Oromo officials have equal legitimacy in the eyes of the Oromo community. If not much inside the party (OPDO), ethnic identity seems to be critical in relations with the community at large.

Beyond the language and ethnic factors, there is also another factor attributable to the less involvement of non-Oromo in urban administrative issues in Adama. As some informants (from

---

<sup>46</sup> *Group discussions with three privately employed individuals, 25 May 2011 Adama*

OPDO side) present, most non-Oromo communities in Adama have been engaged in private businesses, which in many ways is better in income than employment in government offices.<sup>47</sup> Same informant reflects, had the language factor been the main cause to this, they could have learned it at least over the last two or three generations, especially since 1991. What testifies this argument more is that even after the 1991 political changes in the country many of the non-Oromo communities of Adama city have had no or less interest to learn the local or regional language at schools and other places. Even, those who manage the language do not show an interest to look for a job in OPDO dominated government posts.<sup>48</sup>

Instead, the Amhara, Guraghe and Silte communities are dominant in urban economic sectors in the city particularly in the private business sectors, both in formal and non-formal urban economy. The public view in the town confirms this. Some informants found no difficulty to differentiate and tell which private company, shops and hotels belong to which ethnic group. Nevertheless, it is difficult to conclude this matter only based on such information. Neither is it easy to reject the popular view in such a very highly politicized ethnic environment where every urban citizen could clearly identify each other.

To understand the matter, it is also necessary to consult official data. In fact, even officially, it is not an easy task to calculate private economy in general and in terms of ownership by ethnic category in particular in big cities like Adama for various reasons. Anyways, as of 2011 about 14149-business institutions (private and group ownership) were registered for taxation in the town (Adama city profile 2003EC). These private businesses are categorized in to three grades (A, B, C) based on the amount of tax they pay which in turn depends on their yearly income. Accordingly, A grade tax payers are those who earn more income and they number about 253. In B and C grade there were about 1406 and 11906 registered private business in the town (Ibid). To categorize this business sector along ethnic lines was difficult mainly because of the lack of access to the information in the city administration. But as one informant (closer to the information) estimates, the number of businesses owned by the Oromo constitutes is very less

---

<sup>47</sup> *Interview: an official who was head of the one department in the city administration, August 19, 2013, Adama.*

<sup>48</sup> *Interview with a teacher in one of the high schools in the city, 10 June 2012, Adama*

which according to his estimation was about 20.9% in the A, 25% in B and 32.3% in C business categories.<sup>49</sup> The non-Oromo ethnic groups of the town including few foreigners owned the rest business sectors. The accuracy of this figure may be questioned; yet it is very difficult to question the notion of the minimal level of Oromo communities' involvement in big business sectors at least in terms of ownership, especially when seen from the perspective of their numerical size in the city. As it will be seen later, most of the Oromo residents of the city are government employees. In addition, some others are employed in semi-private and semi-public business institutions.

Even more so, as one study revealed the 'informal urban economy' of the town is dominated by the non-Oromo community (see table VI in the appendix). Two opposing views were there for non-Oromo dominance of informal economy in Adama town. Those involving in this economy attribute the matter to discrimination in formal economy. On the other hand, the government officials attribute the matter to an evasion of tax payment.

Still important, it is worth to explaining why the Amhara, Guraghe and Silte ethnic groups have come to dominate the urban economy such as in Adama cities. Mainly this has its root in historical privilege that they enjoyed over the Oromo land over the last century. In all the regions that they conquered in the late nineteenth century, the conquering Amhara elites had become a dominant economic, political and social classes, even surviving the wave of the 1974 revolution. Particularly their dominance was more visible in the urban areas for various reasons. However, following the introduction of the ethnic federalism, the Amhara lost its political power to the Tigray elites at national level (Young, 1998) and administrative power to the Oromo elites such as in Oromia regional state, including the city of Adama. Relatively speaking, they survived with the economic and cultural power. Economically, they were well established in the urban areas by occupying enough of urban land and by monopolizing some key business sectors.

While the Guraghe and Silte communities were victims of the late nineteenth century invasion like the Oromo and other people of the south, they became beneficiaries of the resultant empire building in economic terms because they got economic opportunities of making business in

---

<sup>49</sup> *Informant working in investment office of Adama city (age 33) 11 June 2012, Adama.*

every urban area of the country. They effectively negotiated their loss of political and cultural rights with economic gain. Perhaps next to the Amhara, the Gurage and silte groups may be the second advantageous groups in urban economy of the country. In Adama, too, they are still dominant in business areas. However, some Guraghe and Silte business elites vehemently complain that there has been freedom of market, especially fair and free competition after 1991 in some areas such as in Adama city.<sup>50</sup> Same informants reflect that in post-1991 periods, especially after the 2005 election, the Guraghe and Silte economic position in urban businesses have been threatened by the Tigray entrepreneurs at national capital city, and by emerging but staggering Oromo entrepreneurs in Oromia such as in Adama city.

What is important in the study of power is not only the nature of its distribution. It is also equally significant to understand the nature of relationships between various powers since the goal to possess power is to wield it in promoting and/or defending one's own interest. In the pursuit of interest, it is inevitable for different power actors to interact, and these interactions in turn inevitably produce effects: conflictive or consensual. In this section, we examine two key points. First, we identify the kind of interests that each actor seeks to promote or defend, and then explore the conflictive and consensual relations that emerge in the course of these interest pursuits.

We begin by identifying some basic interests that each actor in the town seeks to achieve using the power at its disposal. To begin with, the central government (TPLF dominated EPRDF) as the ruling power (government) has a wide ranging and multiple interests. But in relation to the other powers, such as OPDO and Amhara-Gurage entrepreneurs, its political interest is to assure or maintain the status *quo*, that is, to grip the state power. In fact, this is the pivotal political interest of EPRDF party and it watches over very seriously in its relationships with the other contending powers (Abink, 2006; Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003). Adama city, perhaps next to Addis Ababa hosts various elites (business and others) with a potential threat to the party in power as was observed during the 2005 election, and this justifies the EPRDF's security concern in the city.

---

<sup>50</sup> *Group discussions with two Guraghe and two Silte entrepreneurs (age 27, 45, 51, 30), 13 June 2012, Adama*

On the other hand, there are at least three major political interests of the Amhara-Gurage entrepreneurs of Adama city. The first one seems to be assuring their survival as a community in Adama city because the post-1991 political environment has not been favorable for them outside of their homeland. It has been documented that the Amhara community settled in Oromia and in some other Southern part of the country was evicted following the introduction of ethnic decentralization. There are even some reports citing the massacre (Lentakis, 2005). Yet, eventually, the Amharas survived or managed to continue living outside their homeland (Amhara regional state) withstanding all challenges. As some informants in Adama city claim, the source of their survival is not only legal protection but also due to their economic power that enabled them to organize themselves for self –defense.<sup>51</sup> In this connection, it is worth remembering the establishment of AAPO one of whose objectives was for this self- defensive purpose (see Aalen, 2002). Most people interviewed put much trust on self-organization rather than in the rule of law to protect themselves, and this might emerge a security threat in the region and perhaps in the country in general.

Secondly, some Amhara and Gurage enterpreuners had an interest to maintain their good-positioned economic status in the city. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, there were some business interests who enrolled in the political struggle to unseat the EPRDF government, even to outlaw the ethnic federal policy of the country (see Pausewang, 2007; 2009). As discussed before, they have made a tireless effort to change their economic wealth to political power,<sup>52</sup> such as through establishing opposition political parties, like AAPO in 1990s and CUD since 2005. Especially, during the 2005 election the CUD comfortably won the public vote in urban areas, even if they did not take the position to govern due to the post-election crises (see, Alemseged (2009). In this case, their main interest is to regain the pre-1991 political, cultural and economic dominance (Pausewang, 2007).

What about the OPDO? What is their main political interest vis-à-vis the other two main powers in the city? Many assume that OPDO has no political interest of its own rather it is manned to implement the political interest of the EPRDF, particularly of the TPLF. However, to conclude it

---

<sup>51</sup> *Interview with one businessman of higher economic class, 29 June 2011, Adama*

<sup>52</sup> *See, for example, Kuma Demeksa, president of Oromia regional state interviewed by Efoita, September 1992E.C; 8<sup>th</sup>.No.1).*

as such could be a fatal error as there is enough evidence for the continuous quest by the OPDO for political autonomy from EPRDF/TPLF. For this, suffices is to consider many OPDO officials who demanded such political autonomy and in return risked their position and jobs, and even left their homeland in migrating to foreign lands (Mohammed, 2009). Indeed, political autonomy is an essential factor for the OPDO to cultivate legitimacy and support among the Oromo community (Merera, 2003; Young, 1998).

Still important, in pursuing their respective goals, each of the above loci of power has produced certain kind of relationships: some conflictive and some consensual. It is, therefore, important to see the power relations of conflict and power relations of consensus in the course of interaction between the three different loci of power in Adama city.

Let us see, for example, the conflictive and consensual relationships between the OPDO (of Adama city municipalities) and the Amhara -Guraghe business elites, as is tangibly observable in the city. Politically speaking, relationships between OPDO groups ruling over the city and the Amhara business elites seem to be of conflictive nature. Primarily, OPDO claims that it is a political organization established to liberate the Oromo community from the century-old Amhara domination (Waadaa, 2000). While this refers to the Amhara generation who invaded the region during the time of Emperor Minilek II, there is a tendency to include their progeny of present generation. Apparently, politically speaking, this claim pits them against one another and it is possible to argue that OPDO's relations with Amhara business elites seem to be somewhat rivalries.

It seems important to illustrate concrete evidence about the conflictive relationships between OPDO and the Amhara and Guraghe entrepreneurs in Adama city. One of these relates to the destruction of *Arif Hotel* immediately following the 2005 election by the Adama city administration in the name of road construction.<sup>53</sup> However, according to some informants the reality of the action was different.<sup>54</sup> The owner of the Hotel was alleged to donating one million Ethiopian Birr to the CUD party during the election and this was the cause for the destruction of

---

<sup>53</sup> *This hotel was owned by a rich Amhara businessperson*

<sup>54</sup> *Interview with one of the relatives of the owner, age 48.*

the Hotel.<sup>55</sup> Many assumed it as a sort of revenge from the part of OPDO. This argument sounds since the place has not been used for the claimed purpose, even after seven years.

The other example for conflictive relationships between OPDO and the urban business elites (of Guraghe and Amhahra origin) is the destruction of Ginb Gebeya. This was a big business center in the middle of the city owned the Amhara, Guraghe and Silte entrepreneurs. In this particular area, the CUD won public vote during the 2005 election. Equally important, it was said that a huge amount of money and material support for CUD was drawn from entrepreneurs who own the business center during the election. The destruction of Ginb Gebeya by the Adama city administration was once again considered as a sort of revenge.<sup>56</sup>

However, it is erroneous to conclude that the relationships between OPDO and urban Amhara and Gurage entrepreneurs of Adama city were conflictive altogether. Evidently, not only conflict characterizes the nature of relationships between some OPDO and the non-Oromo urban business groups. Sometimes there has been underground bargaining between some officials from OPDO and the urban Amhara entrepreneurs. Most OPDO officials were economically poor upon coming to administrative position in Adama city. To cope up with urban life, especially with life standard commensurable to their administrative positions, the officials were in need of material resources, such as private homes and cars. However, resources that would meet such needs could not come from the poor urban Oromo community but from the rich Amhara or Gurage entrepreneurs. To expedite some administrative services such as access to urban land, the Amhara and Guraghe urban entrepreneurs warmly welcome such demands. And it is at this juncture that interests from both sides intersect and open up space for negotiation. Most informants agree that this form of negotiation has been among the main reasons for the prevalence of corruption in Oromia regional state, particularly in urban centers including Adama.

It may be also important to mention two more cases where urban officials and business elites bargain, both of which relate to schools. First, by virtue of their economic power the Amhara and Guraghe business elites own private schools (Kindergarten and above) with far better facilities and teachers. In what can be said all in all, the administrative officials of the city prefer to send

---

<sup>55</sup> *Interview with three entrepreneurs who were victims of the action, age 31, 52, 37. 13 June 2012, Adama*

<sup>56</sup> *Same informant as above.*

their children to such private schools<sup>57</sup>. Secondly, even if not explicitly expressed in the constitution of the region, OPDO has respected the right of the Amhara community to use their language in schools in Adama as well as in other cities in the region. These are among typical points to be mentioned as examples for some sort of consensus that exists between the OPDO and the Amhara and Guraghe business community in Adama city.

#### 5.4.2 The consequences of power relations in the Adama city: domination or negotiation?

What happens when two or more powers of conflictive interests interact, such as in our case above? It is generally true that an interplay of powers ends with specific results. A kind of result to come out of the interactions of powers, however, varies depending on the capacity or strength of the actors to influence one another. Accordingly, it is likely to have two possible results out of the interactions of contending powers: domination or ‘negotiation’. Domination is a kind of power relationships in which one power or a coalition of powers imposes their will or interests over others (see Dahil, 1971). Thus, the dominant power is “who forces his or her will on others” (Migdal, 2001:4). In this case, it means that the loser has no choice but to abide by commandments of the winner. However, in the case of negotiated power, though not in proportional basis, every actor gains something and loses some other at the same time in the processes of interactions. It is a condition whereby all gain some and all lose some, *albeit*, the degree of the gains or losses varies. Which of these is likely to explain the nature of power relations in Adama in the post-1991 context?

As argued and illustrated here, there has been certain forms of negotiated forms of power in the Adama city context. To illustrate this, it may require us to depart from the widely used approach of urban power analysis; that is, the decision- making approach which focuses on actors or interests who involve in the decision- making processes (see Judge, 1995). This approach is pursued by the pluralist theory of urban politics, which defines distribution of power in urban areas as dispersed rather concentrated. Prominent urban scholar’s adherent to this school of thought including Robert Dahil (1961) followed this decision- making approach of power analyses.

However, decision-making is one thing and its implementation is another. If we understand power as the capacity to produce intended desires (as Dahil himself defines), it needs to measure

---

<sup>57</sup> *Interview with a teacher in one of high schools in the town, 10 June 2012, Adama*



it in terms of its outcomes, specifically the degree of implementation of policies. To understand the effect of power, it seems that instead of who has participated in decision-making or policy formulation processes, it is useful to focus on to what extent the policies are implemented. To focus only on this policy making approach of power analysis, such as in the contemporary Ethiopian politics, definitely would lead to a conclusion of power domination. The reason for this is clear. Beginning from the time of drafting and ratifying the 1995 Constitution, every law-making process in the country has been monopolized by the EPRDF regime (see Merera, 2009). Definitely, each proposed law that came to the attention of the parliament for ratification passed successfully, including those that concern cities and towns. It seems that there has been no single case of law that was subjected to rejection by the parliament of the country. This is oddly to a government that claims to be multi-party. One of the main reasons for this is that the parliament has been absolutely controlled by the EPRDF party and its affiliates. For example, according to the result of the 2010 parliamentary election, it was declared that the EPRDF won the parliamentary seat by 99.6%.

Given these conditions, one may not be surprised in coming across a scholarly conclusion about the monopoly of power in the country is in the hands of EPRDF. Yet, one may ask, what if we make our focus of analysis on the outcome rather than the decision-making power? To what extent, for example, do decisions passed or laws enacted at national level put into practice at local levels, such as in urban centers? It is less likely for any political actor to secure its political interests as much as it wants. As Joel S. Migdal rightly argues, even states which are assumed to be possessing monopoly of power “have had great difficulty in transforming public polices into successful social change” (2001: preface).

Why, more often than not, is it a case that there are discrepancies between intention and achievements of interests, especially with regard to state policies? The most plausible factor for this is power limit (see Migdal, 1988). In pursuit of any interest, it is most likely for any actor including state agents to face resistances from some other opposing interests (ibid). When the actors fail to command obedience from forces of resistance, they begin to negotiate their power and interests. Due to the limit in power, actors turn to negotiate on their interests, rather than to insist in claiming for domination. The discrepancy between interests pursued (and acted upon) and actual achievements is what we call power negotiated. It is this notion of power relations that

has been focused on in this study in the Adama city context, instead of or more importantly than in the power domination discourses.

We move on to substantiate this thesis. As discussed above, each of the three major powers in the city had certain interests they would like to impose on each other and in the city in general. As it is a case elsewhere, the political interest of the central government (EPRDF) with OPDO in the Adama city context has been loyalty and faithful commitment in implementing the proposed ethnic political agenda. With the urban business groups (such as the Amhara and Guraghe entrepreneurs), the EPRDF had an interest to deter their support for political organizations that worked against the ethnic federal political settings of the country on which its power is hinged. In pursuit of such interests, there were some achievements and losses. Some of the achievements are that the regime is still in power and its ethnic federal political formula is also in place, at least formally. Though most Amhara and Guraghe business elite supported political organizations like CUD worked hard to dismantle it, the federal constitution of 1995 still is operational. Of course, the EPRDF regime barely survived the wave of the 2005 election, at least in major urban centers including the city of Adama. In most towns including Adama, the EPRDF lost popular vote. Yet, it survived. This may be considered as the main achievements of the EPRDF regime, as far as its relationships with the urban entrepreneurs (and political organizations they support) are concerned.

It is also important to look at the negotiated interests of EPRDF. In relation with the Adama city entrepreneurs, the first issue to be considered is that EPRDF along with OPDO could not impose their ethnic federal policy on some non-Oromo communities of the town. Some resisted this ethnic political program almost for more than two decades as observed during the 2005 election. Therefore, this can raise a question about the limit of EPRDF power to impose its political will on such deviant groups. The EPRDF government used every power (soft and hard) to win obedience from the urban elites unsuccessfully.

In connection with the OPDO, the EPRDF also had some gains and losses. One of the gains is that the OPDO still runs local administration in Oromia regional state without jeopardizing the interests of the central government. However, EPRDF could not win full loyalty from some OPDO members as they defect and even turn against it. As informants witness, even in the Adama city context it has been common for some Oromo individuals to resign from key

administrative positions, including some mayors. Of course, mayor instability has been the chronic problem for the city of Adama. Over the last two decades or so, the Adama city has had about nine mayors; almost all of them were purged from power for different reasons. The most alleged reason for this is corruption. While this may be largely the case, informants also witness voluntarily resignation by some of the mayors due to dissatisfaction the political order in place, lack of the autonomy of decision-making power.<sup>58</sup>

Coming to the non-Oromo urban business community, it is possible to illuminate their gains and losses in the struggle for power. Some of the gains are that they survived as community in Adama city. They also maintained their economic hegemony in the city. Their main loss, however, is political and administrative power in the city of Adama. Despite dedicated support they lent to opposition parts such as during the 2005 election, they could not realize their dream of changing the ethnic federal system of the country. This in turn reveals the limit of their power to achieve their political interests.

OPDO on its part has secured its administrative position over the city of Adama and Oromia regional state in general, and this could be taken as its achieved interests. Yet, it still had great losses in relation to both the central government and the urban business interests. In relation to central government, its demand for autonomy seems not to be fulfilled. Against the urban entrepreneurs, the OPDO has faced challenges to perform administrative issues, such as tax collection from the urban business groups.<sup>59</sup>

In the Adama city context, what to underscore regarding power relations is that on the one hand the interests that each of the above actor secured are what the power they wielded offered them and on the other, the interest that the actors failed to achieve is due to the limit in power. As well, it needs to underscore that gain of each actor is not what the other actors voluntarily relinquished but it is what its power brought for it. Equally important, the interests that each actor claimed but failed to realize is not what they voluntarily dropped but what they could not achieve due to the limit of power at their disposal. Thus, the interest that each actor strictly seeks to achieve but fails to realize due to the limit of power is what we characterize here as negotiated power.

---

<sup>58</sup> *Interview with one of the resigned mayors of the town (age 47), 29 December 2013; Addis Ababa*

<sup>59</sup> *23 Interview with an official in finance bureau (age 33) 11 June 2012, Adama*

### 5.4.3 ‘Symbolic’ forms of political engagement (in negotiating statehood) in Adama city

As we discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis, there are different forms of engagement in state politics. Symbolic form of engagement is one of these means and strategies (see Kertzer, 1996). As Jerome Kagan describes symbols are among the “central concepts for those who study human behavior, thought, belief, and emotion, as fundamental as mass and energy in physics, atom and molecule in chemistry, gene and cell in biology” (2009: 104-105). Though not much acknowledged in the field of political science, ‘symbols’ are essential element and tools of politics (Reeves, 2004; Kertzer, 1996; Faucher-king, 2005). For example, David I. Kertzer expresses the political significance of symbols as “politics depends heavily ... on symbolism, and ... symbolic change has important political and material consequences” (1996: x).

But what is a symbol? Jerome Kagan describes, “A symbol is any event – a color, design, spatial location, animal, objects, or word” (2009:105). For Umut Ozkirimli (2005), “symbols are those images, objects and activities that are utilized by individuals and groups in social intercourse to achieve objectives through influencing and controlling behavior” (2005:188). Similarly, in the case of Adama city there were symbols that have widely been used for political purposes by various interests. One of these is the politics of naming (of places, town, streets, building, hotels, and business firms and even of individual person).

In Adama, the politics of symbols or symbolic way of political engagement begins from the name of the city itself. Upon controlling state/regional power in 1991, OPDO (EPRDF) regime embarked on ‘decolonization’ of names all over Oromia. In the process, Nazireth, the name given to the present Adama city in 1944 by Emperor Haile Sellassie I (see Kasahun, 2000), was officially replaced by Adama. Similarly, streets inside the city dropped their Amharic names and replaced with *afaan Oromoo*, at least officially. It is important, therefore, to question the political motives behind such name changes.

OPDO officials claim that Adama now has got its authentic name by the OPDO struggle (Waadaa, 2000; Adama city profile, 2003 E.C). Particularly they state that “Adaamaan *bu’aa qabsoo dhaaba keenyaati*” (Waadaa: 2000: 2), which means the restoration of its original name to Adama is an outcome of OPDO struggle. This clearly reveals how much political emphasis is given to place names. In reasoning out the action, one official of higher-ranking authority in the party states, “In a city which for long had been occupied by aliens and symbolized alien

culture [refers to Amhara], such measure is must”.<sup>60</sup> For him it symbolizes “the end of the Amhara cultural and symbolic domination over the town of Adama” (Ibid). According to the informant, the measures serve two political purposes. First, it helps to clear the memory and symbols of ‘alien’ domination over the town, and secondly, it rectifies the belongingness of the town to Oromo nation.

However, it does not seem that such measures were welcomed by some non-Oromo dwellers of the city, especially the Amhara. Evidently, there has been resistance to accept the new names for city and its streets for some political reasons. We took some interviews to know the political reason why some people prefer Nazireth to Adama in naming the town, and our interview results range from indifference to political reasoning. On the one hand, there were informants who replied that they do not know why; and for them it appears that calling towns and places with this or that name does not make any difference. Yet their preference is to use the previous names to which they are accustomed. On the other hand, there were also some others who were not convinced with the reasons for the changes undertaken recently. One of my interviewees, for example, claimed that Adama is a name that represents only a small area in the town rather than whole city.<sup>61</sup> He argues, Nazareth is a beautiful and legitimate name to maintain. Still, there were informants who were frank enough to express it as form of resistance to the politically - induced involvement of the regional government in such place name changes. From their perspective, it is their duty to keep the previous name of the town (Nazareth) part of their historical heritage.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, presently it is common to name the same place (Adama) with two different names: Adama (official) and Nazareth. Of course, multilingual coexistence is one of the typical features of multiculturalism. However, it does not seem that such differences coexist peacefully and tolerably since, as indicated above, it is politically charged.

We do offer two more salient examples that substantiate the political significance of names in the city from personal experience. The first one relates to my meeting of an official in Oromia urban development Bureaus for letter of cooperation for field research in Adama. My application letter

---

<sup>60</sup> *Interview with a member of city cabinet, 27 June 2012, Adama*

<sup>61</sup> *Informant engaged in private business (age 27) 19 June 2012, Adama*

<sup>62</sup> *Informant- businesswoman (age 32) 19 June 2012, Adama*

reads Nazareth instead of Adama to refer to the city of Adama. The instant response from the official was: “you need to correct your language and it is then that you could get the service you requested”. This illustrates how politically sensitive place names are.

The second example to offer here is what I encountered during one of my journeys to Adama city for this research purpose. In the Kaliti (Addis Ababa) bus station, I found three teenagers (two of them male and one female) complaining about a bus driver who used the name Nazireth instead of Adama in calling in commuters. Avoiding this bus the teenagers got on into another one whose driver was using Adama instead of Nazireth in calling commuters (passengers). Interested in the matter, I got on same bus and sat close to one of the teenagers for information in connection to what they were complaining. In the course of our journey, we made discussion on different issues and in between, I posed a question if it makes a difference to use Nazireth or Adama. His response was short and instant: *Qabeenya keenya* (it is ours). This means that Adama city belongs to the Oromo people and what is of an Oromo needs to be named in an Oromo language.

The politics of names in and about Adama city is not limited to names of the town and its streets. Naming buildings, shops, private colleges and clinics, hotels seems also to be politicized. By referring to such names and interpreting the political meaning they connote, one even may understand the political interests of the owners. Moreover, by referring to their names, there may be a possibility to detect owners of the buildings, shops or hotels ethnically.<sup>63</sup>

Still importantly, one may find the politicization of names of individual persons. One may argue that in post- 1991 Ethiopia there has been counter-cultural movement in Oromia regional state, especially in ‘re-romizing’ names. Due to various influences and forces, in pre-1991 Ethiopia many Oromo individuals were named in Amharic such as in schools (Mekuria, 1997) and beyond. It was common among the Oromo people to drop their authentic Oromo names and adopt either Amharic or religious names (Christian as well as Muslim). Post-1991 political change, however, effectively reversed such experiences. One amazing change in this regard is that in previous times in some case the Oromo were expected to change their names to Amharic if they had to take some key political and administrative position. Reversely, after 1991 it was

---

<sup>63</sup> *Exception to this may be names derived from Bible and Koran.*

common to see people changing their names to authentic Oromo name to hold key political and administrative position in the region.

At family level, too, this ‘re-romization’ of names seems to be significant such as in Adama city. Post- 1991 Oromo generation were mostly named in *Afaan Oromoo* (Oromo language) except in few cases where there were religious influences (both Christian and Muslims). One can easily prove this by referring to names of students in school as this researcher did. Still surprisingly enough, ‘old’ generation who were previously named in Amharic or in any other non-Oromo language are also being engaged in removing the alien or ‘colonial’ names, and courts in Adama have also entertained several of such cases, especially in ‘legalizing ‘the changes’.<sup>64</sup>

What is of interest here is not only the engagement in name changes in Adama city but also the political meaning that these new names bear. Among others, common ones are *Bilisummaa* (freedom), *Nimoonaa* (we shall win), *Diinaa’ol* (above enemy), *Mo’iibon* (denotes win and proud) and many other related names. These names presage various political wishes of the Oromo people. What reveals the political dimension of such names is that they are totally new and different from traditional and cultural Oromo names.

The political meaning of such new names among the Oromo community is vividly clear for the non-Oromo dwellers in the city to which they have also reacted similarly. As one informant<sup>65</sup> asserts there was similar trend among some Amhara to widely use names like Tewdros and Menelik, which signify Emperor Tewdros and Emperor Menelik II who played leading roles in conquering and subjugating the Oromo nation since second half of the nineteenth century. Though these names are not new in Ethiopia, they have been used widely since 1991 such as in Adama city. However, such names and personalities are the most hated among the Oromo community not only for their acts of usurping the independence of the Oromo nation but also the agony that they inflicted on the Oromo people both during and after the conquest (Mohammed, 2002).

---

<sup>64</sup> *Interview with a legal officer in one of the courts in the town (age 49), 27 May 2011*

<sup>65</sup> *Informant private school teacher (age 41) June 1, 2011, Adama*

Some other symbols like monuments and statues have also been widely used in the city as a means of political engagement in both at elite and mass levels. We see first the elite case. One symbol that bears a very strong political meaning in Adama town is the Abbaa *Gadaa* hall whose construction was completed in 2005. This hall is situated on high standing hill to the western side of the city with apparent visibility from any corner. Due to its strategic location and its special design (*Odaa* tree shape)<sup>66</sup> it catches the attention of everybody living in the city or passing through it.

The hall is not a simple building that serves for conference and related purposes. There is also political meaning assigned to it. For example, according to the Ethiopian herald, the hall is “constructed in Adama town of Oromia state in way that reflects the culture and history of the Oromo people” (Ethiopian herald, Vol. Lxi. No. 307: 1). As stated in same source, “The building is said to depict the continuing commitment and victory of the current generation of the Oromo people” (Ibid.). Of course, this is what the then president of the Oromia regional state (Juneidi Sado) has assured in his speech on the inaugural ceremony of the hall (ibid).

As indicated in the above statements there are several points that make the issue of the Abbaa *Gadaa* hall too political. One, for example, is the fact that the hall is constructed in a way that it reflects only the Oromo culture while the city dwellers are not only the Oromo community. Vividly it rectifies the belongingness of the city to the Oromo community. The other relates to the assumption that the hall symbolizes the victory of the Oromo nation, which lends itself to a question: victory over what/whom? Who are the losers, then? Directly or indirectly, losers or victims of the said Oromo victory refer to the Amhara ruling elites, or commonly called *neftegna*, which implicitly or explicitly may also concern their present generation including those living in Adama city.

---

<sup>66</sup> *Literally Oda is a kind of ever green tree. Traditionally the Oromo used the shade of the plant for gathering in making political, social and economic decision, especially when the Oromo nation was independent and governed by the Gada political system. Consequently, the plant to these days symbolizes an Oromo identity*



From the part of Amhara community, there is a counter symbolic political reaction. One of these reactions, especially at institutional level is the “renovation and reconstruction of [orthodox Christian] church buildings ‘(Marcus, 2002:239). Cressida Marcus wrote,

*In response to social crisis, economic hardship and political decline of Amhara, a muted form of resistance and protest is manifested in the people’s attention to their churches. [And] Church construction is a forum in which claims to legitimacy over the control of local space are real; and building projects are also symbolic statements about the possession of heritage and identity(ibid.).*

Similar to what the above quotation reveals, in Adama city too, since 1991 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has turned its attention to church construction and expansion. For example, four churches in the town underwent big changes through expansion and reconstruction. In these expansion and reconstruction processes one of these churches lent itself in conflict and competition with one Oromo businessperson in the town over control of land as well as influence in the area (see picture I). During my fieldwork in the town, their cases were delivered to or taken up by court.

There are two points that may draw attention with respect to the Orthodox Church in general and its recent innovative reconstruction and expansion such as in Adama town in particular. First, while there are also adherents to this faith outside the Amhara circle including Oromos there has been a tendency to designate it as Amhara faith and culture (see Clapham, 2002). Secondly, among the Oromo community and some other southern people, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has widely been known by its political roles (such as supporting the Ethiopian ruling regimes in conquering and exploiting people of the south) rather than in its religious value. Its present reconstruction and expansion trends still is perceived by some Oromo people of Adama as an aspect of the Amhara cultural and symbolic revival, as a tool to control local space, and as a means of claiming possession of heritage and identity in the city.

At family and individual level there were also some symbolic materials used for political expression. For example, I accessed the mobile screen of 27 people in the city; and two had no symbol on it at all, 21 of them hold political symbols on the screen of their mobile cell phone and the rest religious symbols. Some of the political symbols were pictures of Emperor Hailesellassie I, Emperor Tewdros, Emperor Menelik II and the late Prime Minister (Meles Zenawi). In some others mobile phone screen are pictures of Tadesa Birru and Elemo Qilxu (the pioneers and

founders of modern Oromo nationalism movement). Axum obelisk, Lalibela and Fasilidous churches, and the Odaa tree are other images that are in mobile screens of accessed individuals in Adama town. In fact, similar pictures appear on some dresses including T-shirts and other forms of dresses. It is also common to see some of these pictures affixed to private vehicles.

By the picture that they hold, be it in their cell phone screen, T-shirt or in other public and private devices, one may spot the ethnic identity of individuals and the political mission that the symbols convey. It is very difficult to consider that these people hold such political images without some political interests in them. What makes these symbols political is their mutual exclusivity and contradiction. Put differently, the images that some hold as their heroes are enemy for some others. It is clear for everybody, for example, what the successive Ethiopian emperors mean for the Oromo community on the one hand, and what heroes of the Oromo means for the non-Oromo community on the other.

At family level too, there are commonly used symbols as political tool. For example, in Adama it is common to see house utensils with politically meaningful images, shapes and colors including plates, beds, doors and windows. There are two ways to witness this issue. One is to visit homes of families, especially based on ethnic categories. Of various family homes that the researcher visited there was at least one item in the compound or in the house with clear political message. The other is to visit shop centers where these materials are produced and sold.

We come to conclude this part by offering two more cases for the symbolic based political engagement. One was what happened in one of the hotels in the city while I together with two of friends of mine was having lunch. Four adult persons (one female and three males) came in to the hotel for lunch and sat somewhat in distance place from us. Once the lunch was on their table, they all asked the waiter to change the plate holding the food. First, it seemed to us problem was related to sanitation. However, the case was found to be different- the plate was varnished with a lion image holding a flag symbolizing the ‘majesty’ of Emperor Haile Sellassie’s. The political meaning of the symbol on the plate and the political reason to reject it was very clear to everybody in the hotel. Definitely, the symbol signifies an aspiration for political rule of Amhara hegemony like that of the days of Emperor Haile Sellassie I, where as its rejection conveys a political meaning to hate or avoid that type of political rule.

There is also a second and last example to offer with respect to the political significance of symbols in Adama town, which was related to what encountered me on a wedding ceremony. On this occasion, there was lunch service in one of the hotels in the town. Two guys who lined up in front of me for the lunch escaped plates and cups with similar image as above. Even if I did not ask reasons for their action due to inconvenience, it was not difficult for me to understand its political message, which is similar with the case presented in above.

Yet, what is surprising is still there is coexistence among the people such as in social life in the city including cross-cultural and cross- ethnic relations. Despite ethnic differences, people of all ethnic groups in the city share a number of social values, which leads to strong social relations. However, such social relations and social capital are highly vulnerable to identity and political conflicts. Identity hatred and political conflicts are growing strong like wildfire in the city. And no one is sure whether the cooperative and interactive social capital coaches and shapes the identity and political predicaments of the city or the political problems grows deeper and deeper to destroy the urban society apart, perhaps irreparably.

#### 5.4.4 Use of economic resources for negotiating legitimacy and its contribution to political engagement

Economy and politics are intrinsically related in many ways. In this section, we explore the relationships between economy (material resources) and politics (power) in Adama city especially from the perspective of their roles in engaging society in state political activities.

As is discussed before, there have been some legitimacy gaps between the EPRDF government and urban community. Due to legitimacy crises, OPDO, the EPRDF wing in Oromia, has faced great challenges to rule over urban centers in the Oromia regional state. Lack of membership (in both quality and quantity) has also been the other challenge for this political organization. Consequently, over the last two decades or so the OPDO (EPRDF) regime has used different means, strategies and resources to alleviate such problems. As we illustrate here, economic resources have been among of the most influential means that the ruling regime in Oromia regional state has used to negotiate legitimacy and attracting membership in urban Oromia such as in Adama city. In particular, our focus is on two main issues. One is the use of employment opportunities to attract the educated citizens; and the other is use of business incentives as means to attracting private business interests to the party.

We begin with the politics of employment opportunities. Few may disagree that employment opportunity in government offices and access to urban land are among the most important repertoire that the OPDO had at its disposal to cultivate legitimacy and attract membership among the Oromo community in Adama and perhaps elsewhere in the region. Indeed, for those interested to join the party or at least lend support to it, there have been wide opportunities of access to job and land in Oromia regional state.<sup>67</sup> These strategies of co-opting individuals seem to have worked well for the party as it managed to attract more and more membership from time to time. What is remarkable of this event is that the economic opportunities that the regime has provided attracted a large number of individuals to the party and hence to politics even including those who have had political beliefs and policy preferences substantially different from that of the ruling party.<sup>68</sup>

In Adama city, it is not secret today that priorities of employment in government institutions and access to land for housing and related purposes have been given to party members. The result of our investigation was that majorities of jobless and homeless individuals in the town were those who were not party members. However, this does not mean that party members were employed and supplied with housing services all in all. In our investigation, we detected some homeless (private) and jobless party members. Most of these individuals, however, were either those who joined the party recently (usually less than five years) or those whose political loyalty to the party is still ambivalent.

Motivated by such economic interests, recently there has been more and more demand from the urban community for party membership.<sup>69</sup> However, it seems likely that there might not be much more opportunities or space to accommodating such demands as before mainly due to two reasons. First, it seems that the OPDO (EPRDF) regime has no problem of membership any more at least quantitatively speaking. Second, inefficiency and corruption associated with such

---

<sup>67</sup> *Group discussion - three individuals civil servants (age 29, 33, 47) 27 June 2012, Adama.*

<sup>68</sup> *In an interview conducted with 13 persons who were members of the party all agreed with the notion that economic interest is a prior motive to join the OPDO(EPRDF) in the town of Adama.*

<sup>69</sup> *In an interview conducted with 13 persons who were members of the party almost all agreed with the notion that economic interest is a prior motive to join the OPDO(EPRDF) such as in the of Adama.*

economic bribery to cultivate legitimacy among society seems to have adversely affected service delivery and development processes in city. Associated with these issues of inefficiency and corruption, the city had terrible past in maintaining mayors as well as city councils. Nevertheless, this does not mean that economic opportunity as a criterion for the legitimacy and acceptability building faded out in urban Oromia since the regime has never come up with an alternative repertoire either to maintain the old members or to attract new ones.

Such economic motivation with urban community's co-optation into the OPDO (EPRDF) regime in Adama city does not apply to every dwellers of the city. As we discussed before the non-Oromo community of the city have effectively resisted the processes of co-optation to the regime due to various reasons. Hence, economic resource-based approach to negotiating legitimacy has not worked well in relation to this group of the urban residents. Rather the approach seems effective in co-opting the Oromo community of the town. Three factors may explain the Oromo community's vulnerability of co-optation in OPDO (EPRDF). One is language factor. Due to language constraint, there is very less opportunities for the Oromo community to find employment outside Oromia regional state. And if the Oromo people have to look for employment in Oromia regional state, it requires them to become member of the ruling party. Particularly post-1991 Oromo generation is the victim of this language coercion. Partly due to political reasons and partly due to policy effect, the present Oromo generation barely commands Amharic language, which would provide them with opportunities of employment in federal offices or other places, where the command of the language is requirement. This language factor, therefore, has subjected them to party membership.

The second factor relates to occupation or source of livelihood. As discussed before, due to the prevailing socio-economic and political system of the country the Oromo community had had no much opportunity of access to urban life. Consequently, their engagement in urban economy such as in private business has been minimal. Therefore, if they have to live in urban areas it is compulsory for them to look for jobs in government office, which is possible by being member of the ruling party. Consequently, the post-1991 influx of the Oromo community into urban areas was destined largely to end up in government office, especially for the educated ones. Others with no or less education joined labor works such as in construction and building activities. The

third factor for the Oromo community's co-optation in OPDO (EPRDF) regime in Adama city relates to the weakness or elimination of alternative Oromo political organizations.

What are the positive and negative impacts of the OPDO's use of economic resources for politics? In fact, OPDO (EPRDF) regime's strategies of using economic resources to achieve political objectives (namely support and legitimacy) have had both positive and negative effects on the strength and unity of the party on the one hand and on the urban development processes on the other, particularly in the Adama city context. On the positive side, firstly it seems to have alleviated membership problems (shortage) at least quantitatively speaking. Definitely, the party has managed to attract large numbers of individuals into the party and government. Secondly, through provision of employment and other economic opportunities the regime has been able to cope with legitimacy challenges, even if it has not yet solved them. Moreover, by politicizing economic resources, the regime even seems to have mitigated the hostility of relationships between the regime and the intellectuals. In so doing, one may argue that the regime has largely preempted the potential political opposition of intellectuals.

On the negative side of it, the influx of economic motivated individuals into the party with different political preferences created tension and conflict within the party, even in some other cases to an internal 'political decay'. It is true that neither a common views of the party nor a similar political outlook prevails between the original members of the party who were involved in the establishment of the organization and those members who joined the party lately mainly in search for job and other economic opportunities. On the one hand, senior and founders of the party condemn the juniors as corrupted and economically minded personality. On the other hand, the juniors in turn despise their seniors as surrogate and dependent minded who for more than two decades have failed to liberate themselves from TPLF's domination.<sup>70</sup>

In the context of Adama city municipal administration, these conflictive relationships seem to define employees' relationships today. Indeed, problems of employees relationships in the town has some other sources like 'regionalism', that is division among workers on regional basis; but

---

<sup>70</sup> *Interview with one of the cabinet member of the town of Adama, 15 August 2013, Addis Ababa*

many agree that the rift between the old and new party members are acute, even to the level of adversely affecting the municipal performance.<sup>71</sup>

This use of economic opportunities for the legitimacy and acceptability among the urban community also has its positive and negative consequences on the urban development processes such as in Adama city. On the one hand, the co-optation of intellectuals and experts into the party and placing them in leadership position both in the party and in government at all levels, to some degree, enhanced the leadership quality of the government in urban areas. This in turn has contributed to some progress and improvement in urban development processes in Adama town (see chapter 7). On the other hand, recruiting economically motivated individuals into the party and government posts led to personal wealth accumulation and corruption rather than to promote urban economic growth.

The use of economic resources as means of negotiating legitimacy and support by the OPDO (EPRDF) regime in Adama has not been limited only to its relations with individual experts or bureaucrats. Economic resources also play similar political roles for the regime in its relationships with business groups in the city. In present Adama city, it is very rare to find politically 'neutral' businesspersons or companies. Willy-nilly business individuals and companies engaged in politics either in support of or against the ruling regime. To be more specific, on the one hand, instead of engaging in conflict and confrontation with the regime, some businesspersons and companies co-opted if not integrated themselves into the party and hence were beneficiaries of the economic opportunities that the government provides. On the other hand are business individuals and companies which are positioned themselves in opposition camp and are in continuous struggle with regime putting their business at risk.

What were the objective of OPDO (EPRDF) regime to co-opt or exclude business individuals and companies? What were the strategies that the ruling regime of OPDO (EPRDF) use in these co-optation and exclusion processes? What were the nature and objectives of business individuals and companies to co-opt with or to exclude themselves from the ruling party? Due to their much relevance to the current political condition of the Adama city, it is important to raise and address questions such as raised above.

---

<sup>71</sup> *Same informants as in number 31 above*

Two reasons seem to be justifying why the ruling regime of OPDO (EPRDF) has co-opted business individuals and companies. One is ‘developmental’ and the other is ‘political’. Development in general and urban development in particular is unthinkable without full participation and commitment of private business. OPDO (EPRDF) regime’s concern with co-opting the private business owners into itself in Adama partly emanates from this logic. Cognizant of their indispensable contribution to development, the OPDO (EPRDF) regime has co-opted some private business sectors. It is common to hear from the OPDO officials that the principal reason to co-opt business sector into the party is to ensure their cooperation on economic development.<sup>72</sup> Certainly, the contribution of private business sector in urban development processes in Adama town is visible in many ways such as in buildings, employment, private schools and colleges, and income from taxation. This is the positive side of the story.

Nevertheless, the motive of the OPDO (EPRDF) regime in co-opting business elites into itself has also been as much political, that is, legitimacy and survival. Survival and cultivation of legitimacy are among the key political motives for OPDO (EPRDF) regime in co-opting or excluding business groups in Adama city. In this regard, let us, for example, look at the dynamics of relationships between OPDO (EPRDF) regime and Oromo business elites in the Adama city context. Unlike the previous time, presently it seems that there is no or very insignificant direct opposition to the party from the Oromo business individuals. Some has left the country as political migrants. Few others were forced to abandon the town and look for other places in the country for investment. Still some others were in jail.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, the remaining business interests were co-opted to the party. As such, the OPDO (EPRDF) regime has tried to preempt the potential political opposition from the Oromo business elites. In some way, the co-opted business elites, therefore, have become a political actor such as by lending their support to the OPDO (EPRDF) regime.

This notion of state-business elite’s relationships particularly applies to business groups who existed before 1991. It is also important to look into the nature of relationships between the OPDO (EPRDF) regime and the Oromo business companies that have emerged in the post- 1991

---

<sup>72</sup> *Interview with urban council member (age 39), 27 June 2012, Adama*

<sup>73</sup> *Group discussion involving four Oromo business elites 18 June 2012, Adama*



periods. In this latter case, the nature and pattern of relationships between business groups and the ruling regime of OPDO exhibits no varieties. It seems that most of the recent business company and individuals are subordinate to the ruling party in many ways. Directly or indirectly, they are dependent on and controlled by the party. This is so because some business groups are what the ruling party itself created. Individual politicians from the ruling party own some business but in a very secret manner. According to informants, there are also business centers and companies that politicians from the ruling regimes hold a share. As such, the post 1991 political order of the country fails to produce politically independent wealth at least in the Adama city context.

There is one point to note here. Similar to party-expert relationships discussed above, in business areas, too, the Oromo business class was co-opted to the party in the city. For various reasons discussed above, most non-Oromo business class resisted cooptation. There are several reasons for the Oromo business cooptation in the party. One may be an ethnic tie. The fact that the Oromo business and political elites share common ethnic identity has created condition of mutual accommodation. In some cases, it is common to find in Adama city that business and political elites belonging to same families. Two, lack of options. The Oromo business elites have no option rather than being co-opted to the party if they have to survive with their business. Those who insisted in refusing to co-opt with the party were eliminated being considered as a potential threat to the political power of the party. Especially, the elimination of neutral and opposition Oromo business elites followed the elimination of opposition Oromo political organization.

Therefore, today it is fact that business elites highly depend on state's favoritism for access to resources and market, and state is also to some extent dependent on the business elites for survival. In business companies that are co-opted to OPDO (EPRDF), the employees are also expected to show loyalty to the regime. In most cases, this is put as the main criteria during recruitment, if not directly and openly. It needs also remembering that government employees are also kept loyal to the state through coercive economic ties with the EPRDF regime.

Three, is political. It may be untenable, to treat the co-opted Oromo business elites as passive political actors who engage in politics merely for economic interest. However, this is only one aspect of the reality. There is some political interest behind the motive of Oromo business elites

cooptation with the OPDO (EPRDF) regime. In the first place, like any other Oromo citizen they are not happy of non-Oromo economic domination over the Adama town and beyond.<sup>74</sup> Secondly and more importantly, some businesspersons in the town explain that the Oromo alienation from urban life in general and urban economy in particular is due to Oromo's lack of political power in the country. Hence, most Oromo businesspersons in Adama believe that politically empowering the Oromo people is a necessary if not sufficient condition to enable them in penetrating the urban economic life.

This is what five Oromo private entrepreneurs of middle income assert in the group discussion made in Adama town.<sup>75</sup> During the discussion, one of the attendants explained the matter metaphorically but succinctly as *qoree qoreedhaan baasu!* Literally, it means that when a thorn (prickle) gets into your body you remove it with thorn. The contextual interpretation of the metaphor is that since the economic domination of non -Oromo entrepreneurs in Adama city has had state power backing, so too is a need of state power for the Oromo people to penetrate and control the urban business. According to the informants, the Oromo business elites' cooptation in the OPDO (EPRDF) regime is with this political calculation. In this sense, it means that the Oromo business co-optation in the OPDO (EPRDF) has political motives.

#### 5.4.5 Political Consumerism and Political marketing as means of political engagement

In August 2008, I visited an old friend of mine teaching in a very remote rural area in Western Hararghe of Oromia regional state. One morning, along with two of his colleagues, we visited a small market to buy some stuff. While negotiating price for a banana one of our members spoke: *betam wudi newu* - an Amharic expression to mean it is very expensive. All of the sudden, the women (retailer) shouted: *qinijiticha... waan kiyya bituu hindandeettu, anarraa usii deemi!* It means, you *kinijit* - you are not entitled to buy my belonging, hold your tongue and go your way.<sup>76</sup> How surprising is it to hear such political feeling in such remote parts of the country from such an old woman!

---

<sup>74</sup> Group discussion involving four Oromo business elites 18 June 2012, Adama

<sup>75</sup> Same informants as in number 38 above

<sup>76</sup> The term *qinijiti* (*kinijit*) mean an Amharic expression for CUD(Coalition for unity and Democracy), a political party that contested the EPRDF in the 2005 election, and scored decisive victory in urban areas.

As the above quotation taken from personal encounter reveals, the central theme of this section is about political engagement in or through business activities (commodity and service transaction) in the Adama city context. Normally, there is an expectation that the business of business is business. In other words, this is to mean that businessperson work for profit making on the one hand and consumers of commodity and service consider price and quality on the other. Yet, as the above story reveals, sometimes there is possibility to face conditions where business (commodity and service transactions) is politicized even in poor countries such as Ethiopia.

Indeed, scholars have long identified and explained the notion of politicizing commodity transactions. In the field of political science, such activities are widely known as political consumerism and political marketing. Dietlind Stolle, *et al* defines political consumerism as “buying or boycotting of products and services for political reasons” (2005:245). According to this notion, “When people engage in boycotts or “buycotts” with the aim of using the market to vent their political concerns, they are said to engage in the act of political consumerism” (Ibid: 246). While the notion of political consumerism concerns the politically motivated consumers’ behavior political marketing relates more to commodity or service sellers’ behavior. As Lees-Marshment defines political marketing refers to “adapting business marketing concepts and techniques [by certain interests] to help them achieve their goals” (2001: 692). Put shortly, political marketing “represents the permeation of political arena by marketing” (ibid: 693). It seems that same means and technique has been used by business class or companies in Adama city to engage the common people in politics. Certainly, marrying politics to market has been an important strategy for business in the Adama to develop the culture of political consumerism among the urban community.

Apparently, it sounds strange to raise the issue that the notion of political marketing and political consumerism applies to economically poor societies like Ethiopia. In economically poor community, it is price even not quality of goods and services that seem to determine consumer behavior. Similarly, for business group profit making seems to be a prior motive. While this still seems to be the case in the country, one should not however lose the sight of political influence on business and service transaction in the country, especially in such a highly politicized ethnic environment. We discuss here some of such experiences in the case of Adama city.

The notion of political consumerism and political marketing (use of business for political ends) do not seem to be common in Ethiopian political history. What seems to be common rather is ‘religious-consumerism and marketing’, a practice in which Orthodox Christian and Muslim Ethiopian never share common hotel particularly where meat and meat related dishes are served. As Daniel Mains puts it, “Orthodox Christians will not eat meat slaughtered by a Muslim and vice versa” (Mains, 2004:346). Post-1991 Ethiopia, however, has faced experiences of political consumerism and marketing as shall be illustrated here in the Adama town context.

Indeed, the use of business consumption and marketing for political ends publicity and massively applied in the country in the aftermath of the 2005 election. This was a case when CUD supporters decided to boycott any deal with business companies related to EPRDF, especially TPLF owned or affiliated companies (Alemseged, 2009). These alienations were extended to include Tigray community living in different parts of the country such as in Addis Ababa (ibid). In taking such measures, the CUD supporters associated Tigray citizens with the TPLF who dominated EPRDF regime who according to them had stolen the election result. It was a reaction to the conflict between the TPLF- led regime of EPRDF and the Amhara- led CUD party over results of the 2005 election. As informants including the victims themselves witness, in Adama town, of course as elsewhere, it was tough time for the Tigray community for they were practically isolated to transact and interact with other urban community.<sup>77</sup> Certainly, it had created conditions whereby no one could go to shops or hotels owned by Tigray citizen for service. Equally important, the Tigreans had no possibility to be served in others hotels and shops. The EPRDF government condemned the CUD leaders for this act. Whoever initiated it for whatever reasons, this action is significant in the political history of the country in that it has effectively politicized the local masses and inculcated in their mind the notion of politically motivated behavior of consuming goods and services.

Similarly, one should also note the development of such political behavior among taxi drivers in various cities of the country such as when they completely banned service for some considerable time following (and during) the crises of the 2005 election. The primary motive was political, specifically opposition to incumbent regime. As informants witness, the city was with no taxi

---

<sup>77</sup> *Interview with two city residents of Tigray origin, May 27 2011, Adama*

service for more than two weeks during this particular incident.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, there was taxi strike in the country during the 1973/4 revolution, the cause of which was primarily economic (reaction to shortage of petroleum) than purely political.

For many, it appears that such political event is the first and end of its kind in Ethiopia. However, there are some clues that show these practices have been and still are in place in the country in different forms including Adama. For example, one may consider the experience in Jimma town as was investigated by Daniel Mains (2004) in the work entitled as ‘Drinking, Rumour, and Ethnicity in Jimma, Ethiopia’. In this work, Daniel Mains has shown effect of ethnic decentralization on alcohol drink consumption and has come up with the finding that following the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country the Muslim Oromo of the town has highly decreased bar alcohol consumption, mainly due to political reasons. In explaining the cause for this Daniel Mains states,

*I was surprised to find that informants' explanations for this supposed decline had little to do with economics or even 'modernity'. Rather, many of their narratives centred on the introduction of ethnic federalism that occurred after 1991 and the increased salience of ethnicity that it has encouraged. Within these narratives, the disappearance of bars was due to the relationship between ethnic federalism and the drinking habits of Oromo Muslims (Mains, 2004:341).*

One of political reason for this, according to Mains, is an expression of departure from the previous exploitative ruling elites in the town, and hence “Bar hopping is no longer a lifestyle associated with power” (ibid) for the Muslim Oromo of Jimma town.

Such ways of local community’s engagement in politics may not be directly applicable to Adama town. Yet it gives some clues that political consumerism is in practice in the country at least in some areas since 1991. In Adama city, too, we can note several comparable politically motivated consumers’ behavior. As an entry point, let us pose this question: Who consumes whose product and services in Adama city and why?

The ideal place to investigate this theme is to consider owners and clients of private institutions such as private banks, colleges, clinics, pharmacy, Hotels, shops and the like. The question ‘who consumes whose products and services and why’ can help address the issue at hand.

---

<sup>78</sup> *Interview with two tax drivers 13 June 2012, Adama*

Accordingly, we attempted to investigate some of these private business sectors. The finding of our investigation is that private business companies banks, colleges, or clinics have already been delved into this politics of business. Unless for some kind of family ties, shareholders of most business companies seem to be ethnic based or belong to same ethnic group. In most cases, especially in small business companies including some private colleges, banks and clinics ethnic identity has already become criteria for employment.<sup>79</sup>

In fact, there are few exceptions to this general trend in which two or three ethnic groups have established common business venture in the Adama city, whose base is either some kind of family ties or share of common political interests. In fact, where there is some sort of common political interests among different ethnic groups there is also some degree of consensus on business partnership. A random investigation of about twenty companies proves this fact.

What seems to be politicized is not only business partnership and employment in private business in Adama city. The nomenclature and brands of companies, even small enterprises suggest political implications. This in turn seems to have influenced consumers' behavior such as in choosing goods and service. Such political development is widely observable in private colleges and private banks as well as around shops located deep inside the city. These all narrations illustrate the degree of local level political enagement after the introduction of ethnic decentralization to the country. Such intensive and extensive politicization of everything including business at local level could lead to either democratization processes or security crises, depending upon its management.

## 5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the implementation of ethnic decentralization in Adama city and its political effects. From the discussion, the following concluding points could be drawn. The first point to conclude is the constitutional gaps in recognizing ethno-cultural diversity in the city under study. According to the constitution of the Oromia regional state (in which Adama city is located), the sovereignty is vested in Oromo people since the region itself was created to assure right for self-determination for the Oromo nation. As well, later coming urban proclamations

---

<sup>79</sup> *However, for ethical and other reasons it may not be attractive to list them down in names.*

have not dealt with issues of urban diversity accommodation such as in the city under discussion. The second conclusion to be drawn is the co-existence of ethno-cultural diversity in urban centers without an explicit constitutional recognition and protection. The so-called ethnic-outsiders dwell in the city controlling the urban economy, with no much care for opportunity of employment in government offices for various political and economic reasons.

In any cases, the ethnic decentralization initiated various political changes and developments in Adama city. One of these is a dramatic change in ethnic demography of the city. In pre-decentralization periods, ethnically the Amhara dominated the city. Nevertheless, following the decentralization processes the Oromo community (in whose ethnic territory the city is located) came to dominate demographically. Secondly, the ethnic decentralization of the country has resulted in division of power. Urban power, which in pre-decentralization period was dominated by the Amhara, now came to be apportioned between the central government who wields political power, regional government (OPDO) in command of administrative power, and the Amhara and Guraghe urban business elites who retained economic supremacy. However, as discussed, such division or distribution power in the city by no means is constitutional. In other words, the distribution of power in the city since 1991 somewhat conforms not to what the constitution promises or envisions.

Moreover, the processes of ethnic decentralization has rendered societal engagement in contest and bargaining over state power and symbolic identities in the town. As discussed above, elites of various interests have engaged the masses in various ways such as through ethnic affinity, material interests such as employment, and symbols. Moreover, the development of political marketing and political consumerism has been significant in politically engaging the urban mass.

## Chapter Six

### **Diversity accommodation and political engagement (in negotiating statehood) in Hawassa city**

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second empirical part of the thesis. It is about a case study of Hawassa city in SNNPR. The chapter seeks to address two main objectives. First, is to explore how the Ethiopian ethnic decentralization has been implemented (applied) in the city. The goal of this exploration is to learn about the nature and extent of urban accommodation in the country's ethnic federal political arrangement. Of interest in particular is to discern how power (domination), citizenship, identity, history and symbols have been negotiated among various ethno cultural groups in the town within the prevailing ethnic federal political framework. The second objective of the chapter is to examine political changes that the ethnic decentralization processes of the country have brought to state-society and inter-society relationships in the city. In this case, in mind is to learn the effect of ethnic decentralization on the political terrain in the city in both vertical (state-society relationships) and horizontal (inter-societal relationships) perspectives. Together, these twin objectives work out to validate the central arguments of the study.

#### 6.2 Background information about Hawassa city

This section intends to offer background information about Hawassa city focusing on two issues. One is about its location, area and demography (population) and the other is its historical origin and development, in a way it relates to or contributes to the theme of the study.

##### 6.2.1 Location, area and population

Hawassa city is located to the south of Addis Ababa at about 275km. It is situated in what presently constitute the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), specifically in the administrative zone of the Sidama nation (see map I). In the West, the city is bordered by Lake Hawassa, which is widely assumed as the 'origin', name and 'beauty'. In the north and north-west of the city is Oromia regional state; while in the remaining side are some *woreda* administrations of Sidama zone. As it is a case with most developing towns, area size of Hawassa town has been changing continuously due to territorial expansions. Excluding rural



kebeles<sup>80</sup> the total area size of the town presently is about 50 sq km (Serkalem, 2009). With rural *kebeles*, the area of the City administration triples and covers about 157.2km<sup>2</sup> (Hawassa City profile: 2012).

According to the 2007 population census, the total population of the city was about 259,803, out of which 159,013(61%) were urban and the rest 100,790(39%) were rural<sup>81</sup> (CSA, 2007). In 2010, the figure rose to 304479(CSA, 2010). With this figure, Hawassa city ranks first in the SNNPR state and sixth in the country in terms of population number.

### 6.2.2 Origin and Development of Hawassa city

The origin of Hawassa city goes back to 1960. With a history of slightly more than half a century, the city is among the few recently developed urban centers in the country. Many believe that the city has a history of origin different from most towns in the southern parts of the country in general and in Sidama land in particular. As it is argued in chapter four, the beginning of urbanization processes in southern (conquered) parts of Ethiopia is largely attributable to the Menelik II conquest and the attendant developments like the establishment of military-garrison. However, it has widely been assumed that Hawassa city is completely different from this general history in terms of emergence and development. Instead, the origin of the town was attributed to two other factors: beauty of the Lake and surrounding area (Serkalem, 2009)<sup>82</sup> and the penetration of capitalist economy in to the country following the end of the WWII (Kefyelew, 2010).<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> *Under the current urban administration of Hawassa town there are about 12 rural kebeles administered as part of the town sharing nearly 40% of the population of the town, but with no urban infrastructures and urban way of settlement.*

<sup>81</sup> *The inclusion of these rural kebeles into city administration has remained controversial; some consider it as political motive and strategy such as to boost the proportion of Sidama population in the town.*

<sup>82</sup> *It is said that upon one of trips to visit the area (1949 E.C) the beauty of the lake and the surrounding area impressed Emperor Haile Sellassie I. Soon the Emperor “ordered the preparation of master plan for the foundation of a town for tourist attraction on the land along the shore of Lake Hawassa. Accordingly, urbanization processes began in the area first by building a palace for the emperor, and then deploying about 404 commissioned soldiers as the first settlers of the town. Unlike many other towns of the country the foundation of Hawassa, therefore, was by plan.*

<sup>83</sup> *Upon return from exile (from England during the five years Italian occupation of the county) the emperor’s main economic development strategy was promoting large-scale private investments in*

The origin and growth of urbanization is complex and one or two factors alone may not explain it. In Hawassa city context, too, factors such as those mentioned above undeniably had played key roles for the foundation of the city. However, what should not be overlooked is the role and contributions of political factors some of which are worth mentioning here. To begin with, in the first case, the root for the foundation of the town was the initiation and decision of the Emperor Haile Selassie I. This means that the origin of the town was a political decision and this by itself makes the matter more political. It must be noted also that the first house to be built on the land was the palace of the Emperor. What were the motives of the Emperor in laying the base for the foundation of the city? Definitely, answers for this question are not only a matter of tourist attraction, which is economic factor. There were also political interests in it.

For example, Kefyalew Tesemma believes that Emperor Haile Selassie had “a subtle [political] interest in founding Hawassa town” (2010:22). One of these political interests was said to be the need to establish a town that would bear the coronation name of the Emperor. In fact, it was the tradition of Abyssinian kings to found a new town, for example, Menelik II (Addis Ababa), Yohannis IV (Mekele), Fasilidas (Gondor) and some others. However, as Kefyalew notes,

*Although there are towns that bore the other name of Haile Sellassie(Teferi) such as Assab-Teferi, Tefer-Kella and Mizan–Teferi, yet there is no town found for the emperor that bore his coronation name,[thus] Hawassa town is the right candidate for this extraordinary objective’ (2010: 25).*

An evidence for this is the first plan of the town, which was designed in the form of “ፋ. ኃ. ሥ”- the Amharic acronym for the coronation name of the emperor.<sup>84</sup>

The other political interest of the Emperor in founding the city was said to be a means to punish settlers and officials of Yirgalem town <sup>85</sup> who opposed the return of the Emperor from exile after

---

*agriculture and industries. Areas around present Hawassa town were ideal for this purpose, consequently various industrial plantations, and large-scale farming centers were established in 1950s and 1960s, thereby contributing to the development processes of the town.*

<sup>84</sup> *The plan was in place until the Derg periods, but to name the town that way was failed due to disagreement among some members of the royal family.*

<sup>85</sup> *It was one of the big town in Sidama land originally founded as military garrison center later developed to township and also served as the seat of Sidamo Governorate General, before Hawassa took its position in 1960*

the ousting of Italy out of the country (ibid). More specifically, it was to build a rivalry town that would effectively weaken the development of Yirgalem town – a town found and lived by Soldiers of Emperor Menelik II, now in opposition to the Emperor.<sup>86</sup> The plan had worked effectively as Yirgalem lost its position as a capital of Sidamo Governorate General to Hawassa in 1960. This indicates how the foundation of the town was used as a political means.

The second factor that elucidates the role of politics in the foundation of Hawassa city is that the royal families were the first to divide this urban land among themselves (Zelege and Serkalem, 2009). As well, until the 1974 revolution, the royal family governed the city. By this, the town shared the characteristics of military garrison towns. Thirdly, like most other military-garrison towns, the first settlers of the town were the military groups numbering about 404 for security purpose in the region (see Zelege and Serkalem, 1998 EC). Of course, it has been widely argued that these soldiers were retired defense military group and they were made to settle in the place to start a new life by working on state farm (Serkalem, 2009). However, similar to the Menelik's time, the conquering soldiers, this group was also in charge of maintaining security in the region. They were supposed to guard the town and the surrounding industry and farming from the revenge by pastoralist communities who forcefully lost their grazing land for the town and related developments(see(*Ye Sidama Biher Tarikina Bahil*, 2003 E.C). In addition, as Zelege and Serkalem, 1998 EC argue, 'The expatriates were assigned to control the conflicts between the Arsi Oromos and Sidama pastoralists on the grazing land of Ada'are'<sup>87</sup> (1998E.C:7).

Fourth, as it was the case with the military garrison towns, the prevailing political system of the country effectively prohibited the surrounding Sidama and Oromo people from integrating into the urban political economy (see table I below). Similar to Military garrison towns, the native people were effectively marginalized from urban life in Hawassa city. This is well stated in one document that argues that the Sidama people used to go to Hawassa only for marketing not to dwell and make life there (*Ye Sidama Beher, Tariki ina Bahil*, 2003E.C: ).

---

<sup>86</sup> *One of the factors for the Opposition was the reform major of the Emperor in administrative economic issues disfavoured the old interests*

<sup>87</sup> *Adaaree was a pre-urban name for a place where the present town of Hawassa established; as pastoral land it was shared between Sidama, Arsi and Guji Oromo for grazing*

As well, in its early years, it was political processes that had had great contributions to the development of the town more than tourism activities because the latter has not well developed in the country in general and in Hawassa in particular. Especially since 1960s, the town has had great political positions as a seat of various levels of government; first as a capital of Sidama province and then as a seat of SNNPR state since 1995. As Zeleke and Serkalem (2007) rightly argue, these political factors played key roles in contributing to the development of the town.

As will be discussed later, these historic- political issues and processes have had their role to play in the current political discourses and negotiations in the town.

### 6.3 Diversity and its accommodation in Hawassa

One of the core objectives of this study is to explore the nature and extent of diversity accommodation in the ethnically decentralized political arrangement of the country particularly in the case of multiethnic cities. This section of the thesis discerns the nature of ethno-cultural diversity in Hawassa and then explains the nature and status of its accommodation in the legal and politico-administrative settings of the town and the region as a whole.

#### 6.3.1 Ethnic composition and its dynamics in Hawassa

The concept of multi-ethnicity is central to this study. Hawassa seems to meet that feature at least since 1991. Of course, the town has long been nicknamed as home of “diversity and harmony”. In every corner of the city, one finds a slogan written as “Welcome to the city of diversity and harmony”. One who traces literature will also find similar reflection. For example, one source asserts,

*You might have experienced in visiting different places around the globe but what makes the city [of Hawassa] different from others is the congestion of different kinds of nations and nationalities from the region which are nearly 56, and other neighbors from all over the country (Invest in Hawassa Expo-2004: 2004:16)*

In another source, it is also similarly stated, “One of the spectacular features of the people of Hadassah city is its heterogeneity in composition” (Hawassa Business Guide, 2011:4). Some also name it as “Little Ethiopia” to show that the city hosts almost every ethnic groups in the country. Serkalem Alemayehu tends to prove this in stating that the town “hosts more than 76 ethno cultural community” (2010:20).

Harmony is also another denomination of the city. For example, as Serkalem states “These ethno cultural communities lived in relative peace and harmony for the last 50 years” (ibid). This notion is supported by another source as, “Although Hawassa town is noted for its diversified social entity it is known as safe city with a much lower incidence of violence than most African cities” (Business Guide, 2011:15). Therefore, as the literature asserts, Hawassa town is known on the one hand for its cultural and ethnic diversity, and on the other for harmonious relationships between the various ethno-cultural groups of the country. This tempts one to ask and examine the following questions about the nature of diversity and harmony that are ascribed to the town. How and when these features of the town did come into being? What sort of diversity and harmony was it? How has inter-ethnic relationships in the town come to be harmonious as such being in the country that has long been raged by inter-ethnic conflicts? Of all, what are the consequences of ethnic decentralization on ethnic composition of the town as a whole?

First, it is important to look at the nature and dynamics of ethno-cultural composition of the town and its dynamics. Reference to the data presented in table V in the appendix largely helps understand this subject. In order to understand this matter it is useful to classify the data in time perspective as pre - 1991, 1991-1994 and post 2007. Needless to say, 1991 is a time of an introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country. The year 1994 is also important for it was the beginning of the infiltration of the Sidama people to the town. And, post -2007 periods were marked by complete change of the ethnic composition of the town from the Amhara domination to the Sidama domination. Accordingly, in pre 1991 two main features characterized the ethnic composition of Hawassa city. The first one is the dominance of the Amahara, 52.74 % in 1966 and 57.86 in 1970(see table v). Equally important, followers of the Orthodox Christian faith were also dominating in the city by 90.48 % and 76.9% in 1966 and 1970 respectively (see table V in the appendix. The other is an insignificant number of the native population (Sidama) as well as the surrounding communities like the Oromo and Walayta. In pre-1991 periods, the Sidama and Walayta were not counted at all as separate or different entities. In fact, it may be the case that they were counted in “ethnic other” shown in the last row in the table. Even so, that number is inconsiderable compared to different factors.<sup>88</sup> During the same period, the Tigrean ethnic

---

<sup>88</sup> *For example, since there were many ethnic groups in the area supposed to live in the city the proportion of the Sidama in the ‘ethnic others’ might not be many.*

group (another ethnic group from the northern part of the country) held the second position in terms of population number.

Therefore, based upon the data presented in the table, we may state that in pre-1991 periods, the feature of multi-ethnicity in Hawassa city was the domination of the northern settlers and the marginalization of the native southerners. In particular, of interest to underline is the exclusion of the Sidama nation from urban areas in their own locals. Given that, it is not difficult to sense the seriousness of the marginalization of the local people from the urban life including power and resources.

However, since 1991, a fundamental change began to take root in the city in terms of ethnic composition. One fundamental change was an abrupt sinking of the percentage of the Amhara population to 31.41% in 1994 and to 15 % in later years (see the table in the appendix). Equally considerable, the percentage of Orthodox Christian followers scaled down to nearly 27%. The cause for this demographic change was not the people left the city, but due to an abrupt increment of the number of the local people, particularly Wolayta and Sidama. For example, the Wolayta grew from unknown figure to 25% in 1994, though to decrease to 15% in later years.<sup>89</sup> Worth underlining is the influx and explosion of Sidama population in the town to effectively and drastically change the ethnic landscape of the town since 1991, more so after 1994. From uncounted number in 1966 and 1970(see table v), they came to constitute 10% of the population of the town in 1994, and to dominate the town by more than 48 % in 2007. With the rise of the percentage of the Sidama population, the percentage of protestant religion followers increased to 59.71%, just from 12.46% in 1970. There are two major reasons for this. One is that majority of the Sidama people are followers of the protestant Christianity. The other is the freedom of religion introduced to the country following government change in 1991 that helped people of the town profess different faiths including protestant.

How such abrupt changes come about in such short periods? This is a key question that is worth addressing. Indeed, the rise in number of Sidama population in the town of Hawassa is to a large degree attributable to the contribution of ethnic decentralization. First, in the early phases of

---

<sup>89</sup> *It seems that the cause for lowering of the percentage was an increment in the size of the Sidama population in the town.*

ethnic decentralization, especially during the Transitional Government period (1991-1995), Hawassa city was designated as the capital city of the Sidama nation. It was a time when the Ethiopian state was curved into fourteen regional states as constitutive unit of the federation, in which the Sidama nation along with Gedeo, Burji and Amaro constituted the then region 8(See Proclamation No.7/1992). This period was the beginning of the Sidama people's migration to Hawassa and other towns in the region for administrative, business and many other reasons (Ye *Sidama Beher Tarikina Bahil, 2003 E.C*). Even after the merging and formation of the SNNP region, Hawassa has served as the capital of Sidama zone, which helped to attract a large number of Sidama people to the town for employment and related reasons.

The second reason for the abrupt rise of the number of Sidama people in Hawassa town (in connection to decentralization) was the inclusion of rural *kebeles* into administrative domain of the town. According to the 2007 national population census, of the total population of the town the rural *kebele* population constitutes about 40% (100, 790). Almost all of these rural kebele populations belong to the Sidama ethnic group and this came to be one of the key factors that boosted the number of the Sidama people in the town. The decision to increase the number Sidama population in the town such as by the inclusion of these rural kebele into the urban domain has great political implication as shown below.

The third reason for the rise of the number of the Sidama population in the town of Hawassa was the 2005 national election. During this election, the CUD party won the election in the town (Tobia, No. 10, 1997 E.C; 10). The EPRDF government has interpreted this election result as an effect of the ethnic Amhara domination of the town (Ibid).<sup>90</sup> As same source states, this instigated various 'corrective' measures from the ruling party. One of these was to increase the number of Sidama people in the town so that the Amhara people and the party they favor would not be a threat to the power of the ruling regime any longer. To this end, two key majors were taken to increase the number of the Sidama people in the town. One was the inclusion of rural *kebeles* into the town administration as discussed above. The other was provision of incentives to attract the Sidama people to the town through different means such as urban land allocation.

---

<sup>90</sup> *As discussed in the Adama city context, the CUD was considered widely as representing the urban Amhara interest.*

Such political measures, to a large degree, helped to change the proportion of ethnic composition in Hawassa city by abruptly increasing the number of the Sidama people in the city.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, one needs to note such an effect of ethnic decentralization on the ethnic composition of the city. It effectively shifted the composition and position of ethnic groups in the city, namely from ‘settler’ Amhara dominance to ‘native’ Sidama dominance. This is one of the fundamental changes to be underscored in this study. There is also a continuity marked by the dominance of one ethnic group over the town, this time by the so-called native or indigenous communities. Yet, there are some basic differences between the pre- and post- 1991 ethnic domination. In the first case, the nature of the domination (by the Amhara population) was absolute in terms number and quality or role. In terms of number, the composition of the Amhara population was a real majority rising up to 57.86%. However, in post- 1991, though their number is increasing from time to time, the composition of the Sidama people in the town is less 50%. Quality wise, in pre-1991, the Amhara dominated every aspects of urban life, but in post 1991, at least there have been some spaces of freedom for other ethnic groups at least in cultural self- expression. We shall see this in detail later. This is, of course, our ground to argue that Hawassa has become a real multiethnic city after the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country.

Thus, this background information contributes much for our discussion about the effects of ethnic decentralization on the city in broader political, administrative, economic and cultural terms, as shall be seen next. But before proceeding to that, it may be important to reflect on the notion of harmony that is supposed to characterize inter-ethnic relationships in Hawassa city. Reflecting on this point once again requires a time category in pre-and post- 1991. As shown above during the pre-1991 periods the city of Hawassa had been known by one ethnic group dominance and the marginalization of the local population from the town. Under such condition, what kind of ethnic harmony one can talk about, then? In fact, there was stability achieved due to the domination of the northern settlers that effectively marginalized the local population. Usually, in multiethnic society, inter-ethnic conflicts occur between the natives and settlers, but

---

<sup>91</sup> *12 Access to urban land has been the main factor to attract rural people to town in the country, and this same factor were also used by the Sidama ruling elites to attract their rural kin to the town. Though there is a view that this political strategy has not worked fully since it happened that some rural people sold their land and went home back, its role to increase the number of Sidama population in the town cannot be undermined. .*



this was not really the case in Hawassa due to the effective marginalization of the native Sidama people from the urban life. What about the post-1991 situation? Once again, as shall be discussed later, stability but not harmony may define the post-1991 inter-ethnic and even state-society relationships in this particular city.

### 6.3.2. Legal and Politico- administrative set up and diversity accommodation in Hawassa

The processes, challenges and limitation of urban accommodation in the Ethiopian ethnic federal political arrangement have been discussed under chapter five of this thesis. The case of Hawassa city has not been different from that general findings and observations. Therefore, there is no need to repeat that entire story here. Instead, what to do in this section is to stress some of these processes and challenges as they particularly manifest in the context of Hawassa city, especially from the perspective of their impacts and implications for political conflicts and bargaining in this urban center.

As it is discussed in chapter four, urban centers of the country have been treated in different ways in the processes of ethnically re-structuring the Ethiopian state in the early 1990s. Hawassa is among the cities, which were categorized as regional cities and hence subjected to the jurisdiction of regional states, in Hawassa case a region 8.<sup>92</sup> Following the merging of different nations and the establishment of the present SNNPR, Hawassa city was once again chosen as the capital city of the newly established regional state. This is stated in article 6 of the 1995 constitution of the SNNPR state. Since then the city has been serving as the capital city for both the SNNP region and the Sidama zonal administration.

However, rather than stating the town as the capital city of the region, the 1995 constitution of the SNNPR was silent about the town. Serkalem Alemayehu explains this as "... the constitution of the SNNPR ... has...only notified [Hawassa town as] the political seat of the regional government (2012: 52). In fact, in and for itself, Hawassa city had been much neglected in the legal and political-administrative set up of the country. Like many other regional towns, there was no explicit recognition for the town as a different entity both in the federal and regional constitutions (Minas and Tamirat, 2000). Until 2002, there were also no proclamations that

---

<sup>92</sup> *Region 8 existed only during the transitional period(1991-1994/5), inclusive of Sidama nation and its neighbors*

recognized the city as a different and independent entity, deserving an autonomous self-government. Consequently, the town was administered in merger with rural *kebeles* of the Sidama zone for more than a decade, without having its own legal personality and its own governance and management structures. As Minas Hiruy and Tamirat Delelegne (2000) studied well, this had had huge adverse impacts on the socio-economic and political development in Hawassa town and in the SNNPPR towns as a whole.

Such gaps made the EPRDF government to rethink its approach to urban governance. From 2002 onwards, more than ten years after it controlled state power, the EPRDF has begun to take salient measures in urban governance reforms. In the first place, there came the recognition for legal (constitutional) gaps in urban governance. Secondly, this recognition in turn led to enact city proclamations, first in August 2002, and then in 2006. Similarly, in SNNPR, the first cities proclamation was enacted and promulgated in 2002 as SNNPR city proclamation No. 51/2002. By this proclamation, the city of Hawassa was separated from its parental Sidama zone and was established as Transitional city Administration with direct accountability to the Regional government. And following the SNNPR state's revised cities proclamation (No. 103/2006) the town has become an independent administrative unit with its own legal personality, identity, and governance and administrative structures(see Abiy, 2013).

Accordingly, the city governance system was structured with its own executive, legislative and judicial organ of government. The city is meant to administer itself according to the council-Mayor urban governance system in which the council holds legislative authority and the Mayor performs the executive function. According to article 15 of SNNPR state's revised city proclamation (No. 1003/2006), the major organs of governance in the town are city council (filled by regular election every five years), the mayor (elected by the city council from among the council members), mayor's committee to assist the mayor, the manager of municipal services (nominated by the mayor), the judicial organ and the municipal administrative courts.<sup>93</sup>

As is clearly stipulated in the 2006 revised city proclamation of the region, the need for these urban reforms were to establish “a system which enhances principled good governance, modern management, accountability, transparency as well as smooth relations with the Government and

---

<sup>93</sup> *Accordingly, Hawassa city had city council of about 176 seats as of 2011, 2012 and 2013.*

the active participation of the people”(SNNPR revised city proclamation No. 1003/2006: 2). The focus of this proclamation was to improve state-society relationships in the city, because as it was observed in the results of the 2005 election there had been deterioration of relationships between the ruling regime and the urban communities.

As such, while there seems to be some legal improvements between state-society relationships, issues relating to inter-societal relationships are still remain to be vague. The city proclamations still are not expressive enough on issues of the ethno-cultural accommodation in the urban centers. In the city proclamations, there is no explicit legal basis to refer to with regard to how to recognize, accommodate or represent ethnic diversities in the city administration. In the 2006 city proclamation of SNNPR, one may make only indirect reference to this point such as in article 11, where the objective of the proclamation is mentioned as a promotion of amicable relations among people of the town.<sup>94</sup>

Rather, there is a point that needs worth mentioning about the 2006 city proclamation of SNNPR state with respect to the right of indigenous communities in the town of Hawassa, and of course for towns in the region as a whole. The proclamation is highly concerned about the protection of the right of nations and nationalities considered indigenous to the localities in which the towns are located, in Hawasaa case the Sidama. There are two special legal rights that the proclamation accords to the so- called indigenous community. First, according to this legal framework, 30% of the seats in the city council must be reserved for the indigenous groups on condition that the indigenous community do not form majority in the town concerned. Nevertheless, the notion of majority is not clear. In the case of Hawassa city, perhaps it might be to mean greater than 50%, because the Sidama already shares about 48% of urban population of the Hawassa city. According to this legal document, such legal right shall remain effective until the indigenous community becomes majority in the town. But it is not clear how that could come about. Secondly, according to the proclamation, the mayor of the town shall be elected from the representatives of the local or indigenous community. As such, the 2006 city proclamation of the SNNPR intends to protect the rights of the Sidama community in Hawassa town since 2006.

---

<sup>94</sup> *However, it is not clear as to which ‘people’ it refers to. Under such condition, the authenticity of legal basis of diversity accommodation and regulation in the town remains to be subject of controversy and debate.*

This can lead us to raise two fundamental questions. The first one is about the rationale of these legal provisions. The second issue is about its impact and implication for the accommodation of ethno - cultural groups in the city. With regard to the first question, there are two contradictory interpretations: positive/constructive and negative/destructive. On the positive side, the notion is that since the local community such as the Sidama had long been marginalized from urban centers, the law sounds to be right measure to protect the right of local community in towns. On the negative side, there are groups who see the law as a shrewd political game designed to emaciate the power and influence of the urban Amhara following the results of the 2005 election.

<sup>95</sup> Both cases seem to have a point. On the one hand, truly without some legal backing or affirmative action it is less likely for the local community of the south to involve in urban life given the long years of establishment of the settlers in the town. On the other hand, the fact that the mentioned law was enacted immediately after the 2005 election, gives some sense to the second argument.

More important to this study is about the implications of these affirmative legal grounds for diversity accommodation. In light of the issues discussed above, let us see, for example, the situation of diversity accommodation in the city council. As of 2010-2013, Hawassa city has had about 176 seats of the city council, which were represented by about twelve ethnic groups. This representation is depicted in table VI presented in the appendix.

The table gives important insights to analyze the status of ethno cultural diversity accommodation in city council. It signals both positive and negative developments. On the positive side, as can be seen in the table about twelve ethnic groups were represented in the city council. In this regard, perhaps it may be that Hawassa is a unique city among the regional towns of the country in providing such an opportunity for its population. In the absence of expressive legal foundations, providing such right of representation for ethnic groups of the town in the city council illustrates the utmost concern of the city administration for issues of diversity.

On its negative side, three main developments may be discerned. First, one can observe from the table that out of 56 (even 76 according to some sources) ethnic groups living in the city, only 12 were represented. This is an evidence for an explicit exclusion of the majority of ethnic groups

---

<sup>95</sup> . *It should be remembered that in many of urban areas of the country including Hawassa it was the CUD (urban Amhara backed party) which decisively won public vote during this election period.*

from representation in the city's council, which is the highest political organ. Second, it is overly visible that the Sidama nation dominates the city council by holding 130(74%) of the seat. This needs to be compared with the share of the Sidama population in the total population of the town, which is only 48%. Such an unbalanced figure between the percentage of population share and representation in city council is largely an effect of the affirmative action of the city proclamation that reserves 30% of seats in the city council for the locals (Sidama). Thirdly and most importantly, the domination of one ethnic group (Sidama) in the town administration is observable in the executive organ of the city administration.

#### 6.4 Engagement in Negotiating Statehood in Hawassa city

It is the promise of this thesis to illustrate the ethnic decentralization - induced processes and dynamics of societal engagements in negotiating statehood in urban parts of Ethiopia. This section substantiates the argument in the context of Hawassa city. However, as it is discussed under the conceptual part, the notion of statehood is so wide that it is not realistic to cover them all. Therefore, in examining this subject matter we are obliged to focus on some key elements of statehood. Accordingly, the key question in the case of Hawassa city is: the Sidama's quest for 'regional statehood'<sup>96</sup>, the claim and counter-claim over city ownership by various identities, and interests, and contested issues of citizenship. As shall be clear later, even these singled out aspects of statehood have different elements.

##### 6.4.1 Engagement in negotiating 'regional statehood' in Hawassa city

As we discussed before, one of the key promises of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia is to guarantee the right of self-determination for its ethnic groups, called nations, nationalities and peoples. This is well enshrined both in the 1992 Transitional Charter and in the 1995 Federal constitution of the country. According to these sources, all nations, nationalities and peoples of the country have an inalienable right for self-determination including secession.

However, ironically, the question of self-determination and self-governance remains to be a key political problem of the country in general and in SNNPR in particular. For example, in the

---

<sup>96</sup> *It denotes member States of the Federal Democratic Republic; according to article 47 of the federal constitution (1995), there are nine regional states constituting the federation.*

SNNPRS context, the Sidama nation has long been engaged in demanding for a separate ‘regional statehood’ that they have been deprived off after their merging with the SNNPR state in 1994. There are also other ethnic groups in the region, which have long been engaging in quest for a separate zonal or *special woreda* level of self-governance (see Vaughan, 2006). Still important, there are people who are engaged in demanding for the right of recognition as a separate ethnic identity such as Gewada-Dhobase (Ale) in the SNNPR state (Temesgen, 2011). The question of irredentism that is demanded by some identities to join their ethnic kin in some other regions zones or *Woredas* has been also common in the region (See Vaughan, 2006).<sup>97</sup>

Of these various forms of quests for self-determination, only few have successfully won their political aspiration. For example, the Wolayta and Silte nationalities, were accorded a separate zonal self-determination in 2000 and 2001 respectively (see, Markakis, 1998; Vaughan, 2006) . Otherwise, the political engagements of other nations, nationalities and peoples of the country in quest for self-determination remain to be the political fact and fate of the country. Most scholars agree that the main cause for this is the discrepancy between constitutional promises and actual practices as discussed in detail in chapter three of this study (see Assefa, 2006).

The Sidama nation, in which Hawassa city is located, seems to be among the unhappy groups of the country with the EPRDF’s ethnic federal political arrangement; particularly with respect to the zonal level of self-administration they were accorded. Consequently, they have been engaged in negotiating for re-establishing regional statehood, which in turn has had substantial effects on Hawassa city. This section, therefore, explores the processes and dynamics of the Sidama nation’s engagement in negotiating regional statehood and their effects on Hawassa city, particularly on state-society and inter-society relationships.

Currently, Sidama is one of the 13 zones that have constituted the SNNPR state. The SNNPR state emerged in 1994/5 as one of the nine regional states constituting the Ethiopian ethnic federation. However, before that (i.e., during the transitional period) the region was organized into five regional units (*kilil* 7-11) (Proclamation No.7/1992). As Lovise Aalen (2008) and (Vaughan, 2003) rightly argued, this Transitional Period was a honeymoon for the Sidama and

---

<sup>97</sup> *In boundary demarcation there were cases in which same ethnic group were divided into different regions, zone or Special woredas. The concept of irredentism refers to groups demanding to administratively join their kin in other side*

for most nation, nationalities and peoples of the South, because in these five regional states most ethnically defined groups had managed to gain relatively broader rights of self- governance. Especially, the Sidama had its own regional state named Kilil 8, with its capital at Hawassa.<sup>98</sup>

However, the Sidama did not stay long with its regional status of self-governance. In 1994/5, the previous five regional states including Sidama were merged to form the present SNNPR state in 1994. Consequently, the Sidama nation's political organization was reduced to zonal self-government status. As Temesgen Thomas (2011) observes, two contradictory views were there about the rationale of the merger. One view was that the merger was a voluntary action of nations, nationalities and peoples of the region for pulling resources for development purposes. This is the perspective of the EPRDF government (ibid). The other view is imposition from above by the federal government, of course, in negotiation with few opportunistic elites in the region (See Temesgen, 2011:201). While engaging in this argument is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that the claim to re-establish regional statehood has been a critical political problem for SNNPR state, for Sidama nation, and more so for Hawassa city.

The Sidama nation, as one of the most populous and resourceful part of the region, is not convinced with the political decision which reduced them to the zonal level of self-government from that of the regional statehood status. Dissatisfied with the zonal level administrative structure, the Sidama nation has engaged in various forms of struggle and negotiation both with the regional and federal governments to regain a regional statehood status of self-government. As we shall see it, these political engagements have involved the rural and urban Sidama masses, as well as the elites and ordinary sections of the society.

According to key informants, the Sidama people presented at least six rationales to validate their demands for a separate regional statehood.<sup>99</sup> The first one is constitutional. For instance, article 39 of the federal constitution, which guarantees full rights of self-determination for nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. The second is historical justification, which is specifically referring to the 1991-1994 periods, when the Sidama nation managed to gain a

---

<sup>98</sup> *In those days, it was only the capital of Sidama nation, not SNNPR state since the state did not exist by then.*

<sup>99</sup> *Group discussion involving 3 informants; civil servant, private business, and an elder (age, 34, 26, 57) 15 July 2011.*

regional statehood level of government. The third rationale is that, according to the Sidama people, the decision that merged the Sidama nation with other nations, nationalities and peoples of the region to form SNNPR has neither consulted the Sidama people nor represented their interest. The fourth rationale is a sort of self comparison with other ethnic groups of the country who were very less in population, land size and resources endowments than the Sidama yet were accorded a regional statehood status of self-government. One case in point is the Harari people, who has become one of regional states of the Ethiopian federation with less than 20,000 population (CSA, 2007) - perhaps 100 times less than the population of Sidama.<sup>100</sup> The Sidama people also hold the view that the Sidama land by far has better resources endowments to finance itself than some regional states such as the Tigray, Afar, and Somali. For example, there are informants who argue that Sidama can be placed in second position (next to Oromia) in terms of resource endowment in the country.<sup>101</sup>

Fifthly, some Sidama elites argued that even after the establishment of the SNNPR, the constitutional rights of some ethnic groups for right of self-determination were respected, such as the Wolayta and Silte for whom the zonal right of self- government structure was secured after serious conflicts, loss of life and damage of properties (Aalen, 2008; Markakis, 1998; Voughan, 2006). Lastly, some Sidama seriously ask why they should be called by directional names (SOUTH), while they have their own national name, SIDAMA.<sup>102</sup>

There are also counter-claims from the EPRDF government as to why the Sidama's quest of a regional statehood has been denied (see Temesgen, 2011). *Inter alia*, three of these justifications are worth mentioning here. One is the claim that the Sidama nation's merger to SNNPR state was a voluntary initiation of the people, especially the SPDO party that represents the nation (ibid). According to this viewpoint, such a decision was made to meet the needs and interests of the Sidama people. Therefore, from the federal government side, the questions of separate regional statehood for the Sidama nation represent only the wishes of a few and narrow

---

<sup>100</sup> According to the 2007 CSA, the total population number of Sidama and Hareri were 2,966,474 and 31,869, respectively.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with a Civil servant (age 39) 18 July 2012 Hawassa; and businessperson (age 37) 18 July 2012, Hawassa.

<sup>102</sup> This is a simulation effect that other regional states such as Tigray, Afar, Oromia, Somali and Harari are could after their ethnic names.



nationalist elites rather than reflecting the needs and interests of the sidama masses. Two, as mentioned above, is the need for the mobilization of resources for development. The assumption here is that rather than in isolation or fragmentation populations of the region may perform better by merging human and material resources together.

Three, the stand of the EPRDF government with regard to the Sidama political question is that even if such demand has a popular backing, the means and strategies used to express the demand must be constitutional. However, it seems that there is no or little difference among the Sidama zonal council on the issue of the Sidama nation to deserve a regional statehood status of self-government. According to informants, the case came to the attention of the Sidama zonal council in different times and in each case endorsed successfully.<sup>103</sup> However, it was not possible for the Sidama nation to gain similar backing from the regional council of the SNNPR state to realize their political aspirations. There are legal and political reasons for this. Legally speaking, the Sidama people constitute only 20% of the population of the region and could not form three-fourth of the SNNPR council to get their demand endorsed. As well, politically speaking it is less likely for the federal government to let the Sidama nation go their way for two reasons. First, there is a fear that to allow the Sidama nation to establish their own regional statehood would lead to the disintegration of the SNNPR state as the Sidama zone constitute the heart of the region in many aspects. Secondly, there is also a fear from the government side that an endorsement of the Sidama's drive to separate regional statehood can incite further fragmentation in the region and even in the country as a whole. Berhanu Gutema (2007) summarizes the EPRDF government's concern with Sidama nation's question of separate region as,

*Allowing the Sidama people to secede from the regional state [of SNNPR] could endanger the entire structure by triggering other demands for self-administration in the regional state as well as in other multi-ethnic regions like the Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella in which the respective constituted ethnic groups are still sceptical to share the same regional state with the other ethnic groups in their respective region (2007: 217).*

Such contradictory interests between the Sidama nation and the government of Ethiopia have left the Sidama demand for a regional statehood unresolved. The consequence of this is an

---

<sup>103</sup> *Group discussions - involving one retired zone council member (age 63) and an individual still member of the council (age 43) 20 August 2013*

engagement of both sides in processes of conflict and negotiation over the matter has affected the town of Hawassa in two major ways. Firstly, the city has become an arena where the processes of conflict and negotiation take place. Secondly, the city itself has become an object of the negotiation. This point is worth a further discussion.

To begin with, all over the world and throughout history cities has always been the center of political struggle whether or not that political matter directly concerns them. This has also been a case with Hawassa city, especially since ethnic decentralization has been introduced in the country in 1991. Since 1991, the city has hosted both a violent and peaceful means of Sidama's negotiation for regional self-determination. Nevertheless, we take few cases from each side and explain them. From the violent conflict side of engagement, one can put three cases in place. First, from 1991-1993/1994 the town had become a center of military conflict and political struggle between SLM<sup>104</sup> and EPRDF (see Ye Sidama Beher Tarikina Bahel, 2003 E.C). Though not in the post -1994/5 context, this political conflict was also part of the Sidama's struggle for self-determination.

Another case in point was the 2002 political incidents in the town, which had a direct connection with the Sidama's question of separate regional statehood. This year was a very remarkable moment in the Sidama's history of struggle for regional statehood. First, it was a year when the then president of the SNNPR state, Abate Kisho (from Sidama) was disposed from power, and replaced by a man from Wolayta (Haile Mariam Dessalegn- who later became the Prime Minister of the country). Second, as discussed above, it was a year when a decision was passed by law to separate Hawassa city from its parental Sidama zone, administratively. This means that the Sidama nation lost simultaneously three things: the right for separate regional statehood, presidential position in the region, and direct control over Hawassa city.

These had engaged the Sidama in various forms of counter political actions and mobilization including farmers from around the city. At the level of political elites, the immediate reaction was to demand boldly for a separate regional statehood. The Sidama zonal council, the highest

---

<sup>104</sup> *SLM (Sidama Liberation Movement) was established in 1970s for liberation of the Sidama nation. It was the co-author of the 1991 Transitional charter of Ethiopia but soon withdrew from TGE like OLF and ONLF.*

political authority of the zone unanimously endorsed to establish regional statehood for the Sidama people. However, according to Berhanu Gutema, “the demand was coercively and quickly rejected by the regional government as well as by the federal government” (2007: 216). Consequently, the regional and federal government in unison took further measures such as removal of the zonal council members including the president of the zone (ibid). Moreover, a rumor was disseminated among the masses that the next measure to be taken by the government was to remove the Sidama Zonal capital from Hawassa and relocate it in one of the other towns in the zone.

These measures in turn instigated resentment with the Sidama people, which was expressed in massive demonstration on 24 May 2002 in and around Hawassa town. It was recorded that more than seven thousand people in all occupation participated in the demonstration (Daye, 2004:5). Many more demonstrations were controlled before involving in it. The demonstration turned out violent and about 39-40 civilians were killed by the federal police in and around the city, particularly at a place called Loqe (ibid). This was also followed by detentions of officials, elders and businesspersons, accusing them of instigating the violence out of which 10 were Sidama officials who were member of SPDO/EPRDF (Daye, 2004:5; Berhanu, 2007: 2009). This clearly indicates how even members of SPDO, a Sidama political organization which was part of the EPRDF government were in favor of the Sidama nation’s aspiration for a separate regional statehood.

In 2005, there came an opportunity for the Sidama nation once again to (re)negotiate with the federal and regional governments over the issue of regional statehood in general and over their right of control on Hawassa city in particular. In this year, a national election was held in the country. This election had largely modified, if not transformed, the rough relationships between the Sidama nation and the federal government concerning the question of self-determination. An opposition party called CUD<sup>105</sup> won public vote in the city by 65%. The victory was interpreted in two ways. First, it was assumed because of domination of the city by the so-called

---

<sup>105</sup> *CUD (Coalition for Unity and Democracy) was one of the Opposition parties in Ethiopia effectively won public vote in major urban area including the national capital. But in connection to post election riots and crises higher position members of the party were jailed and soon the party disintegrated.*

*neftagnas*<sup>106</sup> at least numerically. Secondly, there was a belief that the Sidama voted for the CUD party in resentment with the EPRDF government due to the unwillingness to address the Sidama political question for the regional self-determination.

In reaction, the EPRDF government took a number of “corrective measures” to its best interest. Its first measure was appointing a new regional president from Sidama ethnic group.<sup>107</sup> The second measure was to increase the proportion of the Sidama people in the city in a way they could overwhelm the town in number. Thirdly, a measure that ensured the supremacy of the Sidama in administrative and political power in Hawassa city was taken, such as revising the city governance proclamation in 2006, which, as discussed above, reserves 30% of the seat in the city council for the indigenous Sidama ethnic group. As a result, the Sidama became a dominant power in the three loci of powers in the city: regional state, Sidama zone administration, and city administration of Hawassa city. Of course, such measures seem to be an appeasement rather than solving the matter from the base.

Compared to the previous years, post- 2005/6 periods can be considered as a period when the Sidama people’s demand for regional statehood was lowered. It can be seen also as a time of improved relationships between the Sidama nation and EPRDF government. It is important to see how this dynamics came about, and the effect it has had on Hawassa city. In pre-2005/6 periods, many agree that the Sidama were silenced by naked force from advancing their claim for regional statehood. However, since the 2005 election, the Sidama nation’s claim of regional statehood has been negotiated between the Sidama and the EPRDF government. This negotiation has been achieved by way of offering a special privilege to the Sidama elites to hold key leadership positions in three of the loci of power that the city hosts, namely, the regional leadership positions, zonal leadership positions and the city leadership position. With respect to regional power, a president to the SNNPR state was appointed from the Sidama. With respect to

---

<sup>106</sup> *Formerly the term denotes soldiers of Menelik II who invaded, conquered and settled in the South, East and west part of the country. Even to these days, there is a tendency to apply the term to every Amhara living in the conquered parts of the country, including progeny of the early settlers and others.*

<sup>107</sup> *The new president of the region was Shiferaw Shigute in power until March 2013 when he was promoted to Minister of Education*

city administration, the Sidama people dominated power not only in the city council but also the mayor and municipal managerial positions. With respect to Zone, the Sidama people exclusively and solely held administrative positions.

As such, the Sidama elites of the SPDO members negotiated the Sidama nation's aspiration for regional statehood in lieu for the control of the regional, zonal and urban power. And for the next 6 years or so (2006-2012), the Sidama were positioned to control the three loci of power in the town. How did this negotiation come about? What were the implications of this domination for the town of Hawassa, especially concerning state-society and inter-society relationships?

According to our interview results, there are two main explanations for the first question. First, in an interview made with four officials (two federal based and the other two regional based) the source of Sidama domination over the regional, zonal, and urban powers comes from their numerical supremacy. This is to mean that the proportion of the Sidama population in SNNPR state, Sidama zone, Hawassa city is by far greater than any other ethnic groups, and this numerical superiority in turn has given them the privilege for political domination. However, this assumption can be challenged on two grounds. First, it gives rise to a question as to why this majority did not work before, such as in pre 2005 election periods? Secondly and more widely, it calls attention to the place of numerical majority in the country's politics. For example, the Oromo nation, which is the largest ethnic group in the country, has never managed to hold key ministerial positions in the country's federal political arrangements, such as the positions of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, even the deputies. In other words, if the Oromo, who constitute minimum of 40% of the Ethiopian population, did not get a chance of access to key political positions in the country, how did the issue of numerical majority work for the Sidama people to hold key positions in the region with only 20% of population share?

The second explanation for the emergence of the Sidama elites as a dominant power in SNNPR state and in Hawassa city in between 2006 and 2012 relates to EPRDF government's interest to dissuade the Sidama people from their insistent claim for a separate regional statehood. It is important to offer one typical case on how this negotiation came about between the Sidama (elders and elites) and the EPRDF government. According to two informants, who claimed to

have personally involved in the occasion<sup>108</sup>, some elders from Sidama were sent to Addis Ababa to invite the ex-Prime Minister to Hawassa to discuss on the Sidama political claims. Accepting the invitation, the Prime Minister arrived in Hawassa. Involved in the discussion from Sidama part were elites and elders. From the Sidama part, the agenda was about the question of regional statehood and Hawassa city. From the Prime minister part, the main agenda was about the victory of CUD in Hawassa in the 2005 election.

In the processes of negotiation, it is stated, one elder was invited to make an opening speech in the meeting. According to the informants, the elder placed *gabbi*<sup>109</sup> on the shoulder of the Prime Minister before uttering a single word. Followed by, the elder explained to the guest about what awarding *gabbi* to somebody means in Sidama culture. In Sidama culture, a person who deserves such a reward is either the most respected or the most hated/ignored one. In this case, the interpretation is that if the Prime Minister was willing to understand the Sidama political cause and then allow them to establish their own separate regional statehood, he would remain to be a hero of the Sidama forever deserving the respectful side of the award. On the other hand, if the Prime Minister were to ignore the political claim of the Sidama nation, it would be likely for the Prime Minister and the political system he leads to be hated, ignored and opposed by the Sidama people.

The reply of the Prime Minister was also equally interesting, stated as,

*Children are not allowed to play with stone in glassed house; otherwise, they would break the glass and deform the house meant for living. More over the broken class harms, the children. Instead, continues the story, what would be better for the children to play with and for the house to remain safe at the same time is to employ them [the children] as guardians of the house.*<sup>110</sup>

The message of this metaphorical expression is vivid. It meant that to allow the Sidama nation to secede from the SNNPR would mean to disintegrate of the ethnic federal arrangement of the country for it would instigate similar questions in the region, even in the country. An alternative measure to this is to empower them in or over the region as well as in Hawassa city. In many

---

<sup>108</sup> *Interview with two Former higher officials of the town ( age 51 & 57), 27 July 2012, Hawassa*

<sup>109</sup> *Hand-made cotton clothes usually worn by elders on holydays and ceremonies*

<sup>110</sup> Same informants as in no. 28 above.

ways, Sidama's empowerment to dominate over the political and administrative landscape of the SNNPR state and Hawassa city seems to be the outcome of this negotiation, especially since 2005/6.

Such development in turn has brought about significant effects on the political dynamics in Hawassa city such as the marginalization of other ethnic groups from accessing the urban political and administrative position, which shall be discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

#### 6.4.2 Engagement in negotiating over city "ownership"

As it is argued in this study, one of the salient consequences of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia is that it has generated conflicts of ownership over territories among the various ethnic groups of the country. Territorial and boundary claims and counter-claims between and among ethnic groups have come to define inter-ethnic relations in the country since 1991. Whether organized at regional, zonal or *special woreda* levels of self-government, it is rare to find an ethnic group that has not engaged in conflict with its neighbors over certain territorial claims in post-1991 Ethiopia. These territorial conflicts have increasingly caught the attention of both the Ethiopian government and scholars. The government reacted to the problem in two ways. First, it responded by establishing the Ministry of Federal Affairs with a mandate to handle the problems. Secondly, it "placed special armed units, called *fet'no derash*, or special military force, to contain the outbreaks of violences in those areas" (Abbink, 2006: 404). A great deal of scholars have also studied these territorial-based inter-ethnic conflicts and contributed a lot to learn about their underlying causes and consequences, scope and magnitude (see Abbink, 2006; Asnake 2009; Hagmann and Khalif, 2007).

Barely recognized both in scholarly works and in policy makers, however, are the questions of ownership over cities and towns of the country. Perhaps there might be few towns known to the public and even to scholars in this regard. One of the cities is Addis Ababa, the national capital, over which both the federal government and the Oromia regional state cast interests (claims) of ownership. The second town is the town of Moyale, which has been a cause of disagreement between the Oromia and the Ethiopian Somali national states.<sup>111</sup> The third is the case of Dire

---

<sup>111</sup> *A temporal solution has been given to this conflict by dividing the town between the two regional states.*

Dawa city, which was also contested between Oromia and Ethiopian Somali. However, though in a different context, there are some other towns in the country that have also been subject of contest and negotiation between various ethno-cultural groups of the country with respect to the right of “ownership”, especially in relation to who (among the country’s ethno-cultural groups) deserve right of ownership and administration over the cities. One case in point is Hawassa city, which is the focus of this study.

Indeed, Hawassa city has already been a subject of contest and bargaining over who is entitled to own the town and rule over it. There are various interest groups (ethno-cultural) with stakes in it. The essence and sources of their claim vary; as are also the strategies they pursued to realize their respective claims. We, therefore, move on to explain the case by way of identifying the actors and interests involved, source/base of their claims and the means or strategies they pursued to realize their respective claims.

One of the main actors who put a very strong claim of ownership over Hawassa city is the Sidama nation, in whose ethnic territory the city is located. They present at least three sources for their claims: Historical, Territorial, and Constitutional rights. The historical aspect of the claim has two dimensions. One is in reference to the pre-urbanization history of the land. That is, there is a belief among the Sidama community that prior to the foundation of the town the area on which the present town of Hawassa has been flourished belonged to the Sidama nation (see Kefyelew, 2010). And they argue that the town was established at the expense of the Sidama people’s and material resources (Ye Sidama Beher Bahilna Tarik, 2003 EC) and human life (Daye, 2004:3). The second historical base of the Sidama nation’s claim over the city goes to the period of the Transitional Government (1991-1995) when the Sidama had Hawassa as their own capital city.<sup>112</sup>

The territorial base of Sidama nation’s claim on Hawassa town comes from the present territorial organization of the country, particularly that of the SNNPR State’s territorial arrangement in which the city of Hawassa is carved under the Sidama zone’s ethnic boundary. Constitutional right is also central to the Sidama people’s claim of ownership over the city. In this case, they refer to article 39 of the 1995 federal constitution and article 14 of the 1995

---

<sup>112</sup> *As discussed above Sidama nation was one of the 14 regional states of the country until its merger with SNNPR.*



SNNPRS constitution both of which affirm nations, nationalities and peoples' right to administer their own affairs within their own territory.

Based on these justifications, the Sidama, at least the elites, claim that Hawassa city belongs to the Sidama and it has to be governed by the Sidama. An informant expresses this as, as *Mekele is for the Tigray, Bahir Dar for the Amhara and Sodo for the Wolayta, Hawassa city incontrovertibly is for Sidama.*<sup>113</sup> Almost every person met for interview from the Sidama ethnic background wonder why the rights of the Sidama people over Hawassa city was seen as different. The researcher asked some of these informants to see their claim of ownership over Hawassa in comparison with the condition of the Oromo's claim of ownership over Addis Ababa city, from which the Oromo community barley benefit (see Benti, 2002).<sup>114</sup> Specifically, the question is if the Oromo sacrificed their heartland, Finifinne (Addis Ababa) for national capital, why the Sidama did not do the same for the SNNPR. And almost all of the informants responded that the case of Oromos in connection to Addis Ababa is 'none of their business', because according to their view it is the Oromo who should speak for the Oromo nation, and the Sidama for the Sidama nation.<sup>115</sup> Only one of the informants reflected somewhat differently. He stated that Oromia is a huge land with many alternative cities and towns and hence the loss of Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) may mean very less for them; but in the Sidama case Hawassa is the only big town leaving no options for the Sidama people.

The Amhara ethnic group in Hawassa city is another main actor who do lay a strong claim of ownership over the town, especially in the sense of having stake in its foundation and hence the right of access to city administration and related benefits. Their claim has three main sources including, historical right (as founders of the town), contribution (as contributors to the development and growth of the town), and demographic (are among numerical majority in the population of the city). To see their historical justification, as discussed before, most of the towns in the southern part of Ethiopia were founded by the invading forces of Emperor Menelik II, the majority of who were from the Amhara. As discussed above, Hawassa city is also not much different from these historical realities. Most of individuals who involved in the foundation of the town were the Amhara as the ruling power of the day. In this connection, one informant (an

---

<sup>113</sup> *Businesswoman (age 34) 5 August Hawassa.*

<sup>114</sup> *Addis Ababa city forms the center of Oromo land, as is Hawassa for Sidama.*

<sup>115</sup> *Group Discussion involving 4 teachers (age39, 33, 62 &35) 28 July 2012; Hawassa*

Amhara origin) argues, *before the establishment of the town, the land was densely forested, inhospitable, and it was a tough task for our ancestors in transforming the jungle land to such a beautiful urban center.*<sup>116</sup>

After the foundation, the majority of the dwellers of the city were the Amhara, as discussed above. Consequently, as the main residents of the town, they claim that they have contributed to the development and growth of the town both quantitatively and qualitatively more than any other ethnic group of the country.<sup>117</sup> In commenting on the insignificant contribution of the Sidama to the development of the town, especially in pre-1991 periods, an informant stated that he knew only one person of Sidama origin who was running a business in the city.<sup>118</sup> Demographic wise, the Amhara claim that they constitute a numerical majority of the population in both pre and post- 1991 periods. Most of them cast doubt on the validity of the official statistical figure that depicts the Sidama as constituting the majority in the town. Moreover, they consider the inclusion of rural kebele population in the town as a political rather than an urban reality. The Amhara, therefore, maintain that their numerical superiority along with historical contributions to the development of the town should count for them a credit concerning their right of ownership over this urban center, specifically the right to be a citizen belonging to the town, instead of being considered as ‘outsiders’ or ‘non-indigenous communities’.

The other actor with a substantial claim of ownership over the town of Hawassa is the Oromo people. Territorially, the Oromo borders the town and almost circumscribe the Sidama nation (see map II). As a result, there are strong historical, cultural and economic links between the Oromo and the Sidama nations in general, and between the surrounding Oromo people and Hawassa city. Based on information from some Oromo individuals living in and around the city, three basic sources of Oromo claims of ownership over Hawassa are discernible: historical, territorial and economy/ resources.<sup>119</sup>

Historically, the Arsi and Guji Oromos shared the *Adaree* pastoral land before the change of the place into township (see Kefyalew, 2010). Especially, there is a strong argument from the Oromo side that the Guji Oromo inhabited the place before they were dislocated from the area due to

---

<sup>116</sup> *Interview with an elder of Amhara origin (age 78), 23April 2011 Hawassa.*

<sup>117</sup> *Group discussion with four Amhara residents (age 32, 47, 39, 71), 5 August 2013, Hawassa*

<sup>118</sup> *Interview with an elder of Amhara origin (age72), 23April 2011 Hawassa*

<sup>119</sup> *Group discussion2 elders (age 71, 79), 17 July 2012 Shashamane*

incessant conflicts between the Arsi Oromo and the Sidama pastoral communities over this grazing land (see Kefyalew, 2010: 5). Some elders from Arsi also claim that parts of the land that lie to the north and eastern parts of Lake Hawassa belonged to the Arsi Oromo before the establishment of the town.<sup>120</sup> Same informants from Oromo heartfully locate some places in the city where they were using for ritual and some other purposes.

In terms of territorial claim, there is an assertion from the Oromo side that beginning from its origin, the town has expanded more and more towards Oromia, thereby evicting the Oromos of the area, especially following the establishment and expansion of the state farm in the area during both the Imperial and Derg regimes.<sup>121</sup> According to this viewpoint, the larger parts of the town at the present lie over the Oromo territory.

The Oromo also have economic allegiance to lay claim of ownership over Hawassa. In essence, the Oromo's claim of ownership on the town goes beyond the right of citizenship (belongingness) to the town and it includes questions of having a share, even possession of the land. Moreover, as shall be clear here this claim of ownership over the town arise more from the surrounding Oromo communities rather than from the city residents. There are historical and contemporary dimensions to Oromo interest in the town. Historically, both under the Imperial and the *Derg* regimes, large area of Oromo land and significant number of Oromo people were administratively included under the then Sidamo province governed from Hawassa.<sup>122</sup> Referring to this historical fact, some Oromo elites argue that the development of the town was largely depended on Oromo resources.<sup>123</sup> What is critical of this resource-related Oromo question in relation to Hawassa is that in many ways the town is still dependent on Oromia, in such resources as potable water. Moreover, resources for the market of the town largely come from the nearby Oromo land.

Still two more factors would make critical about the relationships between Oromia and Hawassa city in the future. One is that a convenient and viable direction for the future growth and expansion of Hawassa city lies to the north, which is an Oromo territory. Under the present

---

<sup>120</sup> *Same informant as above*

<sup>121</sup> *Same informant as above*

<sup>122</sup> *Before 1991 some parts of Oromia like Arsi, Bale, and Borena were part of the Sidamo province.*

<sup>123</sup> *Group discussion, 4 informants 2 private business, 1 retired Derg official, 1 university teacher (age, 39, 33, 62 & 35) 30 July 2012, Hawassa.*

condition, it is less likely for the Oromia regional state to let a piece of land for that purpose. Second, for the last twenty years or so, the Arsi Oromo and Sidama have been engaged in border conflict and a question of territorial delimitation between the two nations have never been set. Given such complex issues, perhaps the relationships between the Oromia region and the city of Hawassa remain to be a critical political issue in the future.

Another ethnic group, which places the right of ownership over Hawassa city, is the Wolayta, perhaps a second populous nation in the SNNPR state. According to a focused group discussion with three Wolayta elders, who lived in the town since its foundation, there are three cases for the Wolayta ethnic groups to claim the right of ownership over the town, namely historical, resource and constitutional rights.<sup>124</sup> Historical wise, the Wolayta claim that they were among the core founders of the town. They explain this in two ways. First, they maintain that the Wolayta people settled in the town during the establishment of the state farm for labor force at least since 1960s. Second, the Wolayta elders maintain that a huge number of Wolayta people settled in the town following the opening of missionary church in and around the town. Hence, they conclude, there are immense contributions from the Wolayta people for the development and growth of the town, which in turn legitimate their claim of ownership.

An allegiance to the constitutional right is another reference that the Wolayta ethnic group residing of Hawassa city presents as a source of their right of ownership. According to article 6 of the 1995 SNNPRS' constitution, Hawassa town is the capital city of the region to which the Wolayta nation is also a part. Consequently, the Wolayta people in general and those living in Hawassa city in particular consider the town as their capital city, too. As such, they assert that they have the full right of ownership over the town including access to administrative position and employment opportunities.

The question of resources that the Wolayta people present as a reason for their claim of ownership over Hawassa town relates to the designation of the town as the capital city of the region. As many other nations, nationalities and peoples who constitute the SNNPR state do, the Wolayta assert that being the capital city of the region, development processes in Hawassa are undertaken by the budgets of the SNNPR state government. They assert that the various

---

<sup>124</sup> *Group Discussion, 2 elders (68, 72) 19July2012 Hawassa*

constructions like road and governments building in the city were financed by the SNNPR government.<sup>125</sup> According to the informants, the budget comes in reduction from other zones and *woredas* constituting the region. Thus, since the development processes of the town have been financed by the regional government, mainly at the expense of the development interests of zones and *woreda* of the regions including the Wolayta zone, the Wolayta claim the right of ownership over the town.

The remaining ethnic groups of SNNPR living in the town can also be considered as other actors with stakes in it. Sources of their claim are similar to the constitutional and resources rights discussed above in connection to the Wolayta ethnic group. Perhaps what might be taken as a unique case in this regard is the Tigrayan ethnic community. Central to their claim are two: birthright and constitutional right. However, those generations who were born and grew up in the town did consider themselves as ‘sons and daughters of the soil’. Accordingly, they attach their right of ownership to their birthrights.<sup>126</sup> However, those who came to the town in post -1991 periods put in place the constitutional right as a source of ownership over the town.<sup>127</sup> Even if not explicitly expressed by the informants, the claim refers to articles 32 of the federal constitution and article 33 of the SNNPR constitution - both of which affirm freedom of choice of residence for the Ethiopian peoples.

We shall turn now into the various means and strategies that the identified actors (interests) use to realize their respective claims with regard to the city. We will begin with the Sidama case. Firstly, they changed the former name of the city from Awassa to Hawassa. In Sidama language, the term Hawassa refers to something, which is big in size, and in this case, it refers to the size of the Lake. To their interest, the official name of the city today is called Hawassa not Awassa. There is a feeling among some Sidama elites that the town was corruptly pronounced as Awassa to divert its meaning from the Sidama. Not only the name of the town is changed to Sidama language but also some places and streets within it. Secondly, the Sidama erected various monuments in various centers of the city, which symbolize their identity and history (see table IV, V and VI in the appendix). Thirdly, they have made the city center for the undertaking

---

<sup>125</sup>, *Group Discussion, 3 civil servants (age, 37, 32, 41) 3 July 2011, Hawassa.*

<sup>126</sup> *Interview, an elder (age 73) 24 April 2011, Hawassa.*

<sup>127</sup> *Interview, Businessman (age, 29) 30 July 2012*

various ritual and cultural ceremonies, the most important of which is Fitcha or *Chambalala*-Sidama's known ritual practice held once every year.

Usually, in Ethiopia such kinds of ritual practices take place outside urban centers in Ethiopia, which could have also been a case with the Sidama. However, following the ethnic decentralization and the rise of contest over urban ownership such as Hawassa, the Sidama has made the town as the center for celebration of their ritual affairs at a place called *Gudumale*. The choice of urban center for this ritual purpose, partly, is a measure to express their right of ownership over the town. What makes this ritual celebration in Hawassa town so relevant to Sidama's claim of ownership on the town is political expression during the occasion (celebration) by the of Sidama attendants. For example, common political expression were the question for city ownership and the right for regional statehood (own observation, in 2010, 2012). They were expressed mostly through songs and related ceremonial actions (observation). Most Sidama are followers of the Protestant Christian faith, yet the Christian Sidama's, too, involve actively in this ceremony. This verifies the political contents of the ceremony.<sup>128</sup> Fourthly, as we discussed before there has been a measure to attract the rural Sidama population to Hawassa town through different incentives to strengthen the number and capacity of the Sidama to control the town. Lastly, the Sidama has made Hawassa town the capital city of their zonal administration. In fact, they have paid dearly including life to maintain the seat of their zonal capital in Hawassa.

The other and the most important strategy that the Sidama nation has been using to realize their aspiration for the full right of ownership over Hawassa city is to regain a separate regional statehood, a detail of which is offered above. Central to this strategy is that once the Sidama secures a separate regional statehood, it is inevitable for the Hawassa city to be included under the Sidama regional state as it had been during the early 1990s, specifically from 1991/2-1994/5. The assumption here is that if a secession of Sidama from the SNNPR state would come true, definitely Hawassa city would cease to serve as the capital city of the SNNPR but to the Sidama only. In this connection, a critical question may emerge. Do the Sidama accept a separate

---

<sup>128</sup> *The protestant Christian faith seemingly discourages such ritual practice, but still the Christian Sidama involve in such ceremony more for political interest.*

regional statehood short of Hawassa town? In other words, would the Sidama nation be satisfied to establish a separate regional state missing Hawassa town, for example as Oromia did by missing Finfinne (Addis Ababa)?

In this case, some individuals who were from the Sidama ethnic background were interviewed if it would be acceptable to the Sidama nation to secede by losing Hawassa city.<sup>129</sup> All have answered that *Hawassa is Sidama and Sidama is Hawassa*. Even one of the informants stated her preference to remain part of the SNNPR state rather than to have a separate regional state without Hawassa. This illustrates the depth of interest that the Sidama has in the town.

It may also be interesting to identify and discuss the means and strategies that other ethno-cultural groups (having interest in the town) use to reflect their interest in the town. For example, let us see the Oromo's case. The first is contesting over the name of Hawassa town and of Hawassa Lake. The word Hawassa has a meaning both a Sidama and Oromo language. As indicated above, in Sidama language the word Hawassa means big which according to them refers to the size of Hawassa Lake. On the other hand, in Afaan *Oromoo* (Oromo language), the word Hawassa has two meanings. One, it means a gathering of population (community) such as in urban areas. Two, and more importantly the word ,Hawas, in *afaan Oromoo* means big river like for example the Hawas (Awash) River, which originates from central high lands of Oromia and flows to Afar and Djibouti.<sup>130</sup> Another expression of interest in the town by the Oromo is establishing an urban center called (*Bishaan Gurraachaa*) adjacent to Hawassa town from the north side. Some argue<sup>131</sup> that the Oromo's decision to establish such an adjoining town is to make a blockage to Hawassa town from expanding northwards, which is an Oromo territory.

It may also be interesting to see the strategies used by the Amharas in expressing their attachment to and belongingness to the town, which include symbolic and non-symbolic strategies. The symbolic expression resembles the case discussed in the Adama town context, which, namely relates to the reconstruction and expansion of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. As in the case of Adama city, in Hawassa town, too, there has been a revival of the Ethiopian Orthodox church expressed in the form of reconstruction and expansion (see picture in the

---

<sup>129</sup> *Group discussion: two civil servants, one private business (age, 26, 31 and 38), 5 July 2011*

<sup>130</sup> *This river is usually, perhaps corruptly pronounced as Awash.*

<sup>131</sup> *Interview: a Sidama resident in same town (age 43), 30 July 2012: Bishaan Gurrachaa*

appendix). Similar to some Oromo people, there is a widely held perception among the Sidama<sup>132</sup> in associating the Ethiopian Orthodox church with the Amhara identity and culture.<sup>133</sup> For example, there are Sidama who interpret the reconstruction of the Saint Gabriel church at the heart of the town (see Picture IV in the Appendix) as one of the Amhara's strategies to lay claim over the town.<sup>134</sup> This church was built at the center of the town called Piazza loftily and beautifully in a way it symbolizes the heart of the town. Being the center, this place is the destiny and the crossing way of six main avenues. Consequently, the church was exceptionally visible from any corner of the town more than any other buildings and consequently, it symbolized the heart of the town (see picture IV in the appendix). Even, sometimes the place is named as Gabriel instead of Piazza.

However, it seems that the Sidama were not happy with this. In reaction, the city administration built a big monument in front of the church (see picture VI in the appendix). The Orthodox Church leaders and followers (most of who were the Amhara) interpreted the construction of the monument as a measure to mask the church from sight, which implies masking the culture the church symbolizes. This highly politicized and instigated resentment and conflict among the society in the town.<sup>135</sup> Then, it happened to stop the construction of the building before finishing (see picture V in appendix). According to informants<sup>136</sup>, due to the conflict the finishing of the monument delayed for more than three years (see picture V appendix). However, eventually a negotiation was made to downsize the monument, which led to its completion and inauguration in 2011. As a result, the monument allows a partial view of the church (see picture VI in the appendix). This may be taken as one of the typical cases in illustrating the symbolic political struggle and negotiation in Hawassa. In any cases, what needs underscoring here is the source of

---

<sup>132</sup> *48 As CSA 2007 shows the Sidama (rural and urban) I majority are protestant followers; and only few follow the Ethiopia Orthodox Christian faith.*

<sup>133</sup> *Such perception perhaps legitimately emanates from two sources: historical and cultural. The historical case is related to the political role the church played such as in assisting the Amhara ruling regime to dominate the people of the conquered land. Culturally the church still today favors Amharic language over other language for religious and related services.*

<sup>134</sup> *Interview: two Sidama resident of the town (age, 33 and 37)*

<sup>135</sup> *Interview, a church leader (age, 41), 10 October 2012, Hawassa*

<sup>136</sup> *informants: K.B (civil servant, age 44) and D. F (pastor, age 39) Hawassa*



such symbolic contest and compromise, which according to this argument is not because of the shortage of space to accommodate these and many other monuments but a lack of political willingness and tolerance for mutual accommodation.

According to some Sidama informants<sup>137</sup>, there are also some non-symbolic strategies and means that the Amhara and other non-Sidama groups use to widen up their opportunities of access to and control over the city. To mention some, one is their aspiration for the dislocation of the Sidama zonal seat from the Hawassa city so that the dominance of the Sidama over the town eases. The other is their aspiration to make the town a chartered city so that the federal government governs it in a similar way to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities. As some informant believed, such a measure would help check the Sidama's domination over the town.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, there were Amhara informants who commented that placing the city administration under the federal jurisdiction would be a possibility for every community of the town to get equal opportunities of access to the urban resources.<sup>139</sup> But from the Sidama side, such measures mean nothing more than the resurrection of the Amhara to control and rule over the town once again.<sup>140</sup> This fear emanates from the fact that the federal working language is in Amharic, which in combination with many other historical factors would help the Amhara to rejuvenate and control the town similar to the pre-1991 periods.

To sum up, conflicts of interests among the various ethnic groups of the city, especially in connection to the questions of city ownership has been among the main political developments in the city of Hawassa after the introduction of the ethnic decentralization in the country. And this shows that there is still a long distance to move to establish an 'urban community' in the city, a community with a common value to live together, and above all a community with a feeling of common citizenship. Indeed, as will be seen in the next section, the question of 'citizenship' is also as much a subject of contest and negotiation in the city of Hawassa.

---

<sup>137</sup> *Informants: two officials in Hawassa city administration (age 47 and 51), 15 January 2013*

<sup>138</sup> *Group discussion: involving three Amhara individuals, businessman (age 27), businesswomen (age 32) bank employee (age 38), 24 April 2011 Hawassa*

<sup>139</sup> *Same informants as in number 54 above*

<sup>140</sup> *Same informants as in number 53 above*

### 6.4.3 Engagement in negotiating ‘citizenship’

That ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia has generated local - based contest and negotiation over citizenships is among the core arguments of this thesis. This section is devoted to substantiate this argument in Hawassa city context.

The issue of ‘citizenship’ has been very problematic and subject to contest in Ethiopia since majority of ethnic groups in the empire have been merely subjects not citizens of the state. As well, there were unequal treatments of citizens of the country by the state in terms of access to state’s cultural, political and economic resources. Consequently, the struggle for equality of citizenship has characterized the political history of the country with severe and lasting impacts on multi-sided development processes. However, as discussed in chapter three, these and other political conflicts in the country had largely been national-based and elite – centered. This suggests that the struggle for citizenship in Ethiopia is not a new phenomenon, but what seems to be new (after the advent of ethnic decentralization in the country) is its localization.<sup>141</sup> In what follows we shall illustrate these localized aspects of contest and bargaining over citizenship in the city.

In post- 1991 Ethiopia, the issues of ‘inclusive citizenship’ seem to be somewhat improved at national (federal) level at least constitutionally and rhetorically (Beken, 2007). However, the notion of accommodative citizenship seems to be highly problematized at local arenas, especially in multiethnic cities like Hawassa. As discussed in the conceptual section of this thesis, ethnic decentralization (federalism) may have effects of ethnicizing *territory* and *territorilizing ethnicity*, i.e., the demarcation of territory along the line of ethnicity which in turn may result in the development of citizenship to be bound up within one’s own ethno linguistic territory. In Ethiopia, the constitutional provisions (both federal as well as regional constitutions) guarantee certain rights for its citizens such as for choice of residence in any parts of the country. In practice, however, the ethnic federal policy seems to have created two categories of citizens in local arenas. One category is those who are considered to be the indigenous people (sons and daughters of the soil) to the region, zone or special *woreda* in whose name the territory have been designated. The other category is those ethnic groups who do not ethnically belong to the

---

<sup>141</sup> **To argue this way does not mean that the national and elite based conflict of citizenship has become moribund; but is to remark that struggle over citizenship expanded to the local level to include(involve) the local masses.**

area and hence are supposed to be ‘aliens’. This latter category of citizenship refers to those who are outside their ethnic regions, zones or special *woredas*.

In the Ethiopian context, scholars like Christophe Van der Beken (2007) named these groups as endogenous and exogenous, respectively. Haileyesus Taye (2012) prefers to call them as indigenous and non-indigenous. But we prefer to label them as ‘ethnic insiders’ and ‘ethnic outsiders’, because it is mostly ethnic identity that classifies as such, otherwise regardless of their ethnic background most people were born and lived in the same areas. Accordingly, in the context of Hawassa city, the Sidama may be taken as ethnic insiders since the city is situated in ethnic Sidama territory whereas all other ethnic groups of the town may be designated as ethnic outsiders.

In any cases, such a dichotomy of citizenship at the local level offers an excellent point of inquiry into the issues of citizenship accommodation. Foremost is to ask how citizenship, namely issues of membership, representation, participation or access to political, economic, and social/cultural resources have been negotiated. Equally important, one may also inquire into the duty side of citizenship, or the extent to which the so-called aliens (ethnic outsiders) show a sense of belongingness and thereby voluntarily involve in and discharge duties of their citizenship in areas where they are supposed to be aliens.

Invariably, the introduction of ethnic decentralization in Ethiopia and its resultants such as territorialization of *ethnicity* and *ethnicization of territory* have ushered in contest and negotiation over the status of citizenship in Hawassa. In the town, some aspects of citizenship status seem to be exclusionary/discriminatory and hence were highly subjected to contest, whereas, some other aspects of citizenship appear to be accommodative opening spaces for negotiation, bargaining and peaceful co-existence. Belonging to the first category are the right of access to political and administrative posts, as well as equality of opportunity for employment in public institutions. In the second category, we find cultural, religious, social, and to some extent economic rights of citizenship.

Let us begin these explanations with the contested aspect of the matter with the following quotation.

*Immense difficulties have been created for the residents of many towns [in the SNNPR] because of [the] demarcating of these towns under a jurisdiction of a single ethnic administrative constituency or 'ethnic homeland'. The political and human rights of this group of people [ethnic outsiders] have been drastically reduced in matters regarding political representation, language usage in office and elementary school, equal employment rights in public institutions and other similar rights (Berhanu, 2007: 207).*

Some of Berhanu's observation above were clearly visible in Hawassa, critical of which were the problems of access to political representation and equal employment rights in public institutions (see Serkalem, 2012). Let us see, for example, the exclusionary and contested nature of the rights of access to political post referring to legislative and executive organs of government in the city. As discussed above (see section 6.3.2), the legislative branch of city government (city council) is largely dominated by the Sidama, in which they hold 130 (73%) seats in the council out of the total of 176 seats. Compared with the proportion of the Sidama population of the town this ratio of political representation seems to be exaggerated vexing other ethnic groups who have been underrepresented and non-represented (see Abiy, 2013). Moreover, of more than 56 ethnic groups supposed to live in the city, only 12 were represented in the council. According to Serkalem Alaemayehu, even the cultural groups represented in the city council "practically do nothing in respect of securing the interest and demands of the communities [they represented]. ... mainly because of the numerical dominance of a single ethnic group [Sidama]" (2012: 65).

A more critical exclusion of diversity in terms of rights of access to political posts, however, is observable in the executive branch (cabinet) of the urban government. As discussed above, the 2006 city proclamation stipulates that the mayor, head of the executive branch of the city government, is elected from the Sidama. The proclamation also gives the mayor full authority to nominate the cabinet and heads of departments. Practically, this has given a chance to the Sidama to immensely dominate the executive branch of the city government, mainly because it has given opportunities for the Sidama to nominate their own people (ethnic) to every post. According to an informant, all city cabinets were Sidamas as of 2012, and in the same year, of the 16 department of the city administration 14 were from the Sidama ethnic origin.<sup>142</sup> The control of the city's political posts by a single ethnic group was not limited to the cabinet and head of department levels. But as Serkalem argues, it is also a case that "most government posts

---

<sup>142</sup> *Interview with one of the two non-Sidama department head (age 47), 5 July 2012*

including the post of sub - cities are fully seized by members of the Sidama ethnic group” (ibid). Serkalem goes on stating,

*For instance, from among the eight sub cities of the city, almost five of them are dominated by more than 45 ethno cultural groups. Frankly speaking, in these sub cities the Sidama ethnic group is minority. But the post of leadership including these sub cities is fully seized by the Sidama ethnic group (2012: 65).*

Therefore, as Abiy 2013 rightly argues, the executive body of the urban government, unlike the city council, lacked representation of diverse ethno-linguistic groups. There may be no any legal ground that justifies the Sidama’s exclusive monopolization of the executive branch of government as such. Rather, it may be explained from the perspective of politics (power relations). As it is generally true in the country’s political set up, in Hawassa, too, the executive branch of government is powerful to dictate the administrative affairs of the city with no or little interference, challenge or balance from the other two organs of government. It seems that the Sidama are mindful of this opportunity in monopolizing the executive branch of the city government, especially from the perspective that it would help them in securing the Sidama’s interest in the town.

Some of the Sidama (contacted for interview) were frank enough in admitting the Sidama’s monopolization of the executive and other organs of city government in Hawassa, and justifies it as constitutional and political rights.<sup>143</sup> Berhanu Gutema also makes similar claim in stating, “the Sidama elites deeply believe that Awassa city is within the Sidama constituency and therefore it is under the right of Sidama people to decide the status of the city” (2007: 215). Such an exclusive monopoly of the Sidama over the political power of the town has excluded the non-Sidama ethnic groups from participating in making the collective decisions that regulate the political and social life of the town (Serkalem, 2012). In this regard, Berhanu Gutema may be right when he argues, “the rights and interests of the non-Sidama residents in the city [of Hawassa] have ... been severely curtailed and abused for the last ten years by the Sidama political leadership who controlled the city administration” (2007: 215). In fact, the insistence of the Sidama in monopolizing key political posts in the town has made processes of negotiations

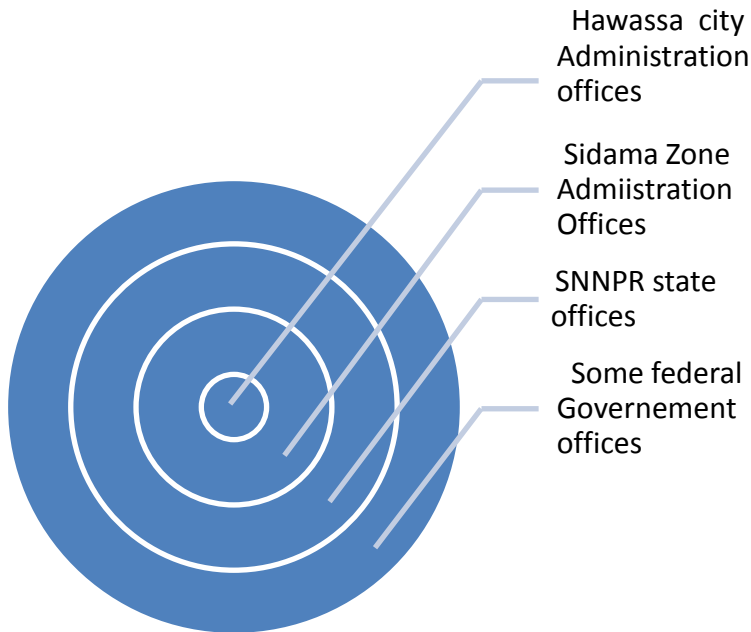
---

<sup>143</sup> *Interview with an official in the city administration (age, 38), 29 July 2011 Hawassa*

and compromises over political posts very difficult, if not impossible. This in turn has left the political aspect of citizenship to be an object of contest and conflict in the town to the present, in turn producing different impacts on other aspects of citizenship status such as on employment rights in public institutions.

Indeed, a question for equal rights of employment in public institutions has been among the most contested aspects of citizenship in Hawassa town. Ethnic outsiders in the town grossly complain that they have been denied citizenship rights to compete for employment in public institutions on equal basis with their fellow Sidamas. Regardless of an extensive interview conducted on this matter, the researcher never came across a single non-Sidama resident of the town who did not complain about the city administration for being discriminatory based on ethnic background. Of course, in Hawassa, the city administration is not the only center of public institutions to pull employees. There is also some Federal, Regional (SNNPR) and Zonal (Sidama zone) based public institutions in the town each offering alternatives for employment opportunities for the residents of the town and beyond. However, each of these public institutions including that of the city administration of Hawassa somewhat employs different criteria for employment qualification, which in turn renders citizenship 'inclusiveness' and 'exclusiveness'. Therefore, before proceeding to discussing the contested nature of citizenship from the perspective of employment rights in the public institutions, perhaps it is important to look into the overall arrangement of citizenship status with respect to right of access to employment opportunity in the various public institutions mentioned above. The figure to follow may be used as an introduction for this purpose.

**Figure 3 : Public institutions that offer employment opportunity in Hawassa city**



Source: author's development

These four different public institutions portrayed in circular figure above offer employment opportunities for the residents of Hawassa town and beyond. However, there is a variation among these public institutions in conferring a citizenship status in terms of qualification for employment. Let us first see this case from the perspective of the offices of the Federal Government.<sup>144</sup> These include like branch offices of Telecommunication, Electric power services, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Universities, Federal police and military. Presumably, these public institutions are open for any qualifying Ethiopian citizens. However, to command Amharic is mandatory since it is a working language of the federal government of Ethiopia. Therefore, language is the most important criteria to be discriminatory. Some complain that this language factor favors the Amharic speaking community. However, arguably, relative to other areas of public institutions in the town, it may be considered as accommodative. Definitely,

---

<sup>144</sup> *These offices are those that are directly run by the federal government with their location in Hawassa city.*

professional employees in these federal public institutions are from a variety of the country's ethnic groups, save the question of proportion. That is why it is represented with the wider outskirts part of the circular figure above.

The other public institutions to be seen here in terms of offering job opportunity in Hawassa are offices of the regional government (the SNNPR state). As the capital city of the region, Hawassa hosts various offices and public institutions of the SNNPR state. These offices are meant to offer job opportunities for the nation, nationalities and peoples of the region including the Sidama. If not legally prohibited, peoples of Ethiopia who are ethnically 'outsiders' to the region practically have never had an equal citizenship status for employment<sup>145</sup>. However, since the working language of the region is Amharic at least officially, there have been some spaces in accommodating the so-called 'ethnic outsiders' in some positions such as where there is scarcity of required professionals. Yet, residents of Hawassa city who have no ethnic belongingness to any of the nations, nationalities and peoples of the region complain that the system still fails to treat them with equal concern and respect over issues of employment<sup>146</sup>. Be it as it may, in relative terms, these regional public institutions may be considered as accommodative at least as far as the citizenship status of the nations, nationalities and peoples of the region is concerned.

Offices or public institutions of the Sidama zone, which are located in Hawassa city, are also other centers for employment opportunities. In these zonal offices, employment opportunities in public institutions have been exclusively reserved for the Sidama people. This exclusiveness is also a case in the other ethnic zones of the SNNPR state. One possible factor for this is language. The working language in Sidama zone is in Sidama language and hence it is a requirement for employment, which in turn renders an exclusionary effect on the non-speakers of the language. The second one is political. Politically speaking, the Sidama zone belongs to the Sidama nation and it is the Sidama people who have the full right of citizenship to be employed in public institutions of the zone. Therefore, extreme citizenship exclusion is observable in these zonal public institutions. This is so because practically speaking, the Non-Sidama peoples of Ethiopia, non-Sidama peoples of the SNNPR state, and non-Sidama peoples of the Hawassa town are not entitled to get employment opportunity in these zonal public institutions.

---

<sup>145</sup> *Interview, a civil servant in regional office (age, 47), 23 July 2012, Hawassa.*

<sup>146</sup> *Group discussion, 4 informants from 4 different ethnic groups (age, 27, 32, 34.37), 11 July 2012, Hawassa*



Two critical points may be emphasized here with respect to citizenship exclusion in Sidama zone. First, as Berhanu Gutema (2007) puts about 12% of the population of the Sidama zone is non-Sidama in ethnic belongingness, which means that they have been denied citizenship right of employment in the public institutions of the zone due to language and related factors. Secondly, the Sidama claim that Hawassa town is or must be part of the Sidama zone as it had been in pre-2002 periods. However, paradoxically, non-Sidama residents of the town, who at least constitute half of the urban population, have not been entitled to right of employment in public institutions of the zone. This implies that only the town but not the people are wanted.

Now we will come to the fourth and the most controversial and contested area of citizenship right for employment in Hawassa city which concerns the public institutions of the town itself. Since 2002, Hawassa town has been reorganized as a self-governing unit in separation from the Sidama zone, at least officially. This means that city administration of the town is expected to represent and work for the whole population of the town. Contrary to this fact, however, as seen above, the Sidama has monopolized all political posts in the city administration. Equally considerable, employment opportunities in civil service position down to labor work appears to be exclusionary and conflictive (see table VII).

Some informants in the town believed that the Sidama held more than 90% of employment posts in the city administration. However, as shown in table VII in the appendix, an official source is slightly different from public assumption in decreasing the figure to slightly more 80%. Still this figure is considerable when compared to the proportion of the Sidama population in the city, which is less than 50%. Moreover, about 40% of the Sidama population in the town is rural with no language and skills competencies to be hired in urban administration offices. Thus, it is not difficult to understand the effective domination of the Sidama in public institutions employment posts in the city of Hawassa.

Why and how did such a domination of the Sidama people over political and administrative posts of the city come about? What were the effects of this domination on the city, especially in connection to urban-society and inter-society relationships? Residents of the city with different ethnic background including the Sidama were asked to give their opinion on factors that favoured the Sidama's dominance the city of Hawassa in administrative arenas. Despite the variations in ethnic background, the opinion of the informants on this issue was remarkably

similar in attributing it to three main factors: political, economic and ownership factors discussed so far in one way or another. In particular, the main political factor behind the Sidama's move to dominating the political and administrative posts of the city relates to a desire to hold the political power not only as an end but also as means to realize their dream for establishing a separate regional statehood for the Sidama nation. The calculation here is to constitute the majority in time of votes.

Economic factor or a motivation to material gain has been another salient factor for the Sidama's seemingly insatiable interest to dominate the city. As it is discussed before, during the pre-decentralization periods, the Sidama's were barred from urban life and hence were effectively marginalized from the urban economic advantages. However, thanks to the ethnic decentralization as well as to a firm commitment of the Sidama elites and elders, that today the Sidama are among the top economic beneficiaries in the town of Hawassa (see Ye Sidama Beher Tarikina Bahil, 2003 E.C.). The question of ownerships over the city of Hawassa, as discussed before, is one of the most contested issues. Hence, the Sidama strictly believe that their right of ownership over the town will be secured only when the Sidama becomes a dominant power over political, administrative, and economic life of the town.

Many of the interviewed individuals of the town believe that such a trend is detrimental to the town since it fails to render the notion of a common urban citizenship. To the belief of many, the present political atmosphere in the city flaws in creating a sense of belongingness among the very diverse ethnic groups that makes up the city. There is a fear that if the problem is to continue unabated, it may even eventually tear the whole society of the city apart.<sup>147</sup> However, there are two seemingly positive essences of the contested aspects of citizenship in the town, particularly with respect to political and administrative posts. One is that almost all contacted residents of the town for interview confirm that there is no notion of 'ethno-centrism' or ethnic hatred behind the Sidama elites' blatant quest for monopoly of political and administrative powers. Even, the Wolayta residents who are supposed to be the most distinguished rivalries of the Sidama (Aalen, 2008) confirm the accommodative and hospitable character of the Sidama nation. See also Serkalem Alemayehu (2009:139) who similarly observes the hospitality of the Sidama nation. All informants of various ethnic backgrounds uniformly confirmed that the

---

<sup>147</sup> *Interview, NGO employee,(age,46), 14 Oct. 2012, Hawassa*

Sidama has never had an intention to exclude others from the town of Hawassa simply for the sake of ethnic hatred. Rather the problem lies in fear of losing their right of ownership over the town if other ethnic groups were to dominate or control it. An elder from the Sidama rightly expresses this notion as, *we were kind and open for any incoming (immigrant) to the Sidama land for long; but our kindness has been taken as an advantage by others to flatten our right of ownership over Hawassa and other towns of Sidama land.*<sup>148</sup>

This quotation suggests two important points regarding issues of diversity accommodation in Hawassa city. One is that, rather than cultural problems, it is the quest to monopolize power, that is exclusionary and goes against diversity accommodation. Two, as the view of the elder hint at, the elite's quest for control of power goes even to adversely impact on the accommodative culture of the Sidama society. Indeed, there is no guarantee for the political conflict not to leak to cultural matters, as symptoms are emerging in some cases.

There is also another evidence for the notion that the Sidama's ambition of monopoly of power on Hawassa town rests on political interest rather than ethno-centric. This is that there are spaces and opportunities for inclusiveness and accommodation in the city on 'non-political' and 'non-administrative' matters, as seen below. Accordingly, a point to emphasis here is if a political desire is the main source for the ethnic exclusion in Hawassa city, it means that resolving the political problems of the city and that of the Sidama nation as a whole may create a space for ethnic co-existence in this urban center.

The other positive essence of contested citizenship in Hawassa town is that despite such issues of domination by the Sidama, there have never been prevalences of violent conflict in the town that has resulted in dislocation of non-Sidama residents so far. In fact, over the last two decades or so there were violent conflicts in the town critical of which were in 1991/2, 2002 and 2012 as discussed above. This trend shows that the violence recurs once every ten years. However, when seen from the perspective of the depth and scope of the problem of citizenship status in the town, these examples may not be exaggerated. These citizenship related conflicts have not turned violent in the town at least between the urban ethnic groups, and this may be taken as a positive side of the story. This suggests that there is still time and opportunity to mitigate the problem, because a

---

<sup>148</sup> *Interview, an elder (age, 61)11 July 2011A village nearby Hawassa*

heavy mutual destruction has never happened to distract negotiation processes among the ethnic groups of the town. To put shortly, so far neither mutual accommodation nor mutual destruction is recorded in the town but only living with conflicts.

Indeed, it seems that there is a ripe conflict in the town to erupt at least between two or three ethnic groups, which was about to explode in July 2012. A question worth asking here is about factors that have checkered ethnic violence in Hawassa in connection to the crises of citizenship status. Two main arguments may come forth to explaining this matter. One is the view that attribute the case to military force or that believes that the federal military force has checkered inter-ethnic violence in Hawassa. Many of the interviewed people in the town of Hawassa share this viewpoint. Especially, there is a strong claim that had not it been for the intervention of the military forces it would have been inevitable for inter-ethnic violence to erupt in the town, particularly between the Sidama and Wolayta.<sup>149</sup> This argument sounds at least partly. While in field research, the researcher himself witnessed this fact when in July 2012 the federal military forces protected the town from invasion by the surrounding Sidama community.<sup>150</sup>

However, it is difficult to assume that inter-ethnic co-existence in Hawassa is a sole function of military force. Military force may play such a role at some particular point and time or during some particular incidents. Otherwise, clearly enough, force has never been and perhaps cannot be a guarantee for ethnic co-existence. This leads us to the second factor to explain a limit to the ethnic violence in Hawassa city. There are different aspects of citizenship (Bellamy, 2008; Susan, 2006). In Hawassa city, not all of these aspects of citizenships are exclusive and contested. Instead, there are some, which are inclusive and negotiated, such as with regard to cultural, religious, social and economic rights. We argue here that the negotiated nature of citizenship have been among the factors that have checkered inter-ethnic violence in the town.

We shall begin the explanation from the cultural aspects of citizenship accommodation. Critically speaking, language is among the cultural elements that have been negotiated in Hawassa town. For example, officially Amharic is the working language of the town. The number of Amharic schools is by far greater than that of other languages including Sidama. Whatever justification is there for this, the Sidama has accepted the Amharic as an official

---

<sup>149</sup> *Interview, police officer (age 31) 13Oct 2012, Hawassa*

<sup>150</sup> *This protection was in place at least for a month*

working language for the town. They also accepted or at least tolerated the Amharic language to be a dominant in elementary schools. Therefore, the interesting point here is that the Sidama who do not want to invite the Amhara or other ethnic groups to the political and administrative posts tolerated and accepted Amharic language to be an official working language in the town. Though why and how the Sidama reached such a point of negotiation may be subject to debate, it needs to be underlined that such a negotiation to some degree illustrates the prevalence of inter-ethnic negotiation over cultural (language) aspects of citizenship. If not official, many other languages are also spoken in the town, for public communication purposes, especially outside public institutions and offices.

Unlike the prevalence of exclusion in political and employment (in public institution) areas, there has been freedom of cultural expression in the town, including Fitcha festival, *Timket*<sup>151</sup> and the like. Religious faiths and religious festivals are also well accommodated and freely expressed in the town of Hawassa. The Sidama people, in and outside Hawassa town overwhelmingly are followers of the protestant Christian denominator. Yet other religious institutions, like the Orthodox Christian, Muslim and other religious practices along with their variety of festivals are well accommodated and freely expressed in Hawassa town. Generally and remarkably, there is religious and cultural tolerance in the town. The researcher has never come across any considerable complain on these cultural and religious matters. In support of this view Serkalem Alemayehu, argues Hawassa “city remained to be exemplary for ... religious toleration, which the world [even Ethiopia itself] has faced as critical problem” (2009: 139). Many believe that such a tolerance of religious and language diversity have had their own contribution to ease the tension rendered by discrimination in the political and employment areas. The conclusion to be drawn from this notion is that in Hawassa, the cultural aspect of citizenship is by far accommodative, especially when it is seen in comparison with the political and employment dimensions of citizenship.

We shall now look at the extent of citizenship accommodation in social service sectors, such as housing, schools, health and other services. One of the good things of settlement in urban Ethiopia is that there has never been ethnic segregation. That is, ethnic groups in the town live

---

<sup>151</sup> *A religious festival celebrated by the Orthodox Christian followers*

mixed rather than in separation. This in turn contributes its share in reducing discrimination in social services delivery in the town. Hawassa town is characterized by this general fact. Of course, some informants were being heard complaining that two sub -cities, especially the newly constructed urban quarter like *Atote sefer* were exclusively of the Sidama. Accordingly, few informants complained that these urban quarters were much more privileged by the city administration in terms of social service provisions, such as roads, modern school and health service, water and sanitation, and electric power services. Of course, by observation, one can easily notice this fact but by sight alone, it is difficult to justify that it was an intended act of discrimination since new constructions normally are followed by better facilities. The other complains over the social services in the city were related to the problem of equal opportunities of access to condominium houses. In the town, there is the rule that 40% of condominium houses are reserved for local community (Sidama), which unquestionably renders a special privilege to the Sidama community (Serkalem, 2012). Otherwise, in other sectors of social services, we have never come across any serious complain on discrimination.

What was the condition of the economic aspect of citizenship in Hawassa town? How inclusive or exclusive has it been? Truly, this is a challenging question to address mainly due to two factors. One is that the economic inclusion/exclusion often overlaps with others, such as social and political issues of citizenship. Yet, as is it will be discussed below, there are good reasons to treat it separately to a certain level. The other factor that makes an inquiry into the economic status of citizenship accommodation in the town so complex is the multiplicity and complexity of economic sectors in urban areas. Generally, economic sectors may be categorized as public and private. For two reasons, we will focus here on the private aspect of economy to explore the degree of citizenships accommodation. First, the condition of access to employment in public institutions (discussed above) is one part of the public economic sectors and we believe in other public economic sectors, too, the condition of citizenship status would not be much different. See also Abiy Ero (2013) who, for example, argues “Investors from local ethnic members mostly favored in terms of public project awards and procurements” (2013:210). Secondly, as the private economic sectors (especially commercial activities) constitute a larger proportion of the urban economy, we believe, to focus on this private economy would give a better understanding about the issue under discussion.

In fact, a private economic sector in and by itself is so wide and complex ranging from an engagement in small private shops to big investment companies. For this study purpose, all of them are important and we will attempt to consider each by taking cases. In either cases, the result of our investigation shows that there is a moderate accommodation of citizenship with respect to the right of access to private economy in the town. In other words, this is to maintain that the economic aspect of citizenship status in Hawassa town is neither as exclusionary as in political power nor as inclusive as in social/cultural and religious respects. There are enough cases that validate both the contested and negotiated (accommodated) aspects of economic citizenship status in the town to be seen here along with their underlying causes.

One of our investigations is directed to the assessment of the ethnic composition of the owners of private shops of different categories in different *Kebele* administration in the town. The result is that these businesses have engaged diversity of ethnic groups where the Sidama did not dominate. We forwarded a question to some of the shop owners if there were a practice of discrimination on ethnic basis in this business environment. Some of them witnessed the prevalence of ethnic favoritism such as with respect to taxation and VAT (value added tax) registration.<sup>152</sup> In this case, the source of the discontent is that the shop owners of the Sidama ethnic origin were less taxed when compared to their non -Sidama counterparts.

Otherwise, the ethnic composition of business owners seems to be fair and inclusive. Indeed, it demands a serious survey to explore the ethnic composition of business owners in the city, which the researchers could not do because of the complexity of the matter. Any ways, with a rapid observation, no much problem is observable in this case. One general fact is that the Sidama are emerging as the dominant economic power in the city unlike the pre-1991. Such an argument made us to explore the date from which each of the selected shops have become operational. The result of the investigation is that nearly all shops owned by the Sidama were the post -1991 phenomena, whereas the non-Sidama shops were of both the pre and post decentralization events. This finding further illustrates the increasing number of the Sidama's engagement in urban business since 1991. However, still the non-Sidama ethnic groups monopolize the urban commercial business in many respects. The non-Sidama ethnic groups'

---

<sup>152</sup> *Interview, 3 informants engaged in private business (age, 32, 37, 28, 22), 5 July 2011.*

engagement in commercial activities of the town in such predominance, to some degree, is an illustrative to an accommodative aspect of economic citizenship in the town.

Let us see now the status of citizenship accommodation in service based economic sectors focusing on hotel services. Hawassa city is among the top tourist destination centre in the country, and hence owns several international hotels. We selected the top 15 of these hotels (see Hawassa city Administration, 2010) to explore the status of citizenship accommodation in the town with respect to this economic sector. The result is that, of these 15 top ranking international hotels, only 5(33%) belonged to the Sidama. The non-Sidama ethnic groups own the rest, and this fact in itself is an illustrative for an accommodative status of the economic aspects of citizenship in the town of Hawassa.

Same conclusion applies to other investment areas such as education and health institutions based in the city. For example, as of 2011-2013 the town had about 54 private Kindergarten schools, 42 private primary schools, 4 private Secondary schools, 6 private preparatory school and 22 private colleges. In each of these private education institutions, on average more than 70% were owned by the non-Sidama. In health case, there are 3 private hospitals, 4 health centers, 20 clinics, 3 health posts, 23 pharmacies, and 5 diagnostic laboratories (Ibid). Similarly about 75% of these health institutions belonged to the non-Sidama in terms of ownership. The non-Sidama's engagement in an investment processes in private education and health institutions are indicative for citizenship inclusiveness in private economy in the town.

Equally important is also to see the status of citizenship accommodation in the city in other investment sectors, such as in construction and manufacturing industries. For this purpose, some industries were taken as sample to investigate about citizenship inclusiveness. Accordingly, in manufacturing industries, the trend is similar to other investment areas discussed above. However, most controversial and contested investment sector is with respect to the construction industry. In this investment sector, of the ten registered companies only seven companies were in actual operation in 2012/3, and five of them were owned by the non-Sidama. In terms of ethnic composition, we still observe moderate status of citizenship accommodation in the town in this investment sector. However, in practice there has been a prevalence of complain that this



business of construction is dominated by one Sidama family.<sup>153</sup> This is among the exagrated issues of complain against the Sidama in Hawassa city.

The base of this complain is ethnic favoritism, especially with respect to opportunities of access to construction activities directly concerning urban administration such as construction of road and government buildings. In fact, a bid for these activities is open for every Ethiopian citizen beyond the Hawassa city and SNNPR state. However, according to this complain, in most cases the chance to win the bid has often been given to one construction company owned by one of the Sidama family. However, it is difficult to verify the validity of this critic. On the one hand, true to the complaint's claim the alleged companies built most of government buildings and roads in Hawassa and Sidama zone. On the other hand, it was difficult to find evidence to prove the special favors done to the company. Yet, the fact is that this sector remains to be a contested area in terms of citizenship accommodation in the town.

Before summarizing this section, we want to call attention to the politics of employment in private business and companies. Employment opportunity in private sectors has also been politicized perhaps not less than that of public institutions. As discussed above, most private business sectors in Hawassa were owned by non- Sidama ethnic groups. As well, our assessment of some bigger companies has shown that employees of these companies were also non-Sidama. These private sectors provided job opportunities for urban communities who were denied citizenship right of employment in public institutions. Of course, one may draw a line of division between the population of the city in terms of employment status as public (civil servants) predominantly the Sidama and the private economic sector employees, which mainly include the non-Sidama residents of the town. This suggests that there are problems in the town in terms of citizenship or diversity accommodation both in public and private economic sectors.

In summarizing this section, we would like to emphasize the following points about the status of citizenship accommodation in Hawassa town. That is, the status of citizenship in the town has been exclusionary and hence contested in political representation and employment opportunities in public institutions, but accommodative and negotiated in cultural and religious arenas, and of

---

<sup>153</sup>*Interview, Informant engaged in construction (age, 48), 19 Aug 2013, Hawassa.*

mixed kind in social service and private economic sectors. Such a complex nature of citizenship accommodation has had its own implications for the political and economic development processes in the town; and this is discussed in the next chapter.

#### 6.5 Explaining the characteristics of political engagement and negotiation in Hawassa

The processes of political engagements discussed so far in the Hawassa context may be characterized in many different ways. We, however, discern some of them in order to draw out their implications for political and economic development processes. Accordingly, five cases may stand out as highly significant. These are the mass-based political engagement, ethnic decentralization as the main cause for mass political engagement, pro federalism character of political engagement, regional-centered political engagement, and political primacy. In what follows, we explain each of these features.

Accordingly, our first explanation concerns the argument that political engagements such as those discussed above have largely involved the urban masses in and around the city. In many ways, people's awareness of political processes and involvements in political claim making such as the question of regional self-determination, conflict of over city ownership and citizenship has increased. There is enough evidence that would let somebody see that the Sidama people (of Hawassa residents) including the ordinary people have had engagements in politics, particularly in contests and bargainings over the question of self-determination and the claim of city ownership. These political engagements have both collective and individualistic dimensions. Here we, however, will focus only on the collective form of mass-based political engagements. First, in signing the petition for a separate regional statehood (done at different times) only space appeared to be the limit to the involvement of the Sidama urban masses.<sup>154</sup> Second, is the participation of thousands of people in different forms of demonstrations and protests conducted at different times in response to the federal and regional governments' decision to place Hawassa city under the SNNPR government by separating it from the Sidama zone. Typical example for this is the May 2002 riots in the city.

---

<sup>154</sup> *Informant: who took part in the process (age, 29), 9 Oct 2012, Hawassa*

The third example of mass-based political engagement in Hawassa town, especially by the Sidama people is an act of boycotting jobs, namely in July 2012. In the mentioned time, the researcher himself witnessed this event when the civil servants working in city, zonal and regional administration offices had quitted their jobs and closed their office for some time. Merchants (from the Sidama) also joined this by closing their shops and other service centers. It was said that this political action was a response to a rumor that Hawassa city was to become a chartered city like Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. If this were to happen, the Sidama believed that they would lose their control and influence over the town as it happened to the Oromo in Addis Ababa (Benti, 2002, for the latter). Because of this boycott, there were no service deliveries by the city administration at least for a week (observation). As well, people who were engaged in private economy were determined to sacrifice their business for the political cause they stood for. Had it not been for the intervention of government forces such as with warning to permanently quit their jobs and disown their business license, the action might have continued for some more times. This measure shows the determination of businesspersons to sacrifice their business for political cause. Asked why he had to take such risk one businessman replied that *if it would help for the Sidama's political cause he had no worry about the end of his business.*<sup>155</sup>

Fourth, active participation in election may be taken as another example to mark a mass-based political engagement in Hawassa, particularly by the Sidama people. The 2005 national election may be worth mentioning in this connection. In the processes of this election, most eligible Sidama resident of Hawassa town had participated.<sup>156</sup> The driving force for this mass participation is a political interest that related to related to the question of regional self-determination and city ownership. According to informants, most political parties even including the ruling party (EPRDF) promised the Sidama people a separate regional statehood if they were to vote for them. Consequently, the Sidama engaged in election *en mass* to vote for parties, which were sympathetic to the Sidama political cause on the one hand, and to vote against parties they believed impede their right of regional self-determination on the other.

---

<sup>155</sup> *Informant engaged in private business (age, 32), 9 Oct 2012, Hawassa*

<sup>156</sup> *Interview with an official,(age 46), 2 July 2011, Hawassa*

There are two points that are worth underlining with respect to these mass political engagements in the city of Hawassa. One is the fact that this political development is a major departure from the pre-1991 political history of the country as discussed in chapter three above. The other is about a cause or causes for these political developments. This latter question leads us to our second characterization of political engagement in the town, which relates the societal political engagement to the ethnic decentralization processes. It is to argue that such mass based political engagement processes in Hawassa town are largely the effect of ethnic decentralization. We explain how and why ethnic-decentralization have become a factor for political engagement in the town.

Chapter four of this thesis has widely addressed this particular question. In that chapter, several ways in which the ethnic decentralization processes of the country have caused societal political engagements are identified. More relevant to Hawassa town context is the discrepancy between constitutional promises and actual practices. The federal as well as regional constitutions have promised self-determination and equality of citizenship to the people of the country, among others. However, it is due to dissatisfaction with the actual practice of these rights that the Sidama people make-political claim for self-determination and other-ethnic groups of the town make political claim for equality of citizenship in the town. The fact that these political claims were the post -1991 phenomena in and by itself justify our argument that there was direct link between ethnic decentralization and political engagement in the town.

Coming next is the third characteristics of political engagement in the town, which may be argued as pro-federalism. This is to note that major political claims in the town in essence support core values and principle of federalism.<sup>157</sup> Scrutiny of object or causes of the major political claims in the town may help realize this line of argument. For example, the Sidama nation's quest for regional statehood, which is one of the core political problems in the town, unquestionably is constitutional in essence and is also in line with the promise and premises of the Ethiopian ethnic federal political arrangement. Clearly and overtly, it can be construed to

---

<sup>157</sup> *However, it should be noted that this does not mean there are no groups in the town who have opposed ethnic federal politics of the country; rather it is to indicate that at least more visible political claims in the town in essence support the core values and principle of federalism.*

article 39 of the federal constitution which guarantees rights of self-determination to nations, nationalities and peoples of the land, even including and up to secession. The realization of Sidama's quest for regional self-determination in no way contradicts the core principles of federalism. Rather they go hand-in-hand with each other.

Indeed, at some point it may challenge some articles of the FDRE constitution, for example, Article 47(1) that gives recognition only to nine regional states as constitutive units of the federation. Therefore, the realization of Sidama's regional self-determination should result in an amendment to this article; but measures such as these do not seem to fundamentally contradict the core value and essence of the constitution and the ethnic federal ethos it stands for. Similarly, to accord the Sidama with separate regional statehood may cause some structural changes to administrative and constitutional arrangement of SNNPR state, yet it does not contradict fundamental value and principle of the constitution and the federation.

Equally important, the question of the non-Sidama residents of Hawassa town for equality of citizenship by any measurement is constitutional. The main objective of an introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country is to accommodate diversity. Hence, the demand for equality of citizenship is in line with the value and principle of federalism that Ethiopia has been experiencing. Rather what seems to stand oppositional to the tenet of the federal political arrangement is the Sidama's lust for monopoly of power and influence over the town of Hawassa. As discussed before, the Sidama austere believe that the Sidama zone including the city of Hawassa has been created for the Sidama people so that it is their right to claim an exclusive right of ownership to rule over the town. In fact, the Ethiopian federal constitution accords certain right of self-governance for ethnic groups in their respective regions, zones or special *Woredas*. Nevertheless, when it comes to cities of multiethnic composition, such as Hawassa, a claim for an absolute control of the town by one ethnic group appears to be odd to the philosophy and principle of federalism. In any cases, the essence and objective of political engagements in Hawassa (be it the demand for regional self-determination or the question of city ownership) do not fundamentally put the Ethiopian federal political order in jeopardy unlike the secessionist political movements in other regions such as Oromia and Ethiopian Somali. It is so because to the maximum the political demand of the Sidama does not go beyond establishing

regional statehood, which in essence does not radically affect the country's federal political organization.

The fourth characteristics that describes political engagements in Hawassa town, as pointed at above is that they are more of 'regional-based' in orientation, even in confrontation. This notion may be interpreted and seen in various ways. In the first place, most key political problems and claims in the town were related to regional affairs rather than purely and solely to urban affairs. Of course, this is discussed in this section in different ways. To emphasize, definitely issues of political engagements in the city to a large degree were related to and affected by processes of conflict and negotiation over the question of regional-self-determination. Strictly speaking, in and by itself Hawassa town has no serious internal political problem, but it rather suffers from political problems in connection to the Sidama's question of regional self-determination and its (mis)management. Thus, it can be stated that key political problem in Hawassa town is regional influence than internal development.

The other point that characterizes political engagements in the town as regional is that most political issues and questions are not about struggle to control national (central) power. Rather political struggles in the town were for regional and urban political power. Definitely, this is what makes political engagements of the town more of regional in orientation and even in confrontations. Apparently, in terms of target and confrontation political conflicts primarily and immediately concerns the SNNPR state rather than the federal government of Ethiopia. This is so because the main political question of Sidama nation is to secede from the SNNPR, which in turn makes the political dealings primarily regional.

We come now to see the fifth feature of political engagement processes in Hawassa town, which is about primacy of politics over other issues of human interests. Scrutiny of the essence and objectives of political engagements in and around Hawassa city reveals that political questions particularly access to political power take priority over other aspects of human relations such as culture, religion and even economy, at least as it stands today. The Sidama's quest for regional self-determination is about a need for an alternative political organization that would better assure power of control over their internal matters. One member of the the Sidama elite, for

example, claims that political power is a key to all.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, the question of city ownership and conflict of citizenship revolve around issue of political power. On the one hand, the Sidama who control the administrative power of the town do work hard to assure that no one else interfere with their interest. On the other hand, the political question of other ethnic groups of the town is a right of access to political and administrative power. In either case, central to conflict in the town is access to political power.

What need remarking concerning the primacy of politics (power) as main cause of conflict in the town is its direct relations with problem of political accommodation discussed above. Political issues have ascended to top position in the town mainly due to an exclusivist political setting of the region and the town. However, other aspects of relationships such as culture, religion and economic areas relatively are accommodative and hence have never become critical issues to engage the urban community into contest and conflict.

In the end, we note that all the nature of political engagements discussed so far has had direct implications for political and socio-economic development processes in the city, and such a deal will be the concern of the next chapter.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the status of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation and its effects on state-society and inter-society relations in Hawassa city, the capital of the SNNPR. Accordingly, it has drawn the following conclusions. Firstly, culturally speaking, the city has become multiethnic truly after the introduction of ethnic federal decentralization in the country. Indeed, the post - 1991 political change in the country has not only attracted the local community to the city but also it has played pivotal roles in promoting the expression and coexistence of various cultures and languages in the city. However, the entertainment of diversities in economic and political realms is not as successful as in cultural terms in the city. In economic arena, for example, there has been exclusion and conflict over employment opportunities in public sectors, though not that much so private economic sector. A much serious contest and negotiation among the society in the city is over the rights of ownership and citizenship in which every ethnic group

---

<sup>158</sup> *Interview with an official (age,51) 7 July 2011*

claims exclusive ownership and domination over the town rather than creating space for mutual accommodation.

The chapter has concluded that such a challenge is directly related to the implementation of ethnic decentralization in the region and in the city, especially the mismanagement of the Sidama's quest for a separate regional statehood. The Sidama are dissatisfied with the prevailing federal political arrangement mainly because of the unanswered demand for a separate regional statehood they were deprived of since 1995. Failure of the ethnic federal institutions to respond to such political claims has been central to politics of contest and negotiation between state and society and among the various urban ethno-cultural groups in the town. For example, it created fertile condition for the Sidama elites to mobilize mass behind this political cause. Instead of addressing the demand constitutionally, the government negotiated it by blessing the Sidama's exclusive control over the city to the dissatisfaction of other ethnic groups dwelling the city. This has been and will be the chronic pain for diversity governance in the city. Hence, it is remarkable that the city suffers from the political problem, which is not its own.



## **Chapter Seven**

### **The Meaning and Implications of the Ethiopia's ethnic federal decentralization for Political and Socio-economic development in Adama and Hawassa cities**

#### 7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have thoroughly discussed and revealed the applications, limits and effects of ethnic federal decentralization in urban parts of Ethiopia. Specifically, in the case study chapters, the tangeable limitations and consequences of ethnic federal decentralization in Adama and Hawassa cities have been discerned. Remarkable among the effects in both cities are the engagement of the urban mass in conflict and compromise over statehood, namely, power, resources, symbols, history, citizenship and the like. Based on the preceding findings, this chapter analyzes the meaning and implications of the country's ethnic decentralization and the subsequent developments for political and socio-economic development processes in urban centers, namely in the two case study cities. As such, the chapter addresses the remaining objective of the thesis, which is about the meaning and implications of the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization for political and socio-economic development processes in urban centers of the country, particularly in Adama and Hawassa cities.

#### 7.2 Meaning and implications for political development

By design, any political order aims at promoting certain forms of political and socio-economic development. One of the primary objectives of the Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization is to promote political and socio-economic developments in the country. How do we sense the status and trend of 'political development' in Adama and Hawassa cities after the advent of ethnic decentralization in the country? What do the ethnic decentralization processes and associated developments discussed so far mean for 'political development' processes in the two case study cities? What are the contributions and limitations of the ethnic federal political framework (environment) to political development processes in these urban centers? This section primarily aims at addressing these fundamental questions.

In addressing these themes, we have singled out three key defining elements of political development for analysis. One is the notion that associates political development with

differentiation or division of political structure and political activities (Almond, 1956). Two, is the view that identifies political development with equality of citizens' political participation (Pye, 1965). Three, is the assumption that conceives political development in terms of institutionalization of political organizations, procedures, values and interests (Huntington, 1965; 1968).

Apparently, these aspects of political development are relevant to and useful for understanding the status of political development in our case study area on the ground that they all are among the key objectives of decentralization - a form of government that has been in practice in Ethiopia since 1991. For example, Gabriel Almond's notion of defining political development in terms of differentiation and separation of political structure in one way or another entails division of responsibility among various political units. It needs to be noted that the issue of differentiation of political structure also implies an issue of autonomy, which is the central premises of decentralized form of government. The notion of equality of political participation emphasized by Lucian W. Pye as the central element of political development is another important premises of decentralization. Equally important, Huntington's political institutionalization aspect of political development is one of the central objective and promise of decentralization. As Huntington understands, political institutionalization is an "art of associating together" of various political value and interests (1965:380). This refers to an articulation and aggregation of "the interests of several social groups (ibid: 401). Put in his own words,

Political institutionalization ... means the development of political organizations and procedures that are not simply expressions of the interests of particular social groups. A political organization that is the instrument of a social group - family, clan, class - lacks ... institutionalization (Huntington, 1965: 401).

According to this conception, in a developed polity political institutions accommodate and represent various identities, interests and values of the society. This notion of political institutionalization, especially in light of political development is directly related to the notion of accommodating and/or representing diversified identities, values and interests in a given political system, which once again is one of the core tenets (premises) of ethnic decentralization including the one in place in Ethiopia since 1991.

Taken together, these three main criteria of measuring political development are among the central features of modern democracy, which among others; entail constitutional division of power and ‘formalistic’ way of mass participation in political processes (Stoker, 2006).<sup>159</sup> This means that democracy and political decentralization go hand in hand (Treisman, 2007). Ethiopia, too, aspires to be a democratic polity by adopting and practicing ethnically based decentralization since 1991. Therefore, it is in light of these three defining criteria that we see the status and trends of political development in the two case study cities in the context of the ethnic federal political setting.

### 7.2.1 The case of Adama city

Seen in light of the above definitions, the status of political development in the Adama town exhibits both positive and negative scenario. To begin with, in the case of the division of power it is possible to identify both positive and negative implications. In the positive sense, as discussed before, if not in a way envisioned in the nature of democratic and decentralized form of government, the Ethiopia’s ethnic decentralization processes have resulted in division of power between various actors in Adama city. These include, political power vested in the hands of central government (EPRDF, specifically TPLF), the administrative power of municipal administration vested in the hands of OPDO, and the economic or business power dominated by groups like Amhara-Guraghe entrepreneurs.

If if not constitutional, apparently, such power division and relations have got positive implications for political development processes in Adama town which we briefly note here. That is, the post- 1991 division and relations of power in Adama town, namely between the political powers of central government (EPRDF), the administrative power of municipal administration (OPDO), and the economic power of business groups (Amhara-Guraghe entrepreneurs) has effectively created balance of power in the city. Almost power relations between these three major interests seems to function the role of check and balance as none of these power could be able to exert dominion on the town as well on each other. In particular,

---

<sup>159</sup> *This is not to measure or compare with developed Western world. However, it needs to be clear that these aspects of political development are sorted out not as criteria to compare the degree of political development in Ethiopia with that of the developed Western countries. Instead, they are marked only for they constitute core element of decentralization that has been in place in Ethiopia 1991.*

the credit for the urban power relations in Adama town is the fact that it has checked (balanced) the potential abuse of power by the central government. Indeed, in present Adama city context, such informal power division and relationships to some extent has become an important means of controlling the aspiration of central government for monopolizing power and establishing domination. This aspect of political development in some way is a departure from political history of the country in which the balance of power in state-society relationships had always been tilting towards the former.<sup>160</sup>

Equally important, one can also discern some negative scenario in this political development issues. For example, as noted before, the said division of power is not constitutional and goes not hand in hand with the principles of democracy and decentralization. Needless to say, rather than between branches and levels of government (that the constitution promises), actual power in Adama seems to have been apportioned between urban political, administrative and business elites. These extra constitutional divisions of power demonstrate significant limitations in the political development processes. One of these is that it seems to have undermined the development of constitutional - based division of power, which in turn tends to belittle the value and role of the constitution- the pillar of democracy in modern society.

There is also another post – 1991 political development in Adama city with both positive and negative political implications, which of course has been central to this thesis. That is, the development of societal engagement in political activities, as discussed above. Of course, societal engagement in politics is one of the qualities of democracy. In Adama, too, no matter how they have been unfolded in informal arenas and expressed through informal means, sometimes violently, a culture of political participation has been emerging. In a society where there had been insignificant history of local political engagement especially as it was the case in pre-1991 periods, these developments may be taken as breakthrough in the political history of the country. If wisely handled this informal political engagement of the masses could be transformed into the formal arenas of political competition and thereby contribute to democratization processes in the country. The experience of the 2005 national election may be an important lesson for this in which the Opposition political parties mobilized the politically

---

<sup>160</sup> *This should not give an impression that society is powerful on state, but the existence of certain societal capacity to resist arbitrarily domination over the societal life.*

charged urban masses behind themselves for voting and consequently scored decisive victory in most urban parts of the country.

However, the negative scenario in this case is the limitation in the institutionalization of these political engagements. Central to post-1991 political development in Adama city is that the development of people's political consciousness, their mobilization and involvement in politics has grown much more than the capacity or viability of the prevailing legal, political and institutional environment to accommodate and regulate them. This notion corroborates with Huntington's characterization of political developments in the Developing parts of the World as,

...political participation is growing much more rapidly than the "art of associating together". The rates of mobilization and participation are high; the rates of organization and institutionalization are low (1965:386).

Samuel Huntington remarked this point forty years ago, but it still reflects the political reality in Ethiopia today, particularly in urban areas. Especially, the expression perceptively captures the essence of political development processes in Adama town, and also in Hawassa as shall be seen later. True to this expression, in the post-1991 political context of the country one can scarcely find people who do not care about politics (especially ethnic politics) in Adama city. Induced by the ethnic decentralization processes of the country and associated political developments, people's interest, mobilization and involvement in state politics has grown sharply. However, it is very difficult to perceive or claim that in what corresponds to these developments there were political, legal and institutional settings, which can suck, articulate and aggregate community's political interests and demands in a way it promotes unity and solidarity both among urban society and between state and society. In turn, this seems to have dwarfed the legal and constitutional - based political participation in the city. This suggests the need to institutionalize and regulate the highly growing local people's political consciousness and participation in the town and perhaps in the county as a whole.

Finally, we reflect on two issues concerning political development processes in the city: autonomy and legitimacy. Question of autonomy is important for decentralized form of government. However, in the Adama city context it is useless to raise the issue since the city is totally dependent on the regional government and controlled by OPDO members, as discussed before, which itself dependent on the central government. What seems important rather is the

question of legitimacy that manifests both negative and positive development. In the positive sense, though the regime in command of the city suffered legitimacy crises for long it gradually improved the condition in various ways. For example, as noted before, through various economic incentives the urban government was able to attract professional and business elites that served two key purposes. First, it solved the membership problem of the party at least in number wise. Secondly and perhaps more importantly through provision of employment and other economic opportunities the regime has been able to cultivate legitimacy and somehow preempted the potential political opposition from intellectuals and business elites. The credit of this development is that to some level it helps to reduce coercive power and resultant effects. However, there has been negative scenario in these measures. The most important of which is economic based cultivation of legitimacy has resulted in boundless corruption in the city, as explained in chapter five. Moreover, the OPDO is absorbing members more than it could entertain morally, politically and institutionally, with a possibility to burst.

#### 7.2.2 The case of Hawassa city

In similar line with our discussion in the case of Adama, here we also discern and explain some essential implications of the ethnic decentralization processes of the country on political development processes in Hawassa city. Since most of political developments in Hawassa town resemble with that of the Adama, we focus only on points that are either peculiar to or more observable in the Hawassa context.

We begin with one important political development, which concerns Hawassa city but not as Adama. This is the development of intra-ethnic unity for common political end. While this notion seems to apply more to the Sidama, in many ways it also concerns other ethnic groups as well. Astonishingly, the political question of regional self-determination and the claim of ownership over Hawassa city have effectively rallied the Sidama people in all occupations and levels behind these political goals. This is to note that most Sidama citizen of Hawassa town share a common political intent that the Sidama nation deserves an independent regional statehood as well as an exclusive right of political, administrative, social and economic and historical ownership over Hawassa city. Remarkably, over these political questions the Sidama people (of Hawassa town resident) stand in unison, speak same language, and reflect similar viewpoint. Thus one can remark that the question for regional statehood and right of city

ownership have become factor for politically unifying the Sidama society in Hawassa, and perhaps beyond.

What is remarkable of this unity of political intent is that it is an all- encompassing for it involves the elite and non-elite part of the society. Definitely, this unity of political intent has allied elites with masses, elites with elites and masses with masses. Consequently, at present time there is no or little rift among the Sidama society as far as intra-ethnic relations are concerned, even including issues related to internal self- administration affairs. When seen against the crises of inter-elite and elite - mass relationships that many towns of other regions such as Adama of Oromia suffers, the Sidama case may be appraised as spectacular aspect of a constructive political development process. As is discussed in section below, this intra-ethnic harmony has also had a positive contribution to economic development processes in the city of Hawassa.

We can offer one case that may be a typical evidence for the above argument, which happened in July 2011 while the researcher was in fieldwork. With the help of my assistant, I met four persons for focused group discussion. All were Sidama but from different background: a civil servant, an elder, businessperson (female) and a daily laborer. To have such a composition was intentional, namely to see if they all have similar reflection on the Sidama's claim for regional self-determination and city ownership. The place of the discussion was an open space. In not more than half an hour after the beginning of the discussion, four more people joined us. Then, my assistant and I decided to pause the discussion, at least to divert the agenda. However, our informants assured us that there would be no problem at all. Then we continued. One after another, more and more people joined us and the number of the gathering counted about fifteen. Meanwhile, two police officers came around which did mean nothing for the group but my assistant and I were not feeling good about it. Soon, a man from the gathering talked to the policemen in Sidama language and they went their way after soft order to disperse. Then, our discussion fairly continued for some time until one young man came to join us. As the new-comer was approaching, a man closer to me made the discussion to stop and everyone went his/her way. This was the end of the story for that day.

We (my assistant and I) were not sure about what really happened until we met two of our informants the next morning. The first question we asked them to explain to us was about the young man who became a cause for the disturbance of our discussion. Their answer was that the

guy was *dembegna*.<sup>161</sup> “What if then?” was a question followed from my assistant, and the prompt reaction from the informants was that *Dembengas* are anti-Sidama’s political interests (of self-determination and self-rule). Moreover, the informants added turn by turn that, every one of *dembegna* gives espionage service for government and can put our security in danger. Then followed another question: how was it possible for the group to identify the *dembegna* from a distance as such? One of our informants responded that it is not a difficult task for the Sidama to identify themselves from others. For us, how that would be possible, however, remains puzzle, as there is no as such a clear difference in physical appearance between the various ethnic groups dwelling the city.

The other point of discussion with my two informants was about the people who joined the group without invitation. The answer for this question was somewhat unexpected and surprising. It reads, “How they need an invitation to see/join any activity taking place in their soil and in their town such as this?”. Still more striking is the paradox of the two police officers, particularly how they were so silenced by the man who talked to them. In reacting to this question, one of our informants replied so shortly that “they are Sidama”. This means that even a police (of Sidama ethnic origin), is sympathetic and supportive to the Sidama’s political cause, regardless of their being strong arm of the government.

In various ways, the discussion was important to verify about the unity of political purpose among the Sidama people. More than words, different actions in the gathering taught us a lot about political unity among the Sidama people of Hawassa city. The lesson was not only about the political unity of the Sidama. The event also pinpointed to the condition of mistrust in inter-ethnic relations as can be inferred from the group’s reaction to the so-called *dembegna man* during the group discussion. Truly, same political questions that have become factors of political unity among the Sidama, have also become factor of inter-ethnic division and conflict in the town. Partly, it is to these inter-ethnic divisions of political purpose that our notion about a negative aspect of political development in the town points. However, since we have discussed on this matter in different ways above, there might not be a need to deal with it here in detail. Suffice is to underline that inter-ethnic division and conflict is getting deeper and deeper in the

---

<sup>161</sup> *It is a name given by the Sidama to the non-Sidama dweller of the city and the Sidama land as a whole.*



town. The main causes for these inter-ethnic conflicts, we argue here, are three. These are lack of equality of political participation, gap in political institutionalization, and lack of incisive differentiation of political structures and autonomy.

Problems of equality of political participation as a cause for inter-ethnic conflict in Hawassa town are clearly discussed in the previous chapter, especially under section of citizenship. We have nothing special to add on it here except to remark that it as an epitome of political development problem in the town and the region as a whole. What rather merits our attention here is the aspect of political development in association with political institutionalization and differentiation of political structures as they pertain to the condition of the city of Hawassa. Truly, change of government in Ethiopia in 1991 has generated a massive political mobilization all over the country for various political demands. Yet, as we discussed in chapter four, the 1995 constitution of the country has been institutionalized at a cost of marginalizing some political interests and organizations such as those opting for independence on the one hand and those opting for a unitary and centralized form of state, on the other. For that the state has paid, and is paying dearly. Similarly, the problems of conflict between political mobilization (and engagement) and political institutionalization, along with attendant development costs have also been equally substantial at local levels such as in Hawassa.

First, as discussed before, in institutionalizing the present SNNPR state, particularly in conflating various nations, nationalities and peoples together to form one regional government, the interests of some nations like the Sidama were not consented and represented (Ayele, 2013; Temesgen, 2011). This is a point from which conflict between political engagement and political institution begins pertaining to the Sidama, which has adversely been affecting political developments in Hawassa city. Definitely, mobilization of masses against the established institutions has come to grow. The Sidama nation is the biggest and most resourceful part of the SNNPR state. It also hosts Hawassa town, the capital city of the region. More so, population number wise, the Sidama takes the largest share. In such condition, it is logical to think that the Sidama should take huge responsibility to play key roles in any development processes in the region including political and economic institutions. Nevertheless, it does not seem that this is working well. As it has been discussed throughout most of this chapter, the Sidama's political mobilization and engagement have been directed against the existing institutions of the region.

Their main concern rather is to secede from the region rather than to consolidate the regional political organizations and institutions. Apparently, this indicates the inversed relationships between political engagement and political institutionalization in the region. This is what Huntington calls above ‘conflict of political participation and political institutionalization’.

In turn, this regional level - based conflict of political participation and institutionalization has implicated itself at urban level. Within the context of Hawassa, too, there have been conflicts between political engagement and political institutionalization, mainly due to lack of interest representation in the existing institutions. Institutions of the city are normally meant to serve the interest of society they represent. In other way round, for the proper development and functioning of institutions, obviously there is a need for social interests to be accommodated, organized and then follow the institutional value, principles, rules and procedures (Huntington, 1965; 1968). Yet most of social forces, particularly ethnic groups of Hawassa town are at odd with the city’s institutions due to their marginalization. As one observer puts, a key problem of city-society relationships in the town is “due to lack of the accommodation of diverse views and claims of the ethno-cultural communities of the city” in the existing institutions (Serkalem, 2012). Almost every non-Sidama residents of the city perceive the city administration and its institutions as only representing the interest of the Sidama (Abiy, 2013; Serkalem, 2012; Berhanu, 2007).

From this notion, it can be noted that political interest of various social forces is not secured in the existing urban political institutions. This gap in turn seems to have negatively affected the mobilization and participation of urban masses behind the city administration for development purposes. As was seen in the result of the 2005 election, it seems rather easier to mobilize the masses against the existing political system than for it. Therefore, this is another indication for conflict between political engagement and political institutionalization in the town.

What about the condition of differentiation of political structure and autonomy in the city, especially in view of political development processes? As we discussed before, Hawassa city is the seat of three different political structures of government: the SNNPR state, Sidama zone administration and Hawassa city administration. Of interest here is to ask how these different political structures and levels are differentiated and interacting. Addressing this question perhaps requires considering the legal and practical aspect of the matter. As far as legal or constitutional

arrangement is concerned, it seems that there is no any visible problem between the region and the zones. Over this matter, we faced no any form of complain from the Sidama side. The crux of confrontation between the zone and the region as discussed before rather is linked to the question of regional self-determination.

However, when it comes to the relationships between the Sidama zone and Hawassa town, differentiation between the two levels of governments seems to be blurred and complicated, to say the least. Until 2002, the city had been governed as part of the Sidama zone and had no any sort of legal and administrative autonomy. However, with the 2002 and 2006 city proclamations, the town was accorded some sort of autonomy of self-administration. These proclamations were mainly meant for separation of city and zonal administrations and it may be considered as important innovation and achievement. Nevertheless, many of the town dwellers complain that real and effective differentiation between the zone and the town remains behind in practice. According to informants, both the zonal and urban administration posts (and staff in general) have been filled with the Sidama. Moreover, administrative staffs in both cases have overlapping interests to consider and administer the two administrative units as the same.

To complicate the matter more and more, there were informants who even link these problems of administrative differentiation of the town with the regional government itself. The ground of this argument is that for the last 20 years or so, except for one term (2002-2005/6), the Sidama has held presidential position in the SNNPR state. Hence, if not in the legislative and judiciary, the Sidama were dominant in executive branch of the regional government since the executive branch of government is very powerful in the region as is also the case in federal government (Ayele, 2013). This means that the Sidama have dominated administrative power in the Regional, Zonal, and Urban levels. In addition, the point is that each of this unit of government has an overlapping interest over the town, making it hard to differentiate between the city administration, the zonal and regional governments.

Most political problems in the town seem to boil down around this blurred boundary between the town and the other levels of government. Informants and observers see this as key problems for various political development processes in the city. For example, Serkalem Alemayehu argues, that lack of clear boundary among the power and responsibilities of Sidama zone, the SNNP regional government and the city administration of Hawassa, have been the main problems for

making the city home for all the ethno cultural communities on the one hand and economic growth of the town on the other (Serkalem, 2012: 97). We will discuss the economic aspect of the problem in the section to follow. Instead, there is another important and legitimate question to ask here. That is about autonomy of the city. In other words, this is to ask, how far the city of Hawassa has been able to operate with some degree of autonomy or discretion from the other levels of government, especially given such condition of blurred boundary between the town and other units/levels of government.

In fact, under such administrative intricacy it seems to be so challenging to speak about autonomy of the town, specifically about how far the town has been able to operate with some degree of autonomy or discretion from the other levels of government. In fact, much has been written about the status and level of regional and local autonomy in present Ethiopia's political setting (Aalen, 2002, 2006; Abink, 2006; Merera, 2006; Meheret, 2007). In what appears to be so surprising, the conclusion of all these and other research results is that there has been little or no local autonomy from higher level of state institutions, particularly from the central (federal) government. This conclusion is so much generalized and fails to consider contextual factors such as time (when), subject/issue (over which power), and place (in which locals). As a result, we assume, it does not seem to fit to every issue, at any time, and everywhere in the country. As we illustrate here, our observation in Hawassa town proves this.

For instance, if we take up the matter at very wider regional level, relative to Oromia regional state, the SNNPR state enjoys some degree of political and administrative autonomy in relations to central (federal) government. This is mainly due to differences in terms of the prevailing political situation/demands in each region. Needless to say, in Oromia there is political feeling and movement for independence (secession) which is an immediate challenge and concern of the federal government. As a result, there has been close observation and tight control over the region's political affairs by the central government. On the other hand, as we discussed above in SNNPR the main political challenge is question of independence (autonomy within the Ethiopian state) which definitely is not an immediate challenge to central government as well as to the ethnic federal political structure. Given that, the degree of federal involvement in and control over these two regions greatly varies. This means that the nature of political demands in the

regions has had an effect on the degree of autonomy. Same logic also applies to Adama town of Oromia and Hawassa town of SNNPR. Let us support this with evidence.

For example, based on our interview and various focused group discussions we came to learn that in Hawassa, there has been no any visible interference from federal government in mayoral appointment. Secondly, the town also enjoys fair autonomy in public administration such as staff recruitment. The fact that the city administration of Hawassa has been filled with personnel of ethnic Sidama proves this. Rather the challenge of autonomy of the town comes in when seen in relation to regional and zonal administration as discussed above. We treat the autonomy question of the town in relation to the region and zone in two different ways: autonomy of city administration (ruling personnel) and autonomy of the town as an entity. In the first case, the city administration authority, one can argue, are autonomous from the regional and zonal power, or at least will be so if they need it. However, the problem is that they prefer to work closely and in attachment with the regional and zonal governments for they share common interest to the town. In detachment from the town, the Sidama zonal administration well knows that the Sidama's interest in the town would not be secured. As well, in detachment from the zone, the Hawassa city administration well knows that it cannot maintain the hegemony of the Sidama over the town. Therefore, such intricate relationships between the two units of government are the effect of mutual interest rather than control or domination of one over the other.

Rather, the challenge of autonomy comes when we see the city as an entity. Despite some legal provisions for separation, the town is still considered as integral part of the Sidama zone. In fact, in black and white, there is deeply entrenched view among the Sidama authorities (of both zonal and urban administration) that Hawassa is Sidama and Sidama is Hawassa. Consequently, the town has come to lack real autonomy and independence since it has inescapably bound to the zonal and regional political issues. The effect of this lack of autonomy for the town as an independent entity is more than a question or problem of self-government. It is also about vulnerability of the town to the regional political processes and conflicts. Indeed, the town has fallen prey to the regional political problems since it is inescapably marked by political influence of Sidama's political question for regional self-determination and associated political developments. Consequently, political processes and developments of the town have come to be

shaped more in and by the regional political environment rather than its own internal social and political realities.

### 7.3 Meaning and implications for socio- economic development

Only few may disagree about the importance of political conditions for the processes of socioeconomic development in a given state or city. For example, scholars like Claude Ake (1999) have long associated the failure of economic development in Africa with political obstacles. As well, Ethiopia's inherent economic underdevelopment, to a large degree, is attributable to its hostile political environment, namely to the unduly concentration of power in the hands of few elites and the lack or minimal level of societal participation in the country's development processes. However, as it has been discussed in this thesis, the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country has generated some changes to these dominant political features of the country. Thus, we explore the effects and implications of these political changes for the processes of economic development in cities under consideration. In particular, the intention is to examine if the ethnic decentralization processes of the country that has generated societal engagement in politics has done the same in socio-economic development processes.

#### 7.3.1 The Case of Adama

Though measuring economic development requires use of economic indexes (which is beyond the scope and interest of this study), many have witnessed a better economic performance in Ethiopia after the country has been ethnically decentralized. In Adama, too, there have been some improvements in economic performance, such as in construction of buildings and roads, expansion of urban infrastructures, schools and colleges, clinics and the like. There are some important questions to ask in this connection. One is about how and why these economic improvements have come about. The other is to what extent the prevailing political environment of the country (of the town as well) engaged the local community in socio-economic development processes.

There are two contradictory observations we make here. One is the argument that the ethnic decentralization policy of the country and associated political developments like power divisions and political engagement has had some positive contributions to economic development processes in the town, such as by generating peoples engagement in development processes. The

other is that these same political situations have also been the main constraints to societal engagement in economic development processes in Adama city. To advance this argument, in fact, partly the spark of development processes in Adama can be explained as an account of the post -1991 political decisions that has unleashed economic liberalization processes which in turn have given rise to private investment in hotels, clinics, college and schools and the like. Still more so, the distribution and relationships of power in the town has had its share in positively contributing to economic progress in the town. Let us see, for example, the developmental effects of power relationships between the central and regional governments. As discussed above, for some kind of mutual advantages the EPRDF government has accorded the OPDO an administrative power over the Oromia regional state. OPDO has made its de facto administrative centre in Adama. Consequently, the town acquired special attention of the government (OPDO regime) in many ways, such as in construction of government owned buildings for administrative or other purposes, and spread of infrastructural facilities. The town has attenuated all these advantages more than and perhaps at the expense of all other towns in the region. Of course, that is why Adama is better today than any other town in the Oromia regional state.

Equally important, the economic-based relationships between the OPDO and Oromo business elites on the one hand and between OPDO and Oromo intellectuals on the other have had their own contributions to economic progress in the town. As it is made clear above, OPDO has co-opted some, if not all of the Oromo business elites. This in turn has created a condition of joint business affairs between these political and business elites. Whereas OPDO officials of the town provide administrative facilities, the business elites on their part bring in capital and entrepreneurship skill. Almost all informants agree that the progress of economic development in the town was attributable to this alliance or joint venture of the political and economic elites. True to this assumption, informants witness that major business sectors in the town, particularly those owned and run by the Oromo community were jointly owned by Oromo business and political elites.

As well, OPDO's co-optation of some Oromo intellectuals has had its own positive contributions to improvements in economic performance. As Siegfried Pausewang (2009) argues, in its early periods OPDO was staffed with uneducated personnel, which adversely affected the

development processes in the region. Nevertheless, informants agree that the co-optation of some Oromo intellectuals into the party mainly by offering economic opportunities has immensely minimized multiple administrative problems in the town such as challenges of technical and administrative competence. This viewpoint obviously contrasts the conventional assumption that attributes problems of decentralization processes to shortage of expertise (see van der Loop , 2002; Meheret, 2007). For example, in explaining the main problem of implementing decentralization in local Ethiopia, Theo van der Loop states,

*...the constraints to decentralization in Ethiopia are more practical than political. In this respect, shortage of trained and experienced manpower that handles administrative and technical issues of government and development as well as scarce financial resources can be cited as major constraints (2002: 89).*

However, at least presently, this assumption is less relevant to Adama city as Oromo intellectuals' involvement in the party and in urban administration largely improved the administrative issues of the city.

However, this does not mean that human and material resources have been fully harnessed for the development processes in the town. Nor do we have a conviction that the prevailing political terrain (namely power relations) have created conducive environment to society to involve or engage in socio- economic development processes in the city. Rather the kind of economic progress we talk about is only in relative terms, especially in comparison with the pre-1991 periods. Compared to the pre-1991 periods one can confidently talk about some sort of economic progress in the city, principally owing to the factors mentioned above. However, when seen from the perspective of all round potential of the town (see Kassahun, 2000; Adama city profile 2003 E.C) it may be difficult to assume that the town has performed well in development. In terms of potentials or conditions of economic development, Adama is better endowed, perhaps more than most towns of the country. As the biggest city of Oromia regional state, which is the biggest and resourceful of all other regions in the country, one normally expects it to be a better city in the country at least next to the national capital (Addis Ababa). However, unfortunately, this seems not to be the case. This, in turn, can lead to ask to why Adama city has failed to realize its full potential in development.

There might be several reasons for this. For example, according to some officials of the city administration, the major answer for the above question is that the city is not 'complete' seat of



regional government.<sup>162</sup> The rationale of this argument is that sisterly cities of other regional states performed economically better because they are the seats of governments of their respective regional states.<sup>163</sup> Still some city officials disagree with the view that Adama town has been performing less in terms of economic development. Even some argue that it takes second rank next to Addis Ababa in development progress (see Adama city profile 2003EC.), but without hiding that the town is not performing to its full potential.

From discussion made so far, we may discern at least three major interconnected political impasses for socio-economic development processes in Adama city: power relations, accommodation and corruption. We see first the adverse impact of power relation on socio-economic development processes of the city. As can easily be inferred from our discussion in chapter five, power relations in the town have been largely guided by and used as means of dominance or ‘social control’ rather than as a tool of ‘social production’ (see Stone, 1989). Power relations of social production as Stone defines in his regime theory of urban politics is that which is arranged in a way that it could harness resources and potentials of various actors for mutual interests, specifically to materialize a common or collective purposes (ibid). As Stone observes this way of power relations is essential for economic development processes in urban areas.

Nevertheless, in the case of Adama the nature and orientation of power relationships among the three loci of power discussed before (political power of central government, administrative power of OPDO and economic power of Amhara, Guraghe and Silte entrepreneurs) seem to contradict these realities since they tend to be more of political rivalries rather than development partners. Indeed, development anywhere and anytime is unthinkable without integrative efforts of political, administrative and economic powers (resources). Unfortunately, Adama city still needs to work to meet this development condition. If these conditions are to be met, it may require the EPRDF government to give priority or at least equal consideration to issue of economic development as regime security. So far, it seems that the power of the central

---

<sup>162</sup> For example, the decision to relocate the capital of Oromia regional state to Adama in 2000/1 was partly justified by the regional government this way.

<sup>163</sup> This notion particularly refers to Bahir Dar (capital of the Amhara regional state, Mekele (capital of the Tigray regional state), and Hawassa (capital of SNNPR). Before the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country, these cities were by far lesser than Adama in any measurement of development. However, presently they are either better or on similar status with Adama.

government seems to be used more as an instrument of social control rather than social production. On their part, as is discussed in chapter five, the Amhara and Gurage entrepreneurs seem to be politically dissatisfied, especially with the prevailing ethnic policy and its resultants, and hence were not willing enough to take part fully in the development processes of the town. Thus, there is a need to improve such mental setup of the urban entrepreneurs.

As discussed, there were cases in which the urban entrepreneurs used economic resources for political ends at the expense of socio-economic development processes. This practice applies to all of the political actors in the town including the ruling party, the business interests (entrepreneurs), and even ordinary citizens. As discussed, the ruling party has been using economic resources at its disposal to cultivate legitimacy and the entrepreneurs on their part were using their economic muscle as means to unseat the ruling regime. Moreover, the idea and practice of political consumerism have already been inculcated in the minds of the ordinary people, and consequently local people's behavior of consuming goods and services has come to be dictated more by political and ethnic consideration rather than by the price and taste of the goods and services.

A political actor, which is directly concerned with the town's development, is OPDO. Nevertheless, definitely it lacks the political and economic powers both of which are essential conditions for development processes. OPDO has only administrative power which in and of itself cannot generate development. An informant, holding one of key positions in the city administration expresses this notion shortly but insightfully as, *Kenya barcumni aangoo muka gogaa dha*. Literally this means that, *our power (of the city administration) is like a dried up tree and it is unyielding*.<sup>164</sup> Asked to explain more about it, the informant stated that on the one hand economic resources necessary for development processes were in the hands of non-Oromo communities who were not willing to invest in the town, and on the other hand, the OPDO has no real political power to enact and enforce development policies. Though it is not clear what kind of inclusive development policy they would enact and enforce if they would get the kind of power they claim, this explanation vividly reveals the powerlessness of the city administration and OPDO in general to engender required economic growth in the town of Adama. The reason

---

<sup>164</sup> *Interview with an official in the city Administration August 15 2013, Adama*

for this is clear – the limit in political and economic power, both of which are essential for development processes.

This brings us to the question of the nexus between diversity accommodation and socio-economic development processes in the city of Adama. Perhaps the question of the problem of diversity accommodation may be an essential factor to explain problems of urban entrepreneur's engagement in development processes in Adama, given that the economic potential required for the development processes were mainly under the control of the non-Oromo ethnic groups of the town. There are officials in the city administration who complain that there are some non-Oromo community of the town who have no interest to contribute what they can or have to the development processes of the town ( see Addis Zemen Gazeta Tir 10, 1994 EC). There are also informants who see capital flight from the town to other regional states, particularly to the ethnic homeland of groups who do not ethnically belong to the town (region).<sup>165</sup> Surprisingly, some residents of the city mention name by name who invests what and where. Such rumor is neither easy to prove nor is it logical to ignore. Indeed, there is some indication about its validity. First, most buildings in the city are owned either by the Oromo private entrepreneur's or are a joint property of Oromo politicians and entrepreneurs. Contrary to this, evidence from the municipality shows that daily income of the non-Oromo entrepreneurs is by far greater than that of their Oromo counterparts. Yet, where those capitals go is not clear.

Moreover, some non-Oromo entrepreneurs of Adama town themselves do witness a big political challenge to invest in the city with their full potential. Constraints that they present include political, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption and taxation factors (see Addis Zemen Gazeta Tir 10, 1994 EC). Of several political factors presented, the most fascinating one is what one entrepreneur of fabulous wealth stated. Asked why he hesitates to invest in Adama, he shortly but amazingly replied: *Remember Eritrea*.<sup>166</sup> The informant explained this notion in two ways. One is the fear that one day Oromia would secede like Eritrea, which according to them might result in loss of their property. According to same informant and many other informants, the fear

---

<sup>165</sup> *Focus Group discussion, Adama 14 August 2013.*

<sup>166</sup> *Interviews with a rich business elite of Amhara origin (born and grew in the town) (age 62) , 19 June 2012, Adama.*

of Oromia's secession is the main political constraint for the non-Oromo business community of Adama town to engage fully in the development processes of the town such as investment. The sources of such fear are both constitutional and practical. Constitutionally, in its article 39 the 1995 federal Constitution affirms the right of nations and nationalities of the country for secession. Practically there are influential political organizations in the country who have been struggling for the independence of Oromia. The other is fear of dislocation in case of conflicts as it happened during the Ethio- Eritrea war (1998-2000), which resulted in dislocation and deportation of one another's citizens leaving their properties behind(see Medhane and Young, 2003).

This feeling is common among many of the non-Oromo urban entrepreneurs in Adama. Perceived or reality, it adversely affects business engagement in urban development processes. Moreover, it gives hint about the importance and perhaps urgency of reconsidering the question of diversity accommodation in the town. Therefore, to expedite economic development in the town, there is a need to accommodate the various interests and identities in the city and it is only then that they release and exert their full potential for the socio- economic development processes in the city.

### 7.3.2 The Case of Hawassa

What was the relevance of the post-ethnic decentralization political environment to socio-economic development processes in Hawassa city? Has political engagement followed by economic engagement in the city? In what ways do the established political orders (power relations) in the town has contributed or failed to contribute to socio-economic development processes, especially from the perspective of pulling together the potentials of various ethno-cultural communities. These are among the major questions to address in this section.

Serkalem Alemayehu (2012) and Abiy Ero (2013) have argued that the prevailing political regime in Hawassa town has not been much conducive for socio-economic development processes. They arrived on the conclusion researching on different aspects of economic sector. Sekalem's research focus was on the competence and legitimacy of the urban administration to mobilize the masses for the urban development agenda. His conclusion is that,

*With regard to economic participation [in the city of Hawassa] the ethno-cultural communities were not actively participated and their diverse skills and experience were not fully utilized. [Due to]... the political dominance of one ethno cultural group in administrative, political and economic strata... (Serkalem, 2012: 94).*

He goes on to state,

*Whenever the administration want to get financial or other assistance from the society, it is hard to mobilize the people. This is because the unrepresented groups have felt that they are not as such part and parcel of the city compound (Serkalem, 2012:62).*

The core point in this argument, therefore, is that the limits in accommodating ethno cultural groups in the town's political and administrative posts and resources impeded urban community initiation and commitment for the development processes of the city.

On the other hand, Abiy's research focus was on the degree of private investment engagement in the development processes of the city. Accordingly, he states his findings as follows.

*Most of the respondents and informants considered ethnicity as a major attributes of discriminatory treatment among them; hence, affected the business climate of the city. They stated that ethnic preference has made business entry and doing in the city difficult; largely, it has distorted business competition. A number of respondents have faced discriminatory treatment in terms of service delivery; access to land; tax liability assessment; public project awards and procurement. Investors of local ethnic members have received various incentives and support services than others did. The former investors easily accessed investment land, and public project and procurement awards than the later. Investment lands were allocated merely by taking into account the identity of investors rather than with due consideration of investment objectives and benefits according to informant investors (Abiy, 2013:93).*

Serkalem and Abiy share common view in identifying problem of ethnic accommodation as the major or at least as one of the major impediments to mass engagement in socio-economic development processes in Hawassa town. Yet, both recognize some moderate socio-economic progress in the town, especially since the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country. Similarly, a considerable number of informants witness some socio-economic progress in the town, especially after the 2005 election. How, then, this progress has come about?

For Serkalem, as many of my interviewees also agree, the main source of socio-economic progress in the town is mainly from government budget. They see insignificant initiatives and interest from the private economy in the town's development agenda. Abiy, however, observes some level of involvement of the private economy in the development processes of the town.

However, he still maintains that the driving motive of private business initiation and interest in involving in urban development agenda has very less to do with the political climate, but with strategic location and resource abundance of the area.

However, our observation of relationships between political environment and socio-economic development in Hawassa city differs slightly and, at times so significantly from the conclusion cited. As we illustrate here, there are conditions in which the political environment of the town has substantially created an alliance between political and business elites for common purpose of the development agenda of the town. At the same time, there are also cases or conditions in which the political environment of the town has become an impediment to economic environment. We substantiate each of this argument with evidence as follows.

In the first case, our argument focuses on alliance and cooperation between the Sidama elites for the development processes of the town. In a way that the urban regime theory (Stone, 1989) stipulates, the Sidama elites (comprising political, professional and business actors) have established strong and firm unity among themselves with respect to the development agenda of the town. Regime theory of urban politics emphasizes the interdependence and cooperation between government and business actors as well as professional (technical experts) for development goals of urban hall. This is exactly what was in practice in Hawassa town, as far as the Sidama are concerned. The underlying cause for this unity, we argue, is political as discussed above. Unity of political purpose has generated conditions of cooperation and coordination among the political, business and professional (technical) elites of Sidama for development agenda. Consequently, the rich Sidama live and invest in Hawassa, highly skilled Sidama professional elites also live and work in Hawassa, and the Sidama political elites show utmost commitment to facilitate working environment for these business and professional elites.<sup>167</sup>

As most agree, effective change in socio-economic progress has begun to be registered in Hawassa only after 2005 election. Dwellers of the city witnessed that major buildings and main infrastructural provisions were the post-2005 achievements. Official statistics on the socio-economic profile of the town verify this reality. Nevertheless, there is disagreement about the real causes of these changes. Some see it from the perspective of government policy direction to

---

<sup>167</sup> *Such political commitment and environment however works not for the non-Sidama ethnic groups of the city.*

urban areas as a corrective measure for loss of urban public trust as observed in the result of the election and attendant crises. The other view is what the Sidama ruling elites suggest as the outcome of the commitment of the city administration, headed by the Sidama. It should be noted that the domination of the Sidama in the city administration in large degree is also the post- 2005 event. This coincidence, therefore, complicates which of the above arguments sounds more. Yet, the two arguments are not mutually exclusive as such since the Sidama's domination of the town itself was part of the post-2005 government policy attention, as discussed before. Thus, one tempts to ask, if authorizing a single ethnic group over a town or over any administrative units matter in positively contributing to development processes. In other words, this is to ask if the Sidama's control over city administration of Hawassa town has positively contributed to the development processes in the town.

Asked to reflect on this point, one Sidama elite in the city administration answered 'yes', with no doubt and reservation.<sup>168</sup> His justification for his position was that: *our minds and hands, and our pockets and chairs are always in and for the town*. The interpretation of this ironic expression is deep and needs some elaboration. For clarity, first by minds he meant educated and experts of Sidama, hands refers to laborers, pocket refers to business groups and chairs mean government officials (political elites). One of the interpretations of the above ironic expression is what we stated above that the Sidama elites of all categories live and work in Hawassa town, which of course is an asset for development processes. The other interpretation of the above metaphor is to mean that non-Sidama dwellers of the town have no full commitment in and for the town in development processes. Especially as same informant argues there were some groups who collect resources from Hawassa and investment in other places, particularly in their home of ethnic origin.

Of course, as our informant above argues there was some contribution of the unity of the Sidama elites for socio-economic development processes of the town, mainly by forming unity, cooperation and coordination among the Sidama elites. This unity of purpose over the development agenda, in fact, was not limited in inter-elite relationships. Equally important to consider is also the unity of the regional, zonal and city administrations for the development processes of the town. As discussed above, these three loci of power, being dominated by the

---

<sup>168</sup> *Interview with assistant city Administration, 09 July, 2012.*

Sidama, have had overlapping interests in the town. Unlike its negative effect on political development processes (discussed above), this overlapping interests of the three levels of government seems to have positively contributed to the development of the town in some way. In many ways, these three levels of government have worked in cooperation and coordination among each other to the socio-economic well-being of the city. Even, some informants (of non-Sidama ethnic groups) complain that some regional budget and related resources unduly leak to the town and through the town to Sidama zone.

It may be important, therefore, to mark some contribution of inter-elite and inter-governmental unity, coordination and cooperation in contributing to the development processes in Hawassa. In the same vein, inter-societal and elite society unity is essential for development processes as observed well in the case of Sidama. However, this is not to mean that a single ethnic group dominated urban administration and fusion of different levels of government such as in Hawassa case is a fruitful and recommendable model for development processes. As we shall see it next, such arrangement is also equally detrimental to mobilization of people and resources for development goals, especially in ethnically diverse society. As Serkalem Alemayehu (2012) and Abiy Ero(2013) rightly argued the practice of political exclusion in most cases has been hostile to socio-economic development in Hawassa city. Particularly, the non-Sidama ethnic groups, which still dominate the private economy, have no good will to cooperate to the city administration for the purpose of city development goals. As Serkalem rightly argued above, this is due to their marginalization from political and administrative resources of the town.

However, we argue that, if not with full potential, private business (owned by the non-Sidama) still were partaker in the development processes in Hawassa, but were not necessarily the development partner of the city administration. As discussed above, some of the giant private business sectors and companies with huge employment opportunity and income for the town (such as in the form of taxation) were owned by non-Sidama either born in the city or moved to the city from other places. For example, big resorts and hotels in the city like Haile and Gezaghen resorts were owned by people coming from Oromia. The former resort was owned by Haile Gebre Sellassie, a famous Ethiopian athlete of distance runner, and the latter by Gezahegn Abera, Gold Medal winner in Marathon in 2000 Sydney Olympic—both from Oromia. In other industrial sectors were also many non-Sidama investors in the town ranging from running such



small business as shops to big industries. Therefore, it is important to ask what has attracted such big investments to the town in such unfavorable political environment.

According to our findings, there were three main reasons for this. The first is that (as discussed above) the economic (business) environment is relatively open for everyone in the town. Unlike in political and administrative arenas private economic sectors are accommodative, and this could be one important factor for engagement of private business in the town. For those who do not mind about political and administrative power the town was open for business. The second reason relates to low level of development with the Sidama urban economy and business culture.

<sup>169</sup>Some informants in the town argue that since the Sidama were only new comers to the urban business they are not well developed to compete and marginalize other ethnic groups engaged in similar jobs with better experience and financial resources in running business activities. It seems that the Sidama have not yet developed urban business culture and entrepreneur skills to the level they could compete and dominate the urban business. In fact, we have witnessed this fact when observing various buildings owned by the Sidama but rented for others for business activities. There were, of course, only few Sidama entrepreneurs in big business activities. Remarkably, some own only buildings without business activities in them except the monthly income they earn from the rent. Taking one building as a case, we compared an income that a Sidama man earns from the rent and an income that the entrepreneurs earn from the building. The result is that the rent income of the owner of the building was 60 times less than that of the entrepreneurs renting the building for business. This shows us that the Sidama are still not so dominant in urban business. Moreover, this also illustrates some sort of business bargaining between the Sidama who rent the building and non-Sidama who were renting the building for business activities. This is a kind of mutual benefit, even if not on equal terms in benefit.

The third and perhaps most important factor for investment in Hawassa city is relative political security. As discussed in chapter six, section 6.5), in the region, it seems that there will be no fundamental political problem that puts the property of the investors in jeopardy, such as issues of secession which is a chronic problem in Oromia and Ethiopian Somali regions. As discussed above, in the case of Adama the main reason why the business elites (namely the non-Oromo)

---

<sup>169</sup> *As it is discussed in this thesis the Sidama and the Oromo are the most marginalized society from urban life, even in cities in their territory.*

hesitate to involve in big and long-term business activities is in fear of the Oromo movement for independence from Ethiopia. However, in the case of Sidama the major political question is secession only from the SNNPR region not from the country. Such issues of difference in terms of political orientation between Oromia and Sidama affected the level of entrepreneurs' engagement in socio-economic development processes in respective regions and cities therein. It applies to the difference between Adama and Hawassa, in terms of attracting and hosting business.

#### 7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the question: if the Ethiopia's ethnic-federal political order has instigated a meaningful societal engagement in socio-economic development, specifically in the two case study cities. The overall finding of the chapter mixed: positive and negative. On the positive account, for example, in political terms some significant progresses are observable, such as the development of societal interest in state and engagement in state political affairs, such as engagement in contest and bargaining over state power, citizenship and symbolic identities. Truly, the development of societal political engagement in various forms shows the degree of political consciousness among the local community. Indeed, these are important steps towards, democratization processes. Yet, such developments are equally negative since they are not institutionalized, and largely anti-constituional. The analysis of the chapter r illustrates there are chronic limitation in harnessing popular political movement into the formal political institutions, and this in turn impeded popular participation in decision-making processes.

In socio-economic terms, too, there are success and failure cases. In positive side, we have the expansion of infrastructures in urban centers, which in many ways are related to the decentralization processes. As well, in some cases, the ethnic decentralization proceses of the country enhahced intra-ethnic unity and commitment for the development of their respective cities and towns. This is, largely a case in Hawassa city, and to some extent in Adama. Yet, in both cases, there has been wide and deep gap in mobilizing resources and skills of the so-called ethnic outsiders for the urban socio-economic development processes. Failure to improve this

problem can remain the main challenge for the socio-economic development of multiethnic cities such as in our case study cities.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to explore the implementation and effects of Ethiopia's ethnic decentralization in urban areas of the country focusing on two secondary cities of multiethnic compositions, namely, Adama of Oromia and Hawassa of SNNPRS. In line with the promise, the study has addressed the following interrelated questions. Firstly, it explored the nature and extent of urban accommodation in the country's ethnic federal political arrangement. Secondly, the study examined the political effects of the country's ethnic federal decentralization on state-society and inter-society relationships in urban areas of the country, particularly in the two case study cities. And lastly, the study explicated the overall implications of the country's ethnic federal political arrangements for the political and socio-economic development processes in the two case study cities. Now, it is time to draw the general conclusions reached at throughout the entire journey of this work. This concluding remark is organized in such a way that, firstly, we recapitulate, if not recount, the major findings and arguments made so far. Secondly, by way of comparing and contrasting the experiences of the two case study cities, an attempt is made to draw out some essential conclusions of academic and policy relevance and implications. And finally, it ends up by pinpointing to some key issues to be researched in the future with respect to the relationships between the ethnic federal decentralization and urban centers in the country.

#### 8.1. Ethnic federal decentralization and urban accommodation in Ethiopia

Obviously, federalism is taken as a political formula for diversity accommodation, mainly in reference to its inherent values like the recognition, representation and empowerment of diversities, what so ever the diversities may be.<sup>170</sup> Indeed, there are different forms of federal arrangements depending on various factors. One of the forms of federal arrangement, to which the Ethiopian brand belongs, is the ethnic federal model. And this form of federalism is supposed to work for societies of ethno-cultural diversities. However, as it is already noted, as a theory and practice of government, federalism (and ethnic federalism) is relevant to the geographically or territorially concentrated identities such as ethno-cultural groups. Urban areas, particularly cities

---

<sup>170</sup> *Basically, it is to these values of federalism that the concept of accommodation refers in this study*

and towns in Ethiopia, may be as elsewhere, are known for hosting people of ethno-cultural diversities. The central theme of this study is how ethnic federalism works when it dissolves to multiethnic cities and towns as a means of urban diversity accommodation. The root of this particular point is the non-territorial settlement of urban ethno-cultural diversities such as in the two case study cities. Put differently, instead of holding a separate urban space, the various ethno-cultural groups live intermingled in the country. It is tempting, therefore, to tackle the challenge.

The overall finding of the study is that the application of ethnic federal decentralization in urban areas as a means of ethno cultural diversity accommodation is untenable. Indeed, the experience of Adama and Hawasaa cities show that ethnic federalism is a challenge for urban; and urban is a challenge for ethnic federal theory of government, particularly in terms of urban ethno-diversity governance. As already identified, factors for the incongruity of relationships between ethnic federalism and urban centers in urban ethno-cultural diversity management are complex, and range from philosophical to practical levels. At philosophical level, as Will Kymlicka, argues in order “for federalism to serve as a mechanism for self-government, it must be possible to draw [territorial boundaries of] federal subunits in such a way that the national minorities form a majority within particular subunits” (2005:2830). Nevertheless, against this general tenet of federalism, in most cities and towns of the world (including Ethiopia), two or more ethno-cultural groups share common urban spaces leaving no possibility to draw a clear line between them in a way that each could control a separate urban space and then be able to exercise the right of self-government therein. While the paradox is crystal clear as such, there is no scholarly answer, even an attempt to address the gap in federal studies. Therefore, one of the conclusions that this study would like to make is that the fault line of federalism (the ethnic model), in terms of urban diversity governance, has got philosophical and theoretical roots.

From this stance, one can draw some important theoretical and practical matters. In the first place, it implies the need to work seriously on how federalism (ethnic federalism) should fit to urban ethno-cultural diversities accommodation, even at theoretical level. There is also a practical question to be noted here like, for example, how ethnic federalism works in practice on the ground in urban diversity management in the context where there is no clear philosophical

and theoretical foundation.<sup>171</sup> As the findings of this study reveal, in practice, too, there is a challenge for urban diversity governance in ethnic federal political arrangements, and Ethiopia is the living testimony for this. As it is argued in this study, the malfunctioning of ethnic federalism in the cities of Adama and Hawassa could be taken as an exemplary where federalism miserably failed to work as a means of urban ethno-cultural diversity accommodation.

In substantiating the predicaments of urban diversity management in the ethnic federal political setting, this study does not intend to attribute every problem to the theoretical loophole. In Ethiopia, the challenges of urban diversity management in the ethnic federal setting go beyond philosophical limitations. In the country, the fault line needs to be sought in the practice itself, too. How the country's ethnic decentralization processes have been conceived, planned and implemented in multiethnic cities is full of challenges. As it is argued, at constitutional level, the urban centers are the most neglected administrative units in the country. Federal and regional constitutions are silent about urban centers. In the processes of institutionalizing the country's ethnic federal framework during the transition periods (in early 1990s), it happened that the then policy makers were not much interested in urban issues.<sup>172</sup> Consequently, the ethnic federal political frameworks of the country, especially constitutions (of the federal government and regional states) have been institutionalized without explicitly recognizing urban centers as distinct units of governance. Consequently, the cities and towns of the country were destined to be treated arbitrarily.

For example, as indicated earlier, the city of Harar was accorded a regional statehood status of self-governance. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa were categorized as federal cities, where as the remaining are designated as the regional cities. To the surprising of many, there is no clear logic for such arbitrary treatment of the urban centers in the country's federal arrangement. Moreover, in either case, there was neither an intention nor a plan to accommodate the urban ethno-cultural diversities. For example, the city of Harar became one of the nine constituent units of the

---

<sup>171</sup> *The relevance of this particular question is that, in such loose philosophical and theoretical foundations, it is very difficult to make ethnic federalism a workable political formula for diversity governance in urban centers, unless there is an innovative approach.*

<sup>172</sup> *Some might assume that the interests of urban centers are marginalized due to the insignificance of the urban in the country. But as it is argued, urban have been the center of opposition to the EPRDF regime right from the beginning.*

country's federation, not in consideration for accommodating its ethno-cultural diversity but empower the Harari people, which constitute only 7% of the total population of the city ( see also Assefa, 2006). Hence, it is very difficult to consider this measure is as an appropriate means of urban diversity accommodation. This may corroborate with Yash Ghai reflection that "The federal model may be regarded as unnecessary if the need is to accommodate only one or two minority groups (2000:9). Equally remarkable, Addis Ababa became a federal territory not primarily in consideration for diversity accommodation but to serve as capital for the country. As it was already discussed, due to these constitutional flaws, all other multiethnic towns of the country including our case study cities were left to be part of (annex to) their respective ethno-regional governments.

The concern of this study is not with the placement of urban areas under the jurisdiction of ethno-regional states but with the lack of clear constitutional provisions regarding their administrative status given the complex historical, political, economic and cultural issues embedded in cities and towns of the country.

As the two case study cities indicate, it was not long for the EPDRF regime to harvest the economic, political and social consequences of the negligence of urban centers in the ethnic federal order of the country. Unwillingness to participate in urban development processes became visible in most of the urban citizens of the country including in the case study cities. Moreover, cities became the main source of opposition to the EPRDF regime, and the ethnic federal arrangement that the regime introduced to the country. As already discussed (see also the section to follow), the political consequences of urban negligence in the Ethiopia's ethnic federation were much more. All these crises compelled the ruling regime to respond to the matter in some ways. Especially, since the turn of the twenty - first century, ten years after the country's transition to ethnic federation, the EPRDF government has made some impressive moves to address the urban government problems by enacting various proclamations that have promised the right of self-governance for major cities and towns of the country (see chapter five for details).

The ruling regime has placed much hope in these policies as a solution to the problems of urban governance in Ethiopia. Unquestionably, relevant policies and proclamations can positively

contribute to alleviating the urban governance problems. To some degree they have promised to solve the self-government problem of municipalities, especially in relation to service delivery issues (Meheret, 2008). Yet, as it is argued, like the regional and federal constitutions, a series of urban proclamations were not explicit enough to deal with or tackle the core problems of urban ethno-cultural diversity accommodation. Therefore, from these analyses, it is fair to conclude that there were constitutional and policy (proclamation) gaps in the present Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement for the urban ethno-cultural accommodation.

As explained, the challenges for the successful accommodation of multiethnic cities in the Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement go beyond constitutional limitations. There were also historical, political and development policy impediments. As argued in different chapters of this study, the historical problems of urban accommodation in Ethiopia's ethnic federation are directly related to the history of urbanization in the country. Especially, in the so-called the conquered parts of the country, most urban centers were originated by the conquering northern forces for political and military ends, notably as centers of control and domination over the conquered people and lands. The deeply ingrained memories of historical oppression (the sense of oppressor and oppressed between the so-called settlers and natives) has made it difficult to reconcile and accommodate ethnic diversities in urban centers. This is evident in both case study cities. From the natives side (who feel to have been historically marginalized and alienated from the urban political-economy), there has been a tendency to consider the historically dominant groups as 'former oppressors' and consequently there is also a tendency to use the ethnic federal political arrangement as a means of revenge rather than as a means of diversity accommodation. On the other hand, the historically advantaged urban dwellers tended to consider the ethnic federal arrangement as a threat to their interests and security. Such a historical burden, therefore, has become a formidable challenge for urban diversity governance in Ethiopia. Because of such historical precedents, there have been chronic challenges both in Adama and Hawassa cities to harvest the benefits that a federal form of government offered for the multiethnic societies.

Apart from this historical burden, various political factors impeded the application of ethnic decentralization for diversity accommodation in multiethnic cities of Ethiopia such as in our case study cities. Instead of serving as the center of innovation and development, urban centers became the center of conflicts for power. On the one hand, inter-ethnic conflicts for dominance



are heightened in the country's ethnic federal order. On the other hand, opposition to the regime on power escalated. Though there may be various groups and interests with various reasons and objectives to oppose the EPRDF government and its ethnic federal politics, the main source of resistance (opposition) lies in viewing the country's ethnic federal political arrangement as an instrument of political control rather than as a genuine device for diversity accommodation. Consequently, opposition groups of the urban elites engaged in struggle for power have targeted to reverse (thwart) the federal system rather than contributing to its development. Equally important, the ruling regime has for long perceived urban areas as the center of opposition to its policies and rules. In conclusion, one can state that urban elites' assumption of the country's ethnic decentralization processes as an instrument of political control rather than as a genuine means of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation; and the ruling regime' perception of urban areas as center of opposition rather than as center of development and innovation curtailed ethnic federalism to function as a means of diversity accommodation in urban areas of Ethiopia.

Added to the above challenges, there were also problems in the treatment of urban centers in the national development policy of the country. The EPRDF regime made rural and agricultural economy central to its national development policy by relegating urban centers to secondary position. This left urban centers in poverty, which in turn has had adverse consequences such as urban mistrust on the ethnic federal policy. As discussed, recently the ruling regime seems to have turned its face to urban in development policies and strategies, which mainly deals with creating job opportunities, housing, and other facilities. How far this could be effective in condition of neglecting the fundamental political questions such as issues of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation remains to time test.

Two key points deserve a reflection on the marginalization of the urban in the EPRDF's national development policy. One is the logic behind the urban negligence and the other is its implications. In the first case, the EPRDF regime justifies the demographic insignificance of the urban centers of the country as they stand today. True to the regime's claim, the urban population of the country is under 20% presently. However, in reality, this logic may not work as such on two grounds. Firstly, there is a fast rate of urbanization in the country which in turn calls attention in development policies of the country. Secondly, the success of rural development without equal consideration for its urban partner is less likely. Sooner or later, the regime is

expected to revisit its development policy orientation in a way it pulls the issues of urban to the center.

In summary, as far as the accommodation of the urban and ethno-cultural diversities therein is concerned, the overall conclusion of this study is that Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement as it stands today seems to be not in the right setting due to the various limitations mentioned. Therefore, one can fairly suggest the need to find ways in which the country's ethnic federal political arrangement may be adapted to urban specific context. Conclusively, Ethiopia's ethnic federal form of government needs to reinvent itself to work in multiethnic cities as a mechanism of diversity accommodation. And doing that could involve the contributions of scholars and policy makers alike.

However, one cannot conclude that the effects of ethnic federalization in urban Ethiopia are exclusively fruitless. Futile though it turned out to be in urban diversity accommodation, the ethnic federal policy of the country has engendered significant effects in urban centers of the country, namely Adama and Hawassa. The following section of this chapter makes concluding remarks on this particular point.

## 8.2. Ethnic federal decentralization and negotiating statehood in Adama and Hawassa cities

Once in place, any political order will have political consequences, whether in line with the original plan or not. Similarly, as already discussed, Ethiopia's ethnic federal decentralization processes have got a number of significant effects in Adama and Hawassa cities. To recount just a few, in the first place, we find a meaningful change in the demographic compositions of cities. In Adama and Hawassa cases, the so-called natives (namely the Oromo and the Sidama peoples) came to share the urban life with a significant influence on the cultural and political landscape of the cities.<sup>173</sup> In that case, it may be noted that ethnic decentralization in the country has contributed in creating opportunities for the Oromo and the Sidama people to share urban life. Even, the study goes to argue that most cities of the country, namely in Oromia and SNNPR have become multiethnic in real sense only after the introduction of the ethnic decentralization in the country.

---

<sup>173</sup> *It is already argued that due to exclusionary political and cultural settings the Ethiopian people have not got equal chance of access to urban life.*

The other notable consequence of ethnic decentralization in urban Ethiopia, at least in the two case cities, was the changes that it brought to structures and distribution of power. As argued in this study, in pre-decentralizations periods, power was extremely concentrated in the hands of certain groups, namely the urban elites. However, the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country has defaced and divided power in some ways. As forcefully argued, in Adama case, there was a division of political, administrative and economic power, in which the central government held political power, with the OPDO holding administrative power and others like the Amhara and Guraghe are dominant in economic power, or accumulation of resources. Similarly, in the case of Hawassa city, the central government held the political power while the Sidama elites and the Amhara and Wolayta were dominant in the administrative and economic positions, respectively. The tragedy, however, is that such divisions of power were not in line with the constitutional and democratic principles. Simply, it is a patronage and an appeasement design, and hence yields nothing to the democratization process in the country.

While such and other similar changes could be taken as important developments in urban Ethiopia after the introduction of ethnic federal decentralization in the country, the focus of this study, however, is on the changes that the ethnic federation of the country brought to state-society and inter-society relations in urban centers, namely in the two case study cities. As the title of the study suggests, and as it is also thoroughly argued in various chapters, the most significant effects of Ethiopia's ethnic federal decentralization in urban parts of the country is the development of societal interest in state and engagement in negotiating statehood, namely the contest and compromise over the core elements of state, like, the power, resources, history, symbols, images, identities and resources of the state. The study argued that to the level unknown in the political history of the country, the ethnic decentralization processes in Ethiopia have initiated local based interest in state and engagement in contest and bargaining over statehood. Thus, how ethnic decentralization devolves the politics of statehood to the local level and engages the local community is of academic and policy interest.

Accordingly, it is important to recapitulate and substantiate the argument along with the conceptual and analytical tools used to arrive at the conclusion. To begin with the conceptual matters, there was a necessity to conceptualize the notion of state and statehood beyond power relations or domination and include the history, image, symbols and the territorial aspects of

state. Considering negotiation in conventional ways such as in a formal and peaceful manner where the actors and arenas of action are formally known may not be relevant to studies such as this. Rather the notion of negotiation in the context of statehood should include multiple and complex actors, arenas, and means of negotiation as it is done in this study. Moreover, the tradition of the dichotomy between the state- centered and society- centered theories of the state-society relations in understanding and explaining the nature and dynamics of politics in contemporary local Ethiopia doesn't help much since there is a strong mutual interest and influence between the state and society. The notion of society-in-state, which among other emphasizes the societal interest in state and engagement in state politics, rather gives a better leverage in this regard.

As the findings of the present study reveal, state is at the center of conflict and negotiation in urban Ethiopia. As Yash Ghai succinctly captures, "Most major conflicts of our time are internal to the state and revolve around the claims of access to or the redesign of the state" (2000: preface). Similarly, in our case study cities, the issue of state and statehood has been the principal 'objects' and objectives of political contest and bargaining. For example, as discussed before, in Adama case, the main point of contest has been about access to or preservation of state power, which was primarily taking place between the central government, the regional government and the various urban business elites. Similarly, central to political contest and negotiation in Hawassa city was the Sidama elites' quest for regional statehood by seceding from the SNNPR. Equally remarkable, the history, symbols, citizenships and resources of the two cities were highly subjected to conflict and negotiation between the various interests and actors.

The most important point worth noting here is the engagements of the urban mass in such processes of negotiation. Obviously, the various post-decentralization political developments (engagements) in effect may be primarily portrayed as elite – driven. Truly, the driving force of political engagement in the two case study cities were elites who stood in rather different relationships to the federal state, namely those who co-opted and tried to safeguard the prevailing order, and those who appear to be alienated and hence engaged in politics of resistance, even replacement. It may be on this basis that many scholars (see for example, Fantu, 2009; Merera, 2003 and Vaughan, 2006) characterize the present political dynamics of the country as the sole business of the elites. However, as the findings of the study in Adama and

Hawassa cities reveal, it would be untenable to see the post-decentralization political engagements in local Ethiopia as the sole business of the elites or as the one confined to small political and business elites. In post-ethnic decentralization, one can argue, state politics (namely contest and conflict over statehood) is no more an elite business. One can capture these developments by adopting and using the concept of political engagement in a very broad sense ranging from the constitutional ones (such as participation in election) to the unconstitutional levels such engagements in secession wars. It is at this juncture that this study boils together the contradictory views and perspectives on the consequences of federalism.

As discussed, there were various ways in which elites in both case study cities played key roles in involving local masses into politics. These, among others, include the use ethnic affinity, symbolic and material assets. The first point is elites' appeal to and mobilization of the ethnic kin for various political ends. For example, in the case of Hawassa city, the Sidama elites managed to mobilize the Sidama masses (urban and rural) in the demand for regional self-determination, as manifested in such forms as getting them involved in violent demonstrations at different times. Consequently, the Sidama elite's inspiration for separate regional state and lust for control over the city of Hawassa seem to have a good deal of sympathy and support from urban even rural Sidama population. Therefore, it may not be tenable to conceive that the elite and popular interests are remote from one another in this respect. In the Adama city context, too, the notion that OPDO, of course the Oromo nation in general deserves political autonomy has a popular support. However, this does not mean that the ruling elites in both case study cities represent the interests of local (urban) masses. It is only to mean that elites and masses share similar viewpoints over some key political issues such as mentioned above.

The use of symbols (such as the names of place, individuals and monuments) were another important means which elites successfully utilized to attract and engage urban masses in politics. Change of names of the two cities from Nazareth to Adama and from Awassa to Hawassa had popular backing from their respective communities, as were also street and place name changes inside the cities. These were primarily political measures, two of which needs mentioning. One is an act of 'decolonizing' place names; the other is a means to reassure the right of ownership over the cities for the Oromo and Sidama nations, respectively. Evidence in both case study cities reveals that these political intentions were well inculcated in the minds of urban masses. As our

findings reveal, this measure drew popular support. Various monuments of heavy political bearings also played similar roles. Equally important, there were resistance even counter measures from the non-Oromo and non-Sidama ethnic groups, in Adama and Hawassa cities, respectively. As such, these symbolic forms of political engagements helped to politically connect elites and the masses both in Adama and in Hawassa. As thoroughly argued and illustrated, the politics of names and symbols goes to individual family level in Adama city context. Especially, 're-Oromization' of names and the use of every materials including house utensils for political expression have become the daily activities of the urban community. This in turn has developed reactive effects or counter-reaction on the part of other ethnic groups of the city, especially the Amhara, as they also use politically charged names and symbols.

Economic incentive was another repository that elites have used to involve masses in state politics. Using economic incentives such as access to employment, urban land, and discriminatory opportunities of access to business facilities were among the important means used by the urban elites to attract masses to government and hence to state politics. In the Adama case, these economic opportunities were primarily used as a means to cultivate legitimacy and support for the OPDO. In Hawassa case, they were used mainly as means of mobilizing urban and even rural Sidama masses for the claim (demand) of regional statehood and aspiration for control over the city. The use of economic incentive as a means of cultivating political support was widely practiced by other urban political interests such as the Amhara and Guraghe business elites in the Adama city context. Consequently, as it is well discussed in the Adama city case, the politicization of private business in turn introduced into the country the practice of political marketing and political consumerism as important means of political engagement.

In conclusion, there were three major ways in which these urban level mass political engagements were connected to the country's ethnic decentralization. Firstly, in 'ethicizing' territory and territorializing ethnicity, the country's ethnic decentralization has highly encouraged the local people to involve in politics, including in negotiating over statehood. Secondly, since ethnicity forms the foundation of the country's federal decentralization, it helped the elites to mobilize the mass by way of appealing to ethnic ethos. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was the politics of exclusion and inclusion of the country's federation that

rendered mass engagement in state politics at the local level such as in the two case study cities. This has been the focal point of this thesis. As one can understand from this reading, the implementation of ethnic decentralization in multiethnic cities of the country has had contradictory effects: accommodation of some groups and exclusion of others. Belonging to the first category were the local elites who co-opted and filled the urban bureaucracy, notably opportunistic Oromo and Sidama elites in Adama and Hawassa cities, respectively. More or less, this section of the urban worked in support of the federal political order.<sup>174</sup> In the other category were non-Oromo and non-Sidama elites in the respective cities, who feel marginalized from the newly opened opportunities and benefits and hence tend to work against the prevailing political order.<sup>175</sup> As such, the ethnic federal decentralization in Ethiopia serves as a point of conflict and contest among urban communities of different identities and interests.

One important point to be drawn here is about societal interest in state and engagement in negotiating statehood in the two case study cities, no matter how the aim is to support or to change the status quo. One can also note that such a societal interest in state and engagement in negotiating statehood including the serious conflicts can better be understood as part of the process and dynamics of state formation rather than pointless crises. The next section synthesizes the overall development meaning and implication of the conflict of statehood in the Adama and Hawassa cities.

### 8.3. The meaning and implications of negotiating statehood in Adama and Hawassa cities for political and socio-economic development

Many agree that the societal interest in state and engagement in state's political affairs are essential requirement for political and socio-economic development processes of a country. Central to decentralization in general and the one that has been in place in Ethiopia since 1991 in particular is to promote societal engagement in political and socio-economic development processes. As discussed throughout this study, the ethnic decentralization process of the country has rendered local community's interests in state and engagement in state politics, notably in

---

<sup>174</sup> *Compared to Adama, the number of ethnic groups in Hawassa city is numerous. This, therefore, could be among reasons for various ethno-cultural groups to involve in business.*

<sup>175</sup> *This is not to mean that there is uniformity of interest and action among the Oromo as well as the Sidama elites towards the regime.*

conflict and negotiation over state power, resources, symbol and citizenship. These developments have had significant meaning and implications for political and socio-economic development processes in urban centers under discussion. Therefore, it is important to draw some important conclusions out of the analysis made so far.

As discussed throughout the study, the ethnic decentralization - induced political engagements in urban Ethiopia, particularly in the two case study cities have got both negative and positive implications. Concerning its political meaning, the positive scenario is the development of societal interest in state and engagement in state political affairs at the local ambit. As many agree, societal engagement in state politics itself is one of the indicators of political development (Putnam, 1993). For a country like Ethiopia which for long has been known by lethargic political culture, these developments are remarkable. Indeed, popular political awareness and engagement are among the core requirements for a political development, particularly for the democratization processes. Seen this way, the ethnic decentralization-induced political engagements in urban Ethiopia may be taken as an important step forward.

However, the problem with this is that the various competing and conflictive political interests initiated by the ethnic decentralization of the county unfold beyond and behind the prevailing federal political institutions. In other words, this is to argue that the federal political institutions were not viable enough in institutionalizing, accommodating, and mediating the conflicting political pressure and demands from local (urban) society. In short, the scope of the prevailing federal political institutions in Adama and Hawassa cities is limited to accommodate and govern the various urban political interests and claims. This clearly illustrates the limitation of the art of associating together, to borrow Huntington's phrase. The Sidama nation's quest for the regional state restructuring in Hawassa and the urban business elites who stood against the federal arrangement in Adama city may be taken as typical cases for the ongoing contests for statehood beyond and outside the federal institutions. Such a gap in turn seems to have thwarted popular participation in formal political decision-making processes.

It is also important to mention another important political development (positive and negative) regarding the link between ethnic decentralization and political development processes in Ethiopia's multiethnic cities. On the positive side, in some cases, it promoted intra-ethnic political unity/solidarity such as among the Sidama in Hawassa city. The Sidama (elites and



masses) stood in unison over the Sidama nation's aspiration for regional statehood and control over Hawassa city. If organized and institutionalized, such development may be used for development purposes. Nevertheless, it in the case of Adama city, the outcome seems to be the opposite as the post-decentralization political environment rendered a rift among the Oromo elites, namely between the co-opted and the marginalized groups. Such a rift to some extent divided the local mass in political orientations in Adama city, especially between those who wish statehood within and without the Ethiopian state. On the negative side, as discussed above, in both case study cities, the ethnic federal political arrangement has had limited success in promoting inter-ethnic political unity. This suggests the need and urgency to transform the country's ethnic federal policy into an effective mechanism for urban ethno cultural diversity management.

It is also important to put a concluding remark concerning the meaning and implications of the ethnic decentralization-induced political engagements for the socio-economic development of urban Ethiopia, namely in Adama and Hawassa cities. In the post-ethnic decentralization period, there were significant changes and developments in socio-economic terms in both case study cities. For example, following ethnic decentralization most secondary cities including Hawassa and Adama have become capitals of regional states that in various ways contributed to the urban socio-economic development processes such as expansion of job opportunities, roads, building, health and education services, and the like.<sup>176</sup> The other positive contribution of ethnic decentralization to urban socio-economic development processes in the case study cities were the development of intra-ethnic unity for the socio-economic development processes in their respective regional, zonal and woreda cities and towns. Hawassa city can be a typical case in this regard, as the Sidama elites (political, business and experts) all have developed unity of purpose for the development of the city. To some extent this also works in Adama city, as there were some elements of cooperation between the Oromo political and academic elites and some business elites. It was also a case in Adama city that the OPDO attempted to attract some Oromo experts to urban administration by providing some economic opportunities. These all, to some extent, had had positive meaning and implications for the socio-economic development in the two case study cities.

---

<sup>176</sup> *As already discussed Adama serves only as de facto capital for Oromia regional state, not in de jure.*

Important to point out here are also developments with negative meanings and implications for the socio-economic development processes in post-decentralization processes in urban Ethiopia. The primary conclusion in this regard is that due to the problems of diversity accommodation, there were chronic challenges to mobilize and engage ethno-cultural diversities in urban socio-economic developments in both case study cities. As already discussed, both in Adama and Hawassa cities, the so-called ethnically outsiders dominate the urban business sectors, thus development endeavors without their inclusion may be difficult. However, as it stands today the non-Oromo residents in Adama and non-Sidama residents in Hawassa were not fully involved in the urban development processes due to political dissatisfaction. In other words, this is to point out that the post-ethnic decentralization that to some extent rendered intra-ethnic unity for urban development processes has failed to promote inter-ethnic unity and cooperation for similar goals.

Yet, there is some difference between Adama and Hawassa cities in terms of engaging the ethnic outsiders in the urban development processes such as investment. As discussed before, the political environment for investment has been better in Hawassa in relative terms. This is so mainly due to the difference in the political settings in the two case study cities. For example, the question of independence (secession) in Oromia seems to have impeded the confidence and commitment of the ethnic-outsiders to engage in the long-term business sectors. There has been no similar political demand in Hawassa (at least since 1991). Rather, as discussed before, the principal political problem in Hawassa is the Sidama's quest for regional statehood within the Ethiopia federation, which may not appear to be threatening for the so-called ethnic outsiders to invest.

In general, one can squarely conclude that while the ethnic federal decentralization process in Ethiopia has initiated societal interest and engagements in state political affairs, there was not that much record in engaging the local mass in socio-economic developments. Even, the recorded political engagement itself is not yet institutionalized in a way it could contribute to political and socio-economic development processes. The overall conclusion of the study is that instead of serving as the center of innovation and democratization, urban centers in Ethiopia are delved into a political jumble, at least partly due to the mismatch between the urban nature and ethnic federal political arrangement. Hence, it is a burning issue to respond soon.

#### 8.4. Points for Future research

It is hoped that the points explored in this study has illuminated some important issues and challenges concerning the relationships between ethnic federal decentralization and multiethnic cities in Ethiopia. Especially, the author believes, by capturing and analyzing the ethnic decentralization - induced urban community political engagements, the study has brought new insights about the dynamics of state-society and inter-society relationships in the urban centers of the country. However, there are many issues that still remain vague and hence demand further and detailed researching. Among others, the following four critical points are worth mentioning here.

The first one is how and in what political formula could multiethnic cities accommodate the conflicting interests and identities of ethno-cultural groups in Ethiopia within the framework of the ethnic federal political arrangement. So long as ethnic federation remains in place in the country as the governing political design, which is likely to continue for the unforeseeable future, the issue and challenge of urban diversity governance remain a critical point in the country. Consequently, sooner or later, the matter demands both scholarly and policy attention.

The second point of scholarly and policy concern with respect to urban issues in Ethiopia's ethnic federation is whether the regional cities should remain as the administrative part of the ethno-regional states or should be accorded autonomy like the Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities. As discussed in this thesis, in the Ethiopia's ethnic federal political arrangement, majorities of cities of the country have become the administrative part of (annex to) the ethno-regional state. However, this policy seems not to be fruitful in terms of ethno-cultural diversity accommodation and governance. Instead, it led to the *ethnicization* of urban centers. Consequently, cities have become hostile to ethno-cultural diversity tolerance and accommodation. Even if not resulted in outright inter-ethnic violence, such urban political environment does not seem to be conducive for inter-ethnic harmony. In such condition, it is less likely to promote the urban socio-economic and political development processes. A further neglect and even a delay in taking corrective measures on these issues may lead to the worst scenario.

Indeed, the federal government seems to be mindful of these challenges. As discussed, some measures such as the enactment of urban policies have already been taken but with no much fruit. Recently, there has been a tendency from the central government part to recentralize some major regional cities. However, it may not be easy to do that due to, at least, the following two reasons. In the first place, it is not an easy because it may demand big political measures such as constitutional amendments. Moreover, as it stands today any move to amend the federal constitution to absorb regional cities into federal jurisdiction obviously faces resistance from regional governments, who do not seem to be comfortable to hand over their towns to the federal government. The federal government seems to be mindful that such measures may incite resentment in regional governments. However, since the existence of the central government, even the country's ethnic federal political order itself is hinged on patronage relationships with regional governments, it is less likely for the federal government to risk these relationships. Given that, the fate of regional cities remains open for research.

In the second place, it is important to ask if a successful recentralization of regional cities may work better in urban diversity accommodation. It is a subject of debate for two reasons. First, there is no evidence that federal cities (like Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) performed better in the accommodation of their diversities. As experience shows, neither Addis Ababa nor Dire Dawa (both under the federal jurisdictions) can be taken as exemplary for regional cities in this case. The second reason is that the placement of regional cities under the federal jurisdiction even with constitutional amendment does not seem to be a panacea for the challenges of urban governance in the country's ethnic federal arrangement mainly due to multifaceted limitation such as historical, political, and development strategy gaps. Hence, this remains to be among the top urgent academic and policy concerns in the country.

The third matter demanding policy and academic concern with the matter at hand is about the challenges for governing ethnic-boundary crossing cities in the Ethiopia's ethnic federal political settings. Of course, Ethiopia is among countries where urbanization processes are taking place at faster rate. Inevitably, this involves territorial expansion of urban spaces. However, in connection to the ethnic federal boundary demarcation, the territorial expansion of cities may raise a question of governance. In the present federal political settings of the country, there are various cities and towns, which either are circumscribed by the territories of other ethnic groups or share

boundaries with other regions. For example, such major cities like Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, and Harari are circumscribed by the Oromia regional state. As discussed before, other major cities like Hawassa and Dilla (both in SNNPR) share boundaries with the Oromia Regional State. All can contentedly accue toward the Oromia regional state. There are also many other smaller towns with potential to expand to territories of other ethnic groups. How then such ethnic-boundary crossing cities may be managed. Could it be an easy task for such cities to expand? May ethno-regional states such as Oromia allow other towns to expand towards their territory?

Such questions are relevant because there is already evidence of conflict over these issues. As of the time of writing this thesis, the expansion of Addis Ababa towards Oromia region by absorbing the surrounding Oromia cities has faced resistance from the Oromo community. Consequently, violence flared-up almost all over Oromia claiming human lives, especially in April and May 2014. As discussed before, the issue of Hawassa city expansion towards Oromia has already become complicated. The long-standing territorial conflict between Arsi Oromo and the Sidama could complicate the matter more and more. Therefore, not belatedly, these challenges enforce everyone (researchers and policy makers alike) to search for a viable way forward.

The last, and perhaps the top urgent issue that requires scholarly and policy attention is the need to normalize and institutionalize the ethnically charged urban political engagements and conflicts. As evidently observed in the Adama and Hawassa cities, ethnic based political conflict is a reality in contemporary Ethiopia. In most cases, the conflicts go their way with no or very minimal role of the existing federal institutions to manage it. Therefore, side by side working on the normalization of the conflicts, it is very necessary to work on making relevant the federal institutions to the urban political, economic and cultural facts and realities. Otherwise, as the conflict over statehood devolved to the locals following the ethnic decentralization, the urban conflicts could go back to the center and challenge the survival of the central government, even the country in general. Thus, any delay to respond to the multifaceted urban challenges in Ethiopia would turn the urban to the center of conflict and war.

## Reference

- Aalen, Lovise. 2002. *Ethnic Federalism in Dominant party State: The Ethiopian Experience, 1991-2000*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Ethnic Federalism and Self-Determination for Nationalities in a Semi-Authoritarian State: the Case of Ethiopia'. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 13, No. 2-3.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. Institutionalizing the politics of ethnicity – Actors, powers and mobilization in Southern Ethiopia under ethnic federalism'. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Oslo University of Oslo
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Siegfried Pausewang. 2002. Blighting the seeds of Democracy: the 2001 local election in Addis Ababa and central regions. In Siegfried Pausewang, et al (Eds.).
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Tronvoll, Kjetil. 2009. 'The End of Democracy? Curtailing Political and Civil Rights in Ethiopia', *Review of African Political Economy*. 36/120. Pp193 — 207.
- Aaron Tesfaye. (2002. Political power and ethnic federalism: the struggle for Democracy in Ethiopia. University Press of America
- Abbink, Jon. 1997. 'Ethnicity and Constitutionalism in Contemporary Ethiopia'. *Journal of African Law*, 41(1): 159-174.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006a. "Ethnicity and Conflict generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno- Regional Federalism", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24, 3: 389-413.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006b. 'Discomfiture of democracy? The 2005 election crisis in Ethiopia and its aftermath'. *African Affairs* 105, 419: 173–99.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. The Ethiopian Second Republic and the Fragile "Social Contract", in: *Africa Spectrum*, 44, 2, 3-28.
- Abdussamad H. Ahmad. 1987. 'Baso: A commercial Enterpot of Gojjam 1841-1889'. In *Proceedings of the Fourth seminar of Departmnet of History, Addis Ababa*, pp1-9.

- Abiy Ero.2013. 'An assessment of the practices of private investment management in a decentralized governance system of Ethiopia: The experience of Hawassa City in SNNPR'. M.A.Thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- Abrams, Philip. 1977\* 1988. Notes on difficulty of studying the state. *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol. 1. No.1. Pp. 58-89).
- Adama city. (2003( E.C ). Adama city profile
- \_\_\_\_\_.2005 E.C. Adaamaa Haadha Indaastriyaallistootaa, special city administration  
Publication for the 4<sup>th</sup> city days.
- Addis Hiwot. 1975. 'Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution'. Occasional Publication No.1, *Review of African Political Economy*.
- Addis Zemen.1994 (E.C). Addis Amharic daily Newspaper. 10, Tir 1994 E.C
- Agbese, Pita Ogaba. And George Klay Kieh JR .2007. *Reconstituting the state in Africa* (ed.) Plagrave Macmillan.
- Akalou Wolde- Michael.1967. 'Urban Development in Ethiopia in Time and Space perspective'  
Unpublished PHD Dissertation, UCLA
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1973. 'Urban Development in Ethiopia, (1889-1925) Early Phase'. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, vol. Xi, no., 1 (1973),
- Ake, Claude. 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Aklilu Abraham 2000a. 'Ethiopia: the challenge of federalism based on ethnic restructuring. A case study of the Sidama and Wolaita ethnic groups in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS)'.: Robert S. McNamara Fellowship Programme unpublished).
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000b. Towards a Political Resolution of Ethnic Conflicts in Ethiopia: The Case of Siltie Gurage Identity Question. Research Report submitted to OSSREA
- Alem Habtu.2003. 'Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia: Background, Present Conditions and Future Prospects. Paper Submitted to the Second EAF International Symposium on Contemporary Development Issues in Ethiopia July 11-12, 2003, Addis Ababa Ethiopia
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. 'Introduction', In Alem Habtu(ed.). *Ethiopian Federalism Principles, Processes and Practice*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University press.

- Aleme Eshete.1984. 'political marriage and Divorce in Ethiopian history ( late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century)'. Paper presented at the Italian cultural Institute. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Alemseged Abbay. 2004. 'Diversity and State-Building in Ethiopia'. *African Affairs*. Vol. 130, No. 413, pp. 593-614.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. 'Diversity and democracy in Ethiopia'. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*. Vol. 3 . No. 2, July 2009, 175\_201
- Almond, Gabriel; Verba, Sidney. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1963
- Almond, Gabriel & Coleman, J. S. .1960. *The politics of the developing areas*. Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press
- Alula, A. 1989. 'Internal Migration and Urbanization in Ethiopia'. Paper presented in Conference on Population Issues in Ethiopia's National Development. Report of conference proceedings Vol. II.
- Amare Tekle(1990) 'Continuity and change in Ethiopian politics'. In Marina Ottaway (ed.), *The political economy of Ethiopia*. New York: Praeger. pp. 31-51
- Amoretti, U. and Nancy G. Bermeo. 2004. *Federalism and territorial cleavages*. Johns Hopkins University press
- Andargachew Tesfaye.1992.'The social consequences of urbanization, The Addis Ababa experience',*Ethiopian Journal of Development Research, Vol. 14. No.1. 1992*
- Andargachew T.1993.*The Ethiopian revolution, 1974-1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to A Totalitarian Autocracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press
- Anderson, Christopher J. et al 2005. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Andreas, Eshete. 2003. 'Ethnic Federalism: New Frontiers in Ethiopian Politics.' Paper delivered at 1st National Conference on *Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building*, UNCC, Addis Ababa, 5th-7thMay 2003
- Aregawi Berhe. 2004. 'The Origins of the Tigray people's liberation front'. *African Affairs* (2004), 103/413, pp 569–592.



- Asefa Jalata .1993. *Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational conflict, 1868-1992*. Boulder: Lynnr Rienner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2010. 'Urban Centers in Oromia: Consequences of Spatial Concentration of Power in Multinational Ethiopia.' *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2010), pp. 39-74.
- Asnake Kefale .2009. *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of the Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz Regions*, PHD Dissertation: University of Leiden
- Assefa Damte.1993. 'Urbanization in Ethiopia: pre and post revolutionary experience'. PHD dissertation. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Assefa Fiseha. 2006. 'Theory versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism'. In D.Turton, ed., *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 131-164.Oxford: James Currey.
- Assefa, Taye and Gebre-Egziabher, Tegegne, (eds.). 2007. *Decentralization in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.
- Atnafu Wassie. 1972. 'Regional history, foundation and Development of Nazareth'. M.A. Thesis Addis ababa University
- Awoke Amzaye.2007.*The Mosaic culture and Ethno cultural diversity of SNNPRS*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing press
- Ayele Dubo.2013. 'The impact of Party structure in the Southern region of Ethiopian federation on right to self-rule of ethnic groups'. M.A. thesis, Addis Ababa University
- Baker, Bruce.2000. *Escape from Domination in Africa: Political Disengagement and its Consequences*. Oxford: James Currey,
- Baker, J. 1986. *The urban- Rural dichotomy in the developing world: A case study from Northern Ethiopia*, Norwegian university press
- Barnett, Michael and Raymond Duvall (2005) *Power in global governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Bahiru Zewde. 1991. *History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa
- Bairu Tafla.1972. 'Marriage as political device: An appraisal of a Socio-Political Aspect of the Menilk period 1889-1916', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. Vol. 10. No.1.

- \_\_\_\_\_.1994. 'Historical background to the conflicts in Ethiopia and the prospect for peace.' In Woodward, P. and M.Forsyth (eds.). *Conflict and peace in the Horn of Africa: federalism and its Alternatives*, Aldeshot, Sydney. pp 1-9
- Balsvik, Rani Ronning.1985. Haile Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1974, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press
- Bangura, Yusuf. 2006. Ethnic Inequalities in the Public Sector: A Comparative Analysis. In *Development and Change* . 37(2): 299–328
- Bayart, J.-F. 1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, New York. Longman
- Belachew Gebrewold.2009. 'Ethiopian Nationalism: an Ideology to Transcend All Odds'. *Africa Spectrum*, 44, 1, 79-97.
- Bellamy, Richard. 1999. *Liberalism and Pluralism Towards a politics of compromise*. London and New York: Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Bereket Habte-Selassie. 1980. *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*. London: Monthly Review Press.
- Berhanu Gutema.2007. 'Restructuring State and Society: Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia'. Doctoral Programme . Aalborg University Denmark, SPIRIT PhD Series, Thesis no. 8
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. 'Constitutionalism in the Horn of Africa: Lesson from the new constitution of Ethiopia .Development, Innovation and International Political Economy Research (DIIPER) Aalborg University Denmark DIIPER Research Series Working Paper No. 15
- Berhanu Nega.2003. 'Introduction: Development oppositions for Ethiopia: Rural, urban or balanced?' . In Berhanu Nega and Befekadu Degefe(eds.). *The Role of urbanization in the socio-economic Development Process*. Ethiopian economic Association(EEA), Addis Ababa. PP.5-19
- Berman, B. 2004. 'Ethnicity and the politics of democratization in Africa'. In Berman, B, et al (eds.). *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*. Ohio University press. PP 1-21.
- Berridge, G. R. and Alan James. 2001. *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*. Houndmills: Palgrave
- Blindenbacher, R. and A. Koller.2003. *Federalism in changing world learning from each other*. MicGill Queen University press

- Boone, Catherine.1994. 'State and ruling classes in post colonial Africa: the enduring contradiction of Power'. In Joel Migdal et al (eds., *State power and Social forces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press pp.109-140.
- Boulding, Kenneth E. 1990. *Three faces of power*. New bury park: sage publications inc.
- Bowman, Ann O'M.1997. 'Urban Government'. Vogel, Ronald K. ed. (1997) *Handbook of research on urban politics and policy in the United states*. : West port:Greenwood press
- Bratton, Michael. 1994. 'Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa', in Harbeson John W. et al (eds.). *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. London, Boulder : Lynne Rienner Publisher. Pp.51-82
- Brown, Wendy.2006. 'Power After Foucault'. In John S . Dryzek Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips (eds.). *The oxford handbook of Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press inc. pp 65-85
- Burgess, Michael .2006.*Comparative Federalism: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Byrne, Bridget.1998. 'Qualitative interviewing', in Clive Seale (ed.) . *Researching society and culture*. London: Sage publications. . Pp179-192
- Chabal, Patrick and Jen-pascal Daloz. 1999. *Africa works: Disorder as Political instrument*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Chazan, Naomi.1999. *Politics and society in contemporary Africa*, third eds. Boulder: Lynne Rienner publishers Inc.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2006. *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*.New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Clapham, Christopher. 1988. *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. 'Ethnicity and the National Question in Ethiopia'. In Peter Woodward and Murray Forsyth (eds.).*Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its Alternatives*. Brookfield: Darmouth publishing co.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002a. *Rewriting Ethiopian History*. *Annales d'Ethiopie*, 18: 37-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002b. '*Controlling Space in Ethiopia*'. In James, Wendy James et al (eds.). *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism & After* London: James Currey. (9:32)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004b. 'The challenge of democratization in Ethiopia', *Whitehall Papers*, 62: 1, 71

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. Comments on the political crisis in Ethiopia, Available from: <http://ethiomediamedia.com>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Afterword'. In D. Turton, ed., *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 231-240. Oxford: James Currey.
- Cliffe, Lionel. 1999. "Regional Dimensions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa." *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1. pp. 89-111.
- Codding, George A. 1977. 'Historical Setting and Schools of Thought, The Federal plan, claims and counter claims, Neo federalism'. In Taylor, P. and A.J.R. Groom (eds). International Organization. Nichols Publishing Company: London
- Cohen John M. 1997. 'Decentralization and "Ethnic Federalism" Post-Civil War Ethiopia' in Krishna Kumar ed. *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War Critical Roles for International Assistance*. Pp. 135-154. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Collins, Susan D. 2006. *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Cour, Jean-Marie .2003. 'A demo-economic analysis of long term structural changes in Ethiopia'. In Berhanu Nega and Befekadu Degefe (eds.). *The Role of urbanization in the socio- economic Development Process, Ethiopian economic Association (EEA)*, Addis Ababa, pp. 29-74.
- Crawford, Gordon and Christof Hartmann. 2008. 'Introduction: Decentralization as a Pathway out of Poverty and Conflict?'. In Crawford, Gordon and Christof Hartmann (eds.) (2008) *Decentralization in Africa: A Pathway out of Poverty and Conflict?* Amsterdam University Press
- Crummey, Donald. 1987. 'Some precursors of Addis Ababa: Towns in Christian Ethiopia in Eighteenth and nineteenth Centuries'. In *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa*. November 24-25, 1986, Addis Ababa, PP. 9-32
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. *Land and society in the christian kingdom of Ethiopia –from the Thirteen to the Twentieth century*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois press.
- CSA (Central Statistical Agency). 1996. 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 1996
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. *The 2010 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Dahl, R.A.1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and power in American city*. New Haven: Yale University press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1971. *Polyarchy; participation and opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. *On democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Das, P.G. 1999. *Modern Political Theory*. London: New Central Book Agency(P)Ltd.
- Deegan, H.2009. *Africa Today Culture, economics, religion, security*. Routedledge: London.
- Dereje Feyissa.2003. 'Ethnic groups and conflict: the case of Anywaa-Nuer relations in the Gambela region, western Ethiopia'. PhD thesis, Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'The Experience of Gambella Regional State'. In D. Turton, ed., *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 208-230. Oxford: James Currey
- Dereje Tadese and Wandimu Geleta. 2003. 'Good urban governance a missing frame work in the Ethiopian urban system'. In Balachew Kale-Christos etal(eds. *Widening Perspective and Improving Capacities central tasks for planning of our towns*. Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National conference on urban planning and related issues, Pp .425-439
- Dessalegn Rahmato .1984. *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*. Uppsala: SIAS
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. 'Civil society organizations in Ethiopia'. In Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang, eds. *Ethiopia: the Challenge of Democracy from Below*. Stockholm and Addis Ababa: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and Forum for Social Studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. *The peasant and The state: Studies in Agrarian Change in Ethiopia 1950s-2000s*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa university press.
- Deutsch, Karl W.1961. 'Social mobilization and Political Development', *American political science Review*. LV. 55: 634–647.
- Dickovick, J.Tyler and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher.2010. *Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Ethiopia*. Report prepared for the United States Agency for International Development.
- Dimitrois, Karmis and Wayne Norman. 2005. *Theories of Federalism: A reader*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

- Doornbos, Martin. 2010. 'Researching African Statehood Dynamics: Negotiability and its Limits'. *Development and change*. Volume 41, issue 4 Pp. 747–769
- Dorosh, Paul and Emily Schmidt.2009.The Rural-Urban Transformation in Ethiopia Development Strategy and Governance Division, International Food Policy Research Institute – Ethiopia Strategy Support Program 2, ESSP2 Working Paper 13
- Dryzek, John and PatrickDunleavy.2009.*Theories of the Democratic State*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,
- Duchacek, I.D. 1987. *Comparative Federalism: The territorial dimension of politics*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.
- Easton, David. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life*. New York: John
- Efoyta. 1992 (E.C). Amharic Monthly Magazine, [of the ruling party] 8th Year, No. 1Tire 1992 E.C.
- Ekman, Joakim and Erik Amnå .2009. 'Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards A New Typology'. *Youth & Society (YeS)* Working Paper 2009: 2
- Elazar, Daniel J. 1987. *Exploring Federalism*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press
- Engedayehu, Walle. 1994. "Ethiopia: The Pitfalls of Ethnic Federalism." *Africa Quarterly* 34 (2):149-192
- EPRDF( Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front).2000. EPRDF's Five Year Program of Development, Peace and Democracy.' Addis Ababa.
- Erlich, Haggai. 1996. Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa: Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press
- Ethiopia Zare (2008) Be Bale University Haya temariwoch tegedelu ("20 students killed in Bale university").10 April 2008
- Evans, Peter B./Rueschemeyer, Dietrich/Skocpol, Theda (eds.) .1985. Bringing the State Back In. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Falleti, Tulia. 2010. *Decentralization and Sub national Politics in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press
- Fantu Cheru.2009. *Saving the Horn of Africa from its elites: What prospects for the future of*

*peace in the region.* Aalborg: Aalborg University.

Fasil Nahum (1997) *Constitution for a Nation of Nations: The Ethiopian prospect.* Asmara: Red Sea Press

Fattovich, Rodolfo .2000. *Aksum and the Habshat: State and ethnicity in ancient northern Ethiopia and Eritrea.* Boston university: African studies centre.

FDRE .1995. *The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.* Federal *Negarit Gazeta* 1st Year No. 1, 21st August 1995, Addis Ababa

Fecadu Gadamu. 1972. 'Ethnic Associations in Ethiopia and the Maintenance of Urban Rural Relationships with Special Reference to the Alemgana-Wolamo Road Construction Association'. PhD thesis. University of London.

Feeley, M. and Edward Rubin .2008. *Federalism and political identity and tragic compromise.* Michigan: University of Michigan press

Filippov, Mikhail et al.2004. *Designing federalism: a theory of self-sustainable federal institutions.* Cambridge: Cambridge university press

Foucher, Emile.1987. 'Birbirsa" 1868-1869, precursors of Addis Ababa: Towns in Christian Ethiopia in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries'. Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa, November 24-25, 1986, Addis Ababa, 33-42

Frey, W.H. and Z. Zimmer.2001. 'Identifying the city'. In Paddison Ronan(ed.) *Hand book of urban studies.* London, New Delhi: Sage Publications LTDS.

Friedrich, Carl J. 1963. *Man and his Government.* New York: McGraw-Hill book Company, Inc;

Garreestson, Peter.2000. *A history of Addis Ababa from its foundation in 1886 to 1910.* Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden

Gashaw, Solomon . 1993. 'Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia'. In Crawford Young (ed.), *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 138-57.

\_\_\_\_\_.2006. 'Ethnic Federalism and Pluralism: The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples State (SNNPRS)', *Horn of Africa* 24.

Gebre Ab Barnabas. 2003. *Ethnic and religious policies of FDR Ethiopia ... 1<sup>st</sup> National conference on Federalism, Conflict and peace building May 5-7 2003 Addis Ababa.*

Gebru Tareke. 1991. *Ethiopia: power and protest: Peasant revolts in the twentieth century* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Geiser, Urs and Stephan Rist.2009. 'Decentralization meets local complexity: conceptual entry point, field level findings, and insights gained', in Geiser, Urs and Stephan Rist(eds.) . *Decentralization meets local complexity: Local struggles. State decentralization and access to natural resources in South Asia and Latin America.* NCCR North –South : Bern. Pp. 11-56
- Getahun Benti. 1989. 'Shashamanne: Foundation and Early Growth up to the Italian occupation'.Proceedings of the Fourth seminar of Department of History , Awasa, 8-12 July 1987, pp.10-27
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. 'A nation without a city [ a blind person without a Cane]; The Oromo struggle for Addis Ababa'. In Ezekiel Gebissa(ed.). *Special issue: The Oromo in Ethiopia studies: Confronting challenges to politically engaged scholarship.* Northeast African Studies Volume 9 Number 3(New series) 2002,pp 115-132
- Ghai, Yashik. 2000. *Autonomy and Ethnicity: Negotiating Competing Claims in Multi-ethnic States*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Gilbert, Margaret.2006. *A Theory of Political Obligation: Membership, Commitment, and the Bonds of Society.* Clarendon Press: oxford
- Greenfield, Richard .1965. *Ethiopia: A New Political History.* London: Pall Mall Press
- Grindle, Merilee .2007. *Going local, Decentralization, Democratization and the promise of good governance.* Princeton university press, New Jersey
- Guluma Gameda .1989. 'An outline of the Early history of Jimma town'. Proceedings of the Fourth seminar of Department of History , Awasa, 8-12 July 1987, pp. 28-47
- Gurr, T.R(1997) 'Why do minorities rebel? The world wide geography of ethno-political conflicts and their challenge to global security '. in Gunther Bachler,( ed.) (1997) *Federalism against ethnicity? Institutional, Legal and Democratic instruments to prevent violent minority conflicts.* Verlag Ruediger, Pp 3-14
- Gutema Imana .1996. 'A history of Adama (Nazret) town from its foundation up to 1974'. M.A . thesis Addis Ababa university
- Hagmann, Tobias and Didier P'eclard. 2010. 'Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa'. *Development and change* . Volume 41, issue 4 539—562.
- Hagmann, Tobias and Mohammed K. Kalif .2007. 'State and Politics in Ethiopia's Somali Region since 1991'. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, 6: 25-49.
- Hailemariam Deslegn. 2004. "Experience of Conflict-Handling and –Prevention in SNNPR".



*First National Conference on Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building*, Addis Ababa, Ministry of Federal Affairs, 2004, (44) 44.

Harbeson, John W. et al. 1994. *Civil society and the state in Africa*. Lynne Rienner Publishers,

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *State and power in Africa comparative lesson in Authority and control*. Princeton: Princeton university press.

Hawassa city. 2010. *Hawassa city Tourist Guide booklet*. Hawassa: Chamber Printing house

\_\_\_\_\_. 2011. *Hawassa Business Guide*, November 20011

\_\_\_\_\_. 2012. *Socio-Economic Profile of Hawassa city*.

Hechter, Michael 2000. *Containing nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Henze, Paul B. 2000. *Layers of time: A history of Ethiopia*. New York: Palgrave

\_\_\_\_\_. 1994. 'The Economic Dimension of Federalism in the Horn of Africa'. In Peter Woodward and Forsyth, (eds.) *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its alternatives* (Alder shot: Dartmouth).

Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hicken, J. 2003. *Parties and election*. Stand ford: Stanford university press.

Hobson, J.M. 2003. *The state and international relations*, second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Höjer, Mattias et al. 2011 *Images of the Future City Time and Space For Sustainable Development*. Springer Science+Business

Holcomb, B. k. 2004. 'Contending Democracies: US sponsored 'democracy' encounters indigenous oromo democratic forms', in Asafa Jalata (ed.) *State crises , Globalization and national movements in North –East Africa*, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 122-164

Holcomb, Bonnie, and Sisay Ibssa. 1990. *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

Hopkins, A.G. 2000. 'Quasi-states, Weak States and the Partition of Africa', *Review of International Studies*, 26(2): 311–26.

- Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic groups in conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. 'Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers', in J.V. Montville (ed.) *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, New York: Lexington Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. 'Democracy in Divided Societies'. In L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner eds. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*, pp. 36-56. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Horowitz, Donald 1997. 'Ethnic conflict management for policy makers', in Montville, Joseph V. (ed.) *Conflict and peacemaking in multiethnic states*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Horvath, R.J.1969. 'The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia'. *Journal of African History*, X, 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1974 'The processes of Urbanization in Ethiopia', Addis Ababa University
- Hueglin, Thomas and Alan Fenna.2006. *Comparative Federalism: A Systematic Inquiry*. Broadview Press: Toronto
- Hunter, F. 1953. *Community Power Structure*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Huntington, Samuel. 1965. 'Political development and political decay'. *World politics* Vol. 7. No. 3 pp 386-430 .
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1968. *Political order in changing societies*. New Haven and London: Yale university press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993. 'Political Development in Ethiopia: A Peasant- Based Dominant-Party Democracy'. Report to USAID/Ethiopia on consultations with the Constitutional Commission, March- April 1993 .
- \_\_\_\_\_. & Nelson, J. M. 1976. *No easy choice: Political participation in developing countries*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hurni, Hans 2009. 'Foreword', in in Geiser, Urs and Stephan Rist(eds.) . *Decentralization meets complexity: Local struggles. State decentralization and access to natural resources in South Asia and Latin America*. NCCR North –South : Bern. Pp. 7-9 .
- Hyslop, Jonathan (ed.), 1999: *African Democracy in the Era of Globalization*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press
- Jackson, R.H. 1990. *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johari, J.C.1989. *Principles of modern political science*. First edition. : New Delhi: Sterling Publishers private Limited company

- John. Peter .2009. 'Why study urban politics,. In Davies , Jonathan S. and D.L. Imbroscio eds. Theories of Urban politics. London: SAGE Publication Ltds. Pp.17-24
- Judge, David etal (eds.).1995. Theories of urban politics. : London :Sage publication LTd
- Kagan, Jerome.2009. The Three Cultures Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the 21st Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Kamis. Dimitrios and Wyne Norman .2005. Theories of Federalism : A reader. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kamrava, Mehran.1993. Politics and society in the Third World. Rutledge: New York.
- Kassahun Argaw.2000. 'The urban informal sector in Nazareth Town: the case of Women Petty Traders in "Ghimbi Gebeya"',M.A thesis Addis Ababa university
- Kassahun, Samson and Tiwari, Alok. 2012. 'Urban Development in Ethiopia: Challenges and Policy Responses'. The IUP Journal of Governance and Public policy, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 59-65 .
- Kefyalew Tessema.2010. 'A history of Hawassa town c. 1950, to 1995'. M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- Kellas, James G.1991. *The politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. London: MacMillan.
- Keller, Edmond J.1981. 'Ethiopia: Revolution, Class, and the National Question'. *African Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 321 (Oct., 1981), pp. 519-549.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995a. 'Remaking the Ethiopian State,' in I. William Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder, CO:Lynne Rienner, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995b. 'The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33,4: 621–34.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. 'Regime Change and Ethno-regionalism in Ethiopia: The Case of the Oromo'. In Asafa Jalata, ed., *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998, pp109-124.
- \_\_\_\_\_.2002. "Ethnic Federalism, Fiscal Reform, Development and Democracy in Ethiopia," *African Journal of political science* (formerly African Journal of Political Economic), Vol. 7, No.1, pp. 21-50.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Lahra Smith. 2005. 'Obstacles to implementing Territorial decentralization: the first decade of Ethiopian federalism'. In Donald Rothchild, eds. *Sustainable Peace: Democracy and Power-Dividing Institutions After Civil Wars*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005

- Kemp, Roger L. 1991. *Forms of local government a hand book on city, county, and regionals* Mcfarland and Company, Inc, INC
- Kertzer, David, I. 1996. *Politics and symbols: The Italian communist party and the fall of communism*. New Haven and London: Yale university press
- Kidane Mengisteab. 1997. 'New Approaches to State Building in Afirca: The case of Ethiopia's ethnic based federalism.' *African Studies Review* 40, pp.111-132.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. "Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism: 10 Years After". *African Issues* 29(1/2):20–25
- King, Preston 1982. *Federalism and Federation*. Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press
- Kinfe Abraham (2001) *Ethiopia from empire to federation*, London, Addis Ababa: EIIPD press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *Ethiopia from Bullets to the Ballot box: the bumpy road to democracy and the political economy of transition*, Lawrenceville: The Red Sea press Inc
- Kobishcchanov, Youri M. 1979. *Axum*. London: The Pennsylvania University Press.
- Kohli, Atuli and Vivienne shue. 1994. State power and social forces: on political contention and accommodation in the Third World, in Joel Migdal etal (eds.) *State power and Social forces*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press. PP 293-326.
- Kopstein Jeffrey and Mark Irving Lichbach. 2005. *Comparative politics: Interests, identifies, institutions in a changing global order*, second edition. Cambridge: Cambrige university press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship – A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998a. 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?', In Percy B. Lehning (ed.) *Theories of Secession*. London: Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. 'Federalism, Nationalism and Multiculturalism', In kamis. Dimitrios and Wyne Norman(eds.). *Theories of Federalism : A reader*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Emerging Western Models of Multinational Federalism: Are They Relevant for Africa?' .In David Turton (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey, Athens: Ohio University Press. Pp. 32-64
- Lähdesmäki, Tuuli. 2010. 'Representation Strategies of Cultural Diversity in Three European Capitals of Culture'. Katherine Wilson(ed.) *Looking at Ourselves: Multiculturalism, Conflict & Belonging*. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press. PP.3-14
- Lamprianou, Iasonas. 2013. 'Contemporary Political Participation Research: A Critical Assessment', in K.N. Demetriou (ed.). *Democracy in Transition*, Springer-Verlag

- Berlin Heidelberg 2013.
- Laswell, Harold and Abraham Kaplan. 1952. *Power and Society: A framework for Political Inquiry*. London: Routedledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Lees- Marshment, Jennifer. 2001. 'The Marriage of politics and marketing'. *Political studies*, Vol. 49, 692-713
- Lefort, Rene'.2010. 'Powers - mengist - and peasants in rural Ethiopia : the post-2005 interlude. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 48, 3 .pp. 435–460. Cambridge University Press
- Leenco Lata. 1999. *The Ethiopian State at the Crossroads: Decolonization and Democratization or Disintegration*. Lawrenceville, NJ and Asmara: Red Sea Press.
- Lemco, Jonathan.1991. *Political stability in federal government*. New York: Praeger
- Lemmu Baisa,1998. 'Contending nationalism in the Ethiopian empire state and the Oromo struggle for self-determination', in Asafa Jalata(ed.). *Oromo nationalism and the Ethiopian discourse: the search for freedom and democracy*. Lawrenville, NJ &Asmara: The Red Sea Press
- Lentakis, Michel B. 2005.*Ethiopia: A view from within*. London: Janus publishing company Ltd.
- Levine, Donald.1974. *Ethiopia: The Evolution of the Multi-Ethnic Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. 'Ethiopia's nationhood reconsidered'. *Análise Social*, vol. XLVI (199), 2011, 311- 327.
- Livingston, W.S. 1956. *Federalism and constitutional change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- Lipset, Seymour . 1960. *Political man: The social bases of politics*: New York: Doubleday Ltd.
- Litvack, Jennie, Junaid Ahmad & Richard Bird .1998. *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries, Sector Studies Series*. Washington DC, The World Bank.
- Lowndes, Vivienne. 1995. 'Citizenship and urban politics', In Judge, von David *et al* (eds.). *Theories of urban politics*. London: Sage Publication Ltd:London Pp. 160-180
- Lund , Christian. 2006. *Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa*. *Development and Change* 37(4): 685–705

- Lukes, Steven( 1974/2005) *Power: A radical view*. London: Palgrave, Macmillan
- Magalata Oromia .2001. The Revised Constitution of the Oromia National Regional State: Proclamation No 46 (2001)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. The urban local government proclamation Proclamation No 65(2003)
- \_\_\_\_\_. A proclamation to amend) the urban local government of Oromia National Regional State No 116 (2006)
- Mahler, Gregory S.1991. *New dimension of Canadian federalism*. London and Toronto: Associated University press
- Mains, Daniel.2004. ‘Drinking, Rumour, and Ethnicity in Jimma, Ethiopia. *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 74, No. 3, (2004), pp. 341- 360
- Mann, Michael.1993. *The Sources of Social Power. Volume, II. The rise of classes and Nation-state, 1760-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manor J. 2000. *Decentralization and Sustainable Livelihoods*. PIP Paper, Livelihoods Connect. Brighton: Institute for Development Studies (IDS).
- Marcus, Harold.1994. *A history of Ethiopia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Markakis, John.1973. ‘Social Formation and Political Adaptation in Ethiopia’. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 11, No. 3 (Sep., 1973), pp. 361-381
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1974. *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a traditional polity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1981. The Military State and Ethiopia's Path to ‘Socialism’. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 21 (May - Sep., 1981), pp. 7-25. Taylor & Francis, Ltd.
- \_\_\_\_\_.1987.*National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. ‘Revolution in Ethiopia: 15 Years On’, *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 44, Ethiopia: 15 Years on (1989), pp. 1-3 Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994(ed). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: James Curry, London and Athens: Ohio University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. ‘The Politics of Identity – the Case of the Gurage’, in M. A. Mohamed Salih and J. Markakis (eds.), *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa* (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003b. 'Ethnic Conflict in Pre-Federal Ethiopia', in Proceedings of the First National Conference on Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building, Addis Ababa: Ministry of Federal Affairs and GTZ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Nega Ayele. 1986. *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press
- Martiniello, Marco. 2005. Political participation, Mobilisation and Representation of immigrants and their offspring in Europe. Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations 1/05 .
- McGarry, John and Brendan O'Leary .2007. 'Federations and Managing Nations', in M. Burgess and J. Pinder (eds). *Multinational Federations*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Medhane Tadesse and John Young.2003. 'TPLF: Reform or Decline?', *Review of African Political Economy* 30(97).
- Meheret Ayenew.1999. 'The City of Addis Ababa: Policy Options for the Governance and Management of a City with Multiple Identity'. FSS Discussion Paper No. 2. FORUM FOR SOCIAL STUDIES, Addis Ababa
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. Decentralized municipal management in Ethiopia: a rapid appraisal of five municipalities. Addis Ababa, World Bank.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Decentralization in Ethiopia: Two Case Studies on Devolution of power and Responsibilities to Local Authorities'. In Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang Ethiopia; The *Challenge of Democracy from Below*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala.
- \_\_\_\_\_.(2007) 'A rapid Assessment of Wereda Decentralization in Ethiopia', in in Taye Assefa and Tegegne Gebre –Egziabher(eds.) (2007)Decentralization in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Forum for social studies, pp. 69- 102.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. 'A Review of the FDRE's Urban Development Policy'. In Taye Assefa ed., *Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs*, 451-468. Forum for Social Studies
- Mekuria Bulcha.1997. 'The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization in Ethiopia and the Conflict over the Status of "Afaan Oromoo"'. *African Affairs* 96(84)
- Merera Gudina .2003. *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960-2000*. Addis Ababa: Chamber Printing Press

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Contradictory Interpretations of Ethiopian History: The Need for a New Consensus'. In D Turton, ed., *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 119-130. Oxford: James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. Electoral Politics and Regime Changes in Africa: The Ethiopian Experience. In Eva- Maria Bruchhaus, and Monika M. Sommer(eds.). *Hot Spot Horn of Africa Revisited: Approaches to Make Sense of Conflict*. PP 114-131. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Merid Wolde Aregay.1984. 'Gondar and Adwa: A tale of Two cities'. Eighth International conference of Ethiopian studies, Nov. 26-30, 1984 .
- Mesfin W. marian. 1970. "Problems of urbanization in Ethiopia". Proceedings of the Third international Conference on *Ethiopian studies*. Vol, 3, Addis Ababa, 1970
- Messay Kebede. 1999. *Survival and modernization. Ethiopia's enigmatic past: a philosophical discourse*. Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press
- Migdal, Joel S.1988. *Strong societies and weak states: State-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World*. : New Jersey: Princeton University press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. 'The State in Society: An Approach to Struggles for Domination,'. In Migdal, et al (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces, Domination and Transformation in the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. PP 7-36
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. *State in society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Klaus Schlichte. 2005. 'Rethinking the State'. In Klaus Schlichte(ed.). *The Dynamics of States The formation and Crises of State Formation*. Aldershte: Ashgate Publishing Plc
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. 'Researching the State', in Lichbach, M.I. and Alan Zuckerman (eds.) *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and structure*, second edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. PP 162-192
- Miliband, Ralph.1969. *The state in capitalist society*. New York: Basic Books
- Minas Hiruy .2003. 'Urban management and development in Ethiopia'. In Berhanu Nega and Befekadu Degefe(eds.). *The Role of urbanization in the socio-economic Development Process, Ethiopian economic Association(EEA)*, Addis Ababa, pp. 120-133.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Tamirat Delelegne. 2000. *A study on the legal status , roles And future of municipalities in Southern nations, nationalities and peoples regional state*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam printing enterprise
- Mismaku Asrat .2003. 'Modernity and change in Ethiopia: 1941-1991 From feudalism to federalism'. Phd Dissertation , Rensselaer Polytechnic institute, Troy, NY.



- Mitchell, Timothy .1991. 'The Limits of the Statist Approaches and their critics', *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 85, No.1. pp 77-96
- Mohamed Hassen.1996. 'Development of Oromo nationalism', in Baxter, P. *et al* (eds.) *Being and Becoming Oromo: historical and Anthropological enquiries*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. 'Conquest, Tyranny and ethnocide against the Oromo: A historical assessment of Human rights condition in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002'. Ezekiel Gebissa(ed.). *Special issue: The Oromo in Ethiopia studies: Confronting challenges to politically engaged scholarship*. Northeast African Studies. Volume 9 Number 3(New series) 2002,pp 115-132
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. 'Ethiopia: missed opportunities for Peaceful Democratic process.' In Kidane Mengisetab and Cyril Daddieh (Eds.). *State Building and Democratization in Africa*. Westport: Praeger.
- MOFED. 2002. 'Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program'. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. 'Millennium Development Goals Report: Challenges and Prospects for Ethiopia', Volume 1, Addis Ababa.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. 'Report: Challenges and Prospects for Ethiopia', Volume 1, Addis Ababa.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. 'Ethiopia: The Millennium Development Goals ( MDGs) Need Assessment Synthesis Report', Development Planning and Research Department, Addis Ababa.
- MWUD. 2006. 'A plan for accelerated and sustained development to end poverty (PASDEP) (2006-2010) '. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Monterescu, Daniel and Dan Rabinowitz 2007(eds). *Mixed Towns, Trapped communities, Historical narratives, Spatial dynamics, Gender relations and Cultural encounters in Palestinian-Israeli Town*. Ashangate Publishing Ltd.
- Morris, Christopher W. 2004. 'The Modern State', in Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas(eds.) *Handbook of Political Theory*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd. 195-209
- Neuman, Lawrence .2014. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*,Seventh Edition.Pearson Education Limited
- Oates, Wallace E. 1972. *Fiscal Federalism*. Harcourt Brace :Jovanovich, Inc.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. An essay on fiscal federalism. *Journal of Economic Literature*. 37 (3): 120–49.

- O'Connor, Anthony. 1983. *The African City*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd Progress
- Ofcansky, Thomas P. And Berry, Laverle .1991. *Ethiopia – a country study*. Washington D.C: Federal Research Division, Library of the Congress.
- Orum, Anthony M. and Gale John G. 2009. *Political Sociology: Power and participation in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University press
- Ottaway, Martina.1976. *Urbanization in Ethiopia: A text with integrated readings*, Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Addis Ababa
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990: “The crisis of the Ethiopian state and economy”. In Marina Ottaway (ed.), *The political economy of Ethiopia*. New York: Praeger.
- Pankhurst, Richard K. 1961. An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. A Social History of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University: Institute of Ethiopian studies
- Parekh, Bhikhu. 2006. *Rethinking multiculturalism: cultural diversity and political theory*. Second edition. New York: Palgrave macmillan:
- Pateman, C. 1970. *Participation and democratic theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Pätz, Tom .2002. ‘Ethiopia: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia’. Forum of Federations
- Paulantzas, Nicos.1968. *Political power and social classes*. London: Verso Press.
- Paulos Chanie.2007. ‘ Clientelism and Ethiopia’s post-1991 Decentralization’. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45(3): 355–384.
- Pausewang, Siegfried.1983. *Peasants, Land and Society: A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*. Munich: Weltforum.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. Can national identity be built on local democracy? Working Paper 8, 1997. *Chr. Michelsen Institute Development Studies and Human Rights*.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. ‘The Oromo and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy’. *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. Volume 14, Number 1 February/March 2007 63-78
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. Ethiopia: a political view from below, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 16:1, 69-85

- \_\_\_\_\_. et al (eds. ). 2002 . *Ethiopian since the Derg: a Decade of Democratic Pretension and Performance*. London - New York: Zed Books.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *The city Limits*. The University of Chicago press.
- Pfetsch, Frank R. 2007. *Negotiating Political Conflicts*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Polsby, N. 1963. *Community Power and Political Theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press pp. 122- 138.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making democracy work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Pye, Lucian W. 1965. 'The Concept of Political Development.' The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Vol. 358: 1-13,
- Reeves, Julie. 2004. *Culture and International Relations Narratives, natives and tourists*. New York: Routledge
- Reporter. 1993 *E.C. Amharic Monthly Magazine Vol 4 No. 35 1993 E.C.*
- \_\_\_\_\_. (09 April 2008a): "Bekililoch Bezendrow amet 28 Gichitoch tekestewal" ("In the current year there were 28 conflicts in the regions")
- \_\_\_\_\_. (09 April 2008b): "Bewendo Genet betekosekse Gichet Kehaya belay sewoch tegadelu" ("In the Wondo Genet conflict more than 20 killed")
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993 *E.C. Amharic Monthly Magazine Vol 4 No. 35 1993 E.C.*
- Riker, William, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*. Boston: Little Brown, 1964.
- Rothchild, Donald, 1966. 'The Limits of Federalism: an Examination of Political Institutional Transfer in Africa'. *The Journal of modern African Studies*, 4, 3 (1966), pp- 275-93
- Robinson, William I. 2004. 'Global capitalism and the Oromo liberation struggle: theoretical notes on US policy towards the Ethiopian empire. In Asafa Jalata (ed.) *State crises, Globalization and national movements in North –East Africa*, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 45-77
- Rotberg, R.I. (2004) 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair', in R.I. Rotberg (ed.) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, pp. 1–45. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rubenson, Sven. 1976. *The survival of Ethiopian Independence*. London: Hienemann Educational Books Ltd
- Samatar, Abdi Ismail. 2004. *Ethiopian federalism: autonomy versus control in the Somali*

- Region, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 1131–1154, 2004.
- Sandbrook, R. 2000. *Closing the circle : democratization and development in Africa*. Zed Books Ltd: New York.
- Sbacchi, Alberto (1985). *Ethiopia under Mussolini: Fascism and the Colonial Experience*. London: Zed Books.
- Schmidt, Emily and Mekamu Kedir. 2009. 'Urbanization and Spatial Connectivity in Ethiopia: Urban Growth Analysis Using GIS Development Strategy and Governance Division'. International Food Policy Research Institute – Ethiopia Strategy Support Program 2, Ethiopia.
- Seale, Clive(ed.).1998. *Researching society and culture*. London: Sage publications.
- Segers, Kaatje et al. 2008. *Be like Bees – The Politics of Mobilizing Farmers for Development in Tigray, Ethiopia*. *African Affairs*, 1–19.
- Sereke-Brhan, Heran.2002. 'Building Bridges, Drying bad blood; elite marriage politics and ethnicity in 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial Ethiopia', PHD dissertation, Michigan state university.
- Serkalem Alemayehu.2009. *City Culture A case study of Hawassa*. Hawassa: Tony Printing
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. 'Federalism and the Accommodation of Ethno cultural diversities: The case of Hawassa city'. M.A.Thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- Seyoum Y. Hameso. 2004. 'The Sidama nation and the solidarity of colonized nations in Ethiopia', in Asafa Jalata (ed.). *State crises , Globalization and national movements in North –East Africa*, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor &Francis Group , pp, 165-181.
- Seyoum Mesfin. 2010. 'Issues and challenges in the Federal constitution making in Ethiopia', In Alem Habtu(ed.). *Ethiopian Federalism Principles, Processes and Practice*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University press. PP 42-58.
- Shumiye Abuhoy. 2003. 'Demographic Trends, urbanization and their effects on Agricultural productivity and Food security in Ethiopia'. In Berhanu Nega and Befekadu Degefe(eds.). *The Role of urbanization in the socio-economic Development Process*. Ethiopian economic Association (EEA), Addis Ababa, pp.75-94).
- Simone, Abdou M. 2005. *Urban Africa: changing contours of survival in the city*. New York: Zed books LTD.
- Skocpol, Theda.1985. 'Bringing the state Back, Strategies of Analysis in current Research '. In Peter Evans et al.(eds.). *Bringing the state Back in*. Cambridge : Cambridge

*University press.* PP 3-37

- Smith, Lahr .2007. Political Violence and Democratic Uncertainty in Ethiopia, United States Institute of Peace Special Report Special Report 192 August
- SNNPR .2001. The Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples National Regional State: Proclamation No 35 (2001). Debub Negarit Gazeta.
- \_\_\_\_\_.2006. The revised cities proclamation: Proclamation. Debub Negarit Gazeta of No 103 (2006)
- Sorenson, John. 1993. *Imagining Ethiopia: Struggle for History and Identity in the Horn of Africa*. New York: Rutgers University Press.
- Steinberger, Peter J. 2004. *The Idea of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press
- Stepan, Alfred. 1999. 'Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model'. . *Journal of Democracy* 10(4): 19–34.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. *Arguing Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_.2005. 'Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model.' Dimitrois, Karmis and Wayne Norman(eds.). *Theories of Federalism: A reader*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Stren, Richard and Dickson Eyoh .2007. 'Decentralization and Urban Development in West Africa: An introduction', in Stren, Richard and Dickson Eyoh (eds.). *Decentralization and the Politics of Urban Development In West Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Pp. 1-22
- Stolle, Dietlind, Marc Hooghe, and Michele Micheletti. 2005. 'Politics in the Super-Market – Political Consumerism as a Form of Political Participation'. *International Political Science Review* 26 (3): 245–269.
- Stone, C. 1989. *Regime politics: governing Atlanta 1946–1988*. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
- Strecker,Ivo. 1994. 'Glories and Agonies of the Ethiopian past', In: *Social Anthropology* (1994), 2.3.303-312.
- Tadesse Tamrat. 1988. Processes of Ethnic integration in Ethiopian History: The case of the Agew." *Journal of African History* 29(1988). 2-19
- Tarlton, Charles D. 1965. 'Symmetry and Asymmetry as Elements of Federalism: A Theoretical Speculation', *The Journal of Politics* 27.

- Tecola W. Hagos. 1995. *Democratization? Ethiopia (1991-1994): A Personal View*. Cambridge, Mass.: Khepera Publishers
- Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher .2006.' Livelihood and Urban Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia: perspectives from Small and Big Towns'. OSSREA Publications.
- Tegegne Gebre–Egziabher and Kassahun Berhanu.2007. 'A literature review of Decentralization in Ethiopia'. In Taye Assefa and Tegegne Gebre –Egziabher(eds.) *.Decentralization in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Forum for social studies, pp. 9-68
- Tegegne Teka. 1998. 'Amhara Ethnicity in the Making'. In Mohammed Salih, M. A. and J. Markakis (eds), *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikaninstitutet
- Tesfaye Tafesse. 2007. '*The Migration, Environment and Conflict Nexus in Ethiopia, A Case Study of Amhara Migrant-settlers in East Wollega Zone*'. Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa.
- Teshale T.1995. *The making of modern Ethiopia, 1896-1974*. Lawrencev: The red sea press
- TGE .1991. 'The Transitional Period Charter', Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- TGE .1992). ' A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of National/Regional Self-Governments, Transitional Government of Ethiopia.. Negarit Gazeta, Proclamation 7/1992', 51<sup>st</sup> Year
- Thomson , Alex.2004. *An introduction to African politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Tibebu Debebe. 2003. 'Policy challenges for urban growth and balanced territorial development'. In Berhanu Nega and Befekadu Degefe(eds.). *The Role of urbanization in the socio-economic Development Process*. Ethiopian economic Association (EEA), Addis Ababa, pp.75-94).
- Tilly, Charles .1974. *An urban world*. Boston, Little, Brown and company
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1975a. *The formation of nation states in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton university press
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990*. Oxford: Blackwell
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Robert E. Goodin.2006. 'It Depends'. In Robert E. Goodin & Charles Tilly(eds.). *The oxford handbooks of Political science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tobiya, 1985 E.C., *Amharic Monthly Magaziner, 1st year, No. 10, Tir 1985 E.C.*
- Tobiya, 1987 E.C. , *Amharic Monthly Magazine 1st year, No. 5 1987 E.C.*

- Tokuma Daba .2010. ‘The Legal and Practical Protection of the Rights of Minorities in Self Administering Nations of Ethiopia: The Case of Oromia’. LL.M Addis Ababa university
- Tonkiss, Fran. 1998. ‘Using focus groups’,. In Clive Seale (ed.). *Researching society and culture*. Sage publications. London. pp.193-2006
- Treisman, D. 1999. Political Decentralization and Economic Reform: A Game-Theoretic Analysis. *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (2) , 488-517.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *The Architecture of Government: Rethinking political centralization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Trimingham, .J. Spencer. 1952. *Islam in Ethiopia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Tronovoll, K. and Aadland, Ø. 1995. The Process of Democratization in Ethiopia-An Expression of Popular Participation or Political or Political Resistance? Human Rights Report No.5, Oslo: Norwegian Human Rights Institute
- Tronvoll K & S Vaughan.2003. *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*. Stockholm: SIDA.
- Tsegaye Regassa 2003. ‘Between Constitutional Design and Constitutional practice: The making and Legitimacy of Constitutions in Ethiopia’, in Conference on Constitutionalism and Human security in the Horn of Africa, 16-49 Addis Ababa, Inter Africa Group.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. ‘State constitutions in Federal Ethiopia : A preliminary observation’. Paper presented in the Bellagio conference March , 22-27, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. ‘Learning to live with conflicts: Federalism as a tool of conflict management in Ethiopia’. An Overview’, *Mizan Law Review* Vol. 4 No.1
- Tsegaye Tegenu.2006. *Evaluation of the operation and performance of Ethnic Decentralization system in Ethiopia: A case study of the Gurage people, 1992-2000*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa university press
- Turton, David. 2006.’ Introduction’. In D. Turton ( ed.,) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 1-31. Oxford: James Currey.
- United Nations Secretariat.2006. World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects”. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 04 December.
- Van der Beken, Christophe. 2007. *Ethiopia: Constitutional protection of Ethnic minorities at regional*. Afrika Focus, Vol. 20, Nr. 1-2, 2007, pp. 105-151

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. The Ethiopian Federal State Structure and the Accommodation of Ethnic Diversity: A View from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region', Non-Western Law Working Paper, Ghent: Ghent University
- Van der Loop, Theo. 2002. 'Local Democracy and Decentralization in Ethiopia'. In *Local democracy and Decentralization in East and Southern Africa: Experiences from Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and Ethiopia*. UN-HABITAT , pp 85-108
- Vaughan, Sarah . 2003. 'Ethnicity and Power in Ethiopia'. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Edinburgh
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. 'Responses to Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia's Southern Region'. In D. Turton, ed., *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 181-207. Oxford: James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *The Addis Ababa Transitional conference of July 1991: Its origin, history and significance*. Endinburgh University press.
- Vaughan, S. and K. Tronvoll. 2003. *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Studies No. 10. Stockholm:
- Venugopal, V. and Serdar, Y. 2008. *Local Government Discretion and Accountability in Ethiopia*, Atlanta: International Studies Working Paper 08-38.
- Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Verba, Sidney *et al.* 1978. *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Verba, Sidney *et al.* 1995. *Voice and Equality. Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vestal, Theodore M., 1999. *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State*. London: Praeger.
- Vincent, Andrew .1987. *Theories of the State*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Waadaa.2000 (E.C). A special publication of OPDO party office of Adama town. Adama: Ethiopia
- Walle Engedayehu .1993. 'Ethiopia: Democracy and the Politics of Ethnicity'. *Africa Today*, Vol. 40, No. 2
- Watts, Ronald . 1994a. 'Contemporary Views on Federalism', in B.D. Villiers (ed.), *Evaluating Federal Systems*. Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.



- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. *Comparing Federal System*. Montreal;Kingston; London; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press. Second Edition.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. 'Comparing Forms of Federal partnership.' In kamis. Dimitrios and Wyne Norman(eds.). *Theories of Federalism : A reader*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Wendt, A.1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wheare, K.C. 1963. *Federal Government*. Fourth Edition, London: Oxford.
- Wirth, L. 1938.'Urbanism as a way of life'. *American Journal of Sociology* 44, 1-24.
- Wondwosen Teshome.2008. 'Ethnicity and Political Parties in Africa: The Case of Ethnic-based Parties in Ethiopia'. *The Journal of International Social Research* Vol. 1/5
- Yin, Robert K. 1994. *Case study research: design and method*. London: Sage Publications
- Yohannes Petros. 1993. *Oromia National Awakening: A Brief Introduction*. London: Burqaa Publishing House
- Young, John 1996. 'Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia'. *Review of African Political Economy*, 70: 531-542
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975–1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. 'Regionalism and democracy in Ethiopia'. *Third World Quarterly* 19: 191-204.
- Zartman, W.I. 1995. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*.Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Maureen R. Berman.1982. *The practical negotiator*. Yale university press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and J.Z. Rubin. 2002. *Power and Negotiation* . Michigan: The University of Michgan press.
- Zelege Kebede .2007. History of Hawassa (1960-2007). *Hawassa city Administration*. Hawassa : Tony printing Inc,
- Zemelak Ayele.2008. Local government in Ethiopia: Adequately Empowered?  
LL.M University of the Western Cape
- \_\_\_\_\_.2011. Local government in Ethiopia: still an apparatus of control?, Law Democracy & Development, volume 15 (2011) .

## APPENDICES

**Table 1: Urban population by size of urban settlement across the country**

Regional State or Charter City	Population by size of urban settlement						
	Up to 4,999	5,000 to 19,999	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,000	100,000 to 200,000	Above 200,000	TOTALS
Amhara	299,346	768,817	442,427	232,105	352,301	204,001	2,298,997
Oromia	561,206	1,204,387	1,002,497	379,659	304,005	239,525	3,691,279
SNNP *	237,063	351,265	349,315	269,062	131,300		1,338,005
Tigray	97,852	199,608	311,173	68,276	177,090		853,999
Somali	77,066	277,382	239,120	71,399	102,489		767,456
Afar	43,974	64,225	23,799				131,999
Benshangul/Gumuz	18,978	24,144	20,879				64,001
Gambela	10,714	5,672	32,613				48,999
Harari					127,000		127,000
Addis Ababa		3,059,000				3,059,000	3,059,000
Dire Dawa		14,827				293,173	308,000
Total	1,128,057	2,910,327	2,421,823	1,020,501	1,194,185	3,795,699	12,688,735
% of total	11%	23%	19%	8%	9%	30%	100%

Source: Ministry of Works and Urban Development: Plan for Urban Development and Urban Good Governance (2006)

\*In SNNPR the figure 131,300, represents Hawassa city. As it is discussed in chapter six, with the inclusion of the surrounding rural kebeles into city administration, the number of urban population in Hawassa city is registered to be about 304479, and the difference is so significant.

**Table 2: The Distribution of towns across the regional states of the Ethiopian federation**

Regional State or Charter City	Population by size of urban settlement							Totals
	33	77	77	15	3	2	1	
Amhara	33	77	77	15	3	2	1	208
Oromia	63	141	130	33	5	2	1	375
SNNP*	25	63	43	13	4	1		149
Tigray	23	21	20	8	1	1		74
Somali	10	20	28	7	7	7		67
Afar	12	9	6	1				28
Benshangul/Gumuz	3	5	4	1				13
Gambela	2	3		1	1			7
Harari						1		1
Addis Ababa							1	1
Dire Dawa			3				1	2
Total	171	339	310	79	14	8	4	925
% of total	18%	37%	34%	9%	2%	1%	0.4%	100%

Source: Ministry of Works and Urban Development: Plan for Urban Development and Urban Good Governance (2006)

**Table 3: Ethnic composition of Adama city in time perspective**

Ethnic groups	1970		1994		2007	
	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%
Amhara	26679	68	56, 788	44.42	70163	31.6
Oromo	6811	17.3	33535	26.23	102291	46.0
Guraghe	3037	7.7	23604	7.29	-	-
Tigre	1162	2.7	8019	6.27	7704	3.47
Walayita	-	-	882	0.69	-	-
Kembata	-	-	690	0.54	-	-
Sebat Bet Guraghe	-	-	-	-	8992	4.05
Sodo Guraghe	-	-	-	-	4485	2.02
Silte	-	-	-	-	10080	4.54
Others	707	1.8	3630	2.84	18317	8.25
Foreign	831	2.11	-	-	-	
Total			127,84 2		222,035	100

Source: CSA for respective years (1970, 1994, 2007)

Note: 1. Blank spaces in the table are for which reliable data was not found

2 In column 2007 census, the Guraghe population is divided in to three different categories. As is seen in the chapter that dealt with Hawassa city, it is due to their separation as different ethnic groups since 2001.

**Table 4: Distribution of women entrepreneurs**

Ethnic Group	No	Percentage
Amhara	52	26
Guraghe	114	57
Oromo	29	14.5
Tigre	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Source, Kasahun Argaw, 2000:76

**Table 5: The Ethnic and Religious composition of Hawassa city in pre and post 1991 times**

Ethnic groups	1966		1970		1994		2007		2010	
	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%
Amhara	2880	52.74	7609	57.86	21731	31.41	40088	15.43%	48069	15.79
Oromo	410	7.51	793	6.03	7992	12	13536	5.21%	16247	5.33

Guraghe	150	2.74	223	1.69	5207	7.25	11250	4.33%	13522	4.44
Tigiray	510	9.34	1000	7.60	3187	4.6	-	-	4054	1.33
Walayta	-	-	-	-	17230	25	36113	13.9%	45408	14.9
Sidama	-	-	-	-	7058	10	126446	48.67 %	143348	47
Kembata	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8522	2.8
Hadiya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4304	1.41
Others	1360	24.9 1	3285	24.98	6764	9.77	32372	12.46 %	21005	7
Foreigners	150	2.75	239	1.81	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5460	100	13149	99.97	69169	100	259805	100	304479	100
Religion										
Catholic	-	-	-	-	2296	3.31	9821	3.78	11955	3.77
Muslim	360	6.59	586	4.45	2826	4.08	21148	8.14%	25755	8.1
Orthodox	4940	90.4 8	10109	76.90	44960	65	70121	26.99 %	84362	27
Protestant	-	-	1639	12.46	18604	26.89	155129	59.71 %	188837	59.5
Traditional	-	-	-	-	68	0.09	-		457	0.14
Others	160	3.47	815	6.19	390	0.56	3584	1.4%	5476	1.2
Not stated	-	-	-	-	25	0.03	-			
Total	5460	100	13149	100	69169	100	259,803	100		

Source: Compiled from CSA report of each year and other related sources

Note: Blank spaces in the table are left due to lack of reliable data.

**Table 6: Hawassa city council ethnic representation as of 2013**

Sidama	Wolayta	Amhara	Kambata	Gurage	Tigray	Oromo	Hadiya	Kafa	Gofa	Tambaro	Dawuro
130	12	11	8	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
Total											176

Source: Hawassa city, office of the Mayor

**Table 7: Employment statistics in public institutions in Hawassa city**

R. No	Ethnicity	Number employees	%	Type of employment	
				Permanent	Temporary
1	Sidama	1657	80.94	1506	151
2	Amhara	142	6.93	118	24
3	Wolayita	141	6.88	102	39
4	Kambatta	33	1.61	26	7
5	Hadiya	22	1	18	4
6	Tigre	12	0.58	12	-
7	Guraghe	40	1.95	31	9
	Total	2047		1813	234

Source: Hawassa city Human resource and Statistics Department, August 2012

## Appendices II: Pictures



Picture 1:: Picture depicting conflict and co-existence of two different symbolic identities in Adama city.

The church is alleged to represent the Amhara identity; whereas the other statue is for the Oromo  
**Taken by the author on 7.25.2011**

### Caption

*This picture represents conflict and co-existence of two different symbolic identities in Adama city. One is the Odaa tree protected by seven horses. The other is the cathedral of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They were installed in adjacent to one another. It is interesting to describe what they mean politically speaking. Historically they represent different identities: the former is associated with the Oromo and the latter with Amhara and Tigray communities. The Odaa tree symbolizes sovereignty of Oromo nation, especially before conquest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had a stake in conquest of the Oromo nation. Therefore, such historical contradiction is remarkable to give meaning to the picture.*

*During the time of this research, there was also conflict between the two. The publicly known conflict is over land (territory) because the church claims the area occupied by the other picture. However, the source of the conflict seems to extend beyond the land to include historical and political issues. Especially there are two widely held interpretations about the picture, especially in relation to the Odaa protected by seven horses. First, the horses are assumed to protect the church from expanding any more in city. Second, it is assumed to represent an interest to protect Oromo culture and identity (symbolized by Odaa at the center) from being invaded by other cultures, particularly that of the Orthodox Church.*



*In any ways the two symbolic identities co-exist what so ever their relationships may be. For example, in the pre-decentralization periods it was rare to find such historically contradictory symbols in one city (town).*



**Picture 2: A picture symbolizes Abba Gada, traditional Oromo political leader**

Taken by the author on 7.24. 2011

#### **Caption**

*This picture represents Abba Gada, the traditional political ruler of the Oromo nation. It was constructed in the post-decentralization period at the center of the town. The picture is significant politically and culturally in many ways. First, its location at the center of the city bears political meaning, especially in connection to contest over the city for political and cultural dominance. Second, parts of the city around the statute came to be known as Abba Gada, which once again is politically meaningful in a way we explained the political role of symbols in this thesis. Third, it has become cultural center to be visited by various people, especially by rural and urban Oromo people (see, for example, picture III below). The most controversial point in this connection, however, is what the Abba Gada under the Odaa tree points to. To the direction it points, there is an orthodox cathedral. Why it was built that way remains open for different political interpretation.*



Picture 3: The Statue of Abba Gada at center of Adama city serving as cultural center

Taken by the author, on 7.25. 2011

**Caption**

**People, especially from the Oromo community often visit this center. It created employment opportunity for about 15 people, 10 of them were engaged in taking photos. According to informants engaged on average fowm 30-40 people visit the place every day. Most people who visit the site were from rural areas. What is remarkable here is that before the introduction of ethnic decentralization in the country there had been no such cultural links between rural and urban Oromia.**



*Picture 4: The Ethiopian Orthodox church at the center of Hawassa city*

*Taken by the author on 6.23.2011.*

***Caption***

***The church represented in this picture is located at the center of Hawassa city. Being at the center, it almost symbolizes the heart of the town. However, as the picture VI shows its visibility diminished following the construction of another monument later.***



*Picture 5: A monument under construction but the construction stopped this time due to contest over it,*

*Taken by the author on August 9, 2011.*

**Caption**

***This is under construction just in front of the Orthodox Church shown above. It represents the Sidama cultural identity. There were two sources of conflict with this monument. One is from the Orthodox Church side which complains for blocking the cathedral (see the full picture below). The other complains was from other groups of SNNPR on the ground that the statute represents only the cultural identity of the Sidama nation. In both cases, it vividly shows the degree to which symbolic identities have become issues of contest in the town.***



Picture 6: *A monument completed with its length shortened.*

*Taken by the author on March 25, 2012.*

***Caption***

*This picture represents the Sidama cultural identity at the center of the Hadassah city. It finishing took long time due to contest with the Orthodox Christian church beside it. It came to finishing on negotiation that its height was to be reduced in a way it allowed at least a partial view of the church. Yet form this side it masks the church from visibility. However, in other direction it allows a partial visibility for the cathedral (see the next Picture)*



*Picture 7: A picture representing conflict and co-existence of two different cultural identities in Hawassa city*

***Caption***

***No matter how it came about through various processes of contest and negotiation, the two symbolic identities co-exist side by side. The immediate one represents the Sidama nation and the church largely represents the Amhara and other groups adherent to the religion.***