



Causes of Electoral Violence: Lessons from the May 2005 Election of Ethiopia

by

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Chapter One: General Introduction

Introducing a particular research requires clarifying the major thematic areas of such research. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to make a general introduction into the main thematic areas of my thesis. Here a brief overview about Ethiopia will be made and the core problem area to be under scrutiny will be described. Other than these, the research questions of the thesis will be stated and the major research objective of the thesis will be clarified. Besides, the relevance of the study will be explained and the works of some scholars on Ethiopian politics as well as the May 2005 election will be presented. Finally the structure of the study will be described.

1.1 Background

Ethiopia is a landlocked country located in the Horn of Africa, covering an area of 1,104,300 sq. km (World Fact Book: 2010)¹ and neighboring Eritrea to the north, Djibouti to the north east, Kenya to the south, Somalia to the south east and Sudan to the west. With a people of around 90,873,739 million (ibid), it is the second densely populated country in Sub-Sahara Africa. Consisting more than 80 distinct ethnic groups, it is among the most ethnically diverse societies of the world. The largest ethno-linguistic groups are Amhara and Oromo. While the Amhara constitute 26.9% of the overall ethnic group, the Oromo comprise 34.5% accordingly (ibid). In terms of religion, 43.5% are orthodox, 33.9% are muslim and 18.6% are protestants (ibid). The national economy depends on the agricultural sector which engages 85% of the total employment (ibid) and is one of the poorest economies of the world. Its recent political history stretches from 1991 to present. The EPRDF came to power in 1991 by ousting the Derg regime through military force and introduced changes in the political sphere. Ethnic federalism became the basis for organizing the state structure and the country is divided into 9 administrative regions and 2 self-ruling cities. The political system is designed on the basis of democratic principles and elections were conducted in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 for federal and regional parliaments respectively.

1 See <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/theworld.factbook/geos/et.html> for further details

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The May 2005 national election of Ethiopia was the first truly competitive multi-party election that the country has ever experienced in its political history. The pre-election period and the election day were relatively peaceful and democratic. This time, contending political parties organized themselves far better than before. Nearly 70 political parties as well as individual candidates participated in this election (EuEom 2005: 11). However, the main competing parties were *Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)*, *Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD)* and *United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF)* (Nordem 2005: 2). One of the major points of difference among these parties was the issue of ethnic federalism. EPRDF believes that ethnic federalism is the only viable way to accommodate the rights of nations and nationalities to self-determination up to and including secession (Lovise 2006: 253). CUD opposes the federal system organized along ethnic lines and desires to avoid Article 39 of the constitution (ibid). UEDF supports a political system based on ethnic grounds but opposes the rights of nationalities to secession (ibid). The other point of difference was the issue of land. While EPRDF continued to favor the nationalization of both urban and rural land, opposition parties particularly the CUD agitated the privatization of land (Harbeson 2005: 157). Opposition political parties (both the CUD and UEDF) also criticized the ruling party regarding longstanding economic problems such as food insecurity, agricultural stagnation, corruption...etc as well as over foreign policy issues particularly over matters related to the Ethio-Eritrean conflict and the peace process (Abbink 2005: 182).

During this election, there was significant voter registration and turnout. Around 85% of the total eligible population ie. 25,605,851 people registered to vote (Nordem 2005: 6). Around 82% of this casted their votes at more than 32,000 polling sites on the election day (Haberson 2005: 150). Besides, the public media was open for free political debates. Political parties were allocated free airtime on the state media. While EPRDF gained 44 %, opposition parties received 56 % of the total coverage (Eu-Eom 2005: 17). Other than these, international monitoring missions were also present to observe this election. These were the European Union Election Observation Mission, the African Union Election Observers Team and the US-based Carter Center Election Monitoring Mission (Carter 2009: 20).

Despite the positive developments of the pre-election period, the post-election period was marred with widespread violence. This time dispute emerged among the contending parties

over election results. Out of the 547 single member constituencies which were arranged for the 2005 federal legislative election (EU Eom 2005: 9), the results of 299 constituencies were disputed (ibid: 25). The complaint and appeal procedures did not succeed providing effective solution to the problem (ibid: 28). Massive popular protest and human right abuse also took place in connection with the electoral conflict. In relation to two major violence which occurred in Addis Ababa in June and November 2005, 193 people were killed, several hundreds were injured and around 30,000 people were arrested (USIP 2007: 7). In its final report, the inquiry commission that was designated to investigate the violence also denied the excessive use of force by security forces and this prevented the possibility of restorative justice in the future (ibid). Besides, 111 people including leaders of the main opposition party (CUD), several journalists, civil society activists and 25 people in absentia (most of whom were opposition activists in the diaspora) were charged and tried in connection with this violence (Amnesty 2006: 1). After being sentenced various prison terms as well as death penalty, they requested for pardon through Ethiopian elders and all of them were released (USIP 2007: 7). Several new legislations that restrict political rights and democratic spaces were also adopted since then. Some of these includes the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation, the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (Human Rights Watch 2010a: 44,50).

1.3 Research Question

As David Silverman (2005: 77) stated research questions provide guidance and consistency for a research project. They also indicate the data required for the study and the appropriate methods of collecting data (ibid). Thus the major research question of my thesis is :

What caused the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia?

1.4 Research Objective

The main objective of my study is to examine the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia in depth. More specifically, the study will analyze the underlying conditions and triggering factors for this violence by focusing on three core areas. These are :

The Nature of Ethiopian Politics.

1.5 Relevance of the Study

The relevance of this study can be explained from various dimensions. Firstly, it will undertake a systematic causal study on the 2005 electoral violence of Ethiopia. Previous scholarly works focus mainly on explaining the election itself. Secondly, it will understand violence related to elections from a peace and conflict stand point by applying a recent conceptual framework ie. Electoral violence, to conduct a case study on a particular country ie. Ethiopia. Thirdly, it will contribute its share to efforts made to prevent electoral violence and resolve electoral disputes peacefully by identifying the lessons that can be drawn from the experience of a specific country. Fourthly, it will serve as a vital historical evidence or source material for local and international legal and human right institutions and practitioners, if restorative justice is going to take place in the future in connection with the post-election violence. Fifthly, it will contribute to one of the research priorities and teaching areas of the center for peace studies (UiT) which is studying the causes of war, conflict and violence in conflict and post-conflict societies.

1.6 State of Research on the Topic

In this part, I will put forward some of the research made on Ethiopian politics in general and on the May 2005 election in particular.

In his article entitled “ Discomfiture of Democracy ? The 2005 Election Crisis in Ethiopia and its Aftermath ” Jon Abbink (2005) examined the nature of the May 2005 election of Ethiopia and its effects on the country’s politics. He argued that despite the significant democratic steps taken by the regime in power prior to the May 2005 election; the post-election period has witnessed the resurgence of neo-patrimonialism and authoritarianism in the country’s political arena (ibid: 193). He concluded his article by arguing that the problem of securing political power through violent means in today’s Ethiopia highlights the tragic continuity of the country’s longstanding political history.

Lovise Aalen (2006) wrote an article named “Ethnic Federalism and Self Determination for Nationalities in a Semi Authoritarian State :the Case of Ethiopia.” In this article, she assessed the problematic of ethnic federalism under the current state of democracy in Ethiopia. She argued that although federalism is introduced by the regime in power as a way of managing ethnic diversity, practically the system in itself could not mitigate ethnic conflicts effectively (ibid: 243-44) due to the absence of democratic way of governance and a broader pan-national identity in the country (ibid: 260) She concluded her article by arguing that the future consequence of ethnic politics would become disastrous not only for the regime in power but also for the entire country.

In a study entitled “ the culture of power in contemporary Ethiopian political life ” Sarah Vaughan and Kjetil Tronvoll (2003) investigated both the formal and informal economic social and political power arrangements and interactions within the Ethiopian society. They argue that despite the enshrinement of international human right standards on the Ethiopian constitutions, in practice serious human right violations have continued to occur in the country since 1991 (ibid: 53). They concluded that the most difficult task ahead will be transforming the longstanding culture of violence in the country and despite limitations in terms of effectiveness and independence, government initiatives to improve the situation need to be emphasized.

Lahra Smith (2009) wrote an article called “explaining violence after recent elections in Ethiopia and Kenya ” In this article she analyzed the causes of post-election violence which erupted in both countries in recent times in light of contending justifications for inter-ethnic violence. She argued that political uncertainty and violence, close election results and biased electoral institutions are commonplaces in African elections (ibid: 867-68) and disproportionate use of force, high level of citizen protest, problematic electoral procedures and greater stakes makes the cases of Ethiopia and Kenya similar (ibid). She concluded her article by arguing that differences in the scope of constitutional reforms are important in affecting the voting public’s reaction to highly competitive elections.

In his article named “Ethiopia’s Extended Transition”, John W. Harbeson (2005) explained the distinct features of the May 2005 election and the justifications for the enhanced showing of opposition parties during the May 2005 national elections. He argued that this election was the

first genuinely competed national election since the country was introduced to multi-party democracy (ibid: 144). However the democratic gains of pre-election period did not last long due to credible accusations of electoral fraud, biased electoral administration and coercive measures taken by the regime on the opposition camp in the post-election period (ibid). He concluded his article by arguing that the experiences from the May 2005 election demonstrate that the democratization process in Ethiopia will encounter both critical challenges and possible opportunities.

Leonardo R. Arriola (2008) wrote an article called “ Ethnicity Economic Condition and Opposition Support: Evidence from Ethiopia’s 2005 Elections.” In this study, he made a quantitative study on the major factors that determine the degree of support given to opposition political parties at electoral district level in the May 2005 election. He argued that the various tactics used by most African regimes for securing victory during elections such as patronage allocation, ethnic polarization and violence application also works for the Ethiopian case (ibid: 115). From the study, he found out that economic factors played a crucial role in determining the level of support obtained by opposition political parties in a particular electoral district (ibid: 117). He concluded his article by arguing that future research needs to focus on analyzing how economic dynamics is influencing the long-established political alignments.

In his article titled “Alternative Electoral Systems and the 2005 Ethiopian Parliamentary Elections” John Ishiyama 2009, examined whether or not the employment of alternative electoral system would have made the outcome of the May 2005 election distinct. In his study, he found that in contrast to opposition parties request for the institution of the proportional representation system before the May 2005 national election, they would have done best in terms of vote share under the block plurality system (ibid: 49). He concluded his article by arguing that the choice of electoral system will be an important variable in determining the outcome of multiparty elections in particular and the course of the democratic transitions in general in the future Ethiopia.

Lovise Aalen and Kjetil Tronvoll (2009) wrote an article named “ The End of Democracy? Curtailing Political and Civil Rights in Ethiopia” In this article, they made a critical analysis on the political changes that occurred after the May 2005 national election in Ethiopia. They

argued that this election witnessed exceptional political liberalization at the initial stage (ibid: 194) but this was reversed in the post-election period due to a stage by stage closure of the political arena by the regime (ibid). Such measures undermine the prospect for a peaceful political resistance and heightens the likelihood for long term violent conflict (ibid). They concluded the article by arguing that all these developments confirm that the regime has eventually resumed its authoritarian essence.

From the research made on Ethiopian politics in general and on the May 2005 election in particular one can understand that the risk of election related violence became high in the Ethiopian case due to political factors such as neopatrimonialism, authoritarianism, use of violence, biased election administration, contested electoral systems ...etc and due to socio-economic factors such as greater stakes, ethnic polarization, economic inequalities, social injustice ..etc. These factors will also continue to be challenges not only to the peace-building efforts but also to the democratization initiatives undergoing in the country.

1.7 Organization of the study

The subsequent parts of this thesis are organized into four chapters. The second chapter deals with methodological issues and experiences from the field. Specifically it explains how the research is designed and what sort of methods are used. It also brief how access is negotiated and data is collected in the field. Besides, it discusses safety and insider-outsider status issues raised in the course of fieldwork. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework of electoral violence from the existing literature. The main focus of this chapter is to explain electoral violence in post-conflict societies. Particularly, it describes the meaning, nature, effects and causes of electoral violence. In line with the purpose of this thesis, more emphasis is given to the explanation forwarded on the causes of electoral violence. The fourth chapter firstly reviews the May 2005 Election of Ethiopia by classifying it into Pre-election, Election day and Post-election period. Secondly it analyzes the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia. This part is divided into three sub parts. The first sub-part considers the nature of politics in contemporary Ethiopia. Here issues like neo-patrimonial and authoritarian politics, ethnic and political party cleavages as well as use of violence and culture of impunity are discussed. The second sub-part examines the nature of the May 2005 election of Ethiopia. This part covers subjects such as political mobilization along conflict margins, close competition among political parties and pertinent socio-economic stakes. The third sub-part explores the

nature of electoral institutions in post-conflict Ethiopia. Problems such as contests over existing electoral system, limited regulations of electoral conduct and weak electoral administration entity are analyzed here. In the final chapter, I will summarize the lessons drawn from the Ethiopian experience and forward the concluding remarks of this thesis.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Fieldwork Experience

Clarifying methodological issues is an important step in any research process. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology used in my thesis as well as my experiences from the fieldwork. Specifically, the way in which the research is designed and the methods are chosen will be clarified. Besides, the manner in which access is negotiated and data's are collected will be explained. Moreover, the way in which my insider-outsider status played a role on the challenges encountered and measures taken in terms of safety in the field will be analysed.

2.1 Research Design and Method

With respect to research approaches, David Silverman (2006: 15) argued that methodology refers to the process of choosing data collection and analysis methods appropriate for the research to be conducted and can be classified into qualitative and quantitative ones. Methods are the particular techniques used to conduct a research and are required to be consistent with the theories to be used in the research (ibid). Adrian Holliday (2000: 6) said that qualitative studies explore the attributes of social life in depth by situating the study in a particular social setting. While designing my research, a qualitative approach is chosen in order to collect and analyze relevant data.

As to sources of study, Alan Bryman (2004: 381) argued that researchers can utilize a variety of documentary sources to conduct a qualitative study such as written and visual personal documents, official documents of government and private organizations, printed and visual mass media products and electronic sources. Yin (2009: 105) also argued that researchers should gather documents needed to address research questions in a systematic way. They should also recognize the purpose of such written documents so that they can interpret the information within these documents properly (ibid). Various types of documentary sources are supposed to be consulted while planning my study.

In my study, I am using the May 2005 election as a case in point. As Yin (2009: 4) argued that case study is utilized as a research method so as to build a knowledge about specific individual and group attributes, organizational settings and socio-political events. The May 2005 election

of Ethiopia was a socio-political phenomenon that involved diverse stakeholders such as the national election board, the contending political parties, the voting public, domestic and international observers, local and foreign medias, civil organizations and others. It is in light of this fact that I planned to travel to Ethiopia and visit the institutions of these stakeholders in search of primary and secondary documentary data relevant for my study.

In my study, theory is used as an important methodological tool. As Robert Yin (2009: 130) explained, theoretical suppositions will not only imply the objectives, questions and hypothesis of a specific case study but also the literatures to be reviewed and the method to be used for data collection. The conceptual framework of electoral violence developed by Kristina Høglund (2009: 423) indicates that the causes of electoral violence in conflict ridden societies are identified in three major spheres. These are the nature of politics, the nature of elections and the nature electoral institutions. So this framework helped me to design the objectives and the questions of my research. It also assisted me to decide the appropriate methods for collecting the required data. Moreover it assisted me to identify the institutions that I should visit and the relevant documents that I should search for the study purpose. This theory will also be used to make a causal analysis on the issue under study.²

The literatures that I reviewed have also played an important role in identifying the appropriate methodology for my research.³ For instance Høglund (2009: 414) argued that reports organized by both domestic and international election monitoring agencies are key documentary sources in order to study electoral violence. From the reports prepared by the Kenyan Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV 2008: 21-36) and the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR 2008: 20-30), I observed that documentary information is extensively used in order to analyze the causes of the 2007 electoral violence in Kenya. I also reviewed some documents related to the May 2005 election of Ethiopia.⁴In this

2 Casual analysis is a study method that strives to find out independent variables that explain or justify a specific dependent variable. Ruane Janet (2005:76)

3 Some of these are *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peace building* by Timothy D. Sisk & Anna K. Jarstad(2008), *Electoral Violence in Conflict-Ridden Societies: Concepts, Causes and Consequences* by Kristine Høglund (2009),*“Elections in Fragile States: Between Voice and Violence”* by Timothy D. Sisk(2008)These literatures analyze the nexus between democracy and violence and theorize electoral violence as a distinct type of political violence.

4 These are *Ethiopia: Legislative Elections 2005: Final Report* by EU Election Observation Mission (2005), *Ethiopia: Prisoners of Conscience on Trial for Treason: Opposition Party Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists* a report by Amnesty International (2006) and *Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia* by

regard, Chris Hart (1998: 44) argued that literature review is “about evaluating the logical coherence of theories, methodologies and findings in a context of informed scholarship” and establishing what has already been done on this particular topic.

With regard to my insider-outsider status and its impact on my fieldwork in Ethiopia; I argue that on the one hand my previous background and local knowledge which includes; being a student of political science and international relations with critical views on my country’s political developments ie. Ethiopia, being an Ex- staff member of a highly politicised state office ie. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia with an understanding of the internal and external affairs of the state,⁵ being an Ethiopian national and a resident of Addis Ababa who participated in the May 2005 election as a voter and observed its violent aftermath ; makes me a insider. On the other hand my current career and residential status such as ; being an overseas student who is doing research on a politically sensitive topic with funding from institutions of a foreign country that once experienced a troubled diplomatic relations ie. Norway and being a diaspora who returned to Ethiopia from a country where opposition and rebel groups critical to the Ethiopian government also reside and in a situation where state authorities heightened suspicions towards diaspora's returning to Ethiopia in politically critical periods; constitute my outsider status. Moreover, I believe that my insider-outsider status has played a mixed role during my fieldwork in Ethiopia. On the one hand, it contributed both to the opportunities I gained and the obstacles I encountered in terms of accessing relevant documentary data. On the other hand it played an important role both in the challenges I encountered and the measures I took in terms of my personal safety.

2.2 Access Negotiation and Data Collection

Concerning access to data, Corrine Glesne (2006: 44) stated that, researchers whose studies involve organizations are obliged to meet with the gatekeepers of these institutions. These gatekeepers are authorized to “grant or deny initial access and make access either more or less difficult.” (Feldman & others 2003: 31). Before commencing my data collection task, I have submitted my letter of cooperation to all the institutions I visited to secure their consent for

the UK Home office(2006). These reports cover the political and human right issues in Ethiopia and provide reliable information on the May 2005 election of Ethiopia.

⁵ After graduating from Addis Ababa University with a Bachelor degree in Political Science and International Relations in July 2003; I worked as a Diplomatic Attache at the Directorate -General of Ethiopian Expatriates Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia for two years. Attache` refers to ``an official, under the authority of an Ambassador or other head of a diplomatic mission, who serves either as a diplomat or as a member of the support staff.” (Source: Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, 30.09.2010)

sharing relevant data.⁶ Nearly all of them required me to clarify the specific topic of my research before granting permission access to relevant data and I did so. Moreover, most of the letters which I submitted to government organizations went through higher authorities ie. deputy ministers and commissioners to secure their approval.

During my fieldwork I have visited forty different institutions and secured relevant documentary data from twenty two institutions. For instance from the National Election Board of Ethiopia, I have obtained the Board's report on the May 2005 election to the national parliament and different electoral rules and regulations used by the Board to manage national and local elections. I have got the report of the independent commission of inquiry on the Post-May 2005 election violence and the new proclamations on civil society organizations, anti-terrorism and broadcasting services from the House of Peoples Representatives. From the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, I have secured different compilations of reports and press releases on the situation of human rights in Ethiopia (2002-2006) and a special report of EHRCO on the May 2005 election of Ethiopia. I have obtained election related evaluations reports, press releases and party program bulletins from the political offices of EPRDF, CUD and UEDF. I have also secured articles written on democracy, elections, political parties and human rights in Africa from the Institute for Security Studies. I have also bought books written by prominent Ethiopian scholars and politicians on the May 2005 election such as *Agetuni- Temren Wetan* by Prof. Mesfin Woldemariam and *Ye Nesanet Goh Siked* by Dr Birhanu Nega. These documents are written both in Amharic and in English and nearly all would be unavailable electronically.⁷ My findings also demonstrate the success that I have achieved in applying the documentary data collection method.

Besides this, I have collected secondary documentary data related to the May 2005 election from the university's library as well as from the Internet, while I was in Tromsø. The institutional reports include election monitoring reports issued by the EU election observation missions and the Carter election observers mission, human right reports issued by international non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and country reports published by foreign government offices like the UK home office and the US

6 There is no central government organisation or research council in Ethiopia that grant research permission for students and researchers coming from overseas. The data collection task was carried out for 6 weeks ie. From June 28 to August 6,2010.

7 A full information about the various institutions visited can be obtained from the list attached in the appendix.

state department. Articles and books written by prominent scholars on Ethiopian politics and society such as Jon Abbink, Kjetil Tronvoll and Lovise Aalen as well as the works of other emerging scholars were also collected. The news archives of some international media organizations such as the BBC and websites of the Ethiopian Diaspora such as Ethiomedia.com were also consulted. All of these documents are written in English.

With regard to access challenges, Raymond Lee (1995: 20) argued that state authorities in conflict societies tend to restrict access to information so as to prevent the leakage of sensitive information. The authorities of two governmental organizations have imposed restrictions on my access to relevant data during data collection due to the political sensitivity of the data. These are the Ethiopian Radio and Television Authority and the National Election Board of Ethiopia. At the Ethiopian Radio Television Authority I was denied the copy of the videocassettes of the Pre-May 2005 election Inter party debates. I was allowed only to see these videos at the audio visual room of the Authority. At the National Election Board of Ethiopia I was allowed to copy a number of relevant documents to my study. However my request to copy a document which contains a letter written by the National Election Board of Ethiopia to the Federal Police Commission of Ethiopia was rejected by authorities.

Likewise most policy officers in sub-Saharan Africa also “shy away from policy issues for fear of political repercussions, government clamp down, fear of being labeled as anti -government and the consequences that go with it.”(Gokah 2006: 67). One non-governmental and two inter-governmental organizations have restricted my access due to one of the above reasons. These are Justice for All- Prison Fellowship, the EU delegation office and the AU commission Head office in Addis Ababa. At Justice for All ,I was denied a document which contains information about the reconciliation and pardoning process that was initiated by prominent Ethiopians ie. the elders committee to resolve the political standoff which lasted for 2 years after the May 2005 national election. Officials of the European Union Delegation Office in Addis Ababa have also denied me a document that explain the role of the so-called Ambassadors of Donors Group in mediating the conflict between the ruling party and the major opposition parties over the result of the May 2005 election. An officer at the AU commission Head office have attempted to restrict my already permitted access to the African Union Election Observation Mission Report on the May 2005 election of Ethiopia.

Moreover, I could not secure any relevant documentary data from twelve institutions for

various reasons. Studies related to my research were neither made nor retained in seven institutions. These are National Ombudsman Authority, National Library and Archive Center, World Bank Ethiopia, Ethiopian Economic Association, Institute of Peace and Security Studies and Institute of Ethiopian studies at Addis Ababa University and the Book Center at A.A.U. Moreover I could not find any worthy data from the offices of three political parties. These are UDJP, EDP and AEUP.⁸ Officials of these political parties told me that they do not retain party documents related to the May 2005 election currently because they were confiscated by the government following the Post-May 2005 election violence and the crackdown of opposition groups by the ruling party . I have also been waiting to hear from two other institutions that promised to send me vital materials related to my study but got no response up to now.

Despite the restrictions which I encountered, I have managed to get some of the data from alternative sources. In regard to this Glesne C.(2006: 44) argued that “sometimes denied access may turn out for the best.” For instance Although I was denied the copy of videocassettes of the Pre-May 2005 election Inter Party Debates by the Ethiopian Radio and Television Authority, I have obtained these debates in a report-hard copy format from an NGO that worked on the issue during the may 2005 election ie. the Inter Africa Group. I have also received documents that are similar to the one that I was denied by the National Election Board of Ethiopia from the currently operating CUD party office. I could not obtain an already available hard copy of news compilations for the year 2005\2006 from the news archives of two institutions due to technical, financial and time constraints. These are the Ethiopian Press Agency and the office of the Reporter Newspaper. Later on I managed to get copy of a one year compiled election news (2005\2006) from the Ethiopian News Agency. In the case of the African Union, I have managed to get the report of African Union Election Observers Mission from the archive of political section of AU by overcoming the gate keeper problems I encountered in this organization. However, I have missed the documents that I have expected to obtain from the EU delegation office in Addis and the local NGO-Justice for All. No other alternative source retains the documents which I was looking for from these two institutions other than themselves.

Here I also want to emphasize the role that my project proposal has played during data collection. As Silverman D.(2005: 139) stated preparing a research proposal enables

⁸ UDJP refers to the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party, EDP means Ethiopia democratic Party and AEUP is All Ethiopians Unity Party.

researchers to have a clear understanding about the theoretical, methodological and other important issues connected to their evolving research projects. I have prepared a research proposal prior to data collection. Thus, the theories and concepts I reviewed on this proposal helped me to recall the important issues related to my study and to evaluate my daily data collection experience. Moreover the safety measures I planned including my data collection method assisted me to protect my security and make a safe exit from the field. In general I can say that my project proposal has served me as an important guidance tool and helped me so much to finalize my data collection task effectively.

2.3 Issues of Safety and Insider-Outsider Status

As Raymond Lee (1995: 20) stated that gatekeepers in conflict societies will “allow the research to go ahead but only under restrictive conditions that allow them to monitor and control the researcher.” Moreover, the background and motive of researchers conducting fieldwork in conflict situations is usually subjected to both formal and informal investigation and surveillance by state authorities (Lee 1993: 125; 1995: 17)(Thomson 2009: 119). I have encountered strict security clearance and serious interrogation about my personal background and purpose of my research from two of the government institutions I visited while negotiating access. These are the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia and the office of Government Communication Affairs. I visited the House of Peoples Representatives to find the report of the independent commission of inquiry on the violence that followed the May 2005 national election. I also went to the office of Government Communications Affairs in search of documents containing the policies, strategies and programs of the Ethiopian government in the economic, social and political and other spheres. In both institutions, the respective authorities took me to their office and interviewed me about my personal background and purpose of my research for more than an hour. The officer at the Government Communication Affairs officer also tried to approach me as a friend and tap more information about my previous background and daily research experience in Addis Ababa as well as my current status and life experience in Norway. Other than this, the officer at the House of Peoples Representatives argued that my thesis should cover not only the negative developments in the post-election period but also the positive developments of the pre-election period. Similarly the officer at Office of Government Communications Affairs insisted me to use the written responses prepared by his organization to the US state department human

right report as important references for my study.⁹ The reasons for all these measures were the suspicion of state authorities over my background and purpose of my research as well as to pursue further surveillance on me.

It has been found out that clarifying the purpose, funding source and institutional linkages of a particular research project to the research subjects may result in not only opportunities but also to challenges (Martin-Ortega&Herman 2009: 232). Geraldine Lee-Treweek & Stephanie Linkogle (2001: 11) argued that “research on communities under threat, for example in high crime areas, war zones, and in situations where torture and political repression occurs, also presents obvious and immediate dangers to researchers.” Moreover, “Accusations of spying are presumably most common in situations of conflict or tension” (Lee 1993: 6). In the case of my study, the clarification I made about my research while negotiating access contributed not only to the opportunities I got in terms of collecting relevant documentary data but also to the challenges that I encountered in terms of my personal safety during my fieldwork. For instance, although the documents that I was searching for were available in both the House of Peoples Representatives and the office of Government Communications Affairs, accessing them required me to pass through an overly scrutiny. Also it is not hard to imagine how state authorities may react when I reveal the purpose of my research which has serious political implications. For instance the official at the House of Peoples Representatives reminded me of the sensitivity of my research topic and the possible challenges I might face during my search for relevant data. The authority at the office of Government Communications Affairs was surprised by my courage to come and request for information on such sensitive topic from his organization which he argues is a political institution. Moreover, since my research on this politically sensitive topic is financed by institutions of a foreign country ie. Norway which has experienced a problematic relation with the Ethiopian government for about two years after the May 2005 election, state authorities might have perceived me as an agent working for a foreign government. At the time, Ethiopian authorities accused Norway of having ties with rebel groups in Ogaden ie. a somali region in Ethiopia and expelled most of the diplomats working for the Norwegian Embassy in Addis. Thus, I believe that the previous problematic relations of Ethiopia and Norway as well as my current credential as an outsider researcher have contributed their share to the safety problems I encountered in the field. I further argue that I would not have faced such challenges if I have used a covert research method and things

⁹ See also the recent news published online by *Ethiopian Review*, an Ethiopian news and opinion journal entitled "Ethiopia: Government set to manipulate western researchers." september 1st, 2010, Available at <http://www.ethiopianreview.com/articles/33273>

could have been different if I were in Ethiopia for a purpose other than research.

Experiences show that familiarity does not always ensure safety due to “unpredictable events stemming from suspicion, change of political climate and traditional\cultural conservatism” (Gokah 2006: 64). The identity of researchers and how they are perceived by others will also influence their own personal safety (Martin-Ortega & Herman 2009: 238). My previous background as an insider and the current status as an outsider has also contributed to the safety challenges that encountered during data collection in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry is among the few key and highly politicized institutions in the country. After the May 2005 election of Ethiopia, there was a high rate of resignations, dismissals and defections of diplomats both from the headquarter and missions abroad. The reasons for this range from personal to political factors. This was of a great concern for the Ethiopian government because all of us left the ministry along with our knowledge about the internal and external affairs of the state including the sensitive ones. I resigned from the Ministry three months after the May 2005 election due to personal reasons. I opted to advance my studies and engage myself in other carrier rather than becoming a representative of an authoritarian state. In fact here I cannot deny my own sympathy to those who struggle to bring about a genuine democracy and respect for human rights in my home country. Lee (1995: 23) also argued that “complete neutrality is probably impossible.” However my case study will continue to maintain its impartiality because it will be based on the theoretical arguments of electoral violence. Moreover, as of the May 2005 election where the majority of the Ethiopian Diaspora provided a political support for opposition parties, the ruling party has become very suspicious about the role of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the country’s politics. State authorities are also aware of the fact that most of the reports, researches and news issued in the past by international organizations, foreign governments and scholars about the May 2005 Ethiopian election were very critical towards the Ethiopian government. Other than these, I suspect that my Amhara ethnic background might also had contributed to the low level of trust I came across while negotiating access in some government offices. Historical studies show that the Amhara ethnic group dominated the power politics of both the ancient and modern Ethiopian political history. However the past two decades witnessed the predominance of the Tigrean ethnic group in the country's politics. Studies made on ethnic federalism and ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia have also proved that ethnic identity is highly politicized in contemporary Ethiopia. In general, the above factors served as a ground not only to the suspicions of state authorities on me and my research but also to the subsequent interrogations and surveillances which I

encountered during my fieldwork in Ethiopia.

Scholars argue that researchers should have a good knowledge about the history and recent political situation of the country so that they can anticipate potential risks and take required measures (Martin-Ortega&Herman 2009: 227). Moreover researchers should take into account the local context of conflict societies so that they can plan and execute effective research projects (Bøas&others 2006: 71). Recently, scholars categorized the regime in power in Ethiopia as an electoral authoritarian regime (Schedler 2006: 3). The country's human right record in the past two decades is also worrisome.¹⁰ Due to the painful experiences in the past, the perception of many Ethiopians towards politics is negative (Aalen 2002: 32). Engaging in politics is usually perceived as full of uncertainties and insecurities. Similarly, participating in a political research is also considered as tantamount to involving in politics. For instance the EU election observers mission to Ethiopia reported the restriction of political space and the impacts of the troublesome experiences of the May 2005 election on the country's politics and society.¹¹ Moreover in Ethiopia, due to a newly introduced anti-terrorism legislation, any activity related to politics specially by an outsider is perceived and interpreted by state authorities as a potential threat to security. Evidences also show that the broad definition of a terrorist act within this law is being used to silence opposition views and activities and justify the arbitrary actions of security forces in Ethiopia.¹² For instance a researcher who tried to contact a particular rebel group for a research purpose or a journalist who attempted to report an opposition political protest can be charged as a collaborator of terrorist and may serve substantial prison terms. Since I am a researcher with Ethiopian nationality, the risk of arbitrary actions due to this law also concerns me. Besides this, recently the Ethiopian government has introduced a new civil society and charities proclamation. By this law, international NGO's as well as Ethiopian NGO's with more than 10% their finances originating from foreign sources are prohibited from working on areas of democracy, good governance, human rights. This law also has provisions that restrict the exchange of information on these areas and imposes harsh penalty on trespassers.¹³ So the kind of fear that

10 See For instance the US State Dept.(2006), *Ethiopia: Report on Human Right Practices 2005*.

11 See Eu-Eom *Ethiopia:House of Peoples Representatives and State Council Elections, May 2010* Final report (Eu-Eom 2010:1,2,3,4,22 &23)

12 See Human Rights Watch's 'Anaysis of Ethiopia's draft anti-terrorism law' (Hrw2009:1,3,5,7&10) The draft law was approved by the parliament and came into force in August 2009 without any significant adjustments.Also see Human Rights Watch report entitled *Ethiopia: One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure*. (Hrw2010:50)

13 See also Human Rights Watch's ' Analysis of Ethiopia's Draft CSO Law' (Hrw2008:1,3,4,8,9) The draft law was approved by the parliament and came into force in February 2009 without any significant adjustments.

I observed in some of the NGO's I visited while negotiating access for a political and human right related data could be related to this provision. Although these legislations were initiated to narrow down political spaces prior to the 2010 national election, they remained legally effective even after this election because they already have become parts of the laws of the country. Hence, these realities have influenced the data collection techniques I applied as well as other safety measure I took during my fieldwork.

It is argued that since “conflict zones are not places of free intellectual debate and objective discourse”, researchers should be reserved from provoking unnecessary discourse with state authorities on politically sensitive issues (Romano 2006: 440). In fact conducting research on political topics is challenging because it touch issues that concern those who hold political power or that are controversial within the society (Lee 1993: 4,145) (Martin-Ortega&Herman 2009: 234). Besides being a naïve researcher, doing research on the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia was a risky task for me due to the political sensitivity of the topic. Evidences show that state authorities have played a major role in the violence.¹⁴ It is for this reason that my independent research project on this delicate issue attracted the attention of state authorities while negotiating access. The restrictions imposed on my access to relevant documents and the serious interrogations that I encountered in these institutions also proved the sensitivity of my research topic. As Lee (1995: 25) argued “ in conflict situations, trying to obtain multiple perspectives on particular events may put one's existing social relations at risk.” In the case of my field work, I was visiting various state and non-state institutions in search of relevant documentary data. My assumption was that collecting information from multiple sources will help me to enrich my study by entertaining diverse perspectives on the issue. But I did not anticipate the risk that goes with doing this kind of research while designing it. What happened on the ground was that the more I multiplied the institutions I visited, the more I immersed my self into high level of suspicion and subsequent surveillance by state authorities. Lee (1995: 24) also stated that the capacity of researcher's to forward questions can be restricted by their insider status. For instance “ a researcher who is a member of a particular culture may invite only incredulity by asking questions about it ” (ibid: 25). In Ethiopia, human rights abuse cases are not properly investigated by the state authorities due to the prevalence of culture of impunity.¹⁵ So any critical and investigative studies on such

14 See 'Electoral violence in conflict ridden societies: Concepts, causes and consequences',(Hoglund 2009:418)

15 See Human Rights Watch report entitled *Ethiopia: One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure*. (Hrw2010:41)

issues particularly by an ex-insider-current outsider like me can be considered as a threat to their political power and state's sovereignty. In this regard, Lee (1993: 6) also noted that “ the presence of a researcher is sometimes feared because it produces the possibility that deviant activities will be revealed.” So, to avoid situations that may jeopardize my personal safety, I refrained from opening a discourse with state authorities over this controversial issue.

Studies also show that, since authorities of conflict zones and authoritarian regimes may abuse the right of informants who participate in politically sensitive research, researchers should protect the identity of the researched (Romano 2006: 441)(Mertus 2009: 166)(Norman 2009: 80). It is also argued that specific contextual factors such as levels of violence, state control and population fractionalizations will influence the methodological choice of researchers conducting field work in conflict and post-conflict societies (Paluck 2009: 39). Previous studies indicated the challenges compounding political research in Ethiopia (Aalen 2002:32). Recently Human rights watch also explained the problems of undertaking human right related research in Ethiopia and stressed the importance of a covert research. Specifically it stated that “ Ethiopia is one of the most challenging environment for human rights research on the African continent.” (HRW 2010a: 7, 2010b: 10). Current evidences show that “the consequences for victims and witnesses of speaking out about their situation can be extremely serious” (HRW :2010b: 10). Therefore “any kind of independent information gathering, and particularly human rights research, carries such risks and must be conducted in secrecy” (ibid). These challenges are always out there whether the researcher is an insider, an outsider or both like me. My own research experience also confirms this fact. Furthermore, I went to Ethiopia in a politically critical period ie. just one month after the May 2010 election. Although the results of the election were publicized, they were disputed by the major contending parties. Security was highly tightened to prevent any violence that may erupt due to disputed results. My own observations in the course of my fieldwork as well as recent studies show that the capacity of the government to control its population both in urban and rural areas has increased tremendously due to the entrenchment of its administrative structures even at the lower level of the society. The government has also expanded the patronage system throughout the country. On the one hand, the ruling party's members and supporters are entitled with different economic and political rewards and benefits. On the other hand, opposition group members and supporters are concerned about current political uncertainties and insecurities. Thus, to avoid situations that may immerse my potential informants into risks of arbitrary actions of security forces, I declined from conducting interview on this delicate issue.

Lastly, I argue that the current political realities in Ethiopia has also influenced my choice of data transfer means. In this regard, Elisabeth Woods (2006: 381) stated that researchers in conflict zone usually encounter problems in terms of ensuring “ the security of data gathered particularly sensitive data that might have political implications if in the wrong hands.” Particularly, the new anti-terrorism law has granted state authorities the right to intercept the telephone conversation, the email and the postal correspondences of any individual if deemed necessary. Moreover, this law requires service providing entities such as telecom and postal service agencies, banks, hotels ...etc to disclose any information relevant to security and intelligence officials when the need arises. Although court warrant is required to do this in principle, this does not necessarily prevent the security officials of an authoritarian state from taking arbitrary actions in practice. Since I have clarified my contact details to authorities during the interrogations I encountered in two state institutions, I was sure that those details of mine were also being used to pursue surveillance activities on me. I also suspect that some of the puzzling incidents I encountered in the field were the results of such activities. Thus, to minimize safety risks, I have limited my informal relations and made precautions on the telephone conversations as well as the postal and e-mail correspondences I made while I was in Ethiopia. For instance I opted to send the documentary data which I collected from about 20 institutions back to Tromsø via an international private postal service agency ie. DHL. I also kept the copies of these documents in a safe place in case of failure in mail delivery. Thus my local knowledge as an insider has assisted me to apply the appropriate data transfer method in and finish my documentary data collection task successfully.

In this chapter, I have presented the methodological issues related to my thesis and my experience from the fieldwork. Firstly, I have clarified how the research was designed and the methods were chosen. Secondly, I have explained how access was negotiated and data's were collected. Thirdly, I have analyzed how my insider-outsider status played a role on the challenges I encountered and measures I took in terms safety in the field.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework of Electoral Violence

Understanding the theoretical assumptions of a particular topic is a major task in any research. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to forward the theoretical framework of electoral violence from existing literatures. Specifically, the meaning, nature and effects of electoral violence will be described briefly. Moreover, the explanations concerning how electoral violence is caused will be presented broadly. The facilitating conditions and triggering factors for such violence are categorized into three major areas. These are the nature of politics, the nature of elections and electoral institutions.

3.1 Meaning, Nature and Effects of Electoral Violence

The problems associated with the democratization process in several parts of the globe were indicated by many. They argue that democracy; increases the risk of armed conflict in newly democratizing nations (Mansfield & Snyder 2007: 163), heightens the probability of violent conflict in post conflict societies (Jarstad 2008: 29) and increases the risk of political violence in low income countries (Collier 2009: 11). Current studies also show that violence related to elections has become a prevalent phenomenon. Out of 57 countries that held elections in 2001, violent conflicts were witnessed in 14 countries (24.5%) (Fischer 2002: 11). In the case of Africa, violence affects from 19 to 25 percent of elections (Bekoe 2010: 1). Some of the countries that experienced such incidences in recent times include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe (Sisk 2008: 2-3, IDEA 2006: 57).

Relatively few researchers and practitioners have made an effort to define and conceptualize electoral violence. Liisa Laakso (2007: 227-8) defined electoral violence as “ an activity motivated by an attempt to affect the results of the elections either by manipulating the electoral procedure and participation or by contesting the legitimacy of the results. It might involve voters’ and candidates’ intimidation, killings, attacks against their property, forceful displacement, unlawful detentions and rioting.”

According to the United Nations Development Program (2009: 4), Election-related violence refers to:-

“acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arise in the context of electoral competition. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections—such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll—and to influence the outcomes: the determining of winners in competitive races for political office or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions.”

Electoral violence has features that make it distinct from other sorts of political violence. Firstly, it should be noted that such violence is utilized in order to realize specific political objective ie. to affect the various aspects of the electoral process and thus its outcomes (Høglund 2009: 415, FES 2001: 1). Secondly, it may occur at all stages of the electoral process. These are the pre-election period, the election day and the post-election period (Sisk 2008: 14-16, IPI 2010: 20-21). Thirdly, it involves different actors like government forces ie. the police and military, political parties (leaders, members and sympathizers) and non-state armed groups like militias, rebels and paramilitaries (Laakso 2007: 228,UNDP 2009: 13).

Fourthly, it includes various activities such as threats, coercion, obstruction, abduction, detention, assault, torture and murder as well as rioting, plundering and destroying properties, distracting campaign activities and materials, disturbing public gathering and educational activities, shutting down offices, establishing ‘no-go’ areas ..etc (Marco 2009: 9,UNDP 2009: 20-22). Fifthly, it has specific targets. These include electoral partakers such as electorates, candidates, election officers, observers and media groups, electoral materials such as ballot boxes, campaign stuffs, registration data, polling results, electoral facilities such as voting and tallying stations and electoral events such as campaign meetings and demonstrations, journeys to voting stations (Høglund 2009: 417,USAID 2010: 5-6).

Electoral violence has an effect both on democracy and peacebuilding. From the standpoint of democratic politics, violence and insecurity may influence the result of elections in many ways. Actors may use threats and coercion to prevent electorates from registering to vote and to discourage them from casting votes. Party candidates may abandon the electoral process due to threats and killings during campaigns or may act against measures taken to conduct

elections (Høglund 2009: 417,419)(UNDP 2009: 5). From conflict management view point, violence may have an adverse effect on the society. It will polarize the voting public along conflict margins and in the worst case could lead to an outbreak of violent conflict. Radical or fanatic groups may also get the opportunity to assume state power through violence (ibid).

3.2 Cause of Electoral Violence

3.2.1 Nature of Politics

As Kristina Høglund (2009: 423) suggested, the nature of politics in post conflict societies is one of the major areas from which the causal factors of electoral violence can be identified. Under this broader topic, I will discuss the enabling conditions and triggering factors of electoral violence by further classifying them into three categories. These are patrimonial and neo patrimonial politics, conflict cleavages and cultures of violence and impunity.

3.2.1.1 Patrimonial and Neo patrimonial Politics

Predominant modes of authority do exist in several conflict, post conflict and newly democratizing countries. Patrimonialism is a prevalent phenomenon in the politics of many post conflict societies (Høglund 2009: 420). Besides this, Neo-patrimonialism has become a peculiar institutional attribute of African political regimes (Bratton & Van de Walle 1994: 458)(Erdmann & Engel 2007: 113). Under patrimonialism “the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than an office” (Bratton & Van de Walle 1994: 458) and there is no distinction between public and private domain (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 105). All sorts of authority relations ie. political and administrative interactions between governor and governed, are personal ones (ibid). In the case of neo patrimonialism, formal distinction between the public and the private sphere ie. official rules and structures, do exist in principle but it is difficult to observe these distinctions in practice (ibid) because “relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade the formal political and administrative system” (Bratton & Van de Walle 1994: 458). Hence, it combines two coinciding and partly intertwined forms of power ie. patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic authority (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 105) and characterizes the power relations within authoritarian political regimes (ibid: 113).

Clientelism and patronage are also considered as central parts of neopatrimonialism. Both of

them involve securing political support through exchange of particular public goods and services (ibid: 106). But differences exist with regard to the levels of relation and objects of exchange. Under clientelism, relations are personal i.e. ‘patron -client relation’ and the client is expected to give political support for a particular patron or politician in order to secure personal benefits such as land, office ...etc (ibid: 107). In the case of patronage, relations are more than personal i.e. ‘high-level politics’ and the clients (groups) are required to provide political support for a specific political party or a government in return for public utilities like roads, schools...etc (ibid). Politicians of clientelist regimes use vote buying as well as ethno-regional appeals as instruments for securing political support (Van de Walle 2007: 63,66). In patronage democracies, electorates use their votes as a means of obtaining material rewards (Chandra 2007: 90). As politicians favor their co-ethnic voters to secure political support, voters will also favor their co-ethnic politicians to ensure those rewards (ibid: 103).

It is also asserted that both patrimonial and neo patrimonial politics have implications on the political stability of post-conflict and newly democratizing countries. Patrimonial politics has the potential to encourage electoral violence because it marginalizes significant portion of a society, gives more emphasis to loyalty than competence, promotes corruption and neglects the rule of law (Høglund 2009: 420). Under neo patrimonial politics, insecurity exists with regard to the character and functions of government institutions due to three important reasons (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 105-6). Firstly, it is difficult to predict the activities of state agencies. Secondly, government agencies may not be able to deliver basic public services properly. Thirdly, political informality may encourage expressing institutional informality openly which in turn leads to a different kind of political culture. For these reasons, neo patrimonialism is considered as a source of social unrest (Bratton & Van de walle 1994: 460), as a cause for violent conflict (Mehler 2007: 217) and as a risk to peaceful political transitions (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 97).

3.2.1.2 Conflict Cleavages.

The nature of actors participating in politics as well as existing cleavages within the society are among the important factors which determine whether elections become peaceful or violent. Cleavages are “politically effective conflict configurations institutionalized in the social structure.” (Eith & Mielke 2001: 11 quoted in Mehler 2007: 195). Experiences show that the capacity of post-conflict elections to bring about sustained peace and democracy is

determined by the extent to which politics is demilitarized (Lyons 2004: 273) and one of the important aspects of demilitarizing politics is the “ transformation of military organizations into effective political parties” (ibid: 277). However, in situations where previously warring parties have not yet been fully disarmed and demobilized, post conflict elections will have more potential to incite violent conflict (Lyons 2004: 283, Høglund 2009: 420). In other words, the existence of armed groups facilitates the return to violence, if competing political parties reject the results of post conflict elections (Sisk 2009: 203, Høglund 2009: 418,420).

It is also argued that the manner in which political parties are organized and managed will determine whether elections lead to peaceful or violent outcomes. In post conflict societies, most political parties do not represent specific social classes and are not recognized by their particular policy of public interest (Reilly 2008: 177-78, Fortman 2000: 81). Instead they manifest the social cleavages which instigated previous violent conflicts (Reilly 2008: 178). For instance, if previous wars were fought along ethnic lines, then ethnic-based parties may flourish in the post war era (ibid). Such kinds of party formation stimulate stiff competition between the ethnic parties on the one hand but prevents cooperative relationships among themselves and threatens the overall stability of the political arena on the other hand (ibid). In general, political parties in these societies are often fragmented and underdeveloped (Jarstad 2008: 32, Sisk 2009: 201) and use violence to promote narrow and extremist political ends (Mehler 2007: 200, Høglund 2009: 420).

In the case of Africa, it has been found that “ideological differences have been minor across parties, and debates about specific policy issues have been virtually non-existent” (Van de walle 2007: 62) because political parties were not organized on the basis of diverse perspectives on public demands and policies in the first place (Fortman 2000: 83). Rather they reflect and multiply existing ethnic cleavages (Mehler 2007: 212). Besides this, the expansion of a dominant party system in which political power is personalized has led to the narrowing down of political spaces available for fair political competition (Fortman 2000: 83, Mehler 2007: 197). The logic of organizing political support along ethnic lines also exhibits the “volatility of the party system, with the rapid appearance and disappearance of new parties around each election cycle” (Van de walle 2007: 61). Moreover due to the prevalence of ethnic and clientelist politics, it is very difficult for program-based political parties to effectively compete and secure significant political support (Van de walle 2007: 67, Reilly 2008: 178). Thus, opposition political parties may resort to violence as a way of expressing

grievances and a means of political struggle (Mehler 2007: 203-4, Laakso 2007: 227-28).

3.2.1.3 Cultures of Violence and Impunity

Cultures of violence and impunity are among the major features of politics in conflict and post conflict societies. Culture of violence refers to “the system of norms, values or attitudes which allow, make possible or even stimulate the use of violence to resolve any conflict or relation with another person” (Cruz, in Moser& Winton 2002:11 quoted in Steenkemp 2005: 254). Impunity refers to the exemption of those who committed unlawful acts from accountability and legal punishment (Opotow 2003: 149). Under culture of impunity “government officials, the police and military, and ordinary citizens break the law without fear of punishment, for there is a shared understanding that each person will be silent about the other’s abuses as long as the favor is returned” (Crocker 1998:506 quoted in Opotow 2003: 150). It is strongly believed that culture of violence is an outcome or a legacy of past violent conflicts (SteenKemp 2005: 253, Høglund 2009: 421). Such culture prevails in societies that experience political violence for prolonged periods and makes violent acts of state and non-state actors such as threats, coercion and intimidation acceptable and tolerable at societal as well as individual level (ibid). Other than this, due to the traumatic experiences of past, these societies have continued to live under fear and insecurity even after the end of such conflicts (Sisk 2009: 201, Jarstad 2008: 31). Therefore, conducting elections under such circumstances may not render the range of alternatives required to advance democracy (Lyons 2004: 274) and makes political mobilization along conflict margins easier (Sisk 2009: 201, Jarstad 2008: 31).

There are major factors which contribute for the persistence of both cultures of violence and impunity in post conflict societies. One of these factors is the weakness of state institutions (Steenkamp 2005: 259, Høglund 2009: 421). In these societies, government institutions at national and local level are mostly unaccountable, non transparent, politically partial, and financially unstable (Jarstad 2008: 28) and thus fall short of the required legitimacy and resources to manage widespread violence (Høglund 2008: 94). So when elections are held under such context, governments usually fail to avoid fear and ensure security among their citizens (Sisk 2009: 201). Moreover, in societies where patronage politics is prevalent, security forces and judiciaries often encounter coercion and manipulation from political elites which in turn hinders them from becoming efficient instrument for resolving conflicts (Høglund 2009: 421).

The other contributing factor for such culture is use of violence by state agents (Steenkemp 2005: 258, Høglund 2009: 421). In these societies, the security apparatus of the state such as the police and armed forces commit large scale human right violence at national level (ibid) and local officials also ensure the perpetuation of such violence at the lower levels (Høglund 2008: 94). Such arbitrary and violent measures may also encourage sections of the society as well as non state armed groups to continue using violence as a viable means to resolve conflicts (Steenkemp 2005: 258) and may hinder ongoing efforts to reconcile existing cleavages within the society (Høglund 2008: 95). Other than this, political parties may also employ violence as a means of achieving various political objectives (Mehler 2007: 199). Due to fears of losing public support, political parties may also refrain from punishing the culprits of electoral violence (Høglund 2009: 421). In the case of Africa, ruling political parties use not only formal security forces but also party militias, criminal groups, and youth wings to carry out violence against opponents (ibid: 204). The frequent use of violence by political parties in Africa thus, witnesses that it has become “a common mode of political competition in African societies, more common than consensus or cooperation.” (Mehler 2007: 208-9) and a major feature of electoral authoritarian regimes (Lindberg 2006: 157).

3.2.2 Nature of Elections

As Kristina Høglund (2009: 423) indicated, the nature of elections in post conflict societies is the other important area from which the causal factors of electoral violence can be figured out. Within this broader topic, I will discuss the facilitating conditions and triggering factors of electoral violence by further categorizing them into three parts. These are political mobilization, close competition and stakes involved in such elections.

3.2.2.1 Political Mobilization

Political mobilization causes violent conflict in post war societies. In these societies, conducting competitive elections renders opportunities for generating conflict and violence through increased polarization (Jarstad 2008: 29, Høglund 2008: 85). During competitive elections, competing political parties emphasize mainly on what makes them distinct from others and tend to mobilize political support along lines of differences (Jarstad 2008: 29). To be more specific, in the course of electoral campaign, political elites and radical groups forward exclusive nationalistic and ethnic appeals to secure political support which further polarize the society and consequent outbreak of violent conflict (Reilly 2008: 178, Sisk 2009:

200). In other words, extreme nationalistic or ethnicized rhetoric worsens existing tensions between political opponents and foment hatred among different ethnic groups (Reilly 2008: 160, Sisk 2009: 200). Other than these, politicians also employ terminologies used for military purposes such as “strongholds”, “citadels”, “cadres”, “strategies and tactics” and “the parties wage campaigns” to secure wider public support (Høglund 2008: 85, 2009: 421). Such activities also show the extent to which political rights are used for wrong purposes and competitive elections intensify prevailing social and conflict cleavages (Høglund 2008: 85).

In the African case, it is strongly believed that holding multiparty elections aggravates prevailing tensions within the society (Sisk and Reynolds 1998: 2) and heightens the propensity for the outbreak of violent ethnic conflict (Sisk 1998: 150). One of the justifications forwarded for this is related to the way parties are formed. In most cases, political parties are mainly organized on the basis ethnic identity (Sisk 1998: 150, Fortman 2000: 81). The other reason is connected to the way political support is secured during elections. In several instances, politicians use ethnic identity as a viable means of mobilizing political support in times of elections (Glickman 1998: 37, Collier 2009: 26). More over there are cases where political parties representing diverse ethno- regional interests resorted to violence, after realizing that they are losers of the electoral process and its outcome (Mehler 2007: 200, Bekoe 2008: 30).

3.2.2.2 Close Competition

Closely competed elections cause violence in conflict ridden societies. In these societies, holding competitive elections renders incentives for generating conflict and violence through increased contestation (Jarstad 2008: 29, Høglund 2008: 85). In other words electoral contests with close margins of victory create higher level of uncertainty about the final outcome and eventually may lead to the outbreak of violence (Sisk 2008: 9, Høglund 2009: 421). On the one hand, dominant groups whose political power is threatened by democratic political competition may resort to violence in order to secure their previous status (Jarstad 2008: 29-30, Høglund 2008: 85-6). Since holding public office is considered as an important means of exerting substantial influence to secure benefits from other spheres, politicians of electoral authoritarian regimes may resort towards stealing elections (Thompson & Kuntz 2006: 121). Other than this, fears of future legal prosecution in connection with alleged economic crimes

and human right abuse motivates them to maintain their political office by any means (Thompson & Kuntz 2006: 117, Laakso 2007: 230). On the other hand, marginalized groups who gained less from the political competition than their expectations may opt for violence as a viable means to realize their new demands (Jarstad 2008: 29-30, Høglund 2008: 85-86). Specifically, opposition party leaders and sympathizers frustrated by the injustices of the electoral contest as well as other political forces that were subjected to systematic exclusion from the political scene may consider violence as an alternative to achieve their political goals (Sisk 2008: 10).

In the African context, political power is considered as a major social good because those who hold it, also have a significant control over a variety of other social goods (Fortman 2000: 76). So violence becomes inevitable, when elections pose a real probability for transforming the prevailing power configurations (Fortman 2000: 76, EISA 2010: 3). In Africa, both ruling and opposition political parties use violence (Mehler 2007: 204). While, opposition groups employ violence to express their grievances over the electoral process or outcomes, ruling elites take arbitrary and suppressive measures against their political opponents due to deep-seated fears of losing political power (Mehler 2007: 204, Laakso 2007: 230). Such problems become more prevalent in times of competitive multi-party elections and impede efforts to promote human right respect and entrench democratic governance in these societies (Adivilah 2009: 3-4).

3.2.2.3 Higher Stakes

Competitive elections are more prone to conflict and violence in post conflict societies due to the stakes involved in such elections (Høglund 2009: 422). The stakes of winning and losing a political office becomes extremely high within the contexts of patronage and identity politics (Sisk 2009: 9). The risk of election related violence is also high in situations where poverty and unemployment are rampant (Sisk 2009: 9, IDEA 2009: 10). Under patronage and identity politics, those who hold political offices enjoy greater control over various economic resources and public services and distribute these resources and services to their clients or co ethnics in return for political support (Sisk 2008: 9, Chandra 2007: 87). Thus for ruling parties, political elites and their supporters, losing political office via competitive election means losing their patronage network and jeopardizing the livelihood of themselves as well as of their supporters (Thompson & Kuntz 2006: 120, Sisk 2008: 9). For this reason, they resort

to violence to avoid such threats and maintain their *status quo* (Sisk 2008: 9, Høglund 2009 : 422). Besides to this, in situations where economic underdevelopment and distributive injustices are prevalent, a substantial section of the society holds grievances about lack of economic opportunities and absence of proper resource distribution (Sisk 2008: 9, Steenkemp 2005: 260). Thus opposition parties, marginalized groups and their followers prevented from winning political posts via competitive elections may consider violent alternatives to assume state power and resolve longstanding grievances (Sisk 2008: 9, Jarstad 2008: 29-30).

In several African countries, due to the poor performance of their economies, the stakes involved in the politics have become very high (Fortman 2000: 76). Rampant poverty and economic strains have encouraged vulnerable sections of the society to organize grievance based violence in election times (Laakso 2007: 229, Fortman 2000: 92). Elected office is mostly considered by politicians as a place which provides opportunities to engage in economic crimes and ‘immunity from prosecution ’(Collier 2009: 27). Recent studies have also identified grievances over land rights, economic discrimination and ethnic marginalization as important factors facilitating election related violence in Africa (Bekoe 2010: 2, Souare 2008: 8).

3.2.3 Electoral Institutions

As Kristina Høglund (2009: 423) put forward, the nature of electoral institutions in post conflict societies is also another central area from which the causal factors of electoral violence can be distinguished. In this wider topic, I will discuss the enabling conditions and triggering factors of electoral violence by further categorizing them into three areas. These are electoral systems, electoral rules and regulations and election administration.

3.2.3.1 Electoral Systems

Electoral system choice has an impact on conflict dynamics in post conflict and fragile societies. In these societies, the choice of such systems may facilitate conditions favorable for election related violence (Høglund 2009: 422, Sisk 2008: 11). Converting the votes cast into parliamentary seats in different manners is among the main tasks of any electoral system (Reynolds&Sisk 1998: 19, Reilly&Reynolds 2000: 425). Another key role is to serve as a channel through which voters make their representatives accountable (*ibid*). Other than these,

it arranges the limits of “acceptable” political dialogue and offers incentives for political parties to express their appeals to voters in various ways (ibid). Therefore electoral systems “reflect negotiated settlements of political conflicts over institutional design” and “structure political conflicts over distributional outcome.” (Mozaffar 1998: 81) .

Electoral systems can be classified into three major categories. These are plurality-majority, proportional representation (PR), and semi proportional (Reilly 2008: 172). *Plural majority* is a system where a candidate or a party with a majority vote becomes winner and takes decision making power on behalf of the entire public (Sisk 2009: 202, McGee 2008: 5). This system applies small and single-member electoral districts and provides more importance to local representation (Reilly 2008: 173). The first-past-the-post, round off, block and alternative vote are subtypes of this winner -takes-all-system (ibid). Generally, the system is considered to provide clear-cut choices and discard extremism (Reynolds& Sisk 1998: 23). *Proportional representation* is a system where candidates compete for a prearranged number of seats and political parties share the total votes cast and decision making powers equivalently (Sisk 2009: 202, McGee 2008: 5). This system uses larger and multi-member districts and gives more emphasis to proportional representation (Reilly 2008: 173). The open and closed party list PR, mixed member and single transferable vote are subtypes of the proportional system (ibid). In general, the system is considered to ensure more representation and inclusiveness than the plural-majority ones (Reynolds&Sisk 1998: 25). *Semi proportional system* is a system which integrate components of both plurality-majority and proportional systems (Reilly 2008: 173, McGee 2008: 6). When applied, it creates a parliament in which part of the elected members come from electoral districts that used PR (proportional representation) and part from that used PM (plural majority) (Reilly 2008: 173). Such mixed systems are designed with the aim of bringing a more legitimate and inclusive election outcome and power distribution and thus as a remedy for the pitfalls of the other two mentioned systems (McGee 2008: 6).

It is also suggested that deciding an appropriate electoral system for both ethnically alike and divided societies, requires making compromises amongst different and contending normative ends. These are representativeness, accountability, inclusiveness & accessibility, stability of government, development of the party system and ability to engender reconciliation (Reynolds&Sisk 1998: 21-22) Therefore, electoral systems designed without adequate consideration of these ends often become ineffective instruments for promoting democracy

and mitigation conflicts (Reynolds & Sisk 1998: 21, Mozaffar 1998: 84,91). Moreover, specific contextual factors such as the historical process that brought about the electoral systems, the nature of existing societal cleavages and the nature of present political system, require greater importance while evaluating the applicability of any electoral system for divided societies (Reilly & Reynolds 2000: 429) and its effect on conflict dynamics (Sisk 2008: 13). For instance, electoral systems deliberately chosen by powerful groups in post-war transitional periods (eg. constitution making or peace process) in order to maximize political benefits poses serious questions regarding the legitimacy of the system and hinders the democratic progress and political stability of these societies in the long-run (Reilly & Reynolds 2000: 442, Sisk 2008: 13). Besides this, the degree to which ethnicity is associated with the support given to political parties and the behavior of the voting public usually determines the capacity of different electoral systems to either dispel or limit ethnic conflicts (Reilly and Reynolds 2000: 429). Moreover, introducing “winner-take-all” (simple majority) electoral systems under contexts where ethnic based political parties are predominant and the political arena is less tolerant of opposing views, contributes to the persistence of exclusionary and zero-sum politics. (Reilly & Reynolds 2000: 435, Reynolds & Sisk 1998: 24). In the case of Africa where neo patrimonial politics is prominent, plural-majority systems performed much less in terms of ensuring representation, accountability, inclusiveness, party development and political stability than proportional representation systems (Lindberg 2005: 61-62). Therefore, the use of an electoral system that facilitates a “zero-sum game” makes the risk of electoral conflict and violence high in the continent (EISA 2010: 4).

3.2.3.2 Election Administration

Election administration has a role in terms of inducing violence in post conflict societies. In these societies, such administration might create favorable circumstances for electoral violence (Høglund 2008: 422, Sisk 2008: 16). In principle, the ways of structure, levels of competence and extents of balance of any electoral institution determine its capacity to administer credible elections (Sisk 2008: 16). Specifically the efficiency, professionalism, transparency, impartiality and independence are important preconditions to come up with legitimate election outcomes (Lyons 2004: 282 & Sisk 1998: 169). In contexts where these prerequisites are not operationalized, the risk of political instability and electoral violence becomes high (Pastor 1999: 5 & Sisk 2008: 16). Practically, elections are conducted under

circumstances of mistrust and suspicion in many post-conflict and newly democratizing countries (Lyons 2004: 282, Mansfield& Snyder 2007: 171). The prevalence of political bias, the absence of accountability and lack of adequate finances within public institutions in general (Jarstad 2008: 28) and the lack of impartiality, independence and competence on the part of election administration institutions in particular (Pastor 1999: 12) play an important role in creating such circumstances.

Moreover, choices made over the nature of electoral management bodies are instrumental in facilitating the conditions for election related violence (Høglund 2009: 422). Basically, such bodies can be organized on the basis of both partial- partisan and independent-non partisan models of electoral administration (Lopez-Pintor 2005: 22, Pastor 1999: 12). For instance, an election administration office within the government and an election administration office within a government ministry but supervised by a judicial body can be considered as partial-partisan models of election administration in transitional elections (Pastor 1999: 12). An independent election commission staffed by experts and directly accountable to the parliament and a multiparty election commission composed of representatives of the political parties can be considered as independent-non partisan models of election administration in such elections (ibid). Evidences indicate that, high level of mistrust and divisions among political party representatives have become commonplace in countries that adopted partial- partisan electoral management entities (Reilly 2008: 176). In many developing countries, these electoral management bodies lack the required impartiality, independence and competence (Pastor 1999: 12). In the case of Africa, similar problems posed serious questions on the very credibility of elections and subsequently heightened the risk of electoral violence (Mehler 2007: 210, EISA 2010: 4). To overcome such problems therefore, the significance of adopting independent and professional administrative bodies is stressed by many (Lopez-Pintor 2005: 21, Reilly 2008: 175).

The monitoring of elections by missions designated for such purpose is another essential activity related to electoral management (Høglund 2009: 423). The main objective of election monitoring is building the confidence of the voting public on the overall electoral process (Sisk 1998: 170, Lopez-Pintor 2005: 25). This involves evaluating the extent to which elections were conducted in a free and fair manner (Sisk 2009: 204, Ndulo 2010: 169) and verifying manipulative and violent activities that may influence the electoral process and its outcome (Sisk 1998: 170, Fortman 2000: 92). Even though the presence of domestic and

international election monitoring organizations may not necessarily avert the risk of electoral violence, it may reduce the magnitude of such violence (Høglund 2009: 423).

3.2.3.3 Electoral Rules and Regulations

Both formal and informal rules of electoral game play a part in generating conflict in post conflict and newly democratizing societies. In these societies, such rules can facilitate conditions conducive for electoral conflict and violence (Høglund 2008: 421, Sisk 1998: 4). In principle, these rules are broadly classified into rules of electoral competition and rules of electoral governance (Mozzafar and Schedler 2002: 7-8). Rules of electoral competition consists of issues such as electoral formulas, district magnitude and boundaries, assembly size ...etc (ibid) and are mostly referred in many writings as electoral systems. Rules of electoral governance cover areas like party, candidate and voter eligibility and registration, vote counting, tabulating and reporting techniques, election monitoring and conflict resolution mechanisms, campaign financing ...etc (ibid). These rules offer structural inducements for modest and conflict-resolving character on the part of those playing the political game (Reynolds&Sisk 1998: 4). For instance, an electoral code of conduct obliges political parties to respect the political rights and freedoms of others and ensure the freeness and fairness of the elections (Ndulo 2010: 168). Nonetheless, studies indicate that electoral authoritarian regimes of many newly democratizing countries adopt and practice different sets of informal rules that make electoral competition undemocratic (Schedler 2006: 3). Similar rules are also used by hybrid (semi-authoritarian) regimes in several post-conflict societies (Wigell 2008 : 242) and the risk of political instability and violence have become extreme under such regimes (Østerud 2008: 233). Moreover, these rules were given different labels by various scholars like “Nested Games” by Andreas Schedler (2006: 12), “Norm Violations” by Mikael Wigell (2008: 242) and “Winning Strategies” by Paul Collier (2009: 45) and seem to be conflict-inducing in their very essence.

One of the strategic rules used by such regimes is imposing different kinds of restrictions on the political rights and civil liberties of citizens (Schedler 2006: 3, Wigell 2008: 13). This includes measures taken by the government to control the state as well as private electronic and print media (Ottaway 2003: 152, Case 2006: 99) and restrict the rights of different social and political organizations to assemble for their own cause (Ottaway 2003: 149, Case 2006: 99). The other strategy is preserving key political domains and positions away from electoral

competition (Schedler 2006: 3, Wigell 2008: 13). Such positions render the incumbent party the power to amend constitutions and adopt legislations for their own benefit (Ottaway 2003: 155-6, Case 2006: 101) and allows them to maintain their control over existing patronage resources and hierarchies (Case 2006: 101, Ghandi 2009: 408). Another important strategy is excluding political opponents from the electoral game and fragmenting their overall organization (Schedler 2006: 3, Wigell 2008: 13). Such rulings aim at limiting the extent of choice available for the voting public during election and may involve activities like deregistering opposition parties and disenfranchising political candidates (Case 2006: 101). A substantial percentage of the public which sympathize opposition parties can also be systematically marginalized from the voter registration process (Ottaway 2003: 141).

These regimes also consider vote buying as a vital strategy to win electoral competition (Case 2006: 103, Wigell 2008: 242). This strategy involves distributing public goods and services at personal and community level through channels of patronage (Ghandi 2009: 408-9) and dispensing money to individual as well as group voters through networks of corruption (Collier 2009: 31). Consequently, voters are expected and obliged to render political support in return to the rewards they received from politicians of the incumbent party (Collier 2009: 31, Ghandi 2009: 413). Intimidation can also be prioritized by such regimes as a more reliable strategy of securing political support (Case 2006: 104, Wigell 2008: 242). As part of the overall politically motivated violence, agents of the ruling party may apply threats and coercion on political opponents and the voting public (Lindberg 2006: 157). These tactics might also be considered by state agents as counter measures against possible violence from the opposition side (Collier 2009: 34). Another key strategic choice made by these regimes is electoral fraud (Case 2006: 104, Wigell 2008: 242). The main objective of electoral fraud is to affect electoral outcomes and its scope extends from technical infringement of the electoral laws to outright employment of violence against voters (Lehoucq 2003: 233). Specifically, such violence may target registration data, campaign materials, ballot boxes, vote results as well as the voters themselves (Høglund 2009: 417). Recent studies have also indicated that all the above strategies were widely used by several African regimes (Lindberg 2006: 156-7, Collier 2009: 38-9).

In this chapter, I have presented the theoretical framework of electoral violence. Firstly, I have described briefly the meaning, nature, effects of electoral violence. Secondly, I have forwarded the explanations concerning how electoral violence is caused. The major causes for

such violence are related to the nature of politics, the nature of elections and electoral institutions. Topics such as patrimonial and neo-patrimonial politics, conflict cleavages and cultures of violence and impunity are discussed under the nature of politics. Issues like political mobilization, close competition and stakes involved are covered within the nature of elections. Subjects such as electoral systems, rules of electoral conduct and election administration are analyzed under electoral institutions.

Chapter Four : Causes of the 2005 Electoral Violence in Ethiopia

Analyzing the causes of a particular phenomenon requires considering various contextual factors. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to make a broader analysis on the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia. Specifically, the empirical fact on the May 2005 national election will be presented by classifying it into pre-election period, election day and post-election period. Moreover, the causes of the 2005 electoral violence will be analyzed in light of the theoretical frame of electoral violence, the empirical fact on the May 2005 national election and my own reflections.

4.1 The May 2005 Election of Ethiopia in Retrospect

4.1.1 Pre- Election Period

4.1.1.1 Political Context

Ethiopia is a federal republic comprising of nine administrative regions and two self governing cities (EuEom 2005: 7). The nine regions are Tigray, Amhara, Oromo, Afar, Harari, Somali, Benishangul\ Gumuz, Gambela and state of the southern nations, nationalities and peoples (SNNPS) and the two self-governing cities are Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (ibid). Institutions both at the federal and state level are entitled to exercise legislative, executive and judicial powers (ibid). The parliament is bicameral ie. comprised of two chambers (Carter 2009: 10). These are the upper chamber, the House of Federation and the lower chamber, House of Peoples' Representatives (ibid). While the former has 108 seats, the latter has 547 seats (ibid). While members of the House of Federation are elected by regional assemblies and serve five-year terms, members of the House of Peoples' Representatives are elected by popular vote from single-member constituencies and serve five-year terms (ibid).

4.1.1.2 Legal Framework

The 1994 constitution, the 1995 election law, which was amended before the 2005 elections, and regulation no.1 issued by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) are the major legal instruments governing the holding of elections (EuEom 2005: 8). Basic political rights such as the rights of freedom of expression, association, assembly and movement as well as rights to vote and to be elected are enshrined the Constitution (AU Eot 2005: 7). Simple

majority rule “first past the post” is stipulated as the electoral system governing elections for the 547 seats of the lower legislative chamber ie. House of Peoples’ Representatives (EuEom 2005: 9). The 1957 penal code has listed electoral offenses such as impersonation, disturbance of meetings or assemblies, breach of the secrecy of voting, falsification of results and breaches of official secrecy (Carter 2009: 10). The electoral law states that election can be observed by “ political organizations campaigning for the election, the public, various forms of public organizations” and the government can also invite international observers (EuEom 2005: 10). It also provides that any citizen who is 18 or older is eligible for registration as a voter and should have resided in the constituency in question for six months or more (AU Eot 2005: 7). As per the 2005 modifications to the 1995 electoral law, Woredas ie. administrative units monitored by the local government, are the basis for the constituencies accountable for electing a representative to the parliament and are further partitioned into kebelles, which are the smallest administrative units in Ethiopia (Carter 2009: 10). The formal legal complaints mechanism according to the 1995 electoral law provides that complaints should first be lodged with the woreda election officer (ibid). If the complaints are concerning elector registration and voting, the woreda court will make the final decision (ibid). Complaints regarding candidate registration can be appealed to the Regional Supreme Court, and complaints with regard to tabulation can be appealed to Federal High Court via the NEBE (ibid).

4.1.1.3 Election Campaign

Compared to previous elections, there was a significantly expanded freedom for political campaigning and this encouraged political parties to campaign actively country wide (Eu Eom 2005: 15). Both the opposition and the ruling parties organized peaceful party rallies in Addis Ababa which also demonstrated the public interest in the democratic process in general and in the elections in particular (Carter 2009: 15). The joint political party forum organized by the NEBE at national and constituency level also played a role in resolving campaign related problems (EuEom 2005: 16). However problems of using state institutions and resources for campaign purpose by the ruling parties were widely reported and this showed the existing overlap in the functions of government at the regional and zonal levels and the EPRDF party (Carter 2005: 16). Despite improved campaign context, opposition parties reported various instances of harassment, intimidation detentions and other electoral offences (ibid). Members of the ruling party have also accused the opposition party members of violating campaign rules by campaigning in churches, schools and market places (ibid: 15). Inflammatory

rhetoric was also used by the contending parties towards the end of the campaigning period (EuEom 2005: 16). For instance the deputy prime minister used an extreme rhetoric during one public debate forum by comparing the opposition parties with the interhamwe militia which was responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide (ibid).

4.1.1.4 Media

In Ethiopia, both the audio and the print media is dominated by the state (EuEom 2005: 17). The government monitors the only TV station (Ethiopia TV), a radio station (Radio Ethiopia), a national news agency (Ethiopia News Agency, ENA)(EuEom 2005: 17). It also manages the three out of the four daily newspapers (Addis Zemen, the Ethiopian Herald and Baarisa) (ibid). Furthermore, the ruling party is strongly affiliated with the only other news agency (Walta Information Center) and a radio station with countrywide coverage (Radio Fana)(ibid). The Reporter, which has two weekly editions in English and one in Amharic, and the Addis Admas, published in Amharic were the two most important representatives of the private press (ibid). Generally, the election campaign period was more passionately covered by the private press than the state media (ibid). Unparalleled opening of the state media was also witnessed during the campaign period (EuEom 2005: 16). The government allocated free airtime and space to contending political parties (ibid). While 44% was allocated for the ruling party, opposition parties gained 56% (Nordem 2005: 9). The free exchange of political views via the state media contributed a lot in raising the public political awareness and interest in the electoral process (EuEom 2005: 17).

However, after election day, the government made a drastic change on its policy on the use of public media (EuEom 2005: 16). Consequently state media stopped providing access for opposition opinions and covered only government/EPRDF stands (ibid). Another issue which raised serious concerns was the passing of the restrictive draft press law as an amendment to the new Penal Code (ibid: 17). From a procedural view, the law was adopted without proper consultation of the concerned parties and violates the rights of citizens to participate in public affairs under Art. 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)(ibid: 10). In terms of substance, the law provides that anyone in the media production and distribution chain can become criminally responsible if the author or editor of an article cannot be distinguished (ibid). Therefore the passing of this law might have had an intimidating effect on the operation of the private press (media)(ibid).

4.1.2 Voting

Despite some exceptions, the election day (15th of May) was generally peaceful and orderly (Nordem 2005: 9). Around 96% of the polling stations observed by the EU were opened on the scheduled timeframe (EuEom 2005: 18). There was also a very high voter turnout which resulted in long queues (Nordem 2005: 9). More than 20 million people went to cast their vote on this day (Carter 2009:20). Voting hours were extended in many areas in order to overcome the long queues (Carter 2009: 20). Despite the delivery of voting material was generally sufficient in the country side, there were scarcities in some areas because of the huge voter turnout (EuEom 2005 : 19). Election officials as well as community observers were generally present in the 93% of the voting stations visited by EU observers (EuEom 2005: 18). With regard to political party observers, EPRDF party observers were present in the 93 % of the voting stations visited by EU whereas CUD party observers were present in the 73% of the polling stations visited and UEDF party observers were present in the 40 % of the EU visited stations (ibid). Other parties observers and individual candidates observers were present in the 25 and 23 percent of voting stations visited by EU respectively (ibid). Non-partisan domestic observers were present in 47 per cent of polling stations visited by the EU (ibid). In general, the electoral process was judged by EU election observers as “very good” and “good” in the 77 percent , “poor” in the 17 % and totally unsatisfactory in the 5 percent of the visited voting stations during the election day (ibid).

4.1.3 Post- Election Period

4.1.3.1 Election Administration

The main body responsible for the administration of elections at national, regional and local level is the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)(Eu Eom 2005: 13). The NEBE is composed of seven members elected by the House of Peoples’ Representatives and members are obliged to have no political affiliation and to be selected on the merit basis (Carter 2009: 13). The Board has the power to issue regulations and directives and is accountable for assigning and training electoral officials (EuEom 2005: 13). It also has the responsibility to deliver civic education to the public, notify official results, investigate complaints and resolve electoral irregularities (ibid). At the federal level, this election management body is staffed with 170 permanent officials and out of this 12 are regional electoral coordinators for the various regions (Eu Eom 2005: 14). In times of elections, more than 120,000 election officers

are recruited by constituency electoral offices to administer polling stations (ibid). In each of the 547 constituencies for the lower chamber legislature, constituency electoral committees composed of three seconded civil servants are formed during elections (Carter 2009: 13). Moreover in each of the more than 33,000 polling stations, polling station committees composed of five persons mostly civil servants are organized (ibid). Other than these, polling stations also involve a three member Grievance and Complaint Committee, led by the Chairman of the Polling Station Committee, five election observers selected by the local public, and up to two observer delegates per candidate (Carter 2009: 13).

The overall performance of the NEBE was mixed (EuEom 2005: 14). Generally, the NEBE managed the electoral process effectively up to election day. Election officers at all levels demonstrated higher dedication and worked their best in general (ibid). Given the geographical distances, infrastructural problems and scarcity of electoral finance, the pre-election preparations such as voter and candidate registration were generally well organized and more transparent than before (ibid). In order to come up with consultative solutions for potential election related problems, the NEBE also organized the so called joint political parties forum which was also a positive development (ibid). This forum was organized both at national and constituency levels and allowed political parties to jointly discuss problems related to election campaign and election administration (ibid: 16). For instance, competing political parties signed a code of conduct in this context (ibid). Other than this, the ruling party (EPRDF), CUD and other opposition parties signed a joint non-violence pact shortly before the election day (ibid).

However, after the election day the NEBE contributed to the substantial delays in the counting of votes and aggregation of results (ibid:14). Besides Some decisions made by the NEBE have raised questions and resulted in the opposition's allegations of the NEBE impartiality (ibid). Due to lack of voter education and inadequate training of election officials, a large number of invalid votes were observed in several areas (ibid). The NEBE decision to restrict several civil society organization from observing the election also raised serious concerns (ibid: 15). The NEBE decided that to observe the elections, the statutes of these organizations should consider election observation as an important organizations objective (ibid). Although the decision of the NEBE was later on turned down by the federal high as well as supreme court, lateness of the court decisions made these organization unable to observe the elections effectively (ibid). Another main concern was that opposition political parties mistrusted the

NEBE from the very beginning (EuEom 2005: 15). Such lack of confidence on the NEBE emanated from the very practice of appointing of an electoral commission by the one party dominated federal parliament (ibid).

4.1.3.2 Counting and Tabulation

Despite the absence of major incidents on the election day, significant problems started to appear during the vote counting and tabulation stage (Carter 2009: 22). In several constituencies the process of counting and the publication of results both at local and national level was defective and slow (EuEom 2005: 19). In almost half the urban voting stations monitored by EU, the counting and closing process in general is assessed negatively (37 per cent poor and 10 per cent totally unsatisfactory) and the figure gets even worse for rural areas (ibid). Insufficient training, adverse material conditions and bureaucratic procedures were also among reasons behind the slowness the vote counting at polling stations and constituency level.(ibid: 19-20). Several irregularities including ballot box stuffing and unlocked ballot boxes and being prohibited from accessing many tabulation centers were reported by opposition parties and confirmed by observers (Carter 2009: 22). Intimidation of party supporters and candidates as well as the presence of militia were also reported by opposition parties (EU Eom 2005: 21). Claims and counter claims of winning the majority seat by the ruling as well as opposition political parties also overshadowed the counting and aggregation process (ibid). The opposition and ruling parties together filed around 383 election complaints to the NEBE with the potential to affect the results of 299 constituencies (Carter 2009: 23). The NEBE inability to ensure transparency in the counting and tabulation process also raised serious questions about the credibility of the final results (ibid: 22). The NEBE published the preliminary results of 513 constituencies by early June 2005 and postponed the publication of final election result after the finalization of the complaint investigation process (EuEom 2005: 21). The results showed that the EPRDF achieved clear majority and this made the oppositions to continue to strongly dispute the result by claiming massive electoral fraud and led to the violence which occurred in June,2005 (Carter 2009: 23)¹⁶.

16 According to the final election result issued by the NEBE on september 5, 2005, EPRDF won 327 seats (55% of votes), CUD won 109 seats (26% of votes), UEDF won 52 seats (9% of votes) and others won 57 seats (10% of votes). (Source; *Final Report of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia on the May 2005 Election*).

4.1.3.3 Complaints Investigation Process

To resolve disputes over election results, the government and opposition parties agreed to establish an ad hoc complaints review and investigation mechanisms (Carter 2009: 25). Consequently, the NEBE established two Complaints Review Boards (CRB 1&CRB 2) and 44 Complaints Investigation Panels (CIPs) to verify complaints and conduct investigations, respectively, within a period of two-month (ibid). Both the CRBs and CIPs were composed of three members, one from the NEBE, one from the complainant party and one from the defendant party (Eu Eom 2005: 25,28). The Complaints Review Body (CRB 1) reviewed the whole body of the complaints and then decided the complaints with significant evidence to be reviewed by Complaints Investigation Panels (CIPs) (ibid). To provide an administrative appeal to complaints, the second complaints review body (CRB2) was also established (Eu Eom 2005: 25,28). After investigating the complaints, the Complaints Investigation Panels (CIPs) forwarded recommendations to the NEBE and when parties were unsatisfied with the NEBE action, they were allowed to appeal to the court system (ibid). Initially, the CRB1 filed more than 383 complaints and out of this 151 were chosen to be investigated by 26 different CIP panels (ibid). From the 151 complaints reviewed, 10 percent were filed by EPRDF, 27 percent by UEDF and 53 percent by CUD (ibid). The CRB2 reviewed the 232 complaints rejected by the CRB1 and out of this 9 percent were filed by EPRDF, 29 percent by the CUD and 41 percent by the UEDF (ibid). The CRB2 also reviewed 29 other complaints rejected by CRB1 due to lack of sufficient evidence (ibid) and to investigate the complaints forwarded by the CRB2, the NEBE created 18 additional CIPs (ibid).

The complaint investigation process led to decision made by the NEBE to conduct re-run elections in 31 constituencies in the Amhara, Oromia and SNNP regions (EuEom 2005: 29). Despite the fact that 26 of the 31 constituency re run elections were the outcomes of the complaints made by the opposition, all the 31 seats were won by the ruling party during the August 2005 re-run elections (Carter 2009: 31). The complaint reviewing process however, could not become an effective mechanism to investigate complaints because it was conducted in the context of partial arbitration and human right abuse (Eu Eom 2005: 28). The NEBE's alignment with the ruling party during decision making in the CIPs made the opposition parties such as the CUD to withdraw from the process and made the ruling party to stand unchallenged for re-voting (Carter 2009: 31). Compared with the ruling party lawyers, the opposition side lacked the necessary expertise and resources for making sound presentations at

the panels (Carter 2009: 31). Inconsistencies in terms of the application of the various electoral rules and regulations also posed serious problems on the complaint investigation process (ibid). Opposition leaders and supporters were also threatened in several ways while the complaint investigation was undergoing in their local area and this undermined the capacity of the opposition to effectively participate in the process (EuEom 2005: 28). There are instances where important witnesses declined from testifying due to fear of the consequence (ibid). There was also the presence of police, militia and armed forces in areas where the complaint process took place (ibid).

4.1.3.4 Human Right Issues

On the evening of the election day ie. May 14th,2005, the prime minister declared a state of emergency and notified a ban on any sort of demonstration in Addis Ababa (Eu Eom 2005: 22). In contrast to the pre- election period, the media coverage became unbalanced and reflected only government\ EPRDF stands (ibid). Due to biased reporting, the accreditation of five local correspondents of international media was also withdrawn by the ministry of information (ibid:23). Students of Addis Ababa university rioted on June 5 and the riot spread to other parts of the city (ibid). On the next day police arrested 520 students and other 50 residents (ibid). Demonstration took place in Addis Ababa on June 8 and on this day the police and armed forces killed around 36 people and wounded several others (ibid). The main reasons for the early June violence were the frustration of CUD supporters over the delay in the counting of votes and publication of final results (Writenet 2006: 15) and the claims on the part of CUD of electoral fraud and NEBE's partiality towards EPRDF (Amnesty 2006: 3). Consequently a wave of arrests were conducted in connection with the demonstration and the numbers of arrested people were estimated to be in thousands (Eu Eom 2005: 23). Elected opposition leaders such as those of CUD were harassed and forced to be under house arrest without court warrant (ibid). Security forces also raided the offices of opposition parties and arrested their staff members (ibid). Members of human right advocacy organizations such as the Ethiopian Human Rights council as well as journalists from the private media such as Ethiop, Menelik and Nesanet were also arbitrarily arrested (ibid). A new parliamentary law which restricts the role of opposition parties in the parliament was also adopted by the outgoing ruling party dominated parliament ie. House of Peoples Representatives (Carter 2009: 38). Several elected opposition members and leaders refused to assume their new seats in the new

parliament which was reconvened in October 2005 (Carter 2009: 38). In response to this, the government denied the elected CUD members and leaders of their legal immunity from criminal prosecution (ibid). Opposition groups call for a government of national unity was rejected by the government (ibid). Consequently violence erupted for the second time in early November 2005 and in this violence more than 40 peoples were killed, hundreds were wounded and several thousands were imprisoned (ibid). The main reasons for the early November violence were the continued claim on the part of the CUD of massive electoral fraud (Writenet 2006: 16) and its call for a nation wide popular strike and civic disobedience (Amnesty 2006: 4) This time, hundreds of opposition political leaders and members of the civil society were also incarcerated with treason and genocide charges (Carter 2009: 38).

4.2 Causes of the 2005 Electoral Violence in Ethiopia

4.2.1 Nature of Politics in Contemporary Ethiopia

4.2.1.1 Neo Patrimonial and Authoritarian Politics

Neo-patrimonialism has become a peculiar institutional attribute of African political regimes (Bratton & Van de walle 1994: 458). Recent studies have also identified the regime in power in Ethiopia as a neo-patrimonial ones (Abbink 2005: 193). It is argued that, in such regimes despite the existence of formal distinctions between the public and the private sphere, it is difficult to observe these distinctions in practice” (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 105) because “relationship of loyalty and dependence pervade the formal political and administrative system” (Bratton & van de walle 1994: 458). Moreover, it is believed to be difficult to predict the activities of state agencies and government agencies may not be able to deliver public services properly (Erdmann & Engel 2007: 105-6). In the case of Ethiopia, such trends were observed during the election campaign, election administration and in the compliant investigation process of the May 2005 election. There were instances where the ruling party candidates used vote buying as instruments of securing political support while campaigning in rural areas (Lefort 2010: 440, Aalen & Tronvoll 2009: 197). There were also problems of using state institutions and resources for campaign purpose by the ruling party (Carter 2005: 16). This has showed the existing overlap in the functions of government and EPRDF party at the regional and zonal level (ibid). Despite the unparalleled opening of the public media in the pre -election period, the post-election period was characterized by the ruling party monopoly of

the state media (EUEom 2005: 16). In the post- election period, the NEBE has contributed to substantial delays in the counting of votes and aggregation of results (Carter 2009: 22). The electoral commission is appointed to administer elections by the one party dominated federal parliament and the chairman of the NEBE is simultaneously the chairman of the federal supreme court (EUEom 2005: 15). This resulted in the opposition parties lack of trust on the NEBE activities in particular and on the overall electoral process in general (ibid). Opposition parties also stressed the partiality of the NEBE in the complaints investigation process (Carter 2009: 31). They alleged that the NEBE sided with EPRDF in the decisions made within the complaint review boards and in the compliant investigation panels (ibid). Reports show that the boards and the panels are organized of three parties ie. one from the opposition, one from the ruling party and one from the NEBE and decisions are made within these bodies by majority vote ie. 2:1 and in most cases the opposition were on the loser side (EUEom 2005: 28).

4.2.1.2 Ethnic and Political Party Cleavages

Existing cleavages within the society as well as nature of actors participating in politics are among the important factors which determine whether elections become peaceful or violent (Høglund 2009: 420). In the case of Ethiopia, the existing cleavage in the country is mainly ethnicity and ethnic federalism is the basis for organizing the state since the fall of the Derg regime and the coming into power of EPRDF in 1991 (Aalen 2006: 245). Ethnicity has also become a major factor which determined the nature of actors that participated in the May 2005 election. For instance the ruling party EPRDF (Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front) is composed of political parties organized along ethnic lines (ibid: 251). These political parties were warring factions along ethnic lines in the pre 1991 period (ibid). They transformed themselves into effective political parties shortly before the transitional period from the long lasted civil war (ibid). The other competing political party UEDF (United Ethiopian Democratic Forces) has also ethnic based parties within itself (ibid: 253). However the main contending political party ie. CUD (Coalition for Unity and Democracy) is a program-based political party (ibid). It has been found out that party formations along ethnic lines mostly stimulates stiff competition among themselves but prevents cooperative relations and threaten the overall stability of the political arena (Reilly 2008: 178). In the case of the May 2005 election, there were instances where the ethnic based ruling party ie. EPRDF used violence to promote narrow and extremist political ends (Aalen 2006: 254). With regard to

ideological differences among competing parties, there was a significant difference between the ethnic based ruling party and program based opposition party ie. CUD and this was having a polarizing effect during election campaign (Aalen 2006: 253). It is argued that due to prevalence of ethnic and clientelist politics makes it is very difficult for program based political parties to effectively compete and secure significant support (Van de walle 2007: 67, Reilly 2008: 178). In the case of the May 2005 election, although the CUD managed to secure significant support mainly from urban areas, found it difficult to do the same in the remote rural areas due to the ethnic and clientelist politics of EPRDF (Haberson 2005: 148,152). Consequently, the CUD forwarded complaints on the results of elections in many rural constituencies and preferred to organize protest and civic disobedience as a means of political struggle in the post election period (ibid: 152-153).

4.2.1.3 Use of Violence and Culture of Impunity

Culture of violence prevails in societies that experienced political violence for prolonged periods and makes the violent acts of state and non state actors acceptable and tolerable at societal as well as individual level (Steenkemp 2005: 253, Høglund 2009: 421). From its modern political history one can understand that Ethiopia is a country which has undergone through longstanding civil wars and violent conflicts (Smith 2009: 871). The mostly agrarian society of Ethiopia has also become tolerant of the violent acts of state actors for long years. Scholars argued that one of the factors that contributed for the persistence of both cultures of violence and impunity is the weakness of state institutions (Steenkemp 2005: 259, Høglund 2009: 421). Similar to several post conflict societies, the Ethiopian government institutions at national and local level are mostly unaccountable, non-transparent, politically partial and financially unstable (Jarstad 2008: 28). Due to this they usually do not have the required legitimacy and resource to manage widespread violence. The manner in which the government handled the post- May 2005 election popular protest and political violence is an evidence for this. The other contributing factor for such culture is the use of violence by state agents. (Steenkemp 2005: 258, Høglund 2009: 421). In the case of the May 2005 election, the security apparatus of the Ethiopian state such as the police and armed forces have committed countrywide human right violations at national and local level (Amnesty 2006: 3). Political parties have also employed violence as a means of achieving various political objectives. For instance, the ruling party EPRDF has applied different forms of violence such as intimidation, arbitrary arrest and extra judicial killings on opposition party leaders, supporters, private

media journalists and civil society activists during the complaint investigation process in the post-election period (Amnesty 2006: 3). Domestic human right advocacy groups such as the Ethiopian human rights council (EHRCO) have well documented the atrocities committed by the regime in power.¹⁷ However, the government of Ethiopia has continued to refrain from conducting an independent investigation and ensuring restorative justice activities on the alleged human rights abuse cases (Vaughan& Tronvoll 2003: 56). The report issued by the inquiry commission established to investigate the post-May 2005 election violence also remained partial and confirmed the actions of state security agents as legitimate and denied that excessive force was used.¹⁸ Recently the government of Ethiopia has commenced to make a written and defensive response to the human right abuse cases reported by the US state department annual report.¹⁹

4.2.2 Nature of the May 2005 Election of Ethiopia

4.2.2.1 Political Mobilization along Conflict Margins

Conducting competitive elections renders opportunities for generating conflict and violence through increased polarization (Jarstad 2008: 29, Høglund 2008: 85). During the election campaign stage of the May 2005 elections, the competing political parties ie. EPRDF, CUD, UEDF and others have emphasized their differences and mobilized political support along these lines of difference. While the political elites of EPRDF have forwarded exclusive ethnic appeals, the opposition parties have forwarded exclusive nationalistic appeals (Aalen 2006: 253). The EPRDF considers itself as a vanguard political party and assumes that it is under its rule that the rights of different ethnic groups can be recognized and protected (ibid: 245). The opposition parties particularly CUD considers it self as a party that strives maintain the unity of Ethiopian state which is endangered by the politics of ethnic federalism (Harbeson 2005: 149). Such extreme nationalistic and ethnicized rhetoric has worsened the existing tensions between these political opponents. The polarization between the competing political parties and within the society heightened around the end of the election campaign. For instance the deputy prime minister of Ethiopia used an extreme rhetoric during one public

17 Ethiopian Human Rights Council (2006) *Special Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council on the May 2005 Election of Ethiopia*.

18 House of Peoples Representatives (2006) *Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Post-May 2005 Election Violence in Ethiopia*

19 *Government Communication Affairs (2008) Response of the Government of Ethiopia for the US Human Right Report on Ethiopia*.

debate forum. The opposition political parties were compared with the interhamwe militia which was responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide (Aalen 2006: 254). Similar rhetoric was used by a prominent opposition party leader during public rallies in the last weeks of the campaigning period (ibid). There are also instances where political rights were used for the wrong purposes. Politicians of the ruling party have employed terminologies used for military purposes such as “strongholds” “cadres” and “strategies and tactics” during election campaign. It is argued that political parties representing diverse ethno- regional interest resort to violence when they realize that they are losers of the electoral process and its outcome (Mehler 2007: 200, Bekoe 2008: 30). This holds true in the case of the May 2005 where the ruling party resorted to electoral violence when it realize that it has ceded substantial number of parliamentary seats to the opposition parties (Aalen&Tronvoll 2009: 195-96). Instead of accepting the results of the election, the ruling party preferred to manipulate the NEBE (the National Election Board of Ethiopia) during the counting and tabulation as well as the complaint investigation process so that the outcomes ensure its dominance (ibid)

4.2.2.2 Close Competition among Political Parties

Electoral contests with close margins of victory create high level of uncertainty about the final outcome and eventually may lead to the outbreak of violence (Sisk 2008: 9, Høglund 2009: 421). The May 2005 election is considered as the first truly competitive multi-party election that the country has ever experienced in its political history (Harbeson 2005: 144). This time, competing political parties have organized themselves far more better than before (Aalen&Tronvoll 2009: 194). The opening of the public media for the campaigning purpose has contributed a lot to raise the political awareness of the voting public (Lyons 2006: 1). Thus the democratic nature of the May 2005 election increased the contestation between the ruling party and the other two opposition political parties. The electoral process has taken a different shape in the post- election period particularly in the counting of votes and tabulation of results as well as in the complaint investigation process (EU Eom 2005: 2-3). It is argued that dominant groups whose political power is threatened by the democratic political competition may resort to violence in order to secure their previous status (Jarstad 2008: 29-30, Høglund 2008: 85-6). The ruling party (EPRDF) has never expected that the outcome of this election will significantly affect its dominant position in the parliament (Gudina 2007: 11-12). However, it returned to violence when it realized that it has lost a substantial number of seats during vote counting (ibid). Claims and counter claims of winning the majority seat

by the ruling as well as opposition political parties has also overshadowed the counting and aggregation process (EUEom 2005: 21). It is also argued that fears of future legal prosecution in connection with alleged economic crimes and human right abuse motivates them to maintain their political office by any means (Thompson & Kuntz 2006: 117, Laakso 2007: 230). Such fears were observed on the part of the ruling party during the May 2005 election. The counting and tabulation as well as the complaint investigation processes were carried out in the context of widespread human right abuse by the ruling party (EUEom 2005: 28). This was done to ensure that the outcome of process is in its favor. It is suggested that marginalized groups who gained less from the political competition than their expectation may opt for violence as a viable means to realize their new demands (Jarstad 2008: 29-30, Høglund 2008: 85-86). In the case of the May 2005 election, the main contending parties rejected the outcome of the counting as well as the complaint investigation process, demanded a government of national unity and used civic disobedience as a means of political struggle to meet their demands (Gudina 2007: 11-12).

4.2.2.3 Pertinent Economic and Political Stakes

In post conflict societies, competitive elections are more prone to conflict and violence due to the stakes involved in such elections (Høglund 2009: 422). The May 2005 election was the first genuine multi party election in the pre-election period and was the most violent ones in the post-election period. It is also argued that the stakes of winning and losing a political office becomes extremely high within the contexts of patronage and identity politics (Sisk 2009: 9). Ethiopia is a country where the both patronage and identity politics are pervasive and the May 2005 election is conducted under such contexts (Abbink 2005: 193-94, Aalen 2006: 253). It is argued that under such contexts those who hold political office enjoy greater control over various economic resources and public services (Sisk 2008:9, Chandra 2007: 87). In the case of the May 2005 election, evidences show that the ruling party EDRDF has entrenched its patronized administrative structure from the national to the local level (Aalen&Tronvoll 2009: 197, Lefort 2010: 440). The structure is even more entrenched in rural areas where the rural community is dependent upon the government allocation of agricultural inputs (Lefort 2010: 440). Thus for the ruling parties, political elites and their supporters, losing political office via competitive election means losing their patron-client network and the livelihoods of themselves as well as their supporters. The ruling party also used ethnic identity as an important means of mobilizing political support during election

campaign (Aalen 2006: 260-61, Abbink 2005: 194). It regarded its political opponents as chauvinists and as agents who are working to bring back regimes of the past ie. the Derg regime (Arriola 2008: 120). During the election campaign for the May 2005 election, the various parties under the umbrella of EPRDF and ethnic parties that support EPRDF have threatened to use their constitutional right of self-determination including and up to secession if the opposition parties win the election and hold political power (Ethiopian News Agency, May 17, 2005).²⁰The risk of election related violence is also considered to be high in situations where poverty and unemployment are rampant (Sisk 2009: 9, IDEA 2009: 10). Ethiopia is also country where poverty and unemployment are prevalent. Studies indicate that during the May 2005 election, economic inequalities and social injustice were among the major issues at stake (Smith 2009: 885) and economic factors played a crucial role in determining the level of support obtained by opposition political parties (Arriola 2008: 117). The lack of economic growth and the prevalence of poverty in the country since the coming into power of EPRDF were stressed by opposition parties during election campaign and the inter-party debate (Smith 2009: 885, Inter Africa Group 2005)²¹ and the policy they forwarded to alleviate poverty and bring about economic development enabled them to win a significant popular support (Arriola 2008: 127-128).

4.2.3 Electoral Institutions in Post-Conflict Ethiopia

4.2.3.1 Contests over Existing Electoral System

The choice of electoral systems may facilitate conditions favorable for election related violence (Høglund 2009: 422, Sisk 2008: 11). It is suggested that deciding an appropriate electoral system for both ethnically alike and divided societies, requires making compromises among different contending normative ends such as representativeness, accountability, inclusiveness and accessibility ...etc (Reynolds& Sisk 1998: 21-22). It is also argued that in the case of Africa where neo-patrimonial politics is prominent, plural majority system performed much less in terms of ensuring representation, accountability, inclusiveness, party development and political stability than proportional representation system (Lindberg 2005: 61-62). Similar to other African regimes, neo patrimonialism is an important institutional attribute of the Ethiopian state. In the case of the May 2005 election, opposition political

²⁰ Ethiopian News Agency (2006) A Compilation of One Year Election News of the Ethiopian News Agency

²¹ Inter Africa Group (2006) *Report of Inter Africa Group on the Inter-party Debate Held in the Pre-Election Period of the May 2005 National Election in Ethiopia.*

parties asked the Ethiopian government to change the rules of the electoral game ie from simple majority to proportion representation system before they enter into the electoral battlefield (Lyons 2006: 2). However the request was not accepted by the government and these parties decided to play with the existing simple majority system (ibid). Moreover it is suggested that specific contextual factors such as the historical process that brought about the electoral system, the nature of existing societal cleavages and the nature of present political system are considered to require greater importance while evaluating electoral systems (Reilly& Reynolds 2000: 429). Regarding the historical process that brought about the electoral system, the existing electoral system in Ethiopia is designed in the post-civil war period ie. during the constitution making process in the transition period between 1991 and 1993 (Smith 2009: 874). During the elections conducted since 1991 ie. in 1995, in 2000 and in 2005, opposition political parties repeatedly argued that the existing electoral system is deliberately chosen to maximize the benefit of the ruling party and opted for the proportional representation system (Lyons 2006: 2). With regard to societal cleavages, Ethiopia is a country which is known for its ethnic diversity and its explicit use of ethnicity as a basis for organizing the state. The electoral system which is in practice since the coming into power of EPRDF is first past the post or simple majority vote (EuEom 2005: 9). Concerning the political system, the Ethiopian political system in principle is multi -party systems and members of the house of peoples representat-ives are elected by popular vote from single member constituencies and serve five years terms (Carter 2009: 10). It is argued that introducing winner take all electoral systems under contexts where ethnic based parties are predominant and the political arena is less tolerant of opposing views contribute to the persistence of exclusionary and zero sum politics (Reilly& Reynolds 2000: 43). As it was said earlier the basis for organizing political parties in Ethiopia mainly is ethnicity and the ruling party is less tolerant of opposing views ie. Authoritarian. Thus the first past the post (simple majority or winner take all) electoral system has been promoting exclusionary and zero sum politics in the country during all the elections conducted since 1991.

4.2.3.2 Weak Entity of Election Administration

Election administration might create favorable circumstances for electoral violence (Høglund 2008: 422, Sisk 2008: 16). Specifically it is argued that the efficiency, professionalism, transparency, impartiality and independence are important preconditions to come up with legitimate election outcomes (Lyons 2004: 282& Sisk 1998: 169) and in contexts where these

prerequisites are not operationalized, the risk of political instability and electoral violence becomes high (Pastor 1999: 5& Sisk 2008: 16). In the case of the May 2005 election, the impartiality of the NEBE was questioned by opposition political parties from the very beginning (EUEom 2005: 14). Such lack of confidence emanated from the very practice of appointment of an electoral commission by the one party dominated federal parliament (ibid: 15). Thus they requested the government to establish an independent and impartial election administration body before the election day (Lyons 2006: 2). However their request was not accepted by the ruling party dominated parliament to be considered at the time (ibid). Opposition parties have continued their call for impartial election management body even after the election day and made this request a precondition to accept the election result and enter into the new parliament (Gudina 2007: 10). Election observation reports show that the NEBE has managed the electoral process effectively up to the election day. The pre-election preparation such as voter and candidate registration were generally well organized and more transparent than before (EUEom 2005: 14). Elections officers at all levels have also demonstrated higher dedication and worked their best in general (ibid). To come up with consultative solutions for potential election related problems, the NEBE has also organized the so called joint political parties forum (ibid). Despite such positive developments, reports indicate that the NEBE contributed to substantial delays in the counting of votes and aggregation of results (ibid). Many of the decisions made by the NEBE in the post-election period have resulted in the oppositions allegation of NEBE `s impartiality (ibid). For instance, it acted beyond its mandate by restricting several civil society organizations from observing the election (EUEom 2005: 15). This decision was later on turned down by the federal courts (ibid). The complaint investigation process which was managed by the NEBE also could not come up with results which can be accepted by all parties (EUEom 2005: 28). Opposition parties alleged that the NEBE has sided with the ruling party in the decision making process at the complaint review board and at the complaint investigation panels (Carter 2009: 31).

4.2.3.3 Limited Regulations of Electoral Conduct

Both formal and informal rules of electoral game can facilitate conditions conducive for electoral conflict and violence (Høglund 2008: 421, Sisk 1998: 4). It is argued that rules of electoral governance cover areas like party, candidate and voter eligibility and registration, vote counting, tabulating and reporting techniques, election monitoring and conflict resolution mechanisms, campaign financing ...etc (Mozzafar & Schedler 2002: 7-8). In the case of the

May 2005 election, these formal rules and regulations were present and were considered by election observers as sufficient to conduct democratic elections. The 1994 constitution, the 1995 electoral law (amended before the 2005 election) and regulation no. 1 issued by the NEBE were the major legal instruments governing the holding of elections (EUEom 2005: 8). However, a range of electoral rules and regulations were set before the 2010 national election which also showed the gaps in terms of sufficient legal instrument during the May 2005 election. Scholars argue that electoral authoritarian regimes of many newly democratizing countries adopt and practice different sets of informal rules that make electoral completion undemocratic (Schedler 2006: 3). One of such rules is imposing different kinds of restrictions on the political rights and civil liberties of citizens (Schedler 2006: 3, Wigell 2008: 13). The decision made by the NEBE to restrict civil society organization from observing the May 2005 election is a show case of such rules (EU Eom 2005: 15). The other strategy is preserving key political domains and positions away from electoral competition (Schedler 2006:3, Wigell 2008: 13). For instance, different laws which restricts the activities of opposition parties and the civil society were adopted by the ruling party dominated parliament in the post-May 2005 election period (Aalen& Tronvoll 2009: 199). Another important strategy is excluding political opponents from the electoral game and fragmenting their overall organization (Schedler 2006: 3, Wigell 2008: 13). In the post-May 2005 election period, opposition parties which claimed electoral irregularities were excluded from the political sphere ie. their organization were raided and leaders were imprisoned (EUEom 2005: 23). These regimes also consider vote buying as a vital strategy to win electoral competition (Case 2006: 103, Wigell 2008: 242). This strategy was also used by the ruling EPRDF party to secure political support from the rural communities during the May 2005 election (Aalen& Tronvoll 2009: 197, Lefort 2010: 440). Another key strategic choice made by these regimes is electoral fraud (Case 2006: 104, Wigell 2008: 242). The ruling party turned its strategy from free competition to electoral manipulation when it realized that it has lost significant number of seats in the new federal parliament (Aalen& Tronvoll 2009: 195-96). Intimidation can also be prioritized as a more reliable strategy of securing political support by such regimes (Case 2006: 104, Wigell 2008: 242). The counting and tabulation as well as the complaint investigation process of the May 2005 election were conducted under such context (EUEom 2005: 21,28).

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis on the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia. Firstly I have explained the empirical fact on the May 2005 election by categorizing it into pre-election, election day and post-election period. Secondly, I have analyzed the causes

of the 2005 electoral violence. One of the causes for such violence is related to the nature of politics in contemporary Ethiopia . Here neo-patrimonial and authoritarian politics, ethnic and political party (conflict) cleavages, use of violence and culture of impunity are considered as causes for this violence. The other cause for this violence is related to the nature of the May 2005 election. Here political mobilization along conflict margins, close competition among political parties and pertinent socio-economic stakes of this election are regarded as causes for such violence. Another cause for such violence is related to the nature of electoral institutions in post-conflict Ethiopia. Here contests over existing electoral systems, limited as well as informal rules of electoral conduct and weak election administration entity are considered as causes for this violence.

Conclusion

The May 2005 national election of Ethiopia is considered as the first true multi-party election that the country experienced in its political history. The pre-election period and the election day were relatively peaceful and democratic. There was a huge voter turnout and competing political parties were better organized than before. Moreover the public media was open for political debate and international election observers were present. However the post-election period was marred with violence due to disputes among the contending parties over election results. The post-election violence led to country wide human right abuses and a political deadlock which lasted for two years. Most of the disputed issues have remained unresolved until now and several new legislations that restrict political rights and democratic spaces were implemented since then. Thus the main question that should be addressed here is: How do an election which was peaceful and democratic in the pre-election period and during the election day become violent and autocratic in the post-election period ?

Theories on electoral violence have forwarded explanations concerning how election related violence is caused. They suggest that there are multiple reasons ie. enabling conditions and triggering factors for electoral violence to happen particularly in post conflict societies. One of the causes for such violence is related to the nature of politics in these societies. Here neo-patrimonial and authoritarian politics, ethnic and political party (conflict) cleavages and cultures of violence and impunity are considered as causes of electoral violence. The other cause for electoral violence is related to the nature of elections in these societies. Here political mobilization along conflict margins, close competition among political parties and pertinent socio-economic stakes involved in such elections are regarded as causes for such violence. Another cause for such violence is related to the nature of electoral institutions in these societies. Here contests over existing electoral systems, limited rules of electoral conduct and weak election administration entity are considered as causes for such violence.

The theoretical framework of electoral violence also explains the case of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia. One of the causes for the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia is related to the nature of Ethiopian politics. Firstly, the regime in power in Ethiopia is identified by studies as a neo patrimonial ones. There were instances of vote buying and the use of state institutions and resources for campaign purposes. The institution which administers national and regional elections also lacked the required partiality. Secondly, other than becoming the

basis for organizing the state, ethnicity has become a major factor which determined the nature of actors participating in the May 2005 election. Besides the ideological differences among competing parties, ethnic and clientelist politics were prevalent during this election. Thirdly, both cultures of violence and impunity continued to persist in contemporary Ethiopian politics. This was mainly due to the weakness of state institutions and the use of violence by state agents. The government also failed to conduct independent investigations on alleged human right abuse cases.

The other cause for this violence is related to the nature of the May 2005 national election. Firstly there was political mobilization along conflict margins. Extreme ethnicized and nationalistic rhetoric were used by leaders of competing parties. The ruling party which represented diverse ethno-regional interest resorted to violence when it realized that it has ceded significant votes to opposition parties. Secondly there was close competition among contending political parties. The democratic nature of the May 2005 election increased the contestation between the ruling and the other two opposition political parties in the pre-election period. However, the counting and tabulation as well as the complaint investigation processes of the post-election period were carried out in the context of widespread human right abuse by the ruling party. Thirdly, socio-economic stakes were also involved in this election. Ethiopia is a country where both patronage and identity politics are pervasive. Thus the stakes of winning and losing a political office became extremely high under such contexts. Ethiopia is also a country where poverty and unemployment are rampant. So economic inequalities and social injustice were among the major issues at stake during this election.

Another cause for such violence is related to the nature of electoral institutions in Ethiopia. Firstly there were contests over existing electoral system. Opposition political parties requested the government to change the electoral system from simple majority to proportional representation system. But the request was not accepted by the government and the parties decided to play with the existing system. Secondly there were limited rules of electoral conduct. Besides, different sets of informal rules which made the electoral competition undemocratic were implemented. This includes electoral fraud, intimidation, vote buying, imposing different restrictions on the political rights of citizens...etc. Thirdly there was weak election administration entity. Opposition political parties questioned the impartiality of the NEBE from the very beginning and their request to establish independent election

administration body was not accepted by the government. NEBE`s handling of the counting and tabulation as well as the complaint investigation processes also resulted in the continued allegation of its impartiality by opposition parties.

In general, we can argue that the causes of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia are related to the nature of Ethiopian politics, the nature of the May 2005 election and the nature of electoral institutions in Ethiopia. From the discussions made on the analysis chapter of this thesis, we can conclude that the theoretical framework of electoral violence in post-conflict societies also explains the case of the 2005 electoral violence in Ethiopia in a very well manner.

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Appendix

I. List of political parties that formed the various coalitions during the May 2005 election

Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

- Amhara People's Democratic Movement
- Oromo Democratic Organization
- Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement
- Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

Coalition for Unity and Democracy

- All Ethiopia Unity Party
- Ethiopian Democratic League
- Rainbow Ethiopia: Movement for Democracy and Social Justice
- UEDP – MEDHIN

United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

- All Amhara People's Organization
- Ethiopian Democratic Unity
- Ethiopian Social Democratic Federal Party
- Oromo National Congress
- Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Coalition

Unity of Southern Ethiopian Democratic Forces

- Dawro People's Democratic Movement
- Gamo Democratic Union
- Gamo-Gofa People's Democratic Unity

Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Coalition

- Burji People's Democratic Organization
- Dawro People's Democratic Movement
- Gedio People's Democratic Organization
- Gurage People's Democratic Front
- Hadiya Nation Democratic Organization
- Kefa Administrative Region People's Democratic Union
- Kembeta People's Congress
- Omo People's Democratic Front
- Omo People's Democratic Union
- Sidama Liberation Movement
- Sodo Gordena People's Democratic Organization
- Tembaro People's Democratic Union
- Wolayita People's Democratic Front
- Yem Nationality Democratic Movement

II. List of local institutions from which relevant materials were obtained

Governmental Institutions

1. National Election Board of Ethiopia
2. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
3. Government Communication Affairs.
4. House of Peoples Representatives
5. Federal Police Commission
6. Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
7. Ethiopian News Agency
8. Federal High Court

Non-Governmental Organizations

9. Human Rights Council.
10. Christian Relief and Development Agency
11. Inter Africa Group
12. Organization for Social Development
13. Justice for All

Inter-Governmental organizations

14. Forum for Social Studies
15. Institute for Security Studies
16. School of Journalism and Communications
17. Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development

Political Parties

18. Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
19. Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party
20. United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

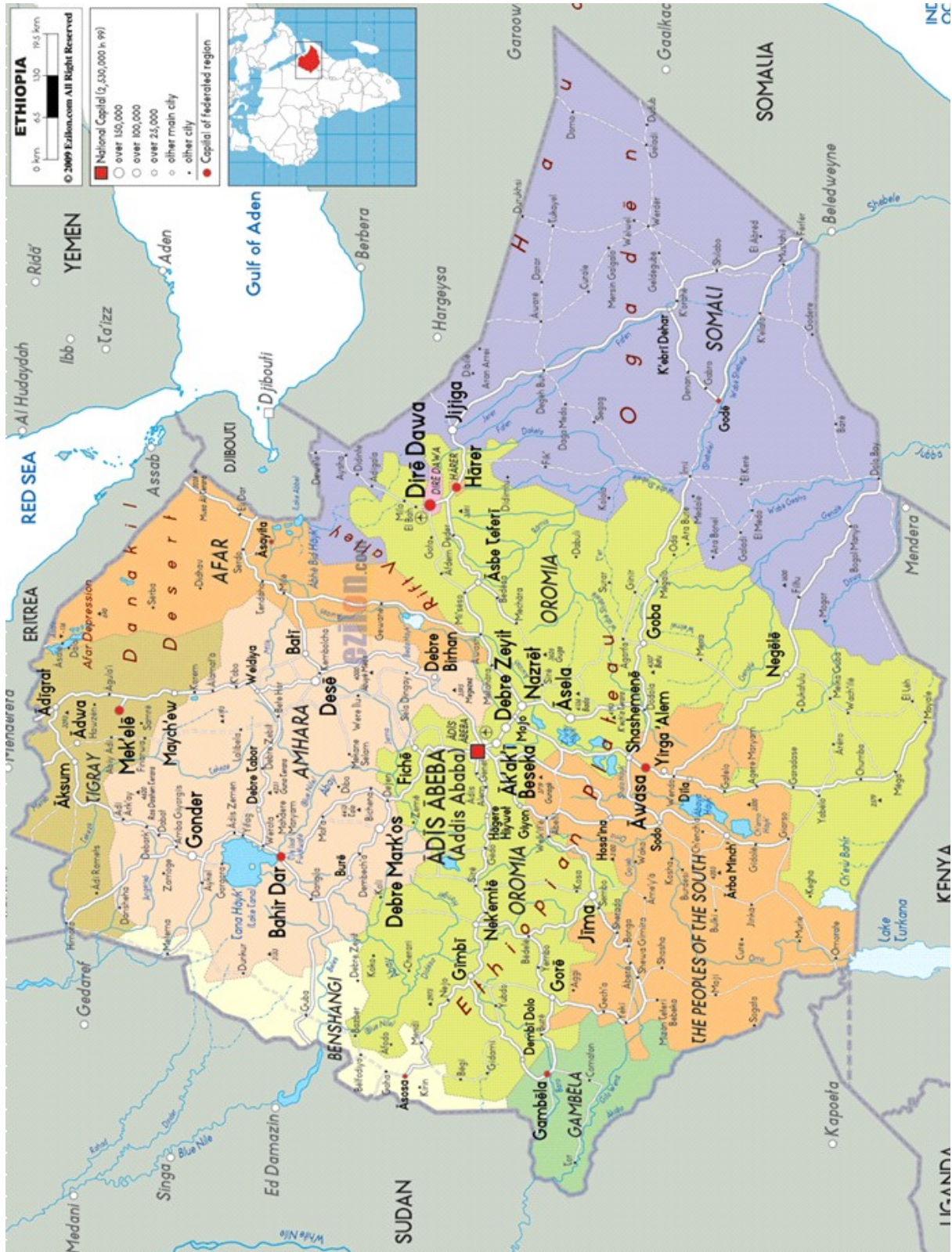
Book Shops

21. A private book shop

III. List of Abbreviations

AAU- Addis Ababa University
AEUP- All Ethiopian Unity Party
AI- Amnesty International
AU-EOT- African Union Election Observer Team
CIP- Complaint Investigation Panel
CIPEV- Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence
CRB- Complaint Review Board
CUD - Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EDP- Ethiopian Democratic Party
EHRCO- Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EISA- Electoral Institute of South Africa
ENA- Ethiopian News Agency
EPRDF- Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU-EOM- European Union Election Observation Mission
FES- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GOE- Government of Ethiopia
HRW- Human Rights Watch
IAG- Inter Africa Group
ICCPR- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDEA- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFES- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IPI- International Peace Institute
KNCHR- Kenya National Commission On Human Rights
NEBE- National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
NIC- National Intelligence Council
NORDEM- Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights
SIDA- Swedish International Development Agency
SNNPR- Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
UDJP- Unity for Democracy and Justice Party
UEDF- United Ethiopian Democratic Front
UiT- University of Tromsø
UNDP- United Nations Development Program
USAID- United States Agency for International Development
USIP- United States Institute for Peace

IV. Political Map of Ethiopia



Source: <http://www.ezilon.com/maps/africa/ethiopia-maps.html>