

**STRUCTURAL AND CONJUNCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON
THE EMERGENCE OF A CIVIL SOCIETY/DEMOCRACY IN
ETHIOPIA, 1991-2005**

by

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Part I Civil society and democracy in Ethiopia: 1991-2005

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the formation of the 'modern state' in Ethiopia

'Ethiopia' is one of the most ancient countries in the world, comprising various dynasties that have contended for supremacy for centuries. Various kingdoms and dynasties have come and gone while some prevailed over others at a given time. Ethiopia's history has been blurred for too long both by local and Western historians who rode roughshod over the myth created by successive monarchs. Attempts have been made to break from this myth for the last three decades following the deposition of the imperial government. Myths, like old habits, persist for too long. In the meantime however, they are bound to blur history and impact on political analysis. In some quarters, there seems to be a renewed campaign to reinvigorate these myths.

Although the Amhara-Tigray polity emerged dominant after the sixteenth century at the political level, following what is known as the 'religious wars' between Muslim and Christian kingdoms, the legacies of the rest of polities also persisted until today. The principal traditional polities in Ethiopia were the Abyssinian (Amhara-Tigray), Oromo, Kefitcho, Welayita, Hadiya, Kambata, Janjero, Harrar, Afar, Somali, Anuak, Konso, Guraghe, Bela Shangul and Khomosa. Despite the prevalent myth, the union of these entities has a history of not more than a century. During the same period of the Scramble for Africa by European colonial powers, Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia conquered the territories where the traditional kingdoms mentioned above had existed for centuries. Most of the military conquests were brutal and the consequences were devastating, particularly for those who put up fierce resistance such as the Kefitcho, Arssi, Wollayita and Harrar. The political and social organizations instituted following these conquests were to plant the seeds of the many forms of resistance that erupted after the end of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1941.

Politically, Menelik instituted a centralized rule, appointing his *enderasies* viceroys in the newly conquered regions. The land tenure was dramatically changed. The *gebbar* system (a form of tenancy) was introduced. It greatly favoured the new conquerors. Amhara (Abyssinian) rule brought ethnic domination in its wake. Together with the *gebbar* system, a system of ethnic domination was introduced to 'bring unity to Ethiopia', but it was an Ethiopia based on Abyssinian dominance at the cost of systematically undermining the existing communities. Most instrumental in this 'civilizing mission' was the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which was out to convert the inhabitants of the

newly-conquered territories to Christianity. Any resistance was met with the most brutal military response. Thus began what Teshale Tibebu calls 'the making of modern Ethiopia'.

The process of centralization of what went into the history books as the 'Ethiopian state' started however, with the accession to the Abyssinian throne of Emperor Tewodros in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Tewodros' attempt was marked by rivalry and betrayal of his cause by the various regional chieftains (kings) of Abyssinia. At the end of the nineteenth century when the 'Scramble for Africa' by European colonial powers began, the emperor of Abyssinia at the time, Menelik II, responded to the European aggression in a calculated manner. He ventured into developing his army's firepower through selling coffee and gold and built up an army that no longer depended on the dagger and spear. When Italy attempted to occupy Ethiopia, Menelik defeated it at the battle of Adwa in 1896. With that, Menelik further expanded and conquered new territories in the east, west and south to incorporate the various communities and kingdoms to form the Ethiopian empire.

After the death of Menelik, the Ethiopian ruling class was once locked into a power struggle despite the official accession to the throne of Menelik's daughter, Empress Zewditu. Through this power struggle emerged the young Teferi Mekonnen, who out-manoeuvred his main rival, Lij Iyasu, Menelik's grandson, and was later crowned as Emperor Haile Selassie in 1933. Haile Selassie's reign lasted until 1974 when he was overthrown by a popular revolution that broke out in February of that year. Haile Selassie established an autocracy and tried to modernize it through the establishment of what passes as a 'modern state'.

The modernization of the autocracy brought various contradictions with it (I will return to this when we discuss the under-development of the 'state'). At the political level, Emperor Haile Selassie's interventionist policy on Eritrea – which was federated with Ethiopia under a UN resolution in 1952 – led to the outright annexation of the territory in 1962. That bred resistance and armed struggle in Eritrea and had further repercussions inside Ethiopia proper. In Ethiopia itself, various civic movements such as trade unions, teachers' associations and later a formidable and militant student movement that developed into a Left-wing movement, emerged. In the countryside, various peasant uprisings with quasi-ethnic aspirations erupted in numerous places such as Bale (Oromo), Gojjam (Amhara), Woyane (Tigray), Sidama and Somali. The imperial government responded to all these discontents with force and in most cases committed massacres.

The cumulative effect of all these discontents was a mass revolt in the urban areas of Ethiopia in February 1974 that was documented in history as the February Revolution. The armed forces movement was a crucial social movement in the overthrow of the imperial government in September of that year.

A tightly-knit group of military officers called the Derg emerged in the wake of the February Revolution and seized power from Haile Selassie. The Derg systematically excluded all the movements, the main actors in the revolution, by decree and later suppressed them. This was fiercely resisted by the social movements that were hitherto co-ordinated by a Left-wing party, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP). Simultaneously, a few ethnic-based movements such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) and Afar Liberation Front (ALF) emerged. Faced with multifarious contradictions and resistance, the Derg chose to attack the multi-ethnic and revolutionary movement first. This it did through massive human rights violations, official executions of political activists and massacres. After the decimation of the Left and revolutionary movement, it turned against the ethnic-based movements in Eritrea and Tigray. By the time it turned against them, the ethnic movements had already become strong. In May 1991, the Derg was overthrown by the combined onslaught of the movements in Eritrea and Tigray that brought the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) to power in Eritrea and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of problem

In this thesis I contend that the failure of the Ethiopian 'state' and the EPRDF in particular to promote social development can be attributed to mal-governance that systematically obstructed society from participating in both development and the democratization process. By dichotomizing individual freedom and collective rights and apparently giving prominence to the latter it suppressed the former. These policies stimulated social and to some extent ethnic conflicts, which significantly exacerbated poverty. I argue that the false start that the African 'state' embarked upon from its inception was based on historically linked fallacies. The African 'state' attempted to build a 'nation-state' based on these fallacies that turned out to be a failure. Neither development nor democracy has been attained. The state that was imposed upon the African social formation created the need for a 'new state'. The form of state that corresponds with the reality of Africa in terms of culture and ethnic heterogeneity, among others, and that galvanizes development should have been explored. Africa needed a new form of state that could bring social development and transform the individual subject into a fully recognized citizen. The option shouldn't have been to step into the shoes of the colonial state, but to create a developmental state instead.

A discussion of civil society in Africa must be contextualized within the particularities of the characteristic features of the institutions of governance there, which are in the main the creations of colonization. State and nation formation in Africa, in the modern sense, are colonial projects. The African 'state' literally stepped in the shoes of the colonial state, inheriting colonial institutions in toto. However, as Archie Mafeje argues, most African 'states' are not states in the real sense of the term (Mafeje, 1999:79). And as I am going to argue, the institutions

of governance in Africa are too under-developed to meet the requirements of an institution that should address the problems of poverty, under-development and unfreedom.

In this thesis I will attempt to synergize a few theoretical constructs that have a direct bearing on the poverty/freedom nexus as background to the deconstruction of the EPRDF's notions on the roles of the state, society and the rights of the individual and its eclectic approach towards development, which attempts to combine a revolutionary approach at the political and a capitalist development approach at the economic level. The EPRDF rejects liberal democracy and opts for what it calls 'revolutionary democracy'. This has an impact on the issue of space for society and in fact explains why there is no space in the first place. Far from being a champion of liberal democracy, this thesis contends that the EPRDF's postulate on rejecting liberal democracy has neither a conceptual nor a factual basis. It analyses the consequences of dichotomizing liberal democracy and 'revolutionary democracy', particularly in stifling the emergence of a civil society.

The policy of 'revolutionary democracy' is directly related to the prevalence of poverty and under-development. 'Revolutionary democracy' governs the policies of the state, the functions of its institutions and performance of its officials. In this respect, the policy of the EPRDF on placement of government officials is one major problem that has an impact not only on the prevailing poverty and under-development but also on retarding the development of the institutions of governance. Placement of government technocrats plays a central role in the process of developing the institutions of governance particularly through decentralization. The principal criterion and rationale for placement of technocrats or political appointees in the process of decentralization must be the degree of under-development in the area/region that would be decentralized. The less the level of social development in the region is, the greater the need for placing the most capable technocrats. Some leaders assert that once the state has a stated policy of development, the quality of the government appointee or technocrat does not matter as the issue is only implementing the stated policy (Zenawi). However, the experience of under-development proves exactly the opposite. Political loyalty as a substitute for qualification for placement has proved to be a disaster as far as development is concerned. On the contrary, the less developed a region, the more the need for qualified technocrats and government appointees as fighting poverty and under-development is a tremendous task that requires being realistic, analytical and tactful. These qualities are subsumed by 'qualification'. Political loyalty as the sole criteria for professional and political appointment is a recipe for disaster as the experience of many developing nations has proved. Placement criteria are also important issue to be considered in the process of developing the institutions of governance in traditional formations.

Also, from the technical point of view, the administrative and judicial capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the 'state' need to be upgraded to meet the requirements of the processes of social development, democratization and the independent participation of society in particular. This is an essential prerequisite for a properly functioning state as the institutions of governance need to interact with society effectively in various ways and particularly in terms of service provision. The state needs to be effective in this respect; providing a free judicial service. Efficient administration enhances the state of freedom and confidence of society in the system, which is a crucial link in the state/society relationship in general and in the mutual recognition between the two in particular.

The civil society discourse is indissolubly linked with the state/society discourse both in the 'advanced' formations of the North and those of the impoverished South. In countries such as Ethiopia and in Africa as a whole, where poverty prevails and issues of poverty eradication and social development are crucial, the discussion on the role of the 'state' and society in the development process are inescapable. That would in turn require us to discuss the nature of the relationship between what passes as the state and society. Indeed, poor countries like Ethiopia need a developmental state, but what qualifies a given institution of governance need to pass as a developmental state? What makes a given institution a developmental state is above all its attitude towards society, whether or not it recognizes the sovereignty of society and therefore whether or not it takes society as its partner in development, not in a political rhetoric involuntarily enforced by donors, but out of full conviction. It is within this discourse that the idea of civil society and the discourse on it is crucial.

The nature of the evolution of the 'state', compared to those of other African 'states', is also important. Because Ethiopia managed to maintain its independence and defeated attempts to colonize it and the fact that there was no colonial state there, the evolution of the modern 'state' there and its functions might seem to be different from those of the rest of Africa. Nevertheless, it exhibits a similar pattern regarding formations of the modern 'state'. It attempted to introduce the institutions of a modern state – without taking heed of the emergence of a civil society – in a manner more or less similar to that in Kenya and Uganda. However, it faced similar problems at the level of the political culture that became instrumental in institutionalizing corruption, denying society the sovereignty and space that it needed for its own development, rendered it unable to produce its own bourgeoisie and unable to produce a civil society, rather many civil wars. Instead, it failed to bring social development and peace or to end poverty, among other things. The Ethiopian or African 'state' cannot be explained without explaining why civil society failed to emerge or develop in the first place. That is indeed why the discourse on civil society is so relevant.

Moreover, I boldly assert in this thesis that: 'development' as described in the dominant discourse, while postulating the necessity of a developmental state, has failed in poor countries. The analysis of the dimensions of the crisis of

poverty that follows will leads us to examine the development paradigm hitherto adopted and leads to the conclusion that the problem is structural both in the political and economic senses. Within the context of the choice by many governments in traditional societies for a market economy (capitalism), the notion of a 'strategy of accumulation' as a vehicle of development will also be examined in view of the place the dominant traditional sectors occupy in the social formation of these countries as a whole and in view of the kind of social development that is needed and possible. This is analyzed against the background of the fundamental stumbling blocks to social development these countries face, namely the environment, gender, population, child rights and child rearing, democracy and governance. This in turn serves as a basis for the discussion of the necessity and analysis of a developmental state that Ethiopia needed at the time of the overthrow of the military government in 1991.

This study draws an important distinction on the principal role of the state in medieval times and that of the modern state. I am drawing my conclusion from the changing role of the state in the aftermath of the industrial revolution. The role of the state drastically changed when the medieval state gave way to the modern state. The principal role of the medieval state was *ruling through exacting and collecting tributes* while the principal role that the modern state assumed was that of *regulating*. The medieval state ruled society by sheer force and exacted tributes and taxes without rendering any service to society. As we have seen, the development of capital brought about radical changes at the economic as well as the social level. The political role of the dominant institution of governance, the state, has to adapt to this. The state needed to withdraw from outright control of resources and let the bourgeoisie flourish in that domain and instead restricted itself to providing legal codes that aimed to regulate competition among the bourgeoisie, ensure the prevalence of the rule of law and regulate disputes such as the one between the bourgeoisie and labour. This distinction adds to the understanding of the constraints on the emergence of civil society and ending poverty as this study asserts that the 'state' in Ethiopia is still at the level of a medieval state regarding the distinction that I mentioned above. One of the most significant failures of the post-1991 'state' in Ethiopia is that it has not yet crossed the Rubicon and assumed the role of *regulating*.

A closer look at the relationship between 'state' and society in an African setting unravels the secrets of the under-development of the continent that have now become perpetual. Africa has been beset by numerous problems of development since independence in the 60s. This under-development is a function of two structural problems: the nature of the political that passes as the 'state' on the one hand and the neglect of the particular characteristic features of African traditional livelihood systems that could serve as a base for generating and facilitating the transformation towards modernity and a commodity economy on the other. These traditional systems are, however, different from the pre-capitalist societies of medieval Europe which were the forerunners of the industrial society. Pastoralism as a way of life and livelihood system; and the pastoral mode of

production that has livestock production as its base is a case in point. From the Sahel belt to the lowlands of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, the entire Sudan, the area of the San people of Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa and many other places in the continent are all inhabited by pastoral communities. This is a huge section of the continent both in terms of area and population size to be reckoned with. The pastoral mode of production should have been considered positively as a mode of production suitable to galvanize foreign exchange and the national economies of many countries. Because pastoralism is seen as defunct, its mode of production was not considered as a viable economic activity to generate accumulation.

For a civil society to exist, an organic expression of it is also necessary. This can be in a form of associations, clubs, societies, NGOs and others. Associational life is the indispensable condition for the existence of civil society. Yet, associational life needs qualification as human societies invariably have associational lives. The associational life associated with civil society is that associational life that is by definition and praxis *engaging*; engaging the issues and problems that determine its existence. With the freedom and space it acquired, society starts to look at the global issues that determine its own existence and starts to engage those responsible and the powerful who decide on macro policies and laws of the land that regulate society's life and determine its existence. It is this freedom to act and the awareness acquired that qualify the associational life of civil society as *engaging*. Those involved in associational life therefore engage the institutions that make policies and laws. There are the state and policy makers at the local level. Globalization has added itself as one more factor to the list of the powerful and lawmakers. It should be clear that the associational life embedded in civil society is different from other forms of associational life of traditional societies that are *non-engaging*. In the urban areas of Ethiopia, there are traditional associations such as the *idir*, which is a funeral association and the *equb*, which is a credit association. There are also other types of associations among Coptic Orthodox Christian communities. These are mainly religious, such as the Michael, Gabriel, and Mariam associations. But, all these traditional associations have neither development nor democratic agendas. They are not engaging associations.

This distinction is extremely significant as civil society is a historical category not only in the sense of belonging to a definite epoch, freedom and democracy, but also because civil society is aware of the conditions that determine its own existence. It is this awareness that is behind the historical imperative of becoming engaging. In other words the associational life in civil society has the historical consciousness that drives it to be engaging. In the contemporary world, and as we shall see below, this historical consciousness also needs to include an awareness of the intrinsic relationship between what determines the state of affairs at home and what prevails at the global level that, in turn, directly or indirectly determine the policy making process at the local level. Both freedom and such a qualified consciousness can only be acquired under a definite

historical situation, which is post-traditional. We can see here that freedom and consciousness are interwoven to describe civil society as a historical category.

The dilemma of most governments in the traditional formations is their inability or unwillingness to change their role *from ruling*, which is a pre-democracy phenomenon, *to regulating*, which is the real function of a nation-state in the proper sense of the praxis. *Ruling* as a political phenomenon belongs to the pre-democratic category that affirms the prevalence of unfreedom as the ruling elite at the helm of political power rules arbitrarily. Ruling is dictatorial, a one-way traffic in which the ruling elite dictates its terms in a form of constitution, laws and macro-economic policies. These are considered to be final and sacred rules that society has to obey unquestioningly. In countries where the 'movement government' exists such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda, the chance for changing the rules of the game, once adopted, is almost impossible. This is because the 'movement government', unlike other *ruling elites*, considers itself omniscient, so that its decisions and policies are not subject to questioning. The disaster of the *vanguard theory* that guides such governments is the fact that it confuses the distinctions between the role of a political party and that of a national government. A political party is by definition sectoral and only advances the views of specific sectors of the populace and these views need to prevail if supported by the majority and for a specific period of time. A government on the other hand does not work to benefit a single section of the population but the populace as a whole. That is indeed why it should be accountable to the population at large. Such governments are fundamentally dictatorial and they rule by dictates. Consulting society, engaging it in a lively dialogue to improve policies and practical performance simply does not exist for it. Such governments, dominated as they are by an elite that opts for *ruling* rather than *regulating* are the foremost obstacles for the emergence of a civil society as they suffocate it at every opportunity. As we have seen, freedom and democracy are preconditions for beating poverty and galvanizing the process of social development.

A sense of interdependence is always complemented by a sense of solidarity to ascertain the existence of a civil society. In a civil society one social sector or citizen takes the interest and demand of other sectors as its own. Thinking beyond one's own interest and appraising the interest of others as intrinsically related to one's own in an interdependent society is the beginning of the notion of solidarity in a civil society. Crossing the Rubicon, so to speak, on the part of the various social sectors and developing the notion of solidarity with other sectors is a crucial component of civil society. Such an undercurrent on the part of society had just started to emerge in Ethiopia in the wake of the 1974 revolution but was quickly nipped in the bud by the military government.

1.3 Structure of the study

This study consists of three parts. Part One includes the introduction, Chapter One, which starts with the background to the formation of the 'modern state' in Ethiopia, the problems that the study deals with, aims of the study, the methodology it follows and the hypotheses it investigates. This is followed by a theoretical framework and a model of analysis pertaining to the state/society relationship with relevance to Ethiopia.

Chapter Two deals with the discourse on civil society, a review of the question of state and society in Africa and postulates an approach to a developmental state in the African context. The chapter attempts to situate the resurgence of the discourse on civil society and goes on to discuss the relevance of the discourse to social development. It attempts to situate civil society within the state/society discourse and attempts to establish the contemporaneousness of civil society and the nation-state and democracy and tries to establish what the central tenets of a modern state are.

Chapter Three deals with the poverty/unfreedom nexus, identifies gender as a crucial link in the poverty/development discourse, postulates an approach towards sustainable development and advances an approach towards civil society in traditional formations.

Three chapters constitute Part Two. In Chapter Four the nature of state and society in Ethiopia is discussed. It starts with an analysis of the relationship between state and society in the pre-EPRDF setting, attempting to establish the fact that the Ethiopian 'state' as an obstacle to development focuses on the political developments that predated the EPRDF's rule, and emphasises the political situation that the EPRDF inherited.

In Chapter Five I examine the state of 'civil society' in the EPRDF's Ethiopia and attempts to show that the EPRDF's policy on the non-state sphere is an important indicator of the unfreedom that prevailed and touches upon the nature of EPRDF's institutions of governance as an ensemble of institutions that is too undeveloped to constitute a modern state. It also deals with the antagonism that the EPRDF created with the non-state sector and assesses the state of the nascent 'civil society'.

In Chapter Six I investigate the state of ethnicization of politics as the doctrine of the EPRDF's policy on governance, examines its origins and how it was constructed and adopted as the cornerstone of the EPRDF's principle of governance. I attempt to deconstruct the doctrine behind ethnicization of politics in its theory of 'revolutionary democracy'. I also attempt to deconstruct the EPRDF's policies that are the main off-shoots of the theory of revolutionary democracy that have a direct bearing on the functions of the institutions of governance that in the final analysis inhibited its development to become a modern state in the proper sense of the word.

Part Three deals with examining the performance of the EPRDF on the country's development challenges mainly on gender, environment, population and rural development. It begins with an introduction to the state of the poverty/democracy nexus and the development challenges that Ethiopia faces. Chapter Seven relates to the issue of gender, society and poverty as pivotal to the development discourse in Ethiopia. It examines the policies of the EPRDF and the ills within society as far as gender is concerned, arguing that the vicious circle that Ethiopia finds itself in regarding poverty is located precisely in the ill-fated policies of the government and the under-development of society.

In Chapter Eight I investigate Ethiopia's other development challenges through a critique of the government's policies. I highlight three development challenges, namely environment, population and rural development, as domains of sustainable development along with gender and examines the EPRDF's policies on each domain.

In the conclusion part, I analyse the episodes of the 2005 elections and demonstrate how the EPRDF two-track policy has come to an end. I analyse the historical significance of the election and argue that the election results, as manipulated by the EPRDF, will seriously exacerbate the state of poverty and under-development in the country.

1.4 Civil society: from a society *by* itself to a society *for* itself

By definition, a civil society exists outside the state. Civil society is a historical association of people who are transformed from being subjects to citizens. The emergence of the association of *citizens* is possible only under certain historical conditions, among which the society being a *society for itself*, to use Marx's famous metaphor, is one. Exactly what does this mean? There are two components to this metaphor, namely the awareness of interdependence among citizens and voluntarism.

In the rise of capitalism and the nation-state, a commodity economy brings with it interdependence among citizens, though initially only at the production level. By contrast, in natural economies immediate producers largely depend on their own produce for their own existence, the commodity economy intensified division and specialization of labour. In this economy individual labourers work in one specific area, dividing society into a food-producing sector, and one in which something else is produced, while everybody buys his/her necessities from what the market presents. That has created a situation in which an individual worker or citizen doesn't have to produce all her/his needs as somebody else is doing it for society as a whole. What makes this notion of interdependence among the various sectors of society more profound is the civic education acquired through the mediums of communication such as media, literature and art that are free and independent or by political parties.

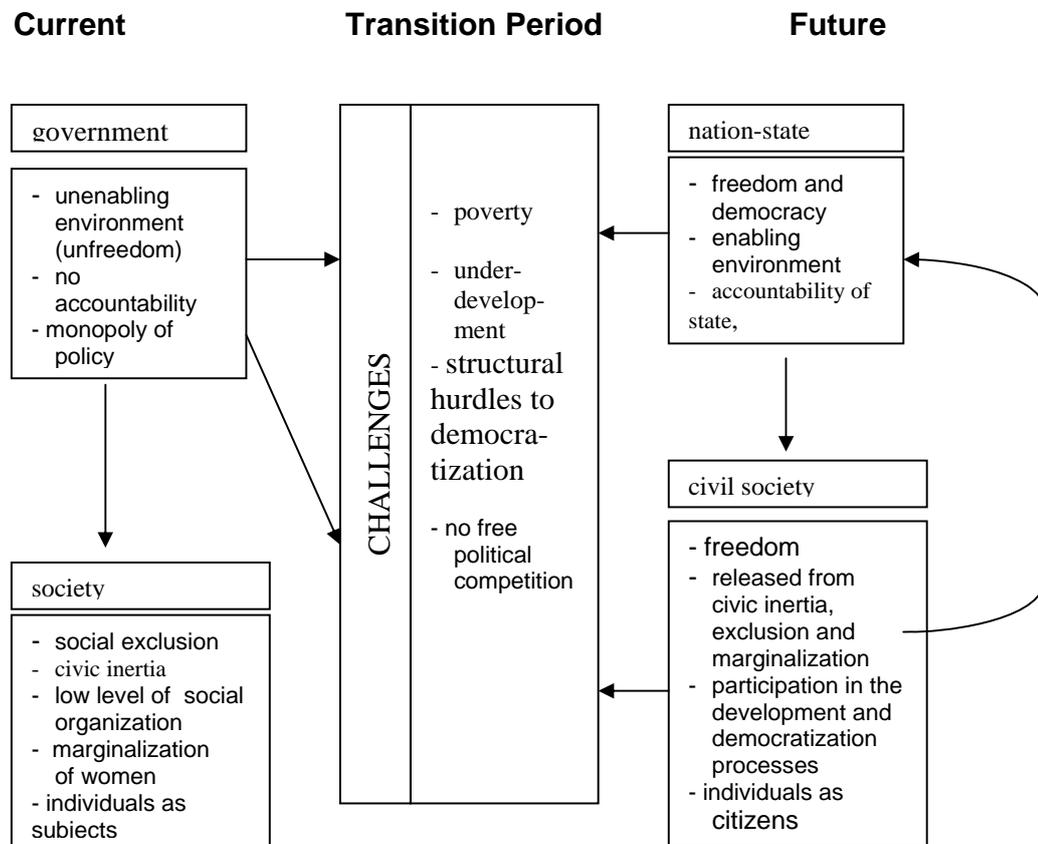
Voluntarism is needed for a civil society to exist. Voluntary intervention can be expressed in a number of ways; through activities in aid of charity, free service, sponsorship and so forth. Voluntarism is an extension of the solidarity disposition that a civil society can develop that can be expressed through patriotism and/or internationalism. In a given local situation, particularly in traditional formations where poverty and want are the norm, it is common for voluntarism to be expressed through charity. Voluntarism is primarily an action by individual citizens who take the lead in starting an undertaking or by joining an existing initiative. What is essential here is that individuals decide to devote or sacrifice their time and energy to the welfare of fellow citizens.

When the above-mentioned factors occur, we can say that civil society exists. It exists because the historical circumstances permit its existence independent of the state not just as a physical domain but also with an existence that is organically expressed in the body and soul of the associational life, transformation of subjects to citizens, interdependence, solidarity and voluntarism. This particular postulate will be developed in the next section of this chapter.

1.4.1 Civil society and nation-state as the development and democracy nexus

In this chapter I will attempt to encapsulate the various theoretical categories that we will be dealing with and try to develop a synergy between development and democracy as fused in the heart of the nation-state and civil society respectively. In order to do that a sketch is drawn below and I will analyze it.

Figure 1 State, Civil Society and Development



As indicated in the figure above, every traditional society encounters three sets of temporal settings. The left column indicates the current situation of a traditional society, the second indicates the challenges that society faces during a transition period in order to attain democracy and development, which the third column depicts.

Analysis: Column 1

As depicted in the first column, the government is the principal institution of governance in a traditional society. As I indicated earlier, the designation of the governance in Africa as the African ‘state’ is indeed a misnomer. The contention is that, with the exception of South Africa and with the potential for the emergence of a vibrant civil society in Kenya, Egypt and Tunisia, it is difficult to speak of a state in Africa. On the other hand, the existence of a government prevailing over every institution and trying to form and consolidate a centralized government is common throughout the continent. In other words, the dominant institution of governance (the government) has not yet developed its own institutions to the degree that they respond effectively to the needs of society. In

societies where poverty prevails, insufficient development of the institution of governance becomes a major handicap in the development process. In Ethiopia for instance, the presence of the government is clearly felt only in major towns where the institutions of the government are not just limited to a police post and a local governor. Until the 1970s, in some remote areas of the country, people were still unaware that Emperor Menelik had died a long time ago. Until the revolution of 1974, people from the rural areas used to flock to the capital with land disputes. This clearly indicated that the institutions of the government in their respective localities were either absent or unable to handle their cases. This changed slightly when the military government spread its tentacles to the rural areas. However, because this move to the rural areas was entirely for security purposes, the form of the government's institutional presence was strictly limited. It was not to respond to the needs of society. Hence, it set up non-developmental institutions. The EPRDF government has not done any better. In fact, because of the closure of the state farms in rural areas, the institutions that were set up adjacent to the state farms were also all closed down. Although the new government has instituted agricultural extension programmes and programmes such as social rehabilitation programmes, the institutions of governance in both urban and rural settings are extremely weak.

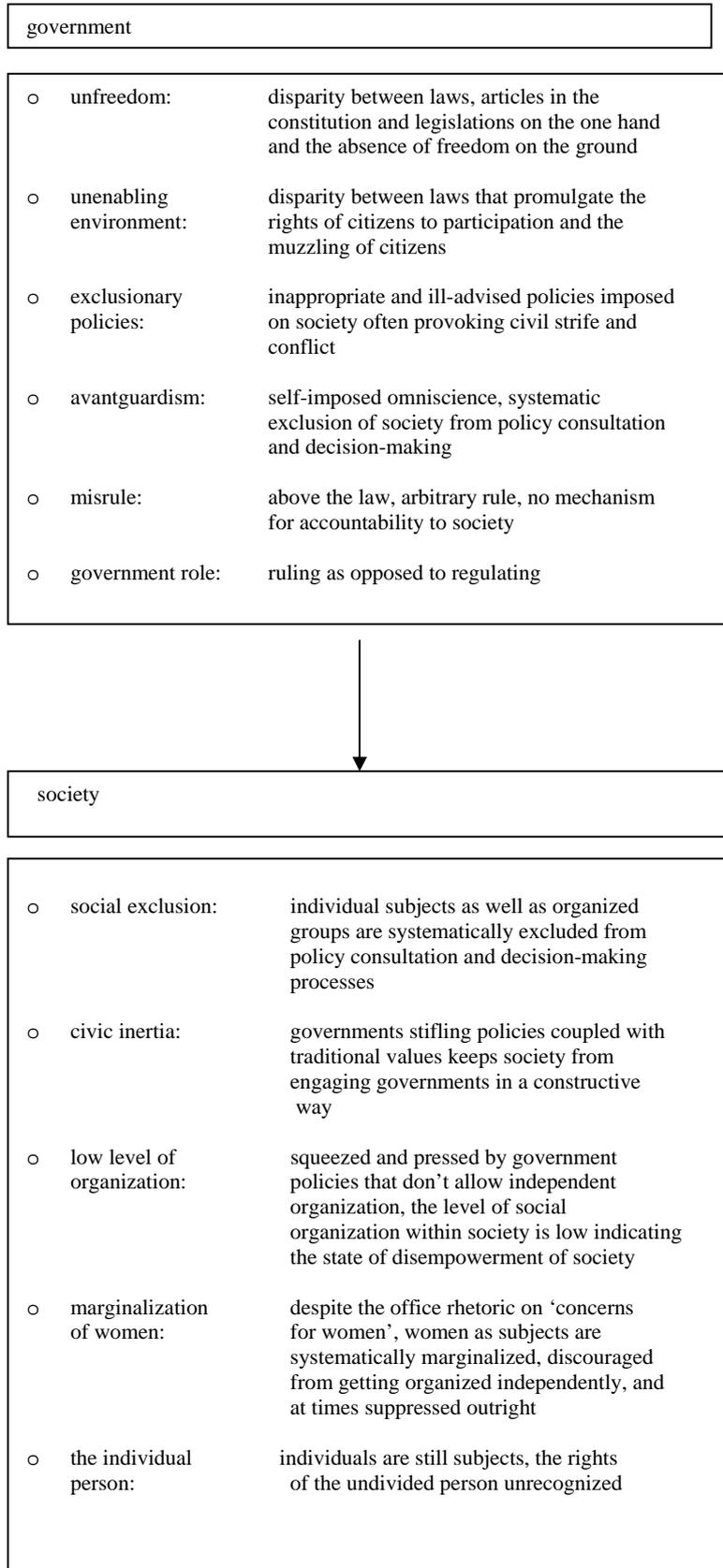
One major assumption in liberal democratic theory as well as in the practice of a supposedly democratic state is what David Held calls the symmetry and congruence between decision/policy-makers (the state) and the communities that they claim to represent (society) (Held, 1991:198). Symmetry and congruence go beyond communication and contact and assume active rapport between the political representative and the voter. This rapport is materialized through institutions that bridge the two sides. In most African countries the notion of symmetry between policy-makers and their constituents come to the surface only during parliamentary or presidential elections. The practice is completely unknown and the institutions that bridge the two sides do not even exist. What the first column in the sketch describes as the relationship between the institutions of governance and society is a one-way but top-down communication largely in the pursuit of controlling society. This constitutes a major handicap for the process of transition both for the development of the institutions of governance and the growth of level of social organization within society.

Such a state of affairs has led to the exclusion of society and a self-imposed alienation of policy-makers. With the sheer lack of space for participation in the development as well as democratization processes, society is kept at bay, socially and politically excluded as much as possible. The further and the longer society is excluded from participating in the processes that determine its own life, as we have seen, the more poverty is perpetuated because unfreedom is reinforced. In a situation where the exclusion of society is absolute and universal, symmetry and congruence between policy-makers and their subjects are absent. In the sections below I discuss the transformation of subjects to citizens. I will touch upon how globalization exacerbated the exclusion of subjects by denying

the factors that give rise to the creation of a situation in which symmetry and congruence exist.

The second major assumption in the theories and practice of liberal democracy is that of individual freedom and the human security of the person. We encounter a similar problem in African countries, where there is a lack of political will to ensure that structures and institutions guarantee human security and above all a complete disregard for individual freedom. The origins of this neglect apart, the exercise of unfreedom accounts for this domain that reduced the human person to the level of a subject, an unknown quantity or a political robot condemned to a perpetual apathy. The more African policy-makers perpetuate this state of affairs the longer the subject is condemned to being a robot and the less chance there is for social development. In the case of the industrial revolution, it is established how crucial individual creativity and initiative is and how that should be encouraged by the state for the sake of development. African societies face enormous problems in this regard. The level of human security and the freedom of the individual person is at its lowest ebb. In countries such as Ethiopia where poverty is universal and periodic famines have become an unwanted companion complemented not only by the social exclusion of the individual but also by political harassment, the insecurity that the subject feels is indescribably high. The insecurity alone accounts for the prevalence of apathy, if not outright hostility, of society to the intents of the government and its policies.

Figure 2 The poverty-unfreedom nexus under current government-society relationship (elaboration of column 1)



The first column in the sketch also depicts the low level of development of the institutions of political governance in the African setting. Structurally, there is either very little physical presence or no government institutions in rural areas, not even police posts in most cases. The government is physically absent in the rural areas where the majority of Africa's population live. In countries such as Ethiopia where urbanization is the lowest and where more than 85% of the population is rural, the physical absence of the institutions of government indeed means a lot. From provision of social services to maintaining security, a whole range of issues is handled neither structurally nor on a daily routine basis by the government.

Another issue is that of coherence in policy implementation and communication by the government institutions of the EPRDF government in urban areas. The failure in this regard indicates that ultimately it is not only the physical presence of government institutions that is decisive, but the capacity to generate social services to the community as well as the capacity to play a regulating role. This by itself requires a huge institutional and human-power development. The issue of capacity is central even if we have the required institutions physically. From that perspective, social services rendered by the government in the capital, where government institutions are expected to be commensurate with the needs of the community, is indeed extremely poor. The government's recent drive to enhance its own capacity reveals this fundamental weakness. The prime minister has since 2001 been referring to this problem (Meles' address to parliament, Addis Zemen, *Tikimt 1*, 1993, Addis Ababa). This has partly prevented the government from responding to the community.

Second, the EPRDF's perception of its own role as well as that of society is central, whether government institutions have the required capacity or not. The EPRDF assumes that it is the vanguard of society as a whole and that of the peasantry in particular. From this standpoint, it thinks that it is not only omniscient but should also be omnipotent and omnipresent. It derives from this the notion that society should be led by the vanguard (the government in this case) in both development and democratization. Because of this, the relationship between government and society is not based on equality, mutual recognition of sovereignty and freedom. The independence of society is not recognized though civic organizations strive for recognition.

As is depicted in the sketch, the government strives to address the challenges of poverty, under-development and mal-governance solely by itself on the one hand and, on the other hand, its relationship with society is one of top-down. In this top-down relationship society's sovereignty is not recognized and it is expected to follow the dictates of the government. Regulatory frameworks that enable society's participation are either lacking or inhibiting. The country does not yet have a regulatory framework for NGOs and associational life as a whole, the

legal framework for the business community is stifling, the press law in general and that of broadcasting in particular is still in draft form.

The eventual accountability of the state depends on the development of the delineation of the roles of the various components of organs of the 'state' as that would have a great impact on, among other things, the prevalence of the rule of law and ensuring individual freedom and the security of the person. Contrary to what was enacted in the 1995 constitution, the roles of the various organs of 'state' are not clearly delineated. After thirteen years in power, the delineation of these roles should by now have resulted in the central role of the ruling party being clearly differentiated from the rest of government organs.

Also, the role of the executive (government) should by now have been demarcated from the legislature, judiciary and army within the presumed 'state' structure. On the contrary, what prevails now is the ever-increasing power of the executive over the rest of the 'state' organs, which makes the evolution of the accountability of state to society unlikely in the near future. In fact, the power invested in the person of the prime minister has prevailed over the organs of the state. Such developments clearly indicate that the democratic process is moving away from what was envisaged when the constitution was drawn up.

The role of individuals is likewise undermined by the structures of governance and their relationship with society. In a situation where unfreedom prevails because of the dictating role of the government, individuals lack freedom to participate. Even though civil liberties and other forms of rights are recognized in the Constitution as well as in legislation, these laws have not yet been applied. Cruel violations of the rights of large sections of society such as women, still prevail due to the lack of strict enforcement of the law and the penal code in particular. Despite such enormous obstacles, the civic sector still strives to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and under-development and still struggles for democracy. It is important to recognise this unhealthy relationship between government and society that exploded in the wake of the 2005 elections in discussing the challenges of development and democratization.

Analysis: Column 2

The second column depicts the challenges encountered by societies in transition. A traditional formation such as that of Ethiopia encounters serious structural problems of transition in both the economic and political senses. Economically, poverty and under-development constitute formidable obstacles to development. At the political level, unfreedom in general and lack of space for various social actors, mal-governance, conflicts, lack of rule of law and institutional infancy on the part of government and society are serious structural problems. Socially, the predominance of traditional values and customs made life miserable, particularly to the marginalized and more specifically women and girl children which in turn

have a huge impact on perpetuating poverty. Like in many other formations that have successfully emerged out of such structural poverty, the under-development and poverty of transitional societies can also be surmounted. However, this can only be attained through a proper development strategy that synergizes the economic, social and political variables that are inseparable in the development process and that are spelt out in a clear development policy.

Figure 3 Democracy/development challenges during the transition period (elaboration of column 2)

Transition period	
Fundamental challenges to development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. poverty: [structural problems that need to be solved] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme level of poverty, low income per capita, famine, food insecurity • Negative balance of payments, low level export earnings • Powerless to compete in the global market • Low level of actual and potential capacity for accumulation • Low level of co-operation between government and society 2. under-development: [structural obstacles that need to be changed] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of education • Traditional and religious values inform individual and society's behaviour • Marginalization of women and prevalence of violence against women • No social contact between government and society 3. unfreedom: [problems needed to be addressed through policy changes] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted or non-existence of space for participation by civic groups/society • Enforcing/introducing laws to protect women's rights, basic human rights, rights of expression • Building the institutions of governance towards the introduction of accountability of state

As we have seen, freedom plays a pivotal role in social development. Without freedom and *independent* participation by society, neither social development nor democracy can be attained. As the gate-keeper of social development, freedom enables both society and government to tackle poverty and under-development side by side. Mutual recognition by both is the key in this sense: government recognizing the *rightful* role of society in the processes of development and democratization; and society recognizing the *necessary* role of government in regulating society. Without such recognition freedom cannot prevail and the national spirit of renaissance cannot be attained. These are indeed the challenges that both governments and societies face in transitional societies and in Ethiopia in particular.

A high level of illiteracy and low level of modern education constitutes a major impediment in the process of social development. In traditional societies, what informs the behaviour of individuals is the custom and tradition transmitted from the past for centuries. In a process of social change, knowledge of basic and fundamental components that constitute development and democratization is the key. Knowledge is empowerment and whoever acquires it has the tools for empowerment. As in the case of Kerala, the empowerment of Kerala women was in the main attained due to their access to modern education and literacy despite the latter-day reversals of Kerala's development in general.

Analysis: Column 3

The third column depicts the most possible scenario, in which a society in transition has successfully surmounted the structural challenges that stood in the way of social development and democracy. In terms of the institutions of governance, the government that has surmounted the challenges working as a virtual developmental state will establish a nation-state in the proper sense of the word. This nation-state will be sufficiently developed to become actively responsive to the needs of society. In terms of role, the virtual developmental state has successfully transformed itself from *ruling* to *regulating*, from *vanguard* to acting *side-by-side* with civil society and will become accountable to the latter. The developmental state will be in a position to ensure that there will be no return to poverty, under-development and unfreedom and will work with civil society to make the return impossible.

By the same token, from below, society that has successfully surmounted the challenges of development with the concomitant development and growth in terms of level of social organization now becomes a virtual civil society in the proper sense of the term. It will check the state that has now become accountable to it and will also ensure respect for the rule of law. In this situation, it continues to work on social development and democratization to make sure that the days of poverty, under-development and unfreedom are gone for good. We can also see that the relationship between state and civil society will be a

two-way relationship based on mutual respect and recognition both co-operating and working for the furtherance of social development and democracy. These are the minimum requirements for both a government and society in transition to become a *virtual state* and *virtual civil society* respectively. With the emergence of a civil society individuals also undergo a radical transmission with the acquisition of freedom and democracy. They now become citizens. In the era of globalization however, the transformation of subjects to citizens holds the key to the complete transformation of both a government and society to a nation-state and civil society respectively.

From the sketch above, we can notice that there are three forms of transformation from the present to the future scenarios. The first is the transformation of the institution of governance from a mere government to a nation-state. The second involves the transformation of society to a civil society and the third is that of individuals from subjects to citizens.

1.5 Aim of the study

Despite the good intentions of EPRDF's 1995 Constitution, the accountability of 'state' to society has not been realised. Indeed, the accountability of the state is a phenomenon made possible with the institutional development of political governance and the development of the level of social organization within society. By definition, this constitutes a symbiotic relationship and process. However, in the case of Ethiopia, the level of institutional development of government is deteriorating with a concomitant negative impact on the development of social organization from below, that is, society. These retrogressive processes have in turn retarded the process of the future of the accountability of the state.

In the preceding section, I dealt with the issue of civil society and with the state of state and society respectively in traditional formations. These are important conceptual categories with relevance to examining why poverty and unfreedom reinforce each other in Ethiopia. It is on the basis of this theoretical formulation that I am going to examine the first ten years of the EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) rule in Ethiopia.

1.6 Methodology

This study entails mainly an analysis of a failure in development policy in the first decade of the EPRDF rule, that is, 1991-2001. Against the background of the hypothesis that I formulated, I will examine extensively the policies of the EPRDF on development in this study. The first component constitutes theoretical assumptions regarding the relations between freedom and poverty/under-

development. I base my analysis largely on Amartya Sen's theory of the relations between poverty and under-development. I have also designed my own theoretical constructions and hypothesis. To test my hypothesis and substantiate my arguments, I have synergized a few theoretical constructs, which required extensive reference to writings by both development practitioners and the school that criticizes the dominant discourse on development.

The second component constitutes archival research both on the theoretical assumptions of the EPRDF on 'democracy' and governance and its policies on major issues of development. Literature on this is abundant both from government and non-government sources.

The third component of the methodology involves interviews with a few politicians who were at one time key policy makers. I am well placed to have access to these personalities, who lost power in the purges of 2001. The interviews also include leaders of civic organizations such as NGOs and others. The data collected through these interviews constitute primary data and will be analyzed in the various chapters of the thesis. The fourth component includes a field trip to two rural regions of Ethiopia.

1.7 Hypotheses

1.7.1 Freedom as a precondition for poverty eradication and social development and democracy for the transformation of subjects to citizens

The African 'state' failed to bring in social development and democratization mainly due to the prevalence of mal-governance. Ethiopia, despite its written history, remaining uncolonised, unlike the rest of Africa and maintaining its traditional forms of governance under the various ethnic groups, still lags behind almost every country on the globe in terms of social development. Mal-governance accounts principally for Ethiopia's under-development and trailing behind in the democratization process. Mal-governance in the main has become a function of the failure of the Ethiopian 'state' to become a nation-state. The three successive post-war regimes in Ethiopia have failed to build a nation-state as a modern state concomitant to the emergence of a civil society and democracy. Mal-governance is the principal 'culprit' in this respect. Secondly, the contradiction in the minds of the leaders of these successive regimes between wanting development on the one hand and, on the other, still being tied to the traditional psyche of ruling by dictatorial means also plays an important role in its failure. Thirdly, and this is a consequence of the contradiction I just mentioned, the structural particularities of the Ethiopian 'state' as distinct from what those of a nation-state were supposed to be, has also played a role in the failure.

What is crucial in all this is the perception of the 'state' towards the role of the individual in the processes of social development and democratization. It is the

contention of this study that the Ethiopian 'state' has not yet elevated the social status of the individual from that of subject to that of citizen. It follows from here that it has not even considered the individual as a citizen, which has a serious impact on the failure to form a nation-state, bring democracy and facilitate the emergence of a civil society. The impact of the globalization process further complicated the failure as it exacerbated the poverty. I have mentioned here a number of overlapping concepts that need to be elaborated. But, let's first deal with the temporal context of the nation-state and what its fundamental perspectives were.

The basis for both solidarity and voluntarism is faith in and sanguine expectation from a prevailing national policy that has raised the hope of the nation and that society has built up some form of optimism that the country is finally heading in the right direction towards ending poverty and bringing development. That kind of national optimism and faith can only be generated by a developmental state that advances the interests of society and encourages its free and independent participation in development as well as in democratic processes. Such opportune moments come when some discontinuities occur that bring about a change at a macro level or cause the emergence of a developmental state altogether. As we will see in the chapters to come, Ethiopia missed that chance, once by the military government when the imperial regime was overthrown; and three times by the EPRDF government – when the military government was overthrown in 1991, during the war with Eritrea in 1998 and when the split occurred within the ruling party in 2001.

1.7.2 State and civil society are symbiotic (and/or in binary opposition): for the state to exist as the public sphere and civil society as the private, the development and transformations of the institutions of governance and political freedom are the preconditions

On the other hand and as I discussed earlier, in a situation like that of Ethiopia where poverty is overwhelming in face of an extremely low level of institutions of governance and society, the scope of the environment for society's participation need be wide enough to galvanize popular enthusiasm that needs to be at the base of associational life. The sheer lack of such an enabling environment constitutes an enormous hurdle in the way of the emergence and development of civil society. The weak state of associational life and the civic sector in turn has greatly affected the institutional growth of the institutions of governance.

1.7.3 Women and the gender perspective are the principal agency for the social change

In the concrete conditions of Ethiopia and the particularity of the nature and causes of the poverty there, the prevailing attitude towards women, female sexuality, the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men in

general has a significant role to play in exacerbating poverty. A change in this regard that fundamentally requires a cultural revolution, will have a radical impact on the mentality of policy-makers, which in turn can have an impact on respecting women's rights and law enforcement as well as on policy implementation. It will also have a vast impact on changing the prevailing perceptions within society, which in turn can have an impact on child-rearing and the girl child, enhancing the roles and responsibilities of women both in the household and in society at large.

Chapter 2 The discourse on civil society

2.1 Resurgence of the discourse

Since the mid-80s, the term civil society has literally become the *lingua franca* of almost everyone involved either in politics or development, or in a combination of both. Institutions claiming to be concerned with social development and democratization such as the United Nations and its agencies, other multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank and IMF as well as bilateral agencies, regional organizations such as the African Union and practically all development agencies, both local and international, all claim to be upholders of the interests of civil society. Governments that do not even have a good human rights record use the term 'civil society' in their official pronouncements. On the other hand, a great deal of academic literature has been produced and deals with the issues of civil society both at the conceptual and descriptive levels. The term civil society has, since the mid-eighties, become perhaps the most universally used political term, except in existing state socialist systems such as China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba as well as in countries whose governments are openly hostile to the independent participation of society in the political process.

Civil society was a term often used by thinkers of modern political science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the ups and downs of European revolutions, the prevalence of ideologies postulating various forms of social system as alternatives to the capitalist one identifying definite social classes as historical agents largely overshadowed the use of the term and in fact the use of it waned over time. It only re-entered the political discourse mainly through the Italian Marxist philosopher and founder of the Communist Party of Italy, Antonio Gramsci. Even then, the term did not become popular, due to two main historical reasons. First, the fact that Gramsci wrote about civil society in Mussolini's prison and his *Prison Notebooks* only managed to see the light of day decades later. The second reason is that the term civil society did not exist in the Leninist discourse, which largely dominated the 'socialist' movement and did not impress the Stalinist monolith. The prevalence of the Cold War, division of the world between East and West, and into the capitalist and socialist camps, the victory of several national liberation movements in the colonies with the help of the 'socialist camp' and the exacerbation of the rivalry between the super-powers all further ossified the ideological positions on either side of the ideological divide, ideologies that had all along refrained from using the term civil society.

2.1.1 A crisis of paradigm

Indeed the contemporary use of the term corresponded with the prevalence of a crisis of paradigm. By the beginning of the 1980s, the greater part of the world had lost its faith in the capitalist system that had already failed to solve problems

emanating from poverty including in the advanced capitalist societies. By the same token, the progressive forces that had long condemned capitalism and banked on the socialist alternative also lost its faith in the ostensibly 'socialist' paradigm, the culmination of which was the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet troops in 1978.

Although the frustration of those who hoped that capitalism would work had long started, the prestige of the global capitalist order was already in crisis as the foreign policies of Western powers, the United States in the main, consistently stood either with the forces that inhibited social development in the developing world or with right-wing military dictators and even racist regimes such as the apartheid regime in South Africa. The culmination came with the universal solidarity movement with the people of South Africa against apartheid, and the fact that Western powers had stood on the side of apartheid became embarrassment to Western governments.

The political frustration at the global level led to a crisis of paradigm and indeed, the progressive world was at a loss as far as a workable paradigm goes. This was much felt among development practitioners who were bogged down on issues of development. The disgruntled distanced themselves from the dominant development paradigms. It was at this point that the use of the term civil society as coterminous with democracy and empowerment of society entered the political discourse. The re-entry of the term civil society as it was initially used by Gramsci in the normative sense, rapidly gained popularity.

2.1.2 Globalization of the market

If the mid-eighties marked the beginning of the decline of the Soviet Union with the accession to the Kremlin of Mikael Gorbachev and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the nineties clearly marked not only its dissolution but also the end of the Cold War altogether with the concomitant prevalence of the globalization of the market. The prevalence of globalization was seen as a threat to social security in the affluent societies of the North through the declaration of war on the welfare state/system. The destruction of the environment in the South indicated the beginning of a global process that Michel Chossudovsky called the globalization of poverty. The celebration in the Western world of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the state socialist camp in Eastern Europe as a whole had not even been over when such threats were posed by the forces of the corporate.

The reality of globalization and the threats it posed to the world's poor and marginalized, coupled with the crisis of paradigm that I mentioned in the previous section, made imperative the quest for an alternative paradigm, a paradigm whose vision must be global and international. This paradigm became the imperative as the consequences and threats posed by market globalization are

by nature global, which in turn made development intervention global by nature. This emanated from the prevailing perception that interdependence among the nations of the world and of the poor in particular has become the reality of the day. Interdependence as a reality more than solidarity, which is an idealistic category, characterized the perceptions of those involved in development work. It is in this context that the discourse on civil society, perceived as fundamentally democratic and emancipatory, became popular.

2.1.3 Relevance of the discourse to social development and democratization

The normative use of the civil society discourse for social development is enormous. The civil society discourse is largely used as the alternative to the dominant paradigm of the market and corporate despite its limitations to have developed a full-blown and articulate vision. Social conflict and crisis have become the dominant features of this world. The end of the Cold War that was greeted enthusiastically was replaced by a uni-polar world and dominated by another monolith, namely the monolith of the corporate. The world has never been as insecure as it is now, poverty has been globalized more than ever and conflicts have also spread world wide. The interaction between the civic sectors at the level of discourse gave rise to new forms of development discourse in which the dominant paradigm and the dominant discourse on development are being discarded. Social development cannot be conceived of outside the realm of power relations both within a given society and at the global level.

The tragedy in the contemporary world is not only the prevalence and exacerbation of social conflicts, but also the continued dominance of the state and corporate (business) that failed to address these social conflicts and solve them. In view of this crisis, the empowerment of the gigantic social sector located between the state and business sector categorized as civil society is crucial. Both the experience of the industrial revolution and the contemporary global situation have proven that without the active participation of this sector, social development has been impossible. At the heart of this participation are the independence of civil society from the state and the space it requires for participation. Space is a crucial category for the participation of civil society. Second, such a space will be meaningless if it is not accompanied by the independence of civil society from the state and corporate business. The civil society discourse is indeed relevant to democratization and social development.

2.1.4 Indissolubility with state/society discourse

As I have said earlier, the discourse on civil society in Africa must be contextualized within the particularities of the characteristic features of the institutions of governance there. In running the state, African politicians did not really break from the ideologies of the ex-colonial powers. On the contrary,

colonial interests intertwined with those of the new African ruling classes which resulted in a new form of colonization, neo-colonialism. In the neo-colonial project, it was not only the ex-colonial powers that were involved but also the United States and Soviet Union who were in a fierce conflict for spheres of influence. It was, and still is, in this neo-colonial project to safeguard the intertwined interests of the dominant classes in Africa and neo-colonialism that the performance of the African 'state' went awry politically, economically and socially. When after forty years of 'independence' the African 'state' is dubbed as a failed state, it is crucial to look into the particularities of the modalities of governance it adopted and the 'principles' it followed.

The forty years of experience of the African 'state' starkly proves that it has failed to generate social development, peace and democracy. The under-development of African civil society should be explained within this context. That indeed discounts the notion of defining civil society as an arena, a physical 'location', so to speak, of the broad sector outside the state sphere. The emergence of civil society in Africa could not follow the same pattern of organic development as that of Europe that emerged in the wake of the industrial revolution. The notion and practice of a 'modern state' in Africa is imported and imposed on a predominantly traditional social formation, a social formation that in turn is alien to the theorists of modern political, economic and sociological thoughts. The particular features of political culture that such a rule by the new African ruling class and its system of governance brought about in Africa needs to be identified and analyzed in order to explain the under-development or lack of civil society in Africa.

The consequences of colonization and neo-colonialism on the process of the evolution of the African civil society are serious: the two projects in fact created factors which stifled the emergence of civil societies. Unlike the process of social change attributed to the Enlightenment in Europe, Africa could not produce its own bourgeoisie. The freedom that galvanized the social process in the post-industrial revolution European setting is something that has yet to be attained in Africa in the second millennium. As the Comaroffs attest, 'Nowhere, wrote Adam Ferguson in 1767, had the torrid zones "matured the more important projects of political wisdom, [or] inspired the virtues which are connected with freedom, and required in the conduct of civil affairs". Two hundred and thirty years later... Africa is home to diverse, determined struggles for popular democracy and moral community' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999:ix). And precisely because of this tragedy, 'Yet, in the eyes of a watching world, it [Africa] remains more likely to produce civil wars than civil society' (Ibid, ix).

2.2 Contemporaneity of civil society with the nation-state

In the West European experience, civil society arose with the rise of the nation-state in the wake of the industrial revolution. As John Keane noted '... civil society was coterminous with the state' (Keane, 1988:73) that arose '... from the

destruction of medieval society' (Bottomore, 1985:73). With the demise of the medieval state, which disintegrated at its core due to social, political and economic processes that were developing over centuries, the bourgeoisie captured the mantle of political power after accumulating economic and social power respectively. For the power of the bourgeoisie and the formation of the nation-state to prevail, it took a multitude of processes – economic, social and political – to develop through the centuries, starting from the period of the Renaissance (Mandel, 1977:118). However, the evolution of the economic, social and political changes that brought about the nation-state at the end followed a basically organic pattern of social change that is, the new system emerged out of a disintegrating system. My focus is on the pattern of the evolution of the modern nation-state. However, the evolution of the change at the economic level that served as the material foundation of the new society, which in turn, necessitated the modalities and institutions of governance, is also noteworthy. Let us briefly investigate the evolution that the capitalist system, as an organic process of change, went through.

The development of capitalism that brought about the modern state concomitantly brought about civil society. The modern state that brought about the representative system also proclaimed political freedom for society, individual freedom and freedom of the press and so on. The proclaimed freedom enabled individuals and society at large to exercise their rights in defending their interests and demanding social and economic reforms to be able to cope with the new way of life that capitalism brought about. The poverty that was created by the new system made the lives of labourers more precarious while it increased the capital of the bourgeoisie. That crisis gave rise to social movements, trade/labour unions and other forms of civic and political association. The enlightenment that gave rise to several schools of thought also brought about a school critical of capital. It was the movement generated by the critical school that enabled society to realize the conditions that govern its social existence. If the triumph of capitalism was ensured by the creation of the modern state, this triumph was at the same time marred by the revolt of the labourers who have now understood the conditions that govern their existence. In as much as capitalism created the modern state, it has also brought civil society with it. Civil society is therefore contemporaneous to the nation-state and political freedom.

In as much as the evolution of the modern state is organic, the evolution and emergence of civil society is also organic. The development of social stratifications that began roughly with the period of the Renaissance gave rise to the emergence of various social classes. Some emerged along the road but pushed down to extinction when, in the final analysis, the bourgeoisies and workers emerged as the two major contending social classes of the time with a large section of the middle class between them. The emergence of the bourgeoisies is as we have seen evolutionary, so is that of the working and the middle classes. The evolutionary progression of the bourgeoisie indicates that the

'chartered burghers of the earliest towns, the forerunners of the modern bourgeoisie' emerged out of the serfs of the middle ages. By the same token, the modern working class also emerged out of the peasants and craftsmen of the middle ages pushed to the background by the development of the bourgeoisie over the years and centuries.

The evolution of the modern state as an *idea* perceived by the individual in society is also a crucial component of the social transition from medievalism to modernity. Now, what is the picture in Ethiopia as far as the 'nation-state' and 'civil society' goes? The evolution or social change towards modernization in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon whose process in the proper sense of the word began with the period of Italian occupation. Unlike the experience of the colonial state in other African countries, whatever modern Italians introduced first and foremost was aimed at galvanizing their war efforts to defeat the resistance. The brief five years of occupation did not give them enough time to introduce and develop other elements of modernization, particularly in the manufacturing sector. They constructed roads and bridges for communication, expanded the telephone system introduced earlier, and other forms of communication as well as commerce. They expanded towns wherever they set up their garrisons. Time did not permit them to do more. In a nutshell, modernization did not really evolve out of a disintegrating medieval system that was outlived by history in Ethiopia but imposed on a country that was not prepared for it in every sense.

'Capitalism' [that is, modernization] in Ethiopia did not evolve organically out of a decaying and/or disintegrating medieval system in the systems of production or social systems. This is a crucial difference between the classical case of Western Europe and that of Ethiopia/Africa. Consequently, instead of a rising bourgeoisie galvanizing the process of social change both at the political/social and economic levels, an aristocracy is trying to introduce a modicum of modernity primarily for the necessity of a better organized bureaucracy and military as a result of the lessons drawn from Italian occupation. To that extent the medieval 'state' acted as an enlightened aristocracy. Therefore, by definition, the role of the 'state' was indeed limited as its interests were also limited. Therefore, Ethiopia has never managed to develop a nation-state similar to that in Western Europe. It goes without saying that civil society could not arise out of a system that has not yet produced a nation-state and its own bourgeoisie. Instead, what Ethiopia managed to produce is a lumpen-state that is neither modern nor fully traditional, an incipient and dependent bourgeoisie, and a society that is struggling to transform itself into a civil society but is strangled by the institutions of governance.

The three post-war governments of Ethiopia have not been conducive to the emergence and development of a national bourgeoisie for various reasons. The imperial government was too traditional and reactionary even to capture the crucial role that a national bourgeoisie could play in both the socio-political and economic processes. The imperial government therefore never instituted

encouraging and protectionist policies. It never managed to transcend being a tributary and tax collector. The Derg on the other hand was completely the opposite as it espoused a state 'socialist' perspective and opposed a bourgeoisie in principle. Instead, the state itself posed as the 'modernizer' and agent of development. The thought of capitalism and capital accumulation was condemned by a sycophant regime that denied the importance of developing the market for the purpose of social development.

The post-1991 situation presents a different picture. The EPRDF government officially endorsed the market system, openly proclaiming, among other things, that it is for a market economy. It also proclaimed that its principles were democratic and incorporated quite a number of important articles of freedom into its constitution. However, the market is still in its infancy mainly because the social vector of the market and the future national bourgeoisie, namely the business sector, faces serious problems as it did at the time of the Derg. As we will see, the business sector has become a victim of highhandedness and harassment, rather than being protected and encouraged as was its West European counterpart during the industrial revolution. Therefore, it could not evolve into a national bourgeoisie. Because it is feeble economically, the business community cannot become socially powerful, therefore could not develop the basis for political power.

Society at large also faces similar problems of strangulation. Freedom of organization/association and of expression are all still on paper. After more than a decade of EPRDF rule and as we will see, NGOs, professional associations and private media are still muzzled and not allowed to operate freely. Unlike what happened in Western Europe during the industrial revolution, a free press and freedom of association have not yet been attained in Ethiopia..

In a nutshell, capitalism did not emerge out of a disintegrating medieval system in Ethiopia but was introduced [imposed?] mainly during the Italian occupation. Ethiopia has so far not managed to form its own nation-state, democracy or national bourgeoisie. This structural problem persisted over the years despite the changes in the political system.

2.2.1 The central tenets of a modern nation-state

a. Development of the institutions of governance

The state had to be pervasive in terms of the structure and institutions of governance and suggest regulatory frameworks and laws to regulate life under the capitalist system, whose motto is profit through competition. That necessitated laying down the administrative structure of the state from top to bottom in as efficient a manner as possible in terms of communication among its units, responsiveness to society's demands, actions and reactions as well as in

applying its policies and safeguarding its laws. The new way of life made fait accompli by the industrial revolution required a much more elaborate and efficient system of governance. As the discovery of modern science increasingly served the development of the capitalist system of production and exchange, which required an elaborated and efficient state concomitant to this development, the presence and efficient function of the institutions/units of governance became the order of the day. Marx put it succinctly: 'In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness' (Marx and Engels, 1975:181)

b. Legitimacy

The state cultivates its legitimacy by committing itself to respecting the rule of law and by subscribing to a political constitution as the ultimate document of the principles that govern the relationship between state and society. The constitution of a nation-state recognizes the role of civil society and that 'sovereignty ultimately lies in the people, but is vested in representatives who can legitimately exercise state functions' (Held, 1996:99). There is mutual recognition by state and civil society. The state recognizes the sovereignty of the people and the people recognize the sovereignty of the state. The nation-state cultivates its legitimacy through the recognition of the freedom of civil society, while civil society rests its legitimacy in the constitution and laws of the land.

c. Constitutionality and rule of law

Under the nation-state, the centrality of constitutionality and the rule of law are unquestioned. Citizens need to be guaranteed freedom from arbitrary treatment and equality before the law enacted in a form of the constitution and laws. 'Political and civil rights or liberties, above all those connected to free speech, expression, association, voting and belief' (ibid., 99). The rule of law is the guarantee that citizens need to protect themselves from politicians or other powerful people as well as from themselves.

d. Separation of power between the apparatuses of the state

The powers of the most important components of the state such as the executive, legislature and judiciary are clearly defined. Impersonating the state and making it accountable to the citizen is a crucial necessity. 'State powers must be impersonal, i.e. legally circumscribed, and divided among the executive,

the legislature and the judiciary' (ibid., 99). In a liberal democracy, heads of governments do not act as if the state is their personal domain or property as the state is impersonated through the political revolution that made the medieval state obsolete. Impersonating the state leads to the institutionalization of the division of functions and responsibilities between the components of the state. The monarch is no longer the absolute monarch who was the state himself ('l'etat est mois', as Louis the IV once said) but is head of state regulated by the constitution. The legislature is the ultimate supreme power while government functions as the executive branch answerable to the legislature.

As we have seen above, the modernization of the autocracy had a limited purpose and had not in fact aimed at introducing modernization in the same manner as Kamal Atatürk in Turkey. Consequently, the institutions of the state did not develop and expand to warrant a division of function between themselves in the first place. The power of the state has always rested in the hands of the monarch and has never been impersonalized. Though the succeeding regimes pledged to subscribe to one form of 'democracy' or another and suggested various institutions of the 'state', state power still rests in the hands of one person in each case.

e. Individual freedom

Under the nation-state, there is a clear division between the public sphere, which is that of the state and the private sphere, which is the non-state. Apart from the mutual recognition between the two, individual members of the private sphere, who have now assumed the status of being citizens with freedom guaranteed by law as distinct from subjects under absolutism, also have the freedom to participate in the political process and in pursuing their private interests. The freedom of the individual in a nation-state is extremely important as it is through this freedom that the individual can aspire to assume the role of a citizen. Being a citizen is being empowered at the same time as the individual with freedom. The citizen can play roles that are crucial to social development as well as to democratization. Citizenry is not only about freedom, it is also about responsibility. The citizen is aware of his/her rights as well as his/her duties in as much as he/she is aware of the conditions that determine his/her existence. It is this awareness that determines his/her identity as a citizen as that is precisely what determines his/her role and even behaviour towards the other citizen. Citizenry combines individual freedom, which is a category of rights, and responsibilities towards the collective, which is a category of responsibility. It is this awareness that is at the root of the empowerment of the citizen as an individual with freedom and responsibility. Individual freedom stands as the soul of democracy under the nation-state as that is the only way that civil society as a collective can sustain liberty and freedom and therefore democracy as a whole. Without an individual empowered with such freedom and responsibility, the transformation of subject to citizen cannot take place.

f. Separation of state from civil society

It is under the nation-state that the state and civil society are separated as independent entities with distinct functions, rights and responsibilities but whose relationship and division of power is defined by law. The function of the state in this regard is to 'create a framework which allows citizens to pursue their private lives free from risks of violence, unacceptable social behaviour and unwanted political interference' (Held, 1996:99). In other words, the state facilitates the ground for the development of a politically autonomous civil society. The more civil society is autonomous, the more distinction it makes between itself and the state, and therefore the better for the mutual respect and sovereignty between the two. In contrast to the absolutist state, the nation-state endeavours towards the autonomy of civil society as that is the sure way of building mutual trust, respect and sovereignty between the two, which serve as the source of its legitimacy.

g. Accountability of the state to civil society

The state playing a *regulating* role poses as an independent and impartial institution and claims legitimacy by being accountable to the people through their elected representatives, the legislature and other public institutions. In regulating the market and political competition as well as other public activities it creates state institutions as public institutions under the legislature to play an impartial, neutral and independent role. The legitimacy of the state is further assured through the institutionalization of mechanisms whereby the necessity of the state in regulating society as enacted by law and monitored by the public institutions is recognized by civil society and whereby the rightful role of civil society is recognized by the state. That is the basis for the accountability of the state to civil society.

2.3 An overview of state and society in Africa: colonial and African states – a continuum?

As my concern is the prevalence of poverty, under-development and unfreedom, I have to deal with the structural factors that perpetrate them. Mal-governance is at the root of all these problems and the principal factor underlying under-development and unfreedom. Even within the desired strategy and policy of development through capitalism, why did African governments fail to attain capitalism while, in the case of industrialization in Western Europe, it is indeed the state that also played a crucial role in facilitating capitalist development? The first answer lies on the particularities in the evolution of the institutions of

governance in Africa. (For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term state to describe the dominant institution of governance in Africa.)

The evolution of the 'modern' African state is historically linked with the history and political practice of colonization. Prior to colonization, the institutions of governance in Africa had been predominantly traditional, feudal or patrimonial, ruling their peoples according to the indigenous knowledge systems that prevailed at the time. The period of colonization in Africa did not last for more than seventy years on the average. 'The colonization of Africa lasted for just over seventy years in most parts of the continent', (Rodney, 1972:224). This is a relatively a short period of time for a given 'civilization' to prevail. The evolution of the African state as a modern (capitalist form) of governance did not develop as an organic process. The fact that the evolution of the African state as a modern state was not an organic one is one fundamental difference between the African state and its West European counterpart and is that which gave the former its most characteristic feature. It is my contention in this thesis that it is precisely this peculiar feature of the African state that determined its performance in the terrain of governance as well as in social development. Why the African state failed in democratization and social development cannot be explained in any other way.

The process of forming a modern 'state' in Ethiopia also began against the background of the Scramble for Africa. In terms of infrastructure, most of the modern 'state' communications infrastructure was built during Italian occupation. In the case of Ethiopia too, the process of the modern 'state' formation was not an organic one that sprang up on a dying medieval state against the background of a booming industrial economy.

When independence came in the 1960s, the African state stepped into the shoes of the colonial state, whose *raison d'etre* was primarily to facilitate extraction of raw materials from the colonies to the industries of Europe without really changing the modalities of its functions (Mafeje, 2002:75). Unlike the nation-state in Western Europe, the African state did not evolve out of a long historical process of social and political development that developed over a long period of three to four centuries from small-scale commodity production to the capitalist system. It lacked all the economic, structural, legal, cultural and ethical foundations that made capitalism possible. Because the colonial state was an institution imposed from above on a completely traditional and pre-capitalist society the *raison d'etre* of which was facilitating the exploitation of raw materials for the industries of Europe, it was largely alien to the larger society of Africa that led life in traditional livelihood systems governed by their own knowledge systems. The members of the African elite who resorted to a quest for political power were invariably those who acquired a limited education and training during colonization and were recruited from the lowest levels of the colonial bureaucracy.

Although the African elite came from that spectrum of society and was divided according to its ties with former colonial powers – most turning their countries into neo-colonies of former colonial powers, while a small minority attempted to lead their countries to independence in the real sense from ex-colonial powers – their vision of social development and of a modern nation-state remained similar, which was in the main the European model. The quest for social development and a modern nation-state however, had neither the social and political institutions nor the material foundation, as the elite had propensity for neither democratic culture nor the commodity economy. The evolution of the African state did not therefore constitute an organic growth with the institutions of governance that a nation-state requires to facilitate the development of a commodity economy that in turn needed to prevail over a dying pre-capitalist formation. This is an outstanding characteristic feature of the African state and its foremost particularity that largely determined the quagmire that the African state has been wallowing in for the last four decades.

External intervention, particularly by ex-colonial powers and other Western powers, notably the United States, whose policies were determined according to Cold War struggles for spheres of influence exacerbated the predicament of the African state. While the structures as well as functions of the African state remained as a continuum to its colonial counterpart, so did its allegiance to the dictates of ex-colonial as well as a super-power such as the United States. Thus enters neo-colonization and the dependence of the African elite that took the mantle of political power from Western powers, who are largely ex-colonial powers or the United States. The African elite ended up as the pawn of the West, which was engaged in a fierce contention with the Eastern bloc for spheres of influence. The closeness to the West bred additional relationships with the African elite. The West protected the political and economic interests of the elite that paved the way for large-scale corruption including capital flight from the continent to Western banks which in turn became instrumental in a boom of capital expansion by Western banks (Stiglitz, Sustained Development Finance to Fight Poverty, quoted in The United States as a HIPC, the New Economic Foundation, 2002). By aligning itself with the West and casting its votes with the West at international meets and at the UN General Assembly in particular, the African elite became part of the conflict during the Cold War. The West in turn paid in maintaining the status quo ante in Africa, a status quo based on the exploitation of its natural resources and the dehumanization of its people.

The colonial state being extractive and exploitative was entrenched in the process of accumulation. Though the African state was a continuation of the colonial state, the African political elite that controlled the state has had no vision for social development, democracy or even accumulation. As Mafeje notes, the African political elite ‘... unlike the colonial state ... has no sense of accumulation or of changing ill-gotten state revenues into productive capital’ (Mafeje, 2002:76). On the contrary, by presiding over a system characterized by an extreme form of corruption, the African elite has in fact sapped Africa’s wealth

and deprived it of its capabilities to generate and reproduce wealth, support the welfare of its people, provide crucial social services including education and public health. In short, it has stifled development and generated underdevelopment as well as poverty instead. As Frantz Fanon said of the African bourgeoisie, the African elite has been not only unproductive but even anti-development as well. Nothing better describes the Ethiopian elite too which was alien to accumulation and development.

Apart from the fundamental fact that the African state was not a developmental state, even within the context of the strategy and policy of development and economic growth that the African elite came up with, it has miserably failed to generate accumulation. It was primarily oriented towards imitating the West on strategies of development without having the required institutional mechanism and ethics in place. That orientation has effectively prevented it from developing a realistic, down-to-earth policy that needed to look into identifying the niche in the economic and social relationships that has the potential to trigger the process of savings that can generate accumulation through development (De Soto, 2000:12). Also, it did institute a legal framework and property law to protect the property rights of the small entrepreneur and thereby failed to develop a social contract (ibid., 12). Moreover, the African elite is above the law. It has no respect for the very law that it proclaimed, thereby facilitating the ground for rampant corruption, endemic embezzlement and massive capital flight. This in turn has a huge impact on society. The level of the culture of respect for the law within a given society is concomitant to the official attitude towards respect for the law. As such the culture of respect of the law on the part of African politicians is so low that it has a serious impact on the development process including the accumulation process.

External influences in a form of direct control of resources and neo-colonization also have impact on preventing the process of accumulation in Africa. These structural constraints were further complicated by policy prescriptions by the IMF/World Bank in the form of structural adjustment programmes that exacerbated the crisis of the already precarious economy (Stiglitz, 2002: 3-53). Globalization of the market as the dominant trend of the contemporary world also retards the accumulation process by aggravating the processes of poverty (for further analysis, see Michel Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty*, 1997: 33-43). The one time senior economist of the World Bank and winner of the 2001 Nobel prize in economics, Joseph Stiglitz, also attests to this fact: 'Globalization today is not working for many of the world's poor. It is not working for much of the environment. It is not working for the stability of the world economy' (Stiglitz, 2002:214).

Conflict had to have a great impact on the accumulation process in Africa. I have noted several causes of conflict that became rampant after de-colonization. In the case of the process of the formation of the nation-state in Europe, the notion and practice of accountability of the state emerged simultaneously with the

nation-state, thereby making the rule of law prevail over individual interests. When the African state stepped into the shoes of the colonial state following independence, some aspects of the pre-capitalist tradition of governance, patrimonial or feudal, still lingered on and carried over what Held called the personification of the state reflected in the disregard for the rule of law that has to have impact on the accumulation process. As Sandbrook argues, '... the problem is that the African states have failed to perform the task that capitalist growth has always required from the state, because they have reflected a pre-capitalist social structure. They have been predominantly "neo-patrimonial" in character, based on the personal domination of an individual leader, who uses the country's resources primarily as loot for rewarding his loyal followers' (quoted in Leys: 1996, 136). That opened the door wide open for corruption and privilege on the part of politicians who dominated state power. That turned the sphere of political power into a sphere of intense competition for powerful persons, the military in the main, who aspired to capture state power, thereby putting the process of state-induced corruption and privilege into a vicious and perpetual cycle.

Mal-governance also lent to widespread grievance that developed into full-blown rebellions. One outstanding issue here is the attitude and policy of the African state on issues of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. Colonization had earlier played the ethnicity card to pit one ethnic group against another to prolong its rule. Following independence, the African state has not addressed the question of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts properly. The dominant attitude has been to reject any notion of ethnicity and not even talk about it. The ex-president of Kenya Daniel Arap Moi used to dismiss any discussion on ethnicity as dangerous. Evading the issue however, has only exacerbated the problem, resulting either in ethnic cleansing as in the case of Rwanda or secession as in the case of Eritrea. Ethnic or ethnic based conflicts cost the continent dearly in terms of loss of human lives and property. The prevalence of conflicts in Africa compelled African governments to spend heavily on defence. This has to have an impact on the share of capital spent on education and public health. Indeed, one of the principal factors that affect the development process in the continent is the low level of budget allocated for education and public health, which in turn has a significant impact on the accumulation process.

2.3.1 A developmental state

The issue of the developmental state has increasingly become popular in the contemporary political and economic discourse. Writers define it from their own perspective. The celebrated Spanish thinker Manuel Castells was one of the first to use it with reference to the four Asian Tigers (Castells, 1998: 282-289). With due respect to Castells, his definition is economically reductionist. He postulates the developmental state solely on economic grounds. For him a developmental

state is the one that is consciously committed to sponsor private capital accumulation by supporting and protecting its own business sector and national economy as is the case with the four Asian tigers. We have seen that contemporary social development goes beyond the confines of economic growth and encompasses important social and political categories. Freedom of civil society, respect for women's rights and human rights as a whole, respect for the dignity of the individual person, for instance, are now crucial components of development. That is indeed why the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Human Development Index as an indicator of the social development of countries. According to the UNDP development index, the United States, although it has the largest economy in the world, was not the most developed country in the world in 2004. Norway was. A developmental state must be defined as a state that is consciously committed to the social development of its citizens and to the social development of other countries, conscious of the reality of the interdependence of nations and peoples today.

In reflecting on the nature of the developmental state in Africa, we need to start with the historical realm of the African state. If the historical realm of the nation-state in Europe was capitalism made real by the bourgeois revolution, the historical realm of the African state is the undoing of poverty and underdevelopment. The colonial state left Africa in ruins and with its own puppets in political power to assure continued exploitation of natural resources. In proportion to the scale of colonial economic disasters, a state that takes as its historical mission the undoing of such disasters with the concomitant development of the association of citizens, i.e. enhancing the level of independent social organization within the society, was what was needed. From this perspective and in the normative sense, the African state could not have evolved except as a developmental state with such a mission.

The fundamental problem of Sub-Saharan African countries is the prevalence of poverty and un-freedom. African countries lag behind countries in other continents of the world when it comes to social development. The paradox of African countries is the fact that neither development nor freedom has been attained. In order to briefly analyze this paradox, we will divide this section into two parts. The first part will deal with a developmental state that Africa, Ethiopia included, needed to have from the start while the second deals with the intrinsic relationship and interdependence between poverty and unfreedom.

The political, social and economic problems that the African state inherited from colonial powers were enormous. Behind the euphoria of independence and the optimism that held that the African state would achieve prosperity through social development, the situation can be characterized as having great potential for social implosion unless a proper strategy of development was adopted. In other words, given the dimensions of these problems the African state in fact was, from the outset, faced with disaster.

Under the historical circumstances that the African state found itself, the overriding concern was indeed social development. However, this concern would have borne fruit had the African elite also defined the historical parameters of the role of the state and its characteristic feature that would enable it to meet these historical challenges in the concrete conditions of each country. This primarily involves issues of development policies and strategies, putting in place at the political level the institutions of governance concomitant to these declared policies and strategies and defining the concrete role that the state plays.

Given the weak state or the lack of a bourgeoisie in Africa, it was natural that the state would take a central role in facilitating the process of accumulation. A state-led accumulation (SLA) imperative was unavoidable though that does not necessarily imply the preponderance of the state in the economy, particularly in terms of ownership. One should distinguish a state-led accumulation imperative as a *historic function* from state involvement in the economy primarily through *ownership*. An SLA mainly involves the functions and role of the state in facilitating the process of accumulation within a given society. This facilitation is legal, namely the creation of an enabling environment for the business sector, a legal environment that encourages its development and enhances its role, a social contract and so on. Because the bourgeoisie is weak, enhancing the role of the bourgeoisie, thereby accelerating the process of accumulation that would bring economic growth in the process, could also involve directly transferring capital to businesspeople as loans as it was in the case of South Korea. Adopting a policy and strategy of SLA thus implies creating an enabling and supporting environment for the business community and civic groups at large to enhance their capacity in the process of capital accumulation. It does and should not imply state ownership.

One should recognize the difference between SLA as a historic function/role and SLA as synonymous with state ownership. The developmental state follows a policy of SLA mainly because the bourgeoisie is too weak to sponsor the accumulation process all by itself. But this should not be read differently. Otherwise supplanting the role of the bourgeoisie will follow. That is exactly what is happening in today's Ethiopia and Eritrea. The state opts to replace the bourgeoisie and has placed several financial and industrial institutions in the hands of the ruling party. In other countries, the state has a limited ownership in the modern sector. In Ethiopia and Eritrea, the state owns part of the modern sector but the biggest part is owned by the ruling party.

If capital is not just an economic but also a social and political relation, so is capital accumulation as a process. Capital accumulation does not just relate to economic returns but also to what is being done at the grassroots level to enhance the capabilities that the community and the individual were deprived of. These are largely development interventions conducted by NGOs at the grassroots level in a form of social, economic and political capability enhancement projects. A state-led accumulation policy also addresses these

areas and provides strategic support first of all by providing the legal environment.

In this sense, enhancing capabilities at the grassroots level as part of building social capital also touches the domain of information and knowledge. Information and knowledge help individuals and communities to make informed decisions on matters that affect their lives. Being knowledgeable about issues as diverse as preventing easily-controllable diseases to electing their own representative to a parliament has become an essential component of the development process in general and in building social capital in particular. Needless to say that information and knowledge also play a crucial role in the accumulation process. Communicating prices of livestock elsewhere has become critical to pastoral communities as that piece of information helps them to determine prices of their own cattle for instance.

State involvement in the economy, particularly in terms of ownership, has been the principal feature of the modern sector in Africa. The neo-liberal school bypassing the liberal democratic model at the level of institutions of governance, relegated the need to address the issue of meeting the basic needs of the poor. Neo-colonization and the globalization of the market also encouraged this trend as well as suppressing the quest from below for democracy and by creating a convenient situation for the state to maintain the status quo. The result has invariably been dictatorship and poverty. On the other hand, the African 'socialist' imperative did not do any better. Though it ostensibly addressed the basic needs of the poor, the African 'socialist' imperative overtly suppressed freedom. The outcome of this experience is also poverty and dictatorship.

The cycle of poverty is generated by an inept elite and maintains a policy that perpetuates poverty. In view of these policies, many African countries still face enormous problems of development. At the dawn of the second millennium, the African state is indeed facing disaster if viewed from the perspective of these problems. It is against this background that the urgent need for a developmental state should be spelt out.

What is a developmental state? We need to start with the historical realm of the modern nation-state. The historical realm of the modern state in Europe in the post-industrial revolution setting was the bourgeois revolution that brought capitalism with it. The historical realm in Africa and Ethiopia in particular is undoing poverty and under-development. Whether through a social revolution or through a radical shift in policy, the *political imperative* and, in fact, the *raison d'être* for the political establishment should be to eradicate poverty and under-development. This must be the historic task in countries such as Ethiopia.

2.4 State organization in the developmental state

2.4.1 Representative governance

As I mentioned earlier, the institutions of governance in Africa are too under-developed to meet the historical necessities of contemporary African society. The roles of the various component institutions of the state require redefinition as the executive branch has dominated the 'state' and even usurped the roles of other branches such as the judiciary and legislature. This was made possible because the African 'leader' considered the 'state' to be his personal domain and that he was permitted to introduce an arbitrary rule in place of the rule of law. Developing the institutions of governance makes these delineations of role of the various branches of the state as well as their interaction and interdependence essential.

The question of the degree of centralization and decentralization is a noteworthy component of the discussion on developing the institutions of governance. In most traditional formations, which are in the process of putting state institutions in place in the manner of the modern nation-state, the cities and towns are more developed in terms of having institutions that provide social services. The disparity between the capital and other towns and between urban areas and the rural peripheries is great. Narrowing the gap between urban and rural, the capital and smaller towns involves a huge development undertaking at the level of institutional development of governance. As we will see below, the security of the person, having access to the market, the right and capacity of the individual to save and accumulate if possible, and other capabilities of the individual are at the heart of poverty that need to be addressed by the *physical presence* of the institution of governance. These capabilities cannot be secured by remote control as many governments in Africa try to do in their respective rural areas. When these capabilities are lacking or denied, poverty ensues. Thus, developing the institutions of governance involves narrowing the gap between town and country by bringing the institutions of governance closer to the rural population, thereby starting to render the services that it deserves in return for the tax it pays.

Moreover, the policy-making process that the 'state' adopts needs to be transparent and as consultative as possible. The principal concern of the developmental state is to enhance the process of human-centred social development and democratization. A human-centred development first of all requires the consent of the population that is supposed to benefit from development. Two elements are interwoven in this scenario: appropriate and realistic development policy and participation of the 'target' population. In the case of Africa where there are social formations and modes of production such as pastoralism, hunting and gathering, which were not dealt with by the classics in economics and politics, the consent of the target population before adopting a given development policy is crucial. In addition, the vision of the decision-making African elite is narrow, which requires the involvement of experts and the target group in the policy-making process is central.

A system of governance should involve elements such as the legal framework, modalities of policy making processes and accommodating diversities, also at the level of political representation. For a developmental state the legal framework must by definition be the main instrument that ensures the prevalence of an enabling environment for participation by individuals and groups in the development as well as democratization processes. The prevalence of the enabling environment paves the way for consultation and participation in development policy formulations. Consultation in a policy making process connotes discussion and debate which must be seen as natural and as a human virtue rather than as a curse and danger. This implies that accommodating diverse views is only natural and necessary. A developmental state can only progress smoothly and peacefully, developing the institutions that it needs for governance through the prevalence of an enabling environment, policy consultations and through accommodating diverse views.

2.4.2 Election and party competition

In traditional formations, heterogeneity rather than homogeneity is the norm in almost every aspect of life and existence whether in ethnicity, religious persuasion or choice of development policies. It is only natural that diverse views on politics, economics and other issues of development and change exist. It follows from this that the expression of these views is also natural. The principle of elections is based on the existence and recognition of this diversity. An indispensable component of social development is social harmony, which, among other factors, is attainable through the recognition of diversity and holding periodic and fair elections. In as much as the state regulates market competition, it also has to regulate political competition fairly. Conducting genuine and fair elections and regulating political competition among political parties is an indispensable function of a developmental state.

2.4.3 Civic groups' role

Civil society organizations have an indispensable role to play in the development and democratization processes. In traditional formations where the involvement of the government in delivering services is limited due to lack of institutional capacity, this gap has been filled by civic groups as has been witnessed in many parts of the world. The role of civic groups in community development, humanitarian interventions, education, health, human rights and democratization is well recognized by institutions such as the United Nations. As such, many of them have attained observer status at the various UN commissions. Beyond recognizing this indispensable role that civic groups play, a developmental state encourages them to expand their interventions by providing the enabling environment that they need and the necessary legal framework for their operations.

A developmental state defines its own role and the scope of its development intervention in a realistic manner. In traditional formations there is a huge area of development intervention that the state cannot cover by itself. It is crucial to affirm this as it would open the door of co-operation and civic participation. From the international perspective, civic groups also have access to donor funding in as much as the state does. The developmental state facilitates the ground for civic groups to tap these resources thereby enhancing their capabilities in their development interventions. There are areas of intervention which are better covered by civic groups than weak states. In their involvement in global advocacy on issues such as environment and sustainable development, debt reduction and international trade regulations (WTO) civic groups bring social activists from around the world to global forums. That has become a powerful advocacy and lobbying tool of the global civil society since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. In such situations, the interest of weak states is best advanced by civic groups. A developmental state is well aware of this indispensable role of civic groups and renders its support through providing an enabling environment and regulatory framework.

2.4.4 Institutions, social pluralism and culture

For a developmental state to flourish both in terms of developing its own institutions of governance and for further effectiveness, the proliferation of both public and civic institutions is crucial. The existence of public institutions located outside the realm of the reigning government is one of the effective tools for accountability. Institutions such as the election board, public broadcasting, the ombudsman and so on, functioning as public institutions, as opposed to government institutions which are tools of governments, serve the public by fostering rapport with the state.

Moreover, social and cultural pluralism plays an important role in broadening the scope of democracy. A developmental state needs to encourage cultural and social pluralism as opposed to homogeneity and social regimentation. However, the state cannot all by itself bring about and secure social pluralism. Instead, it is the multifarious forms of state and civic institutions that can secure pluralism. It is also through social pluralism that civil society is further educated and democracy consolidated.

2.4.5 Pedagogic intervention: social mobilization for social capital

A developmental state has nothing if it fails to build social capital, that is, a conscious community mobilized to attain the long-term and short-term objectives of social development (for the Kerala experience, see Patrick Heller, cited in G. Parayil, 2000: 66-67.) This is different from the conventional notion of 'building a

constituency', which refers to elections oriented and to the advantage of a given political party or government. Building social capital reaches beyond political constituency and encompasses the community as a whole. Whether a political constituency or not, a conscious involvement of the individual in society or a given community is crucial to the development process. The developmental state thinking and acting as a state but not as a government or a ruling party must 'target' the community as a whole in combating the constraints and hurdles to development as social development is not the work merely of cadres of the ruling party or of its constituents, but of the community as a whole.

The notion of social capital reaches beyond the narrow confines of constituency and/or political support as a community is heterogeneous and the supposed social capital is heterogeneous to the same extent. For a developmental state, the presence of a critical mass is essential. A critical mass, however, needs the legal as well as the social environment for its existence, the social environment representing the social capital. By avoiding self-righteousness, the developmental state leaves itself open to criticism and in fact encourages critiques from civil society. An undertaking such as social development is very complex, combining various categories. In traditional formations, this gets even more complex as changing traditional livelihood systems for the better involves not only accuracy in analysis and tact in approach but also a great deal of realism and flexibility, as the analytical tools of the dominant discourse will not be of much help. In such a situation self-righteousness is unthinkable as it would be a recipe for disaster in a developmental state. Development depends on the success of projects implemented and since it is absolutely impossible to think and operate in certainty, politicians should bear in mind that development undertakings implemented even in good faith can also go awry. That should leave politicians open for criticism and appraisal. A developmental state that adopts that kind of disposition would have a better chance to cultivate not only the social capital required, but also the critical mass.

A process of cultivating social capital is intrinsically related to the process of the development and growth of civil society. The evolution of civil society in traditional formations cannot follow the linear and organic path of its counterpart in Europe. In the creation of a civil society, the state has a huge historical responsibility for the benefit of both itself and social development to resort to a pedagogic mission of cultivating social capital. Massive education of both formal and civic institutions is an indispensable condition for social development, as that creates the much needed social capital as well as critical mass. A conscious, energetic, creative, selfless and responsible participation on the part of individuals in society in the development as well as democratization processes can only be attained through the creation of such social capital. A developmental state takes up this particular task as an important undertaking.

Viewed from a different angle, the conscious involvement of the individual citizen and the community of citizens are crucial. The awareness provided by formal and

non-formal civic-education is instrumental in this process. However, the sustainability and expansion of awareness can only be guaranteed if this process is complemented by the independent organization of the community. A developmental state works towards attaining a certain level of awareness at the community level, whereupon a conscious, planned and programmed movement at the community level is complemented by the enabling policies of the democratic state (ibid., 67). If development interventions at a project level are structured in a combination of such a level of organization, freedom of choice and independent action of the community complemented by the creation of an enabling environment by a state, the public action at the micro level can in turn enhance the capacity of the state to provide social services (ibid., 67).

2.4.6 Fundamental values: individual freedom and freedom of choice

Respect for individual freedom and freedom of choice of the individual in society is another crucial area for the developmental state. Respect for collective rights follows respect for individual freedom. The freedom of the individual and the space that she/he has to participate in legal trade is pivotal for invaluable contributions by individual citizens as it is this freedom and space that release the inertia and lethargy of individuals in a dormant society. In societies where a one-party state or military dictatorship muzzled society and ruled by terror, individuals will still continue to live with the political trauma of the past regime despite a declaration of freedom and space. And where the contribution of individuals is indispensable in the struggle for social development, releasing this inertia and enabling individuals to become free of the trauma is crucial. Respect for individual freedom and guaranteeing their freedom of choice is therefore also essential for a developmental state.

2.5 The development/democracy nexus

The environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to a global debate on development that culminated in the radical discourse on sustainable development that established the indissoluble link between the environment and development. The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 introduced a new era in development discourse, particularly with the declaration of Agenda 21 as a global agenda of action. However, as the optimism preceding Rio de Janeiro waned through the onslaught of the forces of the corporate, the market imperative managed to continue to ride roughshod over a process of what Michel Chossudovsky calls the globalization of poverty. The South and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular are increasingly swallowed up by an unprecedented level of poverty. The more politicians suggest various recipes of 'poverty reduction' in the body and soul of formulas such as the 'millennium development goals', the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' (NEPAD) the more Africa sinks into misery

and the more frequently and massively are countries such as Ethiopia hit by famine disasters.

This state of affairs is the result of a combination of two main factors, namely the crisis of the dominant paradigm on development and economic growth, and the widening gap between the North and South as a result of unequal terms of trade and the exploitation of the South as well as the subjection of the South to policy prescriptions such as structural adjustment programmes (for further discussion on this see Shutt, 2001: 86-105). Ultimately however, the culprit for the prevalence of poverty in the South is the state in the South itself, which has been following policies and strategies of development and economic growth on the basis of the dominant discourse. Undoubtedly, development and the dominant development paradigm are in crisis as far as the South is concerned. As Vandana Shiva put it succinctly 'The paradox and crisis of development arises from the mistaken identification of the culturally perceived poverty of earth-centered economies with the real material deprivation that occurs in market-oriented economies, and the mistaken identification of the growth of commodity production with providing better human sustenance for all' (Shiva, cited in Sachs, 1997:215). It is indeed such critical perspectives on development and development paradigms that gave rise to radical perceptions in various parts of the South, Asia and Latin America. Hence, revising the definitions of poverty, development, under-development and others ... are the order of the day.

These are fundamental questions of development that deserve radical answers as well as a radical construction of an alternative paradigm suitable for the South. Undoubtedly, the world is now at a crossroads. With the rate at which environmental degradation is taking place and the consequences of ecological changes on the lives of human beings and the poor in particular, the propensity for human civilization to continue in this fashion needs to be investigated. Where is human civilization heading? That is why Agenda 21 and the other declarations of Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which provided clear answers that humanity had to seriously consider then, indeed constituted an Earth Charter. However, as was revealed at the outcomes of the Johannesburg's World Summit on Social Development held exactly ten years after these famous declarations made in Rio de Janeiro, very few countries indeed seriously moved to put the commitments they made at Rio de Janeiro in practice. If there were wide areas of complementarity between civil society organizations and governments in Rio de Janeiro, what happened in Johannesburg was the opposite. Civil society forums fiercely denounced governments' positions on a number of crucial areas of development as a betrayal.

At the root of this betrayal and the reinforcement of factors that aggravated global poverty is the prevalence of unfreedom and lack of accountability of the state in many countries and the departures that global powers made from the Rio de Janeiro commitments. Absence of accountability of the state demonstrates absence of freedom for communities and individuals. The relationship between

the failure on the part of governments regarding the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and unfreedom explains why freedom is so crucial to end poverty and bring development.

Freedom is essential in fighting poverty and bringing development. In fact, freedom plays a crucial role in the success of any society at any level. Freedom entails the space that the community and individuals have to participate in a process that determines their own lives. This process is a combination of various undertakings that fall within the broad categories of democratization and development. The existence of space for community participation reveals the existence of a balanced relationship between state and society, among which the accountability of the state to society is one. The 'secret' of the success of many societies at various levels depends on the existence of substantive freedoms. As Amartya Sen argues 'The success of a society is to be evaluated, in this view, primarily by the substantive freedoms that the members of that society enjoy' (Sen, 1999:18).

Freedom is the basis and space for the release of individual initiatives and breaking out of the inertia of communities. One major problem in politically traumatized societies such as Ethiopia's is the lack of space for individual initiatives. Without going into questioning the validity of the over-emphasis on collective rights, the role individual initiatives play in a social process is as old as the history of human beings themselves. Great ideas that propelled the wheels of history all emanated from individual brains. The over-emphasis on the collective that prevailed under 'state socialism', systematically and programmatically suppressed individual initiatives as 'bourgeois'. The infantilism in this outlook itself emanated from the fear of ideas and reason, and from the search for the 'luxury' of ruling without objections. However, suppressing individual initiatives in the first place results in distorting the understanding of individual responsibilities. It prevents the contributions that can come from individuals that are in turn crucial for the social development of the community as a whole. As Sen says, 'The second reason for taking substantive freedom to be so crucial is that freedom is not only the basis of the evaluation of success and failure, but it is also a principal determinant of individual initiative and social effectiveness. Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development' (ibid., 18).

Releasing the initiatives of individuals and breaking out of the inertia of the community, particularly in countries where society had been politically traumatized, is crucial as freedom plays in this case both a facilitating and a therapeutic role in curing the community from the fear that it is gripped with. The fact that such fear exists, signals the existence of unfreedom as no human being voluntarily relinquishes his/her rights and freedom. Freedom also has another dimension. Humans cannot exist as humans without freedom. It is only through freedom that they display they are indeed humans. It has been scientifically

proven that some animals also have the capacity to think and it is common knowledge that some also express what they want. But, it is only humans who can express what they think in speech and writing. Curtailing that capability in any form or in any 'rationale' is tantamount to curtailing their identity as humans.

Releasing the individual and community from inertia through freedom is also essential for the development of the role of the individual in society, particularly with reference to enhancing individual responsibilities. There was a time when monarchs and despots in medieval Europe thought that freedom for individuals would create havoc and anarchy because individuals would become unruly. Among the political elite of Sub-Saharan Africa, the same thinking still prevails in the second millennium although all these individual liberties are prescribed in their Constitutions. European colonialists treated the African literally as a child as if there is some mental defect in the African that prevents her/his mental development. The African government that inherited the colonial state in toto, also inherited the colonial mentality considering the African as a child. The result was deprivation of freedom. However, the problem in Africa is that the African is considered to be a child that does not mature. Freedom is thus suspended indefinitely. Individuals and communities are deprived of freedom indefinitely, strongly impacting on their capability to be released from political captivity. Depriving freedom is similar to depriving a child of the education that she/he needs as an asset for the rest of his/her life.

In a proper balanced relationship between state and society, the freedom of the individual weighs heavily on determining the responsibility of the individual. In fact one of the factors that makes an individual a citizen is the degree of responsibility that she/he assumes as a member of the community. Individual responsibility is informed by the degree of freedom that encourages the individual to think not only about herself/himself as an individual but also of other persons who make up the community. Governments and others need to provide social support that facilitates the existence and practice of freedom because it has a huge impact on development. As Sen says 'The argument for social support in expanding people's freedom can, therefore, be seen as an argument *for* individual responsibility, not against it' (Sen, 1999:284).

If freedom is seen as providing the medicine for the individual/community against a lifelong handicap, then individual/community participation in the processes that determine his/her/its own existence – mainly social, political and economic processes – is also essential. As freedom enhances responsibility both at the individual and community levels, it also enhances a *responsible* participation. That is indeed why popular participation is responsible participation. Responsible participation in turn enhances the capacity and effectiveness of the community to influence policies in its activities. When a state is responsive to a responsible citizen and community of citizens, that state also enhances its own capabilities to combat social, economic and political maladies. As Sen argues, 'The exercise of these rights can indeed help in making states more responsive to the

predicament of vulnerable people and, thus, contribute to preventing economic disasters such as famines' (ibid., 288). The active participation of citizens and the community at large in the development and democratization processes also has an impact on the development of the political culture in a given country. The freedom of citizens and community to articulate their perspectives also has impact not only on the elite that is ruling but also on the one that is contending. Enhancing the analytical capacity of contending groups results in developing the quality of public discussion and debate. The quality of the public debate is a mirror image of the quality of democracy in a given society.

2.5.1 Popular participation

Barrington Moore investigated the social origins of dictatorship and democracy in 1967 (Moore, 1967). Now, the proponents of the development discourse need to conduct another study on the social origins of political systems that prevent popular participation. Political systems that erect stumbling blocks to the participation of subjects in the development process are found mainly in the South and, while many countries in the South, especially in Latin America, are removing these stumbling blocks and joining the world of democracy, there are governments in Africa and Asia that still cling to them. Although most adhere to the conventional fear of 'chaos', some appear 'articulate' attempts to link their repressive systems to the remnants of theoretical under-currents from the old 'state socialist' paradigm. The infamous vanguard theory whose author was Lenin (Lenin, Progress, Moscow, 1975) is the principal one in this case. The theory of the vanguard attributes leadership to the Communist Party, which has to be followed by the masses and advances an organizational principle called 'democratic centralism' which gives an unquestioned power to the party leadership at the various levels. Once the communist parties came to power, they still persisted with the vanguard theory, only to lead their respective countries astray or cause popular social implosions that overthrew them. The vanguard theory is a prototype of an elitist theory that perfectly suits the interests particularly of the power monger petty-bourgeoisie. The theory of the vanguard is a theory of substitution of the masses by the party. The worst thing that can happen to humans is when they are, directly or indirectly, told to stop thinking because there is an institution that can think on their behalf.

Experiences of all sorts led development practitioners to distinguish what they call *popular participation* from all other forms of participation. Governments in the South that champion dictatorship but try to pass as democratic, brag about the 'direct participation' of the people in elections, democratization and development. Some display the existence of private newspapers, political opposition parties, non-governmental organizations, and associations ... Some even resort to deceptions in an attempt to prove to the world that there is 'direct participation' and universal suffrage by resorting to mechanisms to display this phoney 'participation' which Rahnema calls 'manipulated, or teleguided, forms of participation' in which people are 'being forced into doing something, but are

actually led to take actions which are inspired or directed by centers outside their control' (Rahnema, 1992:116). He then adds 'Neither the pyramids, nor the many contemporary mass demonstrations in favour of repressive regimes, have represented free acts of participation' (ibid. 116).

Thus development practitioners found it essential to distinguish between these false participations manipulated by governments and the real and free participation of the people. Manipulated participation introduces and over time reproduces involuntary discipline on the part of the people. If it persists, that will create a situation in which people will be compelled to prevent manipulation, leading to confrontation or to social conflict of some sort. According to development practitioners, popular participation is postulated to 'be able to save development from its present crisis and give it new stamina for enabling the grassroots populations to regenerate their life spaces' (ibid., 120). Later on the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) defined popular participation as 'the organized efforts to increase control over resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control' (UNRISD, 1984:12).

Why is popular participation so crucial? It is inextricably bound to crucial links in the domain of social development. First, as we have seen, social development cannot be attained without freedom and the expression of freedom is the free, unfettered and unguided participation of the communities themselves in the democratization and development processes. Second, there can be no empowerment without the free participation of those who have hitherto been excluded from deciding on their own lives. Empowerment can only occur when communities freely form their own institutions and/or organizations that facilitate their independent interventions. Third, both empowerment and freedom derive from the free initiative of the community whose interventions and creativity are informed by their own popular knowledge systems. As discussed in earlier sections, development formulas borrowed from elsewhere and imposed upon traditional communities have invariably failed mainly because they discarded the validity and viability, under prevailing circumstances, of popular knowledge systems.

According to Rahnema, three basic assumptions underlie the occurrence of popular participation. The first is the removal of all institutional/bureaucratic and legislative hurdles that obstructed the free and independent participation of the people. This can only be attained by 'giving the populations concerned the full opportunity of participating in all the activities related to their development'. Second, it is only through popular participation that the hitherto socially and politically excluded can express their free will and 'to ensure that the important moral, humanitarian, social, cultural and economic objectives of a more humane and effective development can be peacefully attained'. Third, popular participation enables the people 'to organize themselves in a manner best suited to meet their desired ends' (ibid., 121).

It is indeed popular participation that is one of the crucial areas that a developmental state seriously engages by providing the space and freedom for communities to participate in the democratization and development processes. As I argued in the previous sections, the developmental state needs to take the initiative in facilitating the space for popular participation. In fact, the developmental state draws its legitimacy by supporting the people in their striving after independent participation. The more independent the participation of the people, the more popular it is and the more the developmental state cultivates legitimacy. After all this is what the mutual recognition of sovereignty between state and society is all about.

A violation of this mutual recognition by the government and resorting to a manipulated participation will only result in perpetuating obstructive structures as well as values that in turn perpetuate poverty and under-development. 'The fact that the entire populations are robbed of relating and acting together,' says Rahnema, 'is indeed a most serious question.' Obstructing popular participation definitely reproduces the possibilities for poverty and under-development. Consciously resorting to obstructing popular participation therefore is tantamount to resorting to violence as Vandana Shiva argues in the case of the violence of the green revolution in India. Rahnema makes a bold assertion: 'This represents a state of violence which cannot leave anyone indifferent, and it, no doubt, calls for action. Whenever people confront such situations, they do act, collectively or individually, within the limits of their possibilities. 'There are no motion-less people', says Gustavo Esteva quite rightly. 'Only the actomaniac, the missionary, the obsessional intervenor and the mentally programmed do-gooder think they alone care about the situation, while the victims do not. And because of the arrogance and lack of sensitivity implied in this attitude, their mediation turns out usually to be manipulative and counterproductive' (ibid., 126).

The practice or institutionalization of popular participation can have a great impact on galvanizing the process of social development, development and expansion of responsible citizenship and democratization at large. An enabling environment that needs to be created constitutionally by governments facilitates this development. Societies which were stifled a great deal by the prevalence of unfreedom, face difficulties in exercising the newly gained liberties for lack of experience and tradition of free participation. As we have seen, however, the *conscious* participation of the individual and communities at large is decisive. It is this freedom and conscious disposition of the individual/community to participate that brings the additional factor to this process, namely responsibility on individual as well as collective basis. In order for this responsibility to exist, the enabling environment, the prevalence of freedom, is the absolute precondition. Once the enabling environment is created the sustainability of both the freedom and responsible participation depend on the provision of formal and civic education. Freedom, conscious participation, social responsibility and provision of education all add up to contribute to a process that is new, namely a

programmed movement at the micro level as opposed to unplanned and spontaneous undertakings. The beginning of a programmed movement at the micro level enhances the facilitating role of the state when it is complemented by the practice of the developmental state. Reciprocity and complementarity between development undertakings at macro and micro levels can be generated through such a process. While the state consistently facilitates the enabling environment needed for development, the community's independent, responsible and conscious participation in turn enhances the capacity of the state in providing social services. One of the crucial functions of a developmental state is precisely this facilitating role.

Chapter 3 The poverty – unfreedom nexus

3.1 Poverty defined

The quest for defining poverty seems to be quite a paradox after a history of human civilization of almost five thousand years which was indelibly affected by poverty that had afflicted the greater part of humanity. Humans have no shortage of words/terms to define poverty. The words poor and poverty are probably, two of the most common words in every language. Rahnema states that ‘World languages compete with each other for the number of words referring to the situations and conditions associated with the different perceptions of poverty ...’ In Persian, for instance, there are more than 30 words for naming those who, for one reason or another, are perceived as poor. In most African languages, at least three to five words have been identified for poverty. The Torah uses eight ... for the purpose ... A whole universe of insights into the murky depths of poverty is to be explored in the many thousands of related proverbs and sayings’ (Rahnema, cited in Sachs, 1992:158). Heretofore poverty has almost universally been associated with material deprivation.

However, Amartya Sen links the phenomenon of poverty to his own perception of what development should entail. His central thesis is that ‘Development can be seen ... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy’ (Sen, 1999:3). Sen continues ‘The basic concern ... is with our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value. This approach can give a very different view of development from the usual concentration on GNP or technical progress or industrialization, all of which have contingent and conditional importance without being the defining characteristics of development’ (ibid., 285). Critical ideas on development challenging the prevailing perceptions informed by the dominant discourse had earlier come from theoretical giants such as Rajni Kothari, Vandana Shiva (India), Gustavo Esteva (Latin America), Majid Rahnema (Iran) and others. Their critique poses a fundamental challenge to the perceptions of the dominant discourse on development.

The dominant paradigm on development is based on the science and technology whose power and influence was made possible through military might, colonization of the South, domination and occupation, violence against women, neglect and marginalization of indigenous peoples and destruction of nature and the environment. Very few people question whether this science is ethical and natural, which is why the dominant discourse (on development) and its various related facets also go unquestioned. The very framework of our intellectual development, which has been informed and shaped by the same dominant discourse, does not permit that. The South has also yielded to this discourse, this world view or cosmology. As Corrine Kumar put it, ‘The “South” has, for too long, accepted a world view that has hegemonised its cultures, decided its development model, defined its aesthetic categories, outlined its military face, determined its science and technology, its nuclear options. A cosmology

constructed of what has come to be known as “universal” values; a cosmology whose philosophical, ideological and political roots were embedded in the specific historical context of the culture of the West’ (Kumar, 1996:3).

Without necessarily implying that these are the antithesis of the dominant paradigm, the corollary is that the existence of various knowledge systems — sciences, in other words — must be recognized, along with the acceptance that Northern science is just one such knowledge system, but not *the* science, *the* paradigm, and *the* discourse.

The subject in the process of development must be people, for the essence of development must be to improve people’s standard of living and livelihood systems. A change for the better first of all implies the consent of the people. What constitutes a *better standard of living* must be defined by the people themselves. However, people have until now often been dragged into accepting a definition and measurement of the process of social development, using the yardstick of Northern values. Consequently, people’s own social and traditional organizations have been seen as archaic, traditional values as backward, and their knowledge systems as ‘un-scientific’. People were expected and even taught to abandon their traditional organizational systems including those of governance, their values and so on. In short, changing their identities was the precondition for the kind of ‘development’ prescribed by the North. People’s authentic institutions or associations — the family, councils of elders, religious institutions, credit associations, their values and customs — were (and still are) supposed to be replaced by alien forms that go by the name of ‘modernity’.

What then should development constitute? What are the criteria used to define development or under-development? And what are the yardsticks used to determine whether or not a given society is ‘developed’ or ‘under-developed’? And whose yardsticks are they? In the contemporary world, whose very existence is threatened by the alarming way in which its environment and ecology are destroyed, these questions are significant.

The other factor is the collapse of the ‘development’ models that were attempted in the South, compounded by the post-Cold war social amnesia in the North. Since 1949, when the term ‘under-development’ entered the dominant discourse, development has always been one-sidedly understood to mean economic growth. The UN and other international bodies as well as political establishments and academic institutions, took this skewed definition for granted. GDPs and GNPs were taken as the principal indicators of development. In a nutshell, development equalled modernization equalled industrialization.

The Northern notion of development has characteristics that derive from its own historical evolution — starting with the industrial revolution and colonial expansion — and so has the cultural and ethical foundations that are peculiar to the North. This evolution and the resulting cultural and ethical foundations are either absent

from, or quite different in the South. Prior to colonization, societies in the South had various political, social and economic organizations based on their own respective cultural and ethical foundations. They differ significantly from those of the North. In the colonial era however, Southern identities were forced to change. In a compelling deconstruction of the Northern discourse on development, Gustavo Esteva notes 'When the metaphor returned to the vernacular, it acquired a violent colonizing power, soon employed by the politicians. It converted history into a program: a necessary and inevitable destiny. The industrial mode of production, which was no more than one, among many, forms of social life, became the definition of the terminal stage of a unilinear way of reformulating in Western terms' (Esteva, cited in Sachs 1992:9).

When the term 'under-development' was first coined after the Second World War, it essentially reinforced the hegemonic content in the Northern beliefs and definitions of what 'development' is about. But, what about the values in other cultures? What are the definitions and indicators of 'development' in the South, in other social forms? Are material well-being and abundance, economic prosperity, or technological 'advancement' the only indicators of 'development'? What about richness in humane values as reflected in the family, social, gender, racial and ethnic relations? In many Southern cultures, there are indeed values that are considered to be proper norms in a humane society and which could just as well be taken as indicators of 'development'. There is no point in pitching the values of the North (considered 'developed', industrial and rich) against those of the South (considered as 'under-developed, poor, for instance), or vice versa. In as much as the North seeks recognition and respect for *its* values, similarly respect must also be rendered to those of the South. Dichotomies need to give way to mutual recognition, though without denying the universality of certain human values which are pertinent and central to human development: values such as on gender, equality, liberty and the right to free expression, ethnic equality and harmony among societies.

In this respect, despite its weaknesses, the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* and the *Human Development Index* it uses to indicate levels of 'development' country by country are quite a departure from the previous discourse on the determinants of development indicators. It constitutes a major breakthrough in the process of re-thinking development paradigms. If dichotomies are to be avoided and recognition of values in all cultures is to prevail, development should be interpreted as the totality of people's material well-being on the one hand and the flourishing of their ethical and cultural values on the other. Can one speak of 'development' in terms of material abundance if this is accompanied by ethical and cultural impoverishment? And *vice versa*?

In view of the prevalence of the information economy over the industrial economy and that of the information society over the industrial society (Castells, 1996:77-147), how development under conditions of opulence should be viewed, is

becoming an interesting question. And how is that related to the notion of civil society? These are crucial categories when it comes to analysing globalization and the impact of the corporate world's adventure in world politics against the background of a seemingly 'fledging democracy' under opulence. Can there indeed be development where impoverishment at the level of knowledge prevails even where there is opulence? Can there be civilization when one's own government rides the roughshod over other peoples' lives in the name of protecting one's own 'national interest'? Isn't the deprivation of capability at the political level of a given society a function of the deprivation of the knowledge of those whose government is behind the capability deprivation of the former? As we will see in the last part of this chapter when I deal with the definition of a civil society, knowledge is at the core of this definition.

The categories defining development assume more global dimensions as interconnectedness and interdependence is the reality of the contemporary, globalized world. That is indeed why the definitions of poverty, development and civil society must start with the prevailing conditions made real by globalization. As I will shortly deal with the relations between globalization, poverty and civil society, let us briefly ponder globalization in relation to development. Development as opposed to material opulence should be viewed as the empowerment of the individual human being and communities at the political level, that is, the capability/freedom of people to determine the conditions of their existence, decide on matters that affect their own lives through *ownership* of macro and micro policies. Political mechanisms or the space that make this ownership possible, the modalities of which depend on the concrete conditions of each society, need to be in place. Without such mechanism of policy ownership by the community, empowerment will always be hijacked by and disappear through the magic formula of *representation* or the theory and practice of the *vanguard*. The remedy for this is the degree to which the community is knowledgeable, where knowledgeable refers to knowledge of the conditions that govern the conditions of their own existence.

It is against the background of this notion of 'development' that I am going to discuss the treatise on poverty. As has hitherto been understood, poverty has meant material deprivation in terms of money, food, shelter and so on. Amartya Sen's principal contribution comes from the new dimension he gave to the definition of poverty. According to him, poverty is a totality of various forms of deprivation summed up as 'capability deprivation'. The definition and postulate of poverty must be contextualized within the general framework of social justice. Therein lie the fundamental components of social justice, with freedom emerging as the most prominent category defining and postulating poverty. '... In analyzing social justice, there is a strong case for judging individual advantage in terms of the capabilities that a person has, that is, the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has a reason to value. In this perspective, poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of income, which is the standard criterion of identification

of poverty' (Sen, 1999:87). Individuals are poor not only because they are deprived of sufficient income. Income is an important category and 'instrumentally significant' in overcoming poverty. But, people become poor when they are deprived of their capacity to meet their necessities. Capability must be seen as a totality fusing various dimensions of capabilities that are political, social and material in nature. According to Sen, if people are accorded the empowering political space (for participation) and policy at the political level and basic social services such as education and health care, then it is possible to beat poverty.

By now, it must be quite obvious that capabilities in this discourse are indeed freedoms and deprivation of these freedoms, to use Sen's terminology, is unfreedom. Hence 'Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity or repressive states. Despite unprecedented increases in overall opulence, the contemporary world denies elementary freedoms to vast numbers – perhaps even the majority – of people' (ibid., 3-4).

Poverty is lack of development, and development is a negation of poverty. In this sense poverty and development are opposite sides of the coin. By the same token the various components of development or the lack of it – poverty – (economic, political and social) are also interconnected though the proportion that each component occupies within a given social formation may vary from one society to another. In rich countries, material opulence may prevail over the low level of knowledgeability of the conditions of their existence (i.e. as global citizens) in this interdependent world. By contrast, the various components of development may prevail in a balanced way so as to provide the community the empowerment it needs for its existence as in the case of the Kerala state of India as Sen asserts (ibid., 35-54). In the final analysis, Sen suggests that in doing away with poverty it is important to enhance the capabilities of people by public policy and by enhancing the participatory capabilities of the public, which in effect means universalizing freedom. These are extremely useful theories at the normative level.

There is another dimension to the state of poverty. Human history attests to the universal truth that poverty and privilege constitute a symbiotic relationship. In most cases the poor exist because there is another who is privileged. The poor also exist because there is another who deprives them of the capabilities to determine the conditions that govern their existence. If there is no one to deprive people of their capabilities, how can they become poor? This deprivation was made possible not by the consent of the poor but by blood and fire. Throughout the contemporary world, the poor are still held in place by blood and fire. Sustainable development must discontinue this state of affairs if poverty has to end and development to take place.

However, beyond the lack of macro policy or strategy of emancipation, there are values and traditional practices that are embedded within cultures informing and shaping the 'norms' [of gender relationships] of society that impede advances towards eradicating unfreedom. In other words, regarding the prevalence of poverty and under-development, though the lion's share of the blame rests on those who command, the state and society also have deep-seated problems and weaknesses that prop up poverty and under-development. These problems/weaknesses are located within the domain of gender relations and the marginalization of women. The corollary is thus: freedom is the precondition for development, marginalization of women constitutes unfreedom, and if women constitute half of society on average, half of society's problems of poverty and under-development are associated with this marginalization. That brings me to the issue of gender relations and women as social agencies of development.

3.2 The gender dimensions of poverty

Gender, both as a discourse and instrument in the promotion of equality between women and men, has been increasingly recognized by the international community and the UN in particular. Since the 1970s, the centuries-old struggle of women waged for equality started to bear fruit both in the adoption of a number of international instruments and in the policies of quite a number of governments, although mostly in the North. The UN has so far adopted twenty international instruments, from the ILO Maternity Protection Convention in 1919 to the UN Special Sessions on Copenhagen + 5 and Beijing in 2000 (for a complete list (see Appendix i). The effort to create new instruments as well as to have existing instruments implemented still continues.

Women and their men supporters are also waging a massive campaign from below for gender equality and justice in almost all countries of the world. There are numerous women's rights organizations advocating respect for and implementation of the international instruments as well as the laws of individual countries to attain gender equality. Development and rights-based NGOs have also mushroomed throughout the world. Most have adopted a policy of gender mainstreaming as well as fighting for women's equality as one of their main agendas. A new type of social movement that takes social mobilization for equality as its central activity, such as 'Women in Black' and 'Courts of Women', is also emerging in countries such as India and other countries in South Asia as well as in the Philippines (El Taller, 1996). This massive movement from below gave rise to the formation of networks of civic groups on country, sub-regional, regional, continental and global levels.

However, despite such a fantastic movement from below as well as the enactment of international instruments from above, the oppression and marginalization of women and violence against them continues at an alarming rate. The more women fight for equality and the more recognition they get

internationally, the more the patriarchal onslaught seems to increase in ferocity. This is not without reason. The struggle for equality of women involves a social change that knocks at the door of every household. This struggle is not about targeting an enemy located outside. The enemy does not constitute a different social class or race. As Maria Mies put it '... the women's movement does not address its demands mainly to some external agency or enemy, such as the state, the capitalists, as the other movements do, but addresses itself to people in their most intimate human relations, the relationship between men and women, with a view to changing these relations (Mies, 1986: 6). However, as human relations are determined by particular forms of perception prevailing at a given point in time in a given society, the other level of the struggle constitutes the deconstruction of these perceptions. It is these perceptions that determine relations between men and women, men and men, and women and women. The prevailing patriarchal perceptions dictate what men think about women and vice versa, what men think about themselves and other men and what women think about themselves as well as about other women. Patriarchal perceptions are in the main social constructions that are consolidated and refined over time and civilizations. The other level of struggle for gender equality involves the deconstruction of these social constructs from the minds of men and women alike. That is indeed an uphill struggle as it involves practically everyone and that is why the struggle for gender equality is indeed one of the final hurdles to cross in social development.

In the South, this struggle is more complicated by the onslaught of the forces of patriarchy. The most formidable difficulty is posed by tradition and culture. This difficulty in turn is informed by religions. Patriarchal arguments are more often than not advanced with the preservation of tradition and/or culture as crucial components of life and the dignity of the family. Religion is used and misused to rationalize these patriarchal arguments. However, as we shall see, gender and equality between men and women play a pivotal role in the struggle for social development.

Gender dimensions of poverty/under-development are institutionalized unfreedom and a totality of capability deprivation of women at various levels, thereby negatively affecting the process of social development as a whole. The emphasis must be on culturally embedded social values, which denigrate women supposedly as a function of the superiority of the man but which in fact is a function of the under-development of society as a whole. In the latter part of this section I will reflect on why women are the historical agent of development particularly in the concrete social and political conditions of under-developed formations.

The treatise on 'freedom as precondition for development' that I dealt with in the previous pages must go beyond rationalizing the indispensability of freedom and establish the links between the various components that make this freedom workable and practical in a given society at a given moment and identify the

principal social agency for development. Beyond the necessity of space for popular participation by civil society, that is, freedom, there is also a structural problem at the cultural and ethical level that prevents society from developing the disposition to accept, absorb and consolidate democratic ideas and alternatives. It is crucial in a discourse on the problems of evolution of civil society and democracy to identify these hurdles and get to the nature and characteristic feature of their construction. Indeed, it is the identification of these hurdles that can lead to identifying areas of intervention that can make a breakthrough towards change of perceptions in a given society. It is clear from this assertion that categories such as freedom, development, gender [equity] and finally civil society are interrelated.

On the other hand, the totality of these categories resulting in the emergence of democracy in the body and soul of civil society is directly proportional to the development of the institutions of governance, whose culmination is the emergence of a state, a modern state. In the process of both transformations, that is, from *society* [deprived of its capabilities, without freedom] to a *civil society* [with freedom and enhanced capabilities] and from a *government* to a *modern state* the transformations of individuals is pivotal; namely the transformation of *subjects* [individuals without freedom, deprived capabilities, dormant and docile] to *citizens* [individuals with freedom, vibrant, released inertia].

Society consists of individuals, but society outside the realm of individuals does not exist. Dealing with social development deals with general categories such as society in toto, but development concerns should address the role of individuals in society. From the development perspective, the change and transformation of individuals in society is an indispensable component of the process. In the process of transformation of a traditional society, the transformation of individuals takes the form of subject to citizen. The transformation of the individual in society from subject to citizen is a historic process embodying several elements brought about mainly by macro and micro policies and strategies. In this process of the transformation of the individual, gender is pivotal. Gender is taken here as a totality of various categories, mainly the change in perception of the relationship between the two sexes, the improvement of the status of women in terms of equity in every aspect of life, respect for the human rights of women with ending violence against them being paramount, nurturing children as care-takers of the future generation, the prominence of gender as a discourse, appropriate policies and strategies to consolidate the improvement in the position of women in society and others. As we will see, the emergence of a civil society and democracy as well as that of the state are all radical undertakings requiring departures from hitherto-held and/or prevailing perceptions and practices. Indeed, the gender component of this social transformation is the single most significant aspect that gives it its radical feature.

What gives gender a radical feature is the empowerment perspective regarding women. Empowerment for women constitutes their freedom in the various

dimensions of their capabilities. Empowerment, as a social and political phenomenon, is also a process. Because it is a process and multi-faceted, empowerment is 'inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability' (Kabeer, cited in Razavi, 2000:28). Empowerment and disempowerment constitute the two sides of the same phenomenon. The enhancement in the process of one is a function of the weakening of the other; the acceleration in the process of empowerment weakens disempowerment. Because 'power is the ability to make choices' (ibid., 28) the denial or obstruction of the ability of women to make choices, whether in the form of legislation, customary laws or even religious laws and whether strictly textual or by way of interpretation retards empowerment and accelerates disempowerment.

Making choices can also retard the process of empowerment unless certain aspects of the totality of a given situation that influences the *capabilities to make choices* is clearly spelt out. In traditional formations the most serious hurdle that affect women's choices is the level of knowledgeability and information. Here, what rules society is in most cases not the conventional knowledge acquired through modern education but traditional perceptions informed by religious interpretations and/or misinterpretations that largely sanctify the degradation of women. Because such perceptions are perceived as culture and tradition, challenging them constitutes a revolt against tradition and sometimes religion. These perceptions have a compelling impact on women's consciousness. It should not come as a surprise that there are women who have internalized inequality. As Razavi says, 'A case in point is the kind of behaviour on the part of women which seems to suggest that they have internalized their social status as persons of lesser value ...' (Razavi, 2000:11). Traditional women are victims of such perceptions as they are located at the receiving end of the marginalization sanctified by these perceptions, but also by being actively involved in furthering them. In Sudan, for instance, it is older women who are the champions of the most brutal forms of female genital mutilation. In a study on female circumcision in Sudan conducted in 1983, it was found that women are equally in favour of the practice as 24% of the women respondents opted for the most severe form of mutilation called pharaonic circumcision as opposed to 12% of the men respondents (Khartoum University Report, 1983:114).

The issue at hand here is indeed the factor that affects the capability of women themselves to make choices (the right choices) namely education. It need not follow from this assertion that uneducated women cannot make the right choices. But knowledgeability and information provided by a process of formal or civic education can play a crucial role. Amartya Sen deals extensively with the issues of women's education and how that contributed to the empowerment of women in the Indian state of Kerala. Enhancing the development of social capital can also play a similar role. In addition, Naila Kabeer relates making choices to the possibility of alternatives. She considers resources as the precondition to make

and exercise choices: 'Resources include not only material resources in the more conventional economic sense, but also the various *human and social resources* which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choices' (ibid., 29, italics mine). At the core of Kabeer's proposition 'human and social resources' is indeed education, the radical change in perceptions mainly of the relations between women and men, boys and girls and the support this change needs by having in place appropriate policy, legislation and institutions.

The required change in perception is not just for women but also for society as a whole. In as much as knowledgeability is crucial for women's capabilities to make choices is a radical undertaking in its own right, a radical change in perception of gender relations on the part of society as a whole also has a massive impact on galvanizing the process of ending poverty and under-development. Here I am going to deal with capabilities deprived not only by the state or dominant forces in society as Sen's theory of entitlements suggests but also about capabilities that society deprived itself of. These are what Razavi calls 'socially-enforced morale rules' (Razavi, 2000:16). In other words even if the legal constraints for the exercise of democratic rights at the political level are lifted, the practice of democracy will not follow unless these legally enforced rights are complemented by the socially-enforced ones. In traditional formations where customary laws prevail over the statutory ones, socially-enforced customs and morale also prevail over the politically proclaimed rights. During the constitutional review process in Kenya, Muslim women embarked upon a campaign against the proclamation of women's rights in the proposed draft constitution. Similarly, rights of a democratic nature proclaimed legally can also be reversed if the socially-enforced morale and custom stands against them. Such resistance comes largely when the prescribed rights deal with women's rights.

Values strongly embedded in traditions and cultures remain conservative not only vis-à-vis proposed or legally-enforced changes. They are also posed as such at 'normal' times even in the absence of a top-down approach. In cultures and traditions where religions have not undergone reformations, norms that pass as religious interpretations are so pervasive that they normally inform the rationale behind the relations between men and women. The most stubborn resistance to a radical change in gender perceptions come from such societies. Because the conservatism is so ingrained as *tradition* it tends to foster resistance to changes in other domains, such as diversifying means of livelihood, which in turn affects the process of primitive accumulation. However, accumulation requires a degree of ascetism, which in turn requires a change in perception of patterns of life as a whole. In Buddhist culture where women are not as severely deprived as women in other traditional cultures, the ascetism required for accumulation also came from women to make the process of accumulation relatively successful.

A citizen is a subject with all deprived capabilities reinstated. Among these deprived capabilities is the consciousness of the individual of the conditions of his/her own existence. Gender equality lies at the heart of this consciousness. As

the empowerment-disempowerment binary, the practice of violence against women is at the same time the perpetuation of male hegemony and is used as a critical tool to subjugate women and punish those who try to change it. As Doriene Rowan-Campbell says 'Violence against women is a critical tool in the maintenance of male hegemony; it is the means by which the patriarchal requirements of conformity and obedience are extended to women and enforced. In hierarchies, men may obey through fear of losing jobs, status, or power; women are made to fear violence. As violence is inextricably linked with male hegemony, only ending that hegemony is going to reduce violence and persuade citizens that it is an issue for societal concern rather than an isolated problem' (Campbell, 1999:20). Ignorance is one form of deprived capability that stands in the way of the individual from being transformed from an individual with deprived capabilities to an individual with these capabilities. As we will see below, this has an impact on perpetuating poverty and under-development.

Perceptions of gender relations have therefore a direct impact on affecting the changes required in a given traditional society including the process to reverse and end poverty as well as in ending under-development. Both Bina Agarwal and Naila Kabeer established the significance of gender as a central dimension of poverty (Kabeer 1999: 32). The empowerment of women, which starts with a radical change in perception by society as a whole is a key element of this transformation. As Razavi argues 'certain trends of policy discourse have identified female empowerment as an effective means for reducing poverty' (ibid., 10). Gender awareness is an indispensable part of the consciousness and knowledgeability required for a radical change of society towards ending poverty and bringing development.

Demographically too, the gender dimension of poverty is a focal area. Evidence indicates that poverty today has a woman's face and that the feminization of poverty is increasing globally. Women occupy the lowest echelons of the poorest of the poor and women-headed households on balance tended to be poorer than male-headed ones (Kabeer, 1999:32). A 1992 report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on rural poverty unambiguously established the fact that rural women constitute the poorest of the poor and that the trend of feminization of poverty is increasing. 'The total number of women living under the poverty line in developing countries was estimated in 1988 to be 564 million. This represented an increase of 47% above the numbers in 1965-70, compared with 30% for rural men below the poverty line' (as quoted in Kabeer, ibid., 32). This indeed is as far as material poverty is concerned. As I have already indicated however, poverty constitutes a multitude of capability deprivations generated at the household and societal levels where various social institutions play their part. As Kabeer says, 'The gender-related dimension of poverty arises from a combination of interlocking systems of disadvantages embedded in these various social institutions' (ibid., 33).

In summary, as far as women are concerned, poverty is multi-faceted. So is their unfreedom. By definition, this makes the scope of women's unfreedom wide, encompassing several categories. Inequality in practice and inequality at the level of perception is the dominant feature of this unfreedom. This gives way to the absolute hegemony of men in society rationalized' (irrationalized) by the traditional knowledge system. Violence against women is perpetrated to this effect. Socially, women have no right of choice even when it comes to choose a man who they are going to live with for the rest of their lives. In patri-lineal kinship, the woman's choice to marry does not even arise. Instead, arranged marriage is the norm compounded by trade involving the woman herself in a form of dowry. As Alice Clark says 'In a patrilineal kinship system where marriages are arranged on principles of dowry and hypergamy, and where women are objects of exchange along with other forms of wealth, excess female mortality is argued to be an inevitable outcome' (quoted in Sudha and Rajan, 2000:179).

3.3 Gender as the domain, women as the historical agent of development

The culmination of my analysis of poverty and the gender dimensions of it is to establish the bold assertion that if real social development is desired on a sustainable basis, gender should be its domain and women its historical agent. Below, I enumerate a number of factors that corroborate this assertion before returning to our discussion of civil society as juxtaposed with the poverty/freedom nexus.

- The demographic imperative: women constitute at least half the population of every society in the world. In the dominant development discourse however, this demographic reality has never been given the importance it deserves. A development theory that does not give prominence to improving the position of women – not in words but in putting into practice a strategy to make it a reality – is not worth being a development theory. Though contemporary theories do emphasize the gender dimensions of development, the degree of importance it is accorded does not correspond with the demographic reality.
- Feminization of poverty: feminization of poverty has become global and women constitute 70% of the world's poor. This reality should compel any development theory worthy of the name to start off with the gender dimensions of poverty. Successive UNDP human development reports indicate that the position of women globally and the state of feminization of poverty have worsened. This begs attention at the level of development theory, policy and strategy.
- The hitherto marginalized: throughout history women have always been excluded from power. In no society in the world is the contrary claimed. That has always been a historic reality. If social development in general and freedom and the idea of civil society are about the empowerment of the hitherto dis-

empowered, then women are the ideal candidates as they have always been excluded from power. In terms of arena, civil society is that sphere of society that is outside the state sphere. Women have always been outside the sphere of state and state power.

- The radical discourse imperative: from the point of view of the necessity of a radical perspective at the cognitive level as the precondition for the subject-to-citizen transformation, which I will discuss shortly, the gender perspective is central. Also, I have argued earlier in this thesis that the gender discourse is the key to the radical change in perception towards not only gender relationships but also development imperatives as a whole.

- No gender perspective, no emancipation of women without men's participation: indeed, the most difficult part of the struggle to change society towards a radical perspective in order to generate gender equality ultimately depends on whether or not men take an active part in the struggle. As Doriene Campbell aptly put it 'Male hegemony can only be dismantled and eroded by working with men; it has to implode from within. Women can not do it alone' (Campbell, 1999:29). The emancipation of women is not just for women, it is for society as a whole. Adopting a radical outlook for men in this regard is the key to solving the riddle of gender inequality. And the greatest of all the riddles is whether or not men would change. Indeed they do as the White Ribbon Movement has shown. In fact, it is this revolution of the mind at the personal and collective levels that constitutes the most difficult part as the most difficult thing for humans, and men in this case, is to change the conservative notions that they have had since their birth. If that change occurs, development has a chance.

However, the place gender as a domain of discourse has in the process of social development and women as its historical agent can best be explained within the context of sustainable development. A few words about sustainable development are in order here. Sustainable development is not only about ensuring a sustained economic growth and democratization for the current generation. It is also about bestowing the future generation with the physical domain, other means of livelihood and the political culture for sustaining life. Sustainable development has thus a generational dimension. Sustainable development is ensuring the preservation and bestowing the physical domain, the environment, to the future generation. Thus, it has the dimension of the physical domain. Thirdly, sustainable development has the dimension of the historical agent. Let's briefly look at these three domains of sustainable development.

- The generational dimension: sustainable development is also about the future generation. What the present generation is going to bestow on the future generation constitutes one category while rearing and grooming the future generation constitutes another because ensuring the sustainability of life in the future depends on the capacity of the future generation. Preparing the future generation for such a gigantic task is indeed the key to sustainable development.

In other words, the issue of children, how they are raised and how they should be raised and the role to be played by women and men in this, are important questions. Stating what should be done in the normative sense is programmatic by nature, but one has to deal with the reality. Indeed, before the issue of rearing and grooming children, what is essential in the context of poor societies in particular is the issue of child survival. One of the devastating problems of such societies is the high infant mortality.

What is therefore noteworthy is the role currently played by women and men in ensuring child-survival. Beyond doubt, women play the role of ensuring child survival practically the world over as it indeed is posited as their 'natural' role. So many studies in traditional formations indicate the responsible role that women play in maintaining a household as well as in rearing children. But, the capacity of women is increasingly being undermined by the process of their disempowerment at all levels as a result of various forms of deprivation, namely educational, employment and so on. The more the woman is deprived of such capabilities as education and jobs, the less secure is child survival. As Amartya Sen argues 'There is considerable evidence that women's education and literacy tend to reduce the mortality rates of children. The influence works through many channels, but perhaps most immediately, it works through the importance that mothers attach to the welfare of the children, and the opportunity the mothers have, when their agency is respected and empowered, to influence family decisions in that direction. ... Similarly, women's empowerment appears to have a strong influence in reducing the much observed gender bias in survival (particularly against young girls)' (Sen, 1999:195).

Indeed, education for women empowers them both at the cognitive and employment levels. The second component in the empowerment process is the employment of women, women being the breadwinners in the household. Sen continues 'First, involvement in gainful employment has many positive effects on a woman's agency roles, which often include greater emphasis being placed on child care and greater ability to attach more priority to child care in joint family decisions. Second, since men typically show great reluctance to share the domestic chores, this greater desire for more priority on child care may not be easy for the women to execute when they are saddled with the "double burden" of household work and outside employment' (ibid., 196).

Women's record in performing better in business has also been established. Both in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the experience of providing credit services to rural households clearly indicate that when men took the credit, there were numerous cases in which they failed to pay back the debt because they spent the money on drinking and 'pleasure' and/or failed in the business for which they borrowed the money. Credits require discipline and responsibility which women have. Studies of the Grameen Bank credit experience in rural Bangladesh attest to this. As Sen says

The economic participation of women is, thus, both a reward on its own (with associated reduction of gender bias in the treatment of women in family decisions), and a major influence for social change in general ... The remarkable success of the Grameen Bank is a good example of this. That visionary micro credit movement, led by Muhammad Yunis, has consistently aimed at removing the disadvantage from which women suffer, because of discriminatory treatment in the rural credit market, by making a special effort to provide credit to women borrowers. The result has been a very high proportion of women among customers of the Grameen Bank. The remarkable record of that bank in having a very high rate of repayment (reported to be close to 98 per cent) is not unrelated to the way women have responded to the opportunities offered to them and to the prospects of ensuring the continuation of such arrangements (ibid., 201).

In a nutshell, women have a 'natural' affinity for rearing children, including ensuring child survival, which in turn requires women's empowerment at the level of education and gainful employment. In other words, if women are accorded access to education and gainful employment, the survival of children, the leaders of the future generation, will be ensured through the reduction of mortality rates. This is what I mean by the generational dimension of sustainable development and the place that women occupy in it.

- The Population Dimension: before the word 'population' became a scare-crow of a sort in Western thought, population was indeed profoundly positive. However, when industrialization and modernization changed the natural environment to a 'scarce natural resource' for the production of commodities and capital accumulation, population, which was a natural category, was also incorporated in the general calculation of commodity production, capital accumulation and income per household. By the second millennium, it has been globally recognized that corporate globalization has a lot to do with global poverty. Traditional societies that were not connected to the global capital chain are now not only affected by corporate expansion and/or corporate-imposed 'development' policies such as structural adjustment programmes, but are in fact suffering from poverty as a result of enormous 'development' projects.

Globalization of poverty has also changed the notion about population from a natural category to a problem category as the hitherto impenetrable fortresses of traditional and indigenous societies are now subjected to corporate exploitation. The subsequent prevalence of poverty, both rural and urban, has made it impossible for the poor to diversify their livelihood to enhance their income so as to feed themselves and rear children. In this sense, population has indeed been made a problem by globalization. It is therefore crucial to distinguish the notion of population as a problem when the victims refer to it as such and when the perpetrators refer to it. The US government, some other Western governments and the World Bank are determined to curb the problem of 'over-population' particularly in South Asia. Numerous projects such as sterilization programmes have been conducted. In this massive campaign it is poor women who are encouraged to undergo the sterilization programme. The fundamental flow of this

project is the fact that it is aimed at 'eradicating poverty', which was in fact created by its own system. As Vandana Shiva says: 'It has been adequately proven that poor people without economic security are forced to have more children. To force them to have few children or no children, without changing the socio-economic conditions of their life that make it rational for them to have more children is not a politics of choice, it is a politics of coercion' (Shiva, 1994:6). It is indeed imperative for a developmental state to address problems of population with a two-pronged approach: following a development strategy to eradicate poverty through livelihood diversification and massive education on voluntary population control.

Nevertheless, it is ultimately the woman in the household who is the object and subject of a population problem. A decisive element in this is the reproductive rights of women. That is why the issue of population must be linked to the issue of sustainable development and that is indeed why the reproductive rights of women must be at the heart of the population and development discourse and policy. As Shiva argued prior to the Population Summit in Cairo in 1994 'The most important challenge in Cairo will be to transcend the politics of Washington DC and the Holy See, and put the Third World women at the centre of the population discourse – as subjects, determining their lives and health, not as subjects of state, or super state policies or as pawns in conflicts between the patriarchs of religion and the patriarchy of super state systems and the demographic establishment' (ibid., 6). Thus, needless to say, gender is central to population issues, which in turn have a colossal impact on the state of poverty in a given country.

▪ The dimension of the physical domain (the environment): the environment and the ecosystem as a whole are the physical domain of sustainable development. However, what 'civilization' (as in the industrial revolution and modernization) did to nature, the environment and ecology is under massive threat, so much so that the future of human civilization is being questioned. This destruction was rationalized and conducted on the basis of a 'science' and cosmology that claim that development means the expansion of the market, the overproduction of commodities and unchecked capital accumulation. Ecofeminists rightly argue that this cosmology is informed by patriarchy and the 'science' it upheld is a masculine science advanced by 'scientists' such as Francis Bacon. Therefore, the destruction of nature (environment and ecology) went hand in hand with the degradation of women rationalized by the same masculine science. As Maria Mies argues '... capitalist patriarchy or "modern" civilization is based on a cosmology and anthropology that structurally dichotomizes reality, and hierarchically opposes the two parts to each other: the one always considered superior, always thriving, and progressing at the expense of the other. Thus, nature is subordinated to man; woman to man; consumption to production; and the local to the global, and so on. Feminists have long criticized this dichotomy, particularly the structural division of man and nature, which is seen as analogous to that of man and woman' (Mies, 1993:5). As a proposition Mies advances the

idea of having in place a new cosmology to inform development policies as well as principles governing production and reproduction in general. 'An ecofeminist perspective propounds,' she continues, 'the need for a new cosmology and a new anthropology which recognizes that life in nature (which includes human beings) is maintained by means of co-operation, and mutual care and love. Only in this way can we be enabled to respect and preserve the diversity of all life forms, including their cultural expressions, as true sources of our well-being and happiness. ... This effort to create a holistic, all-life embracing cosmology and anthropology, must necessarily imply a concept of freedom different from that used since the enlightenment' (ibid. 6).

At the centre of the search for a new cosmology is indeed the preservation of biodiversity. It is in this terrain that women's roles are more glaring. In the first place, the capitalist 'development' rationalized by the patriarchal 'science' and informed by the dominant masculine cosmology has proven to be destructive. Second, women in many cultures of traditional societies in particular have the natural affinity to preserving the biodiversity through their sheer engagement, which is diversified. As Vandana Shiva makes her point, 'Women's work and knowledge is central to biodiversity conservation and utilization both because they work between "sectors" and because they perform multiple tasks' (Shiva, 1993:166). In Sub-Saharan Africa women's role in preserving biodiversity is well known. In Uganda in particular, it is the women who have the expertise on traditional medicine, a discipline that requires collection and preservation of plants, flowers and herbs. Therefore, women have a natural affinity towards the protection of the environment.

In summary, as we have seen, the place that women and gender as a perspective have on the most significant domains of sustainable development, gender as a discourse and as an instrument to bring about gender equality through the empowerment of women, play a pivotal role in eradicating poverty and under-development as well as in generating social development. Amartya Sen powerfully attests to this: 'Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women. This is indeed a crucial aspect of "development as freedom"' (ibid., 203.) In traditional formations therefore gender is a domain for development while women constitute a historical agent for social change.

3.4 Civil society in traditional formations: a postulate

3.4.1 Civil Society as a historical category

The theoretical postulate I am going to advance in this section is, in a nutshell, a synthesis of the various categories of theories I have been dealing with so far and a synergy between them. The synergy of these theoretical categories as I have interpreted them will constitute the essence of how a civil society in traditional formations should be viewed. Needless to say, therefore, that I have departed from the classical approach to civil society and the various approaches in the contemporary political science and sociological literature. My major contention is: globalization of the market as the reality of the contemporary world has changed the forms of the criteria that need to define civil society. It is this change that makes it impossible to define civil society in traditional formations without relating it to democracy, freedom and development today.

Civil society is, in the first place, a historical category belonging to a specific period in the history of a given community of people (nation), a period characterized by the emergence of the nation-state and political freedom for society. In Europe, this period was the era of the industrial revolution, which brought about the nation-state and political freedom that went into history as bourgeois democracy. In contemporary traditional formations in which the *historical* process of the emergence of the 'nation-state' could not take the historical path through which Europe passed, the concomitant emergence of a civil society could also not take the same historical path. That civil society needs to correspond with the existence of freedom is an essential criterion for the existence of the former.

Furthermore, civil society is that part of society located outside the sphere of state power. Civil society must be independent of the state and its independent existence outside the sphere of political power is essential. Some governments in the South attempt to portray themselves as democratic by 'proving the existence of civil society' and those who they call civil society are all 'associations' tied with the state apparatus. However, the independent existence of civil society is essential. In fact, as I have argued, state and civil society are symbiotic. Therefore, in as much as the state seeks sovereignty, civil society must also be sovereign. Independence is *sine qua non* for sovereignty.

In the contemporary world, what determines the conditions of existence of societies in traditional formations are national and global factors. Many things in society no longer depend on the decisions of the local chief, caliphate, guru or kings fortress in their castles. We are living at a time when the nature of interaction between nations has transcended commodities and capital. The state/nation is no longer autonomous. The dominant forces are the corporate and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and WTO who act as global regimes.

The consequences of policy prescriptions and conditionalities through the infamous structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s

imposed by the World Bank and IMF are well known for their destructive role in the economies of poor countries. Now that the World Bank itself has admitted the failure of the SAPs, it does not mean that it has ended its hegemonic policies towards poor countries. New formulas are being manufactured such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and many more may come. One of the World Bank's chief economists, Joseph Stiglitz, attests to this (see Stiglitz, 2002:214, 248). The consequences of the policy prescriptions by the World Bank and the IMF indeed have drastic consequences for the economies of poor countries, effectively contributing to the exacerbation of poverty. In addition, the WTO has come to the scene only to make the lives of poor countries more miserable. It has instituted new international trade arrangements which give extra power to the corporate, facilitates unfair trade which affects poor countries and greatly exacerbates the state of poverty. These developments at the global level have now become the reality of the contemporary world, which affect the lives of individuals and communities in poor countries, thereby becoming an important determinant of the conditions of existence of communities in poor countries.

3.4.2 Nation-state, freedom and space

On the other hand, a developmental state that is required to generate development encourages engagement with society as that is extremely beneficial for articulating policies. It then creates policies that are supported by the community. By encouraging associational life, a developmental state facilitates the revival of society as a whole from the drudgery of hopelessness and apathy and becomes the vehicle of national revival in which there is a spirit of optimism and faith in the general direction of the country. By engaging society, both in dialogue and public debate, the developmental state in turn enhances its own capacity to play its role in development.

A developmental state seriously and genuinely works towards deepening and broadening the sovereignty of society in as much as it seeks its sovereignty from society. This is another crucial element in the development of the process that leads up to the emergence of a civil society. However, the problem of most governments in traditional formations is that they still have the mentality of the middle ages, which believes that the government is omnipotent and omnipresent. They are control-freaks and welcome the presence of the government in every facet of life, including in sports. When society is controlled by those who think that they are omniscient and are entitled to lead all facets of its life, the consequences will be apathy and opposition. Apathy and opposition lead to an unhealthy situation in which the process of development will be negatively affected. Space for participation for society is a crucial factor for a civil society to emerge. Space enables society to participate freely in the development process, independent of the ruling elite.

Another prerequisite for a civil society to emerge is the *prevalence of the rule of law*. From the details of the regulating role of the state, and the form of state

commensurate with the concrete condition of the country that needs to emerge from the ashes of poverty and unfreedom, to the rights of associations and citizens, can only be guaranteed by a law that binds everyone. Also, it is crucial that the institutions of law enforcement be in place so as to protect the individual citizen against crimes that can be committed by officials and/or individuals. For instance, an institution of governance that can not protect women from the most horrible forms of violence unleashed against them, cannot claim prevalence of the rule of law as it has failed to protect half of the population. If a government fails to enforce its own laws, damage at two levels ensues.

First, corruption will be rampant as officials are encouraged to subvert or bend the law for their own purposes or they will make it unworkable, upon which they won't be accountable for the measures they take against the law. Second, corruption among the elite will quickly spread and become the 'norm' as society will also attempt to subvert the law. As a result, the culture of abiding by the law will decline. That in turn will affect relationships among individuals and institutions leading up to unhealthy social conflicts, thereby negatively affecting the spirit of patriotism and the optimism that is required for national revival. In such a situation, the process of the emergence of a civil society will be greatly hampered.

3.4.2 Subjects, citizens, globalisation and civil society

In this section, I will attempt to create a synergy among the various categories of theory that I have so far dealt with in relation to nation-state, democracy, poverty, gender and so on, in order to construct a definition of civil society in a traditional formation. In order to this, I state a premise against which this definition will be constructed. The most significant category of premises is the reality of corporate globalisation (or globalisation of the market), which in my perception has changed the nature of state-society relationships and the fundamental percept that a nation-state in the liberal sense has so far functioned in the Western world. The reality of corporate globalisation, which has negatively affected largely the South, has kept the 'state' in the South captive, which in turn has hampered not only the process of the emergence of civil societies in the South but also reduced the place the individual should have in society. It is my contention in this thesis that the place individuals occupy in traditional societies and the role they play in the development/democratization process is crucial for the virtual civil society at the local level to play its historical role in unison with the global civil society.

I have already expressed my view that the pattern of functions of the 'state' on the one hand and the extreme under-development of 'civil society' on the other lie at the root of the predicament of a traditional formation such as that of Sub-Saharan Africa. The colonial construct of the 'state', which Africa inherited in the post-independence setting has a lot do with misconstruing the role of the 'state'. Neo-colonization and corporate globalisation in particular have further changed the functions of the 'state'. The contemporary reality of the functions of the

African 'state' cannot be explained by the old theory of nation-state and liberal democracy. Corporate globalisation has nullified that.

Furthermore, classical theories of the nation-state and liberalism highlighted the roles of the nation-state and civil society at large with emphasis on individual freedom. By keeping the 'state' captive, corporate globalization has obliterated the role of the state, thereby compelling individuals to play a more meaningful role than was hitherto designated to them in the name of individual freedom. The virtual civil society in the traditional formations cannot be explained without the role of the virtual citizen. In the second part of this section I will deal with the analysis of the transformation of subjects to citizens in the traditional setting.

3.4.3 Corporate globalisation, 'state' and society

The discussion of globalisation began roughly in the early 1970s with a treatise on what would happen to the capitalist society in late nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties. Some reflect on what a post-industrial society would look like. A notable work in this regard is that of Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (Bell, 1973). Bell forecast that in thirty to fifty years a post-industrial society would emerge. That would involve primarily a change in the social structure and its consequences that would vary in societies with different political and cultural configurations (Bell, 1973: xxiv). Bell's treatise provoked much discussion and debate between sociologists. Later on, other scholars such as Ernest Mandel extensively reflected on the latest phase of capitalism (Mandel, *Late Capitalism*, Verso, London, 1999). These early works led to a number of political postulates that resulted in the use of the term 'globalization'.

A number of attempts have been made to define globalization. Most confine their definitions to the discovery and booming of information and communications technologies, while others reduced it to a strictly economic phenomenon. The most comprehensive and scientific analysis of globalization came from Manuel Castells through his monumental work in three volumes namely, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Vol. 1), *The Power of Identity* (Vol. 2) and *End of Millennium* (Vol. 3) (Castells, 1996). In this section I will focus only on the general characteristics of globalization and its impact on the functions of the 'state' in the South and the virtual civil society there.

Globalization is a comprehensive phenomenon, not just economic nor technological advances in communications. Globalization is economic, political, military, ideological and technological. In terms of social systems globalisation does not constitute a new social system. It is the same old capitalist system but with new characteristic features that changed the contemporary features of capitalism. Its global category as capitalist is basic but its new features also give it new dimensions with vast implications for state-society relationships and

therefore on development strategies. Globalisation constitutes the latest phase in the development and expansion of monopoly capital belonging to a new historical epoch. The most significant features of this new epoch are the emergence of a unipolar world at the political level with the concomitant changes in the role of dominant institutions and the role that the latest information and communications technology (ICT) play at the ideological, technological and economic levels. I now summarise the most notable characteristics of globalisation.

Fully-fledged corporate globalisation prevailed at the end of the Cold War and the bipolarity that used to characterise the world political landscape. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe (as well as in Afghanistan and Ethiopia), the alliance of forces at the global level changed to the advantage of the only super-power left, namely the United States. The Soviet empire crumbled, with all its satellites in Africa and elsewhere surrendering to the dominance of the US and its military alliance, NATO. Only a few countries are left that still claim to be socialist, among them China, Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Cuba. They do not operate in unison militarily except in bilateral political alliances. This leaves the world prey to the US and NATO. Communist parties in the West, with the exception of the big ones in Southern Europe and elsewhere, which used to be supported by Moscow, by and large collapsed. The Soviet influence waned dramatically and socialism was condemned everywhere. It is the change at the political level that galvanized the changes in other domains.

This resulted in higher, more intense levels of support for the market system and neo-liberal economics. For the first time after the First World War, the market and capitalism were endorsed globally as a viable social system. The rationale for every country's macro-economic policy became developing and expanding the market. Even three of the four 'socialist' states left in the world, namely China, Vietnam and Cuba, also opted for developing the market as the macro-economic rationale to economic growth. Governments throughout the world upheld a free market economic policy. Capital and market became the global credo practically unopposed by any government. The universalisation of the market is thus one symptom of globalisation.

Nothing has facilitated the the expansion of capitalist corporations as have the changes at the level of global politics and the universalisation of the option for the market. Hitherto impenetrable markets of the world turned out to be an enormous market for their own commodities. Against the background of such potential markets, the size of half the world, the appetites of corporates grew. The bond between political establishments and coporates that was not official and even a taboo now became open and official. The corporates became politically active particularly in the US, flexed their muscles and entered the establishment. The immediate post-Cold War government of Bill Clinton opted to reconcile US foreign policy with the post-Cold War reality, a reality of largely seeking peace and co-operation between nations. With the accession to power of George Bush

Jr. however, corporates gained major influence, thereby changing the political tradition of the US itself. For the first time in the history of the US, Bush set up what is described in the Guinness Book of World Records as the 'millionaires' cabinet' or the 'tycoons' cabinet'. Thirteen out of sixteen full cabinet members are millionaires (The Guinness Book of World Records, 2002:43.) Because the US has the decisive vote in the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the corporate agenda advanced by the US clashed with the developmental agenda of poor countries and the global civil society movement. The world summits held in Durban in 2001 (on racism and intolerance), Johannesburg in 2002 (social development) and other global forums such as the WTO meeting in Cancun in 2003, the clash was mainly between the corporate and development agendas. The hegemonic role of the corporate is one major symptom of globalisation. Hence, the expression 'corporate globalization'.

The hegemony of the corporate also coincided with the waning role of the United Nations. The UN has, by and large, been regarded as a global forum and medium for world peace. Although the US had always ignored the UN on specific issues even during the Cold War period (Blum, 2002:184-199), this has become the characteristic feature of the US foreign policy particularly with the policy of unilateralism advanced by George Bush jr. The US policy of unilateralism is deeply ingrained with advancing the interests of the corporate. This has brought the US agenda into conflict with the development agenda of civil societies the world over. The current Iraq war has starkly displayed this. The US and its few allies ignored the UN and the world at large and invaded Iraq. The corporate agenda and interest of this war did not even wait until the US secured stability there before the US oil company Haliburton, in which Vice President Dick Cheney has a substantial stake, took over the supply of oil to the US army there, charging his own government exorbitant prices (Resurgence, 2003).

The advances in the new information and communications technology made in the late 70s early 80s were to have a colossal impact in a number of domains including culture, ideology, politics, military and the economy. Apart from the political changes at the global level, the most significant basic change that has to have an impact of historical proportions occurred with the discovery and advance in ICT. Manuel Castells recognised it in his celebrated work '... at the end of the twentieth century, we lived through one of these rare intervals in history. An interval characterized by the transformation of our "material culture" by the works of a new technological paradigm organized around information technologies' (Castells, 1996:28). The most important consequences of the information technology revolution are: micro-engineering and macro-changes, the creation of the Internet, network technologies and pervasive computing, the 1970s technological divide, changing technologies of life, the social context and dynamics of technological change (ibid., vii; for further reading see Castells, 1996, pp.28-76). To this one can add that the entire communication systems of political, business, cultural and ideological and even military establishments in

the capitalist world, not to speak of the information establishment, are computerised and digitised. ICT has developed and advanced so much that today people watch a war or revolution story even in the remotest part of the world on their television screens. ICT is the technological domain where technological advances and discoveries are made at the fastest rate ever recorded in the history of science and technology. ICT has brought the world into an active, direct, constant and simplified contact through the Internet. Information, books, journals, newspapers and even movies are accessed on the Internet. The Internet in turn is accessed on the latest mobile phones. The simplification of communications and access to information has also benefited civil societies as one of the mediums to bring them together to advance their global development agenda in opposition to that of the corporate. Needless to say, ICT is also used by governments, corporates and even by the underworld, the mafia and terror groups.

In the eyes of historians and other social scientists, the role technological advances and discoveries play has been a matter of controversy. That seems indeed the reason why some contemporary sociologists over-emphasise the role of technology over the political and equate globalization with the new ICT. The discoveries of new technologies have always contributed to the advancement of science, which also impacts on the lives of society at the economic and social levels. New technologies may or may not correspond with new social systems, but the discovery of new technologies does not necessarily imply new social systems. Castells argues that the industrial revolution contains two landmarks in the discovery of technology, a new technology that affects and changes mode of life in society. The first, the one that ushered in the industrial revolution proper, was the discovery of 'the steam engine, the spinning jenny, the Corté's process in metallurgy, and, more broadly, by the replacement of hand-tools by machines' (ibid., 33). The second major discovery in new technology occurred one hundred years later. That again changed the modes of productivity and life in general. This was the discovery of 'electricity, the internal combustion engine, science-based chemicals, efficient steel casting, and the beginning of communication technologies, with the diffusion of the telegraph and the invention of the telephone' (ibid., 33). Both these discoveries and technological advances happened within the capitalist system and served its expansion and efficiency. The latest ICT that changed life a great deal also occurred within the bounds of the capitalist system and even more so when a unipolar world and the role of the corporate prevailed.

One other major symptom of corporate globalization is the submission of the South to the dictates of the North as a whole and to that of the US and the global regimes that pass in the name of the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. The national liberation movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are effectively replaced with the silence and submission of the voices from the South with the unambiguous submission of the governments of the South. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the state socialist camp had a lot to do with this. In the

contemporary world, the South has no option to turn to as it used to be during the Cold War. Today, the 'development' paradigm is one: the free market as described in neo-liberal economics. The essence of 'development' is reduced to mean economic growth that can only be generated by developing the market and through capital accumulation that has so far become an unrealistic dream in the South except in the few cases of the Asian Tigers. The South has accepted this credo uncritically in the same manner as it accepted that it is 'under-developed' as Harry Truman defined the term. Dependence on external assistance for developing the market and capital accumulation and even for the annual national budgets has completely disoriented the elite in the South so much so that it has completely failed to grasp the basics of the global reality that in turn needs a paradigm shift from the market and neo-liberal economics to a development-based and human-centred approach.

The unilateral approach by corporate globalisation at the political level, compounded by a cultural aggression and the submission of the 'state' in the South to the dictates of the North, has promoted traditional values that provided the rationale for traditional forces to mobilise communities for a counter-attack on what they think is an enemy to their religion. A conflict that arises out of such a quagmire is by definition long drawn out and involves a larger section of the traditional community. A negation of the values advanced by the corporate and which passes as 'modern' normally led to a plea for a return to tradition. This return to tradition brings with it two fundamental obstacles to social development, namely an undemocratic (normally theocratic) political governance and social regression of women who are relegated to the status of second class citizens. This has been illustrated by the horrible situation that prevailed since theocratic regimes took power in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan under the Taliban. A political conflict that arises out of the prevalence of theocracy in opposition to corporate globalization has left many communities in a state of impoverishment and brought about destruction of the meagre modern institutions such as schools and hospitals.

Having summarised the reality of corporate globalisation above, I need to highlight the consequences that humanity faces as a result before I focus on the specific impact of globalization on the functions of the 'state' and the virtual civil society in the South. The global option for the market and neo-liberal economy has led to the global destruction of the environment that has to have a massive impact on the state of poverty in the South. From the destruction of the Amazon to the Mekong and Sarawak, precious tropical forests have been decimated irreversibly, irretrievably changing the ecosystem that sustained the lives of millions and millions of indigenous people. This happened despite the glorious resolutions and declarations of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to which practically every government on earth was a signatory. The destruction of the environment in turn led to a further worsening of climatic changes upon which extreme climatic effects such as drought and/or flood destroyed human lives and property in the South. Global warming accounts for the resurgence of diseases that were at one

point considered to be eradicated. Today globalisation of poverty is as real as corporate globalisation. Women are among the first to suffer from the neo-liberal economic paradigm. Because everything is for the market, not only is sex but even women themselves are considered to be commodities. Trafficking of women in the era of globalisation has become so common that what used to be an experience specific to women from Colombia or Thailand has now become a common trade for women from many countries including from those countries which were at one time republics of the old Soviet Union such as Russia and Latvia. Successive UNDP human development reports indicate that the position of women globally is deteriorating. Corporate globalization has a lot to do with this as at the cultural level the macho image of the man has been propagated extensively, and gender as a discipline is absent from schools' curricula and traditional values representing a backlash to Westernization prevail in some countries.

However, despite its powerful disposition corporate globalization has met resistance ever since its inception. The anti-globalization movement has developed throughout the world in various forms and expanded in leaps and bounds. As the nation-state of the North becomes more complacent towards the US and the state in the South completely surrendered to the North as a whole, the non-state sphere in the soul of NGOs and social movements have taken on the mantle of responsibility to fight for economic, social and political justice, assuming the status of a virtual global civil society. The global civil society movement picked up and expanded quickly with the onslaught of the corporate right after the end of the Cold War. In successive UN summits, the global civil society won UN recognition to convene its own parallel summits that state its own positions on fundamental development issues confronting the world. The emergence of a global civil society movement is realized through numerous networks existing mainly in the South. It is the mammoth network of NGOs, social movements, human rights and women rights movements and environmental movements that constitute a different reality in the contemporary world and are made real as a response to corporate globalization. This is a globalization of civil society, a social process from below.

Against the background of the reality of corporate globalization as a process from above and the globalization of civil society as a process from below, I now investigate the impact of corporate globalization on the modalities of the functions of the 'state' in the South and state of the virtual civil society.

3.4.4 Corporate globalisation: impact on the functions of the 'state' and the state of the budding civil society

Sovereignty, state or national

The submission of the 'state' in the South to the hegemony of the North made real by corporate globalization is the major factor that changed the modalities of the functions of the Southern 'state'. That is indeed why the old political theory of the nation-state and liberal democracy cannot explain the reality of the pattern of governance in the South. The relationship between the North and the Southern 'state' is that of the dominant and dominated at a magnitude greater than during neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism was a phenomenon during the Cold War and the soul of the relationship between the two was the contention between the two superpowers for spheres of influence. For that particular reason, a neo-colonial state had some room to manoeuvre to the extent that at times some governments used scare tactics such as that they might turn to the other superpower if the going gets tough with the current master. Compared to its total submission to corporate globalisation today, the Southern 'state' enjoyed a 'relative autonomy' of a sort then. In a world dominated by corporate globalisation however, the 'relative autonomy' that was, is gone. That accounts for the total submission of the Southern 'state' to corporate hegemony.

The first casualty of the relationship between the North and the Southern 'state' is its sovereignty and that of the nation it purports to represent. As I have noted in my earlier discussion on the nation-state following the industrial revolution, sovereignty is a fundamental principle of liberal democracy and the nation-state. Precisely this mutual recognition of sovereignty lies at the heart of the principle of the social contract. The nation-state cultivates its legitimacy through the recognition of the sovereignty of civil society and civil society in turn endeavours to uphold the rule of law on the one hand and broaden the scope of its space for participation in democratisation and development processes mainly through upholding the sovereignty of the state. In other words, both state and civil society derive as well as constantly guard their respective sovereignties by the rules that determine the balance of internal dynamics. In a given nation, the internal dynamics are decisive for social change. Whatever happens to the state/society relationship largely determines the course of the history of that nation. As Held noted 'Leading perspectives on social and political change have assumed that the origins of societal transformations are to be found in processes internal to society' (Held, 1991:201). That is indeed why the principle of sovereignty is one of the most significant democratic principles both for a given nation and for international relations at large.

The principle of 'majority rule' is also the cornerstone of liberal democracy. However, corporate globalisation has discarded it by denying the Southern 'state' its autonomy, thereby distorting the nature of the internal dynamics, which also affects the scope of space and freedom for society. This occurs when major decisions of a nation are made not from inside the framework of the state but by external forces that lie behind the hegemony of the corporate and neo-liberal agenda. Decisions that determine the lives of ordinary people are made by global institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, decisions that are opposed by poor communities. Through this practice, corporate hegemony writes off the principle

of majority rule. This constitutes a major setback to the process of democratisation, the development of the institutions of governance and the institutions of a budding civil society in Southern formations.

On the other hand, the global interconnectedness that has brought global interdependence as the reality of the contemporary world (as a result of corporate globalisation) has also put the principle of majority rule to the test. Are majority decisions always correct? Are they still country specific? For instance, the election of George Bush as president of the United States in 2000 is justified as a legitimate expression of the principle of majority rule. However, a great many countries in the South have directly or indirectly become victims of Mr. Bush's unilateral policy. In practice, globalisation is bound to make certain principles that have hitherto been held as lofty ideals in liberal democratic theories *obsolete* as these principles now assume meaning only when seen within the global context.

By writing off the sovereignty of the Southern 'state', corporate globalisation has also done a great deal of harm by nipping in the bud the process of democratisation in the South. In the ideal relationship between the nation-state and civil society in the classical sense, the central role that the state plays in facilitating the ground and environment for the process and growth of capital accumulation is well known. In the contemporary world where the 'development' agenda or agenda of 'economic growth' so to speak is set by the Bretton Woods institutions, the epicentre of the specific role of the Southern 'state' has dramatically shifted from that of being instrumental to the *local accumulation* process to that of *global accumulation*. As Samir Amin rightly put it '... the peripheral state (which like any state, fulfils the functions of maintaining the status of the dominant internal class) does not control local accumulation. It is then objectively the instrument of the "adjustment" of local society to the demands of globalized accumulation; and which direction that takes is determined by the directions taken by the central powers' (Amin, quoted in Held, 1991:310). Being captive to the process of global accumulation, the Southern 'state' does little, if anything, to create an enabling environment both for civic participation in the development process as a whole and for the would-be 'national' bourgeoisie in particular. It is for this reason that the process of local accumulation and emergence of a 'national' bourgeoisie was stifled. Stifling local accumulation and the 'national' bourgeoisie cannot take place without stifling the democratic process as a whole and the emergence of a civil society in particular. As Amin states '... that is why, among other things, access to true bourgeois democratization is practically closed to the peripheral state; and why the existence of civil society there is necessarily limited' (ibid., 310).

On the other hand, the state of being captive to corporate globalisation has greatly weakened the Southern 'state' as an effective institution of governance. As we have seen in our discussion in the classical case of the emergence of the nation-state and civil society, the development of the nation-state as an institution

of governance from above and that of civil society from below is concomitant and symbiotic. The development of the state is proportional to the development of civil society and vice versa. The state can only develop through democracy in as much as civil society does. An institution of governance can only become a state when its accountability is in place, and accountability is possible only when there is civil society. That is indeed why in most traditional formations in the South, where democracy is still a dream, we have only government as the institution of governance and no civil society or just an embryo of it.

3.4.5 Global citizenship and transformation of subjects to citizens

The nature of the process of transformation of subjects to citizens is another phenomenon that corporate globalisation made obsolete. As we have seen in our earlier discussion on the emergence of civil society, the principal factor for the transformation of subjects to citizens was political freedom, democracy and an enabling environment for political participation. If, as I have argued in the previous section, the emergence of the nation-state and civil society is concomitant and symbiotic and if the emergence of the Southern 'state' is stifled, then the factor that accounts for the transformation of individuals from subjects to citizens should also change. In as much as the emergence of the 'state' is stifled by corporate globalisation, the transformation of individuals from subject to citizen is also stifled. The suppression of freedom and democracy, as we have seen earlier, is one major factor. But, there are now other factors created by corporate globalisation that determine this particular process of transformation of individuals.

The transformation of individuals from subjects to citizens is indeed a crucial component of democracy and civil society today. Though democracy and freedom as general categories are advanced as factors detrimental to this transformation, a further breakdown of these categories illuminates other factors that are their components. For an individual, democracy and freedom are also domains of political culture, awareness of the conditions that determine one's existence, ethics and behaviour in general. In as much as democracy also constituted a cultural revolution of a sort that determined and constantly informed individual ethics, behaviour consciousness and political culture in the classical setting, the same factors are indeed needed for the transformation of individuals. But, why are we banking so heavily on the individual and his/her place in society? The individual as the historical subject of social change is advanced mainly due to the fact that the Southern 'state' has forfeited its historical role to corporate globalisation.

Seen from this perspective, the individual as the historical subject of social change needs to go through a cultural revolution of a sort to become the developmental individual. Awareness of the conditions of one's existence is a

crucial component. As I have noted earlier, the reality of corporate globalisation prevails today and determines the lives of nations in the South. Any meaningful political analysis or approach to problems of development cannot avoid making corporate globalisation a point of departure. As Amin claims ‘... the worldwide system of globalized capitalism must be the basic unit of analysis in any study of the contemporary world’ (ibid., 305). In other words, the main factor in the world today that determines the conditions of existence of the societies and individuals is corporate globalisation. Knowledge of this single factor is crucial.

If corporate globalisation as a process from above has become the hegemonic reality of the contemporary world (with all its consequences for poverty, unfreedom, social exclusion, violence against women, marginalisation of indigenous peoples, for example...), the interdependence of civil societies the world over as a process from below must constitute the negation and deconstruction of the former. In fact as corporates advance the idea of a ‘minimal state and more market’, which implies the perpetuation of the under-development of the institutions of governance, the trend towards trimming down whatever space for participation has been won can only be reversed by a global initiative and with the conscious interdependence between civil societies. It is indeed the global movement by civil societies that can have an incremental effect on the participating and decision-making roles of citizens in matters that determine their own existence. As B. Barber has noted, ‘If civil society is one key to democracy, then global strong democracy needs and depends on a methodical internationalization of civil society’ (Barber, 1995:287). One can extend this to argue that globalisation of poverty has brought into the limelight the role of individuals and communities to decide on matters that affect their lives – a role that can be effective if only it is global in character. This is related to the enhancement of social power or empowerment of individuals and communities at the local level, a process that cannot be realized without being linked to the global effort to ward off the consequences of corporate globalization.

From the Southern perspective as well as from the perspectives of civil societies in the North engaged in development issues, the World Bank, IMF and the new WTO constitute a global regime of a sort that advance their neo-liberal agenda and impose it on the Southern ‘state’, thereby causing great suffering on the part of the poor and aggravating the state of poverty. Social movements and other civic actors in the North joined hands in the struggle against the neo-liberal agenda and fought out political battles particularly at the various UN Summits and WTO ministerial meetings. Indeed, with the exception of very few states in the South such as South Africa, the states and governments of the world have allied themselves with the global regimes. From development and democracy perspectives, the power divide in today’s world is between the global regimes, the dominant imperial powers of the G8 and the states of the world on the one hand and the global civil society on the other. The global civil society has great potential to change the status quo ante globally, abolish poverty and bring social development if it forges its unity further and involves civil society in the North

much more deeply. The more those civil societies who are at the strongest links of the globalisation chain (such as the US and Britain) become active, the better the chance that global civil society will have not only to beat poverty and bring democracy but also bring world peace. The key link here is indeed knowledgeability of the individual 'citizen' and the community in these countries. That is indeed why the decisive battle between corporate globalization and global civil society is fought out not in the military field but in the field of information and information-based knowledge. Corporates depend on misinformation and disinformation while civil society strives to inform more and make communities more aware. Seen from this perspective, the salvation of the world lies in the hands of global civil society.

This has a massive impact on the factors affecting the transformation of subjects to citizens. As I mentioned earlier, knowledgeability is at the core of this transformation. Corporate globalization has structured the power relationships between states in a lop-sided way by de facto abolishing the sovereignty of the Southern 'state'. That brought the confrontation between corporate globalisation and global society to the fore as the decisive one. In the contemporary world therefore, the individual's radical transformation from subject to citizen must be moulded by the degree of knowledgeability required. Understanding one's own conditions of existence today should constitute understanding the consequences of corporate globalisation. Knowledgeability on the conditions of one's own existence brings to the fore the most important feature of contemporary citizenship, namely global citizenship. In the contemporary world a citizen is a person who has understood that the problems of poverty, under-development and unfreedom that communities in other countries face are in fact her/his own. A citizen is the individual who thinks beyond ethnic, national or other categories such as sex, religion and race and who has understood the interdependence of civil societies the world over.

The transformation of subjects to citizens is a radical process. Beyond knowledgeability, the gender component of this transformation is also a decisive factor particularly at the ethical level. A citizen is, at the level of knowledgeability, the antithesis of the robotic and/or macho individual that corporate globalisation tries to cultivate. A citizen needs to be not only aware of the conditions of his/her own existence but that particular awareness must also inform and mould her/his behaviour and ethics. If Ernesto Che Guevara visualized a new man in a socialist utopia in the 1960s, it is now time to visualize a developmental citizen within the development utopia. A developmental citizen must first of all be humane through and through. The most natural relationship so far existing not only among humans but also among animals and even among living things in general is that between females and males. A developmental citizen must come down to the level of natural relationships and nature as a whole to define her/his own existence. The inhuman subjugation of and discrimination against the female sex by men prevalent in the entire world must come to an end. In as much as there can be no development as long as women are subjugated, there can be no

developmental citizens that are still shackled by patriarchal ethics and behaviour. The unnatural dominance of the man over the woman as socially constructed by human society must be thoroughly deconstructed. That indeed constitutes the beginning of the transformation of subjects to citizens.

The dominant discourse on development and political science in particular has long neglected the gender dimension in political theory a phenomenon which Yuval-Davis and Werner called exclusionary citizenship (Yuval-Davis and Werbner, eds., 85-144:1999). In practice too, women had been denied the right to vote, not to speak of denying them equal pay for equal work, for over a century after the introduction of universal suffrage. In classical theories of political science, the rights of women were only mentioned by very few theoreticians. The concept of citizenship was constructed entirely after prevailing patriarchal images of society that women in many industrial societies were not really considered citizens until recently. The gender component of the process of transformation from subjects to citizens is indeed pivotal.

Part One of this thesis contained three chapters. Chapter One dealt with introducing the thesis as a whole. The chapter also includes a theoretical model on the symbiotic relationship between state-civil society and the poverty/under-development-democracy nexus in relation to Ethiopia. In the second chapter a theoretical framework for investigating the background to the contemporary discourse on the term civil society and situating it within the crisis of paradigm that prevailed in the 1980s, is developed. It also referred to the experience of the post-independence 'state' in Africa and emphasised its stark difference with the European nation-state that emerged in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. It reflected on the historical realm of the African 'state' and asserted what its *raison d' être* should have been. That leads to a reflection on the developmental state as the kind of state needed in Africa. In Chapter Three I reflected on the issue of poverty that draws on Amartya Sen's thesis on poverty as capability deprivation. In the chapter I strongly related the issue of poverty to gender as a discourse and to the position of women in society. I also asserted that gender should be the domain of the discourse on sustainable development and that women are its historical agent. I then formulated a postulate towards a definition of civil society in traditional formations in which the notion of civil society is linked to poverty and under-development. It is on the basis of this approach and theoretical postulate that I am going to examine the state/society relationship in Ethiopia.

Part Two State and society in Ethiopia

Chapter 4 ‘State’ and society: the pre-EPRDF setting

The political, social and economic situation prevailing in Ethiopia now cannot be understood without reference to the social and political dynamics that developed particularly at the time of the imperial government and which eventually gave rise to the 1974 revolution; and without a glance at the gains and losses of the period of the military government between 1974 and 1991. These two periods set the historical context for a meaningful political analysis of the current situation. From the historical point of view too, it is imperative to investigate the evolution of the institutions of governance in the history of the formation of the modern ‘state’ in Ethiopia. Without this it will again be difficult to comprehend the weak state of the institutions of governance today. In this chapter I will deal with the background to the evolution of the institutions of governance under a supposedly modern state and the political and social dynamics that gave rise to the 1974 revolution, analysing the historical meaning of the essence of the revolution as a prelude to the accession to power of the EPRDF. I then pass on to analyse the nature of the EPRDF power and in the last section I will also look at the EPRDF in terms of the central tenets of a modern state.

In the last section of this chapter I will deal with the analysis of the EPRDF vis-à-vis the notion of a modern state and focus on the state of its institutions of governance. It is useful to summarise what the institutions of governance are supposed to be like under a modern state. The state has to have proper structures and institutions of governance in place and establish regulatory frameworks and laws to *regulate* (as opposed to rule) life under the capitalist system, whose *raison d' être* is profit through competition. That necessitated laying down the administrative structure of the state for the purpose of being as efficient as possible in terms of communication among its various units, responsiveness to society's demands, actions and reactions as well as in implementing its policies and safeguarding its laws. The new way of life made fait accompli by the industrial revolution required a much more elaborate and efficient system of governance. As the discoveries of modern science increasingly served the development of the capitalist system of production and exchange, which required elaborate and efficient state institutions concomitant to this development, the presence and efficient functioning of the institutions/units of governance became the order of the day. As Marx put it succinctly ‘In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political; superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness’ (Marx, 1975:181).

The level of development of the institutions of governance of the Ethiopian 'state' is extremely weak. The first attempt to introduce a modicum of the modern state was when Emperor Menelik formed a council of ministers in 1908 in a predominantly traditional Ethiopia. Although there is no evidence regarding what prompted Menelik to do so, it is assumed that in as much as the scramble for Africa made him decide to conquer the new regions, it also convinced him that Ethiopia would still be vulnerable as long as it stayed traditional not only militarily but also in terms of governance. The formation of the council of ministers did not correspond with the formation of definite forms of institutions. The council was like a crown council with no definite form of organization. Neither were the functions and duties of the ministers so clear. For example, one important duty of the minister of posts and telegraphs was to deliver telegrams to the emperor (Clapham, 1969:15.) Modern items such as cars and rollers were introduced just as items but not in relation to any definite function such as public transportation or road construction. Addis Ababa, founded shortly before by the emperor was a village at the time.

Not much changed when Menelik was succeeded by his daughter (ibid:16). However, centralization of power continued and assumed new proportions during Haile Selassie's reign. Although Haile Selassie opted to modernize the autocracy, the modernisation component did not go beyond the immediate institution of rule, that is, the *Gibbi*, palace. Despite his four months' tour to Europe when he was regent, he still commanded his ministers as an autocrat. All power and government functions were centred in the palace. Initially, only two ministers were active, namely those of foreign affairs and commerce. The first Constitution ever was introduced in 1931 as drafted by Bejerond Tekle Hawaryat Tekle Mariam (Bahru, 1991:144) and a parliament was convened. However, the parliament played an advisory role. Ethiopian technocrats trained in Europe were given senior positions as agents of modernisation, but differences soon emerged between them and Haile Selassie as his 'modernisation' drive was not aimed at modernizing the institutions of governance in the first place. Thus all power rested in the hands of the emperor despite the presence of the council of ministers and the inauguration of a parliament playing only advisory roles. All power rested in the *Gibbi*. Haile Selassie remained consistent in pursuing this policy of centralisation of power in his palace even when more ministries and various institutions attached to the various ministries were established through time. Even when the constitution was amended in 1955 and other laws that followed it until 1965 that alleged to give 'more power to the prime minister', Haile Selassie never relinquished any of his power to anybody or to any institution. Ultimately, the closest Ethiopia came to modernisation of the state was, in Addis Hiwet's words 'an enlarged *Gibbi*' (Addis, 1975:80).

Mussolini's army invaded Ethiopia in 1935 to fulfil his long-time ambition of forming a North East African Italian empire. This was met with fierce resistance by patriots and Haile Selassie fled to Europe despite opposition and attempts by patriots to stop him (Dejazmatchs Takele Wolde Hawaryat and Fikremariam rode

to Akaki to halt the emperor's train.) The Italians built communication infrastructure such as roads and bridges thereby, 'For the first time in Ethiopian history the main regions were linked by motor roads' (Sbacchi, 1985:37). Other infrastructure associated with the conduct of the war such as garrison towns and many more buildings in Addis Ababa were also added. Italians built the first forms of infrastructure in Ethiopia that can rightly be associated with modernity. However, at the level of governance, what the Italians attempted to set up was a colonial state but they never had the peace and tranquility to do so. Within five years, the Italians were defeated by the British who at the time were advancing on the positions of the Axis forces in North Africa. Haile Selassie, who was in exile in Fairfield, England, was brought back to power. The five years of Italian occupation had not changed the tradition of governance despite the introduction of a modicum of modern infrastructure. Though Haile Selassie embarked upon what he called 'post-war restructuring', the changes had no effect on the work of the institutions (Clapham, *ibid.*:19). This is consistent with Haile Selassie's initial perception of the essence of the 'change' he opted for to 'modernise' his autocracy.

Apart from the threat by colonisation, the driving force behind the option for the modernisation of the Ethiopian polity was the problem of unity. The disunity and rivalry between the various houses of the aristocracy was indeed an additional threat, evoking visions of a return to what is known as the *era of the princes*, when the princes of the various principalities of Abyssinia imposed their rule on the nominal emperor. Emperor Tewodros' drive towards centralisation was essentially prompted by this disunity that led the country to unceasing conflicts. The same threat existed when Menelik came to the throne. Haile Selassie, who assumed the throne through a Byzantine palace intrigue, was determined to reduce the powers of the princes and nobility of the various principalities mainly of Abyssinia. Modernisation was advanced to weaken the nobility with the introduction of what was called a 'modern' bureaucracy. The bureaucracy itself could not be sustained and was indeed purposeless without trained human power. Thus education and a modern army were singled out as crucial institutions of modernisation (for further reading, see Andargachew, 1993). Haile Selassie's main concern was to weaken the powers of the nobility without relinquishing one iota of his own. This posed various forms of contradiction, although I will focus on one only.

The principal contradiction resulting from the postulation of a modernisation limited in scope, particularly at the level of maintaining an autocracy, was tantamount only to the modernisation of the autocracy and not of the country or of the system as a whole. Modernisation, as I have argued before, requires changes, if not revolution, at the economic level as well. The contradiction in Haile Selassie's modernisation was that it was devoid of economic reforms. Modernisation as social change and indeed as a system requires a modern economy to strengthen it and maintain it. Haile selassie's modernisation was devoid of economic reforms. In this case, the agrarian question comes to the

fore. If economic reform was needed, the sector that needed reform and that could serve as a vehicle of modernisation was the agrarian sector. Until 1974, when his throne was threatened by a revolution, Haile Selassie had never entertained the idea of land reform and indeed he was vehemently opposed to it. In 1973, even Richard Nixon, then US president, advised the emperor to introduce land reform, which the latter rejected. This cost him the refusal of the US to give him the arms he needed badly at the time.

A further vehicle for modernisation is democratisation. Haile Selassie refused to democratise any of his own institutions and vehemently opposed the introduction of democratic rights to any sector of the population. He did not allow any decentralisation of power, while the parliament was still relegated to the status of performing the Emperor's will and dissent was quelled quickly and severely. The principal institution of governance where real power rested was still the palace by which minor and major decisions were made. One issue of the Newsweek magazine at the time sarcastically commented that all decisions from 'the installation of street lights to the country's vote in the UN is made by one man, the emperor'.

Another important category of democratisation and modernisation within the Ethiopian context is ethnic domination. Outside Abyssinia proper, the regions conquered by Menelik, have been subjugated to a life of misery and poverty exploited by the nobility, landed gentry and absentee landlords who took up to 75% of their annual produce. Farmers in the conquered regions were turned into serfs, (*gebbar* in Amharic) after their land was taken by feudal lords. The life of the *gebbar* was almost unimaginably miserable. Addis Hiwet provides us with a description of a *gebbar* 'The *gebbar* bore all the brutalities and the degradation of both the process of conquest and the post-conquest social-economic structure of military-feudal colonialism: landless, treated as nothing more than a chattel by *neftegna*, *melkegna* and *balabat* [the lords] alike. The *gebbar* tilled the landlord's plot, erected the house of the *neftegna* and also provided the household of the latter with food, drink, and firewood. The *gebbar* continued to serve the family of the *neftegna* even after the latter's demise. Indeed the feudal obligations imposed on the *gebbar* were on all counts intensive and onerous' (Addis, 1975:33).

Moreover, they were also subjected to a severe form of ethnic domination. Pastoral communities were categorized as uncivilized and were branded as barbaric. Stereotypes and even jokes directed against oppressed ethnic groups and pastoralists were created only to present the Amhara and Tigrayan ethnic groups as civilised. This state of affairs was resisted several times in a number of regions. In the 1960s however, they took the form of ethnic consciousness and were developing into ethno-national movements. The response of the regime was outright suppression as in the cases of the Oromo in Bale and Arssi, Somalis in the Ogaden, Sidama, Afar and many more. Without equality among ethnic groups, modernisation and democratization would be untenable. Haile

Selassie's regime was not prepared to institute measures fostering equality. It rather opted to quell the ethnic-based rebellions militarily, which resulted in the intensification of ethnic contradictions. The conflict situation required more military spending than capital investment, which contributed to the exacerbation of the state of poverty. By 1974, Ethiopia was one of the most impoverished countries in the world.

The combined effect of the lack of land reform, democratization and ethnic equality further limited the scope of modernisation whose fate was to be decided by the *Gibbi*. Haile Selassie still presided over the most obsolete bureaucracy. Despite the rhetoric about commitment to development the country at large was staggering, with one foot in tradition and the other still striving after modernity. 'It is therefore plausible to speak, in the post-liberation years, of a dual structure of government, in which traditional modes carried on, more or less undisturbed, behind a front of modern institutions' (Clapham, 1969;182). The 'state' bureaucracy that spread its tentacles to the district level never managed to go beyond collecting taxes and performing security acts. In fact, Clapham also argues that 'After the Liberation, ... the government received a modern structure before it learnt to use it' (ibid. 182.) Rural Ethiopia never knew the 'modern state' as the *chika shum* (district governor) was too far away and was never seen except at times of tax collection and conscriptions during conflict.

Little had changed in terms of the development of the institutions of governance during the reign of the military rule. The development of the institutions of governance as in the modern state requires, as we have seen above, the concomitant development of the institutions of civil society outside the state. As I will argue, the military government also ruled rather than regulated and chose to retain all power for itself, excluding the forces of the revolution that overthrew the *ancien régime*. The principal agenda of the military became to quell the revolution in the name of law and order. Out of security concerns as well as for a nation-wide military mobilization seeking massive conscription to the army and militia, the military government expanded and strengthened the structures of control.

The military regime's principal means of control were the armed forces (Clapham, 1988: 109). The armed forces expanded in leaps and bounds from what they were under the imperial government. The total number of the standing army, including the militia, was one million, whereas it had been a mere 40,000 under the *ancien régime*. The four divisions had expanded to twenty-four, including twenty tank battalions with about a thousand tanks. In addition to helicopters and transports, the air force operated about 150 jet fighters (ibid., 109). In a nutshell, the military government built a huge military infrastructure and an enormous force 'amounting in manpower to something approaching one percent of the total national population' (ibid., 109). The military government relied mainly on the armed forces to suppress all expressions of opposition, whether peaceful or armed.

Like its predecessor, the military regime also built up a gigantic security apparatus. Named the ministry of public and national security and established in 1979, it vigorously revived the erstwhile suspicion and fear of informers. Clapham states ‘... in this respect, revolutionary Ethiopia differs little from its imperial predecessor’ (ibid., 113).

The ruling party, the Workers’ Party of Ethiopia, was another instrument of control. The party operated in much the same way as all parties in the Soviet tradition ‘which provides its own intelligence network, through the obligations on its members to report any deviant or anti-revolutionary attitude or actions to their superiors...’ (ibid., 113).

Yet another structure of control was the Working People’s Control Committee, established in 1981 in the Soviet mode of Workers’ Inspection having its own structure from central and regional level down to the workplace (ibid., 113). The *kebelles* were originally established as Urban Dwellers Associations, but quickly turned into the Cuban model of Committees for the Defence of the Revolution. Associations such as those of peasants, youth, women and workers’ unions were also used as structures of control. Outside the gigantic structures of control however, the bureaucracy did not expand the way the structures of control did.

A word of caution is necessary here. In as much as under-development is not absence of change, the under-development of the institutions of governance does not exclude an incremental change in the quantitative sense. However, the changes did not correspond to the changes at the demographic level (such as population) and social necessities of communities at large. In the same vein, there were changes in the expansion of the bureaucracy but those changes were not commensurate with the dynamics of change within society and its increasing needs. By the time the EPRDF took power that was the level of ‘state’ organization.

4.1 The Ethiopian ‘state’ as obstacle to development

I now analyse the role of the functions of the Ethiopian ‘state’ under Haile Selassie as this is relevant to my analysis of the role and functions of the EPRDF’s government. As I identify the institution of governance as the locus of poverty, under-development and a lack of freedom, I will focus on the main issues pertaining to this hypothesis.

4.1.1 The political imperative

The fact that the political imperative of the ruling elite defined the role, form, structure and functions of the ‘state’ in general is consistent with my premise that the nature of the evolution of the African ‘state’ was not the historical evolution of

the institutions of governance that was supposed to give rise to an organic outgrowth of the modern state. Because the idea and practice of the modern state in Africa was imposed by colonisation, the rationale of the African elite to politically prevail was not to *regulate* a commodity economy and a society based on bourgeois democracy but to *rule* its own people. What defined the *raison d'être* of the African 'state' instead was the political imperative as dictated by a number of expediencies which are, historically speaking, ad hoc. In the Ethiopian case, what was the gist of the political imperative that defined the role and functions of the 'state'?

The principal political imperative was the perpetuation of the autocracy and its consolidation. This was done with a premise that was basically contradictory. On the one hand, Haile Selassie chose a sort of modernisation to quell the powers of the nobility in the regions and on the other hand he used extensively the traditional form of rule throughout the country so long as loyalty prevails. He took it as a mission of his rule that the autocracy had to be consolidated and prevail throughout the country. Political power and how to maintain it was at the centre of the political imperative. All other criteria of rule were subordinate to this fundamental imperative.

However, this could only be done at great political cost involving the perpetuation of unfreedom and ethnic domination of the newly conquered regions. Throughout the history of the country, grievances and criticisms of ordinary people were seen as subversive acts that could lead to rebellions or revolts. Criticisms were feared so much by the ruling monarchs that they were not tolerated at all. Despite the hard life that the largely peasant and pastoral populations led, the people were expected to bow to the rule of the monarchs and elites. In Abyssinia proper, the life of the peasant became intolerable as a result of successive wars and conflicts, particularly during the *era of the princes* of the 18th century. Local singers and the literati used to articulate these grievances in popular songs and poems. There are famous rhymes still quoted that condemned Emperor Tewodros for his cruelty and Menelik (Tekletsadik, 1989: 245-249.) Numerous rhymes were also produced criticizing and condemning Haile Selassie's rule, starting from the day when he fled the country during the Italian invasion up to the days of the student movement in the 1960s.

The process of consolidation of the rule of the autocrat was the function of the suppression of freedom at large. Haile Selassie ruled using terror, torture and outright suppression of any expression of dissent. This brought him into serious conflict with the social forces and institutions created as a result of his modernisation drives. When students rose in protest their revolt was cruelly suppressed by riot police. The longer the student protests persisted the better the chance that other sectors would also join the revolt. The autocracy's principal concern was to quell dissidence as a condition for the perpetuation of autocracy.

A further political imperative was the perpetuation of Amhara hegemony over the rest of the ethnic groups of the newly conquered regions. Following Menelik's conquest of the new regions of eastern, western and southern Ethiopia, a new property relationship was instituted, particularly on land where the indigenous population was robbed of its land by the Amhara conquerors known as the *neftegna* who became the landlords. To suppress any possible revolt of the dominated ethnic groups, assuring the economic interests of the *neftegna* and giving them absolute power on security issues and on tax collection was paramount for the autocracy. This paved the way for ethnic domination at the political level in which the dominated ethnic groups could not enjoy their own identity. Instead, Amhara identity was imposed on them: they had to speak Amharic, endorse Amhara culture and the Ethiopian Orthodox church was instrumental in 'converting' the newly conquered regions to Christianity. Ultimately, this was to create a backlash as ethno-nationalism developed out of this ethnic domination. The many peasant and pastoral revolts in Bale, Arssi, Sidamo, Afar, Ogaden and elsewhere are testimonies to this. The autocracy knew that it was indeed faced with disaster and it structured its rule, created the institutions of governance and defined their role according to the political imperatives mentioned above.

What has eventually to become the culture of governance in Ethiopia, all the way from the imperial to the EPRDF regimes, is the fact that they impeded the emergence of political parties that could propose an alternative political and development agenda. At times of crisis emanating from the overthrow of the regime in question, there was no viable and alternative political institution to fill the vacuum. In this vein, Clapham also says '... the central government has failed to encourage – it has in fact deliberately impeded – the development of any alternative source of legitimate authority to supplement or replace that of Haile Selassie' (Ibid., 188). The same is true of civic institutions who could play crucial roles in the development process.

4.1.2 Structures of power: how pervasive the institutions of governance?

Having a structure of government commensurate with the interests of the ruling elite in place constitutes one category in the state/society discourse. But looking into the level of development of the institutions of governance in a given political structure and the pervasiveness of these structures constitutes another. The concern of a prevailing political elite for developed institutions that are pervasive enough to be accessible to all sectors of society emanates mainly from its political interests and orientation. That in turn indicates whether or not the elite aspires after democracy; and whether or not it is development oriented.

Haile Selassie's government neither aspired after democracy nor was it development oriented. The fundamental interest of the autocracy was political control and the government was structured as such. It chose a minimal presence

wherever its rule was not threatened and maintained a relatively heavy presence where it faced rebellions. Because it was not development oriented, reaching out to society with its institutions was not its agenda; the majority of the population was not connected to any institution of governance. As Markakis noted 'The vast majority of Ethiopia's people who live in the countryside have little contact with the central government establishment and the men who wield power in it' (Markakis, 1974:288) The institutions of governance as *functioning* and *responsive* units of a state did not exist.

It is noteworthy that a state as a fully-fledged institution of governance in the first place is bound to spread its tentacles nation-wide as it primarily has to be responsive to the needs of citizens and has to regulate the market and other forms of competition, whether economic or political. Ethiopia under the imperial government hardly had pervasive institutions of governance.

The disconnection of the vast majority of the population from the government and the lack of units of state emanate from the orientation and nature of the autocracy. Ethiopia and Korea were more or less in the same historical situation in terms of social development when Ethiopian troops fought there during the Korean war. Singapore's economic structure was not industrialized at the time either. Thailand was also in a similar historical situation to Ethiopia as early as 1973 when the issue of land reform was high on the agenda of the mass movement there. Unlike the governments of these countries, which were not democratic, but devoted to economic growth, Haile Selassie's government was neither democratic nor devoted to economic growth. It was basically a tax collector and mainly concerned with maintaining its power. Social development was not its primary concern either. As such the government was structured with that ultimate purpose in mind. As long as tax collection went well and its own security was guaranteed, things were fine as far as it was concerned. Economic growth and social development was a concern only at a secondary level.

In the latter phase of its reign however, the autocracy entered a serious contradiction. Poverty, famine and backwardness in general became so acute that something had to be done about it. Pressure exerted by its patrons such as the US for speedy reforms for fear of a social revolution accelerated the belated intent to do something about poverty. However, the major obstacles in this respect were the traditional institutions of governance that the emperor commanded. The most noted institution in this traditional system was the provincial administration. As Markakis noted, 'Persevering in its traditional role, the provincial administration's primary function continues to be what political sociologists term "pattern maintenance". Designed for the task of conservation, not only is this branch of the governmental system ill suited for the task of development, but, given its controlling role over other agencies at this level, it has become a major obstacle for that task' (ibid. 289). Markakis continues '... the provincial administration is emerging as a major obstacle in the effort to promote rural development' (ibid., 305).

At a different level, the situation of the individual in society is also crucial in a state/society discourse. The Ethiopian individual under the autocracy was a subject. What makes the Ethiopian individual a subject was not only the fact that she/he was completely deprived of freedom and basic democratic as well as human rights. The knowledgeability factor also plays an important role in this respect. What the individual Ethiopian thought of the government indeed tells whether or not the individual considers herself/himself a subject with no freedom to exert pressure and eventually make the government accountable for its policies; or a citizen with the capability to do so. As the vast majority of the population lives in the rural areas its connection with the government was also on issues pertaining to tax and security. In the eyes of the peasant, the government is only a tax collector and an autocrat as tax collection (with no returns in terms of social services) and depriving them of their freedom is the only thing they know the government had been doing. This is the typical notion of subjects, whether they are rural or urban. In relation to town councils, what Markakis mentions is also interesting 'Among the residents there is lack of awareness of the town as a corporate entity, and the prevalent tendency is to view taxation as a burden imposed by the central government for its own purposes' (ibid. 321).

The individual Ethiopian had no notion of what the rights of citizens are and what the role of a state should be. In the transformation of the institutions of governance from a mere centralised government to a fully-fledged state the transformation of the individual from subject to citizen is concomitantly crucial. What makes an individual a citizen is not only the freedom attained under a nation-state, but also the knowledgeability about her/his obligations as citizen and what the role and responsibility of a state is. Among these is the awareness of the real source of power of the state, the limitations of this power and that the state is finally accountable to society. The other is the awareness of the conditions that govern one's own existence. These are the most elementary notions that make an individual a citizen. However, what prevailed at the time in Ethiopia was different. 'The existence of constitutional rights' writes Markakis 'legal codes, and procedural safeguards is unknown in provincial Ethiopia, where police power is assumed both by its wielders and by its subjects to be unlimited' (ibid. 303). These notions had not changed under either the military regime or the EPRDF. On the contrary, these notions were further strengthened on the ideological grounds of state socialism by the military regime and revolutionary democracy under the EPRDF.

4.2 The pre- EPRDF period in brief

The EPRDF is one of the political ramifications that the autocracy had unleashed, particularly since the political crisis of 1960/61. It is connected with the political evolution of the opposition since the 1960/61 coup attempt. In this section I will investigate the political evolution from then until EPRDF's accession to power.

4.2.1 The period between 1960 and 1974

The period after 1960/61 – when the military coup by the Neway brothers was aborted – marked the beginning of the decline of the imperial regime. For the first time, it was made clear that Emperor Haile Selassie, who had been literally worshipped like a demi-god, was human after all and that he too could be overthrown. The leaders of the attempted coup, brigadier general Mengistu Neway, commander of the Imperial Bodyguard (Haile Selassie's elite corps) and his brother Girmame Neway, governor of Jijiga (Ogaden, Somali region now) were immediately condemned by the public as traitors to their emperor and the country at large. The only expression of support for the coup leaders came from university students who marched from their campus to the headquarters of the defence ministry, where loyal troops of the armed forces fired at them. Haile Selassie, who was on a state visit to Brazil, quickly returned to Addis Ababa, where huge crowds thronged the streets to welcome him as the saviour of the nation from the chaos as a result of the battle that had raged for over three days.

Although that was the immediate impulse of the public, doubts had been created in the minds of many about the rule of the emperor. The speech by Crown Prince Asfa Wossen that was played on the radio over and over again by the coup leaders on the first day of the coup sent messages that created the doubts. This was reinforced by the defiant demonstration of university students who openly supported the coup. As calm returned, it was the turn of the soldiers to demand salary increases as a reward to save the emperor's rule. That dragged on for a while as soldiers refused to accept the little that was offered by the emperor. In the end Haile Selassie flatly refused to bargain any longer, saying that that is what the country could offer them. Later, the resurgence of the trade union movement the same year and establishment of the first trade union confederation, called the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU) added to the sense of doubt and even opposition to the autocracy.

The trial of the leader of the coup, General Mengistu Neway, began the year after the defendant, who was wounded on the eye in a gun battle resisting arrest, left hospital. Mengistu's statement regarding why he resorted to a coup was paradoxically reported on in the government media and only turned many against the government. Mengistu's statement was an indictment of the autocratic rule from his own perspective that turned out to be the same aspirations of the common person. Mengistu emerged extremely popular and as the rumour of the time had it: 'Even his guards had offered to set him free.' Haile Selassie, who had earlier ordered the dead body of Girmame Neway to be hanged in one of the squares of Addis Ababa, also ordered the execution by hanging of Mengistu Neway, who was subsequently hanged at Teklehaimanot Square. For fear of an attempt to free him, Mengistu was not hanged in the presence of the public as in

other cases, but early in the morning, while the announcement came on the radio later.

The 1960/61 coup attempt was a landmark in the contemporary history of Ethiopia. It was when for the first time the public and the ordinary person started to distance themselves from the autocracy and condemn the repressive rule and oppose the regime. This popular sentiment was considered to be a threat – which indeed it was – and the regime hired many spies, popularly known as *joro tebi*. That threw many more people into the opposition, although the opposition remained latent and unexpressed except in private within families and very close friends. By resorting to repressive measures and crude propaganda, the regime only accelerated its own demise. That was indeed the beginning of the decline of the autocracy.

The emperor was clearly displeased with the support that university students expressed to the coup. He might have recalled that Ras Kassa, a Shoan noble, had earlier advised him against expanding modern education. Ras Kassa was said to have warned Haile Selassie that if he educated the children of the poor, they will one day put a snake around his head. Right after the coup, Haile Selassie stopped the traditional Christmas audience that he used to give to all students of the capital including university students. Students used to receive a piece of the Italian Christmas biscuit, *panettone*, an orange and a sweater per head. The emperor himself used to hand it to university students while the rest of the royal family and the nobility handed out to the rest of students. Right after the coup, that came to an end with a clear sign that students were no longer favoured.

4.2.2 The student movement

Of all the many movements that emerged in the country, the student movement was to have a special place in the contemporary history of the country. University students who started their opposition to the system with expressions of support for the coup, resorted to several political and literary activities and continued their expression of dissent. The literary contest, ostensibly non-political, drew much interest from the student body, lecturers and high school students, who increasingly became interested in the activities of university students ever since the pro-coup demonstration. At the beginning, the literary contest used to be attended by the emperor himself who obviously frowned on some of the criticisms expressed in the poems. *Berekete Mergem* by Hailu Gebre Yohannes and *Nastemaseleki* by Tsegeye Gebre Medhin, who later became one of the leaders of the left-wing Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) were among those outspokenly critical of the regime. Students enjoyed their academic freedom to get organised, first in the Main Campus Union and later in the Union of University Students of Addis Ababa (USUAA).

Over the years, students raised thorny issues that bedevilled their country. In 1965, there was a landmark student demonstration which was paradoxically permitted by security authorities. The demand was 'land to the tillers' a slogan popular within the socialist movement and in Vietnam at the time. They marched through the city and the march culminated at the parliament building, which is close to their campus. The demand for 'land to the tillers' went deep into looking at the inequality caused by the feudal system and the oppression the peasantry was exposed to as a result and made students start radicalizing their world outlook. This was coupled with two important factors, namely the Ethiopian University Service (EUS) and their exposure to the international anti-imperialist students' and youth movement of the time.

The formation of USUAA was a landmark in the history of the student movement as it corresponded to a particular situation. The EUS was a service programme through which university students spent a year working as teachers in rural schools throughout the country. The EUS brought them closer to the life of rural Ethiopia. In the eyes of these students, a radical social change was the only answer to the misery of the rural peoples of Ethiopia. The international anti-imperialist student movement, particularly in Europe, was another dimension for the radicalization of the student movement. The National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS) became a member of the International Union of Students (IUS), based in Prague and the World Federation of Youth (WFY), based in Budapest. Their membership brought them closer to the international movement upon which delegations went to world anti-imperialist students festivals where students and youth from the many hotbeds of the Third World came to share the experiences of their struggle. Vietnam was the inspiration.

In 1965, university students demonstrated against the UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia and condemned Britain for implicit collaboration. They marched to the British embassy, threw stones at the compound upon which the riot police opened fire and wounded the student leader, Tilahun Gizaw. Supported and encouraged by students from other African countries studying with them at the time, the idea of pan-Africanism tinted with anti-imperialism flourished. Students considered the plight of the people of all the colonies at the time and that of Zimbabwe and South Africa in particular as their own.

In 1966 Queen Elizabeth of Britain and Queen Juliana of the Netherlands came to Ethiopia on state visits. On both occasions, the government had earlier rounded up the beggars of the city and dumped them in a camp called *Shola Lamberet* and subjected them to hunger and disease. University students took to the streets with a fiery slogan 'poverty is no crime'. The demonstration was not allowed by the security police and as an 'illegal' act it had to be dispersed by riot police. There was violence the moment students got out of their campus and many students were beaten up and put into jail. High school students nearby such as those of Menelik and Teferi Mekonnen quickly joined their university

counterparts. The next day and for the rest of the week all the schools of Addis Ababa went on strike and demonstrated, fighting with police. The student movement spread. The demand of students first for land to the tillers and then against the government handling of the poor and beggars in the city reverberated throughout the country. The fact that the beating of students in the streets was watched by bystanders quickly spread the message that students were prepared to sacrifice for the plight of the poor. The movement became popular.

In 1967, student riots broke out after a violent demonstration by students in Addis Ababa against a new government proclamation that made peaceful demonstrations almost impossible. This time students in the major towns of the country also embarked on demonstrations and strikes. Thus, the student movement assumed a national scale. This was followed by a strike by university students against a fashion show to be staged at the university campus, which sparked the issue of cultural imperialism. Leaflets were distributed exposing CIA covert and overt operations in the Third World and how the emperor's government was subject to the will of the US, indicating the US military presence in Ethiopia with focus on the Kagnev military communications station in Asmara that was involved in spying on military installations, troop deployments and movements of Arab countries during the six-day Middle East war that took place the same year.

In 1968, there was a change in the history of the student movement. Students raised the issue of access to education by the poor with their slogan, 'education for the poor'. Students throughout the country rose in revolt for weeks. The university and many high schools in the capital were closed. Thousands of students were rounded up and were taken to various military and police camps outside the capital. One student, Demeke Zewde, died while students were being taken by police truck to detention and another student, Shiferaw Kebede from Debre Birhan also died of police brutality. Students of Alemaya agricultural college joined the movement for the first time by staging a surprise demonstration in Harar after walking through the countryside throughout the night to avoid police patrols on the main road and boycotted classes like the rest of their colleagues in Addis Ababa. A number of students were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from six months to seven-and-a-half years. The student leader Walleign Mekonnen was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for writing the pamphlet 'The Counter Proclamation', which was a critique of the Emperor's speech on student strikes. Expressions of support came from student and youth movements from Europe and Africa.

During the class boycotts between April and September, active students went into serious reading of Marxist classics. The popularity of Marxism rose and Marxist literature available at the Soviet Library suddenly became scarce. Marxist and anti-imperialist literature flowed in from abroad and even high school students started to read Marxism. The long break also gave the radical students time to discuss the country's chronic political problems and the ongoing Eritrean

revolt and peasant rebellions in Bale and Gojjam, which were suppressed militarily by the army.

Added to this was the question of Ogaden, which involved the Somali government and on which two border wars had already been fought between the Ethiopian and Somali armies. This prompted student leaders to deal with what was called 'the national question' in the Leninist literature, but which are called 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic conflicts' in today's language. Upon the opening of the university and high schools, the regime began its divide and rule policy by fanning ethnic clashes among students through its spies. Two serious clashes occurred in the General Wingate high school in Addis Ababa and the Teachers' Training Institute in Harar. In both instances Tigrinya-speaking (Eritrean and Tigrean) students were pitted against non-Tigrinya speakers. That the leaders decided to discuss the national question publicly turned out to be the Achilles heel of the movement (ibid., 278).

Another important reason that prompted the discussion of the national question was the position that was taken by student unions abroad, namely the Ethiopian Students' Union in Europe (ESUE) and Ethiopian Students' Union in North America (ESUNA) respectively on the national question which was not of the same level as that of the leaders of the University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA). Both ESUE (*Tatek*, 1968) and ESUNA (ESUNA 17th Congress resolution on regionalism, 1969) condemned all separatist movements. USUAA leaders were so furious at these resolutions that one of them, Yohannes Sibhatu, literally smashed a copy of ESUNA's resolution in his hands and threw it into a dustbin. USUAA leaders saw in these resolutions threats to the unity of the movement for which the government longed and was actively working toward in the autumn of 1969.

Based mainly on Lenin's writings on the national question, USUAA leaders conducted group discussions and debate for months before they brought it out in public. The students decided that the common position of the hard core of the student leadership would be made public by one of them who enjoyed respect and admiration and who would not be suspected of any form of nationalism. The ideal person was Walleign Mekonnen, an Amhara from Wollo. Walleign wrote a piece 'On the National Question in Ethiopia', which was first read out to the student body during the inauguration of the new USUAA leadership. It was later published in the second and last edition of STRUGGLE, the organ of USUAA, in November 1969. The gist of the article was: Ethiopia is composed of many nations and nationalities and not just Amhara or Amhara-Tigray. However, there is a policy of national oppression perpetrated by the Amhara ruling class over the rest of the nationalities, the land of the dominated nationalities was taken by the Amhara, a combination of political and economic oppression had given rise to national movements, that these national movements are historically legitimate and that students should support these rights and their movements.

Walleign's article threw the ruling class into such disarray that it designed methods to quell the student movement once and for all (Ethiopian Herald, 13/12, 1969.) The first attempt was to provoke students to demonstrate and assassinate the leaders during riots. That didn't work, as the students knew the government's design and refused to be provoked. Balsvik attests to the fact that 'Tilahun Gizaw [president of USUAA, MT] warned the student body not to walk into the government trap and spoke strongly in favour of caution' (Balsvik, 1985:268.) Instead, they continued with their activities within their campus. They held two large rallies in solidarity with Vietnam and another one in solidarity with Zimbabwe (against the UDI) and South Africa (against apartheid). On the night of December 28, 1969, Tilahun Gizaw, the radical student leader and reigning president of USUAA, was gunned down in Addis Ababa. The next day, students organized a rally. Students from throughout the city had also gone to the university and joined the rally. The government was concerned by the swelling ranks of the student population taking part in the funeral procession that could turn out to be an enormous political demonstration against it. Troops of the Imperial Bodyguard were called in from Debre Birhan and surrounded the university and took positions. The government forbade students to go out in the funeral procession and in the middle of the stand-off, soldiers opened fire and killed several students. Students were dispersed while their leaders such as Walleign were caught and put into jail.

Traditionally in the Amhara-Tigray culture, a *temari* (church student) is quite popular and everybody feels responsible to support them. In the modern and urban setting students and the student movement were very popular and people expressed their support for their cause discreetly and sometimes in public. As a student activist himself, Fantahun Tiruneh attested that 'During the prolonged crisis, university students also enjoyed the support of the Addis Ababa population, which donated money for food and accommodation when the university dormitories and cafeterias were closed' (Fantahun, 1990: 64). This is mainly because the issues which students raised were not issues to improve their own situation but the issues of the poor and toiling classes. In addition, the sacrifice they paid for their cause made them the champions of the underprivileged (ibid., 62). Because of their popularity among the ordinary people, the many political movements that emerged all sought the students' support. The first to do so were the 1960-61 coup plotters who called student representatives to explain to them their objectives and sought their support. As we shall see, when the *Derg* overthrew the emperor's government the top leaders went to the university, addressed students and sought their support. The student movement indeed occupy an important place in the contemporary history of Ethiopia as they championed the struggle for freedom, democracy and social change. The demands that the poor and marginalised raised during the mass revolution of 1974 were the same old demands that the students had raised over the years. The student movement later gave rise, in the main, to two left-wing movements: the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (Meison) and the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP.)

4.2.3 The trade union movement

Although the modern sector of the economy in manufacturing and extraction was one of the weakest on the continent, the construction of the railway line, *La Chemin de fer Franco-Ethiopienne* in the 1890s brought in the first element of trade unionism. This was expressed during the national resistance against Italian occupation. In the mid-thirties, railway workers formed the first trade union in the country in the small town of Dire Dawa and launched strike actions against Italy's war efforts. With the defeat of Italians and the return of the emperor, trade unionism waned, principally as a result of the ban on unionism until the attempted coup of 1960/61. As a result of seeking support from the population, Haile Selassie's regime lifted the ban after the coup attempt in 1961, paving the way for the revival of trade unionism. Workers began organizing themselves and the railway workers, who were now organized in a similar manner to the French unions, took the lead again. That encouraged the few workers' unions to emphasise independence. The first joint syndicate of the unions was formed in Asmara (Kiflu 1986:31). Unionisation gave way to the beginning of wildcat strikes. In 1962 the unions formed the national network of unions called the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU) in the compound of the Soviet hospital, Dejazmatch Balcha Hospital. Soon CELU was engaged in co-ordinating strikes resulting in confrontation with the government. The government resorted to violence and intimidation. One of CELU's leaders, Abera Gemu, was assassinated in broad daylight to intimidate the union. After creating havoc following Abera Gemu's assassination, the government began to control the union instead of dissolving it outright. A new leadership was installed, all of whom were favoured by the government and CELU was 'reorganized'. This is indeed telling as the Derg also followed exactly the same method. No wonder that the EPRDF followed a similar policy not only towards the trade union but also toward other civic associations.

The taming of CELU subsided after the February Revolution in 1974 when the power of the autocracy waned. Wildcat strikes and demonstrations ignited the revolution, which came to a head when CELU organized its first general strike that paralysed urban life for four days. With that the union assumed a radical posture, no less radical than students and teachers. It continued with a radical posture even when the Derg usurped power by demanding the establishment of a provisional popular government to replace the autocratic regime. It further aligned with the underground Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and other popular movements that flourished after the revolution among women, youth and students, teachers, oppressed soldiers and others. In 1975, the Derg attempted to dissolve CELU as it did with students' and teachers' unions. CELU survived after a titanic struggle but didn't last long. In the Autumn of 1976, CELU was violently dissolved after assassinations and shootouts with some CELU leaders in which the chairman of CELU, Markos Hagos, and others were shot. The Derg established a national network of unions of its own, modelled upon the

state unions of Eastern Europe. With that independent unionism died, never to be resurrected at a national level. CELU's dissolution and the suppression of independent unionism was a serious setback to democratisation and freedom that indeed has an impact on the state of the country's poverty and under-development.

4.2.4 Peasant and pastoral revolts

The history of traditional Ethiopia since the end of the Italian war of aggression can rightly be designated as a history of rural revolts involving mainly peasants and pastoralists. These revolts were outbursts against official government repression manifested in ethnic oppression, levying of new taxes and malgovernance by provincial and local government officials. These factors made it impossible for peasants and pastoralists, whose only answer to the prevailing lack of freedom and feudal exploitation was revolt.

The condition of the Ethiopian peasantry was appalling, but the central government turned a deaf ear to their plight while the provincial and local governments suppressed any expression of dissent. Although varied forms of land tenure systems had existed in Ethiopia, the plight of the peasantry remained the same. Apart from direct exploitation by feudal lords, the peasantry was also affected by sporadic drought and locust attacks that caused food shortages and at times famine. In 1958 famine broke out in Northern Ethiopia, killing about 200,000 peasants. Between 1958 and 1973 major famines occurred and between 700,000 and 1,100,000 rural Ethiopian have perished' (Kiflu, 1996: 39). A multitude of human as well as animal diseases added to the misery of the peasantry as a result of which hundreds of thousands perished. For fear of malaria and other water-borne diseases, peasants evade inhabiting lowlands, even though the lowlands provide them with better natural resources than the highland and temperate zones. Living far from water points, the peasantry has been exposed to serious water shortages. The burden is still on women in particular who have to fetch water walking long distances for hours. In some places women walk carrying pots of water two to six hours at a time (ibid., 1996:37). Expansion of commercial farms, particularly in the East and South of the country led to the eviction of numerous peasants who were left with no compensation at all and to the deprivation of pastoralists of their water and grazing land. Rural protests in Ethiopia by peasants and pastoralists were essentially attempts to reverse government policies that were detrimental to them.

A wide range of rural revolts had occurred in Ethiopia before and after the February Revolution in 1974. More specifically, the post-war imperial regime had hardly stabilized itself when the first peasant revolt in Tigray, recorded in history as the *Woyane* revolt, broke out in 1943 to be followed by a series of sporadic peasant and pastoral revolts until the demise of the imperial regime. Two major

peasant revolts broke out in Bale in 1963-70 and in Gojjam in 1967. In general terms, the causes of these revolts were similar: mal-governance, repressive rules and imposition of new taxation not desired by rural Ethiopians (GebruTareke, 1996: 55-203, Markakis, 1974: 376-387).

What is interesting to the foregoing discussion is the similarity of the governance situation that gave rise to the rural revolts then and the situation of governance now. The Ministry of Interior was the government institution that dealt with the provinces where these revolts occurred. As Markakis notes 'The dominant link and controlling agent of all facets of provincial government ... is the Ministry of Interior ...' (ibid., 379)). However, the capability and quality of the Ministry was in question as mal-governance and repressiveness on the part of a government institution can also generate revolts. As Markakis says 'The Ministry of Interior was an unreconstructed traditional institution whose frame of reference is rigidly limited by an overriding concern for security' (ibid., 379). For more than a decade after the 1975 land reform, the primary concern of the institutions of governance under the Derg's was still security. The *raison d' être* for the imperial government was *ruling*, the *raison d' être* of the Derg was still *ruling*. The *ruling* concern of a government is undemocratic, one that presided over a situation of unfreedom that bred poverty, under-development, revolts and rebellions.

It is noteworthy for our discussion to recognise that the provincial governance is a weak link between the central government and the rural population. We are dealing here with the correlation between the central government and the provincial administration regarding the implementation of the policies of the former, between the provincial administration with the community on the other and the one between the community and the central government. Whether or not the policies of the central government were correctly interpreted and implemented is a central issue for building a state as an accountable, coherent institution. Markakis mentions this as one weakness of the provincial administrations (ibid., 379). However, the paradox is that the central government itself and the emperor in particular appointed his protégés as provincial governors and administrators. The other aspect of this relationship is the one between the provincial administration and the community. This relationship was that of landlord and serf. There was no dialogue, no consultation on new taxation regulations and on policies that affect the communities' day-to-day lives.

A further aspect is the relationship between the central government and the community at large regarding the introduction of new taxation systems and other major policies. The central government had always acted as a distant 'partner', never taking the plight and concerns of the community into consideration when it introduced new taxation laws that severely affected the communities' lives. In this regard, Markakis says ' ...when the centre decides on new measures to be imposed, it simply decrees them and relies on the provincial government to enforce them. No thought is given to the possible reaction of the populace, and no effort is made to prepare it through some preliminary explanation' (ibid., 385).

This sounds very familiar not only during the days of the Derg but even now under the EPRDF. When a central government acts in such a way, more often than not it provokes the populace to revolt. The many revolts and rebellions that ravaged this country for decades had all been caused by ill-advised government policies and laws. Conflict as a constant companion of this country has largely contributed to the prevalence of poverty and under-development. As we will see, this style of government action has not changed one bit and the consequence has been conflict as always. This in turn impacted a great deal on the state of poverty and under-development.

Pastoral communities led a miserable life under the *ancien régime*. Like the peasantry, their plight is also linked to the question of domination. What made their position worse than that of the peasantry is the fact that they were (and still are) considered to be culturally inferior to the people of the highlands. Inhabiting the harsh environment of the lowlands on both flanks of the Rift Valley, the pastoral communities had little connection with the Ethiopian state. Following Menelik's conquest of their regions in the last century, they were formally incorporated into the Ethiopian empire. Most of the pastoral communities also inhabit the border regions and when the 'national' borders of the British and French as well as Italian colonies were drawn following series of agreements with Menelik during the Scramble for Africa, some pastoral communities were split into two (Borana Oromo between Ethiopia and Kenya; Nuer between Ethiopia and Sudan), into three (the Afar between Ethiopia, 'Italian' Eritrea and 'French' Djibouti) and into five states (Somalis in 'British' Somaliland, 'Italian' Somaliland, 'French' Djibouti, Ethiopia and 'British' Kenya.)

The pastoral communities in Ethiopia however, were subjected to outright discrimination and marginalisation. Being considered as culturally inferior, they were treated as 'uncivilised' and even barbaric. Because of their resistance to cultural and political encroachments by the central government that even attempted to 'civilise' through the missionary work of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the main pastoral communities such as the Borana, Somali and Afar resisted this attempt for long. A standoff had prevailed for a long time until the government began with what it called the rangeland development programme with the support of the World Bank and African Development Bank. Because this 'development' programme aimed at not developing the pastoral communities in a way acceptable to them but with an imposed 'development' plan of settling them and making them farmers first, the range land development programme did not succeed (for further reading see Report of the Proceedings of the 1st Conference on Pastoral Development in Ethiopia, Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia, 2000). The hostile relationship between the central government and the pastoral communities was utilised by politicians from pastoral backgrounds for nationalist purposes, often in the form of a violent armed struggle against the state. Some of these conflicts – such as the one in the Ogaden by Somalis – were also utilised by the Somali régime to encroach the Ogaden. The Derg also followed the same policy of the autocratic state as far as pastoralists are concerned. The

marginalization of the pastoralists continued as the Derg also chose to bring 'development' to pastoral communities not in the way they wanted but in its own way of 'civilising' them.

.4.2.5 The Eritrean and Ogaden movements

The two main ethnic-based movements that bogged down the imperial army for decades and prompted mutinies by soldiers that later contributed to the weakening of the regime are the ones in Eritrea and Ogaden. The problems in Eritrea and Ogaden each had a unique historical background. Eritrea was a colony of Ethiopia but the manner in which it was carved out of Ethiopia had been a matter of controversy. With the defeat of Italy both in Ethiopia and Eritrea by allied powers in 1941, Eritrea fell under British rule as a protectorate and later the issue was referred to the UN General Assembly. The peoples of Eritrea were evenly divided on the question of independence or reunion with Ethiopia. The UN General Assembly ruled in 1952 that Eritrea be federated with Ethiopia under a federation. The federal arrangement was continuously and systematically violated by the imperial government until the emperor's government finally annexed Eritrea in 1962 against the advice of his prime minister, Aklilu Habtewold (for further reading, see Zewde Retta's *The Question of Eritrea*, 2002). Then, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) that was formed in 1958 in Cairo, started the armed struggle for independence. The armed struggle was conducted for three decades and Eritrea finally became independent from Ethiopia in 1991, though the affirmation of independence was made through the 1993 referendum.

In the course of the struggle for independence, the Eritrean movement passed through several ups and downs. It was characterized by splits among the ranks of the leading organizations. First, the ELF was fragmented into four or five armed groups between 1969 and 1972. By 1972, some of the groups re-merged into one as a serious contender with the mainstream ELF. That was when the groups led by Issayas Afeworki and Saleh Sabbe merged to form the Eritrean Liberation Front – Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF). Later in 1976, the ELF-PLF became the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Saleh Sabbe later broke off from EPLF to form his own group which underwent further splits. By 1981, the two protagonists in the armed struggle were the ELF and EPLF, that commanded more or less 35,000 fighters.

In 1975, both the ELF and EPLF had their own surrogate groups inside Tigray. ELF befriended a Tigrean group called the Tigray Liberation Organization (TLO) while the EPLF befriended the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). In 1976, the TPLF invited TLO for talks over a proposed merger and wiped out the entire leadership one night while they were asleep. With that, the TPLF remained as the only Tigrean group inside Tigray but had a powerful opponent to overcome, namely the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army, the armed wing of the EPRP. The TPLF maintained strong ties with the EPLF echoing its thesis on the Eritrean

question, including the absurd assertion that 'Eritrea is a colony of Ethiopia'. In 1981, Mengistu's victory over the Somali army forced the Eritrean insurgents to retreat from all the towns they had earlier occupied, only to turn against each other in a second round of civil war. The EPLF, supported by thousands of TPLF fighters crushed the ELF and remained the sole Eritrean guerrilla army.

However, the war in Eritrea sapped the treasury of the imperial government and the fact that its army had been bogged down in foxholes for years prompted dissatisfaction among its own troops. The famine of 1973 during which the imperial government displayed the utmost cruelty by denying that famine existed at the time and by deliberately declining to ask for international help, angered the public at large. Among them were the soldiers in Eritrea who mutinied when the February Revolution broke out in 1974.

In a similar vein, a quasi-ethnic movement had rocked the Ogaden region ever since Somalia became independent in 1960. The movement was supported by the Mogadishu government, which aspired to unite all Somalis, including those in Northern Kenya, Ogaden and Djibouti. Border wars were fought between the governments of Ethiopia and Somalia in early 1960 and in 1964. As a result, the imperial army deployed a large contingent of its army in the Ogaden as well as in adjacent provinces such as Bale and Sidamo. The army had fought Somali guerrillas for years. In 1974, when the revolution broke out, the troops in Negelle, Sidamo, were among the first to mutiny by imprisoning General Diresse Dubale, commander of the armed forces at the time.

4.2.6 The February Revolution of 1974

A glance at the fundamental problems that the country faced before the revolution show that unfreedom, land deprivation, national (ethnic) oppression, poverty and the oppression/exclusion of women were the principal ones. Political repression gave way to a mass democratic movement such as the student movement while national oppression bred regionally based quasi-peasant ethnic rebellions. 'An extreme form of poverty and sporadic famines were compounded by the lack of freedom. It is this indissolubility of unfreedom and poverty that made democracy (a form of freedom) and social development the historical imperatives of the 1974 revolution' (Melakou, 2004:44). Democracy and democratic governance was the historical imperative that came as a negation to absolutism. The demands of all those who took to the streets were democratic. The contradiction between the policy as dictated and the inertia of society had to be resolved as life became harder and harder. Political domination had to give way to the sovereignty of society as a whole, who had to rise and renounce their status as subjects and become citizens with freedom, responsibility and dignity. 'In the traditional polity, there had been no recognition of individuals as human beings with the capacity to decide for themselves' (ibid. 44). The February Revolution was a negation of all these and was profoundly democratic in content.

However, the revolution itself had also a major problem. It was spontaneous in toto, not organised and did not have a political organisation/s to lead it. One debilitating consequence of the absolutist rule was that it had deprived society of its capabilities in terms of getting organised for social change. Civil society could not emerge, individuals could not transform themselves from subjects (individuals without freedom) and become citizens. The autocratic regime had systematically deprived society of its weapon of emancipation: organisation. This had to cost both the autocracy which closed all avenues for a peaceful social change and against which its subjects had rise to overthrow it; and society which was deprived of organisation.

The weakness of the revolution was to be exploited by a group of officers who formed a committee called *Derg* (committee in Amharic) and usurped power by overthrowing the autocrat who had already lost all power to rule. However, the Derg inherited the principal legacies of the absolutist state that caused the February Revolution in the first place: the national question (problems of ethnic movements) and the movements in Eritrea, Bale, Ogaden; the quest for freedom upon which the revolution banked heavily. These problems persisted throughout the Derg's rule as the military régime could not provide a proper solution. Though some sections of the left, Meison and a few others, worked with the military regime for a period between 1975 and 1978, the derg still failed to steer the latter toward finding solutions. Solutions could have come had the Derg not excluded the principal forces of the revolution and consulted them. Instead, the Derg chose to suppress them and isolated itself in an impossible mission of suppressing the population only to cost society in terms of huge casualties and the demise of the regime itself. At the end of the military rule when the Derg was overthrown seventeen years later, the fundamental problems that gave rise to the February Revolution were still intact.

4.2.7 The period of counter-revolution, 1978-1991

By 1978, there were a number of left-wing groups and organizations lining up on either side of the barricade. Meisone, the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organisation, *Woz* League, Echeat in the main worked with the military regime while the EPRP waged an armed struggle against the military. When the regime launched its campaign against the EPRP, including the infamous 'Red Terror', the other groups co-operated fully with it. Later in 1978, Mengistu declared war on Meisone after they had a disagreement. It was an irony of history that both the founders of the EPRP and Meisone, Birhane Meskel Redda and Haile Fida respectively, were captured and executed by the military on the same day.

With the suppression of the semblance of a mass movement in 1978 when the Derg finally broke the structures of its main protagonist that was behind the mass movements that had raged throughout the country since 1974, the EPRP,

counter-revolution reigned. Mengistu also emerged as the new autocrat, becoming the undisputable and unquestioned despot, posing not only as a 'hero' but also as omniscient. All the powerful mass movements were crushed and replaced with the Derg's own unions and associations. The Derg did not want to see any independent organisation outside its control. With the support of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries, the Derg organised itself as a monolith and dominated the lives of citizens. Using a massive spy network and its security apparatus as well as the multifarious institutions it formed in the Soviet model, the Derg ruled with terror and intimidation for seventeen years. That massive terror of rule was to backfire on it at the end. Though the Derg suppressed the powerful mass movement that had the option of reconstituting society anew at the centre, ethno-nationalist movements at the peripheries grew stronger and overthrow it at the end.

4.2.8 Eve of EPRDF's power

As we have seen above, the political and economic problems that gave rise to the February Revolution were not solved by the military regime either. The development of events during the past three decades changed the nature of the political, economic and social dynamics that these unsolved fundamental problems assumed on the eve of EPRDF power, which I will summarize below... I will focus only on the political and economic situation in general.

Political

By the end of the military rule, the Derg had established an extraordinarily centralized power structure, one even more centralized than that of the autocracy with unrestricted, despotic military power residing in the hands of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The *raison d' être* for such centralised power was the insecurity of the 'state', a threat that came shortly after its accession to power. The threat was caused by the military regime itself as it excluded the active participants of the February Revolution and resorted to a rule by terror. This is an extremely important point as this is a recurring problem even under the EPRDF though the method of social exclusion used by the EPRDF was subtle and deceptive compared to the outright use of force by the Derg.

On the eve of EPRDF power, the issue of ethnic domination constituted the biggest political problem that the country faced. The war in Eritrea which the Derg lost had persisted and the main guerrilla organization, the EPLF, had already scored military successes that paved the way not only to the speedy collapse of the Derg's army in Eritrea but also in Tigray and elsewhere over which the TPLF/EPRDF rode roughshod to military victory. In Eritrea, the Derg controlled only the capital Eritrea, Asmara and the ports of Assab and Massawa. The rest of Eritrea was in the hands of the EPLF. It is necessary to compare this situation with the situation in 1974 when the Derg came to power. In 1974, the

Derg sent the then head of state, General Amman Andom, Eritrean by origin himself, to Eritrea to talk to the elderly both in the highlands and lowlands. The positive response he received turned out to be a political coup against the two guerrilla organisations, then the mainstream Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the smaller ELF-PLF (later EPLF). However, Mengistu opposed any peaceful rapprochement with the fronts and wanted a military solution. When Amman opposed the military option, he was killed and the Derg, then dominated by Mengistu, picked General Teferi Benti to succeed Amman. The Addis Ababa government had never been in a situation where it could easily bargain for regional autonomy had Amman's options prevailed. Mengistu lost that opportunity and by the end of his regime, the army was completely surrounded and confined to Asmara, Assab and Massawa. The guerrillas' term, independence, was incontestable at that point. What was negotiable then was the peaceful surrender of the Derg's army. There was no way that any political force in Ethiopia could reverse the independence of Eritrea.

Through its seventeen years of rule by force and terror, the Derg had also antagonized a number of ethnic groups at various times, including Tigreans, Somalis, Afars and Oromos. Though the reasons for the antagonism are in dispute on the nature of the conflict, the degree of grievances by these ethnic groups was fierce due to the disproportional military response to each situation. The national question was, as we have seen, among the biggest political problems at the time of the emperor. Under the Derg's regime too some of the ethnic groups were also under arms. In weighing the political impact of these movements, I need to draw a clear distinction here between those who resorted to armed struggle and those who did not. Though this kind of assessment depends on political perceptions, one has to make a realistic appraisal of the overall situation in order to see the political impact these movements had on the country's future. Some ethnic movements such as the TPLF/EPRDF and the OLF see the national question out of proportion (TPLF Manifesto, Political Programme). Subsequently, the ethno-national movements were given prominence undue to the position they occupy in the country's history. Although the country was beset by fierce ethnic contradictions, the magnitude of most of these contradictions mellowed mainly due to the Derg's land reforms. By the end of the Derg's rule therefore the only formidable political and military threat came from the TPLF/EPRDF, which had already opted for the conquest of political power at a national level. The Derg's land reform programme, coupled with its gigantic control structures, had already mellowed most of the contradictions, which could otherwise have resulted in armed struggles. The OLF attempted to launch armed struggles several times. The Somali and Afar rebellions had already been crushed. On the eve of EPRDF power therefore, there was no apparent threat to the disintegration of the country from any ethnic quarter whatsoever.

At the societal level, the country still suffered from the traumas of the Red Terror launched by the Derg in 1977-78. The principal feature of the trauma was and

still is the extraordinary level of distrust among the population. During the Red Terror, the military regime forced many members of families to inform on other family members. Fathers informed on their sons and daughters, brothers on brothers and sisters on brothers. That was the ultimate betrayal in Ethiopian psyche and family tradition. The extremely cruel measures the military adopted, techniques introduced by its Cuban and Soviet intelligence, also broke the revolutionaries of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) who had already suffered heavily from an internal split involving the leadership. That had a significant psychological impact on the minds of Ethiopians in urban areas. Distrust and suspicion reigned supreme, nobody trusted anybody in politics. Politics that was extremely popular just a few years earlier became a scourge, a curse. Politics was left for those who had the guns. The division of society and families brought a phenomenon that was never known in the country, the atomization of the individual through fear and terror. The state was not to be trusted or respected, but feared. It became an alien phenomenon as far as the individual is concerned.

The individual became callous and lethargic, completely insensitive to politics. Voluntarism gave way to involuntary expressions of support for government endeavours. Responding 'massively' to government calls became the safety net left for the individual. The individual made herself/himself prey to government's political and military mobilisations. State violence turned the individual into a robot, obeying government orders and calls. Society appeared to be living in Stalin's gulag or a Kampuchea turned to a massive labour camp where the border between society and state were marked by barbed wire. The individual is said to have become politically 'educated' through endless government meetings and evaluation sessions and 'voluntarily' contributed whatever the regime asked, whether it was money, labour or even its offspring for conscription into the army.

Examining this situation from the angle of the need for a social change that will do away with poverty and under-development requires an analysis of the political situation and the situation of the individual that was reduced to an animal that is forbidden to use its mental faculties. Social development in Ethiopia, which was destroyed by seventeen years of ruthless military rule will require a comprehensive approach encompassing economic, social and political dimensions. This is crucial in postulating a political system required to fulfil these lofty ideals. An introduction of any political system that doesn't aim at transforming the individual subject (an individual without freedom) to a citizen (an individual with freedom) will definitely fail to attain the ultimate objective of doing away with poverty.

With the political background that I described that focuses on both the individual and society at large, the key link to undoing poverty and under-development is the degree of freedom that the individual Ethiopian and society at large deserved. The resurrection of society and the individual was also to the benefit of the anti-poverty aims of the government that was to come to power. Popular participation,

the free and independent participation of society, as we have seen previously, is crucial for development. Freedom is then essential for the participation of society and the individual. However, the degree and quality of freedom required in Ethiopia at that point in time, against the background of the traumas of the Red Terror that I described above, needed to be unlimited and guaranteed. The individual needed to be sure of his/her freedom. The slightest onslaught on freedom would return the very doubts that they had on the state. When that occurs, the involuntary behaviour will return. Then, that will be the beginning of the march back to square one where the Derg had left it.

Economic

Ethiopia's economy under the Derg can be described as over-centralised. In under-developed formations and even in advanced capitalist countries, state intervention in the national economy is quite substantial. There are varied reasons for the proportion of state intervention/ownership in the economy. In the Ethiopian case heavy state intervention began with the Derg's nationalisation programmes of 1975. The scale of the nationalisation was so large that even bars such as Bar Aurora in downtown Addis Ababa were nationalised.

The consequence of the Derg's militarist socialism was enormous, particularly in the nascent private sector. The Derg killed the spirit of private individual entrepreneurship and greatly discouraged private accumulation. Foreign direct investment did not come either as the Derg fell into the Soviet orbit. Soviet and other east European 'assistance' to the Derg was not economic but military and security. That left the Ethiopian economy still to be a mono crop economy depending on the export of the only export item that the country had since the 1950s – coffee. There was a heavy dependence on the Soviet Union for security and defence.

The land reform of July 1975 was expected to lift the peasantry out of the century old drudgery and exploitation under feudal relations of production. However, security concerns were overriding and marred the initial enthusiasm of the peasantry. The Derg introduced forced conscription of peasant youth and the able-bodied into the army mainly for its war efforts in Eritrea (Eritrean fronts), Tigray (TPLF) and Gondar (EPRP). The mere fact that it was the able-bodied that were conscripted affected crop production. Various types of taxes including a tax on guns were also introduced. This was coupled by endless contributions to war efforts and other 'development' efforts. The combined effect of these factors contributed to the lethargy of the peasantry despite the reforms (Dessalegn, 1990: 100-101.)

Under the Derg, state farms expanded into several regions of the country. 'Following the 1975 land reform, about 448 large-scale commercial farms and plantations covering an area of 131,000 ha were nationalized' (Gebru: 1995:264).

However, the state farms under the Derg fell far short of what they were expected to accomplish. According to its orientation of 'socialist agriculture', the Derg's venture on state farms was indeed a gamble. It did not have the proper institutions in place to make these farms effective, efficient and productive. It was all ambition and was not based on proper institutions and management. On the surface, the cause of the failure of the state farms was the lack of proper and efficient management. As Gebru Mersha argues, there were more global causes for the failure, and they were fundamentally political (ibid., 283). Exclusion and suppression of opponents is singled out as the principal reason. The campaign against corruption that hit the bureaucrats and created an atmosphere of fear is mentioned as one of the reasons (ibid., 284).

The Derg paradoxically gave prominence to the state farms and the socialist sector of agriculture as a whole and set aside a large budget for their expansion. Political exclusion resulted in placement of its own less capable cadres to the management of the state farms. The result was mismanagement and corruption. As Dessalegn Rahmato argues 'The story of state agriculture is one of mismanagement, of wasted resources and financial loss on a large scale. Since 1977, when the government formally gave its blessing to state farms, the enterprise has incurred a total accumulated loss of 613 million Birr. In the period of 1980/1985, annual recorded losses have averaged nearly 80 million Birr', (Dessalegn, quoted in Pausewang et al, 1993:106.) The Derg invested massively in state farms, which operated in a relatively small area with a very low capacity and output. Dessalegn points out that 'State farms, it should be noted, operate less than 4 per cent of the cultivated area of the country and contribute about 1 per cent to the nation's food requirements' (ibid., 106). It was indeed a gamble to invest so heavily in such an enterprise with such inadequate management.

At the end of the Derg's régime, Ethiopia's agriculture was as backward and as stagnant as it had always been. It is interesting however, to note what the Derg aspired to do with Ethiopia's agriculture as early as 1974. As Gebru says 'As early as 1974, there were official declarations that agricultural development would be given precedence over the industry ...' (ibid., 288). The Derg's main failure was to neglect the possibility of promoting the capabilities of the peasantry and pastoralists through a process of primitive accumulation. The freedom of the peasantry and pastoralists was not taken into consideration, it was not even recognised. As attention was not given to ameliorating the peasant's structural problems, the factors that limited the erstwhile structural problems of the peasantry persisted to the end of the Derg's period. As Dessalegn argues

... the inherent weakness of peasant agriculture flows from the interplay of the following factors: 1) Smallholder agriculture is oriented mainly towards auto-consumption, and this, more than the market, largely determines land-use and cropping plans. 2) The standard of technology is poor or of limited potential. Improved technology is, for most peasants, either too costly to acquire, too complicated to operate, or too dependent on external economies. 3) Most

peasants are plagued by inadequate holdings; their plots are too often fragmented, and soil and water erosion are frequent hazards' (ibid., 103).

Dessalegn and Gebru both claim that despite the 1975 land reforms the crop sector of Ethiopia's agriculture remains to face the same structural as well as politically constructed problems. 'It was expected' writes Gebru 'that the 1975 land reform would transform the state of affairs which had ignited the 1974 Revolution. In this regard however, conditions did not change to any great extent. The reality at the end of the 1980s included some of the principal conditions that led to the launching of the 'socialist' transformation of the economy and society almost a decade-a-half earlier', (Gebru: 1995:285). He then adds 'It is no wonder that even slight vagaries of nature, let alone calamities, could shatter the entire fabric of the agrarian economy' (ibid., 289). Such was the reality of peasant agriculture that the EPRDF inherited when it came to power in 1991.

One crucial sector in the rural development that had always been neglected and forgotten by the imperial regime was pastoralism. The Derg did not do any better in this respect either. On the contrary, it continued with the policy and orientation of the imperial government and continued to neglect pastoral communities. With that, pastoral livestock production was not considered a viable contributor to the national economy. The paradox is, however, that Ethiopia had the largest number of cattle per head in Africa at the time. The highland prejudice over pastoralism was inherited by policy-makers and they could not suggest a policy to develop the pastoral sector by incorporating its production system into the national economy (See Tafesse, 2000:41; Melakou, 2003:71-74.) As a result, the capabilities of the individual pastoralist to accumulate was not encouraged and utilised. The pastoral community was as neglected as ever when the EPRDF took power.

In summary, the following points appear to be essential components of the reality of problems of life in Ethiopia that the EPRDF inherited. Unless the dimension and magnitude of these consequences of the Derg's legacy are put into the proper context it will be difficult to analyse the policies that the EPRDF espoused to solve them. Let's discuss these dimensions.

4.3 Evaluation of the Derg period

- Rise of ethno-nationalism

The defeat of the revolution and the Left by the Derg became the function of the strength of the ethno-nationalist forces, most of who also contributed in weakening the Left. The EPLF (the front in power in Eritrea), the TPLF (the core of the EPRDF) and Somali groups have actively waged armed attacks against the main left-wing party, which was behind the mass democratic movements, namely the EPRP.

- The defeat of the Left

The EPRP, the main left opposition, was defeated mainly because of the split among the leadership which, under an extreme form of underground life became detrimental once the schism led to acrimonious attacks and even killings. Had it not been for the split within the leadership, the political picture of the country would have been completely different today.

On the other hand, the other main left organisation that co-operated with the military but that fell out at the end, Meisone, found itself in a 'no win' situation when the military declared war on it. It was not prepared for a showdown, neither was it prepared for an armed struggle. It was left prey to Mengistu, who mercilessly crushed it and executed its leaders. At the end of the Derg's rule, what was the characteristic feature of the legacy of the imperial government, namely the deliberate obstruction of the emergence of any viable political and civic alternative, became real as the result of the onslaught against the left.

- The nature of TPLF's victory

The TPLF's victory was not a political victory but a military one. Politically, the TPLF had no backing outside Tigray. Within Tigray itself support in some areas was expressed for the TPLF mainly due to political coercion. The source of the TPLF's victory was essentially the split within the Derg and the consequent sagging morale in its army. Gebru Asrat, one of the top leaders of the TPLF and EPRDF until recently, attests to this argument ; "I don't think the collapse of the Derg came about only militarily ... Mainly it was rather the consequence of an implosion from inside" (The Reporter, 16/04/2005:18). As Mengistu became an undisputed despot and continued with his option of military victory particularly in the un-winnable war in Eritrea, officers at the war front became disgruntled as failure of one military campaign after another followed. Mengistu quickly blamed these officers for not commanding battles well and executed quite a number of them, the most famous one being General Tariku, a very popular officer among his troops. With that the troops' fighting morale sagged and defeat after defeat followed. As is the case in military conflicts the weakness of one warring faction is a function of the victorious advance of the other.

Also, in a civil war situation, for any military victory the gains made in the political field is essential. The physical tearing down of the *ancien régime* is the last act in its overthrow. Gebru supports this argument '... the Derg became distanced from the people, lost confidence in the people and finally could not even stand on its two feet...' (ibid) The defeat of the largest army in sub-Saharan Africa at the time was not just the work of the TPLF/EPRDF alone as alleged by its officials (Bereket Semon, televised election debate, Feb. 27/2005).

A further major factor was the cessation of military support in about 1989 by the Soviet Union, a few years after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. That came as a major setback to the war machine of the Derg, who lost critical battles first in Afabet, Eritrea, that turned the course of the war and capture of Makalle, capital of Tigray, by the TPLF.

The EPLF, in Eritrea, crushed the backbone of the Derg's army at the battle of Afabet. This was followed by the TPLF's victory at Makalle. With that the Derg's army had been on the retreat until its final demise. In a matter of two years after the victory at Makalle, both the EPLF and TPLF overthrew the Derg. Unlike mass revolutionary or nationalist movements elsewhere, the TPLF had not yet managed to win the hearts and minds of the Ethiopian people outside Tigray by the time it overthrew Mengistu. That needed to depend on the policies it would follow and on the political work it needed to do. Apart from the internal weakness of the Derg's army, a decisive factor that facilitated the TPLF's victory was the change of policy of the Soviet state under Mikhail Gorbachev towards its client states including the Derg. Moscow was the principal military backer of the Derg. In terms of influence, the dissolution of the Soviet state became the function of the strength of the other super-power, the US. That impacted on the attitude of the governments in the region which became ever more resolved in their support for the rebels in Eritrea and Tigray.

- Balance sheet

No country in Africa had as vicious a military dictatorship as Ethiopia had under the Derg. The consequence of the Derg's rule, particularly at the political level, is enormous. No proper figure has ever come out to indicate the victims of the Derg through the infamous Red Terror, the various wars it manufactured or aggravated and through the famine of 1984-85. A conservative estimate is that the Red Terror alone killed more than 20,000 people. The famine killed hundreds of thousands of people and countless others died at the war front. Another rough estimate put the total figure at more than two million killed during the entire period of the Derg. The Red Terror was so devastating that a great many families in urban areas have been affected in one way or another. The gruesome killings that were considered by its victims as sacrifice for the revolution turned out to be a painful psychological trauma for the living with the defeat of the revolution. In the eyes of the living, those heroic youth who sang revolutionary songs to their execution died for nothing. It is this trauma that is behind the political apathy of the urban populace towards participation in general, a trauma that still prevails save the brief interlude during the 2005 elections. To bring back the traumatised to popular participation, a great deal of political work and commitment is required to build its confidence.

Moreover, the Derg's propaganda against ethno-nationalist movements as separatists destined to divide the country, the EPLF and TPLF in particular, struck a responsive chord among the people. Although almost the entire

population was against the Derg, it was also against the secession of any part of the country. The population was a victim of the official historiography that hardly anyone knew the real history of Eritrea. What the common Ethiopian knew/knows about Eritrea was/is the official historiography as constructed by the royal chroniclers of Haile Selassie and perpetrated by the Derg. As such, one huge task in this respect was to clarify the history of Eritrea and of the movement there and why it led to the inevitable circumstances created in 1991. The most significant inevitability was the independence of Eritrea. The fact that Eritrea's independence was unavoidable had to be explained to the Ethiopian public. An open, public discussion on this particular issue should have been held. Forfeiting such a task was to cost the TPLF heavily as the independence of Eritrea was inevitable and the latter accepted it readily.

- Unfreedom

What the Derg had championed for seventeen years as a security for its rule was perpetuating unfreedom. Unfreedom had not only left the Ethiopian people dormant, but it also cost them dearly in terms of losing their social and political memory. Tens of thousands died fighting the Derg's rule, hundreds of thousands ended up in exile and tens of thousands were in jail. In short, the standard bearers in terms of culture and knowledge were decimated or exiled. A generation gap had already occurred in terms of social and political memory. This is a huge social and political gap for a country that had to revive and rise from the ashes of a military dictatorship. One of the ways to fill the gap could have been repatriating the intellectuals from the diaspora. That in turn required political compromise, as the intellectuals in the diaspora were in toto against the TPLF.

- Cadres but not Experts in Statecraft

At the end of the Derg's rule, Ethiopia's development challenges were probably the most complicated. The political problem was enormous, the challenges to undo poverty involved fundamental changes on crucial sectors such as gender, environment and population control. The infrastructure for development had not yet got off the ground and the country's wealth was literally sapped by the war. [When the EPRDF took power there were only three million dollars in the national treasury]. Investment was crucial and the need to do everything possible to attract investment was clear. Politics had to change drastically, beginning with redefining the role of the state. The role of the state had to change from *ruling* to *regulating*. As such, the political, economic and social challenges that the country faced were enormous and complicated. The field of social construction was distinctly different from overthrowing a regime and that social construction and social development were the work of experts. In this regard, expertise in statecraft was required as the highest order with power sharing with other political forces as well as individuals.

- Poverty and under-development

At the end of the Derg period, the Ethiopian people were worse off than when the revolution broke out in 1974. Poverty and under-development were the paramount problems that the country still faced. Therefore, on the eve of the EPRDF's accession to power, the fundamental problems that the country faced before the revolution were still intact and unsolved (Gebru, op.cit, Melakou, 2004: 49). The causes of the 1974 revolution that overthrew Haile Selassie's government were still fresh at the end of the Derg rule. Apart from mal-governance and corruption, poverty and under-development, unfreedom, ethnic tension, gender inequality, environmental degradation and a rapid rate of population growth were intact.

It is against this background that I am going to examine the policies of the EPRDF vis-à-vis these fundamental problems.

Chapter 5 The state of 'civil society' in Ethiopia

Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

Karl Marx

In this chapter I examine the policies and strategies that the EPRDF government adopted to 'solve' the erstwhile problems of unfreedom in Ethiopia, which, as we have seen is pivotal to undoing poverty and under-development. The chapter is divided into four main sections and starts with examining the EPRDF's policies in the non-state sphere, that is, civic associations and the business community. In the second section I examine the level of social organization within society, followed by an analysis of the government-society confrontation. In the fourth section I investigate the state of 'civil society' in Ethiopia.

5.1 EPRDF's policy on the non-state sphere

We have seen in the theoretical framework that poverty and unfreedom are indissolubly connected and that the process of building freedom/democracy is a precondition for undoing poverty and under-development. Building democracy is in effect building a civil society at the societal level and a nation-state as the principal institution of governance. State and civil society are symbiotic and the process of building a nation-state is also symbiotic with the process of building a civil society. In putting democracy/freedom as precondition for development, I have also dealt with four crucial categories that make up this freedom/democracy, namely political, economic, social and knowledge systems.

'Poverty is capability deprivation' (Sen, 1988). However, the capability of individual humans and communities at large cannot be defined without a given space and time. In traditional formations, these capabilities can hardly be defined without being related to the security of subsistence of communities that embody political, economic, social knowledge systems as categories. In a traditional society such as Ethiopia, both in the peasant and pastoral sense, democracy as a concept and practice cannot be constructed without taking these four categories that kept these communities going for centuries into consideration. It is the deprivation of these capabilities that brought poverty and under-development and indeed the freedom component in the process of deprivation stands out as pivotal.

In Ethiopia, the deprivation of the capabilities of communities at the political, economic, social and indigenous knowledge system levels that began more than a century ago has been described. The feudal autocracy attempted to 'modernise' the structures of deprivation while creating the seeds of its own

destruction. The Derg experimented to 'rationalise' the continuity of these deprivations through a perfectly suitable schema in the body and soul of state 'socialism'. I have described the situation at the end of the Derg period at the economic, social and political levels. In the aftermath of the Derg's demise the essential task of development was precisely the task of enhancing these capabilities of communities, individuals and society at large, capabilities long deprived by the feudal dynasties that reigned throughout Ethiopia's history and the Derg. If Ethiopian society had to rise out of the ashes of poverty and extreme form of under-development, unrestricted and untainted freedom at the political level with a democratic form of governance that is accountable to society with all the central tenets of a modern nation-state was an absolute imperative.

At the economic level, decentralizing the over-centralised economy (withdrawal of the state from the economic sectors that cannot be absorbed by the private sector) that the Derg introduced, enhancing the capabilities of the immediate producers (peasants, pastoralists and workers) and securing their livelihood systems and reviving the capabilities of the entrepreneur class and private business was essential. Amazingly, these tasks that were in a nutshell the historical imperatives at the cross roads that Ethiopia found itself with the end of the Derg's rule corresponded with the instinctive expectations of the population. The individual Ethiopian politically atomized by the terror of Mengistu's rule cherished freedom to decide its own future and sought it desperately. As Pausewang et al say of these expectations of the population, 'There was a wide expectation that, finally, they would be free to decide their political future for themselves' (Pausewang et el, 2002:1). However, these tasks could not be fulfilled without recognising the role of indigenous knowledge systems that kept traditional communities together for centuries but could not be transformed to any modern way of life overnight.

Looking into the internal dynamics of traditional societies and preserving the good practices while repudiating the bad was unavoidable. This refers mainly to the necessity of improving and equalizing gender relations without which neither freedom nor development is possible. In constructing democracy in the Ethiopian context, these were the historical tasks whose fulfillment was unavoidable when the EPRDF came to power. Let's now examine how the EPRDF traversed vis-à-vis what was and still is the historical imperative in post-Derg Ethiopia.

The first ten year rule of the EPRDF starkly and unequivocally demonstrated one basic feature of the ruling party's policy on democracy and on the non-state sphere in general: ambiguity, eclecticism and a mismatch between what is official and textual on the one hand and the practice and the real thinking of the elite on the other. At the end of the Derg's rule which corresponded with the end of the Cold War, the TPLF (the core of the EPRDF) found itself at the cross roads between how it could retain its Stalinist orientation and the great support it received from the West. On the eve of the Derg's demise, Meles Zenawi, the leader of the TPLF and current prime minister, openly pledged his organisation's

adherence to the principles and policies that the Stalinist state of Albania under the ruthless dictator Enver Hoxha followed as 'socialism' (The Independent, 1989:19.) The end of the Cold War also saw the end of the Stalinist regime of Enver Hoxha in Albania, which Meles Zenawi declared as a model to follow.

Within months the Derg was overthrown and the TPLF chose to follow an ambivalent and equivocal policy regarding its policies on democracy. One conspicuous phenomenon was, however, the TPLF became completely silent about its erstwhile vanguard nucleus within it namely the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT). No statement has ever been issued on the fate of the MLLT, it just mellowed down and was never mentioned again. It has not yet been formally and officially dissolved. However, the introduction of a parallel party structure in all government administrative structures and the revival of the idea of 'revolutionary democracy' later in the middle of 2001 after the split within the TPLF and EPRDF as a whole, indicates that, after all, the MLLT is not gone.

5.1.1 The constitution versus revolutionary democracy

Pausewang et al aptly described this ambiguous state of affairs that the TPLF created. The TPLF '... established and reinforced a two-track structure at all administration levels. It has built up a formal structure of democratic institutions to keep in line with the promises it made to the Ethiopian people and the demands and expectations of Western donors, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. But below the surface it has built a party structure that keeps tight control at all levels and makes sure that no one can use these democratic institutions efficiently to challenge its power' (ibid., 230-231). It is this fundamentally ambivalent mismatch between the party and government structures, between the official rhetoric and the practice that described the EPRDF policy on democracy, opposition and the non-state sphere. The ambivalence led to a number of government policies – particularly on issues of democracy and the non-state sphere – that are at opposite extremes between official rhetoric and the practice. The official is for the consumption of Western donors while the practice is the real policy of the TPLF/EPRDF. Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that when some government officials are heard to express what they really think in official discussions or debate that the real policy of their party comes out, although it is normally taken as 'a slip of the tongue'. For instance, when the Prime Minister addressed the African Development Forum (ADF) on Gender and Civil Society in 2000 along with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and OAU Secretary General Salim Salim, he started by saying 'the so-called civil society ...' At a recent public debate between the ruling party and the opposition on issues of democracy and civil society, one of the trusted lieutenants of the prime minister, Bereke Semion, ex-minister of information, said quite a few things that are indeed revealing of what the real thinking of the EPRDF is on democracy and civil society. (I will deal with this at length.) Let us

now turn to the fundamentals of the EPRDF constitution on freedom and democracy.

The EPRDF's constitution is the fourth constitution that the country has had since the semblance of a 'modern state' was established. The first constitution was proclaimed in 1931, the second was enacted in 1995 as an amended version under the imperial regime. The third was that of the Derg enacted in 1985. A long time had already elapsed between 1931 and 1995 when the EPRDF proclaimed the latest constitution; the country had already gone through political turmoil and civil wars for over three decades; a massive destruction of the economy had already occurred and needless to say, millions of lives had been lost through wars and governance related periodic famines. Above all, with the demise of the Derg regime, there was a high level expectation by the population not only in terms of the enactment of a constitution per se, but also in terms of finally having a democratic system with an unrestricted enabling political environment for the full utilisation of the capacities of both individuals and communities for the prosperity of their country. Indeed, the EPRDF constitution as an enactment on paper could not be any more restrictive. It would be ahistorical to compare the EPRDF constitution with those of its predecessors as the historical situation during the three periods varies starkly. The same holds true for the Kenyan constitution. The first independence Constitution was hailed as perfect at the time of independence but after thirty years of independence it was outdated in many respects. It is mainly because the Kenyan society has developed in leaps and bounds that a potentially vibrant civil society was already in the offing in 1992.

In its very first sentence, the 1995 constitution undertakes the 'building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing our economic and social development' (Negarit Gazeta, 1995:75). Whether or not the EPRDF has lived up to these pledges will be a subject for examination in this thesis. The question at this point however is the fact that the EPRDF could not promise anything other than 'the rule of law' for a country hitherto ruled by diabolical dictators, 'a lasting peace' in a country in which there were uninterrupted wars and conflicts for over three centuries. I am referring to 'guaranteeing a democratic order' for country ruled by autocrats and military dictators and advancing 'economic and social development' for a country that is one of the poorest in the world and at the lowest rung of the ladder in the UN annual Development Index. These pledges should not come as a surprise as the leaders of the EPRDF are all members of the generation that negated these negative features of their country. Whether or not they meant these pledges remains to be seen.

The 1995 constitution provides for important democratic principles such as respect for human and democratic rights under Article 10, the separation of religion and state under Article 11 and the accountability of government under Article 12. The entire Part One of the Constitution comprising 14 articles (Articles

14-28) deals with human rights as a whole. The entire Part Two, that is, from Articles 29-44, deals with democratic rights in which principal freedoms were proclaimed. Freedom of expression and opinion/thought is proclaimed under Article 29 while freedom of the press is assured under the same article under Clause 3. Clause 3, Section 'a' categorically asserts that any form of censorship is prohibited while section b assures access to information of public interest. Clause 4 proclaims that the press is protected by law while Clause 5 assures that the state media 'shall be operated in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversity in the expression of opinion' (ibid., 89). Articles proclaiming the right of assembly, demonstration and petition (Article 30), freedom of association (31), freedom of movement (32), women's rights (35), children's rights (36), right of access to justice (37), the right of nationalities to self-determination (39), the right to property (40), economic, social and cultural rights (41), rights of labour (42), the right to development (43) and environmental rights (43). Although the essence and definition of some of these provisions such as the right to development and environmental rights contravenes the essence and definition created by international covenants and declarations to which Ethiopia is a signatory to such as Agenda 21 (Rio, 1992) and the Convention of the Right of the Child (1989), the essence of these provisions in the 1995 Constitution by and large constitute the first steps towards democracy. How the EPRDF fared for the last decade vis-à-vis these proclaimed democratic rights will indeed be a subject of our analysis.

In addition, a number of proclamations have been made to augment the democratic provisions proclaimed in the Constitution, the major one being the revised Penal Code of 2003. Now, let's retrace our steps to the issue of the EPRDF following a two-track policy. The first track, as I mentioned earlier, constitutes these proclaimed liberties on paper such as the Constitution and other laws. The second track is what the EPRDF really is and what it really believes in and what it follows as a matter of policy. Nothing less than the document issued in 2001 by the EPRDF entitled *Yedemocracy Meseretawi Tiyakewoch Be-ethiopia* (Basic Questions of Democracy in Ethiopia) and ostensibly authored by Meles Zenawi (*Abyotawi Democracy*, Special Issue, Guinbot [May], 1993:41) unambiguously lays down the official perception of the EPRDF leadership on issues of governance.

Meles' thesis has four major parts, namely liberal democracy, revolutionary democracy, problems of revolutionary democracy in Ethiopia and current focus of revolutionary democracy. It describes liberal democracy quite incorrectly and deals with its cornerstones mechanically without any historical perspective. As we saw in the second chapter, liberal democracy had its own evolution created by a historical situation marked by the industrial revolution. Needless to say that liberal democracy was not perfected the day the nation state was formed and bourgeois democracy proclaimed. Capitalism as the material basis for the nation state and liberal democracy did not immediately become the predominant mode of production in all European countries where liberal democracy took root. The

capitalist sector is said to have become dominant not because all the pre-capitalist economic and social relations are completely overtaken by the industrial sector but because the capitalist sector had become the decisive sector in the sense that it had set the rule that the trend was towards the expansion of the sector. Italy and even Germany were cases in point where pre-capitalist relations were still at large long after these two countries followed the path of liberal democracy. The essence here is the decisive role that capital and the bourgeoisie had but not the spatial dominance, the engulfing of a given country by capital.

Indeed, the question of democracy in general and the evolution of the nation-state and civil society in traditional formations cannot assume exactly the same pattern of evolution as that of Western Europe. Colonisation and the resultant changes that occurred, for instance the feeble state of the institution of governance that passed as the African 'state', the limitations that it had on the ethics of the culture of democratic governance all compel traditional formations to introduce democracy and even liberal democracy provided there is the political will on the part of the political society. It is, for example, the prevalence of freedom and space for participation for society, political pluralism and a properly regulated political competition that are the fundamental pre-requisites for liberal democracy to flourish. It is not the full development of capitalism but the political will and the democratic system of governance in place that is the precondition for liberal democracy in the case of traditional formations. Exact replication of the pattern of the evolution for liberal democracy in Europe is impossible in traditional formations. That is indeed why the political precondition for liberal democracy prevails over the economic.

Meles, on the other hand, absolutizes the dominance of the capitalist sector as a pre-requisite for liberal democracy (EPRDF, 2003:3.), which, as we have seen, cannot be in the case of traditional formations. On the basis of such erroneous observations, the EPRDF document further advances its reasons why liberal democracy cannot be applied in Ethiopia. Incidentally, these arguments must be seen against the background of the prevalence of autocracy and dictatorship for centuries in Ethiopia and the expectations of the public for freedom following the Derg's overthrow. Secondly, these arguments must also be seen in line with the original perceptions of the TPLF/EPRDF on governance that we discussed earlier. Now, Meles argues 'Liberal democracy has no social base in Ethiopia. There is not a [private] wealthy person who has a strong capitalist economy and developed wealth' (ibid., 31). He then goes on to dismiss the business sector as parasitic and dependent on the state bureaucracy. Therefore, he argues 'Liberal democracy, based on such dependent sector cannot guarantee the desired development and democracy' (ibid., 32). Now, the paradox is: Meles argues that we cannot have liberal democracy in Ethiopia because we don't have a developed bourgeoisie but, as we will see, the EPRDF, on the other hand, systematically obstructs the development of the business sector. In the first place, the ideals, values and institutions of liberal democracy are not mechanical

formulas that one would say they can or can't be implemented because this or that component is lacking. The question is not whether or not there is a developed bourgeoisie in Ethiopia but whether or not freedom can prevail over government's absolute control on every facet of life.

The connection in the EPRDF's argument between the non-existence of a developed bourgeoisie and a flourishing corruption that can in turn corrupt the political system is indeed clumsy and cannot stand on its own. Corruption has origins of social and political nature that have nothing to do with whether or not the dominant bourgeoisie is developed or dependent. By rejecting liberal democracy on the grounds that 'it can breed corruption in the case of Ethiopia' mainly because of the lack of a developed bourgeoisie ('Liberal democracy can be a cover for dependent democracy' [ibid., 32]), the EPRDF could not manage to create even a bureaucracy that is clear of corruption. On the contrary, corruption has become rampant since the EPRDF came to power. The Anti-corruption Commission it established to control corruption has not fared well so far. By any account, the EPRDF's argument in rejecting liberal democracy is flimsy, clumsy and cannot hold water.

Now, Meles picks the EPRDF's gospel to argue against the impracticality of liberal democracy in Ethiopia, namely ethno-centrism. For the EPRDF that holds the national question as determinant to every political phenomenon also extends its anti-liberal democracy argument to it. Meles makes an extremely categorical and completely false assertion to dismiss liberal democracy. He argues that even in developed capitalist countries where liberal democracy is fully practiced, the national question has not been solved because the emphasis of liberal democracy is on individual rights. Here we have two elements woven together, that is, collective rights versus individual freedom and the record of liberal democratic states (Western Europe in this sense) on the national question. On both accounts, the document fails to grasp the essence of both elements. In the original Western discourse it is indeed true that the emphasis was on individual freedom. However, over time collective rights such as those of women, nations, ethnic minorities and immigrants were recognised. These rights should not be seen in the abstract and/or in isolation from the general question of freedom. Official rhetoric in terms of law or proclamation to collective rights does not protect the freedom of the collective, the main thing is the political practice that guarantees general freedom. Is there any parallel between the general state of political freedom in Western Europe with that of the Soviet Union that declared the 'right of nations to self-determination including the right to secession' in its 1936 Constitution? Can there be any parallel between the political freedom that women enjoy in Europe with that of the Soviet Union, which considers itself the champion of the women's question? None whatsoever. As human experience has shown, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whole disappeared essentially because of the denial of political freedom, whether for the collective or the individual. And countries such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were dismembered into several capitalist nations simply because the disparity

between the rhetoric on recognition of the right of nations to self-determination but its complete denial in practice (for further reading in the case of the USSR see Melakou, 1991.) The reality in contemporary Ethiopia can be compared to the state of affairs before the dissolution of both the USSR and Yugoslavia: recognition of collective rights at the level of rhetoric (the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession as in Article 39 of the EPRDF Constitution) but a negation of these rights in practice and disentangling these un-respected rights from the general question of political freedom.

Meles' 'thesis' is full of fallacies. In the first place, individual and collective rights are not and cannot be mutually exclusive. Secondly, it is impossible to recognise collective rights without recognising individual rights. Thirdly, without the individual empowered with freedom and responsibility, the transformation of subject to citizen cannot take place. Emphasis on collective rights and dismissing individual rights actually dis-empowers the individual and keeps her/him in bondage. The Stalinist state has found it convenient to stress collective rights and dismisses the rights of the individual, thereby perpetually subjugating the individual and collective rights and never respecting either.

In a nutshell, Meles' assertion that ethnic rights are not recognized under liberal democracy is simply unfounded as multi-ethnic countries such as Belgium and Switzerland are fully fledged multi-ethnic states, Sweden fully accepted the secession of Norway in 1905 and Germany as a federal state recognises the rights of the regions that constitute the *Bundesrepublik*. Indeed, the situation in Britain vis-à-vis the Irish question and in the US vis-à-vis indigenous Indians and Afro-Americans is one negative experience but it cannot be the rule for all liberal democratic states. Be that as it may, but what has the national question got to do with the question of the practicality of liberal democracy?

Meles' argument is indeed empiricist: because liberal democracy in the West has not solved the national question, which is a false assertion as we have seen, it cannot solve the national question in Ethiopia either. Therefore we should not adopt it. The second empiricist argument also relates to the experience of the post-independence African 'state'. According to Meles, the African state also opted for liberal democracy but it did not solve the national question. Is it because the African state has always been thoroughly undemocratic and has never recognised and respected general political freedom? Or is it because it has not pledged (the rhetoric again) in its constitution to respect the right of nations to self-determination? The national question is still a burning issue in Africa as it is in Ethiopia (despite the official rhetoric on self-determination) mainly because the African 'state' simply failed to recognise freedom in general and let people practice it.

The EPRDF argument in rejecting liberal democracy on grounds of its incompatibility with the national question is groundless in both the political reality of liberal democratic states and conceptually. The rejection of liberal democracy

by the EPRDF is to reject democracy in general and advance its main agenda that has always been under its track two that we discussed earlier, namely the denial of political freedom for society and a rationalization of its erstwhile Leninist doctrine, the controlling role of the party in every facet of life. Let's now pass on to deal with the EPRDF's rationales for what it calls revolutionary democracy.

The formula 'revolutionary democracy' tries to combine two concepts, namely revolution or being revolutionary ('revolutionaryness') and democracy. The word revolution connotes a forceful removal of a status quo ante and replacement of a new political order in its place. In the case of Ethiopia and the EPRDF in particular, what constitutes a revolution is not the sheer removal of the Derg but its replacement with a new political status quo, which is a negation of or radically different from the political system under the Derg. A negation of the Derg's system cannot be anything but complete political freedom for society and the introduction of a political system that galvanizes the process of the transformation of the individual *subject* that was reduced to a political robot under the Derg, to a *citizen* with full political rights and responsibilities. This is what constitutes revolutionary in the case of Ethiopia on the aftermath of the Derg. A type of democracy that qualifies this particular transformation is the kind of democracy what Ethiopia needed and what it still needs. Whether or not that kind of democracy is called revolutionary democracy is a matter of semantics but the essence remains the same.

A democracy, to be qualified as revolutionary vis-à-vis the Derg, implies unrestricted political freedom and comprehensive policy support that the individual subject needed/needs to convert itself from subject to a free and responsible citizen. It is only this kind of democracy that can be qualified as revolutionary. The EPRDF's 'revolutionary' democracy as I mentioned above follows a course that is completely the opposite of what should be qualified as such. In actual fact, the EPRDF's democracy is much closer to the Derg's own 'people's revolutionary democracy' in its essentials. As such it should not be called revolutionary as it does not constitute a qualitative as well as quantitative change. EPRDF's 'revolutionary democracy' is neither revolutionary nor democratic by any stretch of imagination. The rationales advanced for the necessity for 'revolutionary democracy' by the EPRDF is the same old recognition of the right to self-determination and citizens' rights (*ibid.*, 37). But, as we have seen above the combined rights of the collective (self-determination) and individuals (citizens) can be better protected under liberal democracy than under a Leninist state.

During the 2005 election debates, the EPRDF unceasingly stressed that its 'revolutionary democracy' is indeed democratic because it stands for collective rights such as those of nationalities. It further stressed that it succeeded to maintain the unity of the country through its policy on the national question and Article 39 of the Constitution. Now, we have to sift the conceptual from the reality on the ground and start commenting on the conceptual note. What should

collective rights in general and the right to self-determination of nationalities in particular mean in the concrete conditions of the Ethiopian situation? We will come back to the experiences of the last fifteen years of a policy of 'self-determination up to and including secession', but first on the conceptual note. The experiences of the last fifteen years unambiguously attest to the fact that the right to self-determination according to the concrete conditions of Ethiopia must be reexamined and redefined.

In the first place, the concept of self-determination is a relational phenomenon. There cannot be a discourse on the right to self-determination in the abstract, without relating it to a situation of injustice or inequality featured by what in the Leninist school is called a *policy of national oppression*. This is fundamental as there can be no discussion on self-determination if there is no prevailing policy of national oppression. According to the EPRDF, the national question has been solved through the adoption of recognition of the right to self-determination unambiguously implying that there is now no policy of national oppression advanced by the government. The non-existence of a policy of national oppression does not warrant the insistence on self-determination, let alone that right to include secession.

This brings us to the next level of our discussion on self-determination. Abolishing a policy of national oppression does not mean the problem of the national question has been solved. There are two elements here. The question of self-determination being answered through regional autonomy is one thing but solving the national question en toto is quite different. However, this does not mean that these two components have no relation. Indeed, the national question cannot be solved without self-determination. Now, the whole question is, what should this self-determination mean once regional autonomy is attained? Should one continue with the rhetoric of self-determination forever as the EPRDF does or should one address the issues of freedom and liberty once regional autonomy is attained? It is here that the question of individual rights and the transformation of subjects to citizens come to the fore. The EPRDF 'concern' for collective rights comes to an end with regional autonomy because regional autonomy is supposed to end the policy of national oppression. This implies that self-determination for the collective is not the question once regional autonomy has been attained. This is without going into whether or not the practice of EPRDF's regional autonomy is indeed genuine. By reducing the problems surrounding the national question to a mere regional autonomy, an autonomy controlled by its own party apparatchiks, the EPRDF has ended up where the ex-Soviet Union and ex-Yugoslavia did.

In Ethiopia 'the national question has not been solved. Far from that, it is in fact going to the opposite direction, towards national oppression in a new guise' (Negasso, interview, 2005). There is no doubt that we still have the problem of the national question. From whence did the problem emanate after the adoption of the policy of regional autonomy that was supposed to solve the problem,

according to the EPRDF? The problem emanated at two levels. First, at the level of regional governance where regional autocracies have been created in each administrative region, a new ruling class that Merera Gudina calls the 'PDO (People's Democratic Organizations) project' (Merera, 2003: 143-156).

The second major problem, which is the subject of our discussion here, is the complete disregard for individual rights once collective rights are ostensibly attained through regional autonomy. Because the policy of the EPRDF has created a new ruling class that imitates the TPLF leadership, it has entered a new social conflict with the local population. The problems of the ordinary person have not been solved at all. Fear and want still haunt the individual Ethiopian, poverty still takes its toll, basic needs are still too far off, and more than anything else the freedom of the individual has been robbed from her/him. The new ruling class rules arbitrarily, it has been given absolute power over the individual subject, and rules without a modicum of accountability. All this is happening in the name of self-determination. This is what the oppressed in Ethiopia, irrespective of their nationality, are now experiencing as the ANDM (Amhara National Democratic Movement) in Amhara and the TPLF in Tigray are doing the same thing. In as far as that goes, all nationalities have now been levelled, and the questions confronting the ordinary subject are freedom, poverty and under-development. The concept of self-determination must also address these issues beyond regional autonomy or independence. The Eritrean experience also attests to this fact. The question of freedom and development constitute the agenda of both Ethiopia and Eritrea. The meaning of self-determination in contemporary Ethiopia can only find its salvation through addressing the rights of the individual, her/his fears and wants.

The EPRDF's argument is not really about the impossibility of having liberal democracy in Ethiopia but against the flourishing of freedom as a whole. As actions speak louder than words, its policies and actions are precisely directed against freedom of independent participation. Like the Derg, the only form of participation that the EPRDF through its 'revolutionary democracy' recognises is that of mass organizations that rally around the flag of 'revolutionary democracy'. Meles stipulates that one of the means through which the people can realise their participation is mass organisations and professional associations (ibid., 57.) It states that it is necessary for the government to create as many such associations as possible and make them accept the 'directions' of 'revolutionary democracy' (ibid., 58-59.) It is well known that the Leninist vanguard principle clearly stipulates that the communist party must play a central role in creating and leading mass organisations such as unions (see Lenin, *What is to be Done?* 1975). It is also well known that under state 'socialism', there had never been any independent form of associational life or political opposition. They were not tolerated at all. The only difference between the Stalinist practice and that of EPRDF is that the latter did not outlaw independent associational life or political opposition openly. As I mentioned earlier, the US and other Western powers made it clear to the EPRDF, when it came to power, that their support to the new

government depended on its commitment to human rights and democracy as in the words of Herman Cohen, the then US assistant secretary of state for African Affairs, 'We have cautioned the interim administration that future co-operation from the United States depends on their holding to their announced commitment to human rights, democracy and due process for all' (Statement of Herman Cohen, 1991:8.) Otherwise, in essence, the Stalinist doctrine/practice and the EPRDF's thesis on mass organisations or on the non-state sphere as a whole are identical.

There is also a very serious dimension to the EPRDF's two-track approach towards governance. In the words of some of its own ex-leaders, the EPRDF's two-track approach is in fact based on deception. Aregawi Berehe, one of the founders of the TPLF and military commander of its guerrilla army for a long time says, 'The TPLF's talk about democracy is basically for the Western consumption. It is a Stalinist party and a strict follower of the late Enver Hoxha of Albania' (interview with Aregawi Berehe, 2004.) Such assertions are even strongly advanced by ex-members of the EPRDF such as the ex-president of the country, Dr. Negasso Gidada. Dr. Negasso was a central committee member of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), which was originally created by the TPLF at the demise of the Derg's regime. He was also one of the few OPDO leaders in the Central Executive Council of the EPRDF. In a recent interview he revealed that he left the EPRDF and OPDO 'because I have proof that they are opportunists and cheats' (*Hizbawi*, vol. 1 no. 19.) Negasso's revelation is not just that 'the EPRDF is a cheat' but what this cheating was all about. It reveals evidence for the two-track approach. He refers to EPRDF's 'socialist' agenda and in fact reveals that there was a 'communist' nucleus that led the EPRDF. It is well known that the TPLF had earlier formed the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT) back in the mid-eighties as the 'communist' nucleus of the TPLF.

According to Negasso, a 'communist' nucleus was also formed to lead the EPRDF. One of the disputes during the 2001 turmoil within the TPLF/EPRDF was on the fate of the earlier socialist agenda and the 'communist' nucleus. Apparently, the TPLF/EPRDF had intended to keep these nuclei secret for fear of withdrawals of support from the West. To this effect, Negasso says 'It is well known that the direction of the 1990 EPRDF political programme was to follow the path of revolutionary democracy that leads to socialism. At the extraordinary meeting of the EPRDF's executive council, we were informed that we stopped officially subscribing to this original programme and even mentioning the name of the Marxist-Leninist nucleus leading the EPRDF. When asked why, we were told that we don't want to risk the aid that we receive from the West and the US in particular on the one hand and for fear of losing support among the people who had already detested socialism due to the Derg's misuse of the word socialism' (ibid., 4, unofficial translation.) It is clear both from Aregawi's statement and Negasso's revelation that the TPLF/EPRDF has always been and still is consistent on one central issue of governance, namely the principled and

systematic exclusion of the non-state sphere from the state 'socialist' experience that commenced with the Soviet state that the Bolsheviks founded.

The EPRDF's vanguardist notion has been uttered several times by its officials sometimes intentionally, at other times as a slip of the tongue. At the 2nd Africa Development Forum at the Economic Commission for Africa in 1999, a forum for over 700 civil society representatives from all over the continent, Meles Zenawi started his statement with the words 'the so-called civil society'. Several officials of his government followed suit only to halt it later apparently after a criticism by the donor community. However, the negative reference to civil society and/or NGOs continued only with a slip of the tongue. The most blatant revelation came however, during the debate for the 2005 elections. Representing the EPRDF, Bereket Semion, minister of information, spoke quite openly about the EPRDF's real position on the civic sector and on NGOs in particular. Bereket referred to a draconean draft NGO legislation that is in the pipeline and argued why the government had to increase its control over NGOs. He revealed that the EPRDF is working hard towards forming a 'strong state' not in the sense of state intervention in the economy but in the sense of raising an iron hand to muzzle NGOs. He also unambiguously declared the erstwhile motto of the African state: to *control* but not to *regulate* (for further reading, see my critique to The EPRDF's position in *The Monitor*, annex ii).

In order to have further insight into the EPRDF's main thinking under track two, we have to look at the orientation of the core group that has led and still leads the EPRDF, namely the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

5.1.2 The EPRDF's initial perceptions

The TPLF as founded in 1975 by young college students, most of whom, including the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, were second and third year students, were Maoists (see TPLF Manifesto, 1976) and when the Chinese Communist Party fell out with its erstwhile and sole ideological ally, the Party of Labour of Albania under Enver Hoxha, it supported Hoxha's party. In fact, on the eve of its accession to power in Addis Meles Zenawi told a British newspaper that the TPLF's model was Albania (op. cit) On the other hand, the TPLF has been a parochial ethnic grouping from its inception. Politics and political struggle for most of the founders of the TPLF was basically what revolves around ethnicity. Most came to politics via ethnicity in 1975 when the Derg proclaimed its populist campaign that involves sending students to rural areas to work with peasants. At that point Tigrayan and Oromo students from the University of Addis Ababa demanded to be sent to serve 'their respective peoples' and that was when the nucleus of the would-be TPLF surfaced to mobilise Tigrayan students.

The Leninist slogan of the old Ethiopian student movement for the recognition of the right to self-determination of nationalities in Ethiopia became its credo.

TPLF's reference to Marxism was solely through Lenin's and Stalin's writings on the national question and later through Mao's works on people's war. As far as the national question goes, Stalin's arithmetical formula was taken as the gospel. The TPLF did not stop there however. Its absolutization of ethnicity in politics in fact goes beyond Stalin's formula as Praeger has rightly observed '...the TPLF stretched ethnicity further than Stalin' (2003:134). [This is further discussed in Chapter 6] Its identification with 'Marxism' started with the notion that it was basically a matter of convenience and as long as it served the immediate aims of the guerrilla war it waged. Later on the doctrine became 'Mao Tse Tung Thought' and Enver Hoxha's interpretation of socialism and the world situation (TPLF Manifesto, 1976: ix). This fundamentally dogmatic and fragmented formation was taken as its 'Marxism' and passed as its ideological orientation. What makes it weird is its strange combination of Stalinist socialism with the TPLF's deeply parochial ethno-nationalism. This was set out clearly in its 1976 Manifesto although the specific reference to its aim being the formation of a separate republic of Tigray was denied as a mistake in 2001. In a nutshell, the TPLF was basically a parochial ethno-nationalist grouping but used Maoist slogans and ideas for the purposes of the guerrilla war it waged particularly to mobilise the youth in Tigray.

At the core of the perception on governance is to hold power on behalf of the Tigrayan people as a whole and of peasants in particular, wield it by hook or by crook, and 'liberate' the people through party political education. This is almost the same as the thesis of European anarchists during the Paris Commune in France who vowed to establish a 'dictatorship by the educated', that is, the party (Melakou, 1990:14). This is corroborated by Meles Zenawi, who, in an interview with the London based *The Independent*, said that his millenarian vision of Ethiopia portrayed as 'a democratic utopia, once freed from oppression and *educated by the party*' (op cit, emphasis mine). In fact, this notion is the same as that held by the post-revolution states which shaped their modalities of governance after Stalin's USSR. According to this Stalinist school, the party is omnipotent, the all-powerful institution capable of doing 'everything' without restrictions. It is also omnipresent, having spread its tentacles throughout the country and in a position to control every facet of life. The dangerous part of this notion is the codification of Marxism and its 'simplification' through slogans replacing concepts that reduced it to the level of sophistry. Through such a dogmatic prism Marxism is reduced to a completed ideology that does not need to develop further as far as knowledge goes. The party that holds such dogmatic notion is supposed to be omniscient as it is supposed to know everything because everything in this world from natural science to social science is defined by 'Marxism'. Such is the rigid schema of thought that informed the policies of the TPLF on governance.

It follows from this perception that the world outside this schema is evil and deserves to be eventually obliterated as all the experiences of Stalinist regimes show. However, the Stalinist schema shrouded mainly with strong Maoist

undercurrents, was used to advance the cause of the armed struggle to establish a Tigrayan republic. In other words, Stalinism and Maoism were used mainly for the cause of attaining political power. Alliances with other political forces or shifts in policies marked particularly with the formation of the EPRDF were also made 'purely for the expediency of the leadership on its path to power' (Gidey, 1991:2). With such a schema the party (i.e. TPLF) should lead and control every facet of life and that leaves no room for individual freedom, freedom for non-party individuals and groups, no room for opposition parties, and so on. This is further confirmed by Aregawi.

Despite the denials, it is noteworthy that the current TPLF/EPRDF policy on governance is in line with its 1976 Manifesto. The Manifesto is flawed. One fundamental point appears to determine and inform the entire essence of the objectives of the TPLF. It is based on a misreading of the level or magnitude of ethnic contradictions or the antagonism between ethnic groups in Ethiopia. In 1975 when the TPLF was established and in 1976 when the manifesto was written, the principal political feature of Ethiopia was: the military regime was besieged by a massive democratic movement by labour unions, teachers' associations, the student movement, women's groups and even by democratic soldiers. The country had never seen such spectacular unity of purpose to establish a democratic state and to overthrow the military junta. One principal demand that united these massive movements was the demand for the formation of a popular provisional government that should be set up immediately that would organise democratic elections to form a democratic republic. The TPLF also recognised this when it stated 'That was why progressive sectors of the Ethiopian masses demanded, in their struggle against the counter-revolutionary junta, for the establishment of a 'provisional popular government' as a transition to the establishment of the democratic republic of all oppressed classes' (ibid., 7). Unity among activists of all nationalities was spectacular at various levels, particularly through the clandestine revolutionary organisations and the social movements that I described above. The only nationalist movement that was well known was the one in Eritrea, led at that time by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the smaller Eritrean Liberation Front-Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF) later to become the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF).

The mass revolutionary movement was so overwhelming that it drew to its fold even Eritreans from all over the country including big towns in Eritrea itself such as Asmara, Massawa and Keren. At the initial stage of the revolution, the person who the Derg appointed as head of state was a popular general, Amman Andom, an Eritrean by today's definition. The fact that Amman was the new head of state, replacing Emperor Haile Selassie and after his talks with elders in Eritrea, greatly reduced the influence of the two liberation fronts (Melakou in Zegeye and Pausewang, 1994:61-62). The political potential for the unity of the country had never reached the level it did during and after the 1974 revolution. However, the parochial Mengistu destroyed all that Amman had achieved in Eritrea, particularly with a massive clampdown against the Eritrean youth all over the country.

Thereupon, the nationalist fronts regained strength. Otherwise, until the PLF became a noticeable ethno-nationalist movement in the 1980s there was no substantial ethnic-based movement that captured the imagination of any nationality.

At no time in Ethiopia as in 1975-76 had the various nationalities of Ethiopia risen in unison to form a new society. Needless to say, the solidarity of the poor and oppressed that emanated from the character of the 1974 revolution, when the underdog of every sector rose against its oppressors, was still intact when the TPLF was writing its Manifesto. Amazingly, the Manifesto arrives at a completely different conclusion to the situation described above when it said, 'Realizing, however that at present not only is waging an integrated, joint political struggle extremely difficult and impractical because of the intensification of national contradiction, but also and partly as a result, national consciousness [especially in our nationalities] has preceded over class consciousness for the increasingly intensified forced territorial integrity of the oppressor and oppressed nationalities has made it impossible and intolerable for the oppressed nationalities to remain integrated any longer thereby making the possibility and practicality of an integrated joint struggle a mere dream and fetish ...' (TPLF Manifesto, 1976: xiii).

An additional 'factor' for the prevalence of ethnic consciousness over class, according to the TPLF, was what they call the prejudice and hatred towards the Tigrayan people by the rest of the Ethiopian people. In an extremely exaggerated statement, the Manifesto says that 'Thus the Tigreans have been made to be the most hated, suspected and discriminated people in the empire, thereby making joint life absolutely intolerable' (ibid., 20). Convinced of the fictitious conclusion that the various nationalities cannot fight in a joint struggle, it became a sweeping generalization and conclusion that Tigrayans are the most hated and suspected ethnic group and that because of this even joint life is intolerable. With specific reference to its own armed struggle the TPLF further states that 'the masses of the Tigray nationality are ... waging a national struggle against national domination, petty bourgeois reformism and imperialism for secession, democracy and independence' (ibid., xiii). This is the basis of the TPLF's doctrine on ethnicity, Tigrayan nationalism and why its initial objective was 'establishment of an independent democratic republic of Tigray' (ibid., 24.) Therefore, the TPLF did not initially have a pan-Ethiopian agenda. On the contrary, its objective was secession just like the Eritrean movements. This perception and political agenda had continued until 1983 when it established the EPRDF jointly with the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (later the Amhara National Democratic Movement).

It should be reiterated that the political premise that the TPLF built upon its objectives as we have seen was fundamentally flawed from the start. When these extremely simplified and fictitious political constructs were created, the national/ethnic consciousness did not prevail over that of class and the Tigrayan nationality was never hated and suspected by the rest of the Ethiopian people.

On the contrary, there had always been a great deal of respect, solidarity and sympathy with the people of Tigray. It was indeed seen as the official historiography did: 'the cradle of Ethiopian civilization', also because it was, together with the adjacent province of Wollo, sporadically hit by famine.

As for the rest of Ethiopia, the TPLF's vision was confused and inarticulate. In fact, Gidey insists that the TPLF leaders had an optional formula when they took power in Addis in 1991. According to him they would probably declare the secession of Tigray from the rest of Ethiopia and consolidate their position in Tigray if adversity occurred in Ethiopia proper. He warned, 'But let us not forget that the TPLF leaders might not hesitate to call for Tigrayan independence and returning to their old caves, should they fail to get power' (Gidey, 1991:3.)

Nevertheless, from what the TPLF stated in its Manifesto as well as from its political practice, policies and political messages to the people of Tigray at the time, it was obvious that the TPLF primarily sought an independent republic. Thereafter, if any union with the rest of the country was sought, it would have resulted through a condition that was conceptually ridiculous and practically unfeasible at the time. Ethiopia's unity according to the TPLF would be possible only if a 'national democratic revolution' (a Maoist concept for the first stage of a socialist revolution in a traditional society) is waged by a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that should forge the class-based revolutionary struggle with that of the national struggles. The assumption is that there would be a revolutionary class struggle and an ethnic-based national struggle. The document is neither explicit nor articulate on whether or not the national struggles are mandatory for the desired union. Also, the Manifesto is not very clear whether the so-called national democratic revolution should be waged nationwide by a revolutionary vanguard or within each nationality. Kinfu Abraha however makes it explicit that the TPLF stood for a struggle by every nationality separately '...The Tigrean students differed from the belief that the national question should be addressed at the national level. Instead, they began to advocate the right of each nation to struggle separately' (2000:171-173, quoted in Praeg, 2003:115). In a cumbersome formulation the manifesto states

Understanding that such an exploitation and oppression can be abolished only by national democratic revolution [NDR] with the working class-peasant alliance and organization being established under the revolutionary guidance of the should be organized working class party, recognizing that this party will assume political leadership over the empire wide [*minus the national struggle carrying nations, italics mine*] political struggle and undertake the task of coordinating this struggle with the revolutionary action of the necessary national armed struggles of the oppressed nationalities in the empire, thereby resolving by victory the existing class exploitation and national democracy and socialism (ibid., xii).

Although it was not explicit in the Manifesto at the time, the idea of postulating the unity of Ethiopia through some kind of organized expressions of the various ethnic groups of the country was there initially.

Apart from being based on a complete misreading of the prevailing political situation in the country, the TPLF's postulate fundamentally negates the prevailing political reality at the time, namely a clamour for a nation-wide mass revolutionary and democratic social change on the basis of class solidarity of the poor and marginalized. The only movement that came closer to a nationalist movement was the one in Eritrea, although there were a few ethno-nationalist groups at their formative stages: the TPLF itself, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Afar Liberation Front (ALF), Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) and others. In fact, the mass revolutionary movement was predominant when compared to the ethnic ones. The revolutionary organization that took the lead in the underground mass democratic movements at the time was the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), one of the off-shoots of the old student movement that stood for the revolutionary reconstitution of society though it recognized and supported the right to self-determination of nationalities. Because the EPRP had a people's army already operating in Tigray that started a little earlier than the TPLF and because it was enormously popular throughout the country, the TPLF demanded that the EPRP withdraws from Tigray. What is conspicuous and indeed conceptually ridiculous from the practical point of view of the Manifesto is the assertion that in the event of a possibility for a unified nation-wide struggle, the revolutionary vanguard must operate throughout the country but not where there are ethnic movements when it said 'minus the national struggle carrying nations'. This is eclecticism as it recognizes the necessity of a nation-wide struggle by the revolutionary vanguard and nationality struggles on the one hand but denies the role of the vanguard in regions of national struggles.

In summary: the TPLF's original perception of governance was based on a strange combination of the Stalinist/Maoist schema with a homegrown parochial ethno-nationalism that aimed to capture power solely in Tigray. Democratic perceptions such as human rights and the right of the individual, space for participation for the non-state sector did not exist. On the contrary, the perception was one of hostility toward and non-recognition of the non-state sector. Political power was seen as the only and crucial instrument to solve all problems of society and through which an African Singapore could be built. Thus, no compromise as far as political power is concerned, was tolerated. Also, the parochial ethno-nationalist construction dominated the Stalinist/Maoist schema and was primarily used as an instrument to advance the cause of the armed struggle. Furthermore, the unity of Ethiopia was postulated in the first place as a possibility and it could only be realized through the coalition of the organizational expressions of the various ethnic groups. Whether or not the TPLF did indeed change its original perceptions even after it had captured power will be obvious when one investigates its policies on the non-state sphere in concrete cases. It is noteworthy however, that the two most important leaders of the TPLF who have always influenced and formulated its policies, Meles Zenawi and Abbay Tsehaye, are still in leading positions (Gedey, 1991:3).

The EPRDF's Stalinist policies are debilitating the struggle against poverty and under-development. In this section I have emphasised the crucial role freedom should play in post-Derg Ethiopia by deconstructing the EPRDF's main thesis on governance and/or on state-society relations. Needless to say, I have not set out to deconstruct the entire thesis as outlined in the aforementioned document ostensibly written by Meles Zenawi. I only dealt with the kernel of 'revolutionary democracy' that determines state/society relations as a whole and people's participation in particular. In the third part of this thesis, I will investigate the consequences of these policies on concrete development challenges that Ethiopia is facing that are the main constituents of sustainable development, namely environment, gender, population, rural development, peace and democracy. Having laid out the central perceptions of the TPLF/EPRDF on governance or state-society relations, I will now briefly examine a concrete case of the TPLF/EPRDF's state-society relationship as exemplified in its policy on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as a concrete case of how the civic sector or non-state sphere was and still is systematically excluded from participating in the development process.

5.1.3 EPRDF views on non-government organizations (NGOs) and associations

In traditional formations and in Africa in particular, the first organic expressions of a nascent civil society are local NGOs. This is to be expected given the complete suppression of freedom and space for participation for society under the post-independence African 'state'. As a negation of the dictatorial or autocratic rule of the past, the slightest opening attained under a new political situation encourages people to start initiatives, organize into self-help and community based groups and attempt to participate in the development process in order to eradicate poverty. These initiatives normally emerge when a historical situation is created which is mainly political, namely an opening in which democratization is envisioned. This particular feature distinguishes the process of the emergence of a civil society in the classical Western European sense, in which case the industrial revolution was the basis for the bourgeois revolution. In Africa, it is the change in the political situation, or a social revolution if you like, that was the basis for the emergence of free and independent civic associations, whether in the form of NGOs or community-based organizations (CBOs). It is noteworthy here that NGOs and CBOs are expressions of an organic process involving democratization and building of a civil society.

Also, the expectations of the population when the Derg was overthrown and which I have already discussed, should be noted. Needless to say, democracy, freedom and the independent organization of society, that is, independent from the government, were the principal expectations regarding participation and the real exercise of freedom. Life under the Derg was characterized by a huge control mechanism involving institutions created by it but pretended to be

'independent' mass organizations, associations and unions. As one politician put it in 1991 'Those are organizations created from above amid the people not to serve the interests of the people but to control, brainwash and terrorize the people' (MNCPE, 1991:1). The people were completely disenchanted with such party and government controlled organizations. They wanted to form organizations independent of the government/party and wanted to serve their communities independently and free of the directives of governments. But what was the EPRDF's policy on this burning demand for independent organization? Let's examine the EPRDF's policy on NGOs and associations.

The EPRDF is following a two-track policy on this issue too. The real policy that is hidden and known only to its cadres; and the official one that is made public, stated in the constitutions, laws and policies that donors are to see. Its real policy is the same old policy that all Stalinist parties followed. In an internal document written in Amharic and circulated to its members in 1993 the EPRDF lays down its policies unambiguously. Summarizing the gist of the aims of the EPRDF stated in the document, Theodore Vestal writes 'The aim of the party is to develop a political system in which, regardless of whatever guarantees are written in the constitution, the EPRDF and its surrogates remain *de facto* the leading political force', (Theodore Vestal, in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective*, 1995:175.) He continues 'Under this strategy, "mass organizations" are to "be used as forums for political and propaganda works to ensure the hegemony of Revolutionary Democracy" ... The party would not attempt to impose its leadership on autonomous organizations but would "try to influence them through indirect means"' (ibid., 175). One does not need to guess what this 'indirect means' involves. Vestal continues 'The TPLF/EPRDF document further states: "The masses have to be organized in various social and political associations which intertwine them and lead them in our direction. We should maintain the relative autonomy of these associations as a means of promoting popular initiative and a check on corrupt tendencies in our cadres. But maintaining their autonomy does not mean that we should not influence their activities or recruit their members."' Then Vestal remarks,

Following this strategy, the EPRDF has destroyed or modified most of the social organizations that had existed prior to 1991. The ruling party encouraged people to join associations carefully vetted by the EPRDF. Tightly organized and firmly disciplined EPRDF cadres infiltrated and eventually manipulated many of the institutions and mass organizations of public and collective life, such as peasant associations "democratic petty bourgeois urban organizations, including professional associations in education, medicine, and journalism", as well as "peace organizations, human rights organizations and development organizations", trade unions, government organizations and "a nationwide organization formed from democratic nationality (ethnic) organizations", a national union of ethnic-based organizations. Almost all social activity takes place in the context of these front organizations that project an image of "pluralism" in Ethiopia without disturbing the real EPRDF power relations' (ibid., 175-176).

Despite the existence of official and hidden policies, the EPRDF has in fact pursued and implemented the hidden policies as its real policy because its own practice is what the EPRDF really believes in. It also believes that the non-state sector is a rival to donor funds and potential opposition (Dessalegn, 2002: 116) that has to be dispensed with at 'best' or stifled at 'worst'. The non-state sphere includes the institutions outside the government such as opposition political parties, civic groups such as NGOs, trade unions and other professional associations, the free press and the business community. How does the EPRDF do that? Let's examine how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are handled by the EPRDF.

The NGO sector is probably the youngest in Africa and quite new to Ethiopian society after the Derg period. Though international NGOs have been operating in the country for decades, particularly after the 1973 famine, the NGO phenomenon that involved the involvement of Ethiopian nationals in the context of their own initiative is quite new. As part of the incipient non-state civic sector and one of its organic expressions, NGOs can play a pivotal role in the development process as well as in democratization and in eradicating poverty. NGOs emerged as concrete expressions of and as an organic offshoot of a nascent civil society in the making. Individuals, who think they are citizens as opposed to being subjects of a draconian state, formed NGOs to participate in ameliorating the problems of their country in various fields but mainly in the area of poverty alleviation, democratization and policy advocacy. The ideal behind these local NGOs is lofty and noble.

However, as a young sector, it faces problems of an internal nature. Because most of the founders of these NGOs had no exposure to the outside world and how NGOs operated in other countries, their scope is confined to the problems of the country. That in turn has limited the benefits that they could get from involvement in international solidarity and international networking. A further major problem is the capacity to manage their own institutions. As a result, lack of transparency and democratic practices remain. Capacity building programmes could solve these problems but a lack of them as well as the increasing rate of the brain drain from the country continues to perpetrate the problem. These problems are understandable due to the youthfulness of the NGO sector as a whole.

As we have seen, the institutional development of civil society is sought by the nation-state as its own institutional development is concomitant with the development of the former. The state and civil society have a symbiotic relationship. The state cannot develop while institutionally suppressing the civic sector. The institutional development of one is to the interest of the institutional development of the other. The EPRDF's notion of governance is the opposite. It believes that the suppression of civic institutions can result in the reciprocal development of the state. How is this manifested in the case of NGOs?

In the first place, the EPRDF that has produced laws regarding practically every aspect of life – even on how to deal with the lumpen-proletariat – has not yet promulgated an NGO law. The basic law that governs NGOs is still that of the 1960 Civil Code, which was written when NGOs did not exist. There are also supplementary decrees enacted in the 90s dealing with controlling the functions of NGOs. Here, the EPRDF's policy on NGOs is its real policy and deliberately designed to erect bureaucratic hurdles that make the life of NGOs miserable, dispense with or stifle them. 'These bureaucratic hurdles', writes Dessalegn, 'some of which have been put in place on purpose, have hampered the growth of civil society' (ibid., 117). NGOs must be registered at the Ministry of Justice. However, one of the preconditions for registration is securing sufficient funding to start implementing proposed projects. It goes without saying that NGOs also have to submit detailed proposals to the Ministry. The paradox here is that all donor agencies in the country are requested and instructed by the government not to give funds to any NGO that is not registered. These preconditions are impossible to fulfill unless the NGO in question raises funds from abroad. Most, if not all, of local NGOs have no access to this.

These preconditions are deliberately designed to trap NGOs from getting a license to operate. Therefore it took NGOs more than a year and even two to get a license from the Ministry of Justice. In the meantime, the project proposals submitted by NGOs were passed to government's own organizations (GONGS, i.e. government NGOs) that pass as 'NGOs' such as REST (Relief Society of Tigray) in Tigray, Amhara Development Organization in Amhara and the Oromo Development Organization in Oromiya, to be used for fund-raising both within the country and abroad. Consequently, most NGO applications for registration are denied.

A further bureaucratic hurdle is what might be called operational agreement with the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) as the government sees NGO's roles only in the area of relief work. The same bureaucratic examination of the NGO application will be conducted at the DPPC, which is more hostile than the Ministry of Justice. But, there is no reason why NGOs should deal with the DPPC as most local NGOs are not involved in relief work at all. This is one more mechanism to make the life of NGOs miserable as the registration is not final as far as legality is concerned. Operational agreement is a further precondition for legality. The process takes from six months and a year if an NGO is lucky. A great many NGOs still fail the DPPC test and their registrations are cancelled. Once the operational agreement is signed the DPPC becomes a partner in the NGO's project and will instruct the NGO to sign yet another agreement called a project agreement with a government institution.

The situation of other civic sectors such as the business community is not much different from that of NGOs. Much like any modern institution in the country, the business community is also relatively young, a mere sixty years old, and extremely under-developed. The sector had a much better policy environment

under the imperial government though it was too feeble to take full use of it. However, it was then that enterprising entrepreneurs such as Bekele Mola (hotel chains), Kidane Adgoy and Molla Maru (liquor), Mammo Kacha and Mekonnen Negash (transport) emerged and indeed their respective businesses flourished. However, that trend was condemned to be short-lived when the Derg came to power in 1974. The sector resurfaced after the overthrow of the Derg in 1991. It is still weak and small. At the industrial front, the sector's annual output is not more than \$600 million (Kibur, 2004:23). Competition by the sector in the world market is out of the question at the moment as 'The share of the industrial sector in Ethiopia's GDP is only 11%, which makes the country's share in the global economy one of the lowest' (ibid., 23). The industrial sector is dominated by three groups, namely corporations affiliated to the ruling party, enterprises owned by the Ethio-Saudi tycoon Alamudi and a small private sector mainly with small and medium-scale business enterprises '... but it is still not strong to sustain itself' (ibid., 25).

In the post-Derg period, the private sector demonstrated its entrepreneurial capacity and as a result small and medium scale businesses have flourished. However, the sector could have emerged stronger had it not been for certain basic constraints on its development. The one-time President of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, Kibur Genna, states three main constraints: the general state of poverty of the country, depletion of the country's natural resources and its rugged topography, globalization and the mutual mistrust between the private sector and government (ibid., 25-30). The first three of these constraints, the general state of poverty, environmental degradation and the reality of corporate/market globalization are structural constraints that could be combated with proper development strategy and policies. The key to combating these constraints and overcoming the mutual mistrust between government and private sector is again a proper development strategy. The EPRDF's policy on the private sector is like its policies on the other civic sectors; it is aimed at stifling and obliterating it and, if possible, replacing it by its own business empire.

The size and pervasiveness of EPRDF's business empire attests to the assertion that the government is heavily involved in the country's business sector. Each member political party of the EPRDF has its own business corporations. The TPLF's business empire dwarfs all the other EPRDF parties' involvement in business. Two studies on the subject conducted by Gunther Schroeder in 1999 and Bogale Assefa in 2005 indicate that the TPLF is heavily involved in the business sector. The TPLF's parastatals are involved in export, import, manufacturing, processing and other economic activities. Involvement in export includes items such as coffee, oil seeds and other agricultural products, food items, industrial products, clothes and minerals. They are involved in 21 categories of imports, 25 categories of manufactured and processed products, imports and 92 categories of other economic activities (Bogale, 2005:16-24. For details of these export and import categories see **Annex iii**). The TPLF runs 52 companies with a capital ranging from 778,295,760.00 Eth. Birr (9,156,420.7

USD) to 100,000.00 Eth. Birr (11,764.7 USD) (ibid., 36-38, for the list of these companies see **Annex iv**). The total volume of capital that these companies operate with is 3,770,114,295 Eth. Birr (4,435,428 USD) (ibid. 38). Next in line is the EPRDF's business empire, the ANDM (Amhara National Democratic Movement) that runs five major companies, including the Dashen Brewery, with a total capital of 391,493,800.00 Eth. Birr (4,605,809 USD). The OPDO (Oromo People's Democratic Organization) runs seven companies with a capital of 151,897,000.00 Eth. Birr (1,787,023 USD). The SEPDO (South Ethiopian People's Democratic Organization) runs one company, Wendo Trading A.C., with a capital of 12,000,000.00 Eth. Birr (1,411,764 USD). As is evident from the above, and given the minuscule size of the country's modern sector, the involvement of the EPRDF business empire in the country's modern sector is indeed overwhelming.

In addition, the EPRDF policy is still to expel the private sector from the market. It obstructs its activities, levies taxes upon taxes on it and tried to divide the Chambers of Commerce. It gives large loans to its own corporations from the government-owned National Bank while largely depriving the private sector. The government has become an arbiter in an unfair competition, itself setting the rules of the game to favour EPRDF's corporations. Most of these EPRDF business corporations have been managed by incapable people and a number of them have become corrupt and insolvent. Ultimately, the private sector as an indispensable component of social development has been stifled and deliberately suppressed.

The EPRDF's marginalizing policies towards the private sector are related to its macro-economic policies. Though it claims to follow an 'open market economy', the EPRDF basically follows the principles of a command economy whereby the economy is controlled by the party. Party-affiliated corporations control much of the modern sector along with the only investor favoured by the regime, Sheikh Mohammed Alamoudi. Ethiopia's economy therefore is not really an open market economy as claimed by the EPRDF. It is in fact not independent of the state. In its annual report of 2005 called Index of Economic Freedom, the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal categorized Ethiopia's economy as not independent. Transparency International reached the same conclusion in its 2003 report. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, Ethiopia was ranked 133rd out of 155 countries whose economies are not free. The report held that although the government in Ethiopia 'claims to be federal, power rests in the hands of very few politicians and the country is ravaged by poverty and conflict, and is where the notion of democracy has not yet developed and where the government failed to safeguard the human rights of its citizens' (The Reporter, Miazia 2/97). In its 2003 report Transparency International also asserted that Ethiopia's economy is not free and warned that the devastation because of a lagging economy could be repeated. Worried about the systematic marginalization and stifling of the private sector, the Development Assistance Group, a consortium of donors based in Ethiopia, requested the government to

end its policies that favour the party corporations (The Reporter, Meskerem 1, 1998.)

The public service sector is not only badly run but unprofitable too. The government was obliged to privatize firms that went bankrupt. However, there are crucial public sectors that impact heavily on the development process as well as on economic growth. One of them is the Ethiopian Telecommunications (ET). ET control and runs the telecommunications, mobile phone and Internet services. These services are probably among the worst in Africa in terms of providing reliable services. The ET as the sole Internet and mobile service provider has monopolized the market. The demand for these services, for mobile phones in particular, is very high. The ET has displayed its utter inefficiency and incapability to provide the required and demanded services. Unfortunately for the country's economy and communications needs of its people, the EPRDF is adamant in not allowing the private sector in these sectors. There was a strong call for the privatization of ET as a whole or the mobile phone service. Both the prime minister and the minister of communications have flatly rejected the idea of privatization of ET or the mobile service. In his address to the international Information and Communications Technology conference in Addis in April 2005, Meles affirmed that state monopoly in the telecom sector (The Reporter, 09/04/2005). In an infamous statement, minister Kassu Ilala also stated that 'The mobile business is a milk cow, we will never privatize it' (The Reporter, Amharic 8/5/1997).

5.2 The EPRDF: nature and state of the institutions of governance

The nature and state of the EPRDF's institutions of governance are the key to the general state of under-development and/or poverty in Ethiopia today. As I stated in the previous section, the general question of freedom and democracy are crucial categories and preconditions for social development as well as in eradicating poverty. These deal mainly with policies, orientation and perceptions of the political elite in power. In this section I analyse the nature and state of the principal instruments that the elite used to exercise what it calls 'revolutionary democracy'.

Undoubtedly, the act of overthrowing the Derg regime constitutes a social revolution. A revolution is not just the overthrow of a regime however, although that is the crucial part and the precondition for the other. The other crucial aspect of any revolution is the construction aspect, the construction of a new political system. Revolution as a process of tearing down an old system is in fact much easier, but constructing a new system and a new society where freedom and prosperity flourish is by far the most difficult task. Social construction involving basically social development whose basis is freedom and democracy in a country with a predominantly traditional social formation such as Ethiopia is indeed an

immense task that requires not only knowledgeability but also expertise. A number of factors made it immensely difficult to reconstruct by the time the Derg was overthrown. These were mainly political, economic and cultural (see a summary of the situation in Chapter 3 above). However, the EPRDF inherited a situation in which a war economy had already ruined the country, the state 'socialist' option imposed on society had already divided state and society and the individual Ethiopian had been reduced to a political robot obeying the state not out of free will but out of fear. Also, the undemocratic values and relationships within the traditional systems that degraded women and affected the progress of social development and the development challenges that country faced in the fundamental areas of environment, gender, population, rural development, peace and democracy were insurmountable without a democratic 'state' and institutions of governance in place.

The aftermath of a revolution poses a problem that practically all revolutions face and to which all revolutionaries confess: the situation on the ground is not what they had expected and they face difficulties in coping with it. The Communards of the Paris Commune (1871) were the first to be confronted with this situation. They were confronted with an immediate problem after waging a revolution, namely how to retain power. They could not suggest a realistic strategy to do so and failed. The Bolsheviks were next. They learned from the failure of the Communards and managed to retain power. But, they failed to produce a realistic policy to develop their country. It took the Chinese revolutionaries nearly thirty years of civil war to come to power and twenty-nine years (1949-78) to adopt a realistic strategy of development. What is essential for a revolutionary party that found itself in power after a revolution is to adopt a development strategy that is political, social and economic in nature that corresponds to the concrete reality of the country. If that fails to happen then what Frederick Engels warned revolutionaries more than a century ago can take place. They can be 'irretrievably lost'. In other words, what is required from a revolutionary party after the revolution is flexibility and realistic political, economic and social policies. As I explained above and as in the previous chapter, the situation in Ethiopia required the utmost flexibility to undo all the wrongs of the Derg and lay the foundation for the construction of a new society on the basis of freedom and democracy.

Once it captured power, the tasks of a revolution that is democratic should have been to consolidate its power base with the empowerment of the social base of the revolution. The social base of the revolution at that moment was all those oppressed and marginalized by the Derg, a sector which is nearly the entire population save the small minority government and party bureaucrats who benefited from the Derg's rule. Empowerment requires first of all independence and freedom as that is what the Derg had hitherto deprived society of. This is a process completely different from, if not opposite to, the principles and practice that Leninist parties adhere to, namely the paternalistic role of the party in 'leading the masses', which is an inextricable part of the process of concentration

of power in the hands of the party. The process of empowerment of the social bases of the revolution requires its independent and free organization and participation while the process of concentration of power in the hands of the party would, sooner or later, exclude them from participation. As Charles Bettelheim says of the Bolshevik revolution, this will lead to the social base to be 'organs animated by the working masses but organs functioning *on their behalf*' (Bettelheim, 1976:447). In other words, the social base that was supposed to be the active participant and the empowered will be represented by the organs appended to the party but effectively disempowered.

In its 'celebrated' document that lays out its principles and strategies of 'revolutionary democracy', the EPRDF makes a sweeping and unfounded claim that its social base is the peasantry (EPRDF, 2001: 38-46). Even if one accepts the claim that it has the support of the peasantry, it is incorrect to assert that the social base of the revolution is only the peasantry. If the EPRDF's 'revolutionary democracy' had to be revolutionary and democratic indeed, its social base needed to be the entire population marginalized and antagonized by the Derg as a negation of the past.

The process of empowering the peasantry constitutes another dimension to the problem. The EPRDF's main interest was to control the peasantry but not to empower it. It maintained the peasant associations (now rural kebelles), which were established by the Derg and used them as instruments of control over the peasantry. The peasant associations were appended to the various political groupings that constituted the EPRDF. The TPLF controls peasant associations in Tigray, ANDM in Amhara, OPDO in Oromiya and SPDO in the South. The peasant associations that were appended to the Derg's Workers party of Ethiopia are now organically associated of the EPRDF. Otherwise, the functions of the peasant associations continued as usual.

We have to see this relationship vis-à-vis the development challenges that country faced and still faces. If life continues as usual, traditional and repressive relationships, particularly regarding gender, continue unchanged. No care for protecting the environment and no change in the social and economic relationship implies no change in the process of rural development and life as usual implies no population control in a country where rural resources for production such as land had already turned the peasant situation extremely precarious. The EPRDF believes that it can consolidate its power by making peasant associations appendages to the party and retain life as usual which ultimately constitutes control or a political relationship. But, political relationships cannot be proclaimed or enacted, but are, as Charles Bettelheim argues '... political relations are never "decreed": in the last analysis they are always the form assumed by the fundamental social relations at the level of production' (Bettelheim, 1976:251). As the famous dictum of Marx in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* has it, 'each mode of production produces its specific legal relations, political forms, etc.' (Marx, 1971:193). In other words, the

material base of production, the economy, determines the nature of political relationships and/or even political power. If the two do not correspond, what Engels had forecast a century ago becomes true: politicians who try to reconcile the irreconcilable 'will be irretrievably lost'.

That brings us to the question of the nature and state of the institutions of governance under the EPRDF. A revolutionary transformation requires not only the revolutionary take-over of political power but also the transformation of the state apparatuses of the old regime to suit the new conditions of governance that are supposed to be revolutionary as well as democratic. However, the EPRDF maintained all the government institutions except the armed forces, police, security and so on. When it came to power the EPRDF was handicapped by an extraordinary problem – lack of capacity to run the state machinery. On the eve of the overthrow of the Derg and as the inevitability of the EPRDF's capture of power became clear, activists warned about this serious handicap and urged the EPRDF to broaden membership to the political groups and the intelligentsia in the diaspora that had the administrative capacity in order to share power with them. On the eve of the Derg's overthrow, I raised the problem that the TPLF/EPRDF faced in terms of administrative and leadership capacity (Melakou, 1991:7-8). This was that a broader united front of the opposition than the EPRDF was at the time that might lead towards power sharing upon the overthrow of the Derg was required. Nevertheless, as in many things the TPLF/EPRDF remained self-righteous and went alone. It inherited the Derg's bureaucracy, imbued it with ethno-nationalism and has maintained it to this day. Transformation of the Derg's state apparatus in a revolutionary and/or democratic manner never took place. The EPRDF bureaucracy is the same as the Derg's bureaucracy, but infused with rhetoric. It is essential to recognize this in analyzing the nature of the EPRDF's institutions of governance.

Even some of the Derg's structures of control are also maintained. One of the most important instruments of control introduced and used by the Derg were the *Kebelles*, the neighbourhood associations. The *Kebelles* played a vicious role before and during the Red Terror, in which countless youth and revolutionaries were murdered in cold blood. The *kebelles* were 'definitely the most important tools for the Derg in administration but also in terrorizing and manipulating the broad masses' (Tronvoll, 1995:30, Human Rights Watch Report, 2005). First introduced as revolutionary institutions resembling the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, they were quickly dismantled because they became genuinely people's committees. The *Kebelles* were 're-elected' and the Derg then put its own people in the leadership. They were used effectively in breaking up the structures of the underground movement led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and hundreds of thousands of people were killed. The *Kebelles* were the most effective instruments of control because they were the closest state institution to the public able to monitor the movements of individuals in each neighbourhood. It is for no other reason that the *Kebelles* were the most hated institutions in the country.

The Kebelles are not only maintained under the EPRDF, the assignment of EPDRF cadres to their top leadership also replicated the Derg's structure. In principle the Kebelles were supposed to be elected freely by the residents of a neighbourhood and their leaders are in theory elected representatives of the residents. Like the general elections, the Kebele elections are also manipulated by the ruling party. As Pausewang et al noted 'In practice, however, the *kebelles* are controlled by cadres of the governing party, who make sure that *kebele* chairmen and leaders follow closely the EPRDF line. In the rural areas, a Norwegian team observed in 1995 that the new government revitalized the central control structure of the *kebele* which it had inherited from the military regime, replacing the old cadres of the defunct Workers' Party of Ethiopia with their own cadres' (Pausewang et al, 2003:232). Apart from being part of the instruments of control, the Kebelles also play important role in what the EPRDF calls mobilization of the public at time of war such as the one with Eritrea and for 'development'.

The Kebelles are important instruments through which the ruling party directly reaches the public whenever it has some agenda of mobilization. During the war with Eritrea, the Kebelles were instrumental in making sure that each Kebele contributed conscripts to the army. It also has administrative power through which some of the public services are rendered. The Kebelles are also the main organs used when the ruling party wants to collect contributions from the public. For instance, during the so called 'contribution for urban development', the Kebelles estimate how much each household should contribute, figures that run between 200 Birr per household (minimum wage is 150 Birr) and 3,000 Birr. The Kebelles are also used by the ruling party during both parliamentary and *Woreda* (district) elections. As Pausewang et al observed during the 1995 and 2000 elections 'Voters faced pressure before and during the elections. Before the elections, in many areas, *kebele* officials and party cadres were going from house to house, urging people to register and to vote for the ruling party. Peasants know their *kebele* leaders, recognize them, and generally understand their agitation as orders. Often they were directly told that failure to register or to vote for EPRDF would be punished' (ibid., 237).

The *kebelles* also exist as controlling mechanisms of the EPRDF in the rural areas. A telling report released by Human Rights Watch early in 2005 revealed how the peasants in Oromiya region are controlled by *kebelles* and peasant associations through newly introduced control structures. These new structures were particularly hastened in their formation with the approach of the 2005 elections. 'With elections approaching in May 2005, the regional government has taken drastic new steps to tighten its control over the rural population. New quasi-government structures have been set up throughout the region and are being used to monitor and control the rural population down to the level of the individual households. These structures have been employed to gather information, monitor and harass outspoken individuals, control and restrict the

movement of the rural population and disseminate political propaganda on behalf of the ruling OPDO' (Human Rights Report, The Reporter, May 14, 2005). *Kebele* officials are expected to keep their communication under perpetual surveillance and to report any subversive activities to higher authorities.

Ostensibly, the *kebelles* are supposed to provide services to their communities. *Kebele* officials wield a great deal of power over rural communities in the same way as they did at the time of the Derg and the old East European systems in Stalin's Gulag. In Oromiya, most peasants who are subsistence farmers depend on the *kebelles* for their supply of chemical fertilizers on credit. Rural Ethiopia must be the only place in the second millennium where freedom of movement is restricted and controlled by government authorities. The Human Rights watch report continues, 'Farmers must also obtain letters from *kebele* officials verifying their identity and place of residence when they wish to access government services outside their communities. Such letters are usually required, for example, in order to visit a doctor or send one's children to secondary school in town' (op. cit). In addition, the *kebelles* have their own tribunals and prisons where farmers who failed to pay for fertilizers and other 'subversive' elements can be locked up at will. (For the full exposure of government control over the rural population, see excerpts from Human Rights Watch Report 2005, **Annex v**).

We have seen that the EPRDF did not transform the bureaucracy it inherited from the Derg. On the contrary, it is using some of the structures of control (such as the *Kebelles*) that the Derg introduced and used in the same way as the Derg. This is one major problematic on the state and nature of governance under the EPRDF. The other major problematic area still under governance is the confusion in roles of party, government and state. The nature of the existing institutions of governance is ambivalent as the EPRDF itself has never been clear regarding the distinct roles of the ruling party, government and state. It started being broadly democratic as the nation-state facade of Western democracy (track one), but practiced in the same way as all the ruling Leninist parties in 'socialist' countries (track two). According to the Leninist school, the party should control the state as a result of which a situation is created where there is no distinctly differentiated role between the party and state. Governance under the Leninist state is a monolith. The party controls the state and dictates its terms. In addition, it is not really the party but the leader of the party that enforces his will on the party and state as it happened everywhere in 'socialist' societies; Stalin in the Soviet Union, Mao in China, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Enver Hoxha in Albania, Kim Il Sung in North Korea, Tito in Yugoslavia and so forth. In other words, what we have under a Leninist regime is an autocracy of a new type that poses as 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. A similar pattern has developed in Ethiopia particularly since the 2001 split within the TPLF that brought the uncontested power of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Since then, Meles is the prime minister, the chairman of TPLF and EPRDF, the supreme

commander of the armed forces and so forth. These autocratic traits are relics of the traditional Ethiopian polity upon which the 1974 revolution rose to destroy.

Another major area of structural problematics is the relationship and roles of party and government. Under state 'socialism' the party is omnipotent and reigns supreme over the government/state. Under the EPRDF, the distinction between the party and government/'state' is obliterated. This happened because though the EPRDF adopted a Western style democracy on paper it in fact rules through state 'socialism'. The initial aim was to make TPLF and/or EPRDF reign supreme and for their power, policies and decisions to be unquestioned and uncontested. The EPLF of Eritrea operated with similar assumptions. For that reason, a distinct role of the party and government had not existed in the minds of the TPLF/EPRDF leaders. As Gebru Asrat, a leading Central Committee member of the TPLF and EPRDF and head of the Tigray regional state until 2001 when he was expelled because of the split in the TPLF, attests '... when the EPRDF assumed power there was no real distinction between what constitutes working as a government and as a party. We did not distinguish the work of a ruling party from the work of the government. Every decision made by the party is also taken to be the decision of the government. It is the same thing with *Shaebia* [EPLF, MT] in Eritrea' (Interview with The Reporter, 2005:13). Because the TPLF/EPRDF was not clear on the distinct role of the ruling party and government, both the government and the country at large have suffered certain consequences.

The first casualty was the process that needed to lead up to the development of the institutions of governance from a government to a fully-fledged nation-state while the second was the pace of the development process and the struggle to eradicate poverty. The principles of the vanguard party lead a ruling party to operate under the assumption that the distinction between the party and government is not important because the government has to be led by the party in any case. Blurring the distinction between party and government leads to the creation of a monolithic system in a country like Ethiopia that has extremely under-developed government institutions and also lacks democratic political culture, as we saw in Chapter 4. When the vanguard party operates under such an assumption, the monolithic system it creates will not allow it to be concerned with the role of the non-state sector as a whole and that of political groupings outside it. It resorts to restricting the participation of the non-state sector and stifling its growth and development. A situation of political polarization such as the one that prevailed in Ethiopia since the EPRDF came to power exacerbates the aloofness of the ruling party/government and the distance between it and the non-state sector. The development of such a situation leads to mis-communication, which in turn leads the party/government to consider any critical expression outside its realm as opposition and sometimes as danger that deserve to be quelled. As Gebru Asrat said of student demonstrations in 1993 '... at the time, my and my colleagues' perception was that the demonstrations and others were deliberate attempts to destabilize the country and not expressions of

legitimate concerns...’ (ibid., 12). In the case of the EPRDF, as the party/government persisted in its policies, a situation of antagonism with the non-state sector was created. In fact however, it was not just the critical perspectives of the non-state sector but the EPRDF’s own official policies regarding the non-state sector that aggravated the situation as we have seen above. Ultimately, the government’s policies, far from creating an enabling environment for popular participation, has rather exacerbated the hitherto disabling environment and the government in fact reversed some of the crucial articles of the constitution on liberty through a series of laws and draft laws. A stand-off situation between the government and society was created to the extent that the possibility of the government to start thinking of changing its role from ruling/controlling to regulating literally stopped. As the culture of control persisted, the government’s commitment to accountability diminished and its response to meeting the needs of society dwindled. Once that happened, the EPRDF continued its preoccupation with implementing its own policies without looking inward and deciding whether or not the institutions of governance it inherited from the Derg had indeed been sufficiently developed to meet the needs of society in terms of participation until the split in 2001. In brief, the EPRDF policy of preventing the non-state sector from participating in the development and democratic processes has in turn severely curtailed the development of its own institutions of governance. As we have seen in the previous chapters, one of the dilemmas of the African ‘state’ is this particular under-development of its institutions of governance that did not enable it to be transformed into a fully-fledged state.

The second casualty of the EPRDF’s restrictive policy is the development process, the fight against poverty and the process towards democratization. By curbing effectively the participation of the non-state sector in the development as well as democratic processes the EPRDF has also contributed to the exacerbation of poverty, under-development and unfreedom. Ethiopia is one of the four poorest countries according to the 2004 UN Development Index ranking. It goes without saying that its government is also one of the poorest as its potential for collecting large amounts of revenue from a poor people is low. Instead, the government levied more taxes on the non-state sector as a whole and on the business community in particular, thereby stifling the development of the national bourgeoisie and exacerbating the state of poverty. How, the exclusion of the non-state sector from participating in the development process has further exacerbated the state of poverty and under-development will be discussed at length under various categories in Part Three.

The state of further deterioration of the economy as well as the political situation has in turn contributed to disillusionment and hopelessness. The public’s hatred of the EPRDF is so immense and the stagnation of the latter’s bureaucracy so serious that its own civil servants moved to the private sector en masse. At the societal level, losing hope in the prospect of the development of their country compelled many, the young in particular, to emigrate to the North en masse. Consequently, the brain drain from Ethiopia is the highest in Africa. The brain

drain has affected not only the government's bureaucracy but also the non-state sector. A state of incompatibility has been created regarding the capacity of the government vis-à-vis the enormous development challenges that the country faces. I will discuss this further in Part Three.

5.3 The stand-off between the EPRDF and society

The stand-off between the government and society is expressed in the prevailing state of affairs. The government failed to manage to gain the support of society in which case the public stands in constant disagreement with it come what may. Under such circumstances the EPRDF could not obtain the mandate from the public. It also failed to generate social development by going its own way, excluding society from participation. As a consequence, in Ethiopia neither the government nor society has the upper hand vis-à-vis the development challenges that the country faces. In this section, I will deal with how this stand-off came about.

A confrontation between a government and public cannot be expressed in the abstract. It needs to be concrete. The confrontation is in fact between the government and the organized sphere outside it, namely the old social movements such as trade unions and other professional associations; and elements of new social movements such as NGOs, think tanks, rights activists (such as of human and women's rights), the chamber of commerce; and indeed the political opposition and the private press. As we said earlier, the organized non-state sphere in Ethiopia is relatively new except as in the case of the unions that fall under the category of old social movements and some of opposition political organizations. It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into each of the non-state elements. Instead, we will describe the overall situation and briefly highlight some of the cases such as the unions and opposition political organizations.

The confrontation between government and society has been created ever since the EPRDF came to power. According to its vanguard principles, the EPRDF has to control all organized expressions of society and they all have to follow the party line. If they don't they are castigated as anti-revolutionary because they oppose 'revolutionary democracy'. The Hizbawi group that was expelled from the leadership of TPLF/EPRDF and which publishes the weekly *Hizbawi*, attests 'The TPLF/EPRDF doesn't like any independent association outside its control ... Consequently, it sees other associations and organizations, political or mass organizations, having positions different from itself with suspicion and will be spied on' (*Hizbawi*, 26.6.97). What the EPRDF sees as a major challenge in these organizations is, as Bertus Praeg observed, the fact that they reject the notion of organization on ethnic lines and opted to continue as multi-national organizations (Praeg, 2003:287). At that point, ethnicization of politics was faced with extreme hostility as that was seen as a threat to the unity of the country and

dividing it along ethnic lines. The less sanguine EPRDF preferred to resort to adopting coercive measures than entering dialogue with development actors in an attempt to explain its policies. However, the EPRDF seemed not to bother about attaining the consent of the public on its policies, which created not only opposition but also fierce hostility towards it. Ethnicization of politics was accompanied by a ready acceptance of the secession of Eritrea.

The paradox is that most of these organizations emerged as a result of the rights granted to them by the Constitution. They are there because the Constitution grants them the right to exist and function, but 'they are not supposed to be there' because they did not let the government control them. The dilemma of the EPRDF is that it is trapped by its own constitution, which it does not believe in the first place, and that it cannot abolish these organizations outright. The organizations' dilemma is that either they are not banned by law or allowed to function freely. As a result, the social development work at grassroots level has been greatly affected and the country became poorer by the day. Such a state of affairs created a situation of political polarization upon which a universal opposition to the regime was created and the regime went into a kind of mentality that one commentator on *The Reporter* in 2001 called a 'siege mentality'.

How to destroy these organizations was another dilemma the EPRDF faced. The first EPRDF 'solution' is to dupe them into accepting its principles and dictates, which turned out to be a failure. The second 'solution' is to make the lives of these organizations as miserable as possible so that they might become completely frustrated and abandon their projects altogether. The bureaucracy is used as a principal instrument under this option. As we have seen in the case of NGOs, government apparatus such as the Ministry of Justice and Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) are used as instruments to frustrate the efforts of NGOs. The third 'solution' is to create its own parallel institution and drive these organizations out of development, democratization and business through unfair competition in the case of the business community and by setting stringent requirements for other social actors. The fourth is outright punitive measures, particularly targeting the private press. These four 'solutions' constitute the strategy of EPRDF as far as independent institutions are concerned. Let's now glance at specific cases in which these strategies were applied.

Trade and teachers' unions fall under 'solution one'. The trade union movement is the oldest union movement in the country and as we saw in Chapter Three, the imperial government finally managed to manipulate the leadership of the trade union confederation (CELU), also by using force, including the assassination of union leaders such as Abera Gemu. The imperial government was complacent regarding the status quo and the union movement never had to bow to these manipulations. This was displayed boldly when the movement launched its first general strike in the wake of the 1974 revolution that eventually overthrew the imperial government. Under the Derg, the labour union movement succumbed to

the Red Terror and bowed its head. When the Derg was overthrown, it regrouped and again boldly started to assert its independence from government control or manipulation.

According to the *Hizbawi* group, the fall-out between the EPRDF and CETU was an inevitable episode, which was consistent with the vanguard policy of the EPRDF. 'The reason for the dissolution of CETU and fleeing of its leadership from the country was mainly because the leadership of CETU refused the intention of the EPRDF to control the union' (*Hizbawi*, 26.6.97). The first rift between the EPRDF and the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) occurred as a result of CETU's rejection of the structural adjustment programme of the World Bank and IMF, which the EPRDF had readily accepted (*ibid.*, 289). The second cause is again CETU's rejection, along with the entire organized sector of the sphere outside the government, of the new EPRDF's experiment of ethnic politics or ethnicization of politics in general creating an Ethiopia composed of ethnic regions under a federation.

The public denunciation of these policies by the president of CETU, Dawi Ibrahim, along with similar denunciations by opposition political organizations, the private press and prominent individuals came as a threat to the new government. This provided the EPRDF with the excuse to either manipulate or hijack the union leadership by expelling Dawi and the union executive or create a union of its own. The campaign against Dawi began and he was labelled as a traitor, thereby drawing the battle line between the EPRDF and the CETU executive (*ibid.*, 289). The campaign was quickly followed by official punitive measures. As Praeg describes the events '... the EPRDF decided to weaken CETU by undermining its leadership through directives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' (*ibid.*, 290). Ostensibly, a 'splinter group' from within CETU was quickly organized to make the latter dysfunctional. That was followed by the official closure of the national office of CETU and the properties of the union were confiscated by the orders of the ministry.

The case was taken to court, upon which the court ruled in favour of reopening CETU's office but the ministry suspended the activities of the union on grounds that there was a power struggle within the organization. On December 6, 1994, the ministry took a more drastic step when it cancelled the certificate of registration of the union. In a clear case of intervention in the justice system by the executive branch, CETU was closed down again. Praeg describes the dramatic development '... on Dec. 12, 1994, the court again found that the action of the Ministry in sealing off the offices of CETU was a wrong interpretation of the court's order of 28 October 1994. The court then issued an order for the reopening of the offices of the Confederation. But, in a surprising about-turn on 16 December 1994, the court revoked its injunction and attachment order of 28 October 1994' (*ibid.*, 291).

As we have seen above, the EPRDF's first optional 'solution' towards civic organizations was to tame them if possible. It didn't work out as in the case of CETU. Under such circumstances, the EPRDF abandons all pretences of being persuasive and adopts its erstwhile practice of revolutionary democracy and punitive measures. In this case, it closed down CETU even against court orders and when the court's orders become final it intervened in the justice system and enforced its options. It formed a committee called the 'proletarian committee' to lead CETU from behind (Lidetu Ayalew, opposition party candidate, April 3, 2005, in a televised debate between political parties for the 2005 elections). Although the EPRDF managed to put its own cadres into the executive of CETU, major union federations refused to join the pro-government union and still maintain their independence. The rank and file of CETU membership, like members of other civic organizations, has not been tamed by the EPRDF as demands for higher wages and union rights were to resurface in 2004 as urban poverty worsened and the new labour union law relegates the rights of workers. Although the EPRDF controls the official union, the trade union movement as a whole has not been tamed to accept the dictates of the EPRDF as events in 2004 showed. During an electoral debate on trade union issues between political parties held on April 3, 2005 and transmitted live on radio and television, workers defiantly disrupted the proceedings to be allowed to speak. When they got the floor their most important message was that the leadership of CETU did not represent them, it represented the EPRDF. The conclusion one may draw from this experience is: the EPRDF, instead of patiently cultivating support from the unions and/or respecting their independence, resorted to coercive measures that antagonized the movement.

The Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA) is also a case in point. Like the trade union movement the teachers' association was one of the main inciters of the 1974 revolution. In 1975, when all independent associations were to be closed down by the Derg, the Teachers' Association was closed but fought back and maintained its organization until 1976 when it was replaced by its own 'association'. With the Derg's overthrow, ETA revived, reorganized itself, elected a new leadership and asserted its independence. ETA did not fare well with the EPRDF either. According to the Hizbawi group, this resulted from the same policy of the EPRDF of controlling the civic sector. 'The EPRDF is fearful of independent associations. It doesn't get sound sleep unless it finds an association that supports it. If possible by persuasion, otherwise with the use of force, the EPRDF tries to control an association. If it fails to do so, that association will be branded as an enemy. That is why it clashed with ETA' (*Hizbawi*, 26.6.97). The rift began with the introduction of the EPRDF's Education and Training Policy that was ethno-linguistically oriented. Like in the case of CETU, EPRDF's ethnicization of politics was the source of the rift between ETA and EPRDF (Praeg, 2003:297). ETA claimed that the new education policy 'was denying Ethiopians the right to free education, dooming school children to ignorance and teachers joblessness because it was bent on providing education in the mother tongues of the ethnic groups.' However, the ETA's opposition to

EPRDF's ethnicization of politics was seen as intolerable. 'ETA's principled view that education was a binding factor rather than ethnicity was, consequently, interpreted as open opposition to the very foundation of the progressive political system' (ibid., 297-8). Consequently, when taming the ETA failed, the EPRDF resorted to attacks against ETA's leadership having connection with terrorist organizations and the campaign focused on the ETA's president, Dr. Taye Wolde Semayat. This was followed by the murder of the ETA's head of secretariat, Assefa Maru. A report released by EHRCO, alleges that Asefa Maru was killed by security forces on May 8, 1997 (EHRCO, 1997:30-33). On September 17, 1998, the ETA was closed down. Before its closure however, the ETA had written 38 letters of appeal to the Prime Minister, 111 to the Ministry of Education and 149 to the Regional Administrations and Regional Bureaus and 800 to other relevant government organizations. None of these letters received a response (Praeg, 2003:303). The teachers' movement split with the formation by the EPRDF of its own teachers' association while ETA continued.

The second optional 'solution', as we have noted in the case of NGOs, is to make the lives of independent organizations as miserable as possible so that they leave the public arena out of bureaucratic frustration. Because the free existence and independence of civic organizations is anathema to the EPRDF's revolutionary democracy, those who resist being independent will be subject to severe bureaucratic formalities prolonged for indefinite periods as we have seen above in the case of NGOs.

The EPRDF's third 'solution' for independent organizations is creating parallel institutions both in the relief/development and business areas. The leading members of the EPRDF have their own relief/development organizations; the TPLF has REST (Relief Society for Tigray), Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO) has ODA (Oromo Development Association), the Amhara Peoples Democratic Movement (APDM) has ADA (Amhara Development Association). These organizations are what in other countries called Government NGOs (GONGs). They are affiliated to the ruling party and operate according to its strategy. To the public and Western donors, they are presented as independent organizations. The strategy behind this is to siphon off as much donor money to the party as possible. Donors allocate a certain amount to the government and a much lesser proportion to the non-state sector and NGOs. REST and the others GONGs compete for donor funds that are allocated to the non-state sector and indeed they have succeeded a great deal. That is not enough for the EPRDF. By expelling NGOs from the public arena they want to prove to donors that there are not enough NGOs to absorb donor funds. They think by achieving that they can have complete access to the donor funds allocated to NGOs.

In the field of business too, the EPRDF has set up several parastatal corporations that are heavily involved in business throughout the country. One of the principal strategies of these corporations is to weaken the nascent business

sector, to nip it in the bud so to speak. The government allows them easy access to bank loans and other facilities to make their enterprises successful. These corporations are led by high-level EPRDF cadres (see Bogale, 2005) indicating the utmost seriousness of their mission. The strategy is to throw out the young business sector from the market through unfair competition. Nevertheless, by 2003 and 2004, some of these corporations such as Dinsho of EPDO were riddled with corruption and mismanagement, leading to their closure (Reporter [Amharic], 13.6.97).

The EPRDF policy on the business sector clearly contravenes what it officially espouses as its economic policy, namely the free market economy, although we know very well that it is still consistent with the objectives of its revolutionary democracy. From the historical point of view, the EPRDF's anti-business policy is detrimental to social development as it is a repetition of the Derg's policy. In a nutshell, given the predominantly traditional formation of the country, Ethiopia can hardly afford to oppose the process of private capital accumulation. What the Derg did to the country's economy in this respect should have come as a historical lesson: it is detrimental to economic growth as well as to social development to reject capital accumulation and/or discourage it in a situation where traditional modes of production are dominant within the social formation. In this respect, the EPRDF is repeating the Derg's mistakes. Ultimately, either the EPRDF has not let the nascent business sector flourish or has it managed to generate economic growth through its corporations. Thus, the confrontation as far as the business sector goes.

The EPRDF's fourth optional 'solution' in dealing with civic associations and institutions is taking outright punitive measures. The most relevant in our discussion here is that of the free press. Indeed, the existence of a free press as I have dealt with before in Chapter Two, is one symptom of the beginning of an era of democracy as it was in the case of the nation-state in Western Europe. The free press was championed by the bourgeoisie as a catalyst for a speedy transformation to a full-blown bourgeois democracy by shaping public opinion in its own image. In Ethiopia, as in many African countries, the evolution of both the modern state and market of economy did not take an organic course. Instead, it was largely introduced by colonization in the case of the rest of Africa and European influence as in the case of Ethiopia. As a result, we have a government in the modern sense and a free market economy both without the indigenous bourgeoisie that was supposed to stimulate it. This is a serious handicap as the initiation of a free press for instance was seen as the responsibility of the petty bourgeoisie instead.

Apart from the structural handicap described above, the emergence of the free press in Ethiopia belonged to specific periods of Ethiopia's contemporary history, namely the transition from military despotism to democracy and to a political situation marked by an aftermath of a civil war, red terror and ethnic uprisings that polarized Ethiopian politics. The polarization was further aggravated by an

ethnicization of politics by the new regime. This policy came against the background of an intense propaganda campaign by the Derg waged for over a decade against the ethnic movements in Eritrea and Tigray, depicting them as destined to divide the country according to ethnic groups. The EPRDF's taste for ethnic politics confirmed these allegations and made a great many Ethiopians suspicious of the new regime. The organized sections of the population, as we have seen in the cases of the trade union and teachers' movements, expressed their opposition to the new policy. The free press was no exception and, in fact, more so, as it turned out to be a medium of expression for most individuals and organizations opposed to the EPRDF. The free press became extremely popular in a short time and some were even read as gospel truth.

The universal opposition to ethnicization of politics was not for just any reason. Ethnic politics, or the national question in the Leninist discourse, was the least understood question as the ideological apparatuses of both the imperial regime and Derg had all along propagated only one view, that of the dominant ethnic forces. Moreover, the various wars that had raged in the country not only exacerbated the problematics in this outlook but also hardened it to the extent that even dialogue and discussion became impossible between protagonists of the two extreme views. Immediate clashes of ideas and name-calling substituted a genuine and mature discussion. Emotions run high as both sides took ossified positions that consider the fate of the country to be at stake. Thus, the EPRDF consider all who oppose its ethnicization politics as diehard Amhara chauvinists while those who oppose it consider it as destined to divide and destroy the country. It is amidst such a state of fierce political polarization that the free press began to play the role of a catalyst for opposition views.

Opposition to ethnicization of politics was advanced from various perspectives ranging from Amhara chauvinism to Marxist internationalist ones. There wasn't a single perspective advanced, rather an amalgam of various perspectives. The polarization in this respect was not really between 'the democratic nationalism of the EPRDF and the nation-statism of the centrist forces' as Praeger asserted (Praeg, 2003:279) but between ethnic politics and an amalgam of perspectives against it. Nevertheless, the free press turned out to be an institution that would not be tolerated by the EPRDF as they became more dangerous to its political agenda than the opposition political parties themselves. The intolerance of the EPRDF was based not only on the political expression of opposing views per se but also from the weak constituency that it has in the country that caused insecurity and the siege mentality. As Praeger noted 'Its outright resistance to ethnic federalism elevated the private press to the primary enemy of the ruling Front' (ibid., 280). Many people think the EPRDF don't take notice of public opinion. That is not a correct observation. The EPRDF is extremely sensitive to public opinion, but does not like acting contrary to public opinion. In fact the free press is considered by the EPRDF as enemy number one because the free press deals with public opinion. It should not be a surprise that the EPRDF became the most vocal champion of those opposing the free press in the continent.

The free press in Ethiopia is probably the youngest in Africa although in some countries, notably Sudan, the free press appeared earlier, but was suppressed by the Islamist regime, only to reappear recently. As a young sector run mainly by the petty bourgeoisie and in most cases young and inexperienced, it is bound to display weaknesses. Among the principal weakness of the free press are lack of objective reporting, professional journalistic ethics and use of outright character assassination. These weaknesses were spelt out at a general assembly of the Ethiopian Free Journalists' Association (EFJA) in the form of self-criticism, though some did not share these views completely.

The response of the government to criticisms and indeed a political campaign by the free press is resorting to outright punitive measures. Praeg mentions a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) based in New York. 'In a report it presented in conjunction with the World Freedom Day in January 1997, the CPJ stated that more journalists were imprisoned in Ethiopia than in any other country in Africa. At that point the CPJ had documented 104 cases of persecution since 1993 (Preag, 2003:283).

5.4 Whither the nascent 'civil society'?

On the basis of our discussion above, I will now deal with the state of level of social organization within society so as to determine the state of the nascent 'civil society' and examine its fate against the background of official government policy, hidden and public. In order to do so we need to refresh our memories regarding our discussion in Chapter Three on the civil society/poverty (development) nexus and also deal with some constructs of a 'civil society' in Ethiopia. Let's first glance at the level of social organization within society.

We can say that the nascent 'civil society' started to appear after the overthrow of the Derg regime and more specifically after the enactment of the new constitution in 1995. Prior to 1991 however, and as we have seen above, a few social movements of the old type emerged after the abortive 1960-61 coup against the emperor. These were mainly student unions such as in the university (USUAA and the union in Alemaya Agriculture College as well as unions in high schools), trade unions such as CELU and teachers' association such as ETA and these were the ones that played a crucial role during the 1974 revolution. Prior to the 1974 revolution they had also existed as social movements catalyzing the process that led up to 1974.

The existence of organizations of other sectors within the supposedly 'civil society' such as the business community was negligible and there were no NGOs in the country before the 1973 famine. The weak state of the business community did not allow it to become a viable social force even within the context of reforms. The feeble Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce was an appendage of

the imperial regime that it was not independent in the real sense of the term. Though it is difficult to say precisely when international NGOs started to operate in Ethiopia, their existence before 1973 is not established. During the relief operation in 1973 a number of international NGOs flocked to Ethiopia and some of them have stayed in the country ever since. It was then that a group of them formed a coordinating body that emerged as the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), which is now a large NGO consortium.

The Derg's seventeen years of rule stifled the growth of the emerging civic sector first by abolishing outright the most important ones that it thought would continue as sources of opposition: student unions, labour and teachers' unions and later by co-opting them as its own unions. Also, it prevented the emergence of independent forms of organization. The combination of these two processes in a political climate of a peoples' revolution stolen if not defeated dealt a heavy blow to the idea of reform and voluntarism in general. As Hyden and Mahlet claim 'While voluntary associations played an important role in the last few years of imperial regime, the military government that replaced it, the *dergue* – was dead set against any autonomous political activity ... the new military rulers under Mengistu Haile Mariam's chairmanship centralized power to the state and created its own set of mass organizations to which people had to belong. ... Voluntarism was abandoned and civil society lost its meaning. In short, while the *dergue* did away with the imperial power, its members clung to the notion of a strong state that would impose its will on people', (Hyden and Mahlet, 2003:8).

The regime that failed to cultivate an independent and loyal sector/opposition ended up encouraging armed rebellions as the only viable and legitimate opposition. What is important in our discussion on civil society is however the blow to the idea of voluntarism. What we had under the Derg is a clear-cut case of a nascent civic sector nipped in the bud in the institutional sense and the waning of the idea of the idea of voluntarism, a crucial component of a civic sector. We have summarized above the political situation prevalent at the end of the Derg's rule. In brief however, we can say that at the end of the Derg's rule there was no independent form of organization in the country except the CRDA, which was basically a consortium of international NGOs. The civic sector therefore was not just under-developed but non-existent.

It was against the background of such a political situation that the EPRDF's charter (July 1991) that promulgated freedom of association arrived and which was later affirmed by the 1995 constitution. It is extremely important to realize the fact that the process for the emergence of the civic sector literally began with these two promulgations, the charter and constitution. It is noteworthy to compare this state of affairs with the state of civic sectors in other African countries such as Kenya. In Kenya, although Daniel Arap Moi's regime had suppressed the civic sector until 1992, there had still been more than 15,000 registered NGOs and numerous unregistered ones, many professional associations, unions as well as others. In 1992, the quiet revolution changed this

and Moi's regime was finally compelled to recognize the civic sector. Within a few years of opening, Kenya managed to have one of the most vibrant civil societies on the continent.

In Ethiopia, independent local NGOs started to emerge after 1991 and as we have seen above old social movements, such as those representing labour and teachers, were made instruments of the EPRDF the same as they were under the Derg or were divided between those loyal to and in opposition to the regime. From 1991 to 2001, there emerged a number of NGOs, other professional associations, the Chamber of Commerce became autonomous after a fierce struggle, self-help groups and many community based organizations all using their newly won right of freedom of association. There are now civic associations under broad categories of labour unions, teachers' associations, NGOs, chambers of commerce, professional associations, student unions (after 2003), and numerous self-help and community based organizations.

NGOs: the principal form of independent and non-state form of organization in Ethiopia now is, as in many countries of the South, the NGO sector. In terms of number as well as active involvement in the development process NGOs constitute the bulk of the civic sector. The number of NGOs now, both local and international, stands at a little over 1,500 in a country with a population of 77 million.

As in a few countries where the remnant of military or one-party dictatorship is still at large, in Ethiopia there are also a few government institutions pretending to operate independently of the government. Most of them are regionally based and engaged in relief and 'development' work. These institutions are called GONGs (Government 'NGOs'). In Ethiopia there are REST, ADA and, ODA, etc... Some writers and even academics categorize them as part of civil society (see Clapham in EU, 2005). It is erroneous to categorize these institutions as part of civil society as they are integral parts of the government. Their entire intervention in the 'development' process follows the overall strategy of the government and is designed to reinforce it. They are also part of the security network as one of their functions is to inform on civic groups and on advocacy NGOs in particular. ¹

Free press: the free press is an important part of the nascent civic sector. It emerged on the scene after the overthrow of the Derg in 1991 as independent print media and has flourished ever since. It has served the public as an important source of information alternative to the government media. In the prevailing political polarization, the free press has entered into conflict with the EPRDF since its inception. So many journalists have been incarcerated that the EPRDF has become the main enemy of the free press in the eyes of the global media watchdogs. Despite its weaknesses, the free press has served as the principal medium of exchange of ideas, information and knowledge as far as the public is concerned.

Trade unions: the mainstream trade union confederation is controlled by the EPRDF as discussed above. But there are a few trade union federations who refused to join the confederation on the grounds that it is controlled by the government. Although many of their activities are controlled and muzzled by the government, they still keep their unions independent of government control. It is only because they are deprived of their freedom to operate that they are not visible. Otherwise, they are an important part of the nascent civic sector.

Professional associations: one of the most vocal of the professional associations is the teachers' association. Like the trade union, the mainstream teachers' association is controlled by the government while there is also a powerful teachers' association, which is politically vocal and against the EPRDF government. The Economic Association of Ethiopia is another vocal and active association on development issues in general and with a focus on economic issues. There are also other professional associations active in the issue of rights such as the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association, which advocates for the rights of women. Other associations include the Ethiopian Bar Association, associations of medical doctors, physicists, chemists, and so on, which are strictly professional and not involved in rights issues. With the provision of freedom, these can quickly become associations that can engage the government on sectoral, professional as well as other political issues.

Community-based organizations (CBOs): most CBOs are in the form of funeral associations called *Idirs*, savings associations called *Equbs* and the newly formed community organizations in pastoral areas who are engaged in development issues such as community welfare and assistance. The government is doing its best to control the *Idirs* as they are numerous with a huge membership. Some NGOs are also involved in turning the *Idirs* into development-oriented associations.

The chambers of commerce: There are a number of chambers of commerce at regional level and a national one. The business sector, as we discussed earlier, is targeted by the EPRDF as a 'dependent bourgeois' and as therefore as non-developmental and parasitical. The sector has been subjected to various pressures in the form of taxes imposed on it and the government being completely unco-operative towards it. If given the freedom and space and the required co-operation from the government, the business sector can be a vibrant actor in the development process.

These are the main forms of the nascent civil society in Ethiopia. The question that needs to be asked is, "what is the level of social organization at this stage given the number of institutions within the civic sector? Whether or not the level of organization is sufficient must be judged on the basis of a few criteria that are crucial for a civil society to exist in a country like Ethiopia. The first is the population imperative. Ethiopia has now 77 million people to feed and develop.

This is a gigantic task for the most impoverished country in the world. At some point in 2004, whether out of frustration or some political gimmick yet still unknown, Prime Minister Meles said in public that to bring development in Ethiopia should be considered as performing a miracle. The tragedy is that the EPRDF never considers the crucial role that independent social organizations play in social development. The second most important imperative is the size of the country in terms of area. Ethiopia is one of the six largest countries on the continent even after the secession of Eritrea. Larger territory implies more possibilities of natural resources and provides a much better space for intervention/participation by the people. How much of its natural resources and territory have been so far utilized in Ethiopia is not a riddle. It is very little indeed.

The third imperative is the state of universal poverty. Ethiopia is still the most impoverished country on the globe along with three or four others in Africa. The amount of development work to be done in Ethiopia is simply immense. Ethiopia needs hundreds of thousands of independent social organizations in the name of NGOs, associations, clubs and so on. If we look at the level of organization within society from this perspective we find the number too negligible. As Minas Hiruy put it recently, speaking of NGOs, 'In view of the poverty prevalent, the number of NGOs in our country [Ethiopia] is negligible' (Menelik, 02/07/97) Therefore, to determine the existing level of independent social organization within society it is crucial to consider the above imperatives: population, area, poverty and the amount of development work.

Analysis of the state of the civic sector is the order of the day here. It is necessary particularly in the Ethiopian context that the existence of the civic sector should not be defined outside the framework of autonomy and/or independence. The independent existence of the non-state sphere, that is, outside the state, is what makes a civil society exist in the first place. Without such independent existence, it is impossible to play a participatory role. Independent existence is the precondition for popular participation, participation by the people from below. The promulgation of the charter and constitution were the legal preconditions for people to take the decision to organize independently from the state and take part in the development process. Though that constitutes the first step towards the formation of a civic sector, there are other important preconditions.

The civic sector has to engage the state. Engaging the state entails two crucial phenomena: independence of the civic groups and the legal environment under which they can engage the state. Knowledge about these conditions from both sides, namely civic sectors and the government, is needed. Engaging the state does not necessarily entail a conflictual relationship. In the political sense, the independent existence of the civic sector by itself constitutes power outside the state. And power is a relational phenomenon expressing a balance or imbalance in this relationship. Engaging the state must be seen in this prism. A balanced relationship is based on the law that both state and society need to abide by. If

one of the actors violates the law, an imbalance in their relationship will occur, inviting conflict. In this case, engaging the state takes a conflictual character. In Ethiopia, that is exactly what happened. As I have shown above, because the EPRDF government follows a two-track policy on 'democracy', this policy has also reflected on its dealings with the civic sector. The EPRDF's objective under its 'revolutionary democracy' is to control any and all expressions of associational life in the country and circumvent it to its own purposes. This ambition fundamentally contravenes the notion of independence and autonomy for the civic sector and has hampered the capacity of the civic sector to be engaging. Many members of the civic sector refrain from engaging the government for fear of being politically implicated and closed down. A few defiant ones have already burnt their fingers such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), members of the free press and the few advocacy groups that exist in the country. The state of civic engagement is divided into two: those who engage the government and got their fingers burnt and those who haven't for fear of confrontation, thereby severely censoring themselves. This is a noteworthy point as the level of social organization within society is too low and even then it is a tiny proportion of the organized sector that engages the government.

The civic sector must be developmental and this is precisely the factor that distinguishes it from traditional institutions. Many writers assert that civil society has existed in Ethiopia since time immemorial because they cite the traditional institutions as civil society organizations. As we have seen, a civil society is a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the era of rising capitalism/modernization. In traditional formations where the rise of capitalism took a different form than the organic one as in the case of Western Europe, the essence of social development and democracy/freedom are more decisive than the economic development of capitalism per se. The emergence of civil society should also depend on the roles that civic groups take in social development and democratization processes. The character of being civic should be defined by the degree to which they are developmental and democratic both in their engagement and internally in their own institutions. Traditional institutions in Ethiopia such as *idirs* (funeral associations) and *equbs* (savings associations) or even other forms of association such as the ones that are religious (St. George, Mary and other societies) do not engage the government in the area of development and democracy. Though a few NGOs such as Accord attempt to change this character by drawing the *idirs* in particular into some kind of self-help activities the main role of these traditional institutions remains within the non-developmental and non-democracy sphere. The dichotomy between developmental and traditional is put differently by some writers, notably Dessalegn Rahmato, who argues that '... our definition of civil society excludes informal (or traditional) organizations that are common in both rural and urban areas ...' (Dessalegn in Bahru and Pausewang, 2002:104).

The rationale for being civic should not be whether or not to be formal or traditional as informal and traditional organizations/associations can still be civic.

The dichotomy should not be between traditional and modern or formal and informal institutions. Traditional institutions can play an important and sometimes decisive role in the development process. Elders' councils in pastoral communities for instance play an important role in conflict resolution, a role that the modern 'state' hijacked but could not perform. Yet conflict resolution is crucial for development. Pastoral elders' councils can also play additional roles if they are allowed to surface and build partnership with NGOs. If being formal is being registered at the Ministry of Justice or at a regional government's office, that should not be used to characterize an institution as civic. Being organized is a human and constitutional right in the first place, whether it is recognized or not. The civic perspective must strive for such status just as Article 19 suggested to the Ethiopian government to make registration of the free media unnecessary (Article 19, 2003 :20).

Also, the EPRDF government is hostile to autonomous existence and is doing its best to discourage autonomy/independence. Moreover, according to the imbalance in the relationship between the government and civic sector caused mainly by the government's intransigence, the latter does not have the moral high ground to demand formality or registration of civic groups. Above all, given the amount of development work needed in this most impoverished country, the government needed less to emphasize formality than substance.

As we noted earlier, another crucial element to determine the existence of a civil society is the transformation of individuals from subject to citizen. Ethiopia is said to have rich culture and civilization. However, it seems that only few of the countries with ancient civilizations and histories such as China and India that finally made it regarding social development (India) and economic growth (China). Ethiopia, together with Egypt, Nepal and others has not yet made it although there can still be no comparison between Ethiopia's level of development and that of Egypt. The question here is whether the said history and culture contributes to the social development needs of the country. In Ethiopia the historical legacy is one phenomenon whose rightful place is the historical museum, but the cultural needs of development required is quite another matter. Looking at these two phenomena in a continuum constitutes a fundamental cultural problem at the level of converting the individual from subject to citizen.

In Ethiopia's development imperative, there are two major obstacles, namely the anti-civic policies of the government and the extreme cultural backwardness of society. The first can be cured by replacing it with an enabling environment, but the second requires almost a cultural revolution, it indeed constitutes an uphill struggle. At the moment however, the fact is that the individual Ethiopian is still a subject, whether through voluntarily relinquishing her/his rights and/or because of ignorance about the conditions that govern its own existence.

Knowledgeability on the part of the civic sector constitutes a crucial problem. A society that is not knowledgeable of the conditions that govern its own existence

can hardly become a civil society. If knowledgeability is lacking it is also impossible to build social capital. Ethiopia is incredibly religious and the more poverty and political exclusion exacerbates the conditions that determine the existence of the poor, the more people tend to become religious. The more people become religious the less politically conscious they become and that in turn affects the voluntarism and consciousness of solidarity that are needed to build social capital. This is the reality of Ethiopia in the second millennium. In addition, the brain drain impacts heavily on this situation by sapping the potential standard bearers of critical thought that emerged on the development and socio-political scenes.

Lack of knowledgeability has literally crippled the government's bureaucratic apparatus as numerous civil servants left government for the private sector, mainly to the business and NGO sectors. However, that hasn't become a function of the strength of the latter though it is still better equipped in terms of human power than the government. The civil society sector is also affected as experienced project/programme officers leave and end up in the diaspora. This particular problem has also been raised by Dessalegn: 'The brain drain that has been going on since the latter half of the 1970s has seriously depleted the country's trained human power, and nowhere is this more keenly felt than in the voluntary sector, in particular advocacy institutions and professional societies' (ibid., 117).

The problem of lack of knowledgeability is reflected in the capacity of civic groups. Ethiopian NGOs, for instance, face a serious problem of lack of both analytical and managerial capacity. This must be viewed against the background of the enormous development work that needs to be done in the country. The lack of development leadership is serious. NGOs are still confined in a prism that they defined as their area of project intervention. They don't consider the crucial role of networking. The number of NGO networks is so few for a big country with 77 million people. Conceptualizing a network constitutes another problem. Those who understand the importance of networking also think of power like politicians. A case in point is my own experience in establishing an NGO network that works toward ending violence against women. An important NGO in the country and whose director won an international award, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers' Association (EWLA), violently rejected the necessity of such a network. Its director asserted that there was another NGO network of local NGOs (*Kinijit*) working on 'women's' and children's issues and that it would not be necessary to form another one. In the final analysis, however, the bone of contention appears to be power. EWLA controlled *Kinijit* and will not be in a position to control the one to be established.

Problems of leadership among the civic sector also involve institutional issues such as managerial capacity and internal democracy. But, the big problem is the issue of internal democracy and transparency within the sector.

Let's refer to the sketch in Chapter One and examine the state of 'civil society' in Ethiopia. As we have seen above, the EPRDF follows a conscious and deliberate policy of excluding the civic sector. Despite its 'openness', the EPRDF government has created an environment that can be described as un-enabling, if not disabling, for the civic sector. This stifling environment has created a general atmosphere of unfreedom on the part of the civic sector. Therefore, the EPRDF government is too far removed from the democracy of a nation-state. It follows that the EPRDF, like all Stalinist states, is least bothered by the notion of accountability. This has created a handicap to the process of social development and poverty eradication mainly because the government failed to put in place a mechanism to exercise symmetry and congruence with society. Decision-makers are completely alienated from society but claim to be based on grass roots because their cadres control the masses. Under such systems, policy-makers continue to alienate themselves from the masses because the latter are assumed to be represented by their cadres. Andrei Gromyko, the foreign minister of the ex-Soviet Union, had not set foot in the streets of Moscow for twenty-five years. The lack of accountability and the mechanism for symmetry and congruence with society has, as we will see, prevented the government from developing its own institutions of governance in order to become a state in the proper sense of the term.

Thus, what we have in Ethiopia now is a government that considers itself as a sole actor in the development process. In practice, the EPRDF wants to be the sole agent that brings an end to poverty and under-development and that is indeed why the terrain of development as a whole is considered as the sole property of the government. The EPLF government in Eritrea, which shares a similar perception of governance with the EPRDF, said openly that development is not the business of anybody else but that of the state. That is the major reason why Ethiopia still wallows in the mire of poverty, under-development and unfreedom.

Because of this prevailing perception, the notion of the government regarding the civic sector in general and on the NGOs in particular is misguided. In the first place, government officials working in government bureaus directly dealing with NGOs and other associations, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC), know very little about NGOs and their roles. Some are completely hostile and unco-operative. (In a report released in January 2005, it is concluded that the government of Ethiopia is hostile to NGOs: 'A recent review made by the African Human Security Initiative [AHSI] on eight NEPAD countries revealed that the Ethiopian government mistrusts NGOs. AHSI is a network of seven African non-governmental research organizations that came together to measure the performance of key African governments in promoting human security' (Reporter, 29.01.05). The notion that a civic organization is independent and functions independently from the government and therefore has its own independent strategy for whatever it is doing does not exist. According to government officials at the bureaus I

mentioned, civic organizations are created to supplement the work of the government or are engaged in development activities that the government does not cover. In important agreement documents that NGOs have to sign with the DPPC, officials insist that it should be mentioned that the aims of project activities are to supplement the government's strategy or policy in a given area. If an NGO declines to sign such an agreement, it won't get the license to operate.

Society for its part is still excluded and systematically so. Mainly because of the government's policy of social exclusion, the level of social organization within Ethiopian society is among the lowest in the world given the large population it has and its development imperatives. This has in turn severely impaired quite a number of categories that are crucial in building the vibrant civil society the country so badly needs. The low level of social organization and absence of a minimum of empowerment coupled with the low level of education have greatly affected the process of building social capital in general and the process of transformation of the individual from subject to citizen. Needless to say, the marginalization of women is still in full swing and violence against them is still raging. The exclusionary policies of the government have severely stifled the process of deconstructing prevailing patriarchal values that serve as the ideological foundations of violence against and marginalization of women. In a society where the marginalization of half of the population and the violence unleashed against them is rationalized by primitive patriarchal values and institutions such as the established religions of the country, it is beyond dispute that not a grain of freedom or democracy exists.

In summary I can say that the relationship between government and society in Ethiopia is hostile and polarized that neither has any trust in the other and that society stands against anything that the government stands for. Society is completely dis-empowered and enormous hurdles are erected in its way by the government. It has so far been effectively prevented from participating both in the development as well as democratic processes. The tragedy is that this is happening in a country that is hit regularly by drought that occasionally causes famine and that keep the country food-insecure on a permanent basis. In conclusion, a civil society has not yet emerged in Ethiopia. Hyden and Mahlet also attest to this when they state 'Ethiopia ... still operates at a lower end of the civil society scale, but this is no reason to downplay or underestimate the contribution that local people ... make to strengthening society in a civil direction' (Hyden and Mahlet, 2003:29).

As in all other traditional societies, the civic sector within the non-state sphere in Ethiopia is too incipient to be called a civil society. As I argued earlier, civil society is not a physical sphere nor is it just a 'multitude of civic institutions and organizations in society' (IDS, 1998 quoted in EU, 2005). It is neither a multitude of groups and organizations mobilized against the state nor a revolutionary monolith bent to overthrow a government. There are quite a few essentials that qualify a society to be a civil society. A civil society must be independent from the

state, imbued with voluntarism and other civic virtues and values that are developmental through and through, heterogeneous and function on the basis of not only solidarity but also of interdependence with civil societies in other countries. Above all, it is an engaging entity and an essential counterbalance but not necessarily antagonistic to the state. If viewed from these perspectives, the civic sector in Ethiopia is indeed an incipient that requires a large measure of freedom and space for participation and a revolutionary transformation of itself towards becoming a vibrant entity.

There is a simplistic approach towards qualifying any non-state organization or any organization that pretends to be independent from the state as a civil society organization. This approach is not only erroneous but also dangerous to the cause of social development in Ethiopia. The salvation of Ethiopia and its development depends on the development of the civil society. It is thus necessary to qualify who constitutes civil society and who doesn't. In this respect, Naomi Chazan remarks aptly 'Not all social associations are part of civil society: some organizations contribute to its growth and others do not. Civil society is separate from the state but relates to the state: Parochial associations that do not evince an interest beyond their immediate concerns, groups that do not have a concept of state independent of their own aims, and those totally controlled by the state agencies are excluded from its domain' (Chazan, 1994:256 quoted in EU, 2005).

At this stage, Ethiopia's incipient civic sector consists mainly of NGOs, independent unions, the private press, CBOs and the business sector. The future of Ethiopia's civil society, and therefore of the eradication of poverty and under-development depends on the growth and development of these institutions that constitute the nascent 'civil society'. Their growth and development will stimulate other forms of association to emerge in the future. At this stage however, the existence and growth of these institutions is crucial to social development. The policies of the EPRDF on these institutions are extremely significant. In fact, the litmus test for whether or not the EPRDF is heading towards more opening and democratization is its current policies on these institutions. However, it appears that the EPRDF is destined to control these institutions directly or indirectly through extremely restrictive laws or otherwise make them defunct as it has so far done in the case of many of them. The three draft laws that are in the pipeline for the parliament to adopt, namely the NGO legislation, the press law and the law on the private sector clearly indicates the direction that the EPRDF is taking. This is tantamount to nipping the nascent civic sector in the bud, but it is being done at the cost of poverty eradication and social development.

In this chapter, I have examined the perceptions and policies of the EPRDF of the non-state sphere and how the two-tracked policy deliberately stifled the emergence of a civil society and democracy in the country and how that led to a confrontation between the EPRDF and society. I have also examined the status of Ethiopia's nascent civil society. In the next chapter I will examine the rationales

that govern the institutions of EPRDF's system of governance and how ethnicity and ethnicization of politics advanced counter to democracy and freedom assumed prominence in this system.

¹ At an international meeting of partners of a Scandinavian donor agency, I made intervention in which I also criticized the policies of EPRDF on issues of rights and freedom to the civic sector. Among the participants were a representative of TPLF's REST and TPLF's Tigray Women's Association represented by a man. Apparently, my comments were reported to the political police upon which I was shadowed by police in Addis Ababa for sometime.

Chapter 6

The dominant 'rationales' governing the institutions of governance and ethnicization of politics

As I have noted above, the role of the state in regulating the market as well as society is crucial to generating social development as well as enhancing the process of the emergence and growth of civil society. Above all, as I argued that social development and democracy constitute the historical realm or *raison d'être* for the state in traditional formations including the EPRDF government. In view of this, how the state organizes the institutions of governance and works towards their development and expansion, the steps it takes to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness, their responsiveness to the needs of communities, the prevalence of the rule of law, human rights and democracy/freedom, the protection of individual and collective rights, and so forth are essential components of a policy/praxis approach to generate social development and build civil society. In practice, the structure of the state and the rationales advanced, and the modalities of its function mainly determine whether or not the state is indeed addressing the issues that I mentioned above. In this chapter, I will deal with what the determinants in the functions of the EPRDF are: namely the 'rationales' for the modalities of its functions through ethnicization of politics.

The EPRDF has so far missed many opportunities to put itself onto the course of eventually becoming a developmental state. Had it seized these opportunities, it could by now have become a catalyst for social development as a whole and for the development of its own institutions of governance and transform the government to a fully-fledged modern state. The EPRDF's perception on the role of the state and ruling party however, has always been the obstacle in this regard. Moreover, the EPRDF is not clear on the different roles of the state, government and ruling party as admitted by its top ex-officials (Alemseged, *Hizbawi, Sene* 26, 1996; Gebru Asrat, *The Reporter*, January 22, 2005). By adopting a centralist approach (the vanguard party in a Revolutionary Democracy) in governance but a policy of 'free' market in the economy, it ended up in a quagmire; eclecticism in policy and confinement to rhetoric about development prevailed. The paradox is however, the EPRDF's eclectic policy and praxis did not correspond with the reality of the country.

What the Ethiopian social formation needed at the time and even now is a political system that is a thorough negation of the over-centralized political and economic system of the Derg; a political system that releases civic inertia, that undoes the fear of the traumatized individual and society by guaranteeing freedom of expression and organization, that recognizes the rights and freedom of individuals and puts in place mechanisms to enhance the process of the transformation of the individual Ethiopian from the subject of yesteryears to a citizen in the second millennium, and a state system where the public (state) institutions remain permanent while making the government (that is, the executive) an institution liable to change by periodic elections. The different

functions of the public (state) institutions and government are unknown in Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie was an autocrat where the 'state' was synonymous with the monarch himself and where the different roles of public and government institutions were obliterated. Under the Derg, though the 'state' posed as a modern socialist state, Mengistu was indeed an autocrat and there was no difference between the public, government and the ruling party's institutions. It was, and still is, extremely important to introduce the different roles of the party, state and government. Why are these questions so important to Ethiopia?

It is by introducing the differentiated roles of these institutions that accountability of the state to society can start to build up. The most important principle here is that the government as an executive body that runs the public (state) institutions is subject to recall by society and its officials by their constituencies. Being subject to recall, the EPRDF could have cultivated the political culture in which the election of other political parties to office would be possible and that the monopoly of political power would not be a permanent feature as it was during the previous regimes.

This in turn could have an impact on the development of the institutions of governance. It could have created and facilitated the conditions for the development of the institutions of governance. Institutions of governance develop through political competition and one aspect of the competition is running public institutions efficiently, effectively and with transparency. How much a government in office was efficient, effective and transparent is assessed during election periods and the public itself passes the verdict. Society itself would decide whether or not the government in office was responsive to its needs in terms of public services, respect of human and democratic rights and so forth. That would concomitantly enhance the power of society that in turn accelerates its own transformation towards a civil society, not to speak of the impact of destroying corruption and bureaucratic apathy on the part of the government. The fact that the institutions of governance come under a reigning party/government creates the perception that any new policy may come under a new government and that in turn galvanizes accountability and reduces apathy and corruption. In terms of developing the institutions of governance from what it is now, that is an inept ruling party with a corrupt and apathetic government, to a modern developmental state, the non-permanent nature of a government is pivotal. The more rotational the government can be the more chance for the institutions of governance to develop through political competition, which in turn stimulates the development of a democratic political culture within society.

Let's now examine how the EPRDF traversed this difficult terrain; its perceptions on institutions of governance, EPRDF's policies in this respect and its policy of ethnicization.

6.1 Revolutionary democracy and institutions of governance

Constructing a new society along the lines of social emancipation is indeed the most difficult undertaking. In a social construction, there are crucial areas where the leading institution of governance has to be absolutely realistic. This political realism must begin with a realistic analysis of the concrete social, political and economic conditions existing before any strategy for construction or policy of economic growth and/or social development is postulated. Then strategies for social development and/or policies for economic growth need to be put into practice. Having policies and strategies in place all by itself won't bring development, what is crucial is having a strategy of implementation in place. Now, it is the strategy of implementation that brings the leading institution of governance to the ground and looks at all the nitty gritty that is required for the implementation of policies. It is in this context that issues of institution and human power come as crucial areas. One has to analyze whether or not availability of existing institutions and human power correspond with the policies that need to be implemented within a certain period of time. This is from the practical angle.

From the point of view of principle, the leading institution of governance has to be clear about the distinction between the roles and functions of party, government and state. In the aftermath of the Derg's overthrow, one crucial issue was what roles and functions the ruling party and government would assume. Ethiopia being a traditional formation indeed requires an institution of governance whose *raison d'etre* is undoing poverty and under-development. It was not the single will of any social class, whether it is the working class or bourgeoisie that was determinant at the time. It was the emancipation of society as a whole from authoritarianism and awakening from harmful or non-developmental social values and ignorance. Had the agenda been advancing the single will of one social class then the prominence of the ruling party and its ideology could be understandable. But, when that is not the case, the single will of the ruling party could not be advanced. Instead, it is the will of the poor as a whole and the interest of the country that had to be advanced. Such was the political realism required at the time. One of the EPRDF's major mistakes was precisely this: advancing the prominence of the party just like in a one-party state in a post-revolution setting and singling out the peasantry as the social class that needed to be emancipated.

Political realism, however, in turn requires assessing the availability of institutions and human power and defining their roles. Under the scenario we have defined, advancing the cause of emancipation of society as a whole was crucial, which in turn required making the role of government more prominent than that of the party. Government as a national institution administering the country as a whole and being accountable to society at large needs to be advanced. Such an approach would also enhance the process of building the institutions of governance whose development enables it to be more responsive to society's

needs and which concomitantly enhances the growth and development of civil society institutions from below.

The issue of human power is crucial here as it is also the key to spurring the institutions available. The institution of governance that advances the role of the government as primary opts for preserving the human power available and should treasure experts and knowledgeable persons. Ethiopia, riddled with conflicts and civil wars, has indeed suffered a great deal from brain drain even well before the coming to power of the EPRDF. Thus, the problem of availability of human power was acute. A strategy of maintaining experts at home was crucial. As experts can sell their expertise anywhere in the world it was important to create a conducive environment to keep them for rebuilding the country. The EPRDF should in fact have aimed at returning experts from the diaspora too as there were so many Ethiopians in the diaspora who would want to return home to contribute for the reconstruction of their country.

The situation after the demise of the Derg was enormously difficult and complicated but it was at the same time enormously promising regarding availability of human resources and the optimism at the national level was high. To maintain the momentum of the national optimism however, there were certain areas that needed to be addressed urgently and fully. But, they needed attention and had to be addressed and the public had to be assured of the direction in which the country was moving.

The first of these issues is the end of party hegemony and revolutionary rhetoric. One terrible ordeal the people of Ethiopia went through for seventeen years of the Derg's rule was the unquestioned supremacy and hegemony of the ruling party that called itself the Workers' party of Ethiopia. Considering itself the vanguard of the people, the party was in fact the instrument of suppression of society and ensuring the privileges that party cadres enjoyed. Cadres were given unlimited power and they exercised that power ruthlessly through the controlling institutions, the Kebeles in particular. The Derg was anti-intellectual and ruthlessly suppressed intellectuals and wiped out a great many of them. It brought in a rule by party cadres who are opportunists par excellence but who imbibed the party gospels and pledged loyalty to the party and Mengistu only to ensure the continuity of the privileges they enjoyed. A party hegemony and rule by party cadres was something the Ethiopian people had abhorred. That had to change.

As a consequence of party hegemony and rule by cadres, the country also suffered from economic stagnation. In addition to the most ruthless dictatorship and massive political killings that traumatized society, Ethiopians were also subjected to a stagnant economy. 1984 saw massive starvation that affected areas that had heretofore not been affected by famine. Poverty was rampant and severe, malnutrition still killed thousands of children and malaria took its annual toll in hundreds of thousands. Amidst such state of poverty and massive scale of

famine, the Derg spent more than \$ 600 million on the celebration of the tenth anniversary of its accession to power. Poverty and economic stagnation was another phenomenon that the people of Ethiopia abhorred.

Unfreedom was also one legacy that the people condemned. A one party hegemony did not allow any sort of independent participation from society. In face of such massive poverty, the Derg with its all-too-powerful cadres could not end poverty and famine nor did it allow others from within society to contribute to undo it. The unfreedom in face of such calamities was something unbearable for society who had to live through it for too long. All-round freedom as a negation of the Derg's totalitarian rule was the wish of the public.

Unfreedom led to rebellions at various levels that made conflict and civil wars the hallmark of the Derg's period. Conflict sapped the country's budget as the Derg allotted more for building its security forces and less to capital investment. The consequences of the various conflicts were so colossal, affecting the entire society, that it was difficult to find a person who was not directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

Hegemony of the party and rule by cadres paved the way for massive state corruption. Despite the campaign by the Derg to end it, corruption was institutionalized as the social base because corruption was rampant within the institutions of the state that commanded the wealth of the nation and public property. The nationalized institutions that the Derg controlled were under the cadres who won the trust of the Derg but turned out to be breeding grounds for corruption (Birhanu, 1997:12).

Against this background, what should the EPRDF have done from the start in terms of setting institutions of governance in place? Above all else, the EPRDF, all by itself, did not have the technocrats and experts required to run the country. As the Leninist vanguard notion has it, the party should monopolize power all by itself because what is ultimately desired from a social revolution is to make the 'single will of the proletariat' prevail. The best way of doing this is to ensure that power is not shared with other 'class enemies' but monopolized by the party. It was only in cases where the party is weak and has not attained the status of being the sole vanguard of the revolution that the idea of power sharing can be entertained. The Bolsheviks advanced the slogan for a provisional revolutionary government during the 1905 revolution in Russia when the conquest of political power by the proletariat through its vanguard party was not an immediate agenda (see Lenin's *Two Tactics of social-Democracy on the Democratic Revolution*, 1975). During the February Revolution of 1917, the forerunner of the October Revolution, too, the Bolsheviks did not advance the immediate conquest of power by the proletariat because at that moment they, the vanguard party of the proletariat, did not constitute the majority in the All Russia Soviets of Deputies. The Narodniks and Mensheviks combined were in the majority. In July the situation changed and the Bolsheviks constituted the majority particularly in the

workers' soviets. It was then that they decided to take power all by themselves. After launching the insurrection in October and taking power another debacle came when they organized the general election for the Constituent Assembly in 1918 (ibid., 57-58). Amazingly, the Social Revolutionaries captured the majority votes and the Bolsheviks became in the minority. Then, they dissolved the Constituent Assembly (for further reading see Luxembourg's *Leninism or Marxism?* 1972, 57-62). It is indeed clear from the experiences of all countries ruled by Leninist parties that the exclusive monopoly of power is the principle, come what may. The EPRDF proceeded with the same Leninist illogic when it came to power in 1991 even when it knew that it did not have enough technocrats and experts under its party command.

In addition, there was also a problem of commanding a nation-wide constituency. The EPRDF had only operated in Tigray, Northern Wollo and Eastern Gondar and therefore had its 'constituency' only in these regions. The Derg collapsed largely because of internal decay as a result of Mengistu's policy of purges and punitive measures against its own top brass resulting in low morale and desertion among its troops. Because of this particular problem and of its own limited capacity to run the country, some of the ex-EPRDF leaders now admit that taking power solely by itself was a mistake (Gebru, *The Reporter*, January 22, 2005; Alemseged, *Hizbawi, Sene* 19, 1996). At the time, some activists also warned of the danger of monopolizing power by the EPRDF (Melakou, 1990, mimeograph). What should the EPRDF have done then?

First, it should have taken the maximum advantage of the benefits of the doubt that the Ethiopian people gave it for overthrowing the Derg. Scholars, experts and government technocrats all gave the EPRDF at the beginning the benefit of the doubt and even support. But this was seen by the EPRDF as power seeking on the part of intellectuals and thus they were excluded from the beginning. The EPRDF should have endorsed this support and translated it into building its constituency. It should have appealed for a larger unity and solidarity and worked in this direction. It should have worked towards having everyone against the Derg rally around a national programme of social development.

In order to do that, it should have distinguished the role of the party from that of the government. As mentioned earlier, the role of the government should have prevailed over that of the party because now the EPRDF was supposed to lead the government and running the country. This was so important for the country for the simple reason that the fate of state socialism was waning even in the Soviet Union and Ethiopia had been ruled by a regime that claimed to have been building 'socialism'. The question, 'whither socialism?' was inescapable. Whether the EPRDF liked it or not, socialism as it was understood then was extremely unpopular and in fact was synonymous with repression and poverty. For their conscience as well as for the fate of their ideology, the EPRDF should have addressed the issue. If they were going to adopt a policy of monopolizing power by the party, that implied the prevalence of the ideology and therefore the

direction of the party towards building socialism. Even if they were serious about this path, then it was extremely important to go into defining what the contents and major policies of the socialist state should have been because at that moment 'state socialism' was on the verge of collapse. It was a paradox of immense proportions that the EPRDF as a Maoist party came to power on the eve of the overthrow of communist parties in other countries, notably in Eastern Europe, including their 'socialist' model, Albania. Amidst such uncertainty, the EPRDF rather chose to keep quiet about its 'socialist' agenda including its vanguard party, the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT).

The EPRDF should have advanced the leading role of the government that required a much broader social base and constituency. Government as a national institution of governance must have been advanced as opposed to the dominant role of the party because a vanguard political party claiming to represent the 'proletariat' cannot be a national institution of governance. It can only be a leading agent within the government at the level of formulating policies and strategies. Yet, the EPRDF had serious limitations at that level too. This will be much clearer as I discuss its perceptions and policies on fundamental development issues. By advancing the prominent role of the government, the EPRDF could have mustered the potentials of the country's intellectuals and experts. This was crucial not only for the country's social development and ensuring food security, which was an immediate issue then as always, but also for the unity of the country at large. The focus as the principal institution of governance should have been the government than the party. Had that been the focus, the EPRDF would also have realized the importance of developing the institutions of the government to make them effective, efficient and responsive to the communities' demands. That in turn would have developed the rapport between society and the government, better relations and understanding of roles and mutual recognition, which are the cornerstones of social tranquility and social development. Such relationships could have been the foundation upon which the EPRDF could have developed the institutions of governance to a nation-state in the proper sense of the term. Such relationships in turn could have served as the foundation for building institutions and level of organization within society that could develop towards a fully-fledged civil society.

That particular approach could appeal to national feeling by attracting Ethiopians from all walks of life to work for national renaissance after the diabolical rule of the Derg. Intellectuals and experts both at home and in the diaspora could have been the first to respond positively to the development needs of their country. Ethiopian experts devote their expertise to working for international development agencies, the UN agencies in particular, and live and work practically around the globe. Most of these experts left their country because of the Derg's diabolical rule. A substantial number of them fled their country for being involved in mass democratic movements. These people love their country and want to work for it, but they want an enabling environment first before they abandon their lives. These were assets that the EPRDF could have used. However, intellectuals'

needs cannot be equated with those of labourers. Intellectuals are always critical and they need space for their ideas and criticisms. That is indeed why the EPRDF should have introduced a democracy from day one to win the confidence not only of intellectuals but also of the people at large. That approach and policy could have given the EPRDF the chance to utilize intellectuals and experts, some of whom are well reputed internationally. Ethiopian intellectuals and experts want to serve their country but not through a vanguard party schema but through a programme of national renaissance on the basis of democracy and freedom.

One conspicuous feature of Ethiopia's human resources is the fact that there are so many experts and professionals within the diaspora. These experts and professionals have undergone high-level training in advanced and well-reputed academic institutions in the North and because they stretch from California to Fiji in the South Pacific they have amassed a wealth of experience and knowledge of development experiences of practically the entire world. Most are successful in their careers. Their success comes from their knowledgeability, a knowledge gained from experience, first of all, of struggle for social justice. Their experience in struggle served as impetus for their analytical capacity. In this respect Ethiopia was supposed to be blessed; unfortunately it isn't. Most of these professionals in the diaspora who fled their country for fear of persecution by the Derg are highly political. If the EPRDF had to create an enabling environment for their participation in the development process, it also had to open up the space for their political participation. Because the EPRDF has no following among them however, it sees them as political threats and intellectuals are the erstwhile protagonists of a repressive regime. Thus, one of the first political enactments of the EPRDF was to prohibit the political participation of Ethiopians in the diaspora when it rejected their dual citizenship. This came against the background of an existence of close to two million Ethiopian refugees at the time. This policy of the EPRDF discouraged not only professionals in the diaspora but even refugees in neighbouring countries. The EPRDF should have been consistent with the principles it declared in the constitution and encouraged professionals to return not only by extending invitations but also by facilitating the legal and material (for example, housing facilities) conditions for their return.

The exclusion of professionals also involved those at home. Like the Derg, the EPRDF was primarily suspicious of intellectuals and professionals and secondly most intellectuals were not party members. It did not come as a surprise when it expelled forty-one lecturers from Addis Ababa University, most of whom with long-time teaching experience and a great many from the civil service. Amazingly, this was done without preparing any replacements (Birhanu, 1997: 12). It is difficult to imagine what could happen to the standard of teaching thereafter.

Had that been possible, the government and the institutions of governance under it could have been guided by experts rather than by party cadres. That could have made a great difference in social development work and in the struggle

against poverty. The head of the Afar regional government, for instance, could have been an expert or intellectual rather than Ismail Ali Sero, who did not even complete grade five. In a country where massive development and poverty eradication work needed to be undertaken, experts and intellectuals should have guided the development programmes and governance as a whole. Ethiopia has a wide spectrum of experts and intellectuals both at home and abroad whose expertise it should cherish and preserve. In this respect, Ethiopia is also blessed: its experts and intellectuals are largely patriotic to the core and they love their country. The only thing they need to deliver their expertise is space and an enabling environment. And all the EPRDF needed to do was to provide that. To the misfortune of the country, it didn't.

6.1.1 Quantity versus quality, cadres versus experts

It is one thing to have policies in place but putting them into practice is altogether different. In fact, one crucial area in the policy-praxis dichotomy is having a strategy of implementation. Such a strategy must be realistic, based on a realistic assessment of the entire human resource situation in the country. Thus having policies and institutions in place is the first step forward in the development process but *how* to implement policies constitutes the kernel of development strategies. It is not the policies and institutions per se but the human personnel that put these policies into practice and who actually do the development work at grassroots level. It is in this regard that the question of utilization of human resources is decisive.

The level of poverty and under-development of a given country is another category that should influence the strategy of policy implementation particularly of utilization of human resources. The poorer and more under-developed a country is the more development work is required and the more allocation of human resources becomes essential. The more under-developed a country/region is the higher the requirement for skilled human power. This is mainly because development policies are not straight jackets or formulae that can be implemented by addition and/or subtraction. Implementation of development strategies first of all requires a comprehensive political, economic and social examination of a given locality. This helps development planners to identify the particularities of a given locality that can be of political or social nature. In some cases particularities require changes and modifications of original policies, as the solution to a given particular problem in a given region might constitute the key to take the first step forward in policy implementation. Policy implementers on the ground must be capable of making the required assessment and identification of particularities. This capability requires skills that can only be acquired through high-level training.

In short, policy implementers at grassroots level must have the expertise to do so. Needless to say that in order to make such an assessment, identify particularities and implement policy the expert, first of all requires the freedom

and independence to do so. The contradiction in this respect, however, is the rigid party indoctrination of the EPRDF in revolutionary democracy. That in fact is a reflection of the confusion and crisis in the roles of party and government. Because the EPRDF was not, and still isn't, clear about these different roles, it simply followed its own rigid and doctrinaire party policies when it comes to policy implementation whose vehicles are government institutions.

Now, the choice was between advancing the role of the government in development work and policy implementation and opt for the crucial role of experts (whether party members or not), or cling to a rigid Stalinist party doctrine which takes loyalty to the party as criterion for capacity to implement policies and opt for party cadres over experts. As we noted earlier, the EPRDF was replete with cadres of mainly peasant background with little education and no professional qualification at all. Instead of giving prominent roles to experts in policy implementation the EPRDF opted for cadres.

In 2001, when the EPRDF went through a serious internal crisis and split, the prime minister came out with series of ostensibly 'new' policies among which the question of utilization of human resources was one. According to Meles, what is essential for the EPRDF when allocating human resources is not the qualification of the individual but the loyalty of the person to the party (The Reporter, Amharic, *Meskerem* 28, 1994).

The preference to cadres over experts also lent to a typical Stalinist policy of going for quantity over quality. According to Asmelash Beyene, a leading expert of public management, in Ethiopia it was important 'to depoliticize the civil service' (interview with author, 2006). A realistic policy should start with the availability of human resources. Human resources constitute Ethiopia's major problem. Depoliticizing the civil service should have been the priority.

Pursuing the emphasis on quantity over quality and cadres over experts, the EPRDF opened parallel institutions, including academic institutions, to train its own cadres. The same policy was followed by the Derg, which trained its cadres at the special cadre school called the Yekatit 66 School. The EPRDF also opened the Civil Service College as an exclusive training institution for its party and government cadres. Most of the programmes at the Civil Service College are degree programmes but the college entrance criteria are much lenient as compared to the criteria for entrance to other universities. The idea is to train cadres en masse and take them back to the regions' public administration institutions in the main.

6.1.2 Revolutionary democracy and its civil service: the consequences

The consequences of revolutionary democracy's policies on the Ethiopian civil service are debilitating particularly in view of the necessity for an effective and

efficient civil service in an impoverished country whose principal agenda should have been fighting poverty and under-development. After all, the *raison d'etre* for an African state is to undo poverty and under-development. After fourteen years in power, the EPRDF's civil service has turned out to be inefficient, ineffective, lethargic and corrupt. This state of affairs has a great impact on fighting poverty and under-development. The contention is: the EPRDF has failed to transform its institutions of governance from a mere centralized government to a state. There are two crucial components to the transformation towards statehood:

- freedom and democracy that promote building a civil society
- the responsiveness of the institutions of governance to the needs and plight of the nascent civil society

We saw above how the EPRDF failed to ensure freedom and democracy and how that affected the state of 'civil society' in Ethiopia. In this section I will examine the findings of the UNDP-sponsored research on the level of the institutions of governance in the urban areas of the Oromiya region as indicator to the failure of the EPRDF government as a whole to transform itself into a state as a fully-fledged institution of governance actively responsive to society. In order to do this, I will only highlight the findings of the UNDP research.

The principal form of governance that directly deals with provision of services to urban communities is the municipality. The municipality as the principal form of institution of governance in the urban areas, has always been crucial in the country since the restoration of independence in 1941 when the process of the construction of a modern state began. Under the EPRDF too, the municipalities are crucial institutions in urban life. However, the problem with the nature and functions of government institutions in Ethiopia has always been how a government institution is perceived. It has always been associated with power, and power in the traditional Ethiopian perception is an uncontested terrain and omnipotent. The power of a policeman, particularly in rural towns, for instance, is unlimited as he is assumed to represent the government. Power has always been viewed one-sidedly and not as a relational phenomenon. Government institutions are also feared and government bureaucrats take advantage of this fear, abusing their power often without the knowledge of the central authorities. Such relationships and functions of government institutions emanate from a misconception of the role of the state as a modern state. Governments have always thought that the role of the state is to rule and control whereas in the modern state, the role of the state is to regulate society and the market.

Municipalities as urban institutions of governance have a crucial role to play in social development mainly through ensuring freedom and democracy at the political level, providing services, regulating the market and strongly supporting rural development (Birhane, 1994: 25-27) by facilitating the conditions for rural/cottage industries to boom that are strongly linked to the process of rural

development. The last aspect is indeed crucial for a country like Ethiopia that has suffered from food insecurity and stagnation in agricultural production. One of the principal missing links that stifled the process of capital accumulation is the lack of urban support for those who enjoy agricultural surplus from time to time but are unable to diversify their livelihood due to economic insecurity. Urban centres could have served as centres for such diversification of livelihood systems by providing business advice as well as facilities in urban areas including land. A crucial component in a successful rural development is the absorption of those who are disengaged from agriculture (mainly the rural youth); whether from crop cultivation as in the case of peasants or from livestock production as in the case of pastoralists. Absorption mainly takes the form of enrolling the rural youth in education (vocational or otherwise) and in employment, which is one of the most important functions of towns and rural towns in particular. However, this requires the state to be developmental in the sense that it needs to institute a macro-economic policy that enables such social transformation. For instance, the state's law on land must enable the rural population to diversify its livelihood systems whose major symptom is the disengagement of a section of the rural population from agricultural production and migrate to the towns. The second important criterion for the state is to make its municipalities developmental institutions that have the capacity and efficiency to deliver these crucial services.

The principal problem of the EPRDF is the perception of itself being the vanguard revolutionary party, which is omniscient by its own definition. For this reason, and as we have seen above, the emphasis was on quantity rather than on quality and on party cadres rather than on development experts. This was to have far reaching consequences on its performance as a government only to impact negatively on the country's poverty and under-development. The UNDP study that I mentioned above about Urban Systems Development in the Oromiya region amply demonstrates this debacle. What are the findings of this study?

'The study team's report on its major findings states that the report was written 'focusing primarily on critical bureaucratic bottlenecks and administrative malpractices which are detrimental to the efficient and effective urban development of the Regional State ...' (UNDP, 1999: 181). The findings of the research are divided into three major areas: structure, systems and communications. Under structure, a number of serious categories of urban governance are included such as capacity, leadership, accountability and municipal relations. The report indicates serious problems regarding leadership capacity and accountability, which is a general problem of structure. After examining the structures of the two major organizations (the Woreda administration and the Works and Urban Development Bureau) to which municipalities are accountable, the study concludes that both organizations:

- do not have organizational components specially designed to accommodate municipalities

- while Works and Urban Development has several departments, divisions and other units of work that are closely related to assist municipalities, the Woreda structure provides nothing of the sort
- both structures are top-heavy. In the case of Works and Urban Development – there are the Regional Council, the Bureau, the Chief Engineer’s Office, the departments, the regional branches with far and remote Woredas, without Woreda offices for works and Urban Development. Regarding the Woreda Administration structure – there are the Zonal Administration, the Woreda Council, the Woreda Executive Committee, the chairperson, the vice-chairperson and the sectoral offices, before reaching the level of municipalities while
- both organizations have a wide span of control. The Zonal Department head single-handedly co-ordinates the affairs of 4 divisions and all the municipalities within the zonal jurisdiction. The Woreda Chairpersons with little or no assistance from others, controls the vice-chairperson, the secretary, five sectoral units, several municipalities and the Kebele administrations,
- both lack the capacity and capability to render adequate assistance to municipalities. While Works and Urban Development lacks adequate professionals, equipment, facilities, budget; the Woreda Administration is rurally focused with rurally biased agendas and is in no way qualified for urban assistance.

The report continues

As such, no one appears to be certain as to who is responsible for what is going on in cities and residents seem to be at a loss as to where to go in order to get things done. There are too many bosses with no one to place upon the ultimate responsibility. Matters brought to the Woreda are evaded and pushed to Works and Urban Development, which pushes them back to the Woreda; the former on pretext that the latter is technically qualified and on the ground that the primary responsibility rests upon the former (Woreda). The question of accountability, the type and role of supervision to be exercised on municipalities with regional, zonal and Woreda authorities are, therefore, some of the areas in municipal administration of the region that require legal definition (ibid., 183).

Municipal relations are one major area of critique that the UNDP report focuses on. The current state of relation and co-operation between the various units of urban governance is compared to those of the past under the Derg as well as the emperor’s regimes and the reports found out that ‘... there is no exchange of information on regular basis among the institutions. The nature of relationships among the various levels of government is rather ambiguous, lacking clarity. As such, not knowing what power rests where one cannot spell out the powers of cities in relation to the various tiers of government’ (ibid., 185). One can collate these findings with the EPRDF’s claim of decentralization resting power even to Kebeles. According to the UNDP report, in the first decade of EPRDF’s rule, the Kebeles didn’t even know their responsibilities ‘There is also need to define the

responsibilities and accountability of Kebeles and to provide both financial and technical assistance to Kebeles so that they would be able to effectively play their urban development roles' (ibid., 185).

There is also a devastating critique of the system of urban governance as a whole. On the issue of planning the reports says, 'There is hardly any planning in the municipalities of the Regional State. Whatever little planning there exists, it is more of an expression of needs rather than means' (ibid., 187). Communication also constitutes an important component of urban governance as 'organizational survival is related to the ability on the part of management to receive, transmit and act on information. Information serves to integrate the activities of an organization to the demands of the environment'. In this regard the report observes 'In all municipalities visited there hardly exist any systems to collect, analyze or disseminate data. Information is collected randomly and manually. While whatever organizational structure there exists formally provides for downward and upward communication, in all the municipalities visited, the downward system appears to dominate the upward system. As a result, most organizational communication is one way, invariably from higher to lower levels without any room for reaction/feedback from subordinates' (ibid., 190-191).

Another, if not the, key component of urban governance is having a mechanism of city governance in place and the question of leadership. In this regard the report also delivers devastating findings. On governance mechanisms it states that 'Oromiya cities have no governance mechanisms of their own' (ibid., 192). On leadership it contends that 'It is also the general belief that Woreda Chairpersons would do their cities favour if they were to restrict themselves to city policies and left issues of implementation to trained professionals' (ibid., 192). The report also states its finding on problems of leadership 'Leadership is another crucial factor that is closely linked with work organization and involves considerable problems in the municipalities of the Region. The leadership in all municipalities is generally characterized by lack of the requisite charisma as well as capability to lead. Most staff members of the municipalities had expressed the conviction that the leadership should be at least one step ahead of the subordinate staff' (ibid., 193). The staff at the lower levels of the structure is in the main the implementers of urban 'development' policies. In this respect the report says: 'The staff profile of urban centers in Oromiya Region does not at all show a picture of personnel that can face the challenges of urban management and development. A study conducted in 1998 on 20 Oromiya towns indicated that about 52 percent of the staff completed only primary education while 41 percent were high school graduates. Only 8 percent of them have post secondary school education. In almost all instances the municipal staff has the following features:

- They have very low educational qualifications compared to the type of work they are expected to perform
- They possess very low and at times irrelevant skills that do not correspond to the kind of work they perform

- Most of them occupied the current positions not because they have the requisite qualifications but simply because they have been serving in low-level jobs for a long time. Since the jobs are not attractive to people with better skills the municipalities are compelled to promote their clerical and other general service staff to important technical and other key positions. There are cases where there is not even a single technical staff in places like Sire and Arjo.
- A substantial proportion of the staff is on contract basis for a very long time while the kind of work they are performing is of a permanent nature. It has been reported that there are employees who have been serving for over 20 years but still temporary [e.g. Arjo and Metu]' (ibid., 207-208).

In its conclusion, the study makes devastating remarks about the municipalities. It has found that 'The human resource policies, rules, regulations and practices in municipalities have remained unchanged with changing circumstances and have therefore become obstacles to improved human resources management.' The capacity of staff is so poor and weak that it has 'incapacitated them from providing good services and meeting the development needs of towns ... They [staff, MT] have therefore remained continuously incompetent and unable to possess the skills required to do their jobs at the desired standard and magnitude. This has made municipalities archaic and lagging behind expected levels of readiness and capacity to serve their clients.' The fact that municipalities in Oromiya, as elsewhere, are incompatible with the changes of urban dynamics and demands thereof is also mentioned in the conclusion. 'The present human resources management practices and trends in municipalities; and urban development trends in Oromiya do not seem to move in similar directions. Towns are becoming dynamic, they are growing in terms of population, area, type and number of institutions. The type and magnitude of services they require and problems that emerge are dramatically increasing. But frustratingly municipalities have remained stagnant and weak in their human resources capacity. With the increasing demands and complexities and problems of towns on the one hand and the discouraging human resources situation of municipalities on the other; it is hard to expect a better prospect for urban management and development' (ibid., 220-221).

These weaknesses are crucial to social development in general, thereby exacerbating the state of under-development and poverty, and to the development of the institutions of governance in particular. This has direct impact on the emergence of institutions within the nascent 'civil society'. Municipalities are the principal institutions that are directly dealing with society in terms of service delivery and tax collection. As we have seen above, the municipalities are extremely under-developed and cannot cope with the changes and dynamics within society. (A 2001 study by the World Bank comes to similar conclusions as the UNDP. See Ethiopia: Regionalization Study, 2001.)

In summary, shortage of skilled human resources and appropriate technocrats is acute in Ethiopia. 'The explosion of primary schools vis-à-vis the human resource needs of the country don't match', (Asmelash, interview). The explosion of

primary schools occurred within the context of attaining one element of the Millennium Development Goals. However, the paradox is the quality of the education given and the capacity of teachers is low. 'The government realized this problem some time ago and even introduced the Ministry of Capacity Building for this purpose. However, problems still persist. The main problem in this area is the problem of retention of the trained civil service' (ibid.). Trained civil servants still leave government institutions for the private sector or go abroad. Brain drain is a big problem in this country. 'Problems of brain drain from the government institutions are serious. Civil servants need attractive benefits not just in material terms but also in working conditions among which, depoliticizing the civil service is one. The government needs to spend a lot on developing human resources and retain what it has' (ibid.).

One structural problem according to Asmelash is the structure of higher education. In the first place, the number of graduates is low compared to the needs of the country. There is also the problem of quality education that needs to be provided. The educational system must be aligned to the human resources needs of the country both in terms of supply and quality.

In addition, the criteria for recruitment of civil servants are also a problem according to Asmelash. 'Merit is not the criterion for recruitment' (ibid.). Even the Derg failed to achieve its objectives through the same recruitment criterion that takes political membership of the ruling party or political loyalty as the sole criterion. At the end of its rule, it was compelled to open up and recruit non-party technocrats. The EPRDF's problem is more complicated because the recruitment criteria are more complicated. One major criterion in this respect is the ethnic factor both in terms of placement of federal government officials and regional administrators. At the root of this complication is the notion of sharing power among those who fought during the struggle. There is no doubt that both the EPRDF and Eritrea's EPLF firmly believe that they had to stay in power because they fought the Derg and overthrew it. This is partially true, but not the whole truth. Furthermore 'I have to stay in power because I overthrew the ancien regime' is a primitive mentality belonging to the era of absolutism. That is indeed the main reason for these two regimes to be thoroughly authoritarian.

One strategy to stay in power is playing the ethnic card. According to Merera, as we have seen above, the EPRDF's policy of self-determination is a new mechanism of control. If we look at the background of the EPRDF's officials both at the federal and regional levels, we will find a great many of them who haven't fought against the Derg. On the contrary, it has retained quite a number of Derg officials such as Dr. Fassil Nahom, head of the research and revision of laws department at the Ministry of Justice, in key positions. 'Organizations' such as the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO) were quickly put up by ex-prisoners of war from the Derg's army and were declared the 'vanguard' of the Oromo people. Officials such as Kuma Demeksa, former president of the Oromiya region and current minister of communications, and Aba Dula, former

minister of defence and current president of the Oromiya regional administration, are examples. Most administrators of the regional administrations were not fighters and had not fought the Derg at all. The whole idea is to have a 'share' of the cake, but the lion's share goes to the TPLF who actually secretly control these 'organizations'. Now, the basic problem is that the notion of 'sharing power' is interpreted as placing politically loyal people in key positions of government that require skill and qualification. As Asmelash noted, if one operates within such a mindset, it is unavoidable to 'share power'. 'The contradiction between avoiding the feeling of exclusion and the need for qualification constitutes a problem' (ibid.). The choice the government made indeed has a negative impact on administration and development. 'At least they could have made distinctions between the crucial and non-crucial ministries and posts and placed people accordingly giving crucial positions to qualified persons' (ibid.). Asmelash also says that the government could have suggested advisory committee and advisory support systems to absorb non-qualified officials.

The challenges posed by development are becoming more complex by the day as the concern of development is not only local but also influenced by regional and global developments. Concomitantly 'the human resource requirements also become more complex than they have at the moment. The Derg had tried to go it alone but failed. They need to open up and depoliticize the civil service to start with' (ibid.). This is also connected to the issue of the accountability of the state. A politicized civil service can hardly be accountable. This in turn brings us back to the issue of the role of the state, ruling party and government. In Ethiopia, these roles are muddled and the EPRDF operates as a one-party state with no accountability whatsoever. It was only in the 2005 elections that issues came out into the open for discussion and debate and that society became hopeful that with the gaining of many seats in the parliament the opposition will contribute to institutionalizing these distinctions between the ruling party and government and accountability in general. With the imprisonment of opposition leaders, closure of the private media, and suppression of the civic sector, the popular optimism has disappeared into thin air only to bring back the totalitarian type of rule where the cadre bureaucracy is not accountable to the public. Asmelash says that the little public pressure exerted as a result of the elections brought a slight improvement in the delivery of public services, but has now reversed completely.

Asmelash suggests that there must be a systematic human resources policy, a policy that he thinks doesn't exist now. The role of parties, government and state must be clearly stipulated with the fundamental recognition of the rightful role of the civic sector. 'The scope and quality of higher education must improve otherwise we cannot absorb the 9 million college graduates that we are going to have in a few years. Special concern should be made for women. If an affirmative action is introduced to ethnic groups, why not for women? Crucial and immediate areas of improvement still remain to be the areas of retention of trained civil service, remuneration policy and so on' (ibid.). These are crucial undertakings with great impact on the fight against poverty and under-

development. However, as I have been arguing so far, they cannot be attained with changing the roles of the ruling political party, government, and state on the one hand and without freedom for the emerging civic sector.

6.2 Ethnicization of politics

Ethiopia appears to be the only country in the world that has a clause in its constitution that grants its ethnic groups the freedom to secede. This is true in the second millennium, but the ex-USSR also had a clause on the right of nationalities to secede in its constitution that read 'Each Union Republic shall retain the right freely to secede from the USSR' (Constitution of the USSR, 1977:42). In the case of the EPRDF however, ethnicity or the 'national question' as it calls it, is not only central to all its policies but constitutes a nearly religious creed of the organization. A number of questions arise here: what is the real outlook/ideology of the EPRDF, ethnicity/nationalism or socialism? Does its policy on ethnicity/nationalism and its general ideological orientation originate from the old Ethiopian Student Movement as it claims and as many others still hold? If so, what was the orientation of the student movement itself when it comes to what brand of Marxism it adhered to? In this chapter I contend that the real ideology of the EPRDF is not socialism but ethnicity and its policy on nationalism did not proceed from the positions of the student movement but from its own parochial and aggressive ethnic perceptions.

6.2.1 Orientation and Perceptions

The ideology of the TPLF/EPRDF is not only ethnicity but ethnicity of a parochial and aggressive brand, which, as is quite often the case, is peculiar to the region of the Horn of Africa. J. Huizinga calls this kind of nationalism 'hyper-nationalism' and in fact characterizes it as 'the curse of this century' (cited in Snyder, 1968:29). Stalinism of the Albanian brand disguised as 'Marxism' is used by the TPLF/EPRDF as a tool to advance the parochial type of ethnicity, the hyper-nationalism, that it upheld. The schema in state 'socialism' canonized by Stalin as 'Marxism-Leninism' perfectly suited the TPLF/EPRDF to advance its ethnic agenda. The TPLF was born amidst a revolutionary undercurrent as basically the class perspective to advance the 1974 revolution. The ethnic approach was preferred by a minority of the student population at Addis Ababa University at the end of 1974. In November 1974, the military junta propagated a schema to avoid opposition in urban areas through a campaign that disbursed university and high school students to the rural areas of the country. It was at this moment that a group of Tigrean students (who later formed the TPLF) and Oromo students who argued that students be dispersed to areas of their ethnic origin. The TPLF built upon this undercurrent and came up with a much more controversial thesis that holds that the principal contradiction (i.e. in a Maoist lense) prevailing in Ethiopia then was the one between ethnic groups and specifically between the Amhara as

'oppressor nationality' and the rest of the nationalities categorized as 'oppressed' (TPLF Manifesto, 1976:iii.) Such thesis came amidst the 1974 revolution that was fundamentally characterized as a class-based revolt of the plebeian against the ruling class. Going against the class perspective to rationalize its parochial agenda in the name of 'nationalism' is a typical feature of ethnicity.

As a background to the rise of the TPLF's ethnicity is indeed the country's historical development in the process of nation and state formations. As is well known, there were a number of houses of aristocracy in medieval Ethiopia contesting for the throne at the dawn of the 19th Century. The main rivals that contested for the throne were the Tigrean and Shewan houses of aristocracy (Gebru Tareke, op cit.) This rivalry got fiercer at the turn of the century commensurate with the Scramble for Africa that brought colonial powers closer to the country's border and notably the Italian presence in Eritrea and Somalia, the British in Sudan and the French in Djibouti. When Italians launched their aggression from Eritrea against Ethiopia, Tigray was the main route and there were some members of the Tigrean aristocracy, notably Dejazmatch Haile Selassie Gugsa, who collaborated with the Italians in return for favour, namely power. Others include Ras Hailu of Gojjam. The rivalry between the two houses of aristocracy got even fiercer after the defeat of Italians in 1941. Within two years of the defeat of the Italians and the restoration of Ethiopia's independence, a revolt broke out in Eastern Tigray that went into history as the *Woyane* revolt.

Although the bulk of those to took up arms against the imperial government then had genuine grievances, particularly regarding levying excessive taxes and the prevalence of corruption, the revolt also drew a great deal of inspiration from Tigrean nobility that threw itself into the revolt (see Gebru, op cit.) Thus, the issues involved then were not really discrimination or oppression on ethnic grounds or 'national oppression' as the TPLF/EPRDF later alleged. The revolt was not about discrimination in which Tigreans as ethnic groups were discriminated against or oppressed, but corruption and levying excessive taxes, which are cases of class questions rather than ethnic. There were also regionalist sentiments, an issue advanced earlier by the Tigrean aristocracy. The revolt was quelled by massive military mobilization and with the help of the British Air Force flown from nearby Aden (Yemen), then a British colony. But the grievances lingered on in various forms through folk tales and songs. It was these grievances that resurfaced in 1974 by the Tigrean students who demanded to be sent to Tigray during the Derg's campaign.

However, the TPLF leaders, unlike the leaders of the *Woyane* revolt, had to construct a certain ideology that passes as 'nationalism'. It is in the process of the search for the construction of a 'nationalist' ideology that the 'national question', that was introduced in 1969 by the student movement, suited the purpose. But, is the TPLF's orientation similar to that of the student movement on this issue? Or has the TPLF directly proceeded from the viewpoints of the student movement as some writers such as Andargachew Tsige allege? In his

recent work, Andargachew alleges that the orientation of the TPLF and the student movement on the 'national question' were identical (see Andargachew, 2005: 263.) This brings us to sum up the gist in the position of the student movement on the 'national question'.

6.2.1.1 The Student Movement

Ethiopia had always had problems of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts that arise out of ethnic sentiments and national oppression. The origins of these problems can be attributed, in a nutshell, to the process of the formation of the so-called modern state and particularly to the process of the centralization of the state system into autocracy. This was further complicated by colonial interventions that gave rise to the creation of colonies such as Eritrea and Somalia. The centralization of the autocracy that depended on tributary systems created a situation where national oppression in a form of political, economic and cultural domination in the name of one nationality, the Amhara, prevailed. It is important to stress the expression *national oppression* as it needs to be seen as distinct from other forms of political repression or economic exploitation. National oppression involves deprivation imposed by one ethnic group, which uses and develops its own language as the principal medium of communication; develops its culture and traditions; benefits from its own resources and is politically represented, among other things. In addition to economic exploitation and political marginalization, non-Amhara and non-Tigrean ethnic groups faced national oppression. National oppression is humiliating as it deprives the entire community of a given ethnic group of its identity, therefore its fundamental right to exist as that specific ethnic group in equality with other ethnic groups. National oppression presupposes dominance by one or two ethnic groups; the language, religion, culture and tradition of that particular ethnic group are considered as *the* language, religion, culture and tradition of all. National oppression is a fetter to ethnic equality and therefore undermines and deprives the ethnic/national identity of dominated ethnic groups.

In Ethiopia, the form national oppression took was severe because the politico-economic interest of the ruling feudal class was fused with the perpetuation of this particular oppression. Since the colonial Scramble for Africa, the ruling class ventured into conquering the various kingdoms and communities in the south, east and west, confiscating their land, upon which the emperor distributed this land to the nobility, his military commanders and foot-soldiers. The land tenure system in these regions was structured to perpetuate this land confiscation that turned the local population of the dominated ethnic groups into tenants of the conquerors. To maintain that exploitative relationship, the ruling class imposed a political system that was more of a controlling mechanism than being an institution of governance. Because of this historical conflict, the national oppression took on a humiliating form: the languages and cultures of the dominated ethnic groups was something to be laughed at while the Amharic and Tigrean cultures were advanced as epitomes of 'civilization'. Oromos, Gurages,

Wollamos were laughing stocks because they did not speak Amharic 'properly' but with an accent. There were numerous jokes on how they spoke Amharic. When students from dominated ethnic groups, particularly Oromos, were to be sent abroad for advanced education, they were obliged to change their names to Amharic ones. Such was the blatant national oppression prevalent in the country. And it is this oppression that bred ethnic/national sentiments that quickly developed to ethnic conflicts

One of the complicated cases created by European colonization was Eritrea. With the defeat of the Italians in 1941 both in Ethiopia proper and Eritrea, the latter was made to be administered by Britain according to the Geneva accord signed between allied forces on territories freed from the Germans, Italians and Japanese. Under the British administration that lasted ten years, the political map of Eritrea went through basic changes with the emergence of a number of political parties, which enjoyed freedom of expression and organization. In 1952 Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia by a UN resolution and in 1962 it was completely and unlawfully annexed by the imperial government of Ethiopia. That paved the way for the beginning of an armed struggle in Eritrea that went on for over three decades. By 1965, exaggerated and accurate news about the movement of Eritrean guerrillas circulated widely among university students in Addis Ababa.

However, the history of Eritrea was probably most obscured and distorted by the historians of imperial Ethiopia. The consequence of this distortion was enormous. Prejudice towards Eritrean national sentiment, fanned mainly by the government itself, quickly spread. Unfortunately, university students fell victim to the propaganda of the government. Until 1969 the feeling of university students was that of Amhara supremacism and chauvinism. Thus, hostility towards Eritrean nationalism had prevailed.

In 1965, a major revolt broke out in Bale involving mainly Oromo peasants in a region called El Kere. Backed by the Somali government, the revolt quickly developed to a full-scale regional revolt as a result of which a big part of the army was involved to quell the rebellion. In the urban areas, a mass-based movement called the *Metcha-na-Tulama* began. Led by General Tadesse Biru of the imperial police, the movement paved the way for the rise and articulation of Oromo nationalism. The Bale revolt was a major topic for discussion among university students. As with the armed struggle in Eritrea, university students were not positive towards the Bale revolt.

In 1967, another peasant revolt, predominantly Amhara, broke out in Gojjam,. The revolt was triggered by a land tax newly introduced by the imperial government. Unlike the Bale revolt, the Gojjames first sent a delegation of elders to the capital, Addis Ababa, to appeal to the emperor himself. When he refused to receive them, they marched to the parliament building, where they were enthusiastically joined by university students, who were then increasingly

radicalized. In fact, that incident further prompted students to popularize further their historic slogan 'Land to the Tillers!' The attitude of students to the Gojjam revolt was different from the attitude they adopted towards the ethnic revolts in Eritrea and Bale. They were supportive of the Gojjames.

It was against the background of such political situations that the student movement quickly developed and expanded from the university to high schools in the capital and then to the rest of the country. In 1969, at the peak of the movement, students raised the issue of access to education. In the ensuing conflict, the university and high schools were closed down, giving ample opportunity to the restive student population to discuss political issues and gain more political consciousness. Many student leaders were jailed with sentences ranging from six months to seven-and-a-half years. This exposed them to the international youth and workers movement, triggered in 1968, which led them eventually to read Marxist literature. As they read more Marxist and anti-imperialist literature, they were also exposed to the ongoing revolutionary movements in Latin America and the revolutionary icon of the global youth at the time, Ernesto Che Guevara, became their idol. The history of the Vietnam War and the Vietnamese national resistance against US aggression was read; Ho Chi Minh also became their hero. Popular songs such as *Fanno Tessemara* (be a revolutionary guerrilla fighter) were sang at the time, poems commemorating revolutionary martyrs died elsewhere were written in publications (see Abraham G. Egziabher's poem for Che and the Peredo brothers of Bolivia in *Struggle*, Nov. 1969).

6.2.1.2 Walleign Mekonnen on the national question: At the beginning of the 1969 academic year in September, the government was compelled to release all students from jail unconditionally as the striking students refused to resume classes until their comrades were released. Though the student movement was triumphant in the autumn of 1969, the problem of ethnicity was haunting it underneath as a great many of the student population had not yet broken from the dominant historiography of the imperial government regarding ethnicity/the national question. Chauvinism and more specifically what Lenin calls 'Great Nation Chauvinism' prevailed among students and unless they liberate themselves from it the student movement would face a serious crisis and even division. The movement was triumphant, everybody thought that it was then a matter of advancing forward. However, the few far-sighted among the USUAA saw the danger beneath the spirit of triumph. One of these USUAA leaders was Walleign Mekonnen.

There were two problems that the student movement faced on the issue. The first was the position taken by Ethiopian student unions abroad, namely the Ethiopian Students' Union in Europe (ESUE) and Ethiopian Students' Union in North America (ESUNA) on ethnic/national movements in Ethiopia at the time. Earlier on and specifically in 1967, the National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS) held its 6th Congress and passed an infamous resolution, which

denounced the movements in Eritrea and Bale.¹ Unfortunately, ESUE and ESUNA followed suit by adopting similar positions, a position severely criticized by the Algeria group (Alebachew Damte, mimeograph, 1971). However, by the time ESUNA had taken its latest position in August 1969, USUAA leaders such as Wallelign had already turned critical towards the old chauvinist position taken by NUEUS.

The other concern of the leaders of the student movement was the divide and rule campaign launched by the imperial government. In fact, when the emperor's government released students from prison in September (1969), it had a strategy in mind to weaken their movement. The most available means was to play the ethnic card and incite students along ethnic lines. Because of the guerrilla movement in Eritrea and the obvious support rendered to it by students of Eritrean origin, the imperial government began to incite students from other regions (ethnic groups) against 'Eritrean' students. Fighting involving scuffles broke out in high schools such as the General Wingate high school in Addis Ababa and the Teachers' Training Institute in Harrar between 'Eritrean' students and the rest. The government was indeed on the offensive but only to plant what was to become in the future a poisonous weed in Ethiopian politics, namely aggressive 'nationalism'/ethnicity.

On the other hand, as Wallelign states in his article (see Annex vi), a small circle of USUAA activists began to discuss the national question in seclusion. However, the content of these discussions and who took what position leaked out and as Wallelign says '... because they [the discussions, MT] were not brought into the open they normally led to backbiting, misunderstanding and grossly exaggerated rumours' (Wallelign, 1969: 9). For the Walleligns, the best thing to do was to provoke discussion on the issue and debate it publicly. As he himself says in his very first sentence of his article, 'The main purpose of this article is to provoke discussions on the "sacred" ...very important issue of this country – the question of nationalities' (ibid., 9).

It is indeed obvious that despite the widely held opinion that was generated by the Algeria group (see Alebachew Damte, in EUSNA New York chapter Newsletter, 1971), USUAA as a union had not taken an official position on the national question, it had not even discussed it at its assemblies as the Walleligns wished. The issue was discussed among a small circle instead and that circle alone was clear on the issue and the position it took. Other USUAA militants who were not included in these discussions had in fact entertained the old position and ideas of NUEUS. The small circle that took a position on the issue decided to make the issue public in the person of Wallelign Mekonnen mainly for two reasons. First, Wallelign was the most prestigious student leader at the time to be taken seriously and listened to and lead the student body onto a serious discussion on the subject. Second, because Wallelign was from an Amhara ethnic group, he would not be suspected of any secessionist intentions at all. These tactical considerations even to start off the discussion on the national

question clearly indicate how delicate the issue was in the eyes of the Walleigns. Walleign read his article in Christmas Hall in front of the student body that assembled on the occasion of the inauguration of the newly elected officers of USUAA under the presidency of Tilahun Gizaw. With that background description, let us now examine the content of Walleign's article. I have divided Walleign's article into three main sections: on nations and nationalism, the solutions to the question of nationalities and attitude towards existing ethnic movements.

On nations and nationalism

Walleign starts his analysis by asserting that Ethiopia was not composed of one nation as had hitherto been believed but of nations and nationalities with their own distinct 'languages, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity' (ibid. 9). At that time, as the official imperial historiography had it, it was generally believed that the Ethiopian people were one and if there were diversities it was in terms of language and religion. Students had been cultivated through the imperial historiography that glorified the roles of its emperors and which completely distorted the history of the non-Amhara peoples and the evolution of the 'modern' Ethiopian state. No doubt that students, like many in society, had a distorted view of the history of their country and peoples. It was on the basis of such misguided historiography that the imperial regime cultivated the state nationalism that passed as Ethiopian 'nationalism'. This 'nationalism' was reinforced by the patriotic war against Mussolini's occupation of Ethiopia that culminated in the reinstatement of the emperor's government with the help of British forces. The paradox is however, that a great many patriots were marginalized and forgotten by the government, that there were widespread complaints and even court cases filed by patriots against government officials who blocked their access to rewards such as plots of land. The dissatisfaction of patriots was expressed in popular songs and poems circulated underground at the time. For instance, the Amharic lyric: *Enat Ethiopia, yetagelelish kerto yademash* (roughly: Mother Ethiopia; those who made it at the end were not those who fought for you but those who collaborated with the enemy (Italians)).

Additionally, there were stories circulating underground on the role of patriots such as Dejazmach Takele Wolde Hawariat and Fitawrari Habtemariam, who were opposed to the emperor's departure from Ethiopia to exile after the defeat sustained by Ethiopian forces at the battle of Maichew. As the popular view had it, it was not the patriots who benefited after the country regained its independence but the collaborators with Italians. It was to this effect that Walleign wrote his famous short story entitled *The Prisoner of Azinara*, a story of an Ethiopian patriot held prisoner by Italians in the infamous prison called Azinara, in Italy. Walleign's article was published on the Amharic daily Addis Zemen and won the literary prize in 1967.

Walleign called the state 'nationalism' advanced by the imperial government as 'fake nationalism'. There is of course, he wrote 'The fake nationalism advanced by the ruling class and unwillingly accepted and even propagated by innocent fellow travellers' (op cit). But, what is this fake nationalism? He answers 'Is it not simply Amhara and to a certain extent Amhara-Tigre supremacy? Ask anybody what Ethiopian culture is. Ask anybody what Ethiopian language is. Ask anybody what Ethiopian music is. Ask anybody what Ethiopian religion is. Ask anybody what the "national" dress is. It is either Amhara or Amhara-Tigre' (ibid., 10).²

These answers hit at the heart of the chauvinism that prevailed within the student population. Walleign continues 'To be a 'genuine Ethiopian' one has to speak Amharic, to listen to Amharic music, to accept the Amahara-Tigre religion, Orthodox Christianity, and to wear the Amhara-Tigre *shama* in international conferences. In some cases to be an "Ethiopian", you will even have to change your name. In short, to be an Ethiopian, you will have to wear an Amhara mask [to use Fanon's expression]. Start asserting your national identity and you are automatically a tribalist, that is, if you are not blessed to be born an Amhara. According to the constitution you will need Amharic to go to school, to get a job, to read books [however few] and even listen to the news on Radio "Ethiopia" unless you are a Somali or an Eritrean in Asmara for obvious reasons' (ibid., 10).

Walleign attributes this 'fake nationalism' to economic domination by the Amhara ruling group. He argues that cultural domination presupposed economic subjugation and in this case he attributes the construction and prevalence of 'fake nationalism' to the system of landed gentry by the 'Amhara and to a certain extent Tigray Neftegna system in the South and the Amhara-Tigre coalition in the urban areas' (ibid., 10). Walleign warns that the Amhara-Tigre dominance should not be confused with the peoples of Amhara or Tigray as they themselves are made victims of the repressive system. '...Amhara and Tigray masses wallow in poverty in the countryside. For that matter, during the hey-days of British colonialism a large mass of British workers had to live under inhuman conditions' (ibid., 10). In view of what the TPLF/EPRDF claims today, it is extremely important to realize what Walleign emphasizes here. He makes a clear distinction between the Amhara and Tigrean ruling class and the Amhara-Tigrean poor. In other words, what became a fetter to social development were the Amhara and Tigre ruling class.

According to Walleign and many revolutionaries at the time, the ethnic composition of the ruling class was Amhara and Tigre. As we shall see below, Birhane Meskel also categorizes the Tigrean ruling class as a junior partner in perpetuating national oppression. As we have seen in the 1976 TPLF Manifesto, however, there is no mention of the Tigrean ruling class as a partner to its Amhara counterpart in dominating the rest of the nationalities. On the contrary, the Manifesto presents the Tigrean people as victims of national oppression and even 'the most hated nationality in the country' (TPLF Manifesto, 1976:20).

The solution to the national question, a democratic and egalitarian state

Walleign points out that the national oppression that was made possible by the economic and cultural subjugation of the oppressed nationalities by the Amhara-Tigre ruling class had to come to an end. He insists that an end to this state of affairs is essential. As to the tasks of the student movement (and the Left) he also says that 'we must declare a stop to it.' That is the crux of Walleign's and USUAA leaders' position: to declare that the national oppression prevalent had to come to an end. It follows from this that Walleign postulates the establishment of a genuine democratic and egalitarian state as a solution to the nationality problem. He defines this democratic and egalitarian state as: 'It is a state in which all nationalities participate equally in state affairs, it is a state where every nationality is given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music and its history. It is a state where Amharas, Tigres, Oromos, Aderes, Somalis, Wollamos, Gurages, etc... are treated equally. It is a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally' (ibid., 11).

As the solution to the nationality problem, Walleign's and USUAA leaders' position is as stated above and I believe it is absolutely clear. To students of Ethiopian politics and contemporary history, it is crucial to grasp what USUAA leaders advanced as the solution to the problem of nationalities: namely the establishment of a genuine national, democratic and egalitarian state.

Walleign also outlines the principal essence and function of such a state:

a. Equal Participation: Walleign advocates the equal participation of nationalities in state affairs. It was, however, not further articulated as to how this participation would take place such as how nationality representation should take place and what state structures (e.g. legislature, executive) were needed to have this actualized. However, the prevailing view was for the need for equal participation on merit regarding qualification without discrimination on nationality basis. At that time, the notion of having different nationality political organizations existing and functioning separately did not exist as there were no nationality political organizations in the country except the little known Eritrean Liberation Front. What was postulated as equal participation then was the principle of having no discrimination against members of dominated ethnic groups/nationalities in affairs of government such as placement and to elected posts. It was generally accepted by the leaders of the student movement then that the idea of having separate political nationality organizations was counter-productive to the cause of the radical and socialist movement. This idea was reinforced by Lenin's famous argument against the Bund, the Jewish trade union in Tsarist Russia. In 1969 when Walleign's article was written, the notion of having separate nationality political organizations was not popular. Walleign and the leaders of USUAA were centralist in the first place.

b. Cultural autonomy: Walleign is more specific on the issue of equal participation. He sees equality of opportunity as cultural autonomy and through developing one's language, music and history in particular (op cit.)

c. Abolition of national domination: the outstanding component of the democratic and egalitarian state, postulated by Walleign, was the end of domination by any one nationality over the rest. The end of national oppression was the kernel of the solution to the nationality problem.

It is essential to point out that both from Walleign's article (see Appendix 2), documents of the student movement that I am going to cite as well as from my own participation in leading positions of the student movement both at home and in Europe, it is possible to confirm that:

1. There was no notion postulating a federal state arrangement on ethnic differentiation. On the contrary, the movement was centralist and what was postulated was a centralized, genuinely democratic and egalitarian state that ends national oppression.
2. There was no notion of a separate pattern of social development based on ethnic differentiation.
3. The movement was also hostile to the notion that the elite should serve 'their own people' as it was internationalist and advocated multi-national approaches and solutions.

These viewpoints must be seen against the claims of the TPLF/EPRDF for having 'correctly proceeded' from or inherited the positions of Walleign and the student movement which, as we will see, is not the case.

Attitude towards existing ethnic movements

Walleign's position on the existing ethnic movements was also clear. As a Marxist he was first of all centralist. For him as well as for all USUAA leaders and student radicals, it was essential to advance the cause of the revolution that would bring democracy and progress for the country. In the absence of an organization that should lead the revolution, ethnic-based rebellions had broken out in some parts of the country, Eritrea, Bale and Ogaden, which the student movement had to reckon with. In this context, Walleign's central message was that the student movement had to break from its erstwhile chauvinist position on the issue and recognize these ethnic movements as movements directed against oppression (ibid., 12.) But, that support was not unconditional. So long as they are against oppression they deserve support. The second problem that Walleign dealt with was what they called at the time the prevalence of a 'great nation chauvinism'. According to this great nation chauvinism, the ruling class was basically from the Amhara-Tigray ethnic coalition and their culture had been imposed on the cultures of other ethnic groups as 'the Ethiopian culture',

language, national dress and so on. If revolutionaries cannot discard such chauvinism, it would be impossible to maintain the unity of the country. Equality of all ethnic groups, or nationalities according to Walleign, was considered crucial even for the unity of revolutionaries themselves. Thus, considering the historically legitimate emergence of national movements as responses to national oppression is a crucial position to adopt by students and the Left.

Amazingly, Walleign did not mention the term 'self-determination' at all. There was no mention of the term '*right of nations to self-determination*' nor of '*the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession*'. For Walleign what was essential was the attitude to be adopted by the movement on the existing ethnic/nationality movement than the formula 'the right of nations to self-determinations'. He was consistent with his ideas on the relationship between solving the problems of nationality and the socialist revolution. He saw the solution to the nationality problem only through the democratic and egalitarian state that can only be formed by a socialist revolution. He then ponders various options for bringing about such a state. He asked if a military coup can do it, and rejected it outright. He then asked 'Can the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Bale armed struggle achieve our goal? Not with their present aims and set-up' (ibid., 11). He continues

Both these movements are exclusive in character, led by the local bourgeoisie in the first instance and the local feudal lords in the second. They do not have the internationalist out-look, which is essential for our goal. They are perfectly right in declaring that there is national oppression. We do not quarrel with them on this score. But their intention is to stop here. They do not try to expand their struggle to the other nationalities. They do not attempt to make a broad-based assault on the foundations of the existing regime. They deliberately try to forget the connection of their local ruling classes with the national oppression. In short, these movements are not led by peasants and workers. Therefore, they are not socialists. And if they are not socialists, it would only be a change of masters for the masses. But for the socialists of the welfare of the masses comes first' (ibid., 11-12).

Then, was Walleign against these movements? No. He only said that they would not bring the ultimate solution; that is, addressing the welfare of the masses which can only be done by a movement with a socialist agenda. To this effect, he says 'Mind you, I am just saying that these movements are not lasting solutions for our goal – the set-up of a genuine nationalist socialist state. I am all for them, the ELF, the Bale movements, the Gojjam uprising, to the extent that they have challenged and weakened the existing regime, and have created areas of discontent to be harnessed later on by a genuine socialist revolution' (ibid., 12). Walleign displays here that he was indeed a strategic thinker. He was for the position of supporting the movements so long as they create areas of discontent that can be harnessed later on by a genuine socialist movement. Here, his views and Birhane Meskel's are identical as we will see. Nevertheless, one thing that comes out very clearly from his position is that: he was against condemning the

existing ethnic/national movements nor was he their unconditional supporter. He did not endorse the ethnic movements (nationalism) in toto without a critique and reservation. His support to them also emanates from the strategic thinking that a socialist movement would harness them later on.

In assessing the position of the student movement, it is essential to take the political situation then existing in the country as well as internationally. In this sense, there is one major shortcoming in Walleign's position. The fact that he did not situate the national question within the global context despite the fact that Ethiopia at the time was, in the political sense, a neo-colony of the US, constitutes one major weakness. The US had at the time a highly sophisticated military communications base called *Kagnew* (presumably named after the name that the Ethiopian detachment in the Korean War adopted) in what is now the capital of Eritrea, Asmara. This communications station had played a crucial espionage role for the US and Israel. During the 1967 Middle East War, the *Kagnew* station played a crucial role in monitoring troop movements of Arab states and relaying messages to Washington and Tel Aviv. The imperial regime was clearly on the side of Israel and US in the Middle East conflict and the states in neighbouring Somalia and Sudan and a number of states in the Middle East were pro-Moscow. What should constitute a genuine national movement in Ethiopia at that point in time should have also been viewed against the background of the attitudes of their leaders on the regional and international situations too.

However, a critique of the positions of the student movement constitutes one category, while appraising the positive side of the movement's position is unavoidable. It was commendable on the part of university students and their union, USUAA, for the courage they displayed to raise this extremely sensitive yet unavoidable issue. They must also be commended for the bold assertion they made that all ethnic groups in Ethiopia are equal and sovereign and that they deserve equal respect including the right to self-determination. The very notion of equality of all ethnic groups was a major contribution of the student movement. The respect for the cultures and languages of ethnic groups that had been officially displayed is a contribution by the student movement. Students and later the EPRP paid with their lives for raising these issues.

The most unfortunate thing that happened to the student movement was the fact that the imperial government of Haile Selassie committed a massacre of students on December 29, 1969 after assassinating the president of their union, Tilahun Gizaw. USUAA was closed down and all student unions and their activities were all banned. That was the greatest handicap ever to happen to the student movement and the 'national question' because the discussion on the national question that had just begun was interrupted. The theoretical discussion and debate on the 'national' question that went among a small circle of USUAA leaders and militants was interrupted before it reached the larger student population. It is indeed difficult to say how many students had really understood

the essence and principal messages in Wallelign's article. For instance, when one copy of the *Struggle* that carried Wallelign's article arrived at Alemaya campus, which is 450 km away from Addis, only a handful of militants managed to read it and really understood the message.³ Not even a week had passed before the student massacre occurred at the university campus in Addis Ababa and all student unions banned. The arrest of Wallelign and many more student leaders effectively prevented the essence of Wallelign's article to filter down to the student population. A five year sentence previously imposed on Wallelign was reinstated and many other student leaders were sentenced to one year and more. As time passed, the suspension of discussion and debate on the issue paved the way for a misinterpretation of the positions of USUAA and Wallelign. When the movement went underground, clandestinity in fact contributed to the further misinterpretation and misrepresentation of USUAA's position. The discussion on the 'national question' that was interrupted in the country, however, continued among Ethiopian students' unions abroad with vigour and intensity.

6.2.1.3 The formula 'Up to and including secession': Prior to the publication of Wallelign's paper, in the summer of 1969, a group of university students, among whom two prominent USUAA leaders, Birhane Meskel Redda and Amanuel Gebreyesus, hijacked an Ethiopian airliner to Khartoum. Later on they were given asylum in Algeria, home to numerous revolutionaries from all over the world at the time. When this group left the country, the 'national question' had not been raised yet. It was not known what the position of this group on the question was until 1971. In March 1971, the group in Algeria issued a fiery paper criticising the position of the Ethiopian Student's Union in North America (ESUNA). Under a pseudonym, Tilahun Takele (a pseudonym used by Birhane Meskel Reda in memory of Tilahun Gizaw and the patriot Takele Wolde Hawariat, a reputed patriot killed by the imperial government in 1969.) Birhane Meskel's paper was largely congruent with Wallelign's but contained a vitriolic attack on the then leaders of ESUNA (Endreas Eshete, Alem Habtu and Hagos Gebreyesus).

This paper was written at a time when a dispute had emerged between the group in Algeria and those leaders of the student union in Europe (ESUE), who together with the leaders of ESUNA had already set up a quasi-political party called the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (with the Amharic acronym *Meisone*). The dispute was on the issue of organizing a revolutionary political organization. *Meisone's* leader, Haile Fida, suggested that the group in Algeria should join his organization as individuals. This was rejected by the Algeria group, which was already in the process of organizing its own revolutionary organization with followers within ESUNA and ESUE. The idea behind the Algeria group and its followers was to set up a revolutionary organization and start an armed struggle immediately. To start an armed struggle alliance with the Eritrean 'nationalist fronts' was seen as unavoidable. The attitude towards the Eritrean movement and the 'national question' in Ethiopia at large constituted the first step forward. Having the student unions abroad, mainly ESUE and ESUNA, adopt the same

position as that of Walleign and Birhane Meskel was crucial. This was the political context that informed Birhane Meskel's paper.

Although Birhane Meskel's paper was not very different from Walleign's position in substance, there were nevertheless certain differences. The differences were in emphasis and in its objectives as Birhane Meskel's paper was basically a refutation of the positions of the leaders of ESUNA at the time. While Walleigne did not mention the right to self-determination even once and downplayed the issue of the right to secession as a slogan – though he was not opposed to secession at all – Birhane Meskel insisted strongly on the right to secession. He was the one who uncritically overemphasized the idea of the right to self-determination *up to and including secession*, a term borrowed from Lenin in a dispute with Rosa Luxemburg. The phrase *up to and including secession* was later to constitute the gospel of ethnic groups such as the TPLF. Birhane Meskel's paper managed to evade imperial censorship and was read by a number of activists, including leaders of ethnic groups (Interview with Aregash Adane). Different ideas could be debated under conditions of clandestinity, whereas thorny issues such as the national question were not discussed in public, and the emphasis on the *right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession* indeed appeared to have contributed to a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the positions of the student movement. The TPLF and other ethnic political groups that claimed to originate from the student movement were victims of this misinterpretation, whether deliberate or not. That is indeed why untenable political constructs, ostensibly theoretical, were advanced by the TPLF in its 1976 manifesto as we saw earlier. In contrast to the prevailing assumption, the TPLF/EPRDF did not proceed from the positions of the student movement on the 'national question'.

In the final analysis, Birhane Meskel's paper perfectly served its purpose, namely to found a revolutionary organization that would launch an armed struggle immediately. That was achieved in the body and soul of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary party (EPRP) that was founded on April 9, 1972 in the residence of a German Marxist professor in West Berlin, where the founding congress was held (the Congress was held from April 2nd to the 9th, 1972).⁴ However, Birhane Meskel's paper left two indelible scars on the revolutionary movement, namely dogmatism and a stereotype style of writing. By endorsing Stalin's definition of a nation and Lenin's unremitting insistence for the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession, Birhane Meskel made a blunder in his analysis of the situation of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. There are two aspects to this dogma. The first is endorsing Stalin's and Lenin's theses and uncritically applying them to the situation in Ethiopia. The works from both Stalin and Lenin that Birhane referred to extensively were all written prior to the First World War and well before the Bolshevik revolution and were based on the concrete conditions of Europe at the time, a continent besieged by an impending imperialist war.

The historical situation as well as the social constitutions of the nations of Europe at the time was in no way similar to the Ethiopian situation in the 1960s. It is understandable that conducting research on the concrete conditions of the various ethnic groups in the country and assessing the cohesion among them as well as the general historical situation to establish whether or not they constitute nations and/or nationalities was a difficult if not impossible undertaking at the level of student unions. Andargachew's critique of the movement for not having done that is misplaced (Andargachew, 2005: 136). By establishing the 'existence' of 'nations and nationalities', Birhane Meskel opened the door wide for parochial ethnicists to consider themselves as 'nationalists' and their movement 'nationalist', thereby automatically and naturally qualifying them for the uncontested right to self-determination *up to and including secession*. To the surprise of the naïve Ethiopian Left, the right these ethnicists exercised first was to attack and destroy the Left itself.

The second strand of dogmatism constitutes the fact that of all undercurrents within Marxism, it opted for the Bolshevik version. It is well known that one of the fundamental weaknesses of Marxism was and still is its view of nationalism. There had never been unanimity, not even agreement on nationalism among the various undercurrents of Marxism. The debate between Lenin and Luxembourg is well known, the position that the Austrian Social-democrats held on cultural autonomy than political self-determination is also well known (for further reading on these issues, see H. Davis' *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917*, 1967).

Also, Stalinist parties that came to power in multi-ethnic settings did not even subscribe to Lenin's and Stalin's thesis. It is well known that the post-revolution multi-ethnic states from China and Vietnam to Eastern Europe did not subscribe to the Bolshevik thesis at all but adopted their own policies according to the concrete conditions in their respective countries. In addition to all these however, the policies of the Bolsheviks themselves, once in power, is in sharp contrast to their pre-revolution rhetoric on the right to self-determination. Of all people, it was Stalin himself who was the first to violate precisely the thesis he used to advance when he suppressed the right to self-determination of Ukraine, Georgia, Khazakstan and others (Melakou, 1991: 48-52.) Although Soviet Russia and later as USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) included in its constitution the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to form a separate state, the Bolshevik regime under Stalin suppressed this right. That caused a serious rift between himself and Lenin to the extent of calling each other names: Stalin calling Lenin a 'national liberal socialist' while Lenin called him 'a Georgian, a great Russian bully in fact' (Ibid., 49.) Needless to say that the great terror and massacre aimed at the nationalities in question in the 1930s conducted by Stalin had caused the death of millions of people (ibid., 58-71.) These practices of Stalin should have spoken much louder than his pre-revolution tirade on nations and national self-determination. The Ethiopian Left conveniently ignored these contradictions in the policies of Stalin and went on to parrot pre-revolution Stalin

as if this was the only Marxist interpretation of nationalism. This mistake of the left should be viewed in addition to the misinterpretation of its own position by parochial ethnicists. The TPLF/EPRDF was one of these ethnicists.

The mistakes of the Left and the misuse of its positions by ethnicists constitute one category. The main issue here is the contrast between the real standpoints of the student movement and the TPLF/EPRDF. Both Walleign and Birhane Meskel, being Marxists, are centralists to start with. As centralists, the position they pursued principally aimed at advancing the cause of the revolution at a national level. The issue of self-determination did not constitute the kernel of their ideological and political convictions. The 'national question' was always secondary to the social revolution. But, it was only in the relation between the social revolution and ethnic inequality that the right to self-determination was raised as an important political issue.⁵ Their principal aim was to expose the chauvinism prevalent among students at the time that hampered the unity of the student movement and that can impact on the unity of future revolutionaries. In Birhane Meskel's case, the 'national question' was pivotal for the beginning of the armed struggle by the revolutionary organization that was to be born. The declarations and resolutions of student unions in Europe and North America that appeared after a rigorous ideological and political debate clearly indicate that the 'national question' occupied an important position for the social revolution to come in Ethiopia. The 'national question' was secondary to the class struggle and social revolution. But, for TPLF and other ethnicists, the 'national question' and the principle of the right to self-determination up to and including secession was the kernel of their ideology, the very creed of the movements.

I need to dwell briefly on some misplaced critiques of the Left and student movement. Such critique is part of a misguided critique of the Left in lieu of a general comparative assessment of the performance of the three regimes in contemporary Ethiopia, namely the imperial government, Derg and the EPRDF. The critique comes mainly from those who were not part of any of the political movements and who mostly sat on the fence, so to speak, when the struggle for democracy raged in the 60s, 70s and 80s. In fact, the critique seems to emanate not from a concrete observation of what prevailed then in the political sense but from some kind of nostalgic harking back to the 'good old times of the emperor's rule'. But, good for whom? In any case, this 'critical' school advances the idea that the imperial regime was the best of all and mostly the state of the country was very good and on the right course towards development and it blames the Left and the student movement for generating the revolution against the imperial regime. Resisting the temptation to deconstruct such a 'critique', I will only touch upon ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. Such people allege that the student movement was to blame for raising the principles of the right to self-determination of ethnic groups in Ethiopia and for throwing the country into chaos and particularly to the rule based on ethnicization of politics now. The late Professor Asrat, the founder of the All Amhara Political Organization, openly blamed university students for raising the issue and in fact labelled them as

devilish for doing so. Since then, a number of people have repeated such criticisms.

The mistakes of such people are mainly two. First, they argue that it was students who sparked the problem of ethnicity by generating a discussion on the issue. As we have seen above, this is completely detached from the political reality of the country at the end of the 60s when university students were indeed *forced* to raise the issue. The country was faced with three serious ethnic movements in Eritrea, Ogaden and Bale and a major peasant uprising in Gojjam. The policy of national oppression that the imperial regime advanced was so dehumanizing that the country was on the brink of being at the mercy of mushrooming ethnic based movements. The problem of ethnicity and ethnic movements was first of all created by the imperial government and aggravated when it deployed masses of troops in these areas. Eritrea was subjected to constant air strikes by the air force, plundered by a special commando trained by Israelis. The town of Om Hajer in Western Eritrea was erased from the map by a heavy air strike. The Bale revolt by Oromo peasants was cruelly crushed by the army, but the armed struggle continued. Such was the reality at the time that prompted university students to discuss the issue of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts.

Amazingly, one critique by Bahru Zewde comes as a complete surprise. Though Bahru does not belong to the class of people who advanced the above 'critique', he nevertheless ended up accusing university students. As a member of the student movement as well as of the Left, and in addition being a historian, he should have known very well the historical background that led to the discussion on the national question at the end of 1969. Bahru lumps the issue of the national question with what he calls the 'Marxist-Leninist ideological baggage' that allegedly messed up Ethiopia and literally dismisses the students. '...Arguably,' he says 'The most potent ingredient of the Marxist-Leninist ideological baggage has been the principle of the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession. The principle was first aired at a student gathering in Christmas Hall [the main student dining hall of Addis Ababa University] on a fateful November evening of 1969. The vector of this pregnant idea was the intrepid if rather adventurist stalwart of the student movement, Walleign Mekonnen' (Bahru, 1994:15). Bahru erred, in the first place, on the facts. Walleign did not say a word on the *right to self-determination* let alone advocating *the right to self-determination up to and including secession*.

A further major problem of such 'critique' is that it considers the TPLF/EPRDF as the inheritor of the student movement and the Left simply by taking for granted the latter's rhetoric about self-determination and Marxism (Andargachew Tsige, Merera Gudina). As we saw above, the construction of ethnicity ('nationalism') in the minds of the TPLF is very different from the way university students constructed it. For the militant students and the Left, nationalism was secondary to the revolution and class struggle while for the TPLF it constituted the kernel of its ideology. Also, students and the Left were first of all centralists while the TPLF

is primarily ethnically exclusive and secessionist. The TPLF subscription to the slogans of the student movement and Marxism-Leninism was, as mentioned earlier, for the sake of advancing its armed struggle in the same way that the Derg used 'Marxism-Leninism' for its own purposes. Nevertheless, a critique of the student movement and that of the Left on the national question must be tabled in the proper manner and what follows are modest endeavours in this direction.

In traditional formations, as we discussed previously, these preconditions, historical in nature, for the existence of a bourgeois nation-state as well as civil society, do not exist. Neither do traditional societies have their own national bourgeoisie to speak of. The construction of 'nationalism' takes a different form in traditional formations where the relationship based on blood kinship is still dominant. Indeed, it needs to be spelt out whether or not it is nationalism or ethnicity that existed in the first place. Wherever colonial domination prevailed it is possible to say that the construction of one-ness took the form of nationalism as it corresponded with the introduction of capitalism, bringing together the various communities into one vis-à-vis the colonial power. Now, the ideology of one-ness of these communities must be dichotomized with the prevalence of colonization as a power that had to go. As far as that dichotomy goes, anti-colonial sentiment can be categorized as nationalism. But, when it comes to settling internal ethnic problems vis-à-vis 'its own' state, that is not the only sentiment that communities in traditional societies have. The sentiment that is determined by blood kinship that has always been dominant at the social level now found political expression with the failure of the performance of the post-colonial state. It was this sentiment that was utilized by the petty bourgeoisie to advance as 'nationalism' its own quest for political power, which in fact is ethnicity. The issue here is not whether or not ethnicity, like nationalism, is historically legitimate. For that matter with the prevalence of neo-colonization and now globalization the era of a blanket legitimization of nationalism has come to an end. Nationalism has to be judged on its programmatic merit, particularly in the area of freedom/democracy and social development. This has to be strongly emphasized, particularly in view of the fact that hardly any nationalist in traditional formations has ever opened up space for its own people and brought political freedom and democracy. In our region, the EPLF in Eritrea, once in power, led the country astray not only in the economic sense but also, most importantly, by depriving its own people of political freedom and democracy. The EPRDF is following exactly the same policy on matters of democracy and political freedom, but the heterogeneity of the country compelled it to allow a slight opening for expression.

The reality in Ethiopia in the 1960s, when both Walleign and Birhane Meskel boldly asserted that the various communities that constitute Ethiopia were nations and nationalities, was very different from the situation that existed in Europe which served as a basis for Lenin's and Stalin's positions. Like the emergence of the 'state' in Africa, the issue of nationalism in Africa must be

viewed against the background of the consequences of colonization. In as much as the African state was created not out of an organic process but imposed from above on a predominantly traditional social formation, the sentiments of African communities tied by blood kinship is too far removed from constituting nationalism and the communities themselves being nations and/or nationalities. The social formation in Ethiopia, unlike the claims and overemphasis by Birhane Meskel that 'rising capitalism' was its characteristic feature, was more traditional than in many African countries and did not give rise to a community sentiment that surpassed ethnographic categories. This was stressed by a letter of leaders of the student movement at home to the 19th Congress of ESUNA that overturned its own 17th Congress resolutions in 1971. 'That the concept of rising capitalism in Ethiopia (or in any of the neo-colonies for that matter)' they say 'As was defined in classical works does not exist at the present moment, having been stifled by modern imperialism, and that rising nationalism (once again in the classical sense) which should have gone hand in hand with rising capitalism has been and is being replaced by forced assimilation' (SPARK, 1971:6).

The problem in the position of Birhane Meskel is the tendency of endorsing 'nationalism' as more positive than having its own drawbacks. Walleign only mentions the limited scope of existing ethnic movements while Birhane Meskel who attempted to make a theoretical treatise of nationalism only scoffed at the political orientation of the ELF (Eritrean Liberation Front) ⁶ for not being anti-feudal and anti-imperialist (Tilahun Takele, 1970:49). Otherwise, nationalism as a political trend was not dealt with in depth.

There are various forms of nationalism, depending on the concrete historical and political conditions within which a given nationalism emerged. As we have already seen, in Europe, the old nationalism emerged simultaneously with the nation-state because it was generated by the rising bourgeoisie. Other nationalisms that emerged before and after the First World War however took different forms in different countries. It was in this period that nationalism's features, other than being all positive, surfaced. The paradoxical nature of nationalism started to reveal itself. As Snyder notes, nationalism in both its old and new forms 'Is a historical phenomenon of the utmost complexity, suffused with paradox. At once moral and immoral, human and inhuman, noble and savage, it can be either blessing or curse ... Circumstances so powerfully influence the feelings and opinions of men that vices can pass into virtues, and paradoxes into axioms' (ibid., 14). The positive or negative aspects of nationalism are political and social constructions that sprang from a specific condition of a given political situation on the one hand and the political aspirations of those who construct nationalisms on the other.

The political landscape of the world had changed a great deal after the formation of nation-states in Europe, some of whom ventured into colonization. Nationalism in the Third World as advanced both as anti-colonial as in the case of anti-European colonization and as anti-national oppression as in the case of

oppressive post-independence states mainly by the political elite at the time, the middle class. The negative content in the construction of nationalism sprang from the dominance of the middle class as the new leader of nationalism in place of the bourgeoisie. This is common in the many constructions of nationalism in the Third World. In the case of the old nationalism instigated by the bourgeoisie, freedom and democracy were also the principal undercurrents along with nationalism. Two kinds of rights were advanced at the time: individual and collective rights. To the middle class or the nationalist elite in the Third World, individual rights were not issues at all as the middle class was itself a creation of colonization and not a product of a historical evolution, an evolution that had a history of radical thoughts and deconstructions against tradition at some point in its history.

The evolution of the construction of nationalism is of the utmost importance in analyzing the history of ethnic movements in Ethiopia and the EPRDF's ethnicization of politics as the mess that the country finds itself now cannot be explained outside the realm of the political construct that passed as 'nationalism'. The ethnicity construct that the TPLF (EPRDF) called 'Tigrean nationalism' began on the background of considering 'nationalism' as positive. Neither Walleign nor Birhane Meskel had warned the student and Left movement of the dangers of the negative aspects of nationalism. By the end of 1974 however, certain ethnic constructs with negative contents started to emerge within the student movement as I explained earlier. By 1975, the TPLF was formed and advanced its aggressive form of nationalism. Iyassu Alemayehu, in his preface to the second edition of Birhane Meskel's paper, notes that 'narrow nationalism' surfaced because the Left had earlier focused only on the main danger then, namely 'great' nation chauvinism within society and 'social chauvinism' within the movement 'At that time the main target of the fire [excuse the language, MT] was social chauvinism as symbolized by Hagos and his followers [the ex-leaders of ESUNA, MT] a social chauvinism that was an integral part of the chauvinism rampant in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia' (Iyassu, 1976:vii). The founders of the TPLF advanced their ethnic constructs when nationalism was still considered to be positive and when the possible danger that it could pose had not been tabled yet.⁷

Was there a Tigrean 'nationalism' when the TPLF was formed as a movement? As I mentioned earlier, a sort of ethnic sentiment had already developed in Tigray as a result of the Woyane revolt of 1943. But, that ethnic sentiment was a political construct on the basis of the consciousness surrounding the rivalry between the two houses of aristocracy in Tigray and Shewa. It is essential to stress that a ruling class construct cannot be emancipatory. Otherwise, as far as the ordinary Tigreans are concerned, they strongly believed that they are Ethiopians and Tigray is the centre of Abyssinian history. However, when the TPLF constructed its own 'nationalism', it was on the basis of the denial of being Ethiopian as the objective of the movement was secession just like that of the Eritrean movements.⁸ But, because the sentiment of the Tigrayan people as

Ethiopians was insurmountable for the TPLF's objectives, accusing the state of what it called the 'national oppression' that Tigray was subjected to by the Amhara was in their eyes imperative. As we saw earlier, at the propaganda level, the Tigreyan people were painted by the TPLF as 'The most hated, suspected and discriminated' nationality in Ethiopia (TPLF Manifesto, 1976:20). A wedge had to be inserted between the peoples of Tigray and Amhara in a form of an ethnic political construction. Then, an anti-Amhara sentiment had to be manufactured both within the organization and among the people. The TPLF imitated the Eritrean movements' anti-Amhara construct and endorsed it as a doctrine. In Eritrea one measurement of Eritrean militancy was how much an Eritrean hated Ethiopia, Amhara and anything Ethiopian and Amhara. The TPLF adopted the same policy but pushed it to the extreme. For instance, within the Eritrean movement knowledge of Amharic was appreciated because it was needed for propaganda purposes. Within the TPLF however, the reverse was true. Amharic had been banned within the organization until the mid-1980s. Association with non-Tigrean Ethiopians used to be condemned and any TPLF member who was found out violating this rule used to be expelled from the organization.

Another negative aspect of the TPLF's ethnic construct was the exaggeration of anything that is Tigrean, adding to the myth about the glorious past and promising a glorious future. In the final analysis, such exaggerations pose incalculable harm. As J. Huizinga states: 'Nationalism, the exaggerated and unjustified tendency to emphasize national interests, has produced in our time the abominable fruit of hypernationalism, the curse of this century' (in Snyder, 1968:29).

Incongruity is another negative aspect of nationalism. This is expressed at two levels. First, denying democratic and individual rights for precisely the people for whom it espoused national liberation. It dichotomizes individual with collective rights and argue that as nationalist it advances collective rights, that is, the right to self-determination of its own people as 'national oppression' is the primary problem that the people face. Second, in a multi-national context, the creed of the movement, the right to self-determination, is also denied to those who demand it. Snyder calls this the A-B-C paradox. 'Another incongruity of nationalism,' he writes 'Is the A-B-C paradox projected by the political scientist Hans Morgenthau. In this self-contradiction, the nation B invokes the principles of nationalism against nation A, and denies them to nation C – in each case for the sake of its own survival' (ibid., 17). Such nationalism has huge potential ultimately to become oppressive. As Morgenthau says, 'There are no inherent limits to the application of the principles of nationalism. If the peoples of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia could invoke these principles against Turkey, why could not the people of Macedonia invoke them against Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia? ... Thus, yesterday's oppressed cannot help becoming the oppressors of today because they are afraid lest they be again oppressed tomorrow' (in Snyder, ibid., 18). This is exactly what happened in Eritrea under the EPLF, which had earlier

on rejected the idea of self-determination for the various ethnic constituents of Eritrea itself. In Ethiopia, as we will see, though the right to self-determination of nationalities up to and including secession is enshrined in the 1995 Constitution, the practice is the opposite. There is neither political freedom nor democratic rights for the larger society nor the real exercise of the right to self-determination for the various ethnic groups.

6.2.2 Ethnicization of politics at work

The perceptual basis for the TPLF's/EPRDF's ethnic politics as its 'doctrine' is an amalgam of its own parochial ethnicity, aggressive in nature and containing some elements of the Stalinist style of organization. As we have seen above, the perception of the TPLF/EPRDF did not proceed from the viewpoints of the student movement and that it used 'Marxism' as rhetoric (but Stalinism in practice) as a tool to rationalize and advance the cause of this parochialism. Since the TPLF claims that its 'Marxism' also derived from the student movement, it is necessary to mention here with the ideology that the student movement upheld as 'Marxism'.⁹

The Ethiopian Left also took Stalin's canonization of 'Marxism' by the Bolsheviks and particularly as codified by Stalin and all their organizational principles as the correct 'Marxist' ideology. But, why was Leninism so attractive to the Ethiopian Left? In the first place, Leninism is uncompromising and inflexible, which is basically doctrinaire and dogmatist. This is very appealing to what Andargachew Tsige calls the *debtterra* (literati) psyche of the Ethiopian elite (Andargachew, 2005:82). Second, the polemical style of Lenin in the debate he conducted against his opponents was also very attractive to the Ethiopian elite. It is customary that in Ethiopia what is normally appreciated is the verbal attack against a political or ideological opponent than the content of the arguments.

Clandestinity also contributed to the popularity of Leninism and the dogma preached by Stalin. Lack of open discussion and debate on ideological issues, the sectarian style of work by leaders of the student movement at home and abroad all contributed to advancing the dogmatist style of ideological orientation among student radicals. One has only to remember how students, with views different from Leninism yet who were against the imperial government, were treated during student debates: violence. When USUAA militants resorted to violence against a group of students who were opposed to the formation of USUAA but who preferred to see more unions were branded as 'restorers', the 'restorers' branded these militants as 'USUAA dogs'. Abroad, the leaders of ESUNA in the mid-70s went to the extreme by expelling members branded as Trotskyites. When differences occurred on the question of ethnicity in 1970, a great deal of dogmatism was practiced. Stalin's arithmetical definition of what a nation is what and nationalism constitutes and the unconditional support for the right to self-determination of 'nations' and 'nationalities' was taken for granted.

Birhane Meskel's extremely polemical paper against the leaders of ESUNA is a typical example for this.

The Ethiopian Left uncritically accepted these theories as the genuine principles of Marxism on organizational issues. When the EPRP and *Meisone* were founded as political parties with Birhane Meskel and Haile Fida as heads respectively, these Leninist organizational formulas were adopted without any changes or modifications whatsoever. Posing as 'Left', the TPLF/EPRDF also adopted the same principles.

The ideological orientation of the TPLF/EPRDF is the absolutization of the 'national question' and making ethnicity the sole criterion for practically every social and political phenomenon. Knowledge in general and political knowledge in particular starts, according to the TPLF, with taking 'the correct position' on the 'national question'. Democracy is also codified by how much people have accepted this 'correct line', that is, the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession. In a 1985 document, the TPLF stated that 'any democratic force must uphold the right of nations to self-determination and struggle for its realization' (TPLF, 1985:4.) Thus, for TPLF/EPRDF, the principle and practice of democracy begins with the endorsement of Stalin's formula on the 'national question' and the fight to realize it. The document then adds 'The principle of the right of a nation to decide for itself is the litmus test that identifies democratic forces from undemocratic ones' (ibid., 4). Twenty years later, this statement was repeated by Meles Zenawi in an election campaign in 2005. According to the TPLF, the 'correct line' as outlined above must be upheld irrespective of changes in the political system. Now, the 'national question' is not only absolutized but also universalized and made the cornerstone of political principles. This is beyond dogmatism. In the first place, recognition of the right to self-determination came because of national oppression. If national oppression as a policy is abolished once and for all due to the establishment of a democratic order, there is no situation that warrants advancing the issue of the right to self-determination. That was the point of difference between the TPLF and EPLF in 1985 as a result of the EPLF's rejection of the TPLF's demand for cessation. Incredible as it may seem, the TPLF advanced the idea that even when a democratic order is established, the right to self-determination including the right to secession must prevail. 'To declare that a nation has no right to secede because a just system has been established is a breach on the right of people to self-determination' (ibid. 6.)

But, this is only as far as Tigray is concerned. The TPLF's/EPRDF's attitude towards other ethnic groups' rights is not the same. One can infer from this that the construction of the TPLF's ethnicity that passed as Tigrean 'nationalism' is not entirely about the self-determination of Tigray but very much about holding on to political power at the country level. This has become glaring after the 2001 split within the TPLF upon which Meles' wing lost constituents in Tigray. Now, what is the attitude of the TPLF toward the rights of other ethnic groups? Does it

consider the right of other ethnic groups unconditionally and irrespective of the formation of a just system? Its practice speaks against the rhetoric. The inclusion of the right of 'nations and nationalities' to self-determination up to and including secession in the country's constitution is, however, for the purpose of rhetoric. In practice, the right of other ethnic groups is very much restricted. It is well known that the various ethnic-based regional governments that make up the Ethiopian federation are all controlled by TPLF cadres, who make decisions for the regions. Dr. Negasso attests to this fact: 'After the split in 2001 (of the ruling EPRDF, MT) the TPLF controlled the secretariat of the EPRDF's council that monitors the performance of the party in the regions' (interview, 2005).

Article 39 of the EPRDF constitution that proclaims the 'unconditional' right of nationalities to self-determination including secession has come as a surprise to many. However, that right proclaimed as 'unconditional' is indeed conditional and a condition difficult to meet. Section 4 of the same constitution also proclaims that the right shall come into effect:

When a demand for secession has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Legislative Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned; when the federal Government has organized a referendum which must take place within three years from the time it received the concerned council's decision for secession; when the demand for secession is supported by a majority vote in the referendum; when the Federal Government will have transferred its powers to the Council of the Nation, Nationality or people who has voted to secede; and when the division of assets is effected in a manner prescribed by law (EPRDF Constitution, 1995:97).

A careful scrutiny of these provisions clearly shows that the right to secession cannot be effected as these conditions are hardly surmountable. The EPRDF's intention is to appear as the champion of the 'underdog' while at the same time keeping the 'underdog' under its own bondage. As Merera Gudina says, this is a new form of control mechanism (see below).

It is important to point out here that the TPLF/EPRDF officially adopted a policy that is discriminatory to other ethnic groups. It is an open secret in Ethiopia that Tigreans are in general favoured by the TPLF/EPRDF regarding access to jobs, scholarships abroad, permits and loans to start businesses and so on. In addition, the TPLF/EPRDF government has, from the beginning, adopted a discriminatory policy in allocating budgets and funds from foreign loan/ aid to the ethnically-based regional governments. As a March 2001 Report by the Central Statistical Authority has it (see Table 1 below), Tigray got over 30.6% of capital expenditure, 49.4% of federal subsidies and 16.1% of foreign loan/aid per capita while, for instance, the most populous region, Oromiya, only got 13.5% in capital expenditure, 27.4% of federal subsidies and 6.9% of foreign loan/aid per capita.

Table 1**Per Capita Expenditure**

	Capital expenditure	federal Subsidies	foreign loan and aid
Amhara	17.6	32.9	9.4
Oromiya	13.5	27.4	6.9
SNNP	16.9	35.2	10.6
Tigray	30.6	49.4	16.1

Source: Central Statistical Authority, March 2001 Report

Merera Gudina also attested to this fact when he wrote ‘... even the official data on the regional distribution of money from the national treasury and external sources could not conceal the disproportionate flow of resources to the ruling elite’s home base of Tigray ... The Tigray region’s per capita share of the federal subsidy is consistently higher than Oromiya, Amhara and SNNP regions, which constitute more than 80% of the country’s population. The same is true for capital expenditure as well as foreign loan and aid per capita... In fact, the capital expenditure per capita for Tigray is two or three times greater than Oromiya’ (Merera, 2001: 175).

This discriminatory policy is contrary to the kind of cohesion that the country needed to emerge out of the ashes that the Derg left it in. The nature of political power is, if at all constructed on ethnic lines, and indeed as the TPLF did, to guarantee the unity of the country, then real practice in terms of regional autonomy had to be granted to the various regions. The TPLF practices were contrary to its own rhetoric on unity and construction of political power to guarantee that unity, and in fact caused much more division among ethnic groups as a backlash. The backlash came at two levels. First, the practice of self-determination did not correspond to the official rhetoric, but in fact it was the opposite. Second, the exercise of the power of the regions was through ‘political organizations’ that are largely the TPLF’s own creations except the Amhara National Democratic Movement which started as the Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (EPDM). The EPDM had to change its entire national political programme and objectives and agreed to the TPLF’s demand to become ‘representatives of the Amhara people’. Because of such a neo-colonial approach a Lancaster-House type agreement was also signed between these ‘parties’ to make up the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Meeting in London on the eve of the downfall of Mengistu, the EPLF, TPLF/EPRDF and OLF mediated by the US secretary for African affairs, Herman Cohen, agreed on the modalities of power in Ethiopia and Eritrea after the overthrow of the Derg. As Tronvol says ‘Prior to the TPLF/EPRDF takeover, United States of America (USA)-led negotiations had been conducted in London where the USA gave its endorsement for a new government in Ethiopia led by the TPLF/EPRDF and an acceptance of an EPLF-controlled Eritrea’ (Tronvol:2000:15). It is clear from the

above that the TPLF's view on the right of ethnic groups other than Tigray is condescending if not outright non-respect. That is one huge contradiction that the ethnicity advanced by the TPLF poses.

However, unity in general was essential for Ethiopia right after the Derg's demise as the under-development and poverty the Derg left it with was overwhelming that politicians needed to address the issue of political power beyond considerations of class and ethnicity. Ethiopia simply could not afford any kind of political or ideological cliché that may pass as class-based or ethnic-based. Political power should have been viewed as the principal instrument to improve the lives of the poor, which needed a country wide or multi-ethnic approach. With the national, that is, country wide, enthusiasm just created with the Derg's demise and the benefit of the doubt that the EPRDF enjoyed at the beginning, it was essential to reinvigorate the optimism of the people as a whole by displaying the fact the people alone can solve their political, economic and social problems. The people of Ethiopia needed to emerge out of the deep-seated apathy that the Derg pushed them into, and political power needed to be constructed to develop their enthusiasm and optimism, and above all, their national self-confidence. The country needed a national leadership that provides such a national, that is, country wide, leadership. Such leadership did not solely depend on the political will, it also required political maturity and competence.

The TPLF's policies and actions were contrary to these expectations and obligations. Pan-Ethiopian nationalism was greatly downplayed and in fact had never been mentioned at all in official media until the war with the Eritrean government in 1988 (Merera, 2003:120). Instead, ethnicity with over-emphasis on the right to self-determination including secession was preached. High-level government leaders such as the Prime Minister at the time, Tamrat Layne, addressed crowds in the Somali region and openly incited people to rise against Amhara (*neftegna*). When massacres against Amharas were committed in places such as Bedeno and Water in the Oromiya region in 1992, the then president and current prime minister Meles attempted to rationalize the atrocities by saying that 'such problems are expected when people, who have been deprived of their freedom, suddenly get it and misuse it' (Andargachew, 2005:257). This is not states-personship as a head of state is not expected to incite people to revolt against another group of people in its own country or rationalize ethnic cleansing. The TPLF's policies did not only fail to advance Pan-Ethiopian nationalism beyond the narrow confines of ethnicity, they also drove a wedge between the various ethnic groups of Ethiopia. A call for 'revenge' against the people of Amhara ostensibly for the national oppression that the Amhara ruling class had committed during the imperial regime is neither states-personship nor 'nationalism'. Once in power, the EPRDF should have advanced the idea that those responsible for the demise of oppressed ethnic groups during the imperial period were not the Amhara people as a whole but the ex-ruling class that happened to be from the Amhara and Tigray ethnic groups.

One of the most debilitating consequences of the ethnicization of politics is to make ethnicity the sole criterion to put the structure of the 'state' in place. This is related to how the EPRDF understands self-determination and how to put it into practice. The essence of self-determination, both in Marxist literature and in liberal democracy interpretations, is not to divide political power among ethnic groups and say 'Here is political power, do whatever you want with it.' In the Ethiopian situation, more than anywhere else, the essence of self-determination has two component parts that constitute two parts of the same coin, namely an end to national oppression and the development rationale. In fact, national oppression comes to an end with the demise of the imperial regime; and by the time the EPRDF came to power the old imperial ruling class and its political legacy, national oppression, were all history.

From a practical point of view the rationale for putting the structure of the 'state' should have been eradication of poverty and under-development. Social development should have been the principal criterion for structuring the 'state'. It goes without saying that because national oppression had already come to an end, ensuring equality of all ethnic groups should have been strengthened. Because the political and economic basis for pursuing a policy of national oppression had been abolished, the political basis for ensuring ethnic equality was supposed to be freedom and democracy at the country level. The introduction and deepening of democracy and freedom should have served as the guarantee for ethnic equality. Had that been the rationale, the various regions could have had an evenly divided human resource to administer their respective regions. However, because the EPRDF understands self-determination differently, it opted for a different path in which the local petty-bourgeoisie assumes political power in the various regions, becomes the TPLF's appendage, and establishes its own fiefdom. This in turn constitutes the erstwhile strategy of the TPLF to organize a new ruling class in the name of 'revolutionary democracy' and imposed an absolutist rule of the power-monger petty-bourgeois elite of the various ethnic groups. Ultimately, the 'national question and right of self-determination up to and including secession' political enterprise far from resolving the problems surrounding the national question has actually installed a new ruling elite at the local level to perpetrate political subjugation which is by far the worst the country has ever witnessed. This is what the EPRDF calls decentralization of power and solution to the national question. In fact, the political organisation the EPRDF introduced is very much like that of the imperial regime sans national oppression, where the emperor used to put his own self-appointed appendages from among the local population in decision making.

The major mistake of the TPLF/EPRDF was making ethnicity the sole criterion for the creation of the federation and the state system as a whole. However, the TPLF was not genuine in this because its main concern was political control, but not the right of ethnic regions other than Tigray. For this purpose, it created its own puppet ethnic 'groups/movements' and put them into power in the various regions. Secondly, it assigned its top cadres to control these regions and make

decisions on their behalf. What made the TPLF's policies of ethnicization of politics worse is the criteria it used to placement of officials. Placement/appointment to ministerial or vice ministerial positions was according to one's ethnicity. For instance the minister of communications had to be a Somali, minister of foreign affairs a Tigrean, the president of the republic Oromo and so on. Diplomatic posts were also assigned according to ethnicity. The Ethiopian ambassador to London had to be an Oromo, to Washington a Tigrean and so on. This policy had continued until the 2001 split within the TPLF that had depleted the organization and its affiliate organizations with most of their senior cadres.

Adoption of the ethnic criteria for almost everything went awry when the Oromiya regional government exposed the utterly nonsensical nature of this policy in the early 1990s. The Oromiya regional government's investment bureau followed an investment policy that wouldn't grant license to non-Oromos. That had severely affected the economy of the region as many potential investors were denied the license to invest in the region. This is happening in a country where lack of investment was one major cause of unemployment and indeed to poverty as well (Negasso, interview, 2005).

The EPRDF's policy of ethnicization of politics has been one major contributor to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of its institutions of governance and the prevalence of corruption in them. It has also greatly contributed to their stagnation. As was explained above in the case of the municipal institutions in the Oromiya region, lack of capacity and lack of competent leadership lie at the centre of their inefficiency, ineffectiveness and corruption. This was made possible mainly because the regional administrations had to be administered by ethnically locals and politically loyal to the ruling party. Under earlier regimes, qualification was the sole criterion for placement that experts of various ethnic backgrounds served their country anywhere else. The creation of ethnic-based regional administrations supposed to be run by ethnic locals made ethnicity and political loyalty the sole criteria rather than qualification and expertise. Those ethnic regions, which happened not to have qualified people had to fill the administration posts with unqualified personnel. It is not only ethnic background which served as the sole criterion but also political loyalty as I discussed above. That prevented many ethnically local experts and qualified people from serving 'their' regions simply because they were not politically loyal to the ruling party. The staffing of regional administrations with unqualified personnel resulted in inefficiency, ineffectiveness and massive corruption. This is the major consequence of ethnicization of politics under the EPRDF.

Ethnicization of politics also brought to power unqualified individuals through the sole criterion of being locally ethnic and politically loyal. With that it was easy with many opportunist elements to seize the opportunity and play the party card to certify their political 'loyalty' to the EPRDF and get appointed. For instance, a certain individual, who was made member of the central committee of the Oromo

People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and later member of the ruling EPRDF Council was a waiter in Jimma. Ismail Ali Sero, the current head of the Afar regional government, did not complete grade five, but was made head of this region because he was a TPLF fighter. There are numerous cases in which people were given leadership positions without proper qualifications.

In addition however, the TPLF's strategy of ruling is advancing the slogan of the right to self-determination up to and including secession and the fake ethnic-based federation at the level of rhetoric but, in fact, practicing a neo-colonial type of rule when it comes to ruling the various ethnic regions. In the first place, surrogate 'organizations' under the name of 'nationality organizations' with the political brand of 'peoples democratic organizations' were set up and made members of the EPRDF as a front. In regions labelled but in fact denigrated as *emerging regions* such as Afar, Beni Shangul Gumuz, other surrogate groups were also established but were not made members of the EPRDF until they *developed*. This sounds very colonial. These organizations were all created by the TPLF when it came to power, most replacing organizations that had existed before as genuinely independent political organizations. At the same time, all these surrogate organizations and the 'regional governments' they dominated were led by key TPLF cadres appointed by the centre to manipulate them (for more information see Merera, *ibid.* 123). This is a typical colonial or neo-colonial practice worse than what Stalin did to the various republics in the USSR. Stalin opted to control them from the centre. The motto considered as 'the loftiest' and to constitute the kernel of TPLF's ideology, namely the right of nations to self-determination to end national oppression, was not put into practice by the high priests of parochial ethnicity. Manipulation of the various ethnic groups replaced the imperial policy of national oppression and the Derg's genocidal policy but miserably failed to solve the nationality problem, precisely the problem for which the 'doctrine' was constructed in the first place. However, as the real design of the 'doctrine' was indeed control of political power, the controlling power of the TPLF is boosted through this mechanism. As Merera aptly put it, 'In the five-tier government structure, that is, federal, regional, zonal, *woreda* and *kebele* levels, the TPLF practically controls the central government by occupying the key posts of the prime minister and the Foreign Ministry as well as the key posts in the army, the police and security structure. In other words, the TPLF, which controls the PDOs [the surrogate groups in the regions, MT] through the EPRDF, in turn controls the regional and other tiers of local government through the PDOs. It is necessary to note that the regional governments are staffed and operated by the PDOs and other EPRDF affiliates who are either appointed or assumed office through mock elections. ... their activities are supervised and their decisions are cleared through the TPLF-assigned senior cadres, some of whom are at the Central Committee level (*ibid.*, 147). In the execution of this policy of control, a policy of excluding Pan-Ethiopian or multi-national political organizations from the political process occupies an important place (see Merera, *ibid.*, 146).

By way of conclusion, let's ask what Rosa Luxembourge asked the leaders of the Bolsheviks in 1918. She wondered why the Leninists were so adamant to grant the freedom to secede while they stubbornly suppressed other basic freedoms such as of expression, the press and so on. As if we are reading a critique of the EPRDF's policy on the national question now in the second millennium, Rosa Luxembourge pondered this critique in 1918 against the Bolshevik party

One is immediately struck with the obstinacy and rigid consistency with which Lenin and his comrades stuck to this slogan [i.e. the right to self-determination of nations including the right to secession, MT], a slogan which is in sharp contradiction to their otherwise outspoken centralism in politics as well as to the attitude they have assumed towards other democratic principles. While they showed quite a cool contempt for the Constituent Assembly, universal suffrage, freedom of the press and assemblage, in short for the whole apparatus of the basic democratic liberties of the people which, taken all together, constituted the 'right to self-determination' inside Russia, they treated the right of self-determination of peoples as a jewel of democratic policy for the sake of which all practical considerations of real criticism had to be stilled (Luxembourge, 1972:48).

Luxembourge also mentions the fact that the Bolshevik party considered the slogan for the right to self-determination of nationalities to be 'The true palladium of all freedom and democracy, the unadulterated quintessence of the will of the peoples and as the court of last resort in questions of the political fate of nations' (ibid., 48). As we mentioned earlier the EPRDF also considers this slogan to be the quintessence of the political fate of Ethiopia and that it constitutes the cornerstone of its 'revolutionary democracy'. But, why this inconsistency on the issue of freedom and democracy, that is, rejection of freedom and democracy in the area of having true representation, freedom of expression, speech and participation on the one hand and consistently upholding the slogan on the right of nations to self-determination? The answer to this riddle lies in what Merera calls 'a new type of control' (Merera, 200 :146.) What does this mean?

Though the formula on self-determination is pushed to the extreme and advanced as pivotal to democracy, as enshrined in Article 39 of the constitution, the practice is different and probably the opposite. The essence of this policy is to appear as radically democratic by introducing what at face value appears to be the most daring experience in Africa. In fact however, the policy has never granted the right to self-determination as we discussed earlier because of the introduction of two ways of control. The first is through putting the surrogate 'parties' into power as member organizations of the EPRDF for the purpose of much stricter and centralized control. The second is by introducing a neo-colonial type of control by directly appointing a TPLF viceroy in the regions categorized as 'backward' as the decision-maker. In both cases the principle of self-determination is rejected.

In addition, as we have seen above, though the constitution grants the right to secede (Article 39), the same constitution also has another provision that

prevents the exercise of this right. According to the constitution, the issue of secession, to come into effect must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the regional legislative council and must be ratified by a majority of the population of the region in a referendum organized by the federal government. The federal government transfers power to the regional council and when the division of assets is effected in a manner prescribed by law (Article 39 of the constitution). This in effect means that there is no way that any ethnic groups can really secede. Article 39 grants the right to secede in section one but makes it impossible in section 4. Then, why make all the fuss about the right to secession?

In the first place, it promotes the regime's image as radically democratic by African standards. But, the real reason is that this policy serves as a new form of control. The extreme rhetoric about self-determination, the denunciation of Amhara rule and so on lures to its fold the elites of ethnic groups that were oppressed by the policy of national oppression advanced by the imperial regime and continued by the Derg though in a different way. The EPRDF put a carefully selected group of elite from the various regions to power as its surrogate to ensure its control and act as if real self-determination is being practiced. As a result of this, the new social and political elite has emerged in the regions that benefited from its power.

That is why the new policy failed to resolve the nationality problem in the country. On the contrary, more and new problems have emerged in the various parts of the country. One of these problems is the dichotomy between indigeniety and settler populations. In many parts of the country there are areas where various communities who inhabit a given territory as indigenous and settlers who have come much later coexist. There had been no problem of coexistence until the imposition of the EPRDF's policy of ethnicization of politics that problems and even clashes started to occur. This is mainly because the idea of ethnicizing territory ignited the quest for territorial identity. Territorial demarcations took place according to ethnicity and that ignited so many problems. The most well known conflict is the one between the Somali and Oromo communities in the adjacent area of Borana (Oromiya) and Somali region. Because a given area was going to be demarcated as Somali the Boranas were furious, saying that that had been their ancestral land for centuries and that the Somalis had just come to the area. The Somalis in turn argue that even the TPLF has turned a large territory in Amhara region to Tigray and why not us? Similar problems have occurred in many areas particularly in adjacent areas where pastoral and farming communities inhabit.

In this chapter, we have discussed the state of the institutions of governance, their relationship with the national question and how the strategy of a new way of political control under the guise of right to self-determination undermined them in the final analysis. Most of all however, EPRDF's revolutionary democracy and its understanding of self-determination, has resulted in a creation of a new ruling

class that oppresses both genuine collective rights such as self-determination and individual rights for freedom and democracy. The suppression of freedom and democracy are to impact on the low level of social organization within society thereby stifling the emergence of a civil society. In Part Three, we will have a closer look at how the EPRDF traversed on development issues and how its policies stifled the emerging civic sector thereby further aggravating the state of poverty and under-development.

¹ Mulugeta Bezabih states that NUEUS' resolution was prompted by a resolution by the Prague-based International Union of Students which was supportive of the Eritrean struggle, Ethiopian Students' Movement Oral History Workshop, Adama, September 5-9, 2005)

² Walleligns refers here to the Somali service on Radio Ethiopia and FM radio services from the American military communications base in Asmara.

³ The author was the vice president of the student union at Alemaya agricultural college. The position on the national question was earlier explained by USUA leaders notably Tilahun Gizaw and Abay Abraha to the delegation of of the Alamaya Students' Union composed of its president and vice president, Tacob Fisseha and Melakou Tegegn respectively.

⁴ Those who attended the Founding Congress of the EPRP were: Birhane Meskel Redda, Iyasu Alemayehu, Abdissa Ayana, Tesfaye Debessay [Dr.], Melakou Tegegn, Kiflu Tadesse, Mekonnen Jote [Dr.], Kiflu Teferra and Mohammed Mahfuz.)

⁵ In 1970-71, leaders of the student movement in Addis Ababa designed a strategy, which was not public at the time. The strategy was to infiltrate the Eritrean fronts and revolutionize them from within and once this is successful to play down the idea of secession and work towards unification (statements by Melakou Tegegn and

Netsanet Mengistu, Ethiopian Student Movement Oral History Workshop, Adama, Sep. 5-9, 2005).

⁶ In 1970, the dominant group in the Eritrean movement was the ELF, other groups that splintered from the mainstream ELF including Issaya's group later to become the EPLF had already surfaced but they were too weak at the time.)

⁷ Abroad, the EPRP conducted a vast campaign against what it called narrow nationalism as advanced by the TPLF in the main. See the three pamphlets on the theme by Kiros Alemayehu actually authored by Iyassu Alemayehu and distributed by ESUNA in 1976).

⁸ In their agitation in Tigray at the time, the TPLF advanced these ideas and were invariably confronted with questions by peasants who used to ask them questions such as, 'If Tigray secedes to become an independent state, who is going to constitute Ethiopia?' [interview with an ex-EPRP fighter].

⁹ When Stalin first coined the term 'Marxism-Leninism' after the death of Lenin, it was not really as a tribute to Lenin but to begin the canonization of Marxism through an ideological garb, which is an amalgam of an interpretation of Marxism first made by the Russian social-democracy at the turn of the century and the post-revolution practices/policies of the Bolsheviki (for further analysis, see Melakou, 1991.) This came against the background of extremely high-level contention between European Marxists on a number of fundamental issues of democracy, governance, nationalism and right to self-determination and on socialism itself. The debate between prominent Marxist figures continued even after the Bolshevik revolution (see Rosa Luxemburg's *Leninism or Marxism?*). The most important and significant of these debates was the one between Rosa Luxemburg and the Bolshevik leaders particularly on issues of freedom and democracy under socialism. The debate was not consummated as to establish who had proceeded correctly from the ideas of Marx when Rosa Luxemburg was murdered by the German bourgeoisie and Lenin himself died a few years later.

The most contentious issue that emerged from the policies of the Bolsheviki was the issue of freedom and democracy. Lenin and later Stalin proceeded from the formula that bedeviled the history of socialist and revolutionary movements for too long, namely *dictatorship of the proletariat* as was defined and understood by the father of Russian 'Marxism', Georgi Plekhanov. Georgi Plekhanov got *dictatorship of the proletariat* completely wrong and considered this formula as the most important principle of Marxism that determines state-society relationship. For Marx however, *dictatorship of the proletariat* was just a formula designating the class content of a workers state and did not constitute a principle at all. But, his followers first in Western Europe (notably Baboeuf in France and Bounarotti in Italy) and Russia (Plekhanov in the main) got it completely wrong and took it as the most important principle of Marx on state-society relationship. Only to make matters worse, they all attached it with the idea of repression targeting the *class enemy*. Following this fundamental misconception and despite Engels' warning, the Russian Social-Democratic Party with Plekhanov as its guru, put the formula *dictatorship of the*

proletariat in its party political programme at the turn of the century. At the time, Lenin and all other Bolshevik leaders such as Trotsky and Stalin were students of Plakhanov and took this interpretation of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* for granted. The split between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks that came in 1903 was basically a split on party rules that did not affect the general acceptance that *dictatorship of the proletariat* had already acquired.

In actual fact, the transformation of Marxism began with the misinterpretation of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917 what they exercised was *dictatorship of the proletariat* in its repressive aspect. Freedom and democracy was suspended even for the working class. In 1918, riding roughshod over the popularity they had acquired as of July 1917, the Bolsheviks held parliamentary elections for a Constituent Assembly completely confident that they would win. However, it turned out that the Social-Revolutionaries won the majority of seats and the Bolsheviks lost. With that, the Bolsheviks dissolved the Constituent Assembly. Rosa Luxemburg fiercely criticized the Bolsheviks for their policy of suspending freedom when she wrote, 'Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of the one party –however numerous they may be- is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of 'justice' but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when 'freedom' becomes a special privilege' (Luxembourg, 1972:69).

Freedom and democracy faced further setbacks as inner party struggles beset the Bolshevik party ever since it came to power. The style of the Bolshevik party in resolving internal differences was not that democratic even most of its positions were adopted by majority vote. The level of intellectual ability between the members of the leadership was not uniform that, more often than not, the differences that occurred were between presumed theoretical giants such as Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. After Lenin's death, Stalin assumed the leadership and wiped out one by one most of the Bolshevik leadership beginning with the presumed theoretical giants. By the mid-30s they were all assassinated. That was taken as inner-party struggle and the 'correct way' of resolving differences. The canonization of Marxism by Stalin from philosophical categories such as the theory of knowledge to the conduct of a social revolution was completed afterwards once the theoretical giants were removed. Unfortunately, most communist parties elsewhere which were in the Comintern (the International Communist Federation or the 3rd International) dominated by Stalin's Bolshevik party also took this canonization as the correct 'Marxist' interpretation baptized as 'Marxism-Leninism'. Methodologically, the purges of party leaders that fell out with this or that party leaders, also constituted the canonization of Marxism. One has only to look into the history of party splits within the Communist Party of China from the expulsion of its first general secretary of the party to the 'Cultural Revolution', the Party of Labour of Albania and others in Eastern Europe.

Part Three The Poverty-Democracy Nexus: EPRDF in Face of Ethiopia's Development Challenges

In part three, which consists of two main chapters, we will examine the policies of the EPRDF on issues that we categorized as the domains of sustainable development in the theoretical frame (see Chapter) and collate it with the lack of freedom/democracy to explain the prevalence of poverty in Ethiopia. In the concrete conditions of Ethiopia, among the issues that constitute the domains of sustainable development, those that deserve immediate and long-term solutions are gender, environment, population and rural development not to speak of the general question of political democracy. Much has been written about the state of poverty in Ethiopia that we do not intend to dwell extensively on it. Our purpose here is to examine the policies of the EPRDF and how it exacerbated poverty and under-development in the country. In this last part of the study, we will have two chapters mainly dealing with the gender dimensions of poverty as Chapter Seven and with three main development challenges namely environment, population and rural development as Chapter Eight.

Introduction: In Lieu of a Poverty Analysis

“The economic record of seventeen years of military rule was to prove an unmitigated disaster. By almost every major index of economic growth, the country retreated rather than advancing forward. Wrong-headed policies, war, environmental degradation, a rapidly growing population, adverse external development, and a number of other factors combined to drive the economy to the edge of the precipice. Towards the end of its rule the government began to read the handwriting on the wall.” Eshetu Chole (2004 :193)

Under-development is not absence of incremental change en toto in the economic sense, as Andre Gunder Frank in the early seventies remarked (The Development of Under-development, 1972), but the incompatibility of that incremental change with the demographic, political and social changes required to provide a better life for the population at large. In that relative sense, the state of poverty and under-development that was rampant in Ethiopia under the military rule has not improved a bit under the EPRDF. In fact, it seems, still in the relative sense, that poverty and under-development have exacerbated that Ethiopia is now worse of than it was under the military (see UN Human Development Reports since 1987, Well-Being and Poverty in Ethiopia, World Bank, 2005). From Eshetu Chole's statement above, one has only to substitute “the EPRDF” for “the military” to describe the current state of poverty, under-development and political crisis in the country. Had Eshetu been still alive, it would appear that he in fact was talking about the situation now in 2005. But,

what is the riddle behind the prevalence of poverty in Ethiopia? What is it that arrested development in this country? This will be the subject of our analysis in this section, but let's take a quick glance at the state of poverty to start with.

Why poverty analysis? Poverty analysis is essential in a development discourse. First, it helps to identify the causes and consequences of poverty. Though there could be less debate on the consequences of a poverty situation in a given setting, identifying the causes have however divided social scientists into different schools of thought. In broad outlines however we can divide the various schools into two major camps as far as poverty analysis goes. The first is the conventional school, mainly of economics that begins with economic determinants and ends up in economic conclusions. This approach dubbed as economic-reductionist, has been a subject of criticism for the last three decades. The other major school is what I might call the developmental that pinpoints at various determinants to have caused poverty, namely political, social and economic determinants. Our analysis below follows the developmental school.

The third major use of a poverty analysis is that it also helps to develop interventions in terms of development programmes to mitigate poverty and enable the poor participate in poverty alleviation exercises. The nature and therefore impact of these interventions depend on how one identifies the causes of poverty.

For many who follow developments in Ethiopia the use of the phrase "Ethiopia is one the most impoverished countries in the world" has now become the catchphrase that are common even in government statements. Ethiopia's standing at the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) has been consistent ever since the Human Development Report began in the early 80s. In 1983 the Human Development Report put Norway as the best place to live in and Ethiopia as the worst. By 1987, Ethiopia ranked 111 out of 130, in 1995 it stood at 169 out of 174 and in 2005 it stood at 170 out of 177 (see table 2 for Ethiopia's ranking in the HDI from 1987 – 2005). Indeed, a country's ranking at the HDI can be taken as one indicator for its poverty and under-development. The measurements and criteria for under-development used in the HDI is a clear break from the erstwhile economic-reductionist view of development that had been dominant for too long. The reductionist school used economic criteria only as indicators of development; indicators such as GNP/GDP were the dominant ones. The HDI changed all that as the meaning of development is no longer economic growth only but also political and social where indicators such as the state of human rights, women's rights, environmental protection and other indicators featuring prominence.

Table 1

Year	Ethiopia's ranking
1987	111 out of 130 countries
1988	141/160
1989	138/160
1990	151/173
1991	161/173
1992	165/173
1993	168/174
1994	170/175
1995	169/174
1996	
1997	
1998	170/175
1999	
2000	
2001	158/162
2002	168/173
2003	169/175
2005	170/177

Source: Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy, 1999-2000, Economic Association of Ethiopia, and UN Development Reports, 1996-2005

Though it is not a major shift from the criteria used in the UN HDI well being and quality of life are now real indicators of human development. Well-being and quality of life both deal with real issues involving the deprivation of communities and individuals in a comprehensive way. People become poor when their capabilities to overcome the problems that they face in order to live a decent life are deprived. Though what is visible in poverty is the material deprivation in terms of basic human needs such as food and shelter, actually material deprivation is a symptom of the principal deprivation at the level of social and political capabilities. Ethiopia's poverty can only be described in this way as what at its center stage stands two huge obstacles that are the main factors for the deprivation of the capabilities of communities and individuals to do what they can to overcome their problems. These obstacles are namely the prevailing political and social structures.

These political and social structures determine Ethiopia's ranking at the HDI as one of the lowest in the world. One cannot afford not to compare how Ethiopia fared in this respect with the performance of other African countries. This comparison also reinforces our assumption that the political accounts more in determining the country's performance. Ethiopia is said to have been always

independent with a rich culture and history, etc... but most African countries that only became independent in the 1960s performed much better and surpassed Ethiopia in human development indices. A few African countries are now in the medium level of human development in the HDI while Ethiopia still staggers as one of the last five or six. Uganda and a few other countries in Sub-Sahara Africa for instance are now in the medium level of human development category (HD Report 2005.)

Well-being and quality of life basically refer to the capability of people to live as human beings. Apart from food and shelter humans need security in peace to live without fear and threat, and political rights to regain all their capabilities of which they are artificially deprived. From this perspective, we can say that the people of Ethiopia live in the most pathetic state. On top of the prevailing deprivation of food, shelter and other basic needs the people of the Ethiopia live under an interrupted state of fear and intimidation. The demand for human and democratic rights has always been met with ferocity. Their lives are totally controlled by a body completely alien to them, called the state. The obsession of the state is to control, but it is inept when it comes to generating development. Consequently, the people are neither let free to control the factors that determine their lives and generate development in their own way nor are the state capable of generating development. This has led to a prevalence of massive poverty as indicated in the following table.

Table 2 Regional Indicators of Human Development

REGION	Life expectancy at birth 1994	Adult literacy rate 1994	Combined gross enrolment ratio 1994	Real* GDP per capita (PPP\$) 1994	Life expectancy index	Education index GDP index	Human Development index 1994	GDP index
Year								
Tigray	49.6	20.47	32.74	430	0.410	0.246	0.237	0.055
Rural	49.5	13.68	21.18					
Urban	49.9	57.20	94.04					
Afar (a)	50.3	7.28	6.16	430	0.422	0.070	0.182	0.055
Rural	n.a.	3.13	2.04					
Urban	n.a.	53.81	71.47					
Amhara	50.8	17.79	13.52	430	0.430	0.164	0.216	0.055
Rural	50.7	12.95	6.49					
Urban	53.6	61.79	80.0					
Oromiya	50.4	22.40	17.93	430	0.423	0.209	0.229	0.055
Rural	50.0	16.41	10.74					
Urban	55.3	68.05	77.5					
Somali (b)	54.8	7.96	5.05	430	0.497	0.071	0.207	0.055
Rural	n.a.	4.61	1.49					
Urban	n.a.	27.97	5.05					
Benishangul Gumuz	46.8	17.74	17.92	430	0.363	0.178	0.199	0.555
Rural	46.5	13.85	13.54					
Urban	51.6	60.67	75.79					
SNNPR	48.6	24.44	22.89	430	0.393	0.239	0.229	0.055
Rural	48.3	21.09	18.9					
Urban	54.0	67.31	76.21					
Gambella	54.2	29.33	36.77	430	0.487	0.318	0.286	0.055
Rural	54.7	21.24	26.57					
Urban	51.4	67.95	95.61					
Harrari	51.4	65.76	65.76	430	0.440	0.583	0.359	0.055
Rural	48.6	10.47	10.47					
Urban	57.2	110.39	110.39					
Addis Ababa	58.4	82.52	90.06	430	0.557	0.850	0.487	0.055
Rural	51.7	36.91	30.78					
Urban	58.6	90.85	90.85					

Dire	51.1	51.53	53.49	430	0.435	0.522	0.337	0.055
Dawa	53.3	4.99	2.0					
Rural	49.9	70.26	82.76					
Urban								
Ethiopia	50.7	23.35	20.5	430	0.428	0.224	0.236	0.055

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report 1998, Ethiopia UNDP, Addis Ababa. Appendix 2:71

* National figure is taken for all regions due to lack of regional data

(a) Figures for Afar Region are backward projected from July 1996 to October 1994

(b) Figures for Somali Region are backward projected from September 1997 to October 1994

One means of regaining deprived capabilities and therefore of empowerment is education. For individuals and communities there is a certain level of knowledgeability that is required of them in order to live a life of conscious involvement (production, reproduction, etc...) and most of all in order to make informed choices both in their day to day lives as well as in making political choices that are of strategic and long-term nature but that affect them as part of the collective as a whole. Education of both formal and civic nature is an essential tool of empowerment for individuals and communities at large. Today's world is characterized by the information age indicating the role that information and information-based knowledge is playing in changing the lives of peoples for the better throughout the world. Education is knowledge and knowledge is power. It is through education that social capital can be built as a crucial base for an emerging civil society and social development as a whole. The fact that poverty in Ethiopia prevails indicates the low level of social capital whose basis is knowledgeability that in turn can only be acquired through formal or civic education.

As the famous dictum by Amartya Sen has it, famine occurs where unfreedom and lack of free press prevails. We have said that civic education is crucial in the fight against poverty and under-development. However, civic education can take many forms though raising awareness on development issues is the key. Such civic education normally is given by development NGOs and other civic organizations. But, for civic organizations to undertake such a task there must be an enabling environment, a state of freedom to teach. One major and effective tool in this case is the private media and private broadcasting in particular. In Ethiopia where the buying power of the poor is too low to allow them to buy books or newspapers/journals, radio can play a crucial role in transmitting development/civic education. But, for that to happen liberalizing the airwaves is the first step forward. The EPRDF has adamantly refused to liberalize the airwaves and stubbornly prevented private broadcasting. On the other hand, the state broadcasting institutions supposed to be public service broadcasting are still crucial ideological state apparatuses of the EPRDF. The more the EPRDF is challenged by opposition politicians the more it depends on its broadcasting institutions for a campaign of defamation just like the way the Derg used its broadcasting institutions. There is no sign of liberalizing the airwaves in a country that has suffered so much with lack of alternative information and information-

based knowledge. (For a rough estimate of Ethiopia's situation on access to information, see Incidence of radio and TV ownership among rural households in selected Sub-Sahara, African countries, 1995-2001, annex xiii).

The state of education in Ethiopia is one of the poorest in the world. Recently, the government claims to have attained successes in the area of primary education, which is recognized by the UNDP (Human Development Report, 2005). But, the question is the quality of education. At the time of the 80s, UNESCO awarded the Derg for attaining a high level of literacy through its literacy campaign. Government figures show a high level of attendance but not the numbers who completed the literacy programme. In the same vein, what should be asked now is the quality of education. At the end of the day one has to ask whether or not the knowledge acquired has empowered the beneficiary and that all depends on the quality of education. As the Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy (1999-2000) has it, "In discussing education, it is important to look into its effect on production and its capacity of empowering the beneficiaries through acquisition of knowledge, sharpening their cognitive skills and the extent to which their motivation for achievement is nurtured. In turn this requires an analysis of the quality and relevance of education students are made to absorb in class relative to the pressing needs of the country" (EEA, 2000:116). This is as far as formal education goes. However, as far as civic education is concerned, one can say that there is no civic education in Ethiopia by the government except the ones provided by the civic sector with the meager resources they have. What the government calls "civic education" is the cadre type of political education course it recently introduced in schools. (For further information on the government's "civic education" in association with gender, see *Reflections No. 10*, Panos, 2004). On both counts, the critique against the availability and quality of education is well founded.ⁱ

The health profile is equally bad. Health care and population growth simply never matched and as a result public spending on health did not increase. Ethiopian society is ridden with major killing diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and so on. People contract diseases that are easily controllable but due to lack of civic education on health and sufficient investment in the health care system they suffer and many subsequently die. "Of 1.9 million children born each year, 230,000 (12 per cent) die before reaching their first birthday; another 160,000 (8 per cent) die before their fifth birthday. Major causes of death in infancy and early childhood are acute respiratory infection, diarrhea, nutritional deficiencies and measles. These account for 80 per cent of deaths of children under age 5" (ibid., 107). Tables 3 and 4 also indicate the magnitude of the problem of public health in Ethiopia.

Table 3 Major Indicators of Health Status in Ethiopia and Sub-Saharan Africa

Indicators	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia
Infant mortality rate	97/1000	111/1000
Child mortality rate	114/1000	161/1000
Maternal mortality rate	7/1000	10/1000
Life expectancy	50	48
Access to safe water	51%	25%

Source: UNDP, 1997 Human Development Report and MEDaC, WMU, 1997, Human Development Report for Ethiopia

As quoted in Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy 1999-2000:131.

Table 4 Distribution of Health Facilities by Region

No	Region	Hospitals	Beds	Health centers	Health stations
1	Tigray	12	860	14	141
2	Afar	2	60	4	34
3	Amhara	11	1289	45	444
4	Oromiya	25	2293	63	845
5	Somali	3	255	7	66
6	Beni Shangul	2	254	4	69
7	SENNP	9	816	34	424
8	Gambella	1	95	3	34
9	Harari	5	735	-	5
10	Dire Dawa	3	247	1	18
11	Addis Ababa	16	3016	16	390
	Total	89	9920	191	2470

Source: Policy and Human Resource Development Project, Ethiopia Social Sector Study. Access to and supply of Health Facilities and Services, Addis Ababa, September 1996

As quoted Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy, 2000:133

What has emerged as a major public health scare is the widespread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 1988 a professor from the Institute of Social Studies who visited Ethiopia at the time gave a speech in which she highlighted the potential for HIV/AIDS to be a major killer. The main reason she gave was the war in Eritrea where more than half a million troops were deployed and the various conflicts in the country where a number of towns had already turned to garrison towns. Although the rate of HIV/AIDS reported was probably the lowest in Africa (see Table 6 below), the major concern of the professor was that no education on AIDS was given by the Derg. The professor forgot to add one important reason for the potential for the widespread of AIDS, the sexual behaviour of Ethiopian men and soldiers in particular. Within a span of less than 17 years, the AIDS

pandemic in Ethiopia made the country 4th in the list of major African countries afflicted by the disease.

Table 5 : Cases of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa Reported to WHO (1987)

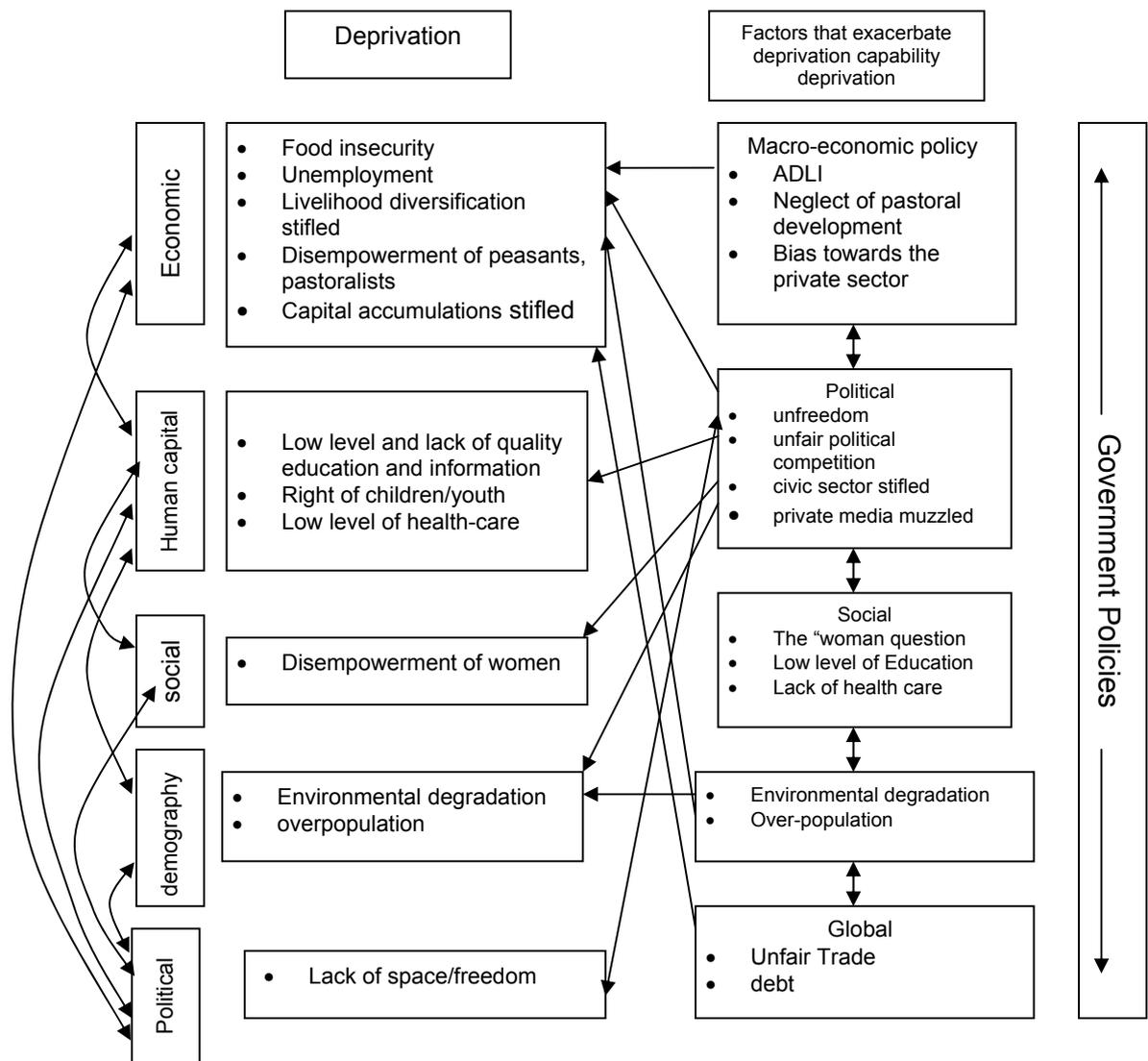
Country	Number	Date Reported	Population 1986 (In millions)
Angola	6	26.09.86	9.0
Benin	3	18.05.87	4.2
Botswana	13	10.10.87	1.1
Burkina Faso	-	13.11.86	7.1
Burundi	569	15.10.87	4.9
Cameroon	25	05.03.87	10.2
Cape Verde	4	30.04.87	0.3
Central Afr. Republic	254	31.10.86	2.6
Chad	1	13.11.86	5.1
Congo	250	13.11.86	1.8
Cote d' Ivoire	250	20.11.87	10.2
Djibouti	-	01.10.87	0.4
Ethiopia	5	30.06.87	44.7
Gabon	13	06.07.87	1.2
Gambia	14	16.03.87	0.7
Ghana	145	15.05.87	14.0
Guinea	4	12.11.87	6.2
Guinea Bissau	16	20.11.87	0.9
Kenya	964	10.11.87	21.5
Lesotho	1	13.11.86	1.6
Liberia	2	12.06.87	2.3
Madagascar	-	25.04.87	10.3
Malawi	13	13.11.86	7.2
Mali	-	08.09.87	8.3
Mauritania	-	13.11.86	1.9
Mauritius	1	15.09.87	1.1
Mozambique	1	30.09.87	14.3
Nigeria	5	22.05.87	98.5
Rwanda	705	30.11.86	6.3
Senegal	27	13.10.87	6.6
Seychelles	-	13.11.86	0.1
South Africa	-	05.10.87	33.2
Sudan	12	23.08.87	22.2
Swaziland	7	01.07.87	0.8
Tanzania	1,608	17.10.87	23.3
Togo	-	13.11.86	3.1
Uganda	2,369	31.10.87	16.0
Zaire	335	30.06.87	30.9
Zambia	395	30.06.87	6.9

Zimbabwe	380	28.08.87	9.1
Totals	8,481		450.1

Source: WHO Weekly Epidemiological Record No. 49, 4 December 1987

Having a glance at the state of poverty that prevails in Ethiopia, we now pass on to postulate a framework of poverty analysis. If poverty is capability deprivation, it is indeed created by humans and is a social construct. A phenomenon cannot be deprived unless there is someone who actually does the act of depriving. The incredible level of poverty in Ethiopia as a socio- political construct has its own causes and there are forces that deprived the community of its capabilities. Ethiopia's poverty is not something whose blame can be put on the doorstep of some supernatural force or a terrestrial body. The causes for Ethiopia's poverty are visible and at large. In the following sketch, we will attempt to postulate a framework for Ethiopia's poverty analysis.

Ethiopia **Figure 4: A Framework for Poverty Analysis in**



As indicated in the above sketch, we have two columns: the left column indicates how the state deprivation occurs at four broad categories, namely economic, human capital, social and demographic. In the economic category are mentioned occurrences of deprivation such as food insecurity, unemployment, stagnant livelihood (no diversification), disempowerment of the rural poor (peasants and pastoralists in the main). Under human capital we have deprivations that inhibited the development of human capital such as education (quality and civic education specifically), information and information-based knowledge and wide spread killer diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, child and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and so on. Lack of policy on child upbringing and nurturing the youth as a responsible generation also fall in this category. Under social category we have disempowerment of women as a fundamental deprivation of human rights that

affects not only women but also everyone. The last category is demographic where environmental degradation and population are singled out two outstanding demographic issues directly contributing to deprivations at various levels. It is important to note that these categories lined up on the left column are inter-related and interdependent. The deprivation occurring at one level directly creates or causes the creation of deprivation at other levels. The economic is interwoven with human capital, social and demographic and vice versa. While interconnected and inter-dependent to each other, the existence or state of these categories in turn is largely determined by the categories lined up in the right column dubbed as factors creating/exacerbating capability deprivations at the left column. The four categories on the right column are all categories of policy at national and global levels.

The first policy category deals with EPRDF's macro-economic policies such as Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI), neglect towards pastoral development and its biased policy towards the local private sector. This has direct consequence on deprivation at the economic level (first category left column). In other words the economic deprivation that Ethiopia's poor undergoes is directly caused by the macro-economic policy. In the first place, ADLI is all about "capital accumulation through crop cultivation" targeting the small peasant land-holder (we will return to a critique of this policy in chapter eight). It is not about rural development or rural transformation but about how a peasant can accumulate capital to contribute to industrialization, a strategy apparently copied from the Chinese experience. The macro-economic policy also marginalizes the private sector, which at this historical juncture could play a crucial role in poverty reduction through generation of employment and to a certain extent through import substitution (we have also seen in Chapter five how the marginalization of the private sector also affected the process of the emergence of a civil society).

The second policy category on the right column deals with the role of policy the political level and how it impacts on occurrences of deprivation at various levels/categories on the left column. In this category are mentioned crucial policy issues such as lack of democracy/freedom, political competition, harassment of civic groups and the private press. In fact, as is indicated in the figure, of all the categories on the right column, it is the political policy that has direct consequence on deprivations at all levels/categories on the left column. In its 2005 poverty and well-being report on Ethiopia, the World Bank also criticized the EPRDF's record on governance. However, a major criticism came with the 2004 UN Economic Commission for Africa's Report on the state of governance in Africa where the EPRDF scored among the lowest in the continent. "Ethiopia registers one of the lowest grades in a survey of the state of governance in Africa conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in about 30 countries throughout the continent... The survey was conducted by inquiring about the state of governance in each of the 28 countries under seven general categories. These are: political representation, institutional effectiveness, the executives' effectiveness, human rights and rule of law, independence of

media and civil society organizations, economic management and corruption control. ... In terms of institutional effectiveness, Ethiopia [read the EPRDF, MT] fared worse, scoring about 31% ... the executive branch of the government as well is reported to be ineffective with about 30% which is reflected in the inefficiency of the state structure, lack of transparency and accountability of the civil service ... 34% in terms of respect for human rights and the rule of law ... the same is also shown to be the case with respect to the extent to which the media and civil society organizations are allowed to independently function. Ethiopia's [read EPRDF's, MT] score is about 32%, is way behind the sample average of about 54%. Ethiopia's [read EPRDF's, MT] overall performance with respect to good governance is dismal according to the report ... 36% as opposed to the sample average of about 53%" (The Reporter, Oct. 31, 2004). It might be interesting to mention the gap between the reality of governance on the ground and EPRDF's rhetoric about democracy. Prime Minister Meless Zenawi, in his key noted address at the special meeting where the above mentioned UNECA report was launched said the following: "Without good governance and the full respect of the democratic rights of citizens and all sectors of society, it would be impossible to put in place conditions for durable peace and stability" (The Reporter, *ibid.*).

The third policy category dubbed as social mainly singles out national policies on EPRDF's "woman question", education and health policies that have direct consequences on deprivations particularly at the level of the categories of human capital and disempowerment of women. Lack of a proper policy on gender and education (quality and civic) as factors of deprivation reinforce each other strongly. Quality and civic education empowers the community as a whole at the level of knowledgeability, which is a crucial factor for the transformation of subjects to citizens as we have seen earlier and the empowerment of women in particular. An educated society hardly discriminates and marginalizes women and an educated woman can hardly bows for oppression and marginalization.

The fourth policy category deals with EPRDF's environment and population policies that have direct bearing on deprivation at the demographic and economic levels. Lack of a proper environment and population policies have hugely impacted particularly on rural poverty. This is also related to education policy as causation to deprivation. Lack of the public's awareness on the crucial importance of protecting the environment and on population control has impacted hugely on less productivity of the soil and availability of water due to soil erosion, which in turn is caused by massive deforestation.

The last policy category on the right column is about policies by globally dominant forces such as the Breton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF), WTO and G8 who have a big say in the performance of the economies of Ethiopia. The main issues involved here are unfair international trade rules, which favour the interests of the rich countries, the debt burden that compels Ethiopia to pay annually a big chunk of its GNP for debt servicing, and the

increased power of the corporate that influences the decisions of the rich countries, Breton Woods Institutions and WTO.

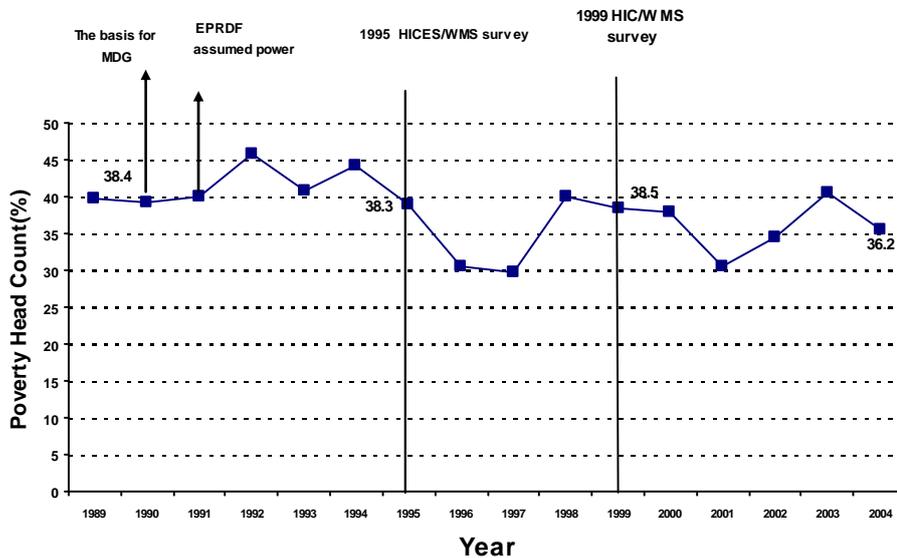
The relationships between the categories on both columns differ from category to category. However, of all the categories on the right as factors that exacerbate poverty, the political factor is so detrimental that affects all the categories of deprivation on the left column. In other words, governance, and mal-governance in this case, is the key contributor to deprivation at all levels of society, namely to economic deprivation and deprivations at the human capital, social and demographic categories.

As indicated in the figure, it must be emphasized that the categories on both sides have a vertical relationship among each other and are inter-dependent. For instance, deprivation at the economic level is connected to deprivation at the levels of human capital, social and demography. However, the degree of their inter-dependence differs from category to category. For instance, economic deprivation has a strong relationship and inter-dependence with deprivation at the demographic level than with human capital as the latter has a catalyst role to economic deprivation while the demographic factors have direct and immediate impact on economic deprivation.

The categories of factors aligned on the right columns also have vertical and inter-dependent relationship among each other though they are all derivatives of the political factor. The political determine the other policies while at the same time all the categories impact as factors on the categories of deprivation on the left column. Needless to say that the last category on the right column, namely the global factor, has direct relationship with the political though it still influences the other factors indirectly.

If we look at the whole issue of poverty from the perspective that we postulated in the theoretical frame, the question of social development and that of sustainable development in particular can also analyzed through this frame. The domains of sustainable development that we discussed earlier include the environment, gender, children/youth and population. Though these domains have also been mentioned in sketch 4, it is important to highlight them as crucial for sustainable development. The policies of the EPRDF on these crucial issues plus its policy on rural development is what we are going to analyze in this last part of the study as these are precisely the development challenges that Ethiopia faces. Before we close down this introduction however, it is important to emphasize that Ethiopia has not fared any better in terms of combating poverty and therefore under-development for the last fourteen years since the EPRDF came to power. In 2004 for instance, Ethiopia was at a lesser level in the poverty index than it was in 1989 as in the figure below indicates.

Figure 1 Evolution of poverty incidence between 1989-2004



Source: Well-Being and Poverty in Ethiopia, World Bank, 2005, p. iii

The above figure as well as the World Bank’s 2005 report on Well-being and Poverty in Ethiopia clearly shows that Ethiopia has not fared any better during the EPRDF period and that poverty has not been reduced at all. On the contrary, with other dynamics that affect poverty exacerbating such as population increase and environmental degradation, and above all, in view of the public’s expectations for a better life after the military dictatorship, we can conclude that poverty has actually increased and life has become unbearable to millions and millions of people. As we argued above, pretty much of this situation is actually a creation of the EPRDF’s own policies. The public and all those concerned about the development of the country have for too long been voicing their concerns and requesting the EPRDF to change its policies. The EPRDF gave deaf ears to these pleas. The year 2005 saw the wrath of the Ethiopian people against the EPRDF unraveled through the parliamentary elections in which the EPRDF is believed to have lost but retained power through massive rigging. It is in this sense that Eshetu Chole’s remarks are once again apt. Writing after the demise of the military regime he wrote, “The economic record of seventeen years of military rule was to prove an unmitigated disaster. By almost every major index of economic growth, the country retreated rather than advancing forward. Wrong-headed policies, war, environmental degradation, a rapidly growing population, adverse external developments, and a number of other factors combined to drive the economy to the edge of the precipice. Towards the end of its rule the government began to read the handwriting on the wall” (Eshetu, 2004:193).

This state of poverty in Ethiopia is indissolubly connected with the general state of unfreedom prevalent in a number of ways. Poverty as a totality of capability deprivation is also related, in the concrete case of Ethiopia, to the low level of knowledgeability of society about the conditions that govern its existence. High level of illiteracy, prevalence of tradition and traditional practices heavily impacting on depriving the capabilities of women and children in particular, insufficient level of modern education, and the low level in quality of the existing modern education system all add up to deprive society from being aware of the conditions that govern its existence. The government's attempt to meet the millennium development goals in the area of universal primary education, commendable though, seriously suffers from the lack of quality education, which also depends largely on qualified teachers. A study in 2002 indicates that more than 60% of high-school teachers in the country do not have the required qualification (Wondimu, mimeograph, Forum for Social Studies, 1999.) The low level of awareness has in turn impacted on the potential of individuals to perform in development activities. A serious handicap among the nascent civic sector, for instance, is the lack of capacity to bring in impact on the development work they are engaged on. Even with the acquisition of freedom, this problem can linger on for a while. However, freedom is pivotal in this context. With freedom, society can easily and quickly overcome its weaknesses.

Freedom disentangles the social inertia of the hitherto marginalized. Freedom opens up the road to free participation, free expression, and the development horizon in general. With freedom people can unravel their creativity as it is freedom that unleashes the ingenuity of humans. In Ethiopia, it is this particular aspect that has been stifled for too long by the authoritarian regimes. The EPRDF is no exception in this case as it strictly follows the principles of a Stalinist one-party rule. The EPRDF's rule still stifles people's initiatives.

On top of all these, the EPRDF is hostile to the independent participation of the civic sector in development. This has become much clearer after the 2005 elections. The main opposition party has been crushed and its leaders put on trial for treason, many private newspapers have been shut down and a clamp down against NGOs has started. The EPRDF has further derailed whatever is left of the space for free expression and participation. That effectively prevents society from participating in development work. As we have seen earlier, curbing freedom is the sole cause for poverty and under-development.

It is now important to look into the areas of development work that are crucial for Ethiopia's dire state of poverty and see how society is prevented from participating in alleviating it. That is the link between poverty and unfreedom as a hurdle for popular participation and as fetter to the emergence of civil society. Both in the immediate and long-term sense, there are issues that require solutions on the one hand but which cannot be attained without the popular participation, i.e. participation by the civic sector. As we will see, the dominance of the government as the sole actor of development and poverty eradication has

led the country to astray. 14 years of one party rule with a systematic exclusion of the nascent civic sector from participation has cost the country a great deal in terms of poverty and under-development. The fact that the country has gone poorer by the day is indissolubly connected with the prevalence of unfreedom, the lack of freedom at the level of formal political opposition, of associations, of the press and general expression, access to information, and so on. There are certain issues that require solutions as well as the critical intervention of the civic sector, issues whose solution in the immediate as well as long-term sense will put the country on the pedestal of social development.

As we have noted earlier, the development of the institutions of governance will only give rise to institutions of a *state* in the proper sense of the term only when they are complimented by the parallel development of the institutions of the non-state or civic sector that gives rise to a *civil society* in the proper sense of the term. The non-state sector can only develop through democracy with the freedom to participate in the development as well as democratization processes. That is indeed why the issue of the emergence of a civil society/democracy in Ethiopia cannot be separated from the general question of eradicating poverty and under-development. Some of the critical issues of development and poverty eradication are the issues that constitute the domains of sustainable development. In the concrete case of Ethiopia these are gender, environment, rural development and population. EPRDF's policy of excluding the non-state actors from intervening in the development and democratization processes is detrimental not only to the development process but also to itself. Even if we have to use the 'logic' of dictators, a government that doesn't want the intervention of the non-state sector must be capable of delivering the development needs of the country all by itself. That requires resources and capacity. The EPRDF has none, and at the end of the day, even the 'logic' of the dictator betrays it.

In the following two chapters, we will take a look at these issues that constitute the domains of development in the concrete conditions of Ethiopia; namely gender, environment, rural development and population. With this section as background to the general state of poverty, let's now pass on to analyze the development challenges that Ethiopia faces and how the EPRDF opted to solve them. We have devoted Chapter seven to gender as a serious development challenge and Chapter eight is devoted to the environment, population and rural development.

Chapter 7

Gender, society and poverty

I have argued that one of the crucial determinants of social development in Ethiopia, like everywhere else, is gender and the marginalization of women. Gender occupies a pivotal position both in the emergence and development of a civil society as well as in generating social development. In Ethiopia, gender inequality plays a major role in the perpetuation of poverty and as a hurdle for the emergence of a civil society and democracy. In this chapter I analyse the relationship between society's perception of women/ gender roles in general and the perpetuation of poverty and also the position gender occupies in the emergence of a civil society – in particular the transformation of individuals from subjects to citizens – as well as in social development in the specific conditions of Ethiopia. I also show how the policies adopted by the EPRDF government failed to change the conditions Ethiopian women are subjected to. I will first review the status of Ethiopian women, then analyse the structural constraints for change, where I will analyse gender perceptions/poverty relationships, whereafter I will analyse the EPRDF's policies on 'women's questions'. In the last part of the chapter I will discuss the indivisible gender-unfreedom-poverty nexus in Ethiopia.

7.1 Profile of Ethiopian women: a summary

Ethiopia is one of the most difficult countries for women to live in.

UNICEF Report, Nov/2004

Ethiopia is one of the worst countries in the world to be a mother.

Save the Children Report, 2003

Taking into consideration the fact that more than 85% of the population live in rural areas as peasants and pastoralists, the position that Ethiopian women occupy in society can be summarized in one word: enslavement. The marginalization of women occurs at the economic, social and political levels. Beyond marginalization, women in Ethiopia are also exposed to one of the most brutal forms of violence that impact heavily on their own poverty as well as on the poverty of society as a whole. For our purpose in this study, namely the place gender occupies in democratization and development processes, we will concentrate on presenting the profile of women vis-à-vis unfreedom, poverty/under-development.

7.1.1 Women and Poverty

Poverty as capability deprivation is starkly clear in the case of Ethiopian women. The deprivation of capabilities occurs in crucial categories of life, domains of life

that determine not only choices (by women) and their agency but also their very existence. These categories are economic, social, ideological and political. Women's capabilities are deprived at all these levels. These deprivations occur mostly because of women's sex, while some occur as members of society. On the other hand, these categories are also inter-related and reinforce each other; the deprivation at one level reinforces the other at a different level. The prevailing construction of sexuality and gender relations/roles, which is traditional through and through, for instance, constitutes deprivation at the ideological level and reinforces deprivations at the economic, social and political levels. Let us now investigate the state of the deprivations at various levels.

Property ownership rights

In Ethiopia's two major traditional modes of production, peasant farming and pastoral livestock production, women are largely deprived of property ownership. In peasant livelihood systems, land rights are mainly for men. Where women are entitled to own land, it is always men who benefit as women have no access to the land and farm income. In almost all pastoral communities, women have no right to property ownership. Lack of property rights and ownership in traditional formations has made women completely dependent on their husbands for their income. Lack of property ownership has debilitated the capabilities of women.

Deprivation of ownership rights in terms of land for rural women, for instance, is detrimental to the balance of power within the household. If a woman owns land like any man, that implies that she has become the bread winner in the house, which enhances her position of power. Mostly this occurs in cases where the husband is deceased because land is registered under the husband's name. Despite the 'revolutionary' rhetoric both by the Derg that carried out the land reforms in 1975 and the EPRDF which maintained the Derg policies on land, the laws on land reform did not transcend the cultural norms of Ethiopia's rural hinterland. Thus cultural norms have precedence over the law. The negative effect of this situation is felt in cases of divorce and land ownership rights. 'Because land is registered in the husband's name, the wife is put into a weaker position when she claims her rights to land during divorce proceedings. In a lot of cases, women might not choose to claim their right to land because it is not a culturally accepted practice for a divorced or even a widowed woman to claim her share of the land and remarry on that land' (Shadow Report, 2003:24). In cases where women have land registered under their name, this happened when they were household heads at the time of the land reform because their husbands were missing, having either died or migrated to the towns. In general, land belonging to female-headed households is much smaller compared to the land owned by male-headed households. A study carried out in Wollo indicates that of the households surveyed '... 51% of the female-headed households had holdings of 0.25 hectares of land while only 10% of the male-headed households had the same size of holdings' (ibid., 24). In pastoral areas, where private land ownership

does not exist, the problem lies with ownership of livestock, in which case women do not have the right to own animals.

The deprivation at ownership level occurs despite the active participation of women in farming, livestock rearing and off-farm activities. Though women are deprived of ownership rights they 'are a vital component of the rural economy and are fully and simultaneously engaged in agricultural production both farming and livestock husbandry, off-farm employment and carry a heavy responsibility for housework and childcare' (Berchi, 2002:58). Despite the dominant economic view that contends that plough farming is a determining activity in farming, social activities can also affect it. These social roles are mainly played by women who head or maintain households.

In households that are female headed or female maintained – a growing category people in rural Ethiopia – most women are faced with even more responsibilities without which these households would not be able to survive. To fully comprehend the role of women in rural Ethiopia, it is imperative to undertake a gender-disaggregated analysis of household livelihoods so as to be able to capture the linkages between on-farm and off farm activities and their importance for the well-being of households and for the farming area (ibid., 58).

In urban areas too, though the husband is the bread-winner in most cases, there are also female headed and female maintained households where women play the decisive role in securing the livelihood of the family. Women play these roles mainly through great sacrifice, at the cost of their health and lives. However, these sacrificial roles of women are hardly noticed because of certain social constructions that take gender inequality and the degraded position of women for granted.

The sacrificial roles of women are also unnoticed even among the educated elite of both of the right and left, mainly because both in the dominant discourse (the neo-liberal paradigm) and state socialist experience, housework, or the care economy as some call it, is not considered to be a productive activity because 'it has no value'. Value in this sense is defined strictly according to the factory production viewpoint, which does not take the social and political aspects associated with factory production into account. Marx's famous analysis of wage-labour and capital touches upon some social and political aspects associated with production of labour. Unfortunately, it neglected the care economy, which also produces value. In Ethiopia, society's perception of work and value is thus strictly associated with production of commodities, civil service, commercial as well as other activities that generate income either in terms of profit or monthly income. Government officials who emerged out of the society that perceives work and value as such also shares this dominant view. This handicap has an impact on policy and implementation of existing policy.

However, hard work is among the sacrifices that women pay to sustain their households and families. Rural women are exposed to extremely hard work that

affects their health. In rural areas and in dry seasons in particular, women have to walk long distances to fetch water. In most cases, peasants construct their huts on hilly places far from water such as rivers, springs and ponds, that are located on lower grounds. In Lower Amacheho, Tegede and Chilga in Gondar (Amhara region) where I stayed for a while, there are no water points that are close to the villages. In rainy seasons, it is relatively easier to fetch water from springs and ponds that are created as a result. In dry seasons, women have to walk to a nearby river, which is on average quite a distance. In some areas of Gondar such as Belessa in the east, adjacent to Wollo and Tigray, women in the temperate zones have to walk about two hours downhill to fetch water everyday. It is mainly because of this traditional division of labour that allots the heaviest burden of the work to women that girls are kept at home when their brothers are sent to school.

For a typical rural woman, work begins early and ends very late at night with no rest in between. For instance, peasant women in *Kolla* (lowland) areas get up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and start grinding grain to make *injera*, the staple bread, for the day. The *injera* should be consumed the same day as the heat will spoil it if it is kept for too long. Thus, it has to be baked every day. When making *injera* is completed, the woman has to fetch water with her daughter/s. In dry seasons, this involves walking long distances. They carry water back, most of which is used in the morning. She then has to prepare breakfast to feed the family. When this is over, she starts preparing lunch. She has to fetch water if necessary. In between, she has plenty of things to do. Weeding the farm is her job, she keeps the animals, takes care of children and the elderly, prepares food items that are crucial particularly for making sauce such as pepper, chili and *shiro* (out of which sauce is made, prepared from beans, chickpeas, and peas). During harvest, she carries lunch to the field for the husband. In the evening, she fetches water once again, cooks dinner, washes the husband's feet in some cases and goes to bed last. As the first ever paper on the 'woman question in Ethiopia' has it, after all this work, the woman then has to offer sex to the husband (Gobena, 1971:7). The same applies to pastoral women, although their functions are different. In the Dassenech pastoral community in Southern Omo, the men use a whip specially made from ox tail to beat the women when 'the latter are not performing their duty well' (Melakou, 2005: 23). The drudgery of rural women in Ethiopia as described above hasn't changed a bit.

One important factor for the deprivation of women's rights at home and within society is discrimination in employment. Women workers, particularly in the service sector (mainly hotels, restaurants and pastries) are underpaid, and the numerous women domestic workers employed by individuals are paid even less. Unemployment among women is very high compared to men's. The presence of women among the employed is minimal. For instance, out of 303, 590 civil servants, 72% are men and only 28% are women (ibid., 69.) This constitutes one category of deprivation while the level of their employment constitutes another. Within the same civil service for instance, 98.2% of women civil servants work in

the lower echelons of the civil service as cleaners and coffee servers and only 0.9% of the administration and managerial posts are occupied by women. Though the low absorptive capacity for employment in the civil service and private sector affect both sexes, the gender bias that sees women as child-bearing and -rearing plays an important role in the small presence of women in the workforce. Another factor is the small presence of girls/women in education and vocational training. An unfavourable traditional attitude toward working women also exacerbates the small presence of women in the workforce.

In the urban areas of Ethiopia, women are engaged in self-employment as micro-entrepreneurs in a sector that is categorized as the informal sector. They produce vegetables and sell them, fetch firewood to sell in the market and engage in all sorts of trades to make ends meet. However, they suffer from insecurity as a result of lack of protective measures despite the crucial services they provide to the community. As Berhici has it 'many studies have shown that women micro entrepreneurs suffer from harassment and confiscation of goods by officials especially the police. They lack secured space and location and are constantly faced with the absence of clearly defined municipal policy resulting in inconsistency of regulation and licensing' (ibid., 70).

As far as domestic work is concerned in urban areas, the picture is no different except for women in the higher middle class and the rich. The situation is more severe for women in low-income classes. An incredible number of women draw their livelihood from activities classified as the 'informal sector' supporting quite a substantial chunk of the urban population. Women who earn their living through either trade or employment also have to do all the domestic work at home. They perform their domestic work early in the morning before going to work and after work that also takes them late into the night. After all this work, the urban woman, like her rural counterpart, has to offer sex to the husband.

I have attempted above to describe the state of deprivation of Ethiopian women at the level of property ownership. Apart from economic incentives, lack of property ownership has a serious impact on depriving women of power both at the household and society levels. The deprivation at the level of property ownership must be seen in conjunction with deprivations at the education, health and political levels. It is noteworthy that the EPRDF government has not done much to change the situation that women are in.

Education

Education plays a crucial role in the life of people because the lack of it is directly related to a state of poverty and under-development. At the individual level, education plays a crucial role for women. Education enhances the knowledgeability of the woman, impacting on her power to make her own choice, whether in employment, in marriage or in deciding on the number of children she can raise in a life that is meaningful for her and the family. As we shall see in the

next chapter, this has a direct influence on issues of population that impact heavily on the state of poverty.

Ethiopian women suffer from the worst form of social exclusion, lack of education. Traditional perceptions always require the boys to be sent to school, as the girl child is needed for the drudgery of domestic work. Those who struggle to go to school drop out for one reason or another, the major factors being having no time to study because of house work, early marriage and so on. In a survey that Emebet Mulugeta conducted among high school students in 2000 'More than half of the respondents indicated that they undertake a number of household chores that could interfere with their education. About 33.6% of them mentioned that they do all kinds of chores including cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and running errands' (Emebet, 2000: 4). Gender-disaggregated data on school enrolment in Ethiopia also indicates a pyramidal structure in which the relative number of girls dwindles as they move to higher institutions. A high number of girls tend to drop out. Primary school enrolment in urban areas in 1994 indicates 54.6% for boys against 45.4% for girls; in the high schools the gender breakdown is more disproportionate as it indicates 60.6% for boys against 39.4% for girls. In the year 2000-2001, in higher educational institutions such as the university the figure is 14.7% for women, even though school enrolment in urban areas is higher than that of the rural areas. Women and the girl child in Ethiopia are excluded from education, but what does that mean and how does that impact on the perpetuation of poverty and under-development?

What does education provide? The tool that education provides to humans is knowledgeability. Knowledgeability as we saw earlier constitutes a crucial factor in the transformation of subjects to citizens. Citizens are no longer individuals with freedom, but also with a capability to determine their lives independently, independent from individuals, government or ruling parties. Empowerment for women also begins with this independence. However, if women are not independent, still dis-empowered and unknowledgeable, they will suffer from serious problems that perpetuate not only their own impoverishment but also that of society as a whole.

Lack of education for women will impact on the fertility of women. This is rampant in Ethiopia. Uneducated women or women with no knowledge of reproductive rights bring out many children to this world, impacting heavily on poverty and under-development. Women's awareness of their reproductive rights and that nobody other than themselves has the right to determine whether or not to have children, is decisive. Women must also have the access to that kind of information and information-based knowledge and that should be the role of development actors such as government institutions, NGOs and other civic organizations. This is not just an issue of awareness, it is also an issue of power relations in households. Whether or not to have children and how many is largely the husband's domain. The typical Ethiopian husband has command over the body of his wife, in a biological process whose suffering and consequences are

inconceivable to him. To change that state of power relations in the household and empower the woman to have the last word on her own body is an immense work at the level of education for the whole society as the reproductive rights of women has to be promulgated and enforced. In this sense, Ethiopia indeed needs to go through a cultural revolution of a sort.

Though rearing children is the duty of both parents and the family at large, being educated or knowledgeable women implies being able to rear children in a healthy manner. In Ethiopia, both in urban and rural areas, children perish or are exposed to lifelong health problems due to easily controllable diseases. Knowledge of easily controllable diseases is lacking. As the population of the country grows very fast – from 72 million in 2003 to 77 million in 2005 – with a lack of concomitant development at the level of provision of both public and civic education, the problems will keep lingering until a comprehensive and developmental education system is instituted. Information-based knowledge also plays an important role in the nutritional status of the household and children in particular. Education and awareness of mothers in this case is important for the family.

Also, nurturing the future generation must be a crucial development intervention both by the state and non-state actors from the perspective of sustainable development. Creating institutions and putting into place a clear policy to enable the girl child and children at large to attain primary education and general civic education is crucial for creating the future generation of citizens, empowered and knowledgeable and to Ethiopia's sustainable development.

In addition, education and knowledgeability for the girl child and women impacts on their employment. Employment enhances women's earning capacity, which again implies better care and education for children. Improvement in the nutritional status of women and the family also enhances the performance of women in their employment, which results in better income and further improvement. In this regard, knowledge of nutrition in Ethiopia is a universal problem and women suffer from such ignorance.

Also, education and being knowledgeable implies knowledgeability on rights. A woman who is aware of her rights and who believes that men and women are equal can be more assertive in defending her rights. Equality of men and women has become a political cliché since the days of the Derg, when that was not recognised. Because this notion is universal, the notion of equality has not been internalized despite the talk about the 'woman's question' for over thirty years now. In fact, the condition of women is getting worse as violence against them intensifies, sometimes with official blessing. The case of the Oromiya regional parliament that passed a bill legalizing polygamy is a case in point (this will be discussed at length in the sections yet to come). For all these reasons, the assertiveness level of Ethiopian women is still very low.

The cumulative impact of all these factors clearly shows that Ethiopian women are systematically deprived of their rights and capabilities. This in turn has a great impact on the deterioration of the state of poverty and under-development. Because poverty reduction/eradication and social development is conceptualized from an economic reductionist vantage point but not from the point of view of improvement of human conditions through regaining of their capabilities, the country still suffers from massive poverty and perpetual under-development. The social exclusion of women, particularly in education, clearly contributes to this state of poverty. As the latest (the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, UNFPA) State of the World Report reads 'When discriminatory burdens are removed, the capacity and earning power of women increase. Furthermore, women tend to reinvest these gains in the welfare of their children and families, multiplying their contributions to national development. Empowering women propels countries forward towards the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] and improves the lives of all' (UNFPA, 2005:1).

Lately, the EPRDF government set out to attain the Millennium Development Goals at least at the level of primary education. In that respect, notable successes have been recorded particularly in terms the expansion of primary schools opened throughout the country. Even in the remotest areas of Afar in the east and Omo in the south, primary schools have been opened. To that extent, a commendable job has been done. However, the question here is availability of teachers and other utensils needed to start primary schools, not to speak of the required quality of teachers. From the gender perspective, efforts have been made to enable as many girl children as possible to attend these schools at the policy level. The question is their implementation and how much is being done to override cultural norms.

Health

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as physical, mental and social well-being. In Ethiopia, however, the prevailing perception of health is just physical. The low level of status of health in Ethiopia in general and that of women in particular is directly connected to the state of poverty at both the country's and household levels. As one study by the Ministry of Health indicates, '... the diseases burdening the poor women were pregnancy and delivery related conditions, anemia, respiratory tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, parasitic infections, malnutrition, persistent coughs and tuberculosis, etc... The poor women engaged forcefully in prostitution due to their poverty status and thus are exposed to sexually transmitted infections including AIDS. The burdens of infectious diseases are mainly affecting the poor, due to the fact that such diseases are diseases of poverty resulting from lack of adequate and clean water supply, lack of proper latrines and poor conditions' (Ministry of Health, 2003: 99).

It is the social position that women occupy in society and their culturally-defined functions that contribute to the deterioration of their health. Cooking is the most important function specifically designated to women. The other activities associated with cooking such as fetching water, collecting firewood and wood- and charcoal burning cause ill-health for most women. As Abonesh H. Mariam noted of rural women 'Women in rural areas on the average spend 14-16 hours laboring under difficult conditions where the basic necessities such as clean water and fuel for cooking are not available. Fetching water and firewood means a long walk from home and back, often barefoot, carrying heavy loads on their backs or head for hours and negotiating difficult terrains. Moreover, they collect and wash/use contaminated water and cook in an air-polluted environment. Hence, women and their children spend most of their time in an unhealthy atmosphere that contributes greatly to ill-health' (in *Reflections*, 2000. no. 4:24-25). Additionally, when women fall ill, they delay care-seeking as long as possible for everything in the household depends on them. Abonesh continues 'When women fall sick, they delay care-seeking, as they give less priority to their personal needs. It is very common for women to wait until they are unable to move and do their daily chores' (ibid. 25). In fact, this is also true of urban women.

The perception that interprets health as merely physical inhibits both society and state to look into women's particular health needs. For instance, there are certain biological factors that specifically concern women, such as menstruation, which need special attention as well as care. As the prevailing perception, which is traditional through and through has it, menstruation is seen with disgust. It is so mystified that it is seen as the 'secrets of women' and it is only women who talk about it among themselves. Parents don't discuss menstruation with their daughters so that many a girl child does not know what to do when she first develops menstruation. This mystification is also part of the general perception of sexuality.

Due to a generally low level of health care in the country, one of the lowest in the world with less than 60% coverage, Ethiopia has one of the highest maternal mortality levels in the world. According to a 2005 UNFPA report, there are '871 deaths per 100,000 live births or 25,000 maternal deaths per year' (The Reporter, 06/4/05). A combination of factors aggravates the ever increasing maternity mortality rate such as 'limited access to health care services as well as cultural factors that pre-dispose women to pregnancy related morbidity and mortality – cultural factors such as early marriage, celebration of higher than normal fecundity and the practice of female circumcision' (ibid.).

7.1.2 Violence against women (VAW)

The most universal form VAW takes and what the girl child and young woman face in Ethiopia is the prevalence of rape and marriage by abduction. Rape has now become the scourge of women of all walks of life and a national shame. The increasing rate of rape cases has exposed three fundamental facts: the pervasive nature of the pandemic, its fatefulness and the alarming apathy of the EPRDF government and its law-enforcement agencies. Rape in Ethiopia occurs in urban and rural areas. According to the Ministry of Health document on gender mainstreaming in the health sector it is estimated that three women are raped each day in each of the 28 *Woredas* (districts) in Addis Ababa, adding up to an alarming total of 30,660 rape cases every year (The Reporter, 19/03/05). The amazing dimension to the pandemic is the widespread nature of the culprits. They are from all walks of life: peasants and pastoralists, rich and poor, elders and youngsters, fathers, uncles, priests, sheikhs, soldiers, officers, police, politicians. In a care centre for victims of rape in Addis Ababa called the Integrated Family Services Organization (IFSO), ten of the first rape victims reported to the centre were raped by their own fathers. One of the victims who shared a bed with her parents was raped by her father while the mother slept beside him in the same bed (ibid.) In face of such a rampant threat, Ethiopian women live in a constant state of fear. What makes this fear so terrible is the fact that the attacker could be anyone.

In the era of AIDS, rape has reached extremely dangerous proportions as rape victims, if infected with the HIV virus will definitely die. At the IFSO centre, among the first to report rape cases, out of 185 cases six were HIV positive. In Ethiopia, it was made public in 2001 that HIV positive men deliberately infected girls and young women through rape (Reflections, 2000, no.3, p.63). In face of such a life of terror, the EPRDF government and its law enforcement agencies have displayed an alarming apathy. Even more shocking is the fact that the Women's Affairs Bureau under the Prime Minister's Office and one its parastatals, the Addis Ababa Women's Association, withdrew from the anti-rape campaign launched by NGOs in 2001. It was such alarming apathy that compelled a woman activist to state that 'A government that doesn't enforce its own laws to protect women from rapists and attackers is an accomplice of the crime' (ibid., 6).

Rape in Ethiopia is so common that there is no place that it doesn't occur, there is no community that is not affected by it, there is no social stratum of men that is not committing the crime and there is no social stratum of women that is not a victim of rape. Rape is culturally condoned more than wife beating, abduction and other forms of violence. The depravity of Ethiopian society is reflected in this shameful practice. Undoubtedly, what makes rape prevalent in Ethiopian society is the cultural assumption and accepted dominance of men over women and the peculiar construction of the typical Ethiopian perception of sexuality. Because of this, rape is a tolerated practice. By 2001, rape had become such a scourge that NGOs were forced to launch a campaign against it, thereby gaining the attention of the EPRDF government. Following this campaign, a number of surveys were conducted on the prevalence rate of rape. Many of these surveys revealed

horrifying figures on the rate of prevalence of rape, including in the capital, Addis Ababa.

One of these surveys by Kasaye Mulugeta, conducted among high school students in Addis Ababa and its environs reports:

A total of 140 female students were involved in the study. The prevalence of completed rape and attempted rape against female students was 5% and 10% respectively. The age range of those against whom actual rape was committed was between 12 and 13 years, and 85% of the rape victims were less than 18 years of age. Of the total respondents 78% believed that rape was a major problem constraining their educational performance. Among the 72 girls who reported they had been raped, 24% had vaginal discharge and 175 had become pregnant. Social isolation, fear and phobia, hopelessness and suicide attempts were reported in 33%, 19%, 22% 6% of rape cases respectively. It was concluded that the prevalence of sexual violence among high school students is a serious problem. Considering that this data provides only a very small sample of the experiences of female students in Ethiopia, one can imagine the extent of the danger that the society is facing. (Quoted by Sara Tadios, Rape in Ethiopia, in *Reflections*, no. 5, 2001).

The 2001 anti-rape campaign as well as the number of studies conducted reveal three fundamental facts: the pervasive nature of the pandemic, its fatefulnesses and the alarming apathy of the EPRDF government and its law enforcement agencies. 'Rape in Ethiopia is so pervasive that it occurs everywhere, urban or rural and no place is spared from the pandemic. The culprits are also from all walks of life; peasants, pastoralists, elders, fathers, uncles, priests, sheikhs, soldiers, police, politicians, the young ...' (Melakou in *Reflections* No. 5, 2001). The attitude behind such prevalence of crime which I will discuss later in line with the transformation of individuals from subject to citizen as a critical precondition for the emergence a civil society is important to our discussion.

There are also a number of factors categorized as harmful traditional practices affecting women's health. The most prevalent is the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and other forms of violence against women (VAW). FGM is socially condoned almost universally and there is no region in the country where the practice doesn't prevail. There are three major forms of FGM namely infibulation (or Pharaonic as is known in Sudan) practiced in pastoral and some other lowland communities. That is the most ferocious and brutal as it involves the removal of the entire clitoris and other sensitive parts such as the labiola minora and 'removal of part or all external genitalia and stitching/narrowing the vaginal opening leaving a small hole for urine and menstruation flow' (NCTP, 2004:3). The other variety is excision, which is common in most highlands and temperate zones and involves the removal of the 'clitoral hood with or without excision of part or the entire clitoris'. The third type is the cliteridectomy, which involves the 'removal of the clitoris together with partial or total excision of the labiola minora' (ibid., 3). In all cases, the most sexually sensitive organ of the woman, the clitoris, is removed, thereby depriving the women of sexual

satisfaction for the rest of her life. FGM is one of the most brutal human rights violations of women. FGM is a pandemic occurring throughout the country, that is, 72.7% in 1998. 'High prevalence is found mainly in six of the ten regions including: Afar with over 90%, Harari, Amhara, and Oromiya regions with about 80%, Addis Ababa and Somali regions about 70%. Beni Shangul Gumuz, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) fall in the intermediate group with prevalence rates under 60%' (ibid. 4). The NCTP/Women's Affairs Office (government)/UNICEF study also indicates that 62% of the FGM in Ethiopia is due to Clitorectomy/Sunna, 19% due to excision and only 3% due to infibulation (ibid., 4).

Other forms of VAW include early marriage where the girl child is married off at the age of seven, eight and up to fifteen. The prevalence of early marriage in Ethiopia is 54.6% (ibid., 10). What is more surprising is the difference in prevalence rate of early marriage between rural and urban areas being no significant at all in a country whose two successive governments have embarked on a policy of the 'woman question' for thirty years between them, 56.5% for rural and 48.9% urban. Early marriage literally debilitates the life of the girl child resulting in the discontinuity of the girl's education, thereby permanently depriving her of her capabilities. Early marriage also results in early pregnancy and motherhood, further debilitating the life of the girl child. The direct negative consequence of early marriage on the girl child is what is known as fistula, which involves damage to the internal sexual organs upon child delivery. Child mothers with fistula cannot control the flow of their urine as a result of the damage they underwent during delivery. There are 9,000-9,300 reported cases of fistula in the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital (The Reporter, Meskerem 1/98). Fistula can only be cured through operation in a fistula hospital. There is only one fistula hospital in the entire country whereas early marriage prevalence is 54.6% nation-wide and a great many of the girl mothers fall victim to fistula.

Abduction and forced marriage by abduction is another violent phenomenon widespread in the country. As the NCTP study states, abduction at the national level in 1998 stood at 69% (NCTP, 2004:17). The study reads '... 52 of the 65 ethnic groups in whom the survey was conducted have an MBA [marriage by abduction] occurrence of 50% or above. In six of these ethnic groups (Basketo, Dasenech, Hamer, Koyra, Zeyse and Worji) the occurrence rate is 100%. Five of them are in SNNPR [Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region] while one, Worji, is in Oromiya Regional State. Likewise, the rate is between 90 and 99.5% in thirty ethnic groups. The rural/urban occurrence is reported to be 72% and 59.2% respectively' (ibid., 17). Abduction is often accompanied by extreme violence, including continuous beatings and sometimes torture. That is followed by continuous rape.

Domestic violence in the form of wife beating is perpetrated against women in Ethiopia. Although it is difficult to come up with figures, wife beating is so common in the country that it has almost become 'norm' that even women have

accepted it. The 2005 World Bank Country Report states that wife beating is a cultural problem (WB, 2005:45). Wives are beaten for numerous reasons, the most outstanding of which is disobeying the husband. Unquestioned obedience to the husband is preached by the two major religions in the country, Islam and Coptic Orthodox Christianity. Obedience to the husband sanctified by the holy men is nearly as religious as any traditional belief.

This state of affairs has a great impact on the lack of assertiveness in Ethiopian women. The process of molding women to become obedient to their husbands begins with the upbringing of the girl child. From childhood, girls are taught even how to sit and walk, how to eat, drink and talk. 'You are a girl, talk like this and sit like that' is the norm everywhere and in all cultures. In addition, religious ethics is added to make the whole thing holy and sanctified by the religions.

Sexual harassment is a major form of violence against women in Ethiopia. This is a common offence perpetrated by young men, employers, bosses and teachers. Sexual harassment is hardly seen as an offence, let alone as violence. A great many women also interpret harassment as a compliment to their looks. However, the borderline between harassment and rape or abduction is so thin that the consequence is debilitating to young women and the girl child. At Addis Ababa University where the brains among the young generation are assembled, the worst forms of sexual harassment take place followed by horrendous forms of violence. In the last six years, more than four girl students at Addis Ababa University have been stabbed to death for refusing to go out with boys who asked them to. Liquid acid has been thrown on the faces of few girl students, resulting in permanent damage to their faces. Employers and bosses and a great many teachers ask for sex in return for favour in employment and grades.

7.1.3 Political disempowerment

Ethiopian women are beyond doubt politically disempowered. Though women are largely politically excluded in many parts of the world, including some countries considered advanced, the political exclusion of women in Ethiopia constitutes disempowerment in toto. Women are not just politically unrepresented and excluded from decision-making bodies and processes, which is a typical phenomenon in Africa. They have lost all their political capabilities to advance their cause. Every avenue enjoyed by women in other countries is closed for Ethiopian women. For instance, they have no means of influencing policy makers so that law enforcement agencies implement the law to defend women from the worst forms of violence unleashed against them. Groups that advocate women's rights are seen as adversaries and with suspicion, and at times are openly threatened. The Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association was banned for a while because they exposed the plight of a young woman who was almost killed by an attacker, a case that embarrassed the minister of justice at the time. In 2002, the Oromiya regional council/parliament passed a bill tacitly recognizing polygamy. NGOs, which signed a petition addressing the Oromiya

Regional Council demanding the decision to be reversed, were openly threatened by the head of the Oromiya regional government (we will come back to this). The EPRDF has its own front 'women's organizations' in each region attached to the ruling parties there and these are the only ones that are supposed to speak on behalf of women. Even if rights advocates evacuate the space for the EPRDF's organizations, their purpose is to advance the cause of the party that prevents them from advocating women's rights. This is a fundamental problem for women in Ethiopia, and as this is a policy followed by the ruling party, it constitutes political exclusion.

This also constitutes disempowerment at the political level as women's rights activism is precisely what is needed by the oppressed women of Ethiopia to attain control over the process that enhances their potential to exercise choice. The process of women's empowerment consists of three main pillars, namely resources, agency and achievements (Kabir, cited in Razavi: 2000:29). Resources are not just material in the conventional economic sense 'but also the various human and social resources which serve the ability to exercise choice'. Access to political decision- and policy-making processes and institutions constitutes access to resources of power. 'Access to such resources will reflect the rules and norms which govern distribution and exchange in different institutional arenas'. The political exclusion of Ethiopian women have deprived them of their important power resource. As a result they have become subject to the rules of the game set by the ruling party. Because women are deprived of their resources, it is impossible to talk of the second dimension of power, namely agency 'the ability to define one's goals and act upon them' (ibid., 29).

Precisely because of this structural problem, women are also excluded from the processes that make up laws and policies that concern them. From the days of the first enactment of the country's constitution in 1931, when the major laws such as the penal code were enacted, women were completely excluded. They were not part of these decisions and they were not consulted at all. That tradition has continued. It is always men and men-dominated political institutions, which claim to represent society, that pass laws and policies concerning the lives of women. Most of these policies are indeed enacted in the eyes of men, with patriarchal lenses.

Low level of political participation by women is another form of marginalization in Ethiopia. Despite the thirty years of rhetoric about the women's question and the 'active participation of women in the armed struggle' the political participation of Ethiopian women is still one of the lowest in the continent. As we mentioned earlier the *independent* participation of women, independent from the ruling party or government, is crucial. That is the only way to develop their resource base.

EPRDF policies, including the 'decentralization' process, could not increase the participation of women in politics either. This is mainly because the EPRDF's policy on the 'woman question' and 'women's participation' is taken to have lost

its meaning in the bureaucratic sense, has no popular support as the process itself is selective and exclusionary. As Berchi noted ‘...one of the major limitations of the political decentralization process is its failure to solicit popular participation. The common citizenry do not feel linked to the system and to the government. In a country where the political and cultural background doesn’t encourage women’s participation, the situation is further exacerbated’ (Berchi. 2002:76). No wonder then that in Ethiopia the political participation of women is very low and there is one woman minister in a cabinet of eighteen, and 42 woman members of parliament out of 547 (ibid., 76-77). A glance at the country’s ranking on the gender-related development index ranking in the Human Development Reports for the three years 2001-2003, indicates the worsening of conditions for Ethiopian women in comparison with the conditions of women in other countries such as Eritrea that became independent in 1993.

Table 8 Ethiopia’s comparative standing on gender empowerment with that of Uganda and Eritrea

Country	Gender related devel. index ranking	Gender empowerment measure ranking
Uganda		
2001 (out of 161 countries)	125	62
2002 (out of 173 countries)	125	66
2003 (out of 175 countries)	117	58
Eritrea		
2001 (out of 161 countries)	133	58
2002 (out of 173 countries)	133	66
2003 (out of 175 countries)	126	70
Ethiopia		
2001 (out of 161 countries)	142	58
2002 (out of 173 countries)	142	66
2003 (out of 175 countries)	139	70

Source: Author’s own calculation from UNDP’s Human Development Reports 2002, 2002, 2003

Another study by Yeman Berhane on women’s health and reproductive outcome in rural Ethiopia produced a number of succinct conclusions on rural women in Southern Ethiopia and elsewhere in the country:

- the rural women in the study were largely illiterate (94.5%)
- many live in a polygamous union (28%)
- majority of them require husband’s permission to visit health facility (89.3%)

- over 70% of the married women have no right to sell farm products for their cash needs
- in households of school age children of both sexes, 40% don't send their children to school, 40.8% send all or some boys and no girls; and 3.2% send all or some girls and no boys
- when asked to state their problems, 23.4% reported heavy workloads; 14.8% lack of money/poverty and 9.0% reported lack of food

(Quoted in Shadow Report, 2003:23)

It is against such a background of the conditions of Ethiopian women that I am going to examine the constraints for change and a strategy for empowerment.

7.2 Strategy for empowerment

The strategy for the empowerment of women deals with the significant question of *how* to empower women so that, ultimately, they are liberated from marginalization, thereby ending their bondage and poverty as well as that of society as a whole. Unlike the Leninists, the proponents of the gender approach hold that a strategy for women's emancipation is not something prescribed for women so that they can help themselves, something of a charity that they can take up with big thanks and kiss politicians' boots. The gender approach is entirely different from this. In as much as the degradation, marginalization and enslavement of women is not the work of women themselves but emerged out of a social construct that developed over the years and centuries, the solution that aims at empowering women should also be the responsibility of society as a whole, that is, of women and men alike. The marginalization of women should also be the business of men. After all there isn't a single man who doesn't have at least a mother; a great many men have wives, sisters and daughters. The entire approach towards emancipation should therefore not be viewed as something of a charity coming from men.

The enslavement of Ethiopian women is also caused by a social construct at the very roots of which stands the mental enslavement of men themselves. It is the ignorance of men that kept the enslavement of women going for centuries. The empowerment of Ethiopian women as a process therefore should by definition also liberate Ethiopian men from the shackles of ignorance. The empowerment of women cannot aim at women only. Society as a whole must be liberated from the primitive perception that informs and perpetuates not only the enslavement of women but also the backwardness of society as a whole. As we argued earlier, the emancipation of women is impossible without the active participation of men in the process. That is indeed why, when we deal with issues of strategy (for empowerment), the whole discussion cannot be disentangled from issues of poverty and under-development that are the hallmarks of society as a whole. That is where Leninists err from the start and the EPRDF is no exception.

How should the empowerment of Ethiopian women be conceptualized? The disempowerment of women did not take place all of a sudden. It was a process and in as much as it is a product of a social construct, it must have taken a long time. Its deconstruction must also take a long time because it involves a process. Empowerment by definition should be a process. But, what should that embody?

As far as Ethiopian women are concerned, power is exercised at two levels: at home and at the societal level. One aspect of power is what Naila Kabir calls the 'ability to make choices'. Empowerment should also involve the ability to make choices at these levels and that is exactly where the world of Ethiopian society turns upside down as that would involve a revolution, a cultural revolution if you like. The sword of Damocles that hangs over the necks of women who attempt to make their own choices needs to be withdrawn. That in turn involves the eradication of the mystifications, traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity and all the mentalities that rationalize the enslavement of women. From this perspective alone, it will not be too difficult to guess how much education is required when a strategy of women's empowerment is conceptualized in Ethiopia.

The second dimension of power relates to what Kabir calls 'the ability to define one's goals and act upon them'. Whose goal prevails in Ethiopia now? I have dealt with this in the previous pages where I discussed the processes and the powers involved in the enactment of laws, policies and the like. They are all patriarchal and it is men who always defined their own agenda, thereby effectively and with a great deal of violence, preventing women from defining their agenda. A strategy of this deprivation is to keep women uneducated and uninformed so that ignorance and being uninformed will prevent them from finding the way out of enslavement.

Empowerment is a process. The need for empowerment of women is an affirmation of the prevalence of the disempowerment of women. The freedom and space to define one's will and choice is essential in the process of emancipation. In the concrete conditions of Ethiopia, a country that has emerged out of the dark ages of feudal autocracy and a barbaric military dictatorship, freedom and space for participation is an absolute precondition. By space and freedom, I mean the unrestricted rights of people to organize, express their views, make their choices and define the direction they want to take along the road of emancipation. This freedom must be freedom from any political party or government, freedom for the citizen, freedom for the subject of yesteryear who has been subjected to dictation and being led around by the nose. Citizens must be able to choose the social or political direction they want to take, they should not be dictated to, nor should they be dominated by a political party that thinks it is omniscient and should be omnipotent and omnipresent. From Ethiopia's experience, freedom must first of all be defined in this manner. Such a state of freedom has not yet prevailed in Ethiopia. As we saw in Chapter Five, the

EPRDF has curtailed freedom and freedom according to EPRDF is freedom for itself and its associates.

However, disempowerment won't just go away, somebody has to conduct the process. But that somebody cannot be anybody. A critical mass is needed in the first place and social leaders must emerge to take the lead for enhancing the process of empowerment. At present, a critical mass is just emerging in Ethiopia through various ways but mainly through the activities of the civic sector, NGOs and associations in particular. This process is extremely slow and at times frustrating due to a number of factors, the main one being the hurdles put in the way by the government. First, the bureaucratic hurdle to work as an NGO and/or association on women's rights is difficult. Second, if one succeeds in getting registered as an NGO or association, there is another hurdle when it comes to operating. There are undeclared limits to what one can and can't do. For instance, an NGO or association criticizing the government on issues of women's rights is what the prime minister calls entering the 'red zone' (i.e. the danger zone). I have already mentioned what happened to the women's lawyers' association when they criticized the minister of justice on an issue involving the plight of a woman. I have also mentioned what the president of the Oromiya regional government did when a group of NGOs petitioned the Oromiya parliament to rescind the bill it introduced to legalize polygamy. Under such circumstances, the process of creating a critical mass is slow.

It is also necessary to produce social leaders and activists who can take the struggle for the emancipation of women forward. Leaders and activists, who are devoted to the cause and who work hard are badly needed. South Asia and India in particular are quite lucky in this respect. And that is no accident as the level of space and freedom in India is much better than many other places in the South. Ethiopia in this respect has not yet produced its gender activists and social leaders. The stifling political atmosphere is the main hurdle in this respect though the civic sector also has its own weaknesses. Despite the rhetoric about the 'woman question' for thirty years, Ethiopia is still too far off from producing its gender activists.

As Naila Kabeer puts it 'Resources and agency together constitute what Sen [1985b] refers to as capabilities: the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of "being and doing"' (ibid., 30). Ethiopian women are deprived of their capabilities at the level of lacking the freedom as the resource and at the level of agency, namely the capacity to define one's own agenda; both as a result of government intimidation. These are the biggest hurdles that the struggle for women's empowerment faces. Empowerment as a process constitutes first the resources, then agency and then achievements (Ibid., 29). In Ethiopia, there are no achievements in terms of empowerment basically because the struggle is nipped in the bud at the first level. No wonder then, the conditions of Ethiopian women have actually deteriorated despite the introduction of the 'women's policy' by the EPRDF in 1993. Because of this

fundamental constraint, it has been impossible to address other constraints such as ideological constraints as a result of religious doctrines, tradition and culture; lack of a critical perspective and critical mass; and lack of leadership.

7.3 Constraints for change

In a discussion on strategy for empowerment or change for the improvement in the conditions of women in a given society, it is necessary to identify the major constraints for change.

Ideology

Social constructs, particularly on gender relations or determination of femininity and masculinity, are informed by other major constructs that are in the nature of ideology. The major ideological source that informs gender relationships and the roles of men and women in Ethiopian society is religion. In Ethiopia, the major religions are Coptic Orthodox Christianity, Islam and the Pentecostal denomination. Religious teachings largely affirm the status quo ante in a family and their rules are geared towards strengthening the status quo. Because of that, change in perceptions and codes of ethics are resisted as dangerous and satanic.

The other problem is the fusion of pre-Christian and/or pre-Islam traditions with the codes of these religions. Circumcision can be taken as an example. But, ordinary followers of both religions take it as a religious code. Because the way the religion itself is taught is not transparent, most of their teachings are obscurantist and prone to misinterpretation. However, it happens that in traditional societies, most of such codes affect women more than men and are in fact designed to control women. Unfortunately they are also taken as religious codes. Attempts to disentangle the traditional from the mainstream religious codes have not been successful. This is mainly because these dominant religions prevail through obscurantist teaching, they refrain from making religious codes clearly distinct from traditional ones. In my own experience as director of Panos this is one of the things that I have noticed as constraints for change. In a campaign against the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in 2003, we tried to bring in religious leaders of the two main religions to condemn the act of FGM as ir-religious and immoral. Though they both agreed to do so, in fact they refrained from doing it. Indeed, one of them said 'a little bit of cutting won't hurt'. FGM, however, is one important instrument through which patriarchy controls the sexuality of women. FGM that starts with babies in the case of Coptic Christians and little children in the case of Muslims, literally destroys the dynamism of the youth in girls.

As traditional perceptions have it, women are perceived as cheats, untrustworthy, devilish, weak, cunning and all sorts of negative characteristics. Stereotypes

against women are constructed out of these perceptions. Traditional societies mostly engaged in natural economy and basically fighting against nature for subsistence seem to be prone to mystify relationships that have impact on or determine their lives. That is why traditional societies are strongly religious. Industrialization simplified labour and labourers no longer struggle against nature to produce commodities. Instead they work in assembly lines and produce by mixing or synthesizing different components whose quantity is measured by scientific method and modern instruments are less prone to mystify than people in traditional societies. Ethiopian society is not only traditional but has kept that tradition for centuries free from colonial influence. As such the stereotype against women is reinforced by sayings, proverbs and stories. Sometimes, the local priest or khadi, his Muslim counterpart, who are authorized by the religious institutions to interpret the religious teachings, further strengthen these negative stereotypes. As women cannot be either priests or *khadis*, the interpretation is certainly done in the way the traditional perception on gender relations has it. All these add up to pass the anti-women stereotypes from generation to generation. Proverbs are among the most important weapons used to transmit the stereotypes. In her 1995 study, Yeshi H. Mariam provides us with 258 proverbs in the Amharic language only (Yeshi, 1995: Appendix 2). These proverbs are still widely used.

Education is an important sector that can serve either as a catalyst or constraint for change. Public education, advanced as 'modern education', is an important institution in this respect for it is an institution that cultivates the future generation. Until very recently when the public schools introduced what they call 'civic education', the kind of education that deals with codes and ethics on gender relations were largely those of the church and mosque with the gist of the message that I described above. In the final analysis 'modern educated' Ethiopians were trained to be technically qualified in their areas of expertise, but regarding gender relations, the same old traditional ethics and codes prevailed. One serious obstacle for the advancement of gender as a serious discipline is the attitude of the educated and intellectuals. The educated and intellectuals are detached from gender as discipline for gender has never been part of their training and consideration of gender does not have a high priority in society. Very few of the educated and intellectuals take gender seriously. In fact, intellectuals are well known for making jokes whenever gender and equality of women is mentioned.

That had a great impact on the absence of a critical mass as well as leadership for gender equality. In the early 2000s, there was a call by NGOs and think tanks for the introduction of gender education to schools' curricula. The EPRDF instead introduced 'civic education' which is basically political and propagandist rather than real civic education that moulds the behaviour of the youth. Though the EPRDF's 'civic education' has sections on 'the women's question' it has been strongly criticised and is in fact very unpopular among students.

Although the media and literature in general is not as commercialized in Ethiopia as it is in countries such as Kenya, they still contain plenty of messages on gender stereotyping in the Western model. In contemporary Ethiopia, where literally everything Western is taken for granted and as liberatory and the standard-bearer of modernity and modernization, there are also plenty of Western gender constructs that pass as modern. That contributes to the commercialization of images of women and has impact on how gender and gender relations are constructed.

Lack of critical mass

Lack of critical mass is a function of the lack of gender leadership and the failure of the role of educated women in particular in providing that leadership. Among women's organizations, the only one that is rights-based is the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA). As an association of woman lawyers EWLA has its own limitations, particularly at the level of strategy for change, as it was established to provide legal services for women. Until recently, the leadership operated on an image created by the support of Western donors without building its own institutions and producing a strategy for change and its role in it. Nevertheless, in a country of 77 million, EWLA is the only organization that still fights for the rights of women. Most women's organizations deliver services. Indeed, there are also a number of international NGOs with gender programmes who also have defending women rights as their agenda. Only to make matters worse, the EPRDF government follows a policy of stifling NGO activity. On the one hand, it has its own affiliates and some of them are 'women's organizations' in Tigray, Amhara, Addis Ababa, for example. But, these are just front 'organizations' whose functions are strictly party line, the same as in the old East European countries. For instance, the Women's Organization of Tigray (WOT), an affiliate of the ruling TPLF, claims to have a membership of over 430,000 women. But, at international conferences WOT is represented by male TPLF cadres.

Lack of gender leadership

Both in terms of creating and building a critical mass on gender and generating a process of social change to institute equality between women and men and generating a social movement or/and a gender perspective, the need for qualified persons on gender issues is crucial. Until 2005, there were no institutions in higher education that provided gender specializations. In 2005, CERTWID (Centre for Research and Training in Women and Development), started an MA programme on gender studies together with Addis Ababa University. The programme is run mainly by Addis Ababa University although the co-ordination was done by CERTWID. This programme was well funded by donors from Norway, Canada and the World Bank. I happened to lecture in three sessions during its initial phase and followed the functions of the programme very closely.

The gender studies programme has so far proved to be a fiasco as it is poorly organized, unco-ordinated and completely neglected by the university administration. In the first place, the advisory committee set up to lead the programme in the areas of curriculum development, staff selection and so on was composed of mostly non-academic persons with no gender specialization. Also, the person selected to co-ordinate the programme is a medical doctor with no gender specialization at all. She works at a hospital full time and has very little time for the programme. Instead, the day-to-day activities were co-ordinated by a volunteer. According to Indra Biseswar, the first lecturer in the programme, the CERTWID office that served as a secretariat was poorly organized and it could not provide any meaningful support to lecturers (interview, 2006). When the volunteer resigned from the programme, she was not replaced. Compared to other programmes at the university, it is hardly possible to say that the university was serious in starting this programme. As part time lecturer at the political science and international relations department for over three years, in terms of organization and institution, there can be no comparison between the two departments.

Furthermore, qualified academic staff was not selected beforehand. That was rather done ad-hoc. Despite the heavy funding the programme received, the university administration did not want to spend money on recruiting qualified academic staff. Those approached from outside the academia rejected the salary offer, which was too low. Instead, a foreign lecturer with no gender qualification was assigned to teach a major course.

This constitutes a typical case of trivialization of gender at the highest level as no other post-graduate programme could be so neglected. This programme could have become a centre of academic and intellectual excellence on gender issues. In addition, it could contribute to the creation of gender leaders and critical mass.

The lack of gender leadership and critical mass has paved the way for any educated woman to pass as a gender expert without undergoing proper training. This was strongly criticized at one of the Panos gender forums (see *Reflections*, No. 9, 2003). Most 'gender experts' are involved in gender training activities. However, those who give these trainings themselves have on average a two-week training and as such most of them lack an 'in-depth knowledge and skills that would enable them to relate gender issues to different sectors of development activities; they also lack grass-roots knowledge thereby failing to relate theory to practice ... some lack facilitation skills ...' (Mulunesh in *Reflections*, *ibid.*, 113). Most of these 'experts' are hired by NGOs to give training on gender mainstreaming or conduct surveys of projects to measure impact on women's lives.

I have so far attempted to present the major problems and challenges that women face in Ethiopia and the major constraints for change. In the last section of this chapter I will examine the EPRDF policies against the background of the

situation that we described above. But, first on the gender-democracy-development nexus.

7.4 The gender-democracy-development nexus

My analysis above leads me to conclude that the marginalization of women and the violence unleashed against them have effectively become a hurdle to releasing the women's agency and that in turn has contributed to perpetuating the poverty and under-development of the country. Seen from this perspective, releasing the women's agency constitutes a key link to both social development and freedom. That is indeed why I contend that women constitute the historical agency for social change and development in the concrete conditions of Ethiopia.

The treatise on 'freedom as the precondition for development' must go beyond rationalizing the indispensability of freedom and establish the linkages between the various components that make this freedom workable and practical in a given society at a given time and identify the principal social agent for development. Beyond the necessity of space for popular participation by civil society, that is, freedom, there is also a structural problem at the cultural/ethical level that severely prevents society from having the disposition to accept, absorb and consolidate democratic ideas and alternatives. It is crucial in a discourse on democracy and democratization, with implicit impact on development, to identify these hurdles and get to the bottom of the nature and characteristic features of their construction. It is the identification of these hurdles that can lead to identifying areas of intervention that can make a breakthrough towards change of perceptions that Ethiopian society still clings to.

As I argued in the theoretical framework, knowledgability is one important precondition for the transformation of individuals from subject to citizen, thereby laying the foundation for the emergence of civil society. I have also argued that the process of social change towards civil society and the dismantling of poverty are the opposite sides of the same phenomenon, development. I have also argued that women constitute the social agency of both social development and social change towards freedom. Here, we are dealing with another dimension of the problem, namely, how lack of knowlegeability, which is poverty of the mind, in turn perpetuates poverty and under-development. As the Ethiopian variant of the patriarchal mentality presented claims, male dominance prevails as a function of the degradation of women. In addition and as we have seen in the section dealing with rape and violence against women, Ethiopian women, far from becoming a social agency with recognition of their role in social change, in fact live in perpetual fear, hopelessness and apathy. Their male counterparts enjoy the dominance that patriarchy bestowed on them but at a huge cost; the cost of

ignorance. A great many of the womenfolk also share this patriarchal mentality, thus becoming a hurdle in the required transformation from subject to citizen.

At this stage, the patriarchal society in Ethiopia, even if it is granted unrestricted freedom for participation and political choice, suffers from serious maladies at the cognitive level, which is in turn one of the major stumbling blocks to the transformation of subjects to citizens. The universality of ignorance, its pervasiveness and impact of the low level of cognition on an individual Ethiopian constitutes the principal hurdle for democratic and humane values to develop and expand, which in turn influences the development process. The prevailing attitude on sexuality in general and masculinity and female sexuality in particular lies at the heart of this cognitive malady. It accounts largely for the generally repressive and under-developed attitude towards the living (women) and the future (children). Unless Ethiopian society passes through some kind of 'cultural revolution' at the level of cognition, democratization and freedom in practice will still be an unrealistic dream and so will poverty eradication and development. In this sense, women, being both the object and subject of the required change as well as in their responsibility for nurturing the future generation, constitute the principal social agent for development. Without women as principal subjects and gender as the perspective at the centre of a strategy of change and development, neither freedom/democracy nor development can be attained.

From the reality at grassroots level too, poverty is very much linked to women and in the contemporary world poverty has a woman's face. Successive UNDP Human Development Reports as well as numerous studies have consistently indicated that 70% of the world's poor are women. This holds true to Ethiopia too, where there are more factors that make women poorer. As part of a traditional society of the fiercest patriarchal values, Ethiopian women are primarily responsible for raising and rearing children; they also look after the aged. In male-headed households women have no say in property and the allocation of family income. In pastoral communities, women are not even allowed to own property. In such an impoverished country, the household and the country and the family managed to co-exist mainly due to the sacrificial role of women. In short, women constitute the proletarians of our time. By the same token, development paradigms and strategies as well as democratization processes cannot do without the central role to be played by women and in the absence of gender as perspective.

Furthermore, no section of Ethiopian society is as exposed to all forms of violence and discrimination as women are. Violence against women is believed to have been going on for centuries and has now reached an alarming proportion. This violence is tantamount to unleashing violence against society itself. One enormous structural constraint on the part of civil society as far as the process of subject-citizen transformation goes is precisely the prevalence of the violent psyche against women. The violence against children also falls in the gender domain.

Moreover, if civil society is that sphere of society located outside the state sphere, the section of society which has always been dis-empowered and located outside the sphere of state power since time immemorial, is women. That by itself makes them potentially the most vibrant members of civil society as they 'have nothing to lose but their chains' to use Marx's famous phrase.

However, a significant characteristic feature of a civil society is its capacity to engage the state. In the case of women's civic organizations and those working on gender issues, the experience of the EPRDF's attitude towards women is that of restriction. Like all civic organizations, those working on gender are also subject to restrictions and sometimes intimidation. The EPRDF's policy is to dominate all spheres of organized, active social life and it leaves no stone unturned to dominate organizations working on gender issues too. It has established phantom 'institutions' in the name of the Women's Affairs Office under the Prime Minister's Office and a number of 'women's associations' under regional governments in Addis Ababa, Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya, SNNPS and so on. These 'associations' are appendages to the EPRDF as mass organizations of the vanguard party. They are not independent at all, and cannot be one as they are all set up and led by EPRDF cadres, and follow the party line and implement its policies.

The EPRDF has adopted a strategy to ostracize civic associations by depriving them of donor funds. It does this in a number of ways. First, it makes registration of civic associations a legal requirement and makes the process of acquiring a certificate of registration almost impossible. Second, it makes it obligatory to donors not to fund any civic association that is not legally registered with a certificate of registration. What is so crude is, it makes availability of funds one important precondition for registration. While systematically blocking the emergence and function of civic associations, at the same time it promotes its own 'associations' such as the relief organizations such as REST and the many women's 'associations'.

As I argued earlier, the state, by definition, cannot cover all areas of development by excluding the independent participation of civil society. Then, even if it is a state with a profound knowledge of gender and with a wonderful policy of emancipating women, the independent participation of civil society is still crucial. Now, as we have seen earlier, the EPRDF has serious limitations on this score. It has no profound knowledge of gender as it is stuck with the old Leninist formula of the 'woman question'. It follows that it does not have an emancipatory policy either. The consequence is enormous. Like other development disciplines that constitute the domains of sustainable development, the EPRDF has created a vacuum by systematically excluding and stifling civic associations without delivering the solutions to the problems of Ethiopian women.

The impact of this restrictive policy is enormous. It has stifled the emergence of independent civic associations among which are also women's associations and NGOs working on gender issues. This is the severest blow to the cause of women's emancipation as it robs women of their most important capability to emancipate themselves: *independent participation*. Having followed such a stifling policy, the EPRDF also failed to develop its own institutions of governance to the level of a fully-fledged state. As I argued before, a government in power can only attain such a level of institutional development through interaction and response to independent civic intervention. It is the massive intervention of civic groups that prompts a government to move to its rightful role of regulating rather than controlling and dominating. And it is only such a role that in turn can galvanize the process of deconstructing poverty and under-development.

7.5 The EPRDF's policies: a critique

The TPLF's/EPRDF's current policies are an extension of its ideological orientation and the perception that it has on gender. It is difficult to establish when the TPLF first raised the issue of gender. One of its earliest official documents is the TPLF Manifesto put out in February 1976, that is, exactly one year after its formation. The Manifesto does not deal with gender at all, nor does it have any specific section on it. The wish to abolish discrimination on the basis of sex along with religion is mentioned (TPLF Manifesto, 1976:27).

Nevertheless, TPLF's orientation on gender dubbed as 'the Woman Question' is the same as that of all Leninist and Stalinist parties. This school perceives the 'woman question' as a problem that can only be solved along with other problems of class through a social revolution. One of the major issues that the Leninist and Stalinist school codified Marxism is on gender. Gender is labelled 'the woman question' as if the problem is only that of women and not of society as a whole, and that gender, instead of being a social construct, is a product of a class society, that the oppression of women was made possible because of class oppression and that the 'woman question' can only be solved through a social revolution and the revolution has to be led by the party of the proletariat. Needless to say, it should not be a surprise that gender issues were not solved under the Bolshevik party at all and that their conditions actually began to deteriorate after 1934 when Stalin abolished the only organization of women, the Genotdel, even when it was an appendage of the party. Many Bolshevik cadres made fiery speeches on revolution and the 'woman question' at mass rallies but who refused to allow their wives to attend these rallies and even beat them up when they did (Rowbotham in Melakou, 1990:74-75.)

It is precisely because the 'woman question' was not formulated in a thoroughly revolutionary way, but in a way that it would 'emancipate' in the abstract women that the old gender social relationships were not abolished in the first place after the Bolshevik revolution. These social relationships resurfaced and were soon

restored. The history of the USSR shows that progressive ideology without practical work cannot change patriarchal reality. Such was the case for equality between the sexes, as a constitutional right, which was never realized in real life. The collapse of the Soviet Union also revealed that underneath the weighty surface of communist ideology lay other ideological systems equally ridden with patriarchal intent. The major weakness of the Leninist-Stalinist school in this regard is that the 'woman question' has always been perceived to mobilize women to advance the struggle/revolution. Because of this perception the party created the 'women's organization' and appended it to the party and it is commanded by the party leadership. This is the tradition inherited by all Communist parties, including those in Western Europe.

The TPLF's perception, which is based on a Leninist/Stalinist tradition on the 'woman question', is an imitation of what we described above. The 'woman question' was introduced as a supporting agenda to advance the armed struggle and capture political power. Once power rests in the hands of the party, the 'woman question' turns to rhetoric without substance. The EPLF in Eritrea literally removed woman fighters from the army and from other active duty after 'liberation'. The TPLF, whose orientation is the same as that of the EPLF, almost did the same but, because of the existence of a critical intelligentsia and an incipient private press, the pretension to pay attention to the 'woman question' continued.

But, how did the EPRDF traverse on the 'woman question' since it came to power in 1991? The EPRDF's policy and practice on the 'woman question' is a reflection of its two-track policy and its 'revolutionary democracy'. Track one on the woman question constitutes recognition on paper of the rights of women, such as in the Constitution, and other laws and engagement in an unceasing rhetoric on the rights of Ethiopian women. The rhetoric about respect for the rights of women also targets the interests of Western donors who want to see the inclusion of gender in development activities as well as in macro policies in general. In this respect, the EPRDF has successfully deceived Western donors who are easily tantalized by the 'involvement of women in the development process'. There is an undeniable fact that a lot of women have benefited particularly from micro-credit loans rendered to them but launched mostly by NGOs. Regional governments have also been involved in micro-credit loans to women but not as extensively as the NGOs.

The rights of women have been proclaimed by the 1995 constitution. Article 35 boldly states 'Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men ... Women have equal right in marriage as prescribed by this Constitution.' It further states 'The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination against women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures ... The State shall enforce the right of women to eliminate the influences of harmful customs. Laws, customs and practices that oppress or

cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited' (FDRE Constitution, 1995:92-93). The constitution further provides space for women to participate in the formulation of national development policies, 'the designing and execution of projects, and particularly in the case of projects affecting the interests of women' (ibid., 93).

Earlier however, the EPRDF produced in 1993 what it called 'the national policy on women' when it still headed the transitional government. The policy on women provided more instruments that women could use to advance their cause. Some of the objectives and strategies of this policy envision:

Eliminating, step by step, prejudice as well as customary and other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy.

Modifying or abolishing existing laws, regulations, customs and practices, which aggravate discrimination against women ...

Creating a condition whereby society's discriminating attitude toward women and women's complacency about it are eliminated through an elevated awareness (The National Policy on Women, 1993:25-27).

In 2000 it introduced a draft family law that became the target of great criticism. NGOs launched a campaign against harmful articles in the draft law. The Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association and other NGOs such as Panos launched an advocacy campaign to influence changes in the draft in order to benefit women. After a bitter campaign, many of the articles that the NGOs demanded to be changed were in fact changed, thereby making family law the only instance in which the EPRDF listened to the public's concerns and reasoning. 'The antiquated law is not fully done away with' as the Shadow report on CEDAW (UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) by NEWA (Network of Ethiopian Women Associations) and EWLA (Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association) indicated about the legal deficiencies of the revised family law. Five years after the enactment of the revised family law by the federal parliament, seven regions have not yet ratified it and still use the old family law enacted by the imperial government of Haile Selassie. As the Shadow Report puts it 'Seven regions have not yet revised their family laws. Thus, the old family law, which clearly discriminates against women, still applies in these parts of the country. Under this law, the husband is designated as the head of the family, and the wife owes him obedience. The husband has the power to make all the important decisions in the personal and pecuniary effects of marriage. In some of the regions where this law is still in force, no major steps have been taken or the pace with which they are going about the process is too slow' (Shadow Report, 2003:29).

Track two of the 'woman question' constitutes the policy that the EPRDF in fact believes in and pursues. The disparity between the rhetoric and practice explains why the condition of Ethiopian women is still one of the most deplorable in the

world as the 2004 UNICEF and 2003 Save the Children Reports attest. The current state of impoverishment of women and the denial of their rights is as a result of the EPRDF macro-economic policy in general and its specific policy on 'women'. As we have seen above, Ethiopian women are dis-empowered mainly because they are denied the freedom and space to regain their capabilities. The denial of their capabilities is exacerbated because of the government's overall policy on freedom dictated by its 'doctrine' of revolutionary democracy. The lack of freedom and space for society as a whole affects women more than any other sector as gender is related to a number of domains of sustainable development.

Women can start empowering themselves first of all through the freedom of organization and participation. Like any social group, the EPRDF only recognizes the organization of women if they are an appendage to it. To discourage the independent association of women it has set up its own women's associations in each region led by the Women's Affairs Bureau under the Prime Minister's office. Like all its satellite organizations, the women's organizations are probably the most dysfunctional as they are not run by women with the necessary qualifications. The most important requirement, as in all appointments, is loyalty to the party. Because the women's association is seen as an instrument of the ruling party and government, they can't function independently with their own strategy and policy but only within the prism of the policies of the EPRDF. When it comes to empowering women, the EPRDF has no policy whatsoever. Instead, its everyday practice that infringes on their freedom and denies independent association, has become a function that dis-empowers women. Women outside the EPRDF, like all other NGOs or independent associations, will be subject to government scrutiny and so many bureaucratic hurdles are erected in their way. One of the factors why there are so many active women organizations is precisely the stifling policy of the EPRDF that I described. No wonder that, for instance, there is only one rights based women's organization in the entire country, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association. The rest of the women's organizations are all service delivery NGOs with which the EPRDF has little problem. Despite the articles in the constitution that grant women equal rights with men and the right to struggle against the historical legacies of oppression and marginalization, the practice of and true policy of the EPRDF is exactly the contrary. This disparity emanates from its limited perception of bringing 'women's equality' only through its own structures. However, the more the EPRDF is criticized about this restrictive policy, the more stubbornly it clings to its revolutionary democracy policy, thereby stifling the freedom of society and women in particular. Once freedom is stifled, the women's agency is also stifled as 'the ability to define one's goals and act upon them' (Kabeer in Razavi, 2000:29) cannot take place without the resource, in this case freedom.

As we have seen above, the EPRDF constitution also grants women the right to be involved in formulating and designing national development policies and particularly those policies that affect their own lives. But, what is the practice? The NGO sector, both EWLA and those with projects on gender, has fought hard

to be heard on matters of policy before they are tabled for endorsement by the parliament. The NGOs conducted a relentless struggle to have many of the original articles in the draft Family Law changed and replaced by better ones. As we indicated, that was the only case when the EPRDF had ever listened, even though just partially, to the voices of the civic sector.

There were many draft legislations and policies that affect the lives of women that the EPRDF neglected. The amended Penal Code, which the parliament enacted in 2004, was a subject of heated debate upon which NGOs also conducted a comprehensive advocacy campaign. This time however, they were not successful as the EPRDF still retained the original articles that are harmful to women by denying them their reproductive rights. Though the new Penal Code has notably improved the old Penal Code it still needs to go further in very important areas such as on the reproductive rights of women and other forms of violence included in (the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action to which Ethiopia is a signatory. As Tilahun Teshome says

The Beijing Platform for Action and other notable instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and General Recommendation No. 19 of CEDAW Committee ... also provide for inclusion of sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, forced sterilization or abortion, forced use of contraception and prenatal sex selection in the realm of the broader issue of violence against women. But, no mention of them is made of either of the two laws [the Penal and Criminal Codes, MT] under survey. This is, therefore, one area of concern on which much exercise needs to be done in the foreseeable future (Tilahun, 2005:15).

The EPRDF is also extremely hostile to any criticisms even on issues such as gender that it thinks is completely non-political. There were two main public incidents regarding such intolerance in the last five years. The first deals with a critique levelled by EWLA against the ministry of justice regarding its complete neglect of a highly publicized case involving a horrendous crime committed by a young man against a young woman called Hermela Wossenyeleh. The young man, Negussie Yemane, made advances towards Hermela, which she declined and thereupon Negussie became violent. To subjugate her will, he resorted to attacking her sisters. He first attacked her younger sister with a machete, severely wounding her. He was arrested briefly and was freed by police on bail, an embarrassing sum. He then attacked her other sister, severely wounding her. He was again freed on bail of a small sum, Eth. Birr 1,000.00 (US \$ 107). Over time her parents were terrorized by messages that Negussie sent to them threatening to kill Hermela or them. They continuously reported the case to the police but the police took no action. As pressure on the family mounted, the father, who was in his middle ages, developed hypertension. After a while, he died of a heart attack. Now, the family was left with no protection at all. The saga continued for over seven years with no action being taken by police and Negussie never stopped harassing the family.

In the eighth year, Negussie shot Hermela with a pistol and ran away thinking that he had killed her. However, she only sustained severe injuries to the head and eyes. At that point, police arrested the young man and put him on trial. After two weeks he was again released on bail of 500 Birr, barely US \$ 60. With the help of EWLA, the case went to court, but with great difficulty as the ministry of justice dragged its feet. At one point the ministry said that it had lost the file. In marking March 8, International Women's Day, a panel was organized on TV on the issue of violence against women and the law. Hermela gave live testimony on the terror under which she and her family lived for eight years. EWLA also exposed how the ministry of justice dragged its feet in this case. That shocked the country as millions and millions watched the programme. An elderly man called EWLA and told them 'I was so ashamed as a man and father watching the TV programme. I simply felt that I was naked.'

The Minister of Justice at the time angrily denounced EWLA and suspended their licence to operate and froze their bank accounts, the usual measures taken by the EPRDF government to punish NGOs. EWLA was literally closed for months. NGOs in the country as well as numerous organizations from abroad including the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Mary Robinson, protested at the closure of EWLA and demanded its immediate reopening. Shocked by this outpouring of support particularly from the international community, the EPRDF lifted its suspension of EWLA.

The second case involves the Oromiya regional government. After the revision of the family law, it was the turn of the regional parliaments produce their own family laws either in line with the revised law or of their own. While discussing the contents of a revised family law for Oromiya region, heated debate arose in the regional parliament on the issue of polygamy. The women deputies argued strongly for making polygamy illegal and that the law should explicitly state it. A great many men deputies argued against the women on grounds that polygamy is 'our culture'. Ultimately, the head of the regional government, Junedin Sado, had the final say. He spoke in support of not making polygamy illegal, thereby, in effect, legalizing it. The parliament enacted its family law legalizing polygamy. Information leaked out before the law was published. Panos Ethiopia (an NGO whose director was this author) took the initiative to launch an advocacy campaign to have this embarrassing law repealed. An article in The Daily Monitor stirred discussion on the issue (see annex vii.)

Many NGOs and gender desk officers at some Western embassies signed a petition to be presented to the Oromiya regional government (see annex ix). Upon receiving the petition, Junedin Sado angrily denounced the NGOs, accusing them of deliberately smearing the 'excellent' reputation of his regional government on gender issues (See his letter to NGOs which signed a petition for the repeal of the newly-introduced law on polygamy in annex x.) Western donors also intervened in the matter upon which the federal government ordered the

Oromiya regional government to put a clause in its family law making polygamy illegal, which it did.

The main criticism that should be levelled against the EPRDF on gender is that it is not serious on the issue. Compared to other issues of development, the EPRDF's approach lacks seriousness. On other issues, after producing a policy, the EPRDF also puts the institutional mechanism in place to implement that policy, whether through the offices of regional government or directly by the federal ministries. It also allocates budget for implementation. Then, it appoints technocrats to implement the policy. However, after the National Policy of Women in 1993 and the establishment of the Women's Affairs Bureau (WAB) under the Prime Minister's office, the EPRDF did not take steps to take the 'policy' forward. The first head of WAB mentioned some 'challenges' regarding the policy:

- Inadequate financial and human resources and lack of skilled personnel confronting the national machinery
- Insufficient mechanisms and tools to mainstream gender among government plans and programmes
- Attitudes and gender stereotypes, competing priorities and tendency for marginalizing gender focal points within the government structures
- Lack of data desegregated by sex and age in many areas and insufficient methods for assessing progress made and impacts achieved
- Inadequate links among NGOs and civil societies that hinder the government machineries to play their co-ordinating role, particularly at regional and federal levels
- Lack of skills and resources to strengthen grass roots women movement to pressure both government and NGO in creating opportunities for them to fight poverty and become advocates for their own cause and be real partner in the process of promoting women's rights in Ethiopia (Tadellech, 2000:11).

In another study, Yelfign Worku, a former government official in the Ministry of Education, criticizes the government's policy on gender on the same grounds as Tadellech, but much more boldly. 'Lack of commitment on the part of implementing agencies and sectors is one drawback,' she writes 'Although gender seems to be mainstreamed, no serious concern is seen. The plan of action or guideline is left to gender focal points alone who have little say and sometimes are marginalized. It will be difficult for them to integrate or stream gender in sector ministries or agencies. Lack of finance to support gender focused programs and projects also limit implementation' (Yelfign, 2004:3).

Among the most noticeable neglects on the part of the EPRDF that Tadellech, as a government official 'politely' mentions, are: the fact that no institutional mechanism was put in place, the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in the government bureaucracy, where gender was supposed to be mainstreamed first

and the lack of budget for the WAB. For ten years the WAB has set up regional offices, which are nominally staffed by women untrained for the job earning a minimal salary. It has not set up an institutional mechanism to carry its declared policy forward. Furthermore, the state bureaucracy has become an impenetrable fortress as far as gender mainstreaming goes. Officials are not serious in enforcing the policy, technocrats joke about the policy of mainstreaming gender. Also, the EPRDF has not even allotted a meaningful budget for the work to be done. What Taddesse 'politely' puts as a mild criticism is basically this fundamental neglect by the EPRDF of a fundamental issue of development. It is necessary that the EPRDF perception on development and this displayed neglect of what it calls the 'woman question' on the one hand should be compared with the utmost concern and seriousness it displays on issues of state security.

7.6 The EPRDF vis-à-vis violence against women

In any society, the existence of violence against women indicates the existence of the enslavement of women and deprivation of their agency. In traditional societies such as Ethiopia, where, as we have seen above, multifarious forms of violence against women prevail, the women's agency does not exist. On the contrary, it is being suppressed both by the lack of government concern and the prevalence of patriarchy in society. For some time now, violence against women has been a subject of concern for the international community pressurized by the global civil society and that of the international women's movement in particular. Although the culmination of the global advocacy for women's rights was the Beijing Platform for Action, the World Conference on Human Right held in Vienna in 1993 in fact paved the way by recognizing women's rights as human rights. The conference acknowledged for the first time that 'violence against women [VAW] is a human rights issue, while VAW is also increasingly recognized as a global public health issue and a barrier to sustainable development' (Terry: 2004:469). The Ethiopian government has endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action, signed by about 180 governments and CEDAW (The Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) among other international instruments.

However, the record of the EPRDF on women's rights and its role in ending VAW is abysmal. The first historical role of a state is providing justice; and one of the principal missions of the modern state is to protect the security of the person and rights of the citizen; equality before the law and that no individual shall infringe the rights of any other. These are fundamental rights of citizens that any state should respect and safeguard. In its crudest form, what else could the role of the state be if not coming between individuals, protecting the victim and punishing the perpetrator? That has been its supposed role since the days of hamourabi. The EPRDF has been completely apathetic in protecting the rights of women and ending violence against them. It has relatively powerful law enforcement agencies, police and courts, but in protecting the rights of women and dispensing

justice in cases of violence against them, the law enforcement agencies have been apathetic.

Because the EPRDF's concern for women's equality is small, it has not laid the institutional mechanism required to advance the cause of gender equality and the slogan for women's equality has not trickled down through the government bureaucracy and other state structures. The consequences of this neglect are felt when cases of VAW occur. When cases of rape, abduction and wife beating are reported to police, the first reaction of the police is: 'This is our tradition that should be solved through mediation.' The police literally refuse to take such cases. If the police refuse to accept rape, abduction and wife beating cases, then they can never reach the courts. The refusal of police officers to take cases when reported and the fact that offenders are given extremely light sentences even in rare cases discourage women and parents to report cases of violence to police. As a consequence, there is a huge disparity between the rate of occurrence of violence and the number of reported cases, as the table below shows.

Table 9 Disparity in occurrence and reported cases of violence against women

Regions	Number of rape crimes reported	Percentage of rape cases reported	Number of abductions reported	Percentage of abduction cases reported
Oromia	991	43.7%	312	61.5%
Amhara	487	21.5%	-	-
SPNNR	336	14.8%	112	22.0%
Addis Ababa (federal city)	168	7.4%	-	-
Tigray	142	6.2%	10	1.9%
Benishangul	58	2.5%	69	13.6%
Dire Dawa (federal city)	43	1.9%	3	0.5%
Harari	25	1.1%	-	-
Aysaita/Afar	7	0.3%	-	-
Somali	6	0.2%	1	0.1%
Total	2,263		507	

(Source: report on cases of violence committed against women, Walta Information Centre, Addis Ababa, 2000; quoted in Shadow Report, op. cit.)

Tadellech H. Michael, ex-head of the Women's Affairs Bureau under the Prime Ministers' Office, attested to this. She told this author that once when the officer at a certain police station in the capital refused to accept a rape case, she personally intervened by going to the police station and introducing herself as head of the Women's Affairs Bureau. The duty police officer still refused to take the case. This has been the standard police reaction and attitude to rape, abduction and domestic violence cases throughout the country, from North to

South and from East to West. On the contrary, when the victims (women) resist and resort to violence in self-defence, the police take such cases and these cases make their way to court, though these are few.

One such celebrated case is the case of Aberash, a young girl from Arsi, Oromiya region. In Arsi, Aberash, then a schoolgirl, was abducted by a group of men upon her return from school and taken to the countryside. She was beaten severely to gain her submission, then raped by one of the men several times. After being raped, she was continuously beaten because she refused to surrender. She had been raped and beaten for seven days when one day the abductor left his rifle in the house and went out. Aberash did not hesitate to escape and to take the gun with her for self-defence. She left the house and started her way home. She was seen leaving the house and news reached her abductor that she had left on the way to her house. But, going from the country to the town was a difficult journey particularly for a young woman who was wounded in several places. Her abductor chased her and met her on the way. She then cocked her gun and warned him not to come forward. He kept coming towards her ignoring her warning. She then fired and shot him to death. She was then taken to police custody on murder charges. She was defended by the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA) and much publicity surrounded the case. (The BBC produced a video production for BBC 2). She was 'found guilty' and sentenced to years of imprisonment. EWLA appealed and this time the verdict was overturned and Aberash was freed. It is interesting here that most rape, abduction and VAW cases are not followed up by police but when the victims are men, it becomes non-customary and a legal issue. This is a clear indication that the EPRDF government has not paid any serious attention to redressing cases of VAW.

The EPRDF is reputed to insist on the 'principles' it believes in. For instance, it didn't hesitate to apply the Bolshevik slogan on the national question 'the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession' in a country where the public was not prepared for that kind of sensitive issue. However, on gender and in cases of VAW in particular, matters are left for customary laws and customary laws are allowed to have precedence over the law and the constitution. On the question of the right to secession, the article in the constitution must be respected no matter what and in fact it is on this slogan that the meaning of democracy rests, according to the EPRDF. This double standard cannot be explained in any way other than that the EPRDF has not taken gender seriously.

Domestic violence, wife beating in particular, emanates from the perception that society condones the absolute supremacy of the husband in the house. In Ethiopia, most marriages are still conjugal relationships governed by customary laws rather than a social and legal contract between a woman and a man. It follows that marriages are still enforced through customary practices and laws that uphold the superiority of the man in the house, thereby sanctifying the

slavery of the woman. It is not only the right of the man to beat his wife when 'she is in the wrong' but also his duty to do so. Because this patriarchal perception prevails in society and is sanctified even by religious leaders, most women share this perception and think that their husbands beat them for 'good reasons'. As the 2005 World Bank indicates 'It was found put that 85 percent of women "believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of the following reasons", burning food (56%), arguing with him (61%), going out without telling him (56%), neglecting the children (65%), or refusing sexual relations (51%)' (World Bank, 2005:41, see annex xi). (For further details see table in Appendix 3). As a result of such perceptions, the husband thinks that his wife is his personal slave, property that nobody has any business to interfere with. Despite its revolutionary rhetoric and its declared 'commitment' to the woman question, the EPRDF has not interfered when a great many Ethiopian women have lived through extreme forms of violence. On gender, it is the erstwhile bourgeois notion of reducing women's rights to the personal level as opposed to including the public level that is at work, not the principles ingrained in the 'woman question'.

Other forms of VAW such as female circumcision or genital mutilation, early marriage, casual rape, trafficking in women and children and violation of women's reproductive rights are rampant throughout the country and the attitude of the EPRDF to such tragedy is still apathetic. But, what are the consequences of this official apathy towards a crime that prevails throughout the country? In the case of rape, for instance, offenders get away with it so easily. Most crimes of rape do not go to court for reasons I discussed. But, even the very few that made it to the courts are not treated properly. Most rape offenders get away with bail that is so low that the offenders are not really punished. The very fact that the offender is not really punished encourages him to go back to the victim and continue harassing her or commit another crime elsewhere. As Original Wolde Ghiorghis, a well-known women rights lawyer states 'Ethiopia is the first country where rapists are released on bail and go back to harass their victims' (Reflections, 2004:90). Whether or not rapists are punished, the sentence was in most cases a few years, until very recently. As we read in *Reflections* the consequence for the victim is for a lifetime '... rapists who get punished may be only for a couple of years after which they walk away free. But the woman or the girl who was raped could be scarred for life in all forms. Apart from the psychological trauma, she could get pregnant. And since abortion is illegal in the country, she will be stuck with the child. Many of the victims are very young, uneducated and poor. In such circumstances, having one more mouth to feed for such people directly contributes to the increase in the already rampant poverty' (ibid., 90).

One life-threatening dimension to rape is the rate of HIV in the country. Ethiopia has one of the highest HIV rates in Africa. Now, rape is associated with HIV/AIDS as a number of reports indicate. Men knowing full well that they are HIV positive deliberately transmit the virus through rape or even casual sex. Rape involving

HIV constitutes a double crime as the victim will definitely die sooner or later. The legal aspect of HIV-rape cases was a very debatable issue in South Africa a few years ago. In Ethiopia, however, the legal system makes no provision for it. Although a judge presiding over a rape case can request an HIV test for the offender, it is up to the offender to agree to it. According to Original '... one setback noted in the past is that rapists do not necessarily want to undergo an HIV/AIDS test' (ibid., 87). Consequently, many rapists do not take the test despite the request by parents of victims. Therefore, the legal aspect of wilfully infecting a victim with a deadly virus is not looked at. In addition to a lifetime trauma for women victims of rape, those infected with the virus also await their death. In spite of such a state of horror, the EPRDF's policy is still characterized by apathy and neglect. It is to such disturbing official attitudes of the EPRDF that a participant at the Panos Gender Forum in Addis Ababa angrily reacted, in her own words 'A government that remains apathetic to such crimes against women should be described as an accomplice to the crime' (*Reflections*, 2001, no. 5, p. 6.)

VAW in Ethiopia effectively deprives women of their agency, their capacity/right to make their own choices both at home and in society. That is the beginning of their poverty as well as that of society, as a society that oppresses and deprives half its population of their freedom, a critical half upon which the life of every household depends, can neither be free nor prosperous. At the household level 'VAW can constrain women's choices, limit their productivity, and prevent them from bargaining effectively with their husbands or partners, all of which can undermine the health of these women and their children' (Terry, 2004: 471). At the societal level VAW has a direct impact on perpetuating poverty on society at large. Terry continues 'If we look beyond individuals and households to communities and societies at large, we see that VAW entails both actual socio-economic costs and "opportunity costs" for development. These often go unrecognized by policy makers and development practitioners' (ibid., 471). At the kernel of our criticism of the policies of the EPRDF is its official neglect that directly contributes to the deprivation of the woman's agency, her disposition to make her choices that made her prey to her husband and the patriarchal society at large. It is precisely this deprivation that constitutes the major hurdle for women's participation in the development as well as democratization processes. As Amartya Sen says 'There is nothing more important in the political economy of development than the adequate recognition of women's participation and political, economic, and social leadership' (Sen, 1999:103 quoted in Terry, ibid. 475). And Terry continues 'By curbing women's agency, in other words limiting the choices women can make, VAW puts a brake on positive social change for whole societies, as well as the women concerned and their families' (ibid., 475). Undoubtedly, this is the fundamental problem that Ethiopian women face and needless to say, this is the country's fundamental problem. It is to this fundamental problem that the EPRDF policy has remained apathetic.

In this chapter I have examined the position of Ethiopian women in society, the violence unleashed against them and the social exclusion that negatively affected their agency. I have also emphasised the crucial role that gender as a discourse/discipline plays in the process of social development and particularly in the process of the transformation of subjects to citizens and how violence and social exclusion has become a stumbling block in this process. It is also my conclusion that women being excluded from state power from time immemorial are potentially the most organic members of the nascent civil society. Without the process of gender equality in the offing and without gender as a discourse at the centre of the development paradigm, the emergence of a civil society will remain an unrealized dream.

I have also examined the policy of the EPRDF government vis-à-vis gender. My conclusion is: the EPRDF has so far adopted an apathetic attitude towards the plight of Ethiopian women and has failed to facilitate the legal and policy frameworks needed to ensure their equality and end the horrendous violence unleashed against them. The policy has a great impact on perpetrating poverty and under-development. One important factor for the country's poverty and under-development is precisely the marginalization of women to which no attention has been paid beyond enactments of rights in laws. On the other hand, it is not only the EPRDF that is to blame regarding gender. Society as a whole, both men and women, still wallow in the mire of patriarchal dungeon that bound them hand and foot, preventing the required radical perspective on social change and gender equality.

In the next chapter, I will also examine the policies of the EPRDF on other crucial areas that constitute the domains of sustainable development, namely the environment, rural development and population.

ⁱ It is well known that the great majority of Ethiopia's population is rural-based as peasants and pastoralists where the oral tradition is strong. Radio plays a crucial role in transmitting basic information and knowledge for rural communities as has been proved in so many countries in Africa notably Mali, Ghana and Southern African countries. Television can also play important role in urban areas where a great many urbanites watch. However, there is no sign of any sort of civic education as far as the government's electronic media goes. Again, it is NGOs who rent airtime from the government-owned Radio Ethiopia and try to transmit useful education on development issues such as HIV/AIDS. For Ethiopia's standing at teledensity as regards radio and television, see annex xiii.)

Chapter 8

The EPRDF vis-à-vis Ethiopia's development challenges

In this chapter I will continue examining the policies of the EPRDF government on the main development challenges facing the country, namely the environment, rural development and population. As I argued in the theoretical framework, the issues that constitute the domains of sustainable development in traditional social formations are freedom/democracy, gender, environment, children/youth and population. In this chapter, I also investigate rural development. This is mainly because Ethiopia is predominantly rural and accumulation in any sense, whether private or state, should start with the production system as well as social and political structures in the rural areas, and Ethiopia's real wealth and potential for development lies in agriculture. A strategy for economic growth or social development in Ethiopia should start with a strategy and policy for rural development. Needless to say however, that the issues categorized as the domains of sustainable development and rural development are also inter-related and inter-dependent as I will show. Let's now start with the environment.

8.1 Environment and sustainable development

In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation.

(Principle 4, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 3-14 June, 1992, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Why is the environment in general and conservation of natural resources in particular so important for impoverished and traditional countries such as Ethiopia? First, the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian population, nearly 85%, lives in the rural areas and is engaged in agriculture. Second, the rural population depends on the availability of natural resources to produce crops in the case of peasants, to raise livestock in the case of pastoralists and to hunt and gather in the case of hunters and gatherers though their numbers have now greatly dwindled. '... the majority of our people completely rely for their livelihood on what nature provides' (Shibiru, 2003: 25). Third, the rural population entirely depends on nature for firewood, energy use, construction of shelter and medicines. This dependence on natural resources exposes the livelihoods of the country's rural population to the vagaries of nature. The state of nature, such as the climate, determines the availability of natural resources upon which rural people depend for their livelihood. The state of the climate determines the availability of rain, which in turn determines availability of water. Peasants start panicking when the short rains are delayed or do not come, which affects

cultivation. Pastoralists also get worried when rains don't arrive on time and have to determine the movement pattern of their cattle, which can involve several things, including conflicts with other communities over competition for scarce water and grazing land.

In short, environment is detrimental to rural life. Environmental sustainability and/or the sustainability of the availability of natural resources determines the sustainability of rural life, the livelihoods of the rural population and the dynamics involved in the process of accumulation, which in turn determine diversification of livelihoods and so on. Most important it is detrimental to food security as Gedion states 'The availability and sustainable use of environmental resources to a large extent determine the food security situation of a country' (ibid., 43). Two things are outstanding here: availability of natural resources, and the sustainable use of them. The first is provided by nature while the latter falls within the domain of human action, their capability in knowing and putting in practice a certain level of conduct (policy) to use these resources while ensuring the continuity of their availability.

A major problem is the fact that once degradation or destruction of natural resources occurs, recovery is either impossible or extremely difficult. If a plant or animal becomes extinct, there is no return to life for it. And in a given ecosystem, of which natural resources are part, the functions of the fauna and flora make them de facto interdependent. Some cycles of life involve both the flora and fauna and once these cycles are broken and discontinued, the ecosystem will be affected and becomes depleted. Preserving the flora and fauna requires a large, expensive undertaking. From this point of view alone, preserving the environment and conserving natural resources saves humanity from the troubles that lie ahead.

Because of this determining role that the environment plays in the lives of humans, we say the environment constitutes one of the domains of sustainable development. However, problems occur when the relationship between them and nature/the environment is not balanced. People depend on the environment for their survival and therefore they 'intervene in their environment, and are affected by the resulting changes because the environment is crucial to their survival. The natural environment is useful, for example, in producing firewood, controlling pests through their natural enemies and breaking down organic wastes in water' (de Jong-Boon, 1990:1). The balance lies in whether or not people are not negatively affected by the changes they brought about in their intervention with the environment. In other words, the capacity of humans to coexist with the environment results in positive effects to them while preserving the environment and conserving the natural resources. A sustainable use of natural resources is assured in this balanced relationship and coexistence between humans and the environment.

The environment has been a subject of global concern for decades now. From the 1972 Stockholm International Conference on the Environment up to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), popularly known as Rio, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, several forums have been held to address the various problems of the environment and eventually the UN took the lead on the issue. Rio ushered in a new era in the contemporary history of the world. Coming right after the end of the Cold War and belonging to the global optimism of the time, the many nations that attended UNCED put their signatures on groundbreaking documents such as Agenda 21, the Bio-diversity Convention and more. It was at Rio and in the global action plan through Agenda 21 that the indissoluble connection between the environment and sustainable development was first recognised. Agenda 21 as well as other documents of Rio were also largely endorsed by the NGO forum that was attended by more than 30,000 NGO delegates from throughout the world. As an action plan for sustainable development, governments throughout the world were expected to take several measures to protect their environment and conserve their natural resources. However, how governments traversed in protecting the environment along the lines of Rio was to become a subject of intense debate and criticism (against governments) both five years after Rio and at the 2002 Johannesburg Earth Summit, dubbed as the World Summit on Sustainable Development or Rio + 10.

In the developing world, where industrialization has not yet prevailed over traditional formations, the overwhelming majority of the population is engaged in farming and livestock production as the mainstay of their livelihood. To such rural communities, preservation of the environment and conservation of natural resources is detrimental to human well being. That is indeed why the UN put environmental sustainability as one of its important items of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Item seven of the MDGs read, 'Ensure environmental sustainability. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources'. The table below, taken from the 2003 UNDP Human Development Report summarizes the relationship environment has with components of human well-being.

Table 10 Why reaching the environmental goal is so important for other goals [i.e. MDG Goals, MT]

Goal	Links to the environment
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Poor people's livelihoods and food security often depend on ecosystem goods and services. Poor people tend to have insecure rights to environmental resources and

	inadequate access to markets, decision-making and environmental information – limiting their capacity to protect the environment and improve their livelihoods and well-being. Lack of access to energy services also limits productive opportunities, especially in rural areas.
2. Achieve universal primary education	Time spent collecting water and wood fuel reduces time available for schooling. In addition, the lack of energy, water and sanitation services in rural areas discourages qualified teachers from working in poor villages.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	Women and girls are especially burdened by water and fuel collection, reducing their time and opportunities for education, literacy and income-generating activities. Women often have unequal rights and insecure access to land and other natural resources, limiting their opportunities and liability to access other productive assets.
4. Reduce child mortality	Diseases (such as diarrhoea) linked to unclean water and inadequate sanitation and respiratory infections related to pollution are among the leading killers of children under five. Lack of fuel for boiling water also contributes to preventable waterborne diseases.
5. Improve maternal health	Inhaling polluted indoor air and carrying heavy loads of water and fuel wood hurt women's health and can make them less fit to bear children, with greater risks of complications during pregnancy. Lack of energy for illumination and refrigeration, as well as inadequate sanitation, undermine health care, especially in rural areas.
6. Combat major diseases	Up to 20% of the disease burden in developing countries may be due to

environmental risk factors (as with malaria and parasitic infections). Preventive measures to reduce such hazards are as important as treatment – and often more cost-effective. New biodiversity-derived medicines hold promise for fighting major diseases.

8. Develop a global partnership for development

Many global environmental problems – climate change, loss of species diversity, depletion of global fisheries – can be solved only through partnerships between rich and poor countries. In addition, predatory investments in natural resources can greatly increase pressure to over-exploit environmental assets in poor countries.

Source: Human Development Report, UNDP, 2003

8.1.1 Ethiopia's environmental problems

Despite the acute environmental crisis that Ethiopia faces, the country is still endowed with conservable natural resources and is enriched with biodiversity. As Gedion attests 'The Ethiopian biodiversity is made up of an estimated total of 6500-7000 plant species of which 12 are endemic. There are also 277 terrestrial mammals, some 861 bird species, 201 species of reptiles, 63 species of amphibians, 150 species of fish and 324 butterfly species of which 31 mammals, 28 birds, 24 amphibians, 4 fish, 9 reptiles, 7 butterfly species are endemic' (ibid., 46). In the face of such biodiversity however, there has been severe environmental degradation and destruction for several decades that has now threatened the very livelihood of the rural population, which comprises 85% of the population. The rural population has reached a stage where it cannot feed itself, making Ethiopia one of the most food-insecure countries. The state of food insecurity has become so perennial that, for instance, in the face of what is officially labelled as 'a year of bumper harvest', the government still requests food aid from donors. For a long time now, and despite the most serious warnings by experts, to which I will return later, Ethiopia has indeed entered a serious environmental crisis, a crisis of no return that caused a situation of perennial food insecurity. It is in view of the acuteness of such a crisis that Shibiru Tedla wrote 'If 85% of Ethiopia's population, which lives in the rural areas and is engaged in farming and cattle breeding, cannot feed itself, we can simply decide that the magnitude of nature of the problem has no indicator and forget

the whole thing' (Shibiru, 2003: 24). But, what are Ethiopia's major environmental problems that have a direct bearing on perpetuating poverty and under-development and in which the civic sector could make a difference but is not allowed to? It is important to situate the problem in relation to poverty on the one hand and the civil society organizations could, in face of the government's apathy, do on the other in order to establish the role that freedom can play in poverty alleviation.

Deforestation and soil erosion

The single most important environmental problem that aggravates the precarious life of rural Ethiopia is deforestation. In Ethiopia, deforestation took place massively and went unchecked. Though the rate of deforestation increased with the introduction of the eucalyptus tree at the turn of the century from Australia, crop cultivation that has disappeared for centuries from the highlands and mid-highlands without due consideration to natural conservation has also played a big part. In Bhuddist culture for instance, the respect for nature and the culture of natural conservation plays an important role and has a great impact on food security. In the peasant world of Ethiopia, a culture of conservation did not exist. In the pastoral indigenous knowledge system, Environmental conservation is a cornerstone of their livelihood. What gives an additional dimension to environmental degradation is the nature of the country's topography the highlands and mid-highlands in particular.

The direct impact of deforestation is soil erosion. The functions of roots of trees in keeping the soil together and giving it a strong base is well known. Deforestation deprives the soil of that particular function and the soil will be exposed to wind and water erosion. Because of the topography of the highlands and mid-highlands 'The water that drains in this manner from every plot of land turns into streams and rivers flowing away with a full load of fertile and rich soil. When the soil is thus washed away by flooding rivers, it is not only the soil that the country loses, but also the microbes that sustain the fertility of the soil' (Shibiru, 2003: 25). As population increases in the rural areas, so does the demand for cultivable land, housing and firewood. With that the scale of deforestation increased with the concomitant increase of soil erosion. But, what is the extent of deforestation in Ethiopia?

It is estimated that the forest coverage of Ethiopia's landmass at the turn of the century was more than 40%. By 1987 it had dwindled to 5.65 by the Food and Agricultural Organisation's (FAO's) estimate (Wood, 1990:187) and by 2003 it shrunk further to a mere 0.2% (Gedion, 2003:44). Also, 87% of the highlands, where most of the population lives, were covered with broad-leafed deciduous or coniferous forests (Wood, *ibid.*, 187). The destruction of forests must also be examined against the background of population increase. With population increase the demand for additional farm plots, huts, and fuel wood increases. This results in further cutting down of trees. With the unchanging life style of the

peasantry, customs, farm technology and culture... and with a sheer lack of awareness of raising programmes, deforestation continued on a massive scale. Added to this are unceasing conflicts that result in great destruction of the biodiversity through warfare, refugees and resettlement programmes that still target cutting down trees for fuel, huts and cultivation.

The rate of Ethiopia's deforestation is alarming. In 1994, the Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan concluded that the deforestation rate in Ethiopia was 150,000 to 200,000 hectares per year. In 1967 high forest coverage was 8.8 million hectares. In 1988 that figure had dwindled to 5.4 million, a loss of 3.4 million hectares in just 21 years, that is, 162,000 hectares per year (Gedion, *ibid.*, 44). The situation is still alarming with the existing apathetic policy of the EPRDF. One of the last refuges of high forest is Gambela, but even there the picture is not promising. According to Gedion 'Future trends for Gambela Region indicate that the region will lose 32% of its high forest in the coming three decades while the estimate for Oromiya is 27% for the same period' (WBISPP in Gedion, *ibid.*, 45).

Trees have specific functions in conserving soil. Forests and vegetation also 'regulate the availability of water in rivers, springs and other water bodies'. If the soil loses that capacity, it starts to degrade and fails to retain and regulate the amount of water to be retained in the soil. That results in direct runoffs and the soil starts to erode as a consequence. That is a particular feature of Ethiopia's highlands and mid-highlands. As Wood says 'Erosion is specially severe where slopes have been cleared and when the removal of permanent vegetation from arable land creates runoff and reduced infiltration cause streams to become more intermittent and lower water-tables, both of which increase the time required to collect water in the dry season' (Wood, *ibid.*, 187). This has been a typical pattern of soil erosion in Ethiopia for several decades now.

Soil erosion also contributes to shrinkage of lakes. Lakes play a crucial role in providing water supplies to towns in Ethiopia and in generating hydroelectric power. A typical feature of the Rift Valley lakes in Ethiopia now is that they are getting dryer and dryer. Three important lakes in Eastern Ethiopia, which used to supply water to neighbouring towns and farms, have dried up, impacting heavily on people's livelihoods. Lakes Alemaya, Adele and Lange in Harrarghe, eastern Oromiya region, have dried up completely during the last two years. Lake Alemaya used to be the source of water for the historic town of Harrar and other small towns nearby. Harrar experienced a severe water crisis for over two years. Lakes Koka, Abyata and Awassa are also threatened unless drastic measures are taken immediately. But, why are these lakes drying up? Deforestation causes soil erosion, runoffs carrying a huge amount of soil with them deposits it at the bottom of the lakes. Siltation develops as a result, and starts to push the water level upwards causing a 'flood' of a sort. In appearance, the lakes look like expanding because water is overflowing from them. In fact however, that is a

typical symptom of a drying lake. (I will return to this when I discuss Lake Awassa in relation to the EPRDF's policy.)

Shortage of wood-fuel is another consequence of deforestation. That brings a heavy burden to bear on mothers and women in general as they are responsible for fetching water, because they now have to walk long distances in search of water. Shortage of wood-fuel compelled peasants to use dung and crop residues which together 'provide up to 55% of domestic energy and are the dominant fuel source for one third of the population' (Wood, *ibid.* 187-188). Burning dung has its own negative consequences for the soil. As Wood says 'The burning of this source of soil humus has led to a progressive deterioration in soil structure, infiltration capacity, moisture storage, and fertility'. It also has to have a great impact on the volume of crop production. These problems undermine the capacity of crops to withstand drought and so exacerbate variations in crop yields. Burning dung reduces the nation's crop production by an estimated 10-20 per cent. The decline in the humus content of the soil causes a further cumulative fall in crop production estimated at one per cent per annum (*ibid.*, 188). At the rate the deforestation occurs 'by 2020 the last highland forests will have disappeared'. Once the destruction has occurred, rehabilitation becomes impossible in view of the economic conditions of the country. As Woods warned in 1990 'To meet rural fuel-wood needs in 2010, and replace the use of dung as fuel, some 16 million hectares of rural fuel-wood plantations will be required, with another 1.2 million ha of forests to provide timber needs' (*ibid.*, 188).

Undoubtedly, soil erosion and land degradation are serious problems to Ethiopia's agriculture, rural livelihood food security. Several studies on land degradation have been undertaken during the last two decades. In the early 1980s, it was estimated that that 3.7 per cent of the highlands (2 million ha) had been so seriously eroded that it could not support cultivation, while a further 52 per cent of the Ethiopian highlands had suffered moderate or serious degradation (Wood, *ibid.*, 188). Woods also indicated that close to 75 per cent of the highlands are estimated to need soil conservation measures if they are to support sustained cultivation. In 1985, the Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study came to alarming conclusions. 'It concluded that over 14 million ha in the highlands were seriously eroded, some 1900 million tons of soil were annually eroded from the highlands' (Gedion, *ibid.*, 45). The increase in population in rural Ethiopia while the way of life and culture of cultivation and agriculture in general endured unchanging also placed more land under cultivation, implying less or no land for forests and grazing. In 2000, the Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project produced further alarming figures on land degradation. '... in the Amhara region 82% of the region has a soil erosion rate of less than 12.5 tons/ha/year. In Oromiya 99% of the region has a soil erosion rate of less than 10 ton/ha/year' (*ibid.*, 45). Such a massive scale of soil erosion and land degradation is taking place in a country with 85% of its population depending on these increasingly depleting resources for their livelihoods. M. Constable has

good reason to conclude that 'the highlands of Ethiopia contain one of the largest ecological degradations in Africa, if not in the world' (quoted in Tereffe, 1990:21).

Apart from such blatant apathy on the part of successive governments in Ethiopia towards environmental degradation which contributed much to poverty and under-development, mal-governance led to political conflicts and armed insurrections and war situations have continued unabated in the country for the last three hundred years. Conflicts led to resettlement by refugees who fled their homesteads. To mitigate political and 'famine problems', the Derg and EPRDF governments also ventured into ill-prepared re-settlement schemes that involved movement of people from areas that are already highly degraded to new, uncultivated areas. The refugees go to these new areas with their farming culture, attitude towards the environment and with no security of tenure on the land they work on. Hence the vicious cycle of environmental crisis.

Although the major environmental problem that is directly associated with the processes of poverty and under-development is deforestation that results in soil erosion and land degradation, other problems still contribute to environmental degradation. The major problem is the national policies of successive governments on rural development. First, the failure of the agriculture policy to generate growth in the sector that led to the degenerated state of agriculture. Problems of land tenure are crucial and are at the heart of this problem. During the imperial period, land tenure was extremely exploitative and turned the peasant to a pauper that perished when famine hit Wollo and Tigray in 1973. The Derg made land state owned but the problem of food insecurity was not solved and, in fact, the country suffered a second major famine in 1984-85. This was far more serious and extensive than that of 1973. Under the EPRDF, more than 14 people million were in need of food aid in 2002 with a much bigger part of the population affected than in 1984-85. But, environmental degradation continues, governments didn't learn from the neglect displayed by their predecessors to the problem, subsequently poverty sustained.

The other major environmental problem is still policy-related, namely the policies of the various governments on land tenure that constrained the diversification of livelihood systems for the rural poor. This will also be discussed extensively in relation to the EPRDF's policies.

The second major problem that is associated with environmental degradation is population increase. The issue of population will be dealt with separately. Mentioning it here will suffice.

8.1.2 The EPRDF and the environment: policy and performance

As you are probably aware, this is a most serious issue [conservation of natural resources, MT] in Ethiopia. In some ways the problem has already reached crisis proportions with regard to: a) the loss of soil through erosion, b) the destruction of forests, c) the destruction of wild life, d) the rapid diminution of utilizable water supplies. ... There is sufficient evidence to show that, unless serious steps are taken, not only will desert conditions develop rapidly in various parts of Ethiopia but, important national resources will disappear ... The question of conservation is usually the subject of a great deal of talk but very little action. It is clear also that really effective measures must be based on a wide spread understanding of a spirit of co-operation among the population (Geoffrey C. Last, Nov. 1966, quoted in Gedion, 2003: 43).

G. C. Last made this statement not now, not even at the time of the Derg, but forty years ago. In his capacity as advisor to the ministry of education and as a geographer wrote this in a memorandum to the vice minister of education on the subject of a campaign on the conservation of natural resources. Probably, Last was the first to utter a serious warning to the government in office. As we will see, such serious warnings have emanated from several natural resource management experts as well as environmentalists and are still forthcoming. This is the third government to reside in the imperial palace in Addis Ababa since Last expressed his warnings, but the response of governments has been negligible. As Gedion says 'What is striking is [that] almost four decades later we are talking about the same issues and probably the solutions currently being recommended may not be much different from what was recommended then' (ibid., 43). Similar to issues of freedom/democracy, gender and rural development, the scope and content of the discourse on environment has been repeated for the last three to four decades. This provides another dimension to the development discourse in Ethiopia, namely issues that determine Ethiopia's development have not budged, mainly due to lack of concern. Why this is happening is what I am going to return to in the concluding part of this study.

Performance

Investigating the performance of the EPRDF on the environment should start with its perception. Starting as a Maoist grouping with a strong Stalinist orientation, the notion of environmental protection and conservation of nature did not exist in the minds of the Maoist revolutionaries. The founder of the TPLF, Aregawi Berehe, confirms this assertion. He flatly admitted during the interview I had with him that the TPLF had no idea about protecting the environment either at the time of its formation or even much later when it overthrew the military government (interview, December 2004). Dr. Negasso Gidada, the first president of the country under the EPRDF and currently a member of the federal parliament, confirms Aregawi's assertion. According to Negasso, the perception did not even change after Rio (interview, January 2006). As on gender and democracy, the EPRDF's rhetoric on the environment seems to emanate from donor's funding requirements. As the NGO activist I interviewed asserts, 'The EPRDF's 'concern' for the environment originates from donors' requirements for

development funding. It is only to display that environment is its agenda ...' (interview, 2006). It is necessary to link this lack of awareness on and concern for the environment with their initial notion of rural development, to which I will return later. For the time being, however, it is important to underline the fact that the TPLF/EPRDF perception of rural development did not include conservation of nature. That leads us in turn to conclude that the TPLF/EPRDF had no notion of sustainable development either. It is also noteworthy here that by the time the TPLF/EPRDF was conducting an armed struggle, the issue of the environment and sustainable development was a full-blown discourse within the development community, academic circles and politicians. The Stockholm International Conference on the Environment took place in 1972, almost twenty years before the EPRDF came to power. The TPLF/EPRDF was simply not connected to the contemporary development discourse. We need to establish from the outset that this is not an instance of isolated ignorance and neglect by the environment but a pattern of thought that cuts across all the domains of sustainable development: gender, environment, population and rural development.

Much to the benefit of the EPRDF in terms of awareness on the environment, the Rio Summit was held in 1992, one year after it came to power. In fact the UN decision to hold the Summit and initial documents to this effect appeared much earlier. The EPRDF had ample time and opportunity to acquaint itself with the issues of environment and sustainable development. Nevertheless, it sent a high level delegation to the Rio Summit, led by the then Prime Minister, Tamrat Layne. Upon their return, a Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection was established.

Apart from the necessity of a viable institution on the environment, laws and policies are also crucial. Very little has been done in this regard. The State of Environment Report for Ethiopia issued by the Environmental Protection Authority in 2003, states that three laws have been enacted on the environment: proclamation for the Establishment of Environmental Protection (2002), Environmental Pollution Control Proclamation (2002) and Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation (2002). It is interesting to note that all three proclamations were enacted in the same year.

In addition, Ethiopia is signatory to some international conventions on the environment. These include Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified in 1994), The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (ratified in 1997), The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (ratified in 1996), Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified in 1994), The Basel Convention (ratified in 2002), The Stockholm Convention (ratified in 2002), The Rotterdam Convention (ratified in 2002) and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (ratified in 1970). As clear from the above, the EPRDF has ratified more international conventions than enacting new laws urgently needed for the protection of the environment in the country such as a law on the protection of forests.

Gaps

As in its performance on gender, there are still great gaps in the EPRDF's perceptions, policies and laws on the environment. These are simply too far off the extremely critical needs of the country in terms of conservation of nature. These gaps relate to institutional arrangements corresponding to the official rhetoric about conservation and environment, capacity of the existing institutions, the EPRDF's attitude towards NGOs that are engaged in environmental issues and natural conservation projects and official neglect.

The gaps in the government's performance on the environment and conservation must be measured against the background of the fact that the environment is pivotal to sustainable development. Two lines of arguments arise. First, what the perception of the EPRDF on sustainable development is and whether or not it takes the environment as its crucial component. Second, even if the EPRDF is serious about the environment, has it put the necessary laws/policies and the institutional mechanism in place to enforce them? Answers to these questions reveal the erstwhile characteristic feature of the EPRDF's rule; disparity between rhetoric and practice. It follows from this that if this disparity between rhetoric and practice prevails across disciplines, one has to ask if this is really a problem of implementation on the part of the government bureaucracy or a serious lack of capacity on the part of the political leadership?

A comparison between the performance of Uganda and Ethiopia on the environment indicates the serious gap at the level of political leadership. As Kilfe Lemma noted, a study regarding implementation of Uganda's environmental protection plan indicates that between 1995 and 2001 Uganda achieved a measure of progress compared to a number of other African countries and provides us with the following table.

Table 11 Comparative Table of Environmental Performance in Selected Areas (Uganda vs. Ethiopia)

Activity	Uganda (1995-2001)	Ethiopia (1997-2003)
<i>Policy Framework</i>	Approved	Approved
<i>Legislative Framework</i>	Approved and being implemented	Rejected
<i>Institutional Framework</i> National Level Regional/District Level	Exist NEMA and ELUs in 12 ministries established and being strengthened	Exist Exist in some regions but not comprehensive
Woreda/Sub-county Level	Exist (in 45 districts)	Do not exist

<i>Awareness raising Action Plan</i>	Awareness Raising and Education Action Plan in Place and Being Implemented	Does not exist
<i>Capacity Building</i> <i>Guidelines User Manuals</i> Guidelines for Environmental Auditing User Manual of Economic Instruments Guidelines for Integrating Environmental Concerns into Development Projects (environment economics and valuation of natural resources) Guidelines for Inspectors <i>Training</i>	Prepared and Being Used Prepared Prepared and being used Training in EIA, Auditing, Monitoring and Inspection, Preparation of Environmental Action Plans for line agencies as well as District Environmental Organs being applied. Training for judges, the police and prosecutors provided	Do not exist Do not exist Do not exist Training in Communications, EIA, Project proposal preparation. PRA, Environmental Reporting, Strategic Planning, Environmental Economics, Gender and Environmental management provided
<i>Sectoral Policy review</i>	Not much	None
<i>Sectoral Environment Legislative Review</i> Water Resources administration Wildlife Forest Mining	Reviewed and updated Reviewed and updated Being reviewed Being Drafted	Not reviewed Not reviewed Not reviewed Not reviewed
<i>Cross-sectoral laws & Environmental Management Tools</i> Pollution Control laws and regulations EIA Regulations and Guidelines Environmental Audit Regulations Environmental Quality Standards for discharges	Exist for land and water and are operational Are in place and operational Were being drafted In place and operational Drafts awaiting approval	Law in place. Draft regs. For industrial discharges into air, water and land exist In place but not operational Not being drafted Exist in draft form Exist in draft for water, air and soil

into water Noise, soil and air quality standards		
<i>Environmental Action Plan</i>	About Eleven District Environmental Plans are being implemented (three still in the process of formulation)	RCSs action plans exist but are not really being implemented
<i>Co-ordination of Integrated Environmental Planning and Implementation</i>	Weak	Weak
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	Weak	Weak
<i>Revision of Framework Policy</i>	Not carried out	Not carried out
<i>Civil Society Advocacy and Activism</i> NGOs Professional Associations	Quite strong and National level Some	Low Low
<i>Private Sector Awareness and Involvement</i>	Relatively strong	Not strong

Source: Kifle Lema, 2004

Institutional gaps

The first institution under the EPRDF to take care of the business of conservation of nature and the environment was, as mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection, which was established in 1993. In 1995, the EPRDF proclaimed Proclamation No. 9/1995 upon which the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) was established as the principal institution to deal with the environment and nature conservation. Although the proclamation is commendable, the relegation of the institution from a ministry to a mere authority, as the NGO activist mentioned, is a major departure from the initial attitude that prevailed after Rio. The law that set up the EPA has, however, flaws including lack of clarity on a number of provisions. The major weakness of the law is the fact that it does not 'provide the Authority with strong powers required for effective co-ordination and regulation' (Kifle, in FSS, 2004:8, and Getachew and Demele, 2000:17).

Also, unlike ministries, the EPA has no nation-wide structure down to the level of wereda to enforce the 1995 law and implement the environmental policy proclaimed in 1997. As Getachew and Demele say '...the EPA is not yet structured down to the regional level' (Getachew and Demele, *ibid.*, 17). Nor does the law state that the EPA can build up the required structure. Instead, the EPA was required to enforce the law and implement the policy 'in consultation with the competent agencies' or 'provide advice to the competent agencies' (*ibid.*, 8). The supposedly 'competent agencies' are the various ministries that have

branches in the various regions and environmental bureaus of the regional administrations. Without going into the issue of whether or not these institutions are really 'competent', delegating the power that was supposed to be that of the EPA to the various institutions whose main concern is not the environment, has caused a major institutional gap. As Kifle noted in his critique of the government's performance 'As a result EPA appears to be unable to secure a responsive relationship based on the force of the law and depends only on appealing to cajoling the regions to accept its own institutional duties and responsibilities' (ibid., 8).

As Bromley argues '... policy response may be misdirected if the primary cause is laid on population growth while the real cause of natural resource destruction lies in a failure to create institutional mechanisms for the management of the same' (Bromley in Getachew and Demele, ibid., 20).

Legal framework

Although the 1995 law and the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (EPE) enacted in 1997 are major breakthroughs as general laws and policy, there are still laws that have not yet been enacted on issues that are detrimental to the environment and poverty eradication, such as a law on forests. The biggest environmental disaster of the country emanates from the massive deforestation that has been going on for decades. From an estimated 40% coverage of the landmass at the turn of the century, Ethiopia's forest coverage has now been reduced to 2.3%. This is one area that urgently requires a law. Also, as Kifle observed, the implementation of the policy was slower than it was supposed to be. In the meantime, writes Kifle, 'actions that may result in serious damage to the environment will continue unabated' (ibid., 8). It should not be a surprise if environmental degradations as a result of deforestation continue on a massive scale and lakes continue to dry up under the nose of regional administrations directly contributing to drought, famine and poverty.

As a result of such serious institutional gaps and lack of a legal framework, problems and lack of co-ordination of work between the EPA and the other government institutions in terms of action planning and implementation is only natural. In the meantime, environmental degradation continues; so does poverty and under-development.

Ethiopia's worst record in the area of environmental protection has also been confirmed by well known environmental institutions such as the UNDP, the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy at Yale University (US), Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University (US) and Conservation International. In a 2005 report issued jointly by the Yale Center for Environmental Stewardship and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy of Columbia University known as the Environmental Sustainability Index, Ethiopia

ranks 135, ahead only nine countries (2005 Environmental Sustainability Index :22). This record must be seen against the background of Ethiopia being one of the few ecosystem spots rich with unique flora and fauna found only in this country. Conservation International also confirms that Ethiopia is fast losing its unique biodiversity. In a report it issued recently, it categorized 34 biodiversity spots in the world as Biodiversity Hotspots that are losing their biodiversity. Among them is the region of the Horn of Africa, of which Ethiopia constitutes an important part. 'The arid Horn of Africa' the report says 'has been a renowned source of biological resources for thousands of years. One of only two hotspots that are entirely arid, the area is home to a number of endemic and threatened antelope species and more endemic reptiles than any other region in Africa. The Horn is also one of the most degraded hotspots in the world, with only about 5 percent of its original habitats remaining' (Conservation International, 2005:2).

The EPRDF versus micro and grassroots interventions

In natural resource conservation, the role of governments is crucial. Needless to say that macro intervention in this respect is pivotal. However, governments' intervention in natural resources conservation must be seen from the general perspective of what the role of governance in this respect should be.

The EPRDF's attitude towards NGOs working in environmental issues and conservation projects is a reflection of its general attitude on the non-state sector in general and on the NGOs in particular. It is characterized by hostility and non-co-operation. This attitude has hardened and is becoming quasi-official after the 2005 elections in which the government blamed NGOs' 'propaganda' for contributing to its defeat.

In natural conservation processes and environmental protection, certain measures can only be taken at the macro level, in countries like Ethiopia. The damage already caused to Ethiopia's environment and natural resources definitely require therapeutic (curative) measures wherever retrieving the natural species, whether plant or animal, is possible. This is the area most NGOs are involved in, trying to cure the problem as related to the immediate needs of rural communities affected by the deterioration of the natural flora and fauna. However, such interventions cannot guarantee the use of natural resources in a sustainable way as the interventions are dealing with symptoms of the overall problem. Addressing the root causes of the problem is crucial. That requires 'a preventive policy and strategy' as an NGO activist put it (interview, January 2006). According to this activist, the environmental problem in Ethiopia has reached such a critical point that it is absolutely essential to move from therapeutic measures to prophylactic (preventive) ones. Drastic measures have to be taken to conserve the natural resources of the country and protect the environment. Macro economic policies and rural development policies must take natural conservation as the cornerstone of their strategy. More than 80% of Ethiopia's population depends on what nature provides and it is only natural to

preserve this resource and strategize to use it in a sustainable manner until industrialization takes over. The NGO activist argues that as industrialization is something that can be achieved in the long-term time, it is necessary to adopt a strategy of sustainable use of the natural resources. He mentions eco-tourism, bee-keeping, incense and gum Arabic productions as areas that can generate income for the country without causing imbalance of what is left of the eco-system.

This is where a correct perception of the environment and sustainable development, the capacity to deliver and the institutional arrangements required on the part of the government are critical. In the eyes of the NGO activist, the government doesn't and cannot meet these strategic requirements. That is indeed why the work has to be done by the NGO sector. That in turn requires a strong institution on the part of NGOs such as a huge umbrella network that can address the problem from a macro perspective. The attitude of the government in this is crucial. Does the government allow such intervention by NGOs? According to this NGO activist, 'that is why the government's policy on NGOs is the biggest and most serious problem' (interview, 2006). Here we are confronted by a classic dilemma caused by the EPRDF that runs not only across the domains of sustainable development, gender, environment, rural development and population but also across all other development issues: *either it cannot deliver all by itself as it professes or does not let the non-state sector to do the work.*

Obviously, the EPRDF doesn't want to give space to NGOs in natural conservation work although NGOs are doing a lot of work in this regard even in providing short-term training programmes on natural conservation for government staff at the woreda level as Care Ethiopia does in the Awash valley (Awash Conservation and Development Project II Terminal Report, 2005). However, as the NGO activist noted to me, the prevailing perception in government circles is that 'NGOs should operate at the micro level only' (interview, 2006). As the head of the zonal office in Gewane, Afar, personally told me, NGO intervention beyond the micro level is unthinkable. That seals the possibility of macro intervention by an NGO umbrella/network. The dilemma is, the EPRDF is not doing what it should at the macro level.

One of the major civic interventions is that of the community in the conservation of nature. In many societies, there are traditional knowledge systems that value protecting the environment and have done so for centuries. In Thailand and other countries in the Far East, Buddhist culture provides that knowledge and experience. In Sub-Saharan Africa, pastoral communities and women at large play important role in protecting the environment. Pastoral communities have a rich knowledge system in protecting the environment. In countries like Ethiopia where the institutions of governance have not yet given rise to a state and where the institutional mechanism to manage the conservation of nature is lacking, it is crucial to empower communities in the protection of the environment. Various farming communities in Ethiopia also have rich knowledge systems in preserving

the environment. Referring to Dessalegn Rahmato's writings that records the best conservation practices of the Konso and Gamo peoples, Getachew and Demelew also conclude that 'All these arguments stand in support of the need for the promotion of indigenous environmental management practices and institutionalization of local authority systems (empowerment of local communities accompanied by a scheme to enable them to benefit from surrounding natural resources which used to have been considered as threats in the form of eviction)' (ibid., 20).

In a political system and structure such as that of the EPRDF, where the institutions of governance are weak in terms of being responsive to society's needs, community-based natural conservation mechanisms are crucial for the preservation of the environment. Pastoral communities have rich conservation practices in their own indigenous knowledge systems. Even if the EPRDF pays attention to the environment, conservation of nature cannot be conducted by governments alone. Communities' participation is crucial. In this regard, provision of information is the key to community participation. Information enables communities to be knowledgeable about several forms of environmental degradation, be aware of their rights in conservation and what to do in case of violations of the law or policy on the environment. That is indeed why this principle was highlighted at the Earth Summit in Rio. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration states 'Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided' (Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, 1992).

The EPRDF's record in this respect is abysmal. It has a comprehensive media apparatus, including electronic media such as radio and television. In Ethiopia where the rate of illiteracy is high, radio and television can play a crucial role in transmitting information-based knowledge that can be used by rural and urban communities. Basic and elementary information on environmental protection could be transmitted with a strong influence on conservation. However, as the environment does not really constitute its agenda, the EPRDF has never been engaged in providing such information and awareness. Most of the content of the electronic media is either political propaganda for the regime or entertainment. Development communication or information on development in general is simply unknown by the EPRDF.

This brings us to the question of the role of governance in environmental protection. Governments play their rightful role in the conservation of nature. A country may be rich or poor in natural resources. Abundance in natural resources

'does not necessarily translate into wealth for the poor. To make nature a source of prosperity for poor communities requires supportive governance conditions: policies and laws that protect the rights of the poor, coupled with responsive institutions that promote their interests. Even where highly-valued resources are not present, the patterns and institutions of governance are usually the critical factor determining how effectively the poor can harness ecosystems for their livelihoods' (World Resources, 2005:55). In other words the issue of democracy is right at the centre of the issue here. Democracy is not just about holding elections every four or five years. It should mean more than that. It should mean taking the plight of the poor into consideration and putting a proper mechanism in place to enable the poor to channel their grievances. It should also mean enabling academics, think-tanks and civic groups to 'review official documents, and involvement on official processes, such as environmental impact assessment' (ibid., 71). In the Ethiopian context, it should also mean enabling communities, civic groups and individuals involved in natural conservation practices and facilitating the legal as well as administrative conditions for their participation. However, the practice and policy of the EPRDF is diametrically opposed to this approach.

Official neglect

That the EPRDF has neglected conservation and the environment is starkly displayed in individual cases of the destruction of the environment. A 2005 report by Conservation International affirms that neglect on the part of the government towards the environment in general and even in preserving the government-run national parks has greatly contributed to the depletion and in some cases disappearance of some rare animal and plant species found only in the highlands of Ethiopia. '... the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization (EWCO) was established in 1964 with the assistance of international conservation organizations, the EWCO is plagued by the lack of resources and legislations ...' (The Reporter, 19/02/05).

To support our argument on prevalence of official neglect on the environment, suffice it to mention the extremely frightening situation of drying up of the lakes along the Rift Valley. Lakes Abyata and Shalla are dangerously being depleted of the quantity of their water mainly due to the siphoning of water for a soda factory. The case of Lake Alemaya is a classic case of official neglect and the ineptness of the government. Lake Alemaya was one of the largest lakes along the Rift Valley, supplying water to nearby communities including big towns such as Harrar. However, after decades of unchecked build up of silt, the lake finally dried up completely in 2005. A smaller lake nearby called Adele had long dried up. A third lake along the Addis Ababa-Dire Dawa route called Lake Lange, not very far from Alemaya, also dried up recently. These are not isolated cases but a clear case of a pattern of environmental change disastrous to human life and biodiversity.

The cause of the drying up lakes is the expansion of human cultivation and livestock grazing. Deforestation took place extensively to facilitate land for cultivation. On top of population pressure and because of the land tenure system characterized by government ownership that caused tenure insecurity, peasants don't take good care of the land. As a result, depletion of vegetation weakens the state of the soil and soil erosion occurs. When the rain washes the soil downstream, it ends up in rivers and lakes. After decades of such processes the silt that developed beneath elevates the water level and enlarges the surface area of the lake when water flows out of the lake as a result. This process appears as if a gradual flooding occurs because it appears that too much water is flowing out of the lake. In fact however, what is happening is exactly the opposite. The water flows over gradually because the silt elevates the water level. Finally, there will be no space to hold the water in what was once a lake. That is a classic case of the process of drying up of a lake.

The impact of the demographic transformation of these lakes is immense. For instance, during the 2002 drought, electricity rationing was introduced in the capital, Addis Ababa. The official explanation attributes the problem to the capacity of the Koka dam to generate electricity because the water level in Lake Koka has fallen because of the drought. In fact, independent experts who had previously worked on the project, argued at the time that the problem was not really the low level of water as there had been drought periods previously. The problem was that the silt that was developing beneath the lake, had not been cleaned for over thirty years.

A few years ago, the EPRDF government started to panic when a water shortage in Harrar occurred as a result of the low level of Lake Alemaya. Officially, the machine that pumps water to the reservoir was blamed for not performing well. Apparently, government officials in the region had no clue of what was happening. In a country with a history of drought and famine, awareness of the degradation of the environment should have been an absolute precondition to be a government official. Even when the depletion of the lake was at its critical stage to be saved with a swift government intervention, nothing was done except watching the lake dying.

Now, next in line to dry up is Lake Awassa, the second largest lake in the country. A 2005 study commissioned by SOS Sahel, a local NGO, and conducted by Delta Consultancy, has produced alarming findings regarding the current state of the lake and its future. The elevation level of the lake has increased to the extent that enlargement of its surface area is already taking place. According to this study '...the surface of Lake Awassa has increased by 1,237 hectares in three and half decades ... The Lake's surface area, according to computations from the 2001 satellite photograph, is 9,596 hectares, occupying about 6.5% of the catchment. In three-and-a-half decades, Lake Awassa recorded a horizontal surface increment of 1,237 hectares with per annum expansion of 34.4 hectares' (SOS Sahel, 2005:40, 56). The study also finds that

on the western portion of the elevation the difference in the catchment is 5.40 meters.

The Lake Awassa catchment is one of the most populous regions in Southern Ethiopia. Cultivation intensified for the last three decades that resulted in the clearing of forests. In terms of area 'The proportion of cultivated land accounted for 33.0% of the total area in 1965 and increased to 47% in 2001. During the period, the size of land newly converted to cultivation each year amounted close to 680 hectares. However, the tradition of food crop production for the growing population in the area caused damage to 42.0% of the vegetation that existed in 1965. Moreover, the semi-pastoral nature of occupation involving higher per capita livestock holding put incremental pressure on available vegetation. Meanwhile, in areas west of Lake Awassa, both dense woodlands and open bushy woodlands completely disappeared as a result of simultaneous expansion of cultivation activities and increased encroachments of settlements into the vegetation-rich flat lands' (ibid., 58). The disappearance of the vegetation in the area is also mentioned by the local people to be attributed to 'the effect of land fragmentation, particularly in individual farm plots ... average size of farmland per household has been as low as 0.58 hectare' (ibid., 59). These findings are indeed pointers to the direction where the current state of environmental degradation is going to result in. Definitely, Lake Awassa is going to meet the same fate as Lake Alemaya and others before it unless something drastic is done to prevent the disaster.

Undoubtedly, environment and conservation of natural resources is pivotal not only to Ethiopia's sustainable development but even to the existence of its population. Needless to say that a development policy and strategy of economic growth for Ethiopia that doesn't make the conservation of natural resources as its point of departure can neither bring development nor reduce poverty. On the contrary, as we saw above, environment and conservation of natural resources is neither an agenda nor concern for the EPRDF. Additionally, grave warnings on the danger of deterioration and destruction of the environment have emanated from experts since 1967, when G. C. Last first indicated the serious nature of the problem. Neither the imperial government nor the military regime heeded to these warnings.

The EPRDF's attitude towards these warnings and the many serious ones after 1991 is similar to that of its predecessors. In fact, what makes the EPRDF's neglect more notable is the fact that the Rio Summit on the environment and sustainable development took place one year after it came to power. In other words, the EPRDF is better placed than its predecessors to be acquainted with the gravity of the problem and the many possible solutions advanced by experts and institutions both at home and from the international community. It is of no value for a government to have vocal individuals leading the principal government institution on the environment if these people and their institutions have no power to enforce laws and policies to protect the environment. Also, the

fact that the warnings of experts fell on deaf ears in the face of massive poverty and food insecurity also indicates that the EPRDF's problem is not just a 'problem of implementation' but also a serious problem of lack of capacity. The EPRDF is well known for saying it has 'wonderful' policies but its problem is implementation. As we have seen above, the EPRDF has not produced important laws on the environment relevant to the country, it has not set up the required institutions, and the EPA is a toothless institution. All these indicate that it has a serious problem of policy and orientation.

In addition to the incapability of the EPRDF, lack of policy and orientation, the fact that the EPRDF presides over a general state of unfreedom constitutes a fundamental problem. As we saw above, control over the peasantry and pastoralists is serious and devastating as far as releasing the capabilities of the rural population is concerned. Because of the prevalence of the Derg type of control, the rural population is fearful of organizing itself without the approval of the government administration. Government administrations don't approve any rural co-operation on issues of the environment. It simply doesn't fall within the EPRDF policy. The manager of the Environmental Protection Authority, Dr. Tewolde Gebre-Egziabher, confirms this. 'The government should support the organizational capabilities of rural people for the purpose of the protection of the environment. Rural people think that getting organized independently is dangerous, (i.e. for fear of persecution by the government; MT). The government should support them to get organized' (interview with ETV, 2005). In other words, freedom should prevail in order to revitalize the capabilities of rural people to take issues of development into their own hands. This is also connected with the role individual and collective freedom play.

According to Tewolde, the fundamental obstacle for Ethiopia's environmental problems is the 'ignorance of the successive governments of Ethiopia and their meddling in matters that they have no knowledge about. Because of their condescending attitude they destroyed the capabilities of the rural population to preserve the environment' (ibid.). Such attitude has created a huge gulf between government and the people. Asked what the solution in this respect is, Tewolde affirmed that, 'The government should listen to what the people have to say on the environment. It should only affirm their role and only complement their endeavours with the kind of assistance that the people need' (ibid.). One has only to extend this observation to the governments' approach towards other development issues.

8.2 Rural development

The question of rural development is indissolubly linked to the environment. Rural development is crucial for Ethiopia as more than 85% of its population live and work in the rural areas and depend on the natural resources available for their survival. In short, Ethiopian society is predominantly agricultural and engaged in crop cultivation as in the case of peasants and livestock production

as in the case of pastoralists. Both peasants and pastoralists work extremely hard to make ends meet. However, both communities have long become captives of government policies on the one hand and of recurrent drought on the other, thereby becoming perpetually food insecure. Ethiopia is well known for its famine and conflicts. Drought does not necessarily lead to famine, but why does it always happen in Ethiopia? Is the state of rural poverty, food insecurity and the occurrence of famine related to other factors such as freedom, democracy and the process of the emergence of a civil society? In this section, I will analyse what rural development should mean for Ethiopia, discuss the environmental and gender dimensions of rural development, reflect on strategies crucial to Ethiopia's rural development and then pass on to a critique of the EPRDF's strategy of rural development, namely the Agricultural Development-led Industrialization (ADLI) and briefly glance at the successes in Chinese rural development which, according to EPRDF officials, serves as a point of reference to ADLI.

Let's start with what constitutes rural Ethiopia. The EPRDF, official documents and even some within the civic sector including think tanks, refer only to the peasantry when they mention agriculture and rural development. However, there are three traditional societies in Ethiopia with their distinct mode of production, namely the peasantry that constitutes the majority, pastoralists that comprise roughly 15% of the population and hunters and gatherers who are few in number. The peasantry is engaged in small-scale farming, while pastoralists are engaged in livestock production, both leading a very precarious life. The peasant sector is not only precarious but also usually hit by sporadic famine and lives in a perpetual situation of food insecurity. On the other hand, Ethiopia had the largest number of cattle per head in Africa until Sudan took over recently. Because of cultural bias towards pastoralism reflected in macro-economic policies, Ethiopia's livestock wealth has not been considered as national wealth.

Poverty in rural Ethiopia has made the lives of communities precarious. Several factors contribute to this state of affairs, including macro policies, lack of freedom and democracy, environmental degradation, climate change and so on. Rural development in Ethiopia should mean reversing this trend. It should mean a radical change in the lifestyle of rural communities, it should mean empowering them so that they can disengage themselves from total dependence on nature. Empowerment in this sense connotes a multitude of factors, including putting political structures in place and their accountability to rural communities, broadening the scope of freedom and democracy, institutions of governance assuming the role of a regulator than a ruler, releasing rural communities from the social inertia inhibiting them from participation, empowering women socially and politically, expanding education both formal and civic and expanding health services. Rural development cannot be just surplus grain production by the smallholder peasant.

Rural development cannot take place in a vacuum. The environment dimension is pivotal to rural development. If more than 85 percent of Ethiopia's population is rural and entirely depends on what nature provides for them, conserving nature and the environment is the first step forward. At the rate that environmental degradation is taking place in the form of soil erosion, deforestation and drying up of lakes and springs, it is important to estimate how long what remained of the natural resources can sustain rural life. As pastoral indigenous knowledge system has it but put in the language of development discourse, there has to be a balance between the use of natural resources and the ecosystem. Imbalance in this relationship causes degradation, which in most cases is irretrievable. Rural population cannot sustain life under continuous degradation and against the background of population increase. Against the background of enormous social, political, economic problems and the alarming rate of environmental degradation, one can imagine how enormous and multidimensional the undertaking to mitigate the structural problems of Ethiopia's rural development can be. What should be done? And how?

8.2.1 Strategic considerations

Let us start with strategic considerations. Rural Ethiopia was immensely complicated when the Derg was defeated in 1991. This complication arose out of the state of the civil war and involvement of various political actors, the over-centralization of the economy, the prevalence of an extreme form of poverty, environmental degradation, the oppression of women, a high rate of population growth and social lethargy. Also, political lethargy among the rural population in particular prevailed as a result of the 17 years of terrorist rule by the Derg. Now, when conceptualizing a rural development strategy in such a socio-political setting, it is indeed absolutely essential to take these complications into consideration. These particularities of the conditions of rural Ethiopia inform us that the main issue in Ethiopia's rural development is not only economic, but more social and political. This will be obvious when the issue of poverty is conceptualized in Ethiopia's rural setting.

'Poverty is not just economic but so multi-faceted and comprehensive that it embodies several elements. The peoples of Ethiopia were (and are) poor not only because of material deprivation but also because they were deprived of their ability to have a say and make choices about the very factors that condition and determine their daily lives' (Melakou, 2004:47). The issue of poverty is fundamentally political as it is an issue of deprivation of the fundamental rights of the dispossessed to do something about matters that affect her/his daily life. The dispossessed is alienated by the 'state' that uses coercion to prevent the poor from being involved in its own affairs. This deprivation influences social and economic relationships. The social and economic consequences are only reflections of the political relationship characterized by repression and marginalization. The political is the key to social and economic problems. This is

the first consideration when a strategy of rural development is designed for Ethiopia.

The Derg chose what it thought was a socialist economy with nationalization of means of production, land and other properties. Under such a misguided policy it even nationalized ordinary bars in Addis Ababa. The state control of the economy was absolute. Such over-centralization characterized the economy of Ethiopia under the Derg. In addition to the political repression, what stifled life in rural Ethiopia is also the presence of the state in the rural economy and in land in particular. To develop the market and market forces, it was essential to change the over-centralized state of the rural economy and the disengagement of the state from the land. This should not, however, go against the wishes of the immediate producers as we shall see.

Having passed through two major famines in 1974 and 1984-5 and recurrent droughts causing food shortages, a strategy of rural development must first of all focus on acquiring food security. From this perspective, a strategic choice between market and collective constitutes a luxury for rural Ethiopia to contemplate. 'As a matter of choice as to economic policy, the Ethiopian social formation was not in a position to afford the luxury of the choice between a market and command economy, as the issue was and still is one of survival. Market and command economies at the macro level need not be dichotomized. Developing the market and the forces of the market is an unavoidable economic policy, without writing off any of the economic associations that are still viable and useful for ordinary rural people' (ibid. 47). Ideological considerations such as these have no place in a society that is in a precarious situation, as is rural Ethiopia. Besides, Ethiopia, being 90% rural, cannot choose the collective option strategically without exhausting the historical course in which the determination and choice for the futility or advantages of the market should be made first and foremost by society itself. In short, such choice between market and the collective is an issue of the future that in turn depends on the development of democratic social and political relations.

Towards a strategy of rural development

In view of the above, some important components constitute a rural development strategy for Ethiopia. A rural development strategy that Ethiopia's rural social formation and the historical state of the economy can afford is *disengagement of the rural population from the land*. What Ethiopia needs is a strategy that enables the rural population to disengage from the land, peasants from the farm plots and pastoralists from perpetual dependence on grazing land and water points. The rural population must be transformed from the state it has been in for thousands of years to a state of economy characterized by small scale commodity production, exchange and accumulation. The strategy must enable as much of the rural population as possible to become other types of producers such as petty traders, artisans, carpenters, producers in co-operatives, and so forth. This

strategy must not be seen to succeed in isolation from other sectors such as the development of the modern sector. Rural development cannot take place without the simultaneous development of the modern sector.

8.2.2 The peasant world

Livelihood diversification or primitive accumulation

This transformation strategy requires in the first place the process of disengagement of rural communities from the erstwhile drudgery of rural life. This can only be achieved through a strategy of livelihood diversification or primitive accumulation. A policy based on such a strategy must enable peasants and pastoralists to diversify their means of livelihood, gradually shifting from their main occupation (farming in the case of peasants and livestock production in the case of pastoralists). Whether or not rural development is desired, rural life has become absolutely precarious for rural communities. A strategy of livelihood diversification must start with the concrete problems of the rural population.

What are the structural problems relating to the peasant? What makes his/her life precarious? The major structural problems are '...diminishing farm size and subsistence farming, soil degradation, inadequate and variable rainfall, tenure insecurity, weak agricultural research base and extension system, lack of financial services, imperfect agricultural markets and poor infrastructure' (EEA, 1999/2000:178). Some of these factors are within the bounds of control by policy-makers, but others aren't. Nevertheless, they are interwoven as the nature of the EPRDF's agricultural policy exacerbates the state of the other factors.

One problem is population increase against the background of a situation in which the possibility of expanding the total land area for farming is limited, if not non-existent. Ethiopia's population in general and that of the rural population, where the overwhelming majority of the poor are, has grown tremendously since land reform was introduced by the Derg in 1975. In addition, migration, which could have reduced the numbers of the rural population, is impossible. 'The very limited possibility of migration owing to the land policy that made the possession of land plots conditional upon residence in the *kebelles* since the land reform proclamation of the Derg, has led to periodic redistribution and leveling down of holdings over the past twenty five years' (ibid., 178.). Besides, according to the land proclamation 'everyone above age 18 years old was entitled to have farm land which was allocated by peasant association officials, frequent redistributions of land were carried out to accommodate the growing population' (ibid. 181). This has resulted in a decline of farm size and subsistence farming. A serious structural problem has arisen out of the diminishing size of the farmland affecting the lives of peasant farmers who are largely categorized as poor peasants. The amount of production declined as 'Households with small plots seldom produce enough grain to meet their family's consumption requirements. Subsistence and

survival are their overriding concern. Nearly all farm produce as well as non-farm income obtained is devoted to food'. Consequently 'There is no surplus for investment and for input purchase' (ibid., 178). Now, clearly, these factors have made the Ethiopian peasant, in the first place, unable to invest in a non-farm activity on a long-term basis in order to transform into a petty trader. Second and worse, all the farm produce is devoted to food, which means the peasant doesn't have any surplus grain to store.

Peasant life has become precarious with population increase since the land reform of 1975 that enabled the peasantry to acquire ten hectares of land per household. That was three decades ago. Life for the peasantry has not improved during the last three decades. Wars and various forms of armed conflict engulfed the country, greatly affecting rural life in many ways. The biggest problem is still population increase and lack of a proper rural development policy. According to rural culture, when a young man is married he is also accorded a plot to work and live on. With the lack of population control and lack of civic education on family guidance, the peasant population continued to increase. Having as many children as possible is seen as a blessing by rural people. Recently, a farmer who has more than ninety children from twenty-three wives was a media sensation. A peasant who has nine children was once interviewed on Ethiopian television and asked if a large number of children were not a problem. He replied that, with the blessing of God, he can go on having even more children. With such traditional values and absence of education on family guidance, rural population increased. From 1991, when the EPRDF came to power, population increased by 50%, mostly in the rural areas.

One impact of population increase is the fact that in the last thirty years land distributed per household has been parcelized whenever a son is married in a peasant household. After thirty years of land reform, average landholding per households has been reduced to 0.1 hectare (see Fasil, 2005, op cit). This is an alarming situation as no household can sustain a family by cultivating 0.1 hectare of land. The peasant can barely feed his/her family with the yield that he/she gets. What is the impact of this? First, the peasant can hardly purchase goods indispensable for his/her family as the surplus grain she/he might be able to sell is too little. This state of affairs severely handicaps the peasant from accumulating wealth in order to shift to a different trade. Nor can she/he send his/her children to school, not to speak of having access to medical services. Under such circumstances, accumulation is out of the question.

Table 12 Average household rural land Holding: 1999-2000

Size (hectares)	Number of holdings	Per cent of holdings
Under 0.10	2142.02	19.94
0.10-0.50	2838.71	26.44
0.51-1.00	2441.92	22.74
1.01-2.00	2256.91	21.02

2.01-5.00	1003.14	9.34
5.01-10.00	46.85	0.44
10.01 and above	9.65	0.09
Total	10738.20	100.00

Source: CSA 2002:108

Although some degree of non-farm activity exists, a social division of labour has not yet emerged. This has an impact at two levels. First, it has stifled the emergence and development of the market even in a rural setting. Second, employment for those who want to sell their labour in order to earn a little extra has become impossible as almost no one can afford to hire any person.

To add to all these acute problems, when drought occurs, the peasant household literally collapses, unable to produce the meager harvest it used to get. He/she does not have any stored grain in case of emergency. As such, when drought occurs there is no harvest and the peasantry will be exposed to starvation almost immediately. A strategy of livelihood diversification must aim at breaking this cycle of precariousness and enable the peasantry to emerge out of the drudgery of such a life.

Another structural problem is soil degradation. 'Farm and grazing lands in Ethiopia have suffered from massive land degradation.' Shortage of good land because of population increase has compelled people to cultivate a large part of steep hillsides especially in areas of heavy land pressure' (ibid., 180). Most of the cultivable land in Ethiopia is on the highlands and temperate zones while 60% of the land in the lowlands is either arid or semi-arid. Farmland is essentially on the highlands or temperate zones characterized by mountain ranges, hills and steep land. 'The seriousness of the problem becomes apparent when one considers the fact that nearly 70% of the Ethiopian highlands have slopes in excess of 30 degrees' (ibid., 180). According to the Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study, approximately half of the highlands or 27 million hectares are already significantly eroded, of which 14 million hectares is agricultural land (cited in EEA, ibid., 180). Soil erosion has substantially contributed to the present precarious state of Ethiopia's agriculture in general and that of the life of the peasantry in particular.

A further structural problem is prevalence of tenure insecurity, which has a great impact on productivity as well as environmental degradation. The issue of land ownership has been controversial since 2000 as the experience of the 1975 land reform, which did not give ownership rights to peasants but user rights to work the land. Land belongs to the state. The EPRDF has not only affirmed this policy of the Derg but also inserted it into the 1995 constitution, thereby effectively shielding it from public debate. '...The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities and

peoples of Ethiopia and shall be subject to other means of transfer' (The Constitution of 1995). Once the issue of land ownership is in the constitution it is law and there is no discussion on the law. Under the Derg the land reform was a policy theoretically subject to change. The EPRDF removed the land issue from the realm of debate and discussion. In fact the prime minister has repeatedly said that the land issue is a dead issue and that there can be discussion on it only on the grave of the EPRDF.

There is a great deal of populism which originates from Maoist gibberish in the EPRDF's position. When the communist part of China, primarily a revolutionary party of urban intellectuals until 1927, was driven out of the cities by Chiang Kai Shek's campaign of terror, it went to rural Yunan where it started to plant itself among the peasantry. It was at this time that Mao took over and the orientation of the party changed with a great deal of populism regarding the peasantry. The experience of China itself has shown that state ownership of land is not the solution to rural development. The 1958 famine occurred under state ownership of land. The 1978 reforms also showed that state ownership of land in the economic sense was not the secret for the miraculous industrialization take-off in the 1990s (I will discuss the Chinese experience at the end of this section.) However, Mao's near-Catholic belief in state ownership of land has been ingrained in the minds of the Maoist leaders of the EPRDF.

According to them, this is a gospel that will never change. For one thing, even from the Marxist perspective, it is metaphysical to take an ossified position on matters of policies that need to change according to circumstances. Also, Ethiopia's land reform experience needed a serious public debate and discussion as that is the kernel to rural development. The Derg had already introduced land reform that appeared revolutionary but food insecurity and famine prevailed. There was food insecurity and famine under the imperial government. Ethiopia is still food insecure and has sporadic famines under the EPRDF. It is obvious that the riddle to food insecurity and famine has to be solved and that can only be done through openness and flexibility. Including the issue in the constitution and claiming that there can be a discussion on it only 'on (the EPRDF) grave' is tantamount to perpetuating the conditions for food insecurity and famines.

Tenure insecurity does not connote economic relations only. It is also political, as there is a great deal of power relations is involved. As Dessalegn Rahmato states, '... the current land system is very restrictive, it is the cause of a great deal of tenure insecurity and the current land system gives the state immense power over peasants' (IRIN news, 2005). Because land belongs to the state, government institutions at the wereda level and even kebelles have immense power over peasants. Because peasants are insecure about the land they work on, kebelles utilize this perpetual fear at times of elections and when the government wants to mobilize peasants for some purpose such as war and conflict. The fear also restricts peasants from participating in political activities of their choice. In addition, the EPRDF has a large-scale spy network informing not

only on peasants' political choices but also on visitors and newcomers (for further reading on this, see Report on Human Rights Violations in Oromiya, Human Rights Watch, 2005). In addition, this fear also restricts peasants from participating in any activity that may appear political but still determines their lives.

The essential part of having tenure security is not whether or not the state has ownership rights in the economic sense. Tenure security is related to a number of social, political and environmental relationships. As I stated earlier, it is crucial to give the maximum attention to the conservation of natural resources and enable communities to manage the conservation, although the government has to meet its obligations at the level of facilitating the legal and political environment. This is essential and Ethiopia's environmental degradation has become so detrimental that the continuity of rural life depends on its conservation. As I once wrote, 'A sort of state of emergency must be declared to protect the country's environment as of today' (Melakou in Fortune, May 22, 2005). In 2002, the FAO suggested a number of tenure rights and obligations:

- The right to use the resource (the 'usufruct' right) or control how it will be used
- The right to exclude others from unauthorized use
- The right to derive income from the resource
- The right to sell all or some of these rights to others, either permanently, or for a limited time (such as through a lease)
- The right to pass these rights down to one's successors (the rights of descendants to inherit land or resource rights)
- Protection from illegal expropriation of the resource
- An obligation not to use the land in a way that is harmful to others
- An obligation to surrender these rights through a lawful action, (e.g. in a case of insolvency, the rights are surrendered to creditors; in a case of default on tax payments, the rights are surrendered to the state) (FAO in World Resources 2005:58).

The thrust of this message is to address the erstwhile concern for conservation of natural resources for sustainable use, failing which, as I have been arguing, is a serious threat to Ethiopia's rural life. It is from this perspective that land security must be attained. The EPRDF's strategy, Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI), has so far miserably failed to bring about security of tenure. As a result, land degradation has continued at an alarming rate. As Fassil G. Kirstos says 'In Ethiopia, the problems of land insecurity and diminution of land holdings ... contribute to a vicious cycle of degradation of rural resources and deepening poverty. As believed by many observers, land insecurity tends to undermine the incentive to invest in long-term land improvements on the part of many farmers' (Fassil, 2005:187). The EPRDF argues that its 'agricultural' extension programmes, which, by the way, cover peasant areas only (excluding pastoralists), will enhance productivity. However, land parcelization has already

created a dilemma for the peasantry, as these extension programmes could not benefit the peasantry because 'their land holdings are too small to make profitable use of such services' (ibid., 188). Fassil further quotes a research report on this particular problem by Yohannes Mekonnen '... if agricultural productivity doubles in most parts of Ethiopia by today, 33.44% of the population who own land below 0.56 ha. will not be able to produce the required calorie from their holdings. At existing levels of productivity, 85% of households in drought-stricken areas are not able to produce adequate calorie from the land. Hence large-scale malnutrition and food insecurity problems are explained not only by [the] weather factor, but also by the resource endowment factor. If the productivity of the land is 15 qt/ha [quintals per hectare, i.e., MT] as indicated in the interim poverty reduction strategy, more than 34% of the population will not have the capacity to produce the required resource to achieve food security' (Yohannes in Fassil, ibid., 188).

In addition to the acknowledged limitation of land holdings, soil erosion is a serious problem affecting low productivity. Fassil continues

The severity of the problem [of soil erosion, i.e., MT] can perhaps be better approached by a glimpse at the actual extent of soil erosion and deforestation that has taken place over the years. Estimates made on the basis of a study carried out 20 years ago (in 1985) had shown that over 14 million hectares of the highland regions were not only already seriously eroded, but the process of soil loss was continuing at the rate of 1,900 million tons per year (Gedion A, 2003: 45). There can be no doubt that, if a similar study were to be undertaken today, the findings would be far more alarming. With regard to deforestation, a commonly quoted estimate is that about 40% of Ethiopia's land mass was covered by forests at the turn of the century; this has now gone down to as low as 3% and still continues to decline. ...The effect of deforestation is not limited to soil erosion and declining agricultural productivity but also includes increasing loss of biodiversity and adverse climatic changes which may further exacerbate the problem of survival in communities to dependency on the rhythm of nature for their livelihoods' (ibid., 188-189).

There has been debate on security of tenure in relation to land ownership between political parties and the EPRDF and also between experts and the EPRDF. The debate between the political parties reduced the whole issue to the advantages and disadvantages of privatizing land. Land ownership must be seen as a means while the end is conservation of natural resources for sustainable use. Ultimately, what is crucial is the social transformation of rural life, an agrarian transformation if you like. 'The point of departure should not be the option to privatize or not, rather to conceptualize agrarian change in Ethiopia's rural setting ...' (Melakou, 2004:48). But, agrarian transformation is not just economic, it doesn't end with changing property relations or rights of ownership of natural resources. It also involves an ensemble of social and political relationships and free and democratic institutions that are broadly independent from the government although the government also needs to create its own institutions that are essential for the purpose of playing its regulating role.

'Agrarian change involves issues such as property ownership, setting up popular institutions for communities to enhance their capacity in development interventions, and setting up the infrastructure for universal education and primary health care' (ibid., 48).

Tenure security must go hand in hand with the traditional knowledge system, culture and tradition of communities. Ethiopia is a mosaic of diverse ethnic groups, cultures and knowledge systems. In a project involving transformation of rural life that is mostly based on traditional knowledge systems, endorsement of measures taken to transform it must be endorsed by the communities in question. This is essential. The best form to achieve tenure security, whether through land privatization or not, should be defined according to these diverse traditional knowledge systems. 'As these categories are strongly based on local indigenous knowledge systems, the recognition of multiple strategies and diversification of the means of livelihood is inevitable. This is essential, as a strategy of rural development must be supported by the rural communities' (ibid., 48). Thus, when choosing security of tenure through land ownership or a land ownership policy, it is required to recognize this diversity. This requires, in principle, recognition of the possibility of multiple forms of land tenure. In this sense, one certainty is the fact that in pastoralism, there is no private ownership of land. Land is owned by the community at large and its natural resources are also protected by the entire community.

In the peasant context too, there were various land tenure systems before the Derg nationalized land and introduced uniformity in land ownership patterns. If a policy to ensure security of tenure through land tenure systems is designed, these systems must be endorsed by the various rural communities. What a security of tenure is all about to the Erbare pastoralist may be entirely different to the peasant in Adwa. If agrarian transformation '... and not only land ownership, is the point of departure for rural development, then considering a multiple land tenure system is a better option' (ibid., 48). In fact, it is inevitable.

In the final analysis, whether land is privatized or state owned is not crucial in attaining security of tenure. Rather, it is crucial to identify the factor/s that appeal to the peasantry and build its confidence in the policies of the government. This is essential in a country where state intervention in the economy has already created stagnation in agriculture mainly by discouraging peasants. The government's policy must enable the peasantry to 'restore peasant confidence which has been shattered by fifteen years of state ownership and socialist agrarian policies under the Derg' (Dessalegn, 1994:12). What form this policy needs to take in concrete terms depends on the particular situation in communities. There are many communities that choose private ownership of land, others might choose collective ownership by the community without involving the government and there could also be other choices, which we don't know at this stage. Ethiopia is a large, populous country with a mosaic of cultures, social organizations, norms and indigenous knowledge systems. It is

certain that no universal land tenure system has worked for the last thirty years. The impoverished rural population can ill afford to wait another thirty years to see a universal land tenure work. A multiple form of tenure is essential.

In addition to these significant questions, the political situation in rural Ethiopia is depriving the rural population of its capabilities at various levels. In Ethiopia's rural areas, the political environment is stifling. Political problems manifested in deprivation of freedom are prevalent. The EPRDF government, in a similar fashion and using similar mechanisms of control as the Derg, has a firm grip on the peasantry. In fact, the level of control is more severe now as the government has direct and quick access to the peasantry, thanks to the construction of roads, introduction of communication technologies and proliferation of peasant associations. The principal functions of peasant associations are political control (manipulation and intimidation at time of elections), spying and distribution of *chemical* fertilizers at a rate fixed by the government. Chemical fertilizers were introduced to increase yield and production. [In fact however, chemical fertilizers when used long term, harm the fertility of the soil. For further reading, see Vandana Shiva's *Monocultures of the Mind: The Violence of the Green revolution in India*] However, as time has gone by, the use of chemical fertilizers has been institutionalized. At times of drought and other problems that affect production and make peasants unable to pay for the chemical fertilizer they bought on credit from the peasant association, the government took forceful measures, including imprisoning peasants. In past years, thousands have been gaoled throughout the country at one time or another for failing to pay (for further reading, see the occasional reports by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council.) Not one iota of good governance exists in rural Ethiopia. Mal-governance is a serious problem that a rural development strategy must tackle (for further reading on this, see Report on Human Rights Violations in Oromiya, Human Rights Watch, 2005).

8.2.3 The pastoral world

The other major traditional sector in Ethiopia's rural formation is pastoralism. Pastoralism is an unknown territory for the classical schools of economics. The only exception is Karl Marx who dealt with the issue as the Asiatic Mode of Production with reference to Mongolia and some parts of India. This knowledge gap has also affected a great many politicians and economists, and even civic activists, whose references are all these classical economists. This is true for Africa and Ethiopia as well. From the time of the imperial regime until now, pastoralism has been an unknown territory for Ethiopian policymakers. As far as the EPRDF is concerned, after fifteen years in power, it has not suggested a pastoral development policy or strategy at all. The 'policy' it has been pursuing on pastoralism is identical with those of the imperial and Derg regimes, namely settling pastoralists. Even when the EPRDF made a big fanfare at the 2006 Pastoralist Day, which it hijacked from the Pastoralist Forum of Ethiopia, an NGO network, it still doesn't have any concrete policy. The prime minister, who is

normally eager to display his mastery of issues, displayed his utter ignorance on pastoralism when he delivered his opening speech.

Pastoral life has also become precarious particularly after the series of droughts after 1992. In Afar and Borana (see Alemayehu: 1998; 15-16), drought decimated cattle and livestock a great deal. As one pastoral elder recently told me in an interview 'Previously people who had up to 2000 cattle and animals now have not more than eight and ten' (Melakou: FARMAfrica, 2005). Pastoralists are in a more precarious situation than the peasant as there isn't enough land to cultivate even when they change to cultivation. After all, people chose pastoral livelihood systems because they inhabit a harsh environment unsuitable for cultivation in the first place. In Afar, cultivable land is located along River Awash and areas adjacent to Wollo. Besides, commercial farmers have already taken the fertile land along Awash and the government also has a scheme of expanding sugar plantations in an area of about 7,000 hectares along the Awash. If the Afars change to cultivation en masse, there will definitely be a land shortage. Both in the case of peasants and pastoralists, rural life has become so precarious that changing to a different livelihood is not only urgent but an absolute necessity.

The knowledge gap on pastoralism in the intellectual world as well as among policymakers has also left a gap in knowledge of how primitive accumulation can take place from within the pastoral system. As in the farming context, pastoral accumulation can start with livelihood diversification processes. However, the process of pastoral livelihood diversification requires great external support both in terms of having legal and policy frameworks in the government as well as other developmental supports from stakeholders in pastoral development. This is mainly because the pastoral way of life is extremely threatened without a viable alternative for the community.

Primitive accumulation in the pastoral context and as an economic category, needs to be complemented by social and political interventions to make it successful. It must be contextualized within the larger category of pastoral development. Pastoral development must start with affirming the need for social change in pastoralism and social transformation within the community. The hitherto macro intervention aimed at first settling pastoralists, an undertaking to which pastoralists are hostile. The interventions were not endorsed by the pastoral community. That is indeed why they all failed.

Pastoral development should not be imposed on pastoralists. It should start with their endorsement. That is crucial. Pastoral accumulation that needs to start off with livelihood diversification should also be endorsed by the community. This requires a conducive policy environment on two grounds. First, as all pastoral communities have been marginalized and discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic background for over a century now, the suspicion that they have that the government is still dominated by Tigrean highlanders must be dispelled.

Second, as pastoralists, they have been neglected and treated as uncivilized and barbaric for too long and that has caused suspicion. This must be dispelled too.

But, this can only be done through the introduction of good governance, freedom and democracy. The issue is to revive the capabilities of the pastoral community to manage its own life, organize itself freely and independently of the government in any way it sees suitable, enable other development actors such as NGOs, CBOs (community-based organizations) and associations to play their rightful role in community development, conflict resolution and policy advocacy.

In terms of concrete policy, the government must institute a livestock marketing mechanism for pastoral communities. Market for their animals has always been the demand of all pastoral communities from South Omo to Afar. In fact, if Ethiopia has any wealth to speak of, it is livestock. Ethiopia is second only to Sudan in the continent in terms of the largest number of livestock. It is a paradox of immense proportion that the governments of Ethiopia, including the EPRDF which claims to be obsessed with agricultural development, has not taken this national wealth into consideration and try to convert it to a national asset for accumulation. There are no livestock market mechanisms for pastoral communities. Pastoralists are compelled to cross to Kenya, Sudan and Somalia to sell their animals at much lower prices. Due to illegal cross-border trade, the country loses close to 900 million Eth. Birr in revenue (in Melakou, 2003:69). 'And as recently as June 2003, the head of the Somali Regional State [now removed, MT] accused the Federal Government as responsible for the illegal livestock trade ...' (ibid., 69). Setting up a livestock market mechanism is the first step forward both in a policy of pastoral development and pastoral accumulation which is beneficial not only to the pastoral community but also to the government.

Also, the government and private sector can use the abundance of livestock for agro-industries such as meat processing, abattoirs and expanding the leather industry. Judging from the experiences of Botswana in this respect, abattoirs can easily be set up in many pastoral areas and leather industries can flourish alongside. The livestock market board can export animals, processed and preserved meat while the leather industry manufactures leather products both for export and local consumption. Prevalence of a conducive and enabling policy and political environment is the key to enable the private sector and pastoralists themselves to benefit from such possibilities.

The record of the EPRDF on agriculture can only be characterized as failure. A large number of food insecure communities still exist in the country although the number fluctuates between drought and 'bumper harvest' periods. Whether or not there is drought millions of Ethiopians still depend on food aid. Even when the government claims bumper harvests, a minimum of 2.5-3 million people need food aid. Such is the precarious state of Ethiopia's agriculture. Needless to say that at the centre of this failure is bad governance and bad policy. In this category, the role of civic groups, *NGOs and CBOs in particular* that are involved

in development work in rural areas is crucial to rural livelihood. As in other sectors, because they are looked upon with suspicion, the working environment is not conducive at all. Until recently, most regional governments were completely hostile to the work of NGOs in the rural areas. Kassu Ilala, a senior minister and leading agricultural economist for the EPRDF government, instructed the Southern Nations, nationalities and Peoples State (SNNPS) regional administration a few years ago to close the door for NGOs (interview, NGO activist, 2005.) Here, we are confronted with a classic case of apathy in which case either the EPRDF government does not deliver by itself or does not allow civic actors to do so. Suppressing NGOs and CBOs has a great influence on perpetuating under-development and in under-developing the institutions of the civic sector. This brings us back to the issue of freedom and democracy.

In Ethiopia's condition, accumulation should undoubtedly have started through rural development. The rural setting should have served as a vehicle for accumulation. However, it is policies that either spur the process of accumulation or arrest it. Macro policies determine that the process goes beyond food security. As we saw above, accumulation through peasant agriculture and pastoral livestock production systems failed mainly because of a wrong policy. In addition, the EPRDF has also failed to establish good relationships with the rural population. Both peasants and pastoralists mistrust the EPRDF and don't like its policies. From this perspective alone, the EPRDF has failed in its rural development policies. The EPRDF is more preoccupied with controlling the peasantry and pastoralists. There has never been political pluralism and freedom of expression in the rural areas of Ethiopia. Political and policy choices have never existed there. Instead the rural population was subjected to total submission to the dictates and control of the EPRDF. Such a rule has completely deprived rural communities of their capabilities at the cultural, social and political levels. This in turn has impacted on their capacity to accumulate. Accumulation cannot take place in a situation where communities are suffocated. The individual entrepreneur could not emerge and, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the seeds of civil society germinate under conditions that encourage and develop the capabilities of individuals and groups. The EPRDF's policy on rural development has therefore stifled the emergence of a civil society by nipping it in the bud.

Quite often in debates on land ownership the prime minister of the EPRDF government refers to the Chinese experience to substantiate his argument for government ownership of land. This is a reflection of the lopsided, intellectually impoverished and politically populist argument of the EPRDF in the debate that raged on the issue of land tenure. The Chinese experience is referred to without any reference to the temporal and therefore historical dimensions of the issue as if China and Ethiopia are in a similar historical period.

One of China's particularities is its history of the medieval period as well as its history of social transformation through the revolution that raged for thirty years, that is, from the May 1919 movement of intellectuals for social change to the final

triumph of the Communist Party in 1949 and the complete liberation of China in 1952. As far as China's rural development goes, the history of China's medieval period is extremely interesting as it reveals so many mysteries. China's feudal period had stretched from 475 BC to 1840, that is, more than 2,000 years. Before 200 BC for instance the Chinese had already experience in irrigation, currency, limited land reform and other social reforms. By the 13th Century, China had discovered gunpowder, practiced acupuncture and developed astrology. What should be singled out as one interesting phenomenon is the development of science, literature, art, institutions of governance and so on as far back as the 15th century that roughly corresponds with the Renaissance of Western Europe. China had already moved ahead of Europe in terms of astrology, alchemy and medicine in general and gunpowder. It is this advanced cultural and scientific attainment that enabled the historical situation for generating division of labour, entrepreneurial culture and later made industrialization possible. In as much as it took Western Europe more than three to four hundred years after the Renaissance to kick off the industrial revolution, it could as well have taken China to do the same within the same time frame had it not been for colonization. In the towns of medieval China, alchemy was fully developed where people buy medicines from pharmacies; there were doctors practicing acupuncture and other forms of medication, towns were booming in terms of business. Interaction between country and towns was enough to warrant the absorption of rural products by the market in the towns. Division of labour was fully developed that there were shopkeepers specifically selling specific items, guilds and workshops producing commodities useful for the community, artists produced pieces of art and performed extensively; there were also sports centres such as the Wushu upon which the latest martial art disciplines such as Karate and Aikido sprang from. In a nutshell, division of labour and diversification of livelihood had already fully developed well before China was colonized (for further reading, see *Imperial China*, Franz Schurman and Orville Schell, eds., 1968:33-99). This is an important feature that distinguishes China from Ethiopia. The structure of life in rural China in the medieval period cannot be compared to the structure of life in rural Ethiopia. And this is an important consideration when accumulation and social transformation in a rural society are considered.

It follows from this that the entrepreneurial culture of China had already been well developed. In fact, it is this rich entrepreneurial culture suppressed for decades by the Cultural Revolution that paid off at the end. This is an important distinction between rural China and rural Ethiopia.

From the historical perspective, the history of the Chinese revolution cannot be compared to the experiences of the political revolution in Ethiopia. The Chinese revolution had primarily a leader, the Communist Party of China that united the people and led them for a social revolution with a fundamentally class approach. The party unified the poor and the petty-bourgeoisie who stood with the poor. They together constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. The ringing proclamation of Mao Tse Tung at Tien An Men Square on October 31,

1949, 'The Chinese People have stood up!' is immortally remembered as the expression of the time for unity on class basis. On the other hand, none of these phenomena exist in Ethiopia even after the coming to power of the EPRDF that professed to be followers of the teachings of Mao. The TPLF (the core of the EPRDF) conducted an ethnic movement, joined forces with those disgruntled guerrilla fighters within the ranks of the left-wing party, EPRP and with the disgruntled officers and soldiers from the ranks of the Derg and came to power in 1991 to proclaim an ethnic-based federal government. Unlike the Communist Party of China that was revered by the Chinese people, the EPRDF was seen with distrust from day one and commanded a very narrow social base in the areas it was operating namely Tigray and some parts of Wollo. In a nutshell, there can be no comparison between the historical role played by the Communist part of China and the TPLF/EPRDF.

The experience of the development of the Chinese economy in general and that of rural development cannot be compared to that of Ethiopia under the EPRDF. China had already attained the status of being a great power with a simultaneous occupation of a seat at the UN Security Council almost automatically upon joining the UN. It had supported revolutionary and anti-colonial movements throughout the world both politically and in arms. During the 1953 Korean War, Chinese support and involvement was decisive to stop the conquest by the United States. The victory of the Vietnamese over the US was unthinkable without the support of the Soviet Union and China. Such involvement could not have taken place without a sufficiently developed economy, the modern sector in particular, to sustain it.

Let's now come to the recent experience of China's industrialization, which is cited often by the EPRDF leaders to rationalize their argument for government ownership of land. The secret behind the recent astronomical industrial boom in China's economy is indeed the reforms they formulated in 1978 under a general framework of social change which they called the Four Modernizations that were in the main modernization drives to be galvanized in agriculture, industry, science and military. These four components were taken as one inseparable package. The attempt to reform agriculture had been there for a number of times since the 1950s. The idea that finally adopted in 1978 under the Four Modernizations, namely the responsibility and contract system, had been advanced in different ways. These attempts had been suppressed as capitalist-roader in the name of inner-party struggle. The final onslaught came when the Cultural Revolution was unleashed that sealed the fate of the leading proponents of the idea such as Liu Shao Qui next in line to Mao and Deng Tsiao Ping. When Deng was revived and elected back to the position of Secretary General in 1973, the idea also came back but not officially. Supporters of the idea increased within the party and by 1976 the ailing Mao alarmed sacked Deng once again. However, many in the party leadership had already realized that China could have advanced ahead much more than it had. The Spring of 1976 saw fierce battle between the two lines when Chu En Lai died in April followed by Mao in September leaving the

ground for open struggle between the two factions. Deng's side moved quickly against the other faction, dubbed it as the Gang of Four and went ahead with preparing an elaborated reform programme for China called the Four Modernizations. In 1979, the responsibility and contract system was officially put in practice as a crucial component of the reform in agriculture. Under this system, peasants contract a plot of land, produce whatever they wanted and turn over a certain amount of their surplus to the state and keeping the rest for themselves. That galvanized the social revolution in Chinese agriculture, beefed up the accumulation process, created a huge market, the largest in the world with a billion people, which in turn attracted direct foreign investment. As peasants became richer, the state further supported them to move to manufacturing either collectively or individually. Rural industrialization boomed, towns expanded to cities, hamlets to towns and generally the standard of living improved a great deal. Heavy and light industries in urban areas expanded, supporting the modernization drive in agriculture, while the development of agriculture also supported the industry.

The key take-off in agriculture is not really the pattern of land ownership per se. The Chinese government did not privatize land by law, but in practice that is what happened (Gou, personal interview, 2004). According to the Chinese peasantry it was not the official entitlement to land ownership that was crucial for the change of her/his livelihood, but the acquisition of land that she/he can work on and take good care of as her/his own. In a country where an unceasing social convulsion called the cultural revolution was spoiling the country and where young people by the name of Red Guards were operating the government and where the idea of producing for oneself as opposed to the communes was considered not only as a capitalist evil but a mortal sin, the idea of entitlement for land ownership was not the peasant's problem. In fact, as Gao put it, in some provinces such as Anqui, peasants could not believe that the responsibility and contract system would come from the party. Thus, what appealed to the Chinese peasantry at that point in time was the acquisition of land. Whether or not titular ownership of land is of the state or individual was not the peasant's immediate concern. This experiment was so successful in generating income, improving rural standards of living and boosting accumulation that enabled individuals and co-operatives to establish rural factories that there are now in China over one million millionaires of peasant background.

The situation in Ethiopia is very different from that of China as I have explained. It is necessary to look into each of the particularities that I mentioned above when referring to the Chinese experience. Ultimately, state ownership of land in China was only titular. It will be inappropriate to refer to the titular ownership of land by the state as the sole criterion for China's agricultural development. In fact, what must be referred to as a fantastic experience of China is its accomplishment in disengaging as much of the rural population from land as possible when the communes were dismantled. Another lesson to be drawn is the secret of appealing to the peasantry and building its confidence on the agricultural policies

of the state, namely tenure security and a good relationship between the state and peasantry. In Ethiopia these two components, still do not exist. Though I have focused mainly on crop cultivation, China's agricultural reforms also produced specific strategies for developing forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries (for further reading on China's experience in agricultural reforms see *Smashing the Communal Pot*, by Wang Guichen, Zhou Qiren and others).

It has been almost fourteen years now since the EPRDF adopted Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) in order to bring rural development as a vehicle for industrialization. The bitter truth is that the country is still stretching out its begging bowl for food aid. Yet, the EPRDF still says it is on the right track.

ADLI is all about accumulation for industrialization. The entire developing world chooses industrialization but everybody's dilemma is where the source of capital accumulation can be. Traditional societies such as Ethiopia resort to focusing on agriculture as the source of accumulation. Industrial giants such as the ex-Soviet Union, China and others also focused on agriculture for accumulation that in turn stimulated their industry. Focusing on agriculture does not mean shutting oneself off from other sectors. There can be no Chinese wall between agriculture and other sectors when it comes to the process of accumulation. While focusing on agriculture strategically in order to enhance agricultural production, one needs also to focus and develop other sectors that can beef up the agricultural sector. It might even be impossible to develop agriculture without developing the small-scale commodity production sector and rural factories for instance. It might even be necessary to boost a particular industry in order to develop agriculture. To realize the interdependence between the various sectors and prioritize where to focus for what purpose and for what time frame is crucial in strategizing an accumulation process. From the historical point of view, accumulation in a traditional society rests on agriculture. To attain this historical strategy however, developing other sectors is also crucial. One cannot build a Chinese wall between the various sectors of the economy in order to focus on agriculture.

The former Soviet Union and China took agriculture as their mainstay for accumulation aimed at industrialization. However, their industrial base was far more advanced than Ethiopia's. Even so, they did not build barriers between agriculture and industry. This is in addition to their strength at the political and social level, skilled human power, dedication to the country, lack of corruption and strong social base. Accumulation is not just an economic phenomenon; it is also social, ethical and political. Accumulation is comprehensive and it deserves a comprehensive approach. This requires first of all a far-sighted leadership. As we have already seen, the EPRDF is far from providing this.

8.3 Population and development

In my theoretical framework, I have singled out population as the demographic dimension of sustainable development. The fact that the issue of population is directly related to social development has not been contested since the UN's International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. The Cairo conference produced a Plan of Action as a reference for governments and development actors to mitigate problems of poverty and under-development as directly related to population growth. In this section I will examine the impact of population growth on poverty and under-development in Ethiopia, its gender and HIV/AIDS dimensions, and will finally look at the EPRDF's record in mitigating problems associated with population growth.

The rate of population growth as well as the fertility rate in Ethiopia is simply frightening given the prevalence of an extreme state of poverty. An impoverished country like Ethiopia with a current population of 77 million having a population growth rate of 3% per annum and 5.9 fertility rate with the lowest social and economic development indicators, is definitely an extremely serious problem. Between 1900 and 2005, the population has rocketed from 11.8 million to 77 million while the rate of population growth grew from 1% at the turn of the century to 3%. Population growth accelerated steadily in the 1960s and skyrocketed from the 1980s and particularly the 1990s, that is, after the EPRDF came to power (Table 13).

Table 13 Reconstructed estimates of Ethiopia's past population, projected population and population growth rates

Year	Population (in millions)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
1950	19.2	2.0
1955	21.2	2.1
1960	23.5	2.2
1965	26.3	2.3
1970	29.5	2.3
1975	33.1	2.6
1980	37.7	2.8
1984	42.2	2.8
1990	49.9	2.8
1995	57.9	3.0
2000	67.8	3.2
2005	80.1	3.3
2010	95.5	3.5
2015	114.5	3.7
2020	138.2	3.8
2025	167.7	3.9
2030	204.7	4.0

2035	251.2	4.1
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Source: Central Statistical Office, 1988

The population trend is characterized not only by high population growth and high fertility rates but also by high infant and child mortality rates. Although a decline in fertility and infant/child mortality rates has been observed in recent years, the current rate is still one of the highest in the world. The third component of the population trend in Ethiopia is the fact that a large part of the population is young. In its 2003/04 Annual Economic Report of Ethiopia, the Economic Association of Ethiopia, states 'In Ethiopia's current population of about 70 million, 4 percent is estimated to be under 15 years of age [UN, 2003] which implies a high dependency ratio.' And what is the impact of this? 'Taking into account the high level of unemployment and underemployment and those economically inactive, an economically active person is forced to carry more than one dependent person. When the national population policy was issued in 1993, there were 116 inactive persons per 100 active ones' ([NOP, 2003] EEA, 2003/04:128). To add to this, the youth will, within a few years, enter a reproductive life and even at a much lower fertility rate, will still contribute significantly to population growth.

A further characteristic feature of the population trend in Ethiopia is the spatial distribution with a high concentration in rural areas and the highlands. As Sahlu puts it 'The highlands of Ethiopia which covers 37% of the surface area, carry almost 80% of the population' (Population Media Centre, 2004:29). What is the impact of high population density on the highlands? It will bring great pressure to bear on the natural resource base, thereby causing major environmental degradation through deforestation and land degradation, the ever increasing per capita size of cultivable land and 'even in the more favourable lowlands, internal migration and, as a result, the clearing of the wood and grazing lands for newly settled inhabitants coupled with inappropriate farming techniques are rapidly destroying the ecosystem' (ibid., 32). As we discussed in Paragraph 7.2 under rural development, environmental degradation exacerbates poverty. In addition to the prevailing rural poverty, when famines occur, the EPRDF, like its predecessor, resettles peasants in areas hitherto uninhabited thereby repeating the same cycle of environmental degradation.

Indeed, population is indissolubly connected with development. The high rate of population growth in Ethiopia is taking place against a background of a stagnant agriculture that failed to secure food for its own people. As Sahlu says 'The performance of the agricultural sector, which employs the vast majority of the population, is lower today than it was 20 years ago. The non-agricultural economy employs a very small proportion of the labour force. Agricultural land is over crowded, over-cultivated and under-maintained and has lost most of its organic matters, and has been severely eroded. The population pressure exacerbates the situation.' The consequence? 'As a result, the country is

condemned to perpetual food dependency and foreign aid' (ibid., 30). Poverty, limited services such as education and healthcare constitute a vicious circle along with population growth. The greater the population numbers, the less these services are; and the less these services are the more people's well-being is affected. Thus, a high rate of infant, child and maternal mortality rates prevail in the country. The country is not faring better in other social indicators such as primary and high school education. The Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) report states that 'According to the 1994 census, only 23.4% of the country's population was literate. To date, about 40% and 87% of primary and secondary school age children respectively, are still out of school' (EEA, 2003/04:133). These figures are also attested to by Sahlu who contend '... a little more than a third of school-age children have access to primary education. The rate for girls is only 17%. High school attendance is limited to less than 12% of the age specific group while higher education is limited to less than 2% of the youth' (ibid., 31). Population growth in Ethiopia also impacted on other social services such as health care, economic performance in crop agriculture, conflict over the use of resources and employment opportunities. Other social indicators such as access to proper housing, electricity, potable water are also abysmal.

Population and gender

Problems generated by population growth or population issues in general cannot be analysed without referring to gender and the social and political milieu surrounding human reproduction. This is starkly clear in Ethiopia, where the very notion of reproductive rights is unknown. The universal ignorance of reproductive rights is coupled with government apathy on the matter as well as the predominance of traditional religions such as Orthodox Christianity and Islam. In the rural areas where more than 85% of the population lives, there has never been any discussion on reproductive rights and women's right to decide on their own bodies. Childbirth can be an agonizing experience for women, resulting in pain, physical changes to their bodies such as weight gain, resulting in bad health, physical and psychological trauma as a result of a lack of maternal care services. Problems in childbirth do not end with the act of giving birth to a baby. In Ethiopia, child-rearing is also the burden of the mother, even in urban areas such as Addis Ababa where most of the country's educated people live.

Respect for the reproductive rights of women is not even recognized by law. The revised edition of the Penal Code, ratified by the parliament in 2003, declined to grant women their reproductive rights. The EPRDF, who claim to be revolutionary and democratic ('revolutionary democracy') and to champion the cause of women, has flatly declined to grant women reproductive rights. Moreover, the EPRDF has not done any systematic education on the matter. Unless the reproductive rights of women are respected and acted upon, the problems associated with population growth cannot be solved. That is the only way to restore the capabilities of women to decide on their bodies, the very capacity deprived of them by tradition and religion. After all, it is the woman, who is going

to carry the baby for nine months and who must be able to decide whether or not she wants it.

Reproductive rights must also be reinforced by education, both formal and civic. Studies indicate that if women are aware of their rights and the social and economic consequences of having many children, they will be empowered as they will decide not to have more children than necessary. That is why educated women have as few children as possible. In Ethiopia, people don't seem to be aware of all the consequences of bringing up children in this world. In both Ethiopian Christian and Muslim cultures, having children is a matter left to God. It is common to hear such statements like "God will take care of it" when it comes to having more children. But, they don't see the economic and social consequences of having more children than they can afford to raise, a matter which they leave to their God to solve. The more people bring children to this impoverished world of Ethiopia, the less chance these children have to become productive citizens, as the infrastructure of social services is too limited to absorb them. On the other hand, no family planning education is conducted by the media, particularly the electronic media, to which most of the population could be accessed but which is unfortunately dominated by the government. The government's neglect of gender, discussed in Chapter 6, has a great impact on population growth. The core of the problem of population growth in Ethiopia is the lack of recognition of the reproductive rights of women.

Population and children

Sustainable development has a generational dimension which, as we saw earlier, concerns children and youth. Sustainable development is not only about the current generation, it is also about preparing the political, social and environmental base upon which the livelihood of the future generation depends. Degrading the environment and destroying the ecosystem is fundamental to the future generation, for instance. It is also crucial for future generations to nurture a humane and democratically constructed generation; a generation that considers women to be the equals to men, respects the rights of individuals, recognizes that all people are born equal and must be treated as such, free from ethnic and religious bigotry, and so on. Education, that is, formal and civic education, plays a crucial role in this respect. Such education must be free of ideological brainwashing such as that of the Stalinist regimes and the EPRDF.

It is necessary to nurture such a humane and democratic generation from the political perspective. Since the EPRDF came to power, politics has been ethnicized to the extreme. This has influenced people's minds. It is no longer taboo to think in terms of ethnicity and when that is coupled with protest against a regime that operates on the basis of ethnicity, ethnic prejudice may follow. Extreme repressive measures to expressions of protest on the one hand and suppression of dissenting voices as has been witnessed in the post-election situation in 2005, can exacerbate the prejudice and may lead to bigotry.

Nurturing a humane generation is not only the duty of a government. Society as a whole and parents and elders in particular also have great responsibilities. As a traditional society replete with a violent culture that emanated from its peculiar history, child upbringing in Ethiopia does not nurture children to be humane and democratic citizens. Boys and girls are brought up in an entirely different manner. The protection of the interest of the family dictated by the head of the family, the man. Boys are nurtured as the future guardians of the family and there is a great deal of violent psyche in the process. A great many fathers teach their sons to fight back and win instead of talking through differences and settling them through dialogue. This has an impact on a number of relationships. The attitude towards the children of others is one.

This is reflected in a horrifying experience that has become common in recent years. Men abduct little children from rural towns and bring them to big cities like Addis and use them for begging. It is horrifying that they sometimes also blind the children with a poisonous thorn before they send them out to beg. This was reported in the media, including the government owned television, which provided graphic descriptions of this crime. This is a reflection of the prevalence of a violent culture in general and an apathetic attitude, to say the least, of society towards the children of others. It is indeed clear that a huge level of civic education is required in Ethiopia to deconstruct such a violent psyche and weed out this criminal practice against children. The underlying factor here is the attitude of society as a whole on children and their upbringing. Sustainable development cannot be attained with such a mentality prevailing in a given society.

Another expression of such disregard for children is rape against the girl child. As we saw in Chapter Seven, the rate of rape is not only high but also directed against girls. Infants of one year old to three and children of all ages are victims of rape in Ethiopia. This is another indication of prevalence of a violent psyche and specifically against children. As long as it is the daughter of somebody else, she may be targeted for rape. The same can be said about child prostitution. It is society that keeps the prostitution business going. To make the business profitable, the most preferred 'product' is sold in the market. The man who goes out to buy this commodity is perhaps a father or brother who has a daughter or sister of the same age. But, the prostitute is the 'daughter of somebody else'.

Population and HIV/AIDS

AIDS does not only kill, it also impacts on morbidity. Reports on the pandemic in Ethiopia indicate that it is the productive segment of the population between the ages of 18 and 45 that is largely affected. Most reports, media coverage and the little discussion that there is on the subject, focus on the consequences of the pandemic. The solutions advanced are mainly abstinence and the use of

condoms. However, the core of the problem is the notion of sexuality that prevails in the society. As a predominantly patriarchal society, male sexuality is constructed in such a way that the man is supposed to be active and the woman passive. Sexual pleasure is always considered exclusively for the man and he has to enjoy it wherever it is available. That is why extramarital sex and affairs by men are rampant. Studies of HIV/AIDS prevalence reveal that a large number of HIV-positive people or people living with AIDS are married men who acquired the virus not from marital sex but from extra-marital relationships. At the core of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia is basically the misconstrued construction of sexuality in general and that of male promiscuity in particular. This core of the problem is not being tackled. Instead, a moral appeal is made for sexual abstinence on the part of the youth. Religious leaders are urged to issue the moral appeal and they do. This constitutes a paradox as it is the established religions that are also behind prevailing traditional perceptions including sexuality.

The problem of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is related to gender in many ways. In Ethiopia, 'In 1999, HIV/AIDS incidence registered was about 10% of the population between the ages of 20-49 and women constitute 50% of this number' (Bogalech in Population Media Center, 2004:42). This must be related to my remark on sexuality above. It is men who roam freely looking for sex but ultimately half of those infected with the virus and the disease are women. There is also a deliberate infection of young women by men who are HIV positive. At a panel discussion on gender and HIV/AIDS at the one of the gender forums organized by Panos in Addis Ababa, it was reported that there are men who deliberately infect women and their girlfriends with the virus and even dare to tell them. One such girl committed suicide immediately (Reflections, No. 3, 2000.)

It is infrequently reported that women and young women in particular are made HIV positive through rape. Because violence against women is neglected by law enforcement agencies, rape has become so rampant that many women are now HIV positive after being raped. Indeed, rape assumes a new and dangerous dimension for women in Ethiopia. It now means possible death as there is no cure for AIDS. No wonder, in South Africa, where rate of rape is the highest in the world, women's rights activists argued at one point to make rape by HIV positive as an attempt to murder in the eyes of the law. Abduction is also a huge problem in many parts of Ethiopia where it is considered to be traditional and customary and even tolerated by the law enforcement agencies. Abduction involves first of all rape as that is the first form of violence unleashed during the act of the abduction to subjugate the victim to submission (see the numerous reports on abduction produced in Ethiopia including documentaries such as Testimonies by Women Victims of Violence at a Public Hearing in Addis Ababa, Panos, April, 2001). Let's now briefly turn to the record of the EPRDF on the problems related to population growth.

8.3.1 The EPRDF on population

Like gender, the environment, children's rights and sustainable development in general, population is a terrain that the EPRDF had not traversed prior to its accession to power. As Aregawi Berehe, the founder of the TPLF, attested in an interview with me, the TPLF/EPRDF had no idea about population being related to development (interview, December 2004). This is further confirmed by Dr. Negasso Gidada, the first president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (interview, January 2006). Undoubtedly, the EPRDF became aware of the importance of population to development when the United Nations Populations Fund supported it, while it was still the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, in preparing a population policy prior to – and in preparation to – the 1994 International Conference on Population and development held in Cairo (Medrek, no. 3&4, 2004:7). That was its first acquaintance with the issue, three years after it came to power.

Except in China where population is a great issue for obvious reasons, problems related to population growth and whether or not population is a constituent part of sustainable development is absent in the Stalinist discourse. Some of the issues discarded as bourgeois are the issues of population, together with gender (as opposed to the Stalinist 'woman question'), children's rights, freedom and democracy. The TPLF/EPRDF not versed in these issues and had not considered them as serious issues of development. However, as it needed to siphon donor funds, which in some cases referred to these issues, although not necessarily as conditions determining donorships, it committed itself to these issues at the level of rhetoric. Very similar to its two-track policy on governance, the EPRDF also followed a two-track policy on these fundamental issues of development. Track one is designed to please donors and keep them at bay through paying lip service to the importance of these issues to development. Track 2 constitutes its real policy, which can be characterized by neglecting these issues. Population is one such issue and its population policy is one such policy.

Now, after ten years of disseminating the population policy, the EPRDF government assessed its records. Because nothing of importance has been done, the EPRDF government admitted to accomplishing nothing, a rare admission by its standards. What are these neglects? The head of the national Office of Population, Hiruy Mitiku, admits them:

1. According to the 1993 population policy, a National Population Council would be set up to co-ordinate the overall work of the government on population issues. The National Population Council has not been put into place yet.
2. The National Office of Population, the ad-hoc body created after the policy, was not given a legal framework with which to operate in terms of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to it by the policy framework. Consequently, it was enfeebled from the start in performing its co-

- ordinating and executing roles. It was not empowered to mobilize resources and inputs at the desired level.
3. At regional level the co-ordinating role of Regional offices of Population was either non-existent or inefficient. Inefficiencies were witnessed during the implementation process in those Regional Offices of Population that were handicapped due to a shortage of qualified staff, material, and counterpart budget. The low status accorded to the Offices of Population in some regions through restructuring or otherwise is a distressing situation we live with. Some Regional Offices of Population were relegated to departments or units within other regional sector bureaus, with diminishing roles, unlike those envisaged in the population policy document.
 4. The technical capacities of implementing agencies in programme and project formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation are so low that they have to be resuscitated at all levels... A four-year project, for example, has taken two years for its formulation only.
 5. There is a tendency to consider 'population' as an independent sector, not as an integral part of the broad social sector. This perception reigned in the minds of some professional cadres who failed to see the nexus between population and development. Failure to see the relationship between population and development has resulted in difficult and uncertain sequencing of activities.
 6. It has been observed that 'although gender dimensions of population issues are widely recognized and gender disparities constitute a source of concern there is not much evidence of gender mainstreaming' in programmes and projects.
 7. There is limited involvement of civil society in the implementation of the national population programmes and projects.
 8. Co-ordination between agencies responsible for the implementation of the national population policy is weak. The National Office of Population, which was responsible for overall co-ordination as indicated in the policy document, was not given full legal backing to undertake a co-ordinating role. Similarly, Regional Offices of Population were not organized in a manner that allows functioning as a co-ordinating agent of population activities.
 9. There was insufficient interaction between federal and regional offices both laterally and vertically (Hiruy, in Population Media Center, 2004:22-23).

The Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) also takes up issues with the EPRDF government on the issue of population. Like Hiruy, the EEA criticizes the government for not having any clear idea regarding the relationship between population and development (EEA, 2003/04:131). This is further made clear when in the much celebrated government document *Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction* where the EPRDF devoted 'a very small space' to the issue [i.e. population, MT] in a major, comprehensive policy paper (ibid., 131). In

this document the government accorded low priority to 'directly population specific programs such as family planning services' (ibid., 131).

Typical of the EPRDF is the fact that fundamental issues detrimental to development such as gender, environment and population are left to the discretion of regional governments without according them the necessary concern such as institutions, qualified staff, budget and so on. They are required to implement the policy all by themselves. This again indicates the drawbacks of ethnic-based federalism in which development issues are left to the ethnic regional administrations, but issues of control and politics in general to the discretion of the federal government. The EEA document in this respect also raises an interesting issue: why regional governments are reluctant to take up the issue of population.

Regional governments in the country are also unlikely to take the population control agenda seriously for various reasons. "Why?" In the current ethnic based federal structure and political movements, each ethnic group is motivated to assert its presence and influence through increasing the size of its population. For example, area demarcation into a specific ethnic based district/region is made using the criterion of population size. ... Subsidy to regional governments is also mainly based on population size criterion. The larger its population size, the higher the level of subsidy to a particular region. It is not surprising, therefore, that regional governments repeatedly claim that their respective population size is higher than indicated by the Central Statistical Authority (ibid., 132).

In a nutshell, the EPRDF has no agenda regarding population growth. Suffice it to mention what a Western diplomat recently told me in an interview that she thought the EPRDF did not even want to control population growth. But, "... a population growth rate of 3% and economic growth rate of 2.5% means no growth" (interview with a diplomat from the Donor's Assistance Group, February 2006).

In this chapter, I have attempted to analyse the principal development challenges that Ethiopia faces, namely what I call the domains of sustainable development: environment, rural development and population issues. We have seen how grave the situation is as far as gender is concerned, how devastating environmental degradation and deterioration of the ecosystem is and how heavily it impacts on agricultural productivity, how precarious the state of rural production systems of peasants and pastoralists are and how dangerously Ethiopia is living regarding population growth. Against this background, I have also investigated the performance of the EPRDF on each of these fundamental development issues and how dangerously neglectful it is.

We have also seen how the EPRDF curbed the participation of the civic sector, NGOs in particular, in these sectors. The totality of the neglect of the EPRDF on these issues and the deliberate marginalization of the civic sector from participating in the development process as well as in democratization as a

whole, have exacerbated the problems in these sectors, thereby greatly contributing to poverty and perpetuation of under-development. This in turn has impacted negatively on the state of the institutions of governance that need to develop into a fully-fledged state through a rigorous interaction with the civic sector and by being constantly responsive to the latter but first of all granting it full freedom to operate. The neglect by the EPRDF of these crucial issues of development, as well as the general question of freedom and democracy might look coincidental. In the final analysis, however, it boils down to one thing: the EPRDF is inept. It is neither a developmental state nor capable of generating development.

Conclusion: The 2005 Election Crisis, End of the Two-Track Gimmick?

This study set out to explain the structural as well as conjunctural constraints for the emergence of a civil society or democracy in Ethiopia during the EPRDF period of the last fourteen years, 1991-2005. It set out to do this by analyzing the relationship between social/political exclusion and the state of poverty/under-development. This in turn necessitated analysis of the under development of the determinant elements within the social formation, namely the institutions of governance and the level of organization/effectiveness of the civic sector on the one hand; and the alarming state of the development challenges that the country faces on the other. We have seen how the institutions of governance are too feeble and under-developed to live up to the challenges that the country faces. On top of this, we also have seen that the EPRDF's ideological lens, namely revolutionary democracy, led it to adopt policies that either failed to conform with the reality of the country both when they came to power in 1991 and during the testing 2005 elections or neglected the most determinant domains of development.

EPRDF's failure in policy ranges from freedom to development. From the development perspective, the most conspicuous policy constraint is the one as regards the civic sector. The impact of the deliberate marginalization of civic actors such as trade and professional unions, NGOs and associations at large is the exclusion of this sector from effectively participating in the development and democratization processes. As we have seen before, the dire state of poverty in general and the alarming state of its determinant factors such as gender, environment, rural development and population, indeed affirms the crying need for the participation of the non-state actors to mitigate the problems posed. On the contrary, the EPRDF's policy on this regard is to deliberately exclude independent non-state actors or make them party affiliates and follow the party diktat. In the mean time, the country is thrown in a terrible dilemma. Neither the EPRDF is capable of meeting these gigantic development challenges nor has it allowed the non-state actors to contribute to their mitigation. How long the EPRDF will take to develop those capacities is not in a matter of a foreseeable future. Fifteen years in a life of this destitute country that is hit quite frequently by sporadic famines and food shortages is too long indeed to contemplate for waiting until the EPRDF develops the desired capacity. This is even if we accept the notion that it is only the state that must be the sole actor in development, a notion advanced by all statist and dictators.

The history of the experiences of many countries unambiguously attests to the fact that without the participation of the civic sector no development can take place. The EPRDF leaders sometimes echo this message in their official pronouncements. But, their real policy is the opposite. Now, after fifteen years of rule, the EPRDF is still determined to pursue its erstwhile policy based on its 'doctrine' of revolutionary democracy. The writing on the wall as made clear

during the 2005 elections is however a rejection of its policies, and its exclusionary policies in the main. The freedom to express what one thinks freely is the crucial distinguishing factor between human and animals. Scientists have proved that there are animals that even think but unable to express their thoughts in words. Humans are the only ones who have that natural/biological gift. Suppressing humans from their natural ability to express what they think is tantamount to reducing them to the level of animals.

Freedom in general disentangles the social inertia that has hitherto tied the people hand and foot. Freedom of thought, freedom to work, freedom to help others, to participate and so on need to flourish in a society gripped with poverty and under- development. The prevalence of freedom unravels the human potential and creativity as was witnessed during the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution and even now when the information and communication technology brings us new discoveries almost by the month. Releasing the potential of humans is the key in this case that can only be attained through freedom. The EPRDF is doing exactly the opposite, stifling the human potential and suppressing its creativity. It is this state of affairs that had prevailed during the past two regimes that led to social implosions of one sort or another.

In this sense, the EPRDF is digging its own grave, to use Marx's famous term, at two levels. First, by suppressing freedom, it is cultivating social implosion of various types. Sporadic and spontaneous revolts have now become common features in the country. When the current spontaneity gives way to an organized political revolt could only be a matter of time. Secondly, by suppressing the freedom of the civic sector, it is only leaving its own institutions of governance as bureaucratic and stagnant. Interaction with the civic sector and positive responsiveness towards it by the institutions of governance in traditional formations is a crucial factor for their development towards a full-fledged state. In an impoverished country such as Ethiopia, the institutions of governance cannot develop through service provision, as the Tunisian government managed for instance, because it has no wealth.

Interaction with and positive responsiveness to the non-state sector constitutes a crucial link both to the process of development of the institutions of governance towards a state and the civic sector towards a full-fledged civil society. Coexistence between state and society is not only marked by all-positive aspects such as mutual recognition and cooperation but also by engagement though engagement does not have a negative connotation. The separate existence of state and society also connotes that they are different entities, but they need modalities for coexistence. The existence of differences of opinion and interest emanates from the fact that they are different entities and is only natural. As long as they continue to exist as different entities, they are bound to have differences of interest and opinions. The recognition of the naturalness of these differences

is the cornerstone of the idea of coexistence between the two. It is precisely this naturalness that does not exist in the vocabulary of the EPRDF.

Consequently, because the activities of the non-state sector is restricted and exists under tremendous pressure, it has so far failed to become an engaging force. Because the EPRDF reads engagement as opposition and at time as treason, the non-state sector exists with a perennial fear of being dissolved altogether. It has therefore recoiled from engaging the government thereby undermining its own development in the process. In the 2005 elections, NGOs were officially branded as opposition and as actively engaged in overthrowing the government as the deputy prime minister, Addisu Legesse, officially said in an interview with Radio Fanna after the vote counts. From the perspective of the development of the internal dynamics within the non-state sector too, failure to become an engaging force has also contributed to another failure of the sector, namely the failure to develop its own perspective. This failure will always leave it to fall prey to other perspectives advanced by other sectors. So long as it is bogged down with government restrictions and marginalization, it will remain to be prone to surrender to other perspectives none other than its own. The characteristic feature of freedom and democracy, on the other hand, is the proliferation of ideas and perspectives by individuals and more importantly by sectors. As we will see in the coming pages, this has huge impact on the state of choices and political choices in particular.

As we have explained in Part three above, Ethiopia faces an extremely serious problem at the environmental, gender, rural development and population fronts. The record of the EPRDF in addressing these fundamental issues of development is abysmal which is commensurate with the characteristic features of an inept dictatorship. The paradox of a historical proportion that puts the country on a brink of collapse emanates from the EPRDF's policies that obstruct the participation of the non-state sector as a whole. It won't be an exaggeration to say that by the advance of each hour, Ethiopia is too late to solve these problems.

It is its own dictatorial policies that kept the EPRDF away from society. The separation of state and society had been complete long before the 2005 elections so much so that the EPRDF had no chance of narrowing the gulf between itself and society, which is of its own making. What Meless Zenawi said of a discussion on the land question being a dead issue for the EPRDF, is very true of EPRDF's attempt to narrow the gulf it created between itself and society. Rapprochement with society had already been a dead issue when the 2005 election came.

The 2005 Elections, end of EPRDF's two-track gimmick?

The 2005 parliamentary election is the major event of historical proportions to take place in Ethiopia's contemporary history after the 1974 Revolution. In February 1974, the peoples of Ethiopia finally said "no!" to the absolutist rule of the imperial regime in the only way possible at the time, through a social implosion that went down in the country's history as the February Revolution. Three decades later almost to the month, the peoples of Ethiopia finally said "no!" to the exclusionist, ethnically parochial and impoverishing rule of the EPRDF through the 2005 elections. Why was the 2005 election unique when the country had already undergone two parliamentary elections in 1995 and 2000? Let's briefly deal with the background to the particularities of the 2005 elections.

By 2004, the rule of the EPRDF had already reached dead end. Two years earlier, a large-scale famine hit close to 15 million people in many regions including new ones that had never been hit before. Though the 2002 famine was a large-scale one, the country has always been hit by food shortages even under conditions of officially claimed bumper harvest. The writing on the wall was clear: the EPRDF had failed to resolve the country's problem of food security. What Meles promised the Ethiopian people back in 1991 that they would soon start eating three times a day had become a pie in the sky. On top of this acute crisis in a country of growing population, the EPRDF's record on repression and systematic clamp down against opposition forces, the civic sector and any expression of dissent had already is well known and had created a huge gulf between government and society. The EPRDF internal crisis of 2001 that culminated in the purge of numerous party members from all of its affiliated organizations had already weakened it and tarnished its image when the prime minister as well as leading EPRDF officials openly admitted that the "EPRDF had deteriorated to its core because of corruption and other political vices" (Tefera Walewa, address on Ethiopian Television, 2001). Although the faction that won the day managed to assure its control of the government and party, whether or not the EPRDF had really weathered the storm would remain to be seen.

In 2004, it was made clear that this didn't happen as another round of crisis emerged within the EPRDF leadership. The crisis developed as the prime minister had earlier and continuously expressed his frustration at the manner the country and regions were run. As times go by, the prime minister's frustration turned to anger that led to personal attacks of his ministers and regional heads. In one these meetings held at the beginning of April, the prime minister attacked key ministers such as the foreign minister Seyoum Mesfin. He characterized the work of foreign affairs as "weak and hopeless", chastised the mayor of Addis, Arkebe Equbai strongly ridiculing his work and accusing him of "rapproachment with the class enemy" referring to his meetings with the business community. A strong critique was also leveled against his deputy prime minister and minister of rural development, Addisu Legesse. He also attacked and ridiculed the other officials too with the exception of Girma Biru, the minister for economic development, and Genet Zewde, the minister of education (*Toby, Miazia 14, 1996*). Some of the officials attacked by Meles responded harshly too upon which

a tense situation was created. At that point, the foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, suggested that the EPRDF resigns and transfers power to a provisional administration composed of people capable of leading the country upon which Meles angrily responded that that would not happen. This was an indication that the meeting of the EPRDF Council tacitly admitted that the EPRDF had failed to administer the country. It was in the spirit of such conclusion that the next EPRDF Council meeting held in July resolved that the parliamentary election scheduled for May 2005 should be open and fair. That decision was to make the 2005 elections unique and different from the past elections. As one CUD (Coalition for Unity and Democracy), the main opposition party, activist informed me, "Dawit Yohannes, [the speaker of parliament at the time, MT] has personally told Birhanu Nega [one of the CUD leaders now in jail, MT] that the EPRDF Council had decided to accept whoever the people elect" (name of informant withheld for security reasons). [EN: Dawit Yohannes and Birhanu Nega were great personal friends in their exile days in the US during the military rule.] When Dawit told this information to Birhanu, the latter's group had just announced the formation of their political party and their decision to enter the race.] This was followed by the government's announcement of its readiness to open up its media apparatus, both broadcasting and print, for all contesting political parties to transmit their messages. The most important decision was to broadcast the political debates between the contesting parties live on television and radio.

Most dictators tend to fight tooth and nail to stay in power come what may. Both the imperial regime and the Derg refused to read the writing on the wall when their rule came to an end and chose to fight to death instead of stepping down for the wishes of the people. In the case of the EPRDF leadership, it is difficult to say whether its July decision to accept the verdict of the electorate was a reflection of an initial reaction to the leadership crisis or if it was a determination to step down if that was the wishes of the electorate. Nevertheless, it made an official commitment to accept the elections results. Despite this decision, however, a faction seemed to be determined to reverse it in practice by mobilizing the membership. Unleashing violence in some regions (Eastern Gojjam), intimidating the electorate and blocking the involvement of civic actors in election education processes (blocking the participation of local NGOs in voters education and the expulsion of three US NGOs working on election education) are all reflections of the attempt to reverse the tide. It seemed that this faction prevailed later and none other than Meles was its mastermind. Nevertheless, the EPRDF's Council July decision made a great many people to become enthusiastic about the elections. In effect, this decision was to end the hitherto principal political gimmick, namely the two-track policy that we discussed previously.

The election campaign kicked off in October 2004 with the debate on the role of civil society. Though still fragmented, the opposition was much more organized now as compared to the debates during the 2000 elections. By that time, the Unity of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) was the only opposition coalition expected to pose a formidable challenge. At the beginning of the debates, the

main opposition coalition, CUD, was not even born. It was soon announced that a political organization called Rainbow Coalition led by prominent intellectuals such as Birhanu Nega was born, registered at the Election Board and was entering the race. That constituted a major boost to the enthusiasm of the population as that was the first time after the Red Terror period that prominent and popular intellectuals entered politics. At that point on time, Meles' famous reference to the absence of a formidable opposition stopped to be uttered by EPRDF politicians. The first debate that the Rainbow Coalition took part was on rural development in which Birhanu Nega shone like an emerging star by literally destroying the arguments of the EPRDF. By contrast the performance of EPRDF candidates, the minister for rural development and deputy premier in the main, was poor. Consequently, public interest in the debate and the elections as a whole rose sharply. Throughout the debate, at which all top EPRDF officials except Meles took part, the EPRDF performed so poorly that the disparity between the EPRDF and the opposition and CUD in particular was high. Many wondered how the country could be ruled by such officials, who displayed that they were much less knowledgeable than the opposition. In the process, the popularity of the opposition and that of the CUD skyrocketed.

Right from the participation of the CUD in the debates, the EPRDF seemed to have sensed that it would lose the debate and probably the election too that it came up with a new stratagem; the usual game of all dictators: protecting law and order. Its leaders cited passages from a book written by Negede Gobezie, one of the exiled leaders of the UEDF, and claimed that the opposition was preparing an uprising. Although the author of the book is from UEDF, the EPRDF however targeted CUD instead. Lidetu Ayalew, a controversial figure within the ranks of the CUD, publicly confirmed EPRDF's allegations when he said in one of the debates that since the EPRDF would eventually steal the elections, the Ethiopian people would perform a miracle by resorting to a political uprising a la Ukraine and Georgia. [EN: Lidetu Ayalew is now widely believed to be an EPRDF plant from the beginning.] With that the EPRDF continuously accused the CUD and the opposition at large of preparing for an uprising and that it would resort to stringent measures to have law and order observed.

This was the same game that the EPRDF played when it dissolved a political party called the United Democratic Nationals (UDN) on the morrow of its accession to power in 1991. The following is a narrative by Theodore Vestal about how the EPRDF dissolved the UDN.

In July 1991, a few days after the Transitional Charter was issued, the EPRDF was challenged to live up to its rhetorical promises about human rights and freedom of association by a newly organized multiethnic political party, the United Democratic Nationals (UDN). In responding to a peaceful challenge from an organization that took seriously the purported guarantees of the Charter, the EPRDF provided a preview of its methods of subjugation that were to become all

too familiar during the following years. A full panoply of public and private sector weapons were unleashed upon the opposition.

The government-controlled media, especially radio could attack the UDN, but other than leaflets or word of mouth, the opposition party had no effective means or reply. False accusations of the party's being a tool of one ethnic group, or worse, having former supporters of the Derg among its members, could be used with impunity to besmirch the UDN. EPRDF informants infiltrated the party and reported UDN plans and any speeches that could be interpreted as being anti-government or anti-charter. The TGE [Transitional Government of Ethiopia, i.e. MT] attempted to use a proclamation governing peaceful demonstrations to prevent the UDN from holding a mass protest against widespread killing in fighting between ethnic groups. When that scheme was foiled because of pressure on the TGE from donor nations, who still were concerned with democracy in Ethiopia at that time, a successful rally of more than 100,000 demonstrators turned out on a Sunday at Meskel Square. Throughout the rally, the EPRDF continued to harass participants. Gunfire was heard as marchers passed by what was already being called the "Eritrean Embassy". Troops along the parade route taunted demonstrators to the point that some young marchers hurled stones at the "guards". Military vehicles full of soldiers tried to drive at high speed through the mass of people assembled in the square. When UDN leaders addressed the rally with a loud-speaker system, electricity in the area suddenly was cut off. Nevertheless, the protest was a success.

The next day, the party's three top leaders were arrested, detained without charges, and imprisoned for two months – supposedly for being responsible for the rock-throwing incident under the terms of their demonstration permit. The charge, finally brought against the leaders, of making "seditious statements" was flimsy at best – but trumped up charges may be all that is necessary for a conviction in a less than independent judiciary. Upon the urging of the US Embassy, a writ of habeas corpus was brought, and the UDN leaders were released on bail.

Stymied in court, the EPRDF sought extra-judicial solutions. After UDN leaders were released, they remained under surveillance by the EPRDF, and one narrowly escaped an assassination plot against him. Meanwhile, the UDN, though never officially banned, had its activities curtailed and its offices physically occupied by the EPRDF. Members of the UDN were harassed, and the party was prohibited from holding any further rallies, and was not allowed to party standing for democracy and unity was rendered impotent by repeated to feel the debilitating sting of the EPRDF prior to the 1992 elections. Firmly in control of most of the election apparatus, the EPRDF found means of disqualifying many opposition candidates who were ominously tarred with the brushing of being discredited "monarchists" or as collaborators with the Derg. Voters suspected of lacking requisite loyalty to the EPRDF likewise were disenfranchised on spurious allegations. (Vestal, 1991:177-178).

One has only to substitute the name CDU for UDN to read the post-2005 election situation. What the EPRDF did to the leaders of CDU and to the organization and its supporters is exactly the same as it did to UDN back in 1991.

As the 2005 election campaign gets heated up the EPRDF also resorted to intimidation tactics using violence particularly in rural areas. In Eastern Gojjam, it killed a number of CUD activists while in Oromiya region close to 20 members of UEDF were killed in separate incidents. The EPRDF also used to capitalize on Hailu Shawul, who was just elected as chair of CUD, accusing him of “feudalist” and having served the Derg regime as an official. That became the rallying point to mobilize its own members. The election began to assume ugly features with these violent actions and negative campaigning by the EPRDF as correctly criticized by Anna Gomez, the head of the EU election observers’ team. In the meantime, a public opinion poll held by a local NGO, African Initiatives, gave 36% of the votes to the EPRDF while the CUD and UEDF trailed as 2nd and 3rd respectively behind. The week before the election was momentous, the country had never seen such massive rallies held throughout the country. The first to hold a mass rally was the EPRDF on Saturday May 7 at Meskel Square. It was thought to be a massive turnout that the country has ever seen. Close to 1. 2 million were estimated to have come out for the EPRDF rally upon which the principal speaker, Meles, publicly said, “This wave does not need to rig the elections!” That evening, the leaders of the EPRDF, who had already been complacent by the African Initiatives poll results, were now more convinced that the majority of the population was with them.

The next day, May 8, the CUD called its rally at the same place, Meskel Square. Close to 4 million turned out in which there was no space in the Meskel Square that people had to amass in the many adjacent streets. Close to a million, who marched past Meles’ palace, shouted slogans against the EPRDF and condemning its rule. As millions and hundreds of thousands thronged into the square from many sides to display their support for the CUD and listen to its leaders, it was indeed obvious that the political map of Ethiopia was changing. Though the EPRDF sabotaged the rally by disconnecting power at Meskel Square, the wrath of society was displayed unambiguously. One private newspaper labeled the turn out as Sunami. The Ethiopian television that had heretofore televised every election activity however did not dare to transmit the images of the CUD rally. That was covered by the private print media instead. The CUD held a number of similar rallies in all the big towns such as Dire Dawa, Bahir Dar and Awassa that turned out to be Sunamis too. These rallies in the major towns of the country demonstrated that the EPRDF is unambiguously opposed in urban Ethiopia.

On May 15, election day, polling stations opened as early as 6 in the morning. Queues started to build up in many places from 5 a.m. on as a huge turn out was expected. The enthusiasm to vote was high. Now, why didn’t this happen in the

previous elections and why did it happen in 2005? This was mainly because people were enthusiastic now as they thought the elections would be genuine and clean as all the major pre-election events led them to conclude as such and they wanted to punish the EPRDF with their votes. The presence of international election observers in urban areas discouraged EPRDF cadres from doing as much mischief as they could. The EPRDF has attempted to sabotage the casting of the votes in many places. In Bahr Dar for instance, where the residents of the town displayed their choice through a mass rally days earlier, the government cut power to discourage people to go home when evening set in while still thousands and thousands of voters were still queuing to vote. But, the voters waited for hours on end till the authorities restarted power. In Oromiya region where there were less international observers, EPRDF cadres resorted to outright violence and use of force to sabotage the elections. Election boxes were stolen replaced by new boxes stuffed with pro-EPRDF election papers. In Shashemene, a big town in Oromiya region, the leading EPRDF candidate, who was none other than the head of the country security, Workneh Gebeyehu, EPRDF cadres snatched the ballot box and as others attempted to stop them, one person was shot to death. Acts of violence were also reported in many places in Oromiya and Southern regions. Despite such violence, largely the people cast their votes in a rather peaceful way. Normally, election violence erupts as a result of some action by the electorate. In the May elections however, the violence was instigated by government forces and in Oromiya it was the police. Evidently, society displayed that it was ahead of the government in a number of ways.

The EPRDF was in panic as of the Sunami rallies in the towns. It was through this panic that its die-hard faction seems to have gained the upper hand and the EPRDF shifted from its stated commitment to accept the verdict of the electorate. Meles made this clear when on the evening of the election day, he went on air to declare a sort of state of emergency in the capital for a month and that all the country's armed forces are under his personal command now. As such, no rallies and outdoor political expressions were banned. The next day, before all the results from polling stations were collected, the EPRDF declared that it had won majority seats in the new parliament. That was in contravention to the election rule as it was only the election board that was supposed to announce election results. The EPRDF claimed more than 300 seats, i.e. more than 50% while the European Union Observers' mission put the figure differently; 47% for CUD and 36% for the EPRDF. The most acclaimed election by African standard began to be marred with EPRDF's insistence to have won.

Claims and counter-claims dominated the post-election scene. With Western donors as intermediaries, the EPRDF and opposition agreed on a verification process. However, the EPRDF went ahead unilaterally with the verification process upon which the opposition withdrew in protest. The election board, which has now become official that it is indeed the arm of the EPRDF, decided on re-elections where there were disputes. Amazingly, ministers such as that of defense and information and heads of regional states such as that of Oromiya,

who had lost the first round of polls when the vote casting were free resorted to extreme form of violence to intimidate voters during the re-elections in their constituencies. There were no observers this time. The EPRDF was declared winner in more than 90% of the cases and all the EPRDF officials were 're-elected.'

There had never been such political enthusiasm in Ethiopia as during the 2005 elections since the days of the 1974 Revolution. A great many people were convinced that the EPRDF would be outvoted and thrown out of office. It was indeed outvoted but was not thrown out of office. Short of that however, the EPRDF admitted to have lost in the capital by 100% and most of the country's towns, save Mekelle, Tigray's capital and Metu in Western Ethiopia, went for the opposition. The EPRDF also conceded that more than 190 seats in the federal parliament had gone to the opposition. That by itself constituted a victory in the eyes of many who know the EPRDF closely. It was in this spirit that I wrote in an English weekly at the time, "Undoubtedly, the 2005 elections have turned out to be one of the greatest landmarks in the contemporary history of Ethiopia. Landmarks in history are measured primarily by the actions of its population that are expressions of their conscience. The February Revolution of 1974 was one such landmark in the country's modern history not because the revolution succeeded to overthrow the emperor's regime; nor is it because it failed to bring about a government of its own. But mainly because the population passed a historic verdict in the only way possible at the time: by social implosion. That was a crucial decision for the ordinary Ethiopian at the time as it could cost lives (and it did), but the people took to the streets come what may! They finally said no! to the emperor's rule. Thirty-one years later, almost to the day in May 2005, the people of Ethiopia said no! to the way the country had traversed since 1991, this time in a different way: through the ballot box. This time too, the people said to themselves, "Come what may!" Ethiopia is now in a much better political situation than it was in 1974, it is now possible to have a government of the people's choice" (Fortune, May 2005). The basis for such optimism was not an assumed victory by the opposition but the gains so far attained constituted, in historical terms, a great leap by themselves. Close to 40% of the parliament seats, a clean sweep of the capital's administration, majority in almost all the administration of the towns except two, constituted an undeniable change in power relations in Ethiopia.

Now, the die-hard faction of the EPRDF that had introduced the stratagem of "protecting law and order" came out openly against the commitments it entered and went against its own decisions to respect the popular verdict. It had to stay in power by hook or crook. Playing the stratagem of protecting law and order was the chosen card it wanted to play and set the trap for the CUD in the main to fall into that trap. Once it falls in the trap, then the CUD would be charged with treason. As one US government document put it, "A common tactic of tyranny is to charge opponents of the government with treason" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm6.htm>). Thus, the trap

was set. If they don't, moves needed to be taken to provoke the CUD to fall into the trap.

At that point on time, the die-hard faction of the EPRDF came out with surprising provocative moves. The old EPRDF-dominated parliament that was supposed to have been dissolved, under a normal condition of freedom, passed new laws directed against the opposition. It introduced extremely strange parliamentary procedures that literally prevent opposition deputies from discussing and debating in the parliament issues that they want to raise. As one of such rules has it, deputies need a 50% + 1 vote to have an agenda set for discussion, a move condemned by the European Parliament. This implies that the opposition cannot have an agenda registered or raise any issue for discussion and debate because it could not constitute 50% + 1 in the new parliament. That alone defeats the very *raison d'être* of a parliament. The parliament also passed a new law that aimed at crippling the powers of the capital's administration by shifting these powers to the federal authorities. The opposition's threat that it would resort to a protest movement tickled the EPRDF as one step closer to fall in the trap.

In the mean time, the opposition insisted for the verification process to be inclusive and at the end, UEDF came up with the idea of forming a coalition government with the EPRDF that will call a clean election in a year's time. In the middle of this, the CUD signaled that it is falling into the trap when its leader, Hailu Shawul, called from Washington for the removal of the EPRDF government and vowed to start a protest movement. The EPRDF must have sighed with relief, the CUD has fallen into the trap as that was sufficient to charge it with treason. Upon his return to Ethiopia, Hailu Shawul made sure that the CUD would not enter parliament. The EPRDF pretended as if it wanted the opposition to join the parliament and started to accuse it of derailing the Constitution by preparing an uprising against the state. Thereafter, things got out of hand for the CUD as protesters went into the streets against the EPRDF upon which a massacre took place twice, in June and November. The EPRDF rounded up to 11,000 persons, the entire CUD leadership, editors and journalists of the private media and some NGO activists and all were charged with treason. A state of terror reigned in the country so reminiscent of the days of the Red Terror. Opposition was quelled, so was civic activism.

The CUD's refusal to enter parliament was to have enormous consequences not only to the party as such but also to the process of democratization as a whole. The scale of space that the CUD was to have had it decided to go to parliament would have meant a much broader space and freedom for the emerging civil sector. It was crucial for the CUD to know its political adversary very well. Regimes such as the EPRDF as extremely stubborn and will never give up power that easily. The most likely political scenario that was to have huge impact on the level of social organization within the emerging civic sector, which as we have been arguing throughout, was the following:

- the opposition would have 199 seats in the federal parliament, quite a substantial presence as compared to the composition of the old parliament that had not more than 15 opposition and independent deputies
- with that number of deputies, it could have generated a lively policy debate that has never been the case and which can be taken as a signal to a move towards democratization
- as members of parliament, they could enjoy immunity from prosecution for expressing their views, which is an asset under the EPRDF rule
- they could have galvanized a popular opposition for the next five years thereby creating a solid electoral base
- could have existed as a political force to reckon with that would give them the leverage to negotiate further reforms such as the reforming of the electoral board, for instance
- by fully controlling the administration of the capital and constituting the majority in most town councils, they could have introduced an effective and much more efficient administration than that of the EPRDF as a strategy for the next election

Above all, the CUD needed time to restructure its own organization, which was rather amorphous and to seriously work to attain unity as it was a very fragile coalition. There was a serious conflict of personalities in the leadership and between member organizations (for further reading, see Lidetu, 2005) that needed to be sorted out urgently. These internal weaknesses alone should have dictated the party to attain a grace period upon which it would address them properly, reorganize and prepare itself for the next election. Joining the parliament was the first step forward in this direction. Had the CUD resorted to such measures, the EPRDF would have been in deep trouble as that was what it did not want at all. It should have decided to enter parliament much earlier and prepared the public for the next election just like the UEDF did. Secondly, had the CUD entered parliament and proceeded to accomplish what we outlined above, the EPRDF, most likely, shall have been ousted by the next election. Since that did not happen, a regime that shall have stayed in power only for five years will now stay in power probably for fifteen years. And that is the biggest nightmare for society and a big blow to the prospects of democracy and development.

The exclusion of the CUD from political involvement was followed by a further clamp down against the opposition hitting hard on political opposition in general and any expression of dissent. The overwhelming majority of private newspapers that served as the only alternative source of information were closed down with serious negative impact on the democratization process. The NGOs also fell under careful scrutiny.

The impact of this situation is enormous on the process of the emergence of a civil society in Ethiopia. Space for the civic sector will be trimmed as the

government might go ahead introducing the stringent draft laws on NGOs/ associations and media. There was a big chance for institutions that fell under the EPRDF's jurisdiction such as the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions to become independent of government and become a real representative of workers. That has now come to an end. The government's attempt to control even funeral associations known as *Idirs* will be reinvigorated thereby killing their chance of becoming independent. As restriction of NGO activity goes on, the atmosphere for NGOs intervention will be discouraging thereby diminishing their role in development and democratization processes. The cumulative impact of all these negative factors will be the stifling of the level of social organization within society and destruction of social capital. That is going to have devastating impact on the efforts to eradicate poverty and under-development.

The gulf between the EPRDF and society has never been widened as it did in the aftermath of the 2005 elections. In terms of acquisition of freedom and space for society, Ethiopia has gone back by decades. The feeble civic sector in Ethiopia that needed freedom and a democratic system for its own development will most likely be further stifled for sometime to come thereby prolonging the emergence of a civil society. The stifling of the civic sector will further restrict the independent participation of society. A civic sector made dormant by the restrictive policies of the government means the weakening of the capacity of the institutions of governance, which in the final analysis impact on its capacity to deliver services and perform as an effective government.

With the policies it is currently following, the EPRDF is indeed digging its own grave. The Ethiopian social formation that entered a serious crisis in 1974 when society abhorred the political conditions that govern its life are still intact thirty years later, if not worse. The EPRDF government, ostensibly a champion of ethnicity, has miserably failed to resolve the nationality problem as Negasso (interview, 2006) and Merera (2003) strongly affirm. Like all petty-bourgeois ethnicists, the EPRDF that galloped all these years over the form of the resolution of the problem neglected the essence of the construction of the whole problem. In societies such as Ethiopia, nationalism has hardly emerged as a political phenomenon. The various ethnic sentiments were misread as 'nationalisms', therefore the right to self-determination including the right to secession as the 'solution' was opted for without a rigorous study and analysis of the concrete manifestations of the various forms of ethnic sentiments and their cause. What ethnic problems in Ethiopia needed as a solution is not the so-called right to self-determination, the right that has never been respected anyway, but safeguarding equality and well being and above all, respect of the rights of the individual subject. Safeguarding equality needed freedom to prevail and a democratic system to preside and for well being to be taken care of what is crucially needed is a developmental state. The technician slogan for the right to self-determination and its inclusion in the Constitution as Article 39 has only served the petty-bourgeoisie of the various ethnic groups in what Merera calls PDOs (People's Democratic Organizations) that ganged up as 'the federal state'

to protect the parasitic privileges it has so far enjoyed. A democratic system must first of all recognize the rights of the individual as a citizen. "A system that cannot protect the right of the individual cannot protect the rights of the collective" (Worku, 1993:84).

The EPRDF project is an undeniable failure. This failure can only be attributed to malgovernance and the misguided concoction called 'revolutionary democracy' as its credo. It has failed to build a state as a modern institution of governance positively responsive to the needs and cries of society. The deliberate suppression of the nascent civic sector backfired to the stagnation and underdevelopment of the institutions of governance. The low level of social organization as a consequence of the prevailing state of unfreedom in turn perpetuated the social status of the individual subject Ethiopian, as replete with fear and want as ever.

At the end of the day the EPRDF which came to power in 1991 with much enthusiasm and hope for a democracy to flourish over the ashes of the draconian military rule turned out to be a disappointment of immense proportion. It has completely failed to meet the central tenets of a modern state that we dealt with in Chapter 2. It has failed

- to develop its own institution of governance from a mere centralized government to a modern state so as to meet the needs of society
- to cultivate legitimacy as it refuses to recognize the freedom of the nascent civic sector and respect the articles of its own Constitution
- to live up to constitutionality and rule of law
- to delineate power between the party on the one hand and between apparatuses of its governance on the other
- to respect the freedom of the individual thereby perpetuating the status of the individual Ethiopian to a perpetual subject
- to delineate 'state' from 'civil society'
- to introduce the accountability of state to society

The experience of the last fourteen years of EPRDF's rule indicates that the essential element in the entire issue of national question is the centrality of development and democracy rationales to prevail over the adherence to the principle of right to self-determination once regional autonomy has been attained. A genuine practice of self-determination, which involves a genuine regional autonomy by the various ethnic groups of the country should have automatically led to concentrating on the rights of the individual. Prevalence of development and democracy rational could have empowered communities, collectives and individuals, which is a crucial component in the process of emergence of a civil society. The overriding rationale of the governance must have been to transform the hitherto subject to a citizen. As we discussed in the last chapter, the developmental challenges that the country faces is monumental that require

urgent and swift shift towards democracy and development. The structural and conjunctural constraints for the emergence of a civil society and democracy have to be removed. Otherwise, Ethiopia is doomed as leading economists, environmentalists and sociologists have warned us all along. Ethiopia is living through a ticking bomb as a result of EPRDF's misrule. The ethnic policy that was advanced to protect the rights of ethnic groups has now proved to be a new instrument of control. On top of this, Ethiopia's development challenges that we discussed are overwhelming and extremely serious. A combination of these two factors may, sooner or later, trigger a social implosion of ethnic magnitude that the EPRDF may be unable to control. That will indeed be a mutual assured destruction both for the EPRDF and Ethiopia.

List of acronyms

ADF	African Development Forum
ADLI	Agricultural Development-led Industrialization
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
APDM	Amhara Peoples Democratic Movement
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CELU	Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions
CERTWID	Center for Research and Training in Women and Development
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EEA	Ethiopian Economic Association
EFGA	Ethiopian Free Journalists Association
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPDO	Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Organization
EPLF	Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front
ESUE	Ethiopian Students Union in Europe
ESUNA	Ethiopian Students Union in North America
ETA	Ethiopian Teachers Association
EUS	Ethiopian University Service
EWCO	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFSO	Integrated Family Service Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUS	International Union of Students
MLLT	Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray
NCTP	National Committee on Traditional Practices
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization
PCF	Parti Communist Francaise
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
TPLF	Tigray Peoples Liberation Front
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization
USUAA	Union of Students of the University of Addis Ababa
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAB	Women's Affairs Bureau
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WOT	Women Organization of Tigray
WTO	World Trade Organization

List of persons interviewed

Dr. Negasso Gidada, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995-2001

W/O Aregash Adane, Central committee member of the TPLF, 1975-2001

Ato Aregawi Berehe, founder, first military commander and Central committee member of TPLF, 1975-1988

Dr. Asmelash Beyene, public administration specialist and director of Africa Institute of Development Management in Addis Ababa

Professor Du Zhixiong, Chief of department, department of research coordination, Rural Development Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Ms. Indra Biseswar, ex-coordinator of the gender forum at Panos Ethiopia, ex-lecturer at the post graduate gender studies at Addis Ababa University

An ex-fighter of Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Army (EPRA), the military wing of EPRP (name with-held on request)

An NGO activist (name with-held on request)

A deputy ambassador at a West European embassy (name with-held on request)

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Thesis Summary

Title: Structural and Conjunctural Constraints on the Emergence of a Civil Society and Democracy in Ethiopia: 1991-2005

This thesis examines the structural and conjunctural constraints that inhibit the emergence of a civil society and democracy in Ethiopia, 1991-2005. Freedom and democracy are taken as precondition for development and social transformation. It introduces a model of how state and society relationship affects development and social transformation in transitional societies placing freedom as a pivotal link.

The thesis establishes a marked continuum in the modalities of state and society relationship throughout the three post-War governments in Ethiopia. It examines the current state/society relationship and highlights lack of freedom as the major constraint. This is examined against the backdrop of what the historical realm for social change in post-War Ethiopia is, namely freedom and democracy. It examines the policies of the current government (EPRDF) on non-state organizations, the 'theoretical' rationales it advanced and how the perceptions that the ruling party held back in 1975 haven't changed. It holds that the government exacerbated the problem of the fragile relationship it had with society.

The thesis also examines the government's policy on ethnicity as the 'rationale' that governs the functions of its institutions of governance and deconstructs the concepts of EPRDF's "revolutionary democracy", the dichotomy between quality and quantity as well as between cadres and experts. It also deconstructs the EPRDF's thesis on the "national question" both in terms of its claims to have proceeded from the positions of the old student movement on the one hand and from the Marxian theoretical perception on the "national question" on the other.

The analysis is extended to examine, within the poverty-unfreedom nexus, the development challenges that Ethiopia currently faces. Four major development challenges are advanced for examination: gender, environment, rural development and population. The thesis concludes that the EPRDF has failed to resolve these structural problems. EPRDF's exclusion of the nascent civil society, suppression of freedom and official political opposition are taken as the main factors behind the failure. The case of the 2005 elections is presented as a sequel to the thesis.

Title of thesis

STRUCTURAL AND CONJUNCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE EMERGENCE OF A CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA: 1991-2005

KEY TERMS

state society relationship, civil society and democracy, subjects and citizens, institutions of governance, ethnicity and nationality questions, gender and development, poverty unfreedom nexus, population and development, environment and development, rural development

Annexes

Annex i International instruments for women's rights and their well-being

- ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No. 3)
- ILO Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (Principles of equality and non-discrimination)
- ILO Night Work (Women) convention (Revised), 1948 (and Protocol, 1990)
- ILO Equal Remuneration convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1951(No.111)
- ILO Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103)
- International Women's Year, 1975
- World Conference on the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 1975 (first global conference on women ever held)
- UN Decade for Women: Equality, development and peace (1976-1985)
- Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the United National General Assembly, 1979
- World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Programme of Action for the second half of the UN Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 1980
- ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)
- World conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, Nairobi, 1985. The Nairobi Forward looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women
- UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, 1992 (role of women in sustainable development recognized)
- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo, 1994 (role of women in sustainable development recognized)
- World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995 (gender dimensions in alleviation and reduction or poverty, expansion of productive employment, and enhancement of social integration)
- Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for equality, development and peace, Beijing, 1995. The Beijing Platform for Action
- United Nations Economic and Social Council Agreed Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming, Geneva, 1997
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and rights at Work, 1998
- UN Special Sessions on Copenhagen+5 and Beijing+5,2000

(author's own construction)

Annex ii Of Civil Society and NGOs: EPRDF's Dangerous Misconceptions

by Melakou Tegegn (Equibegzie Abraha, pen name used), The monitor, 15 Oct. 2004

The first debate between the political parties held on Sep. 26 at the ECA was so revealing indeed, None other than the EPRDF came out finally, after thirteen years i.e., to state publicly its anti-NGO position.

Unlike the previous debates the opposition performed extremely well, so well that I personally could not find any major point to criticize them about.

On the contrary, their position on the two major issues of the debate, i.e. good governance and civil society, was correct and excellent. Hence, the comment will focus on the position of the government's ruling party, the EPRDF.

Indeed, it was for the first time the EPRDF openly and publicly states its position on major issues of democracy, freedom and development.

For the sake of space, I will only raise the most important ones namely good governance, civil society, NGOs, gender and development in general.

Ato Berekt, EPRDF's main representative, stated a position that is of both conceptual and practical nature.

I found EPRDF's position base on a complete misconception that I could hardly believe that a person in his position as a leading government minister could ever entertain. Surprising as it was, here it is.

- Good governance: this term has been popularized by the World Bank in the late 80s and has become a catchword ever since. Let's leave the conceptual inaccuracy aside for the time being and see how the EPRDF understands good governance.

Ato Bereket mentions three pillars of good governance: people's participation, efficient and effective administration and the rule of law. Is that all? Yes, that is all what the EPRDF understands by good governance.

Not a single word or idea of freedom and rights for individuals and civic groups, etc...Be that as it may, is the EPRDF meeting its own weird definition of good governance? Is there people's participation in this country?

The EPRDF always refers to “people’s participation”, all these forceful (yes! forceful because they are imposed) implementation of its policies by rural subjects in the main.

Such “people’s participation” is not different from Derg’s “revolutionary participation of the people.” Secondly, is there effective and efficient government administration?

I don’t think I had to go into details to explain that there isn’t. Thirdly, is there rule of law in this country? From top to bottom government officials even clerks work as if they are above the law.

The law is always for the public. The government does not even implement its own laws. The rights of individuals and even of groups are violated and violence is also committed against them in broad day light. 50 percent of the population in this country (women) lives in fear and terror of violence unleashed against them. Where are law enforcement agencies to uphold the rule of law? Ethiopia being a country where the rule of law prevails is the biggest joke of the year!

- Role of the state: the main and probably the most dangerous misconception on the part of the EPRDF is the perception it has on the role of the state. It is extremely important to make a clear distinction from the start what kind of state it is. As the EPRDF claims to follow a policy of market economy but practices a state socialist policy of the Stalinist type, the choice is between a nation-state or a Stalinist one.

In the nation-state, the role of the state is fundamentally to regulate. In that case, the state encourages individuals and civic groups to participate in the development and democratization processes (South Africa).

It only provides proper laws and regulating mechanisms for popular participation. Because its economic policy is open market economy, it encourages private business, supports them and adopts a protectionist policy (South Korea).

A Stalinist state on the other hand is a control freak and its roll is basically to control. It controls every facet of life social to the economy. Ato Bereket openly said that the EPRDF is out to build a strong state.

I am not sure if he is aware of the implication of that statement, but the notion of a strong state is as dead as the Stalinist state. A strong state particularly in the African setting is nothing but a control freak state that wants to control everything.

The Opposition accused the EPRDF of even trying to control; traditional associations such as *idirs* (funeral associations). Again and again he stated that the EPRDF is the vanguard of the Ethiopian people.

All those Leninist parties who were considered themselves as the vanguard of their peoples have all ended up in the museum of history because that vanguardship was never legitimized by the electorate.

The Bolshevik party itself went into elections in 1918 after the insurrection that brought it powerfully confident of being elected by the masses. The Bolsheviks lost the elections subsequently dissolving the Constituent Assembly.

There has never been any single party in the world that considered itself as the vanguard of the people and that was elected by the people except the Partido Socialista of President Allende of Chile.

This is the crux of the matter: either the EPRDF is aspiring to form a nation-state of the free market economy and relinquish its control freak policy or openly admits that it is still Stalinist and is trying to set up a state socialist system.

- Civil society: Ato Bereket gave us the weirdest definition of a civil society. I have made research on civil society and haven't come across such a definition in any literature. Civil society is equated with NGOs, and those NGOs work voluntarily (he meant without salaries) do not exist in Ethiopia ("they are all for money"!!!)

The implication is because NGOs are fully voluntary there can be no civil society. Now, can you make head or tail out of this? Civil society is not just the voluntary sector.

It is a historical category that arises in the wake of a transition from medieval to modern society both in the liberal (post-industrial revolution) and post-colonial traditions.

The material basis of civil society is capitalism, like EPRDF's market economy, and total voluntarism has no place in capitalist economy.

The bourgeoisie is the historical agent of civil society in the liberal tradition, and capitalism knows no voluntarism. But, civil society emerged and played its historical role as the social base for freedom and democracy.

If the EPRDF's argument is: there can be no freedom and democracy without voluntarism, then our advice is to refer to history and correct that big misconception. Be that as it may, the fact that Ethiopia is passing through a transition period towards democracy makes it absolutely imperative to encourage the market forces and discourage attempts for a collectivist option to prevail over the private. This will bring us back to the dark ages of the Derg where the individual and society as a whole were crushed to the ashes in the name of collective interests of "workers and peasants" in whose name only party bureaucrats, the apparatchiki, fattened their home income and pushed the country into astray. It is really amazing where this anti-civil society mentality came from.

One amazing revelation is: "some civic associations were closed because they took part on opposition parties platforms" (!!) Are we under the Third Reich? Who on earth said that civic groups cannot launch political protest? In as much as the EPRDF itself controls (hijacked) some "associations" such as the official trade union, opposition parties also have the right to solicit support from any association and any association must be free to express its political support to anybody that it thinks would advance its cause. Be that as it may, but civic groups throughout the world, where ever there is freedom and democracy, have every right to support any political party that they want and even organizationally attach themselves to it if they wish. Whether their action contravenes their own principles, is up to the membership to ask and is nobody else's business. In the last US presidential election for instance, the police association campaigned for Bush. This time they switched sides and are campaigning for Kerry. Where is the problem?

NGOs: what Ato Bereket said about NGOs is revealing indeed. But, thanks to him we now know what the EPRDF thinks about NGOs. It was publicly stated that "NGOs do not have a people's agenda, they are all after money and are against the draft NGO because they do not like to be controlled." Ato Bereket's assumptions are all based on fundamental misconceptions, and the danger is that EPRDF is the ruling party and enacts laws on the basis of these misconceptions. NGOs constitute the voluntary sector not because their staff should not be paid salaries but because they are profoundly for development and go to any extent to help the poor and advance the cause of freedom. No NGO in the world works without paying salaries to it's staff. NGO staff cannot live and work like a fighter in a guerrilla tradition; voluntarism cannot be defined with absence of salary.

Again and again it is not gender but the "woman question" that was referred to by Ato Bereket. Let's have the in-articulation at that level for the moment and focus more on practical matters. According to Ato Bereket, NGO that do not go to the countryside, leave with peasant women and work to help them, etc...cannot advance the cause of women. Period! Otherwise they are all talking in the cities and make money because there is huge donor money for the "women question".

It is indeed clear that in the minds of the EPRDF leaders that there is only one side to gender and that is the community development work. If you are engaged in issues of women's rights, gender equality, call an end to violence against women and advocate for respect for the rule of law, etc...you are only talking in the cities and amassing money. That is all there is to it. That is a very dangerous trend as it fundamentally relegates the importance of rights and dignity of women and the human person at large.

The EPRDF position on gender is basically populist and only at the level of rhetoric to start with just like most of its positions such on poverty. If they really are concerned with the "women's question" at the grass roots level, how come they haven't lifted a finger when the most gruesome violence against rural women is raging? If what all the NGO's work in urban areas is all talk and money making, how come nothing has been done by the most powerful institution in this country, EPRDF, to help rural women emerge out of the ashes of violence that they are condemned to? The EPRDF's record on gender is embarrassing to say the least because it did not even bother to implement its own laws on women rights in the first place. Here again, development is the material aspect for the EPRDF, the human aspect, human development does not exist. Last but not least, it should be emphasized that a power that has a wrong policy on gender will never succeed either in reducing poverty or in social development.

Development: according to EPRDF development is only digging irrigation projects, water harvesting, and other rural development components related to material changes. Again, issues of rights, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, etc... are not issues of development. If you are engaged in this one you are amassing money and do not have a development agenda. We can easily destroy this argument with an analysis of the absolute imperativeness of freedom to social development and in fact show how freedom and democracy are preconditions for development. (We may come back to this in another occasion though.) We are living in the second millennium and the EPRDF doesn't still recognize the role of freedom and democracy to development and argues just like Joseph Stalin, Mao and Enver Hoxha (the late Albanian Stalinist despot) about freedom being "democracy for the bourgeoisie".

Roles of the state, government and ruling party: one thing that came out starkly in Ato Bereket's statement is the fact that the EPRDF entertains a very serious misconception about what the roles of the state, government and ruling party are and should be. It is indeed amazing that Ethiopia is ruled by a party that is not yet clear about the difference in roles of these different institutions. Bereket consistently argues on what the role of a ruling party is supposed to be. But, the EPRDF is "supposed" to be a state in the first place and a government as a central executing authority. In both cases, it should not operate as a party because it is not in power to advance the cause of whatever class it espouses to advance but to administer a state and run the country. The confusion is because the EPRDF still thinks the Leninist theory of the vanguard in which the party must

“guide” society by the nose. The experience of all supposedly Leninist states has shown that such a conception only leads the country to astray, poverty and end up in institutionalizing totalitarian dictatorship.

At times, it is indeed shocking and send shudder down the spine to discover that the ruling party is still not clear on the distinct roles of the state, government and ruling party. Mengistu led this country to astray precisely on the same assumption, “power does it all after all”. Uganda under Amin went through the same experience but what made the Derg worse than Idi Amin’s regime was that it was composed of 150 Amins. Will we be spared of such disaster? The future looks gloomy and dark indeed.

It should not then come as a surprise when EPRDF comes out with a very restrictive NGO draft law. If this draft law is enacted, there are immediate and long-term consequences to this country. In the immediate, many NGOs might be closed resulting in lay offs and suspension of development projects. This will be adding insult to injury to the sick economy and high unemployment rate. Will the EPRDF replace that? No. Secondly, as this is a clear sign that the space for civic participation in the development process is closed, those who opt for a violence road will only swell their ranks bringing the country back to square one: conflicts, wars, famine. Thirdly, immigration will rise adding more headaches to the rich countries. This in turn will definitely compel donor countries to review their development cooperation policies towards Ethiopia as this is a replay of what is happening in Eritrea. Even if they don’t civic pressure there will compel them to do so.

Annex iii import and export categories and production areas in which EPRDF corporations are involved, in Bogale, 2005, 16-24

Area of exports

- coffee, oil seeds and other agricultural products
- food products
- industrial products
- Tesfa Co. clothes
- mineral products

Areas of imports

- medical equipments
- building materials
- electronics, communication instruments and machines
- drilling machines
- machine spare parts
- human and animal medicines
- fertilizers, pesticides and anti-weed chemicals
- various kinds of chemicals
- agricultural tools
- other commodities
- clothes
- bicycles
- books and journals
- power generating instruments
- factory parts
- computer and their accessories
- foam producing chemicals and instruments
- cosmetics
- brewery parts/instruments
- rubber
- bulldozers

Production Areas

- vehicle brake canvas
- optical instruments and lenses
- transport machines
- assembling bicycles
- synthetic leather

- tubes and concrete
- soap
- agricultural tools
- plastic products
- edible oil and byproducts
- bricks and cement
- metal works (construction, residential and office)
- plastic tubes (for electric wire and hose)
- production enhancing materials
- seals
- pasta products (spaghetti and macaroni)
- raw materials for textile production
- foam
- candies and sweets
- blankets
- medicines and syringes
- beer and starch
- glucose
- industrial machinery
- corrugated roofs

Miscellaneous

- binding
- storage services
- mandating and brokerage services
- surveys
- wholesale and retail trade
- auto repairs and car rent
- housing construction and renting
- speculation
- hotels and pastries
- synthetic leather production
- lending agricultural tools/instruments
- consultancy
- management training
- printing and print production
- tourism
- transit services
- buying and selling bonds
- entertainment
- travel agencies
- buying agricultural products
- buying food products

- buying industrial products
- building construction
- road construction
- drilling
- sewage construction
- cattle fattening
- commission agents
- transport
- garages
- investment
- assembling bicycles and auto repair
- engineering projects
- building associational residences
- installing and assembling agricultural instruments
- housing speculation, construction
- buying old houses, repairing and selling them
- cosmetic plants
- hunting safari
- animal and fisheries
- controlling construction works
- distribution
- tailoring
- baby products
- transporting goods
- metal works
- setting up factories
- buildings planning
- urban planning
- agriculture
- legal services
- communication and electronic instruments repairs
- bars, entertainment centers, restaurants and hotels
- buying grain and processing
- mills repairs
- incense
- cotton processing
- fodder processing
- off-set and letter pressing
- screen printing
- computer trade, repairs and training
- information processing training
- air and sea transport
- insurance
- banking

- architecture and engineering
- service stations
- urban cleanliness
- mining
- media and communications
- textiles
- installing traffic lights
- medicine imports, whole and retail trade
- leather
- soft drinks and liquor production trade
- construction of shops
- construction of stores houses and rent them
- construction of public transport centers and meeting halls
- construction of oil depots and renting
- advertising
- agro-industry
- construction of schools
- dairy
- poultry production and trade
- quarry
- construction contracting
- coffee (buying, cleaning, roasting and selling)
- grain cleaning
- spices
- marine services

Annex iv List of TPLF corporations and their capital

No.	Name of Firm	Capital
1.	Gunna (transport)	23,460,000
2.	Tikal	778,295,000
3.	Almeda (textiles)	486,469,435
4.	Trans (transport)	103,011,000
5.	Mesebo (building construction)	241,341,000
6.	Sur (road construction)	110,510,000
7.	Mesfin (engineering)	23,045,000
8.	Saba (marble)	100,000
9.	Birhan (building construction)	2,000,000
10.	Meskerem	29,500,000
11.	Ezana (mining)	40,200,000
12.	Addis (pharmaceuticals)	27,000,000
13.	Selam (bus service)	100,000,000
14.	Selam Bus	1,000,000
15.	Mesebo (cement)	1,198,357,000
16.	Africa (insurance)	40,000,000
17.	Hiwet (agricultural mechanization)	31,300,000
18.	Tesfa (livestock)	29,140,000
19.	Beruk (chemicals)	20,500,000
20.	Sheba (leather)	40,400,000
21.	Addis (engineering consultancy)	4,000,000
22.	Dessaiegn (veterinary medicines)	5,000,000
23.	Express (transit services)	1,000,000
24.	Addis (consultancy)	1,550,000
25.	Addis (pharmaceutical plant)	169,160,000
26.	Addis (trading)	20,750,000
27.	Wegagen (bank)	60,000,000
28.	Rahwa (goats and sheep exports)	20,000,000
29.	Mega (printing)	10,200,000
30.	Express (tourism)	2,000,000
31.	Martha (poultry)	421,000
32.	Walta	4,637,000
33.	Saba (quarry)	5,000,000
34.	Gunna (coffee export)	11,000,000
35.	Computer Networking and technology Solutions	200,000
36.	Almeda (clothes)	400,000
37.	Star (medicine and medical instruments import)	5,000,000
38.	Addis (transport)	4,777,000
39.	Fire Sewat	3,899,600
40.	Dedebit (credit and savings)	60,000,000

41.	Walta (information service)	100,000,000
42.	Global	260,000
43.	Segon (construction)	1,000,000
44.	Addis	3,000,000
45.	National (electronics engineering)	6,000,000
46.	Fanna (printing)	1,500,000
47.	Hitech	1,000,000
48.	Ethiopia (tourism)	2,000,000
49.	Dilet (brewery)	1,500,000
50.	Seveta	9,000,000
	Total	3,770,114,295

Annex v Mechanisms Used by the Ethiopian Government to Control Rural Communities in Oromia

(This is an excerpt from the recently released report by Human Rights Watch)

Over 85 percent of Oromia's population lives in the countryside, scattered for the most part among small farming communities that are often far removed from any urban center. With elections approaching in May 2005, the regional government has taken drastic new steps to tighten its control over the rural population. New quasi-governmental structures have been set up throughout the region and are being used to monitor and control the rural population down to the level of individual households. These structures have been employed to gather information, monitor and harass outspoken individuals, control and restrict the movement of the rural population and disseminate political propaganda on behalf of the ruling OPDO.

The Kebele System

The formal structure of local government in Ethiopia has remained largely unchanged since the overthrow of the Derg dictatorship in 1991. The Derg organized the households in every community throughout the country into grouping called kebeles. The kebeles generally corresponded roughly to neighborhoods in urban centers and to larger geographic areas in more sparsely populated rural areas. While originally intended to help implement the Derg's ambitious rural development agenda and land reform program, the kebele system quickly evolved into a highly effective mechanism of control and repression. Kebele officials were expected to keep their communities under perpetual surveillance and to report any subversive activities to higher authorities. The kebeles were also used to disseminate government propaganda, implement government policies and maintain general order and discipline. When the EPRDF came to power it retained the kebele as the smallest unit of local government throughout Ethiopia and has continued to use the system to consolidate and extend the power of the ruling party.

In Oromia's rural areas, kebele officials wield a great deal of power over the populations they govern. Most of the region's rural population consists of subsistence farmers who depend upon kebele officials to provide them with a range of essential services and agricultural inputs. Perhaps most significantly, kebele officials distribute fertilizer to farmers throughout Oromia on credit and are responsible for collecting those debts when they come due. Farmers must also obtain letters from kebele officials verifying their identity and place of residence when they wish to access government services outside of their communities.

Such letters are usually required, for example, in order to visit a doctor or send one's children to secondary school in town.

In addition, most kebeles have their own tribunals as well as small prison houses. The kebele tribunals have the power to issue binding decisions in local disputes and mete out fines and brief periods of imprisonment as punishment for various minor infractions. Most significantly, farmers who fail to repay their fertilizer debts on time are regularly imprisoned, sometimes for more than a month at a time. Regional government agricultural extension workers and civil society leaders interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that in many of the villages they worked in, a very large proportion of the population had served some time in prison in 2004 for failing to repay their fertilizer debts. In many cases, such debtors were released only after being forced to sell off their livestock and other personal property to raise enough money to pay what they owe. Human Rights Watch interviewed one farmer who had fled his village the day before because he was facing imprisonment over an unpaid fertilizer debt of 250 birr, or roughly thirty U.S. dollars. While such farmers often serve out their terms of imprisonment in woredas prisons, primary responsibility for reporting and apprehending them generally falls to the kebele administration.

This authority gives kebele administrations an enormous amount of power over their constituents, and many Oromo opposition politicians and civil society figures have long alleged that kebele officials employ that leverage to discourage and punish dissent. Most commonly, kebele authorities have been accused of unevenly enforcing fertilizer debt repayment obligations, briefly imprisoning "troublemakers" on the basis of trumped-up charges of minor criminal infractions and wrongly evicting outspoken dissidents from their land.

Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch also said that such abuses take place in their communities. Many alleged that people who had good relations with kebele officials were allowed to carry massive amounts of fertilizer debt from year to year while for others repayment obligations were strictly enforced. One farmer from East Wollega said that "the man they send to take us to prison [for failing to meet repayment obligations] have also not paid for their fertilizer."

In several communities around Ambo, kebele officials have eventually imprisoned people for campaigning for or providing support to the opposition Oromo National Congress (ONC). In mid-February 2005, a farmer in a village called Wedessa, roughly twenty-six kilometers from Ambo, was imprisoned overnight by kebele authorities after loaning two of his mules to ONC supporters so that they could travel further into the countryside to campaign. Kebele officials in the same village also reportedly expelled four students from school indefinitely because they attended an ONC rally that was held during school hours; other students had missed class to attend meetings held by the OPDO without being disciplined at all. Another ONC supporter was arrested and imprisoned for

several days in February 2005 by kebele officials in a nearby village called Kotaba after he attempted to speak before the people who had assembled for the village's large Saturday market.

Human Rights watch interviewed many other farmers who spoke of similar abuses by kebele officials in their communities. Most, however, were far more eager to disavow an entirely new set of administrative structures that had been imposed on their communities in recent months.

The Gott and Garee System

The Oromia regional government has created an entirely new set of quasi-governmental structures below the kebele level in rural communities throughout Oromia. Every rural kebele is now divided into groups of households called gott. The gott vary in size but usually encompass between sixty and ninety households. Each gott is divided into smaller groups of roughly thirty households called garee, which means "group" in Afan Oromo. The gott supervise the activities of the garee and report to kebele authorities. The garee are the more active of the two structures and have the most day-to-day contact with the households they oversee.

Oromia's gott and garee are not entirely new innovations. The gott are reportedly modeled on rural administrative structures that were put in place in rural Tigray by the TPLF during the war against the Derg. In addition, a similar set of structures has existed for some time in the Amhara and Southern Peoples, Nations and Nationalities Regional States, although it is not clear whether they are being used for the same purposes. In most of Oromia, however, the gott and garee are very new. According to some regional officials, the gott and garee have been in place for over a year in some parts of the region, but in all of the areas visited by Human Rights Watch the structures have been in place only since roughly September 2004.

Officials placed in charge of the gott and garee have been implicated in numerous violations of human rights. These include imposing fines and even imprisonment without due process, forced or compulsory labor, and restrictions on the rights to freedom of association, movement and expression.

The Imposition of Gott and Garee on Rural Communities

High-level regional government officials claim that the gott and garee are nothing more than voluntary associations of farmers who are interested in promoting development in their communities. Ultimate responsibility for organizing and supervising the gott and garee lies with the Oromia regional government's Bureau of Mass Organization, Culture, Sports and Social Affairs. The head of that Bureau, Getachew Bedane, told Human Rights Watch that the new structures

had been created in response to widespread popular demand that the government organize farmers into small groups for the purpose of facilitating development activities. According to him, no farmer is forced to participate in either structure or any of its activities. "The farmer who does not want to be organized into this garee does not," he said. "He can simply go and work his own land." He also insisted that the gott and garee had "no other purpose" beyond facilitating the design and implementation of development projects selected by the communities themselves.

Human Rights Watch interviewed farmers from twenty-one different rural kebeles in western Oromia, and all of them said that the gott and garee structures had been imposed on them from above without any kind of consultation. When one farmer from a village near Nekemte was asked whether the people in his village had been asked whether they wished to participate in these structures, he replied "it just came from the government. What do the people know about such things? An order came from above. All of the other farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch responded similarly. Even gott and garee committee members and local officials who expressed considerable enthusiasm for the new institutions did not claim that they were voluntary. One gott committee member claimed that everyone in his village was extremely pleased with the new system except for a few people who were "lazy or do not want to work," but he acknowledged that the institutions were imposed on the village pursuant to an order from the woreda administration. One local government official in Dembi Dollo said that the gott and garee had been imposed on local communities by the woreda administration but argued that this was justified because "this form of discipline is a very good thing. The people must get ready to work!"

Theoretically, the gott and garee committees are freely elected by all of their members. Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that there were elections. Most, however, said that the "election" were actually a simple show of hands for or against a slate of candidates chosen by the kebele. "There was no voting," said one farmer from West Wollega. "They just brought their people and said 'this is the gott and this is the garee. Do you agree?' People didn't say anything and then they all clapped and it was finished. Many farmers said that all of the people kebele officials chose as candidates were very young men who had no real stature within the community but who were malleable and staunchly pro-OPDO. "There are no serious people among them," one farmer lamented. "There are no elders. The elders are considered too wild [independent]. Another man sighed when asked who had been chosen to serve on his garee's committee and said of the committee head that "He is a twenty-year-old student. If you have good relations with him you have no problems; otherwise it is the opposite. I try to avoid him as much as possible.

Forced Labor under the Garee

The garee have undertaken a range of often highly visible development-related projects in rural communities throughout Oromia. These projects include construction of irrigation systems, road repair and digging of wells and latrines. Participation in these projects, however, is in no way voluntary. Every rural household is assigned to a gott and a garee and is regularly required to contribute unpaid labor towards whatever development projects its garee chooses to implement. The amount of labor required by the garee varies somewhat from week to week and between communities. Most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that one or two members of every household are generally expected to dedicate one entire day per week to work assigned by the garee. Forced labor violates both Ethiopia's constitution and its obligation under international law.

The garee have the power to impose punishment without due process on farmers who fail to carry out the tasks assigned to them, and their use of that power provides a useful illustration of how much coercive power over individuals the garee have at their disposal. This punishment generally takes the form of monetary fines that grow in severity with each successive transgression. In most of the communities surveyed by Human Rights watch, farmers said that the first time a person missed a day of required work, they were fined between two and fifteen birr, depending on the community. Fifteen birr is more than most people could hope to make in a single day working as a day laborer in tow. In most communities these fines have been imposed quite strictly. One sixty-five-year old farmer from a rural kebele in Guto Gida woredas said that in his community, "There is almost non one who has not paid [a] ten birr [fine], even if he is the poorest of all with no clothes on his buttocks.... They say that if you do not pay you will be put in prison until you [do] pay. In some communities, kebele authorities and garee head had said that farmers who missed work more than three times would be imprisoned for between one and three days in addition to being fined, but it is not clear whether such punishments have been tested out in practice.

Many farmers expressed anger and distress being forced to dedicate so much time to the garee development schemes. "The only result we see from these garee is being fined for not doing things," one farmer said. "So now we just do whatever they tell us; there is no way you can effuse to obey. Most farmers, however, were less concerned with the required labor than with the ways their garee were being employed to control and monitor them in ways that were not related to their development-related goals. Expressing a sentiment common to most interviewees, a protestant minister from a rural kebele near Nekemete told Human Right Watch that he thought the real reason the garee were created was "to follow up what people do in their houses, where they get their money from, who they eat with, what politics they talk. In many areas, the garee have been

employed to achieve a level of control and surveillance that was not possible under the kebele system alone.

Forced Attendance at Political Meetings

The gott and garee, as well as the kebele, have the power to call meetings of all of their member households at any time and to enforce attendance at those meetings. In most of the communities surveyed by Human Rights Watch, the garee usually called meetings at least once per week and in some communities around Ambo they were more frequent. In almost all communities, failure to attend any meeting of the garee without obtaining permission beforehand is punished with a monetary fine that grows in severity with each successive offense. In some communities in Ambo woredas, garee committees had told farmers that people who had missed more than two or three garee meetings would be imprisoned overnight in addition to being fined. By coercing attendance at garee meetings, the government is violating the right to freedom of association under the ICCPR.

The ostensible purpose of the gott and garee meetings is to discuss progress on whatever development projects the community is undertaking. Since early 2005, however, these compulsory meetings have been used as thinly disguised OPDO political rallies. Most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they were regularly required to attend gott or garee meetings devoted primarily to disseminating election-related propaganda in favor of the OPDO.

Many farmers said that they did not want to attend such meetings but were compelled to do so because of the penalties they faced if they failed to attend. One man, who had been arrested three times since 1991 on suspicion of involvement with the OLF, said that he would vote for any candidate who was not affiliated with the OPDO in the May elections. Nonetheless, he found himself spending part of almost every week listening to OPDP propaganda because he could not afford to pay the fine the garee would impose on him if he were absent from the “meetings.

Many other farmers expressed similar concerns, but almost all said that they had continued to attend the garee meetings whenever they were called. The sole exception was a story related by several different farmers in Tokke, a large village situated roughly thirty-five kilometers west of Ambo along the road to Nekemte. Tokke is situated in one of the only parts of Oromia where the opposition Oromo National Congress has had consistently strong support over the past several years. People in Tokke quickly began to rebel against being coerced into attending frequent gott and garee meetings where woredas and kebele officials subjected them to pro-OPDO propaganda. The number of people who consistently refused to attend such meetings was so large that the

problem proved difficult to control. In mid-February 2005, the entire village was summoned to attend a meeting to hear zonal officials from Ambo “discuss the elections,” but almost the entire village stayed away. That evening, kebele authorities made an announcement that the meeting would be held again the next afternoon and immediately cut off running water to the entire town. The next afternoon, the water was still cut off, and attendance at the meeting was considerably better. After sitting through nearly two hours of pro-OPDO and anti-ONC propaganda, people returned to their homes and the water was turned back on.

Using the Garee to Monitor Speech

Almost all of the farmers interviewed by Human Right Watch said that their garee officials were gathering information about individuals who they or kebele-level officials had labeled as critics of the government. While this is perhaps more subtle than overt restrictions on movement or required attendance at political propaganda sessions, farmers repeatedly described the garee’s ability to monitor their words and actions as the most insidious and onerous aspect of the system. One farmer said that his garee “creates a problem for anyone who talks, while another complained that “anyone who expresses their opinion is called a troublemaker. While kebele officials engaged in similar kinds of surveillance before the garee were introduced, the much smaller size of the garee has made it possible for the government to follow individuals more closely and consistently. In addition to being much smaller than the kebele, in many communities each member of the five-member committee that governs the garee is personally responsible for following up on five or six of the garee’s households. In some areas these smaller groups are referred to as shanee (“the five” in Afan Oromo). As one seventy-year-old farmer from just outside of Dembi Dollo put it, “The government has its hands and the garees are like the fingertips... The garee is very near to you. The kebele was not.

Garee officials in many communities have been instructed by gott, kebele and woredas officials to gather information about individuals who make comments they believe to be critical of or hostile towards the government in public meetings or even during private conversations. In addition to farmers from communities throughout western Oromia, Human Rights Watch interviewed several current and former gott and garee officials from several rural kebeles who confirmed that they gathered such information about the households under their supervision. Most claimed that they were deeply reluctant to do so but felt they had no choice. One garee committee member from East Wollega said, “They said that these garees were for development work, but the actual thing is for watching each other. They tell us to report whatever we observe, but I avoided doing that. I try to solve problems myself and avoid reporting because [the information] is usually used for other purposes... People who speak their minds are noted. We report what people said and who said it.

This heightened level of surveillance was felt acutely by most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch. One farmer from a rural kebele near Ambo complained, "If you pass information upwards you are seen with sympathy by the OPDO. But what they need is not information that is helpful to the country but information like, what does this man think and what does that man think... They [garee officials] are always asking us, 'What does this man say? What does he talk about? With whom does he pass the day?' Another man from east Wollega said, "They watch your mouth, what you say. If you talk about the kebele administration, the woredas, about [party] cadres, it becomes a problem. A third farmer, asked to explain what his experience living under the garee was like, said, "You can almost say that the people {in a garee} are tied to one another because we are so closely watched. It is as though they have us in their firs.

Several farmers said that some people in their communities had tried to question the garee's need for the information it was trying to gather but were rebuffed without any real explanation. One teacher from a rural primary school said, "we are very suspicious about why they want to know these things. We think there must be a reason for this. But when we asked why they want to know these things, there is no answer. They [kebele officials] say only that they have their own structure and we should be administered according to what they tell us. One farmer said that the people in his community had given up questioning the garee's actions because "when we ask [them], 'why are you doing this to us,' they accuse us of being anti-development.

The Chilling Effect of the Gott and Garee System on Speech

Many farmers said that because their words were so closely scrutinized for subversive undertones they generally avoided questioning local officials or government policies in public. One man said that he no longer spoke in garee or kebele meetings because, since the garee were introduced in his community in September 2004, "If you speak your thoughts out loud now it is given some dangerous meaning. They suspect you of being OLF." Another farmer from just outside of Dembi Dollo said that, "If in a [garee] meeting someone, says, 'why is this being done, this is not correct,' they tell him that this is not his thought but the thought of OLF which is speaking through his mouth. One garee committee member from a rural kebele in West Wollega said that he disliked participating in the committee but was afraid of being labeled a dissident himself if he resigned his position. Since the garee were created, he said:

Our people do not speak. They have become mute because they are afraid. If two or three people are standing they avoid going to speak with them because those people may listen to what you say and give it a different meaning. If they [local officials] hate someone they say, 'You are an OLF.' If you say something they don't like, they say the OLF is behind you and telling you what to do...

When this thing started we cooperated because we thought it was actually for development, but things were better before... Since the garee came you cannot even have a visitor in your home without being asked to report on him.

In some communities, the garee have subjected people labeled as opponents of the government to unrelenting harassment and public denunciations. One young man from just outside of Dembi Dollo said that both he and his mother were arrested on charges of providing support to the OLF in March 2004. Both were released without charge within three months of their arrest, but since then their garee committee had subjected them to a sustained campaign of harassment that had destroyed the family's already precarious ability to make a living.

They organized the gott and garee against our house. My mother was selling shiro to earn a living and they said, 'this is an OLF house and no one should be here.' Accidentally [without knowing who he was], a relative of ours had come from his village and the garee told him, 'you are a new person here and you should know that because that is an OLF house you should not go in there.' But because he was our relative he came and told us this... No one comes to buy from my mother now, and whenever they meet me they ask me where I am going and why.

Another man from a rural kebele near Nekemte said that garee officials in his community had labeled him a supporter of the OLF and regularly denounced him during the course of garee meetings as a "thug" who is promoting and "anti-peace" agenda. "I raise my hand to talk [in response] and they say you have no right to speak," he said. "How can someone accuse me and then say I do not have the right to speak?"

Restrictions on the Freedom of Movement

Ethiopian and international law guarantees respect for citizens' freedom of movement. However, local authorities in much of Oromia have used the garee to enforce drastic new restrictions limiting the rural population's ability to travel outside of their communities. These limitations on movement vary considerably between different woredas and between different kebeles within a single woredas and between different kebeles within a single woredas as to their strictness and the zeal with which they are enforced. In almost all of the communities surveyed by Human Rights Watch, however, interviewees said that new regulations had been put in place through the garee to prevent them from traveling outside of their villages without permission unless they returned the same day. "You have to go and tell them if you are leaving, and you need to have a good reason for this," said one farmer from East Wollega. "If you only want to go and drink some *tella* [local beer] in Nekemte, they will not allow that. In most communities, farmers said that they asked orally for permission to travel from their garee, but in some places the garee have implemented a more formal set of procedures. In

some communities in Ambo woredas, farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said the garee officials required them to obtain a signed paper authorizing their travel whenever they spent a night away from home. A group of farmers from Wedessa told Human Rights Watch that their garee had threatened that anyone who passed the night in Ambo without obtaining written permission would spend their first night back home in the kebele prison.

Generally, villagers who travel away from home without first obtaining permission from the garee are interrogated as to their whereabouts upon their return and are often chastised or punished as well. One garee committee member from a community in East Wollega said that people who left his village without permission “will be interrogated-why did he go, what did he do and why does he think he has more rights than what the law gives him. Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they complied with the garee’s reporting requirements because villagers who did not were often accused on involvement in OLF-related or other illegal activities. One farmer from a rural kebele ninety-three kilometers from Nekemte said, “If we just leave without saying anything they will accuse us of going somewhere illegal. Even when we go to nearby markets [for the day] we try to inform the. Otherwise we might be accused of belonging to a certain organization [the OLF].

Around Dembi Dollo in West Wollega zone the garee’s new restrictions on movements have been taken to unusual extremes and provide an illustrative example of the coercive power at the garees’ disposal. Towards the end of 2004 woreda officials in Dembi Dollo instructed all of the gott and garee within the woreda’s jurisdiction to inform farmer in their communities that they would no longer be able to travel to nearby markets on any day of the week other than Saturday. Farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that their garee told them this measure had been taken because their travel to various local markets throughout the week was “jeopardizing development” by keeping them from their fields.

Unfortunately, the local rural economy is in large measure driven by precisely the markets the woredas had set out to abolish and many people depend on them as outlets for their produce. This fact meant that the new restrictions were quite onerous, and farmers in much of the woreda’s county side simply refused to comply with them. The garee reacted by imposing fines on people who participated in non-Saturday markets. When this failed to curb farmers’ disobedience in some areas, several garee gathered together groups of young men who were authorized to use force to prevent people from traveling to “illegal” markets. Local garee and government officials interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that the men were posted along several secondary roads, arrested several dozen farmers they caught traveling to unauthorized markets and imprisoned them overnight in kebele jail houses. Before they were released, kebele officials either fined them or confiscated the goods they had been

traveling to market to sell. In some cases, the men who arrested the farmers reportedly beat them with sticks before imprisoning them.

Despite such draconian measures, popular resistance to the new restrictions proved so widespread that woredas officials ordered the garee to relax them around the beginning of 2005. While this has led to the reemergence of weekday markets in large towns and villages, many smaller communities continued to be prohibited from holding them at the time of Human Rights Watch's visit to the area in March 2005.

These drastic restrictions of the freedom of movement take on added significance in the context of the current electoral process. The garee's controls make it more difficult for villagers to exercise the rights to assembly and freedom of association, rights which are an essential prerequisite for any democratic election and which are guaranteed by both Ethiopian and international law. Most obviously, villagers cannot travel to neighboring towns to participate in the political discussion or rallies that are more commonly held in urban areas without obtaining permission or, at the very least, expecting that they will have to answer for their whereabouts to local officials.

Source: The Reporter, May 14, 2005

Annex vi Urban Systems Development Study Report of the Regional Government of Oromia by UNDP (1999)

Summary of Major Findings

The study team's major findings focusing primarily on critical bureaucratic bottlenecks and administrative malpractices which are determined to the efficient and effective urban development of the Regional State are prescribed below under two major categories, -structure and systems respectively with sub-divisions under each.

4.1 Findings on Structure

Problems of:

4.1.1 Accountability

While municipalities are directly responsible to Woredas, they are also accountable to the Bureau/Departments of Works and Urban Development. They are said to be administratively responsible to Woredas while technically to Works and Urban Development. This however appears to be difficult as at times it is not that easy to separate one from the other, as there would be areas of overlap where one takes on the identity of the other. In fact, their accountability goes beyond the periphery of the two organisations to encompass all institutions operating in their cities. It is said that they have multiple accountability to the extent that they are left with little or no activity.

Examination of the structures of the two major organizations (The Woreda Administration and the Works and Urban Development Bureau) to which municipalities are accountable indicate that both organizations:

- Do not have organizational components specially designed to accommodate municipalities,
- While Works and Urban Development has several departments, divisions and other units of work that are closely related to assist municipalities, the Woreda structure provides nothing of the sort.
- Both structures are top-heavy. In the case of Works and Urban Development - we have the Regional Council, the Bureau, the Chief Engineer's Office, the departments, the regional branches with far and remote Woredas, without Woreda offices for Works and Urban Development. As regards the woreda Administration structure - we have the Zonal Administration, the Woreda Council, the Woreda Executive

- Committee, the chairperson, the vice chairperson and the sectoral offices, before reaching the level of municipalities.
- Both organizations have wide span of control. The Zonal Department head single handedly coordinates the affairs of some 4 divisions and all the municipalities within the zonal jurisdiction. The Woreda Chairperson with little or no assistance from others, controls the Vice-Chairperson, the secretary, some 5 sectoral units, several municipalities and the Kebele administrations,
 - Both lack the capacity and the capability to render adequate assistance to municipalities. While Works and Urban Development lacks adequate number of professionals, equipments, facilities, budget, the Woreda Administration is rural focuses with rural biased agendas and is in no way qualified for urban assistance.

As such no one appears to be certain as to who is responsible for what is going on in cities and residents seem to be at a loss as to where to go in order to get things done. There are too many bosses with no one to place upon the ultimate responsibility. Matters brought to the Woreda are evaded and pushed Works and Urban Development, which pushes them back to the Woreda. The former on the pretext that the latter is technical qualified and the latter on the ground that the primary responsibility rests upon the former (the Woreda).

The question of accountability, the type and role of supervision to be exercised on municipalities, the relationships of municipalities with regional, zonal and woreda authorities are, therefore, some of the areas in municipal administration of the region that require legal definition.

4.1.2 Municipal Relations

Intergovernmental cooperation in municipal affairs is an important aspect of urban management to the extent that cities as makings of the state require the assistance and cooperation of all.

In the past, next to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Interior Maintained good working relations with the municipalities. The two ministries in cooperation fixed boundaries of urban centers. The Ministry of Interior through its regional offices and the police force maintained law and order. Through its representatives in the Municipal Councils, the Ministry also assisted municipalities in obtaining the support of sectoral ministries, government and non-government agencies, voluntary associations, etc. living or operating in urban centers.

Other including:

- The Water resources Department closely worked with municipalities in the construction and administration of urban water supply systems,
- The Ethiopian Electric Light Corporation Cooperated in the provision of electric light services,
- Local Department of Agriculture undertook pre and post mortem veterinary examination of livestock slaughtered in municipal abattoirs,
- Health Centres cooperated in the hygienic control of catering and other business establishments, as well as in the extermination of stray dogs,
- The Ethiopian Road Authority used to assist in the construction and maintenance of municipal roads,
- The Ethiopian Red Cross Society cooperated in the establishment and management of some public services, such as, pharmacies, ambulance service and in the running and operation of kindergartens and public toilets,
- Kebeles and some government offices also used to assist in the collection of local taxes,
- Municipalities on their part provided cadastral information to such utility companies as banks and provided technical assistance of site plans, parcellation plans to government offices in cities and nearby urban centres.

Today, however, the various service delivery institutions in cities operate on their own although there is some cooperation on a more or less permanent basis. To this end, there are several ad-hoc committees: health, library, kindergarten, education, etc. whose members are drawn from several institutions in towns. Despite these, however, there is no exchange of information on regular basis among the institutions. The nature of relationships among the various levels of government is rather ambiguous, lacking clarity. As such, not knowing what power rests where one cannot spell out the powers of cities in relation to the various tiers of government.

It is essential that cities take the lead in creating mechanisms for horizontal coordination. Major problems encountered in this regard, include lack of adequate finance, an efficient system of information exchange and absence of clearly defined responsibilities. It is our firm conviction that cities ought to have authority over all matters under their purview so that their residents would not be pushed around. They must also be supported by all levels of government so that they may have adequate capacity to respond to the needs of residents.

There is need for strengthening the roles of municipalities, Kebeles and community based organization (CBOs) like Idir and religious organizations as focal points of urban development initiatives. The technical, financial and institutional capacity of municipalities must be strengthened so that they would be able to provide adequate services to their residents. There is also need to define the responsibilities and accountability of Kebeles and to provide both

financial and technical assistance to Kebeles so that they would be able to effectively play their urban development roles.

The business community should also be encouraged to organise itself into an association (a local Chamber of Commerce) which shall facilitate the representation of the business community in the municipal council, tax committee, etc.

4.1.3 Specialization

Throughout the Regional municipalities machinery Specialization /division of work/ has posed a major problem as there are no formal job descriptions and job identification. When asked if municipality employees have job descriptions of some sort, the often heard reply is that they do their jobs on the basis of long standing traditions.

4.1.4 Departmentalization

The study team was able to come across some sections of some municipalities whose heads had no staff whatsoever. There were instances of single person divisions, sections, and units. The team was able to note that this often results from failure to breakdown the overall task of an organization into successively smaller activities and recombining the activities into coherent groups of jobs.

4.1.5 Span of Control

The group was able to observe that the span of control in many of the organizational units of the regional municipalities was either over-expanded or under-stretched as the case may be. The unit of Land Administration in all municipalities the team visited was, for instance, over expanded whereas the Technical Services had no qualified staff to adequately perform its activities.

4.1.6 Delegation of Authority

One of the crucial findings of the Study Teams with regard to delegation of authority was that Zonal Works and Urban Development Departments as well as Woreda Administrations to whom the municipalities are subordinated lay particular emphasis on the area of responsibility and do not confer on municipalities the necessary authority to permit them to discharge their responsibilities and operate effectively.

The management of municipalities has not been allowed to carry out its responsibilities with many restrictions from above. Management has not been in charge of the very things that facilitate the work expected of it. It is not able to decide on the spending of a budget already approved, it has no control over vehicles at its own disposal. The practice of having every petition end up in the Woreda Executive Committee is no doubt the wrong way to manage a city.

The team during its study tour also came across town officers who felt that they have little share of the authority (most taken by the Executive Committee) for themselves and hence have nothing to delegate to their subordinates. However the concept of delegation requires that there be some kind of harmonious relationship between the responsibilities or managers and the power they exercise.

4.1.7 Centralization Vs Decentralization

With regard to the issue of centralization Vs decentralization, the study team was able to recognise at the very outset that municipalities are tightly controlled by the respective Woreda Executive Committees, Zonal Administrations and Zonal Works and Urban Development Departments. There prevails a highly paradoxical situation whereby there exists a pervading centralization within an overall decentralized system.

The principle of centralization/ decentralization requires that there should be an optimal balance between centralization and decentralization for each specific situation.

4.2 Finding on Systems

Problems of:

4.2.1 Planning: There is hardly any planning in the municipalities of the Regional State. Whatever little planning there exists, it is more of an expression of needs rather than means. This is because of the non-availability of adequate funds and the difficulty involved in endorsing plan proposals by the Woreda Administrations. However planning at the Bureau of Works and Urban Development level, in favour of some cities is rather big, involving several millions of Birr (eg. Water supply Projects, hospitals, schools, etc)

4.2.2 Project Preparation: In almost all institutions surveyed including the Bureaus of Planning, Works and Urban Development the overall capacity for project preparation is rather limited and far from being adequate. There are no systematic, formally organized and well documented criteria for project selection and preparation. Project selections are often based on priority of needs and the availability of funds. There are some guidelines for project preparation but are

not in wide circulation. Except for big investments there are no formal project documents. Projects are determined merely upon approval and the allocation of the requisite capital budget.

4.2.3 Monitoring & Evaluation: Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment capacity is far from adequate and lower than the standard acceptable. There are no monitoring and evaluation units. There is virtually no assessment of performance.

4.2.4 Performance Appraisal: There exist, in some municipalities of the Region such performance appraisal systems as planning, and auditing. Nevertheless these lack qualified manpower and clearly specified authority and responsibility to effectively carryout their duties. Under the prevailing circumstances in the Regional State, managerial processes, operating procedures and work organizations in general are not amenable to the promotion of efficiency and effectiveness. Where standard operating procedures exist, for at least certain activities, the procedures are not properly documented for application by the concerned units. The performance monitoring system which include periodic reports, review meetings, etc. help only to identify output and annual plan targets, as well as indicators for actual performance and comparison of achievement with plans. On the other hand, there are no systems and structures for quality control. The focus is merely on the provision of services without due consideration to quality. There are no established channels or mechanisms for obtaining clientele input or to gather the views of clients/residents on services provided by municipalities.

Reports and financial audits are the only means of control by the higher echelons of the Woreda, Zonal and Regional structures. Whatever the level at which control is exercised, the process should not be limited to reports and financial audits and must involve a number of stages, including the setting of objectives, translating plans into practices, reporting deviations and taking corrective measures. The areas of an organization activity that require control are many and varied including finance, manpower, physical resources, overall activities, research and development, etc.

4.2.5 Decision-Making: In all municipalities of the Region routine, structured decisions are made by the Woreda Executive Committee, at times in consultation with the town officer, in accordance with internal rules and regulation and on the basis of precedent. Decisions that are novel and unstructured are deliberated upon, again by the Woreda Administration or the Zonal Works and Urban Development Department, as the case may be. Whether structured or unstructured, the Chairperson or the Woreda Executive Committee controlled most decisions. As such, the existing practice of having every petition end up in the Executive Committees is no doubt a wrong way to manage a city. No one in the municipalities appears to decide on his own merit, fearing consequences of reversal. City management is so replete with mistrust that very little is delegated

by either the Woreda or the Zonal Works and Urban Development Department. However it is in the nature of man that most organization members desire opportunities to participate in the process of decision-making. Any decision-making is a little more than an abstract function unless the decision is put into effect. It is indeed possible that a good decision may be hampered by poor implementation. Since implementing decision in most situations involves people, the actual test of the soundness of a given decision rests very much on people's behavior relative to the decision. While a decision may be technically sound, it can be easily undermined by dissatisfied subordinates. Subordinate staff cannot be manipulated as other resources of an organization. As such, the manager's job is not limited merely to skill in making good decisions and choosing appropriate solutions; but also includes the knowledge and skill necessary to transform the decision and/or solution into constructive behavior in the organization. This objective is often achieved through effective communication, which is sadly lacking at present in all municipal units at all level.

4.2.6 Communication: Organizational survival is related to the ability on the part of management to receive, transmit and act on information. Information serves to integrate the activities of an organization to the demands of the environment. It also integrates the internal activities of organization.

In all municipalities visited there hardly exists any system to collect, analyze or disseminate data. Information is collected randomly and manually. While whatever organizational structure there exists formally provides for downward and upward communication, in all the municipalities visited, the downward system appears to dominate the upward system. As a result, most organizational communication is one way, invariably from higher to lower levels without any room for reaction/feedback from subordinates. It is therefore essential that those in authority must provide the free flow of upward information and also encourage subordinates to express their opinions without reservation and offer suggestions for improvement. Higher officials must seek to develop an atmosphere of trust between themselves and their subordinates. Two-way communication is more accurate and effective than one way communication. However how accurate it is depends a great deal on the amount of trust the subordinates place on the superior.

4.2.7 Work organization and Service Delivery: According to our findings, there appears to be little understanding among the municipalities of the Regional State about the need to organize work beyond the issuing of directives. There are no mechanisms in place to coordinate work activities to be performed by different staff members. There is little understanding of the need to work as a team or what it means to work in teams. Meetings are irregular, and generally dominated by the interest of few members. They have neither a properly predetermined purpose and agenda nor do they reach concrete conclusions.

Municipal services are not being managed well. Public receptions are somewhat archaic while the management of municipalities is incapable of implementing existing plans or charting future courses of action.

On the whole, the residents argue that for lack of proper management their cities are fast deteriorating in a physical way. Residents are suffering from all sorts of health hazards. Safety and security are deteriorating amidst population growth and rising unemployment. The plan and construction sector is in a state of immobilization. The technical service is more of a stumbling block to city development rather than means to success. There was a strong stance that for lack of proper management community relations have suffered to a disappointing level engendering a spirit of indifference for the public. The disappointing record in service delivery goes far beyond fund shortfall. There is no system and norm for service delivery.

The management system has to be restructured in such a way that there is adequate specialization to cover all city services. Each service needs to be handled by a professional with adequate authority delegated to him.

4.2.8 City Governance and Leadership: Oromia cities have no governance mechanisms of their own. They are considered as sectors of zonal and woredas administrative both of which have little or no time to attend to the concerns of cities. The often heard complaint by city residents is the non-availability of officials to attend to their problems. It is the general feeling of some residents that city governance has been taken away from the people.

It was felt by many we met that the city leadership would require someone with specific skills to the extent that the nature of city administration was on the whole technical. It is also the general belief that Woreda Chairpersons would do their cities favours if they were to restrict themselves to city policies and left issues of implementation to trained professionals. According to this people, it is a waste of time for elected offices to be bogged down by details whereas hired professionals can be delegated to handle details.

To virtually all, the governance of cities had to change. The idea of a city council and a mayor with a city manager that would manage the city without interference is what these people consider as the ideal.

Leadership is another crucial factor that is closely linked with work organization and involves considerable problems in the municipalities of the Region. The leadership in all municipalities is generally characterized by lack of the requisite charisma as well as capability to lead. Most staff members of the municipalities had expressed the conviction that the leadership should be at least one step ahead of the subordinate staff.

Source: Urban Systems Development, UNDP, Addis Ababa, 1999

Annex vii On the Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia

Walleign Mekonnen

The main purpose of this article is to provoke discussions on the “Sacred”, yet very important issue of this country – the question of nationalities. The article as it was prepared for special occasion (where detailed analysis was due to time and other inconveniences impossible) suffers from generalization and inadequate analysis. But I still feel it is not mediocre for a beginning. I expect my readers to avoid the temptation of snatching phrases out of their context and capitalizing on them. Instead every point raised here should be examined in the light of the whole analysis.

We have reached a new stage in the development of the student movement, a level where Socialism as a student ideology has been taken for granted, and reaction with all its window dressing is on the defensive. The contradictory forces are no more revolution versus reform, but correct scientific Socialism versus perversion and faddism.

The Socialist forces in the student movement till now have found it very risky and inconvenient to bring into the open certain fundamental questions because of their fear of being misunderstood. One of the delicate issues, which have not yet been resolved up to now is the Question of Nationalities – some people call it ridiculously tribalism – but I prefer to call it nationalism. Panel discussions, articles in *Struggle* and occasional speakers, clandestine leaflets and even *tete-a-tete* groups have not really delved into it seriously. Of course there was indeed the fear that it may alienate certain segments of the student population and as well the fear that the government may take advantage of an honest discussion to discredit the revolutionary student movement.

Starting from last year, a small minority began to discuss this delicate issue for the most part in secluded places. Discussions even private, leak out and because they were not brought into the open they normally led to backbiting, misunderstanding and grossly exaggerated rumors. I think students are mature enough to face reality even if they are very sensitive. And the only solution to this degeneration, as witnessed from some perverted leaflets running amok these two weeks, is open discussion.

What are the Ethiopian peoples composed of? I stress on the word peoples because sociologically speaking at this stage Ethiopia is not really one nation. It is made up of a dozen nationalities with their own languages, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity. And what else is nation? It is not

made of a people with a particular tongue, particular ways of dressing, particular history, particular social and economic organization” Then may I conclude that in Ethiopia there is the Oromo Nation, the Tigrai Nation, the Amhara nation, the Gurage Nation, the Sidama Nation, the Wellamo Nation, the Adere Nation, and however much you may not like it the Somali Nation.

This is the true picture of Ethiopia. There is of course the fake Ethiopian Nationalism advanced by the ruling class and unwillingly accepted and even propagated by innocent fellow travelers.

What is this fake Nationalism? It is not simply Amhara and to a certain extent Amhara-Tigre supremacy? Ask any body what Ethiopian culture is? Ask any body what Ethiopian language is? Ask any body what Ethiopian music is? Ask any body what Ethiopian religion is? Ask any body what the “national” dress is? It is either Amhara or Amhara-Tigre!!

To be a “genuine Ethiopian” one has to speak Amharic, to listen to Amharic music, to accept the Amhara-Tigre religion, Orthodox Christianity and to wear the Amhara-Tigre Shamma in international conferences. In some cases to be an “Ethiopian”, you will even have to change your name. In short to be an Ethiopian, you will have to wear an Amhara mask (to use Fanon’s expression). Start asserting your national identity and you are automatically a tribalism that is if you are not blessed to be born an Amhara. According to the constitution you will need Amharic to go to school, to get a job, to read books (however few) and even to listen to the new on Radio “Ethiopia” unless you are a Somali or an Eritrean in Asmara for obvious reasons.

To any body who has got a nodding acquaintance with Marxism, culture is nothing more than the super-structure of an economic basis. So, cultural domination always presupposes economic subjugation. A clear example of economic subjugation would be the Amhara and to a certain extent Tigrai *Neftegna* system in the south and the Amhara-Tigre coalition in the urban areas. The usual pseudo-refutation of this analysis is the reference to the large Amhara and Tigrai Masses wallowing in poverty in the countryside. For that matter during the hey-days of British imperialism a large mass of British workers had to live under inhuman conditions.

Another popular counter-argument is that there are two or three ministers of non-Amhara-Tigre Nationality in the Cabinet; one or two generals in the army, one or two governors and a dozen *balabats* in the countryside. But out and out imperialists like the British used to rule their colonies mainly by enlisting the support of tribal chiefs, who were much more rich than the average citizen of the British Metropolis. The fact that Boigne and Senghor were members of the French National Assembly and, the fact that they were even ministers did not reduce and iota of Senegalese and Ivory Coast loss of political independence.

Of course the economic and cultural subjugation by the Amharas and their junior partners the Tigres is a historical accident. Amharas are not dominant because of inherent imperialist tendencies. The Oromos could have done it and history proves they tried to do so. But that is not an excuse for the perpetuation of this situation. The immediate question is we must declare a stop to it. And we must build a genuine national state.

And what is this genuine national-state? It is a state in which all nationalities participate equally in state affairs, it is a state where every nationality is given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music and its history. It is a state where Amharas, Tigres, Oromos, Aderes, Somalis, Wollamos, Gurage, etc. are treated equally. It is a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally.

And how do we achieve this genuine democratic and egalitarian state? Can we do it through military? No!!! A military coup is nothing more but a change of personalities. It may be a bit more liberal than the existing regime but it can never resolve the contradiction between either classes or nationalities. The Neway brothers and Tadesse Birus could not have done it. Talking about Mengistu and Tadesse, one can not fail to remember the reaction that the Mengistu coup though a family one and at that by a sector of Shoa Amharas (with few exception, of course among them Workneh) was very popular just because it was staged by "Ethiopians" – Amharas. With Tadesse, it was automatically a tribalist uprising. Why? Tadesse an Oromo cannot stage a nationalist coup but Oromo supremacist.

I am not equivocal in condemning coups, but the Tadesse coup had at least one significant quality and a very important one too. It gave our Oromo Brothers and Sisters self-respect. And self-respect is an important pre-requisite for any mass-based revolution. Even the so called revolutionaries who scoffed at the coup just like the mass of the student body, could not comprehend this quality. You can clearly see in this instance the power of the Amhara-Tigre supremacist feelings. They clearly proved that they were nothing more than the products of government propaganda of this question.

Can the Eritrean liberation Front and the Bale armed struggle achieve our goal? Not with their present aims and set-up.

Both these movements are exclusive in character, led by the local bourgeoisie in the first instance and the local feudal lords in the second. They don not have internationalist out-look, which is essential for our goal. They are perfectly right in declaring that there is national oppression. We don not quarrel with them on this score. But their intention is to stop here. They do not try to expand their struggles to the other nationalities. They do not attempt to make a broad-based assault on the foundations of the existing regime. They deliberately try to forget the connection of their local ruling classes with the national oppression. In short

these movements are not led by peasants and workers. Therefore, they are not Socialists. And if they are not Socialist, it would only be a change of masters for the masses. But for the Socialists the welfare of the masses comes first.

The same can be said for the Gojjam uprising. But I would like to take this opportunity once again to show how much Amhara supremacy is taken for granted in this Campus.

To applaud the E.L.F. is a sin. If anything favorable is written out, it is automatically refuted by both USUAA and NUEUS. But the Gojjam affair was different. Support for it was practically a show of identity to the so-called revolutionaries.

Mind you, I am just saying that these movements are not lasting solutions for our goal – the set-up of a genuine Nationalist Socialist State. I am all for them, the E.L.F. , the Bale movements, the Gojjam uprising, to the extent that they have challenged and weakened the existing regime, and have created areas of discontent to be harnessed later on by a genuine Socialist revolution.

One thing again is certain. I do not oppose these movements just because they are secessionists. There is nothing wrong with secessionism as such. For that matter secession is much better than nationally oppressive government. I quote Lenin "... People resort to secession only when national oppression and national antagonism make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder any and all economic intercourse. In that case the interest of the freedom of the class struggle will be best served by Secession." I would also like to quote the resolution on the question of nationalities from the London International Socialist Congress of 1896 attended, supported and adopted by the Bolsheviks who bought about the October revolution. "This Congress declares that it stands for the full right of all nations to self-determination and expresses its sympathy for the workers and peasants of every country now suffering under the yoke of military, national or other absolutism."

As long as secession is led by the peasant and workers and believes in its internationalist obligation, it is not only to be supported but also militarily assisted. It is our backwardness and selfishness to ask a people to be partners in being exploited till you can catch p. We should never dwell on the subject of secession, but whether it is progressive or reactionary. A Socialist Eritrea and Bale would give a great impetus to the revolution in that country and could form an equalitarian and democratic basis for reunification to come back to our central question: How can we form a genuine egalitarian national state? It is clear that we can achieve this goal only through violence, through revolutionary armed struggle. But we must always guard ourselves against the pseudo-nationalist propaganda of the regime. The revolution can start anywhere. It can even be secessionist to begin with, as long as led by the progressive forces the peasants and the workers, and has its final aim the liberation of the Ethiopian Mass with

due consideration to the economic and cultural independence of all the nationalities. It is the duty of every revolutionary to question whether a movement is socialist or reactionary not whether a movement is secessionist or not. In the long run Socialism is internationalism and a Socialist movement will never remain secessionist for good.

To quote Lenin again, "From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big market and a big state. From this point of view of the struggle as well, a regime like ours harassed from corners is bound to collapse in a relatively short period of time. But when the degree of consciousness of the various nationalities is at different levels, it is not only the right but the duty of the most conscious nationality to first liberate itself and then assist together in the struggle for total liberation. Is that not true of Korea? We do support this movement, don't we? Then what is this talk of tribalism, secessionism, etc.....?"

Source: *STRUGGLE* (organ of USUAA [University Students' Union of Addis Ababa]), Vol V, No. 2, Nov. 17, 1969.

Annex viii Polygamy Legalized in Oromia

By Melakou Tegegn (Biftu Kitesa, as pen name) The Reporter, October 1, 2003

Recently, we heard that the Oromia regional council had come up with not only the most bizarre and repressive piece of legislation but also the most shameful and sad regards the family law. Among other things, it legislated that men can have more than one wife. The “logic”, we were told, is that: “This is our culture”! There should be no illusion that Ethiopia is still on the brink of a crisis as far as the ethics of governance goes. This is also because there are still people holding responsible positions who can move backwards like a crab in terms of in terms of social development “because it is their culture”! This illogical reasoning needs surgical operation.

In the first place, from the demographic perspective, the Oromo people are not all Muslims. There are a great many Christians and followers of other religions among the Oromos. They pursue their own tradition and culture. Secondly, the Oromo people part of the larger Ethiopian Community, which, in turn, cannot impose the culture or values of any one religious group over the rest of the population. The essence of unity is recognition of diversity and recognition of the equality of the rights of its social exponents, in as much as the era of Ethiopia being a “Christian Island” is not only a fiction but has become to an end, an attempt to impose any one value based on one religion should come to an end. The same thing holds true for Oromia as a region. Imposing a value based on the culture of Muslims over the rest of the Oromo people is not only undemocratic and wrong but also sets a very dangerous precedent.

Secondly, the cultural argument does not hold water either. The dynamics of culture is a fast-changing phenomenon. On top of that, all tradition or custom that passes for “culture” does not mean it is positive. There is something known as harmful traditional practices”. By definition, such practices are harmful not out of any fantasy but because they inflict a wound on victims, are obstacles to social development and breed poverty. Had there been a machine that converts men into women even if for twenty-four hours, men who had advanced “culture” as an excuse for perpetuating repressive could in a position to witness for themselves the agony that women undergo in extremely repressive societies like those in Ethiopia. They could also have experienced the abduction, rape, beating, circumcision and all other forms of violence that women experience in their daily lives. I am sure that such men would cry out for help to be relieved and if such men are powerful, they can even proclaim a state of emergency to abolish polygamy and other forms of violence against women. If anybody tells them that they should accept their condition because it is “our culture”, I am sure that they would say: “To hell with your culture!” Unfortunately humans have not yet

produced such a machine. Until then from the Mullahs of Iran to Christian fundamentalist politicians such as Bush and the leaders of Oromia regional government, may continue with their anti-women policies.

There is something very revealing following the adoption of the law to legalize polygamy in Oromia. Lawmakers in Southern Peoples', Beni Shangul, Gambella, Afar and Somali regions are encouraged to do so because the Oromia regional government has adopted a "correct law on polygamy!"

It is needless to say that legalizing polygamy in a country where the oppression of women is probably one of the worst in the world is actually encouraging male supremacy to continue with their violent acts. This is also indicative of some negative aspects of the federal state structure. Ethiopia is doing its best to conquer poverty and embark on the development track. This is impossible without improving the conditions in which women find themselves. Legalizing polygamy is one huge blow to this great national crusade to end poverty. This is not just about women. It is about society as a whole, the future generation and sustainable development and conquering poverty now, then they should all be schooled on the ABC of development.

All democratic and development organizations and institutions must denounce this law and expose it to the world in its absurdity. On our part, we Oromo women are deeply ashamed that this is happening in Ethiopia in 21st Century.

Annex ix A petition signed by NGOs in Ethiopia on the adoption of a new law enacted by the Oromiya Council (the regional parliament) on polygamy

(The following petition was initiated by a few women members of the Oromiya Council who approached a few NGOs for assistance for a campaign against the new law on polygamy. The information was provided by the women legislators, which was later confirmed by Radio Ethiopia's [the government radio] announcement of the new law. The issue was discussed at one of the *gender forums* of Panos Ethiopia and the NGOs agreed to sign the following petition.)

**His Excellency Ato Junedin Sado,
President,
Oromiya National Regional Government,**

It has been made official that the Oromiya regional council, the regional parliament, has recently drafted a new family law for Oromiya region removing the prohibition of polygamy effectively making it a legal practice.

The aforementioned draft bill in general appalls us members of the civil society as well as civic organizations working towards the attainment of gender equity and ending violence against women as well as on human rights and social development. At this epoch of the second millennium when developed societies have already entered the age of information society, such a draft bill legalizing the dehumanization of the women of Oromiya is unfathomable to say the least. The impact of such a bill is indeed enormous as it is frightening.

In a predominantly traditional society staggering towards development, the transition from the prevalence of customary laws over the statutory ones is an absolute imperative if the rule of law should prevail as an important precondition for democracy and development. The draft bill is in effect a stab in the back to all of us fighting for the prevalence of democratic and humane statutory laws.

The draft law will severely impair the development of the country as a whole with the devastating impact it has on women among others by becoming an additional vehicle for the further spread of HIV/AIDS. Above all, polygamy also contributes heavily to aggravating and exacerbating poverty and degrading the environment. And we all know that women are the first to be affected by poverty.

Therefore, the inter-African Committee on traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) demands the unambiguous withdrawal and renunciation of the article that legalized polygamy from the draft family law.

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Therefore, we demand the unambiguous withdrawal and renunciation of the article that legalizes polygamy from the draft family law. –END-

Annex x Letter by Ato Junedin sado, President of the Oromiya Regional Government to NGOs who signed the petition

[Notice Junedin Sado's complete denial that the Oromiya Council had not decided on a new law that tolerates and legalizes polygamy.]

[name of NGO]
[address]

We acknowledge receipt of your undated letter in which your opinion and demand on the Family Law of Oromia were contained.

The State Government of Oromia upholds and defends the principle that every one is entitled to his own opinion. However, an NGO of your standing, we hold, should not base its opinions and comments on such a serious issue on mere hear say. None of what is said about the Oromian Family Code is true. The whole allegation about the law is unfounded and baseless.

The clean record of our State Government on gender issue is known to everyone and cannot be tainted by baseless and unfounded allegation. We even doubt that the authors of this vicious letter have even seen or put their hands on the new Law. While going through your letter describing our Family Law untruthfully, we couldn't help feeling like reading "Alice in the wonderlands". Oromian State Legislature has not and cannot legalize polygamy. This could have simply been checked by coming to our office and get a copy of the law.

At this juncture in time when much cooperation and understanding between Government and non-government organizations is much called for, such a campaign based merely on hearsay and bias will never be considered a responsible act.

If you happen to be a true champion of gender equality and women's question, as we are staunch fighters for same, get we would like to you assured that you are engaged in un useful shadow-boxing exercise. We don't have the slogan only on the tip of our tongues but deep in our marrows, so that millions shall be emancipated from grinding poverty, entitled to property and be equal in all aspects.

Therefore; the State Government of Oromia would like to reiterate once again that it does not accept and totally rejects the untrue statements contained in the captioned letter.

With best regards

Junedin Sado
President

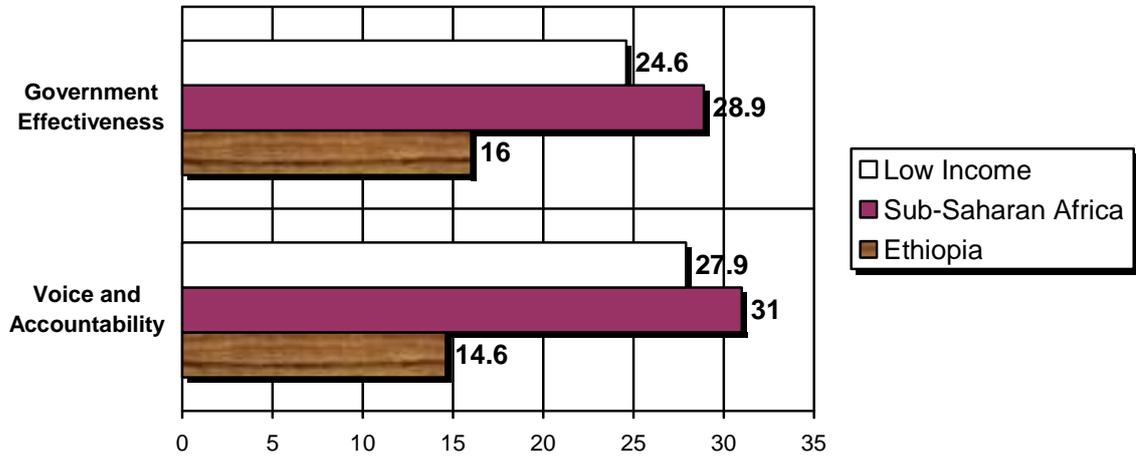
[P.S. With the intervention of the federal government, the Oromiya regional council had later on to withdraw the new law and included that polygamy was illegal instead. Junedin Sado lost in the 2005 parliamentary elections but was later declared winner after a 're-election'.]

Annex xi Women's Opinions on wife beating, Ethiopia 2000

Percentage of women who agree with specific reasons justifying a husband hitting or beating his wife and percentage who agree with at least one of the reasons, by background characteristics, Ethiopian 2000							
Background Characteristics	Reasons justifying a husband hitting or beating his wife						Number
	Burns the food	Argues with him	Goes out without telling him	Neglects the children	Refuses sexual relations	Agrees with at least one specified reason	
Age							
15-19	62.6	59.1	52.9	62.8	43.5	82.1	3,710
20-24	64.1	61.4	56.4	64.3	49.5	84.5	2,860
25-29	63.0	61.5	55.4	63.7	52.1	83.9	2,585
30-34	66.7	63.5	57.9	65.2	54.2	85.3	1,841
35-39	64.3	60.9	57.1	67.6	53.5	85.2	1,716
40-44	64.7	60.9	57.6	64.3	56.2	85.6	1,392
45-49	70.2	65.3	61.5	66.9	58.9	89.6	1,264
Location							
Urban	41.0	39.6	38.2	51.6	29.0	69.0	2,791
Rural	69.7	66.1	60.2	67.4	55.7	87.9	12,576
Region							
Tigray	57.7	56.5	55.9	68.1	41.0	85.7	969
Afar	72.6	71.1	70.6	75.0	70.5	85.7	178
Amhara	66.6	67.9	59.4	65.1	51.6	88.4	3,820
Oromiya	64.7	62.2	55.5	61.5	54.0	84.0	5,937
Somali	48.8	61.5	63.9	65.2	52.0	80.6	175
Benishangul-Gumuz	70.4	61.4	59.0	68.7	51.1	85.0	160
SNNP	73.2	62.3	60.1	73.4	55.2	87.6	3,285
Gambela	57.1	54.4	52.7	56.5	36.1	83.4	40
Harari	28.7	25.8	17.7	28.6	19.9	49.8	41
Addis Ababa	23.3	20.8	22.9	40.0	11.8	54.4	684
Dire Dawa	42.2	46.7	44.0	55.3	37.8	66.9	79
Education							
No education	69.5	65.6	60.4	67.0	56.2	88.1	11,551
Primary	61.6	59.6	53.0	65.8	44.8	83.0	2,425
Secondary and higher	27.4	28.3	27.0	41.8	17.1	56.9	1,391
Employment							
Not employed	63.7	59.5	54.8	62.5	49.6	84.0	5,630
Employed for cash	60.1	56.9	52.6	63.9	47.1	81.4	3,852
Employed not for cash	68.0	65.9	59.9	66.8	54.5	87.0	2,885
All women	64.5	61.3	56.2	64.5	50.9	84.5	15,367

Source: Well-Being and Poverty in Ethiopia, World Bank, 2005

Annex xiii Governance in Ethiopia compared with similar categories (2002)



Source: Well-Being and Poverty in Ethiopia, World Bank, 2005

Mechanisms Used by the Ethiopian Government to Control Rural Communities in Oromia

(This is an excerpt from the recently released report by Human Rights Watch)

Over 85 percent of Oromia's population lives in the countryside, scattered for the most part among small farming communities that are often far removed from any urban center. With elections approaching in May 2005, the regional government has taken drastic new steps to tighten its control over the rural population. New quasi-governmental structures have been set up throughout the region and are being used to monitor and control the rural population down to the level of individual households. These structures have been employed to gather information, monitor and harass outspoken individuals, control and restrict the movement of the rural population and disseminate political propaganda on behalf of the ruling OPDO.

The Kebele System

The formal structure of local government in Ethiopia has remained largely unchanged since the overthrow of the Derg dictatorship in 1991. The Derg organized the households in every community throughout the country into grouping called kebeles. The kebeles generally corresponded roughly to neighborhoods in urban centers and to larger geographic areas in more sparsely populated rural areas. While originally intended to help implement the Derg's ambitious rural development agenda and land reform program, the kebele system quickly evolved into a highly effective mechanism of control and repression. Kebele officials were expected to keep their communities under perpetual surveillance and to report any subversive activities to higher authorities. The kebeles were also used to disseminate government propaganda, implement government policies and maintain general order and discipline. When the EPRDF came to power it retained the kebele as the smallest unit of local government throughout Ethiopia and has continued to use the system to consolidate and extend the power of the ruling party.

In Oromia's rural areas, kebele officials wield a great deal of power over the populations they govern. Most of the region's rural population consists of subsistence farmers who depend upon kebele officials to provide them with a range of essential services and agricultural inputs. Perhaps most significantly, kebele officials distribute fertilizer to farmers throughout Oromia on credit and are responsible for collecting those debts when they come due. Farmers must also

obtain letters from kebele officials verifying their identity and place of residence when they wish to access government services outside of their communities. Such letters are usually required, for example, in order to visit a doctor or send one's children to secondary school in town.

In addition, most kebeles have their own tribunals as well as small prison houses. The kebele tribunals have the power to issue binding decisions in local disputes and mete out fines and brief periods of imprisonment as punishment for various minor infractions. Most significantly, farmers who fail to repay their fertilizer debts on time are regularly imprisoned, sometimes for more than a month at a time. Regional government agricultural extension workers and civil society leaders interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that in many of the villages they worked in, a very large proportion of the population had served some time in prison in 2004 for failing to repay their fertilizer debts. In many cases, such debtors were released only after being forced to sell off their livestock and other personal property to raise enough money to pay what they owe. Human Rights Watch interviewed one farmer who had fled his village the day before because he was facing imprisonment over an unpaid fertilizer debt of 250 birr, or roughly thirty U.S. dollars. While such farmers often serve out their terms of imprisonment in woredas prisons, primary responsibility for reporting and apprehending them generally falls to the kebele administration.

This authority gives kebele administrations an enormous amount of power over their constituents, and many Oromo opposition politicians and civil society figures have long alleged that kebele officials employ that leverage to discourage and punish dissent. Most commonly, kebele authorities have been accused of unevenly enforcing fertilizer debt repayment obligations, briefly imprisoning "troublemakers" on the basis of trumped-up charges of minor criminal infractions and wrongly evicting outspoken dissidents from their land.

Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch also said that such abuses take place in their communities. Many alleged that people who had good relations with kebele officials were allowed to carry massive amounts of fertilizer debt from year to year while for others repayment obligations were strictly enforced. One farmer from East Wollega said that "the man they send to take us to prison [for failing to meet repayment obligations] have also not paid for their fertilizer."

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In several communities around Ambo, kebele officials have recently imprisoned people for campaigning for or providing support to the opposition Oromo National Congress (ONC). In mid-February 2005, a farmer in a village called Wedessa, roughly twenty-six kilometers from Ambo, was imprisoned overnight by kebele authorities after loaning two of his mules to ONC supporters so that they could travel further into the countryside to campaign. Kebele officials in the same village also reportedly expelled four students from school indefinitely because they attended an ONC rally that was held during school hours; other students had missed class to attend meetings held by the OPDO without being disciplined at all. Another ONC supporter was arrested and imprisoned for several days in February 2005 by kebele officials in a nearby village called Kotaba after he attempted to speak before the people who had assembled for the village’s large Saturday market.

Human Rights watch interviewed many other farmers who spoke of similar abuses by kebele officials in their communities. Most, however, were far more eager to disavow an entirely new set of administrative structures that had been imposed on their communities in recent months.

The Gott and Garee System

The Oromia regional government has created an entirely new set of quasi-governmental structures below the kebele level in rural communities throughout Oromia. Every rural kebele is now divided into groups of households called gott. The gott vary in size but usually encompass between sixty and ninety households. Each gott is divided into smaller groups of roughly thirty households called garee, which means “group” in Afan Oromo. The gott supervise the activities of the garee and report to kebele authorities. The garee are the more active of the two structures and have the most day-to-day contact with the households they oversee.

Oromia’s gott and garee are not entirely new innovations. The gott are reportedly modeled on rural administrative structures that were put in place in rural Tigray by the TPLF during the war against the Derg. In addition, a similar set of structures has existed for some time in the Amhara and Southern Peoples, Nations and Nationalities Regional States, although it is not clear whether they are being used for the same purposes. In most of Oromia, however, the gott and garee are very new. According to some regional officials, the gott and garee have been in place for over a year in some parts of the region, but in all of the areas visited by Human Rights Watch the structures have been in place only since roughly September 2004.

Officials placed in charge of the gott and garee have been implicated in numerous violations of human rights. These include imposing fines and even

imprisonment without due process, forced or compulsory labor, and restrictions on the rights to freedom of association, movement and expression.

The Imposition of Gott and Garee on Rural Communities High-level regional government officials claim that the gott and garee are nothing more than voluntary associations of farmers who are interested in promoting development in their communities. Ultimate responsibility for organizing and supervising the gott and garee lies with the Oromia regional government's Bureau of Mass Organization, Culture, Sports and Social Affairs. The head of that Bureau, Getachew Bedane, told Human Rights Watch that the new structures had been created in response to widespread popular demand that the government organize farmers into small groups for the purpose of facilitating development activities. According to him, no farmer is forced to participate in either structure or any of its activities. "The farmer who does not want to be organized into this garee does not," he said. "He can simply go and work his own land." He also insisted that the gott and garee had "no other purpose" beyond facilitating the design and implementation of development projects selected by the communities themselves.

Human Rights Watch interviewed farmers from twenty-one different rural kebeles in western Oromia, and all of them said that the gott and garee structures had been imposed on them from above without any kind of consultation. When one farmer from a village near Nekemte was asked whether the people in his village had been asked whether they wished to participate in these structures, he replied "it just came from the government. What do the people know about such things? An order came from above. All of the other farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch responded similarly. Even gott and garee committee members and local officials who expressed considerable enthusiasm for the new institutions did not claim that they were voluntary. One gott committee member claimed that everyone in his village was extremely pleased with the news system except for a few people who were "lazy or do not want to work," but he acknowledged that the institutions were imposed on the village pursuant to an order from the woreda administration. One local government official in Dembi Dollo said that the gott and garee had been imposed on local communities by the woreda administration but argued that this was justified because "this form of discipline is a very good thing. The people must get ready to work!"

Theoretically, the gott and garee committees are freely elected by all of their members. Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that there were elections. Most, however, said that the "election" were actually a simple show of hands for or against a slate of candidates chosen by the kebele. "There was no voting," said one farmer from West Wollega. "They just brought their people and said 'this is the gott and this is the garee. Do you agree?' People didn't say anything and then they all clapped and it was finished. Many farmers said that all of the kebele officials chosen as candidates were very young men who had no real stature within the community but who were

malleable and staunchly pro-OPDO. "There are no serious people among them," one farmer lamented. "There are no elders. The elders are considered too wild [independent]. Another man sighed when asked who had been chosen to serve on his garee's committee and said of the committee head that "He is a twenty-year-old student. If you have good relations with him you have no problems; otherwise it is the opposite. I try to avoid him as much as possible.

Forced Labor under the Garee

The garee have undertaken a range of often highly visible development-related projects in rural communities throughout Oromia. These projects include construction of irrigation systems, road repair and digging of wells and latrines. Participation in these projects, however, is in no way voluntary. Every rural household is assigned to a gott and a garee and is regularly required to contribute unpaid labor towards whatever development projects its garee chooses to implement. The amount of labor required by the garee varies somewhat from week to week and between communities. Most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that one or two members of every household are generally expected to dedicate one entire day per week to work assigned by the garee. Forced labor violates both Ethiopia's constitution and its obligation under international law.

The garee have the power to impose punishment without due process on farmers who fail to carry out the tasks assigned to them, and their use of that power provides a useful illustration of how much coercive power over individuals the garee have at their disposal. This punishment generally takes the form of monetary fines that grow in severity with each successive transgression. In most of the communities surveyed by Human Rights Watch, farmers said that the first time a person missed a day of required work, they were fined between two and fifteen birr, depending on the community. Fifteen birr is more than most people could hope to make in a single day working as a day laborer in town. In most communities these fines have been imposed quite strictly. One sixty-five-year old farmer from a rural kebele in Guto Gida woredas said that in his community, "There is almost non one who has not paid [a] ten birr [fine], even if he is the poorest of all with no clothes on his buttocks.... They say that if you do not pay you will be put in prison until you [do] pay. In some communities, kebele authorities and garee head had said that farmers who missed work more than three times would be imprisoned for between one and three days in addition to being fined, but it is not clear whether such punishments have been tested out in practice.

Many farmers expressed anger and distress being forced to dedicate so much time to the garee development schemes. "The only result we see from these garee is being fined for not doing things," one farmer said. "So now we just do whatever they tell us; there is no way you can refuse to obey. Most farmers, however, were less concerned with the required labor than with the ways their garee were being employed to control and monitor them in ways that were not

related to their development-related goals. Expressing a sentiment common to most interviewees, a protestant minister from a rural kebele near Nekemete told Human Rights Watch that he thought the real reason the garee were created was “to follow up what people do in their houses, where they get their money from, who they eat with, what politics they talk. In many areas, the garee have been employed to achieve a level of control and surveillance that was not possible under the kebele system alone.

Forced Attendance at Political Meetings

The gott and garee, as well as the kebele, have the power to call meetings of all of their member households at any time and to enforce attendance at those meetings. In most of the communities surveyed by Human Rights Watch, the garee usually called meetings at least once per week and in some communities around Ambo they were more frequent. In almost all communities, failure to attend any meeting of the garee without obtaining permission beforehand is punished with a monetary fine that grows in severity with each successive offense. In some communities in Ambo woredas, garee committees had told farmers that people who had missed more than two or three garee meetings would be imprisoned overnight in addition to being fined. By coercing attendance at garee meetings, the government is violating the right to freedom of association under the ICCR.

The ostensible purpose of the gott and garee meetings is to discuss progress on whatever development projects the community is undertaking. Since early 2005, however, these compulsory meetings have been used as thinly disguised OPDO political rallies. Most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they were regularly required to attend gott or garee meetings devoted primarily to disseminating election-related propaganda in favor of the OPDO.

Many farmers said that they did not want to attend such meetings but were compelled to do so because of the penalties they faced if they failed to attend. One man, who had been arrested three times since 1991 on suspicion of involvement with the OLF, said that he would vote for any candidate who was not affiliated with the OPDO in the may elections. Nonetheless, he found himself spending part of almost every week listening to OPDP propaganda because he could not afford to pay the fine the garee would impose on him if he were absent from the “meetings.

Many other farmers expressed similar concerns, but almost all said that they had continued to attend the garee meetings whenever they were called. The sole exception was a story related by several different farmers in Tokke, a large village situated roughly thirty-five kilometers west of Ambo along the road to Nekemete. Tokke is situated in one of the only parts of Oromia where the opposition Oromo National Congress has had consistently strong support over the past several years. People in Tokke quickly began to rebel against being coerced into attending frequent gott and garee meetings where woredas and

kebele officials subjected them to pro-OPDO propaganda. The number of people who consistently refused to attend such meetings was so large that the problem proved difficult to control. In mid-February 2005, the entire village was summoned to attend a meeting to hear zonal officials from Ambo “discuss the elections,” but almost the entire village stayed away. That evening, kebele authorities made an announcement that the meeting would be held again the next afternoon and immediately cut off running water to the entire town. The next afternoon, the water was still cut off, and attendance at the meeting was considerably better. After sitting through nearly two hours of pro-OPDO and anti-ONC propaganda, people returned to their homes and the water was turned back on.

Using the Garee to Monitor Speech

Almost all of the farmers interviewed by Human Right Watch said that their garee officials were gathering information about individuals who they or kebele-level officials had labeled as critics of the government. While this is perhaps more subtle than overt restrictions on movement or required attendance at political propaganda sessions, farmers repeatedly described the garee’s ability to monitor their words and actions as the most insidious and onerous aspect of the system. One farmer said that his garee “creates a problem for anyone who talks, while another complained that “anyone who expresses their opinion is called a troublemaker. While kebele officials engaged in similar kinds of surveillance before the garee were introduced, the much smaller size of the garee has made it possible for the government to follow individuals more closely and consistently. In addition to being much smaller than the kebele, in many communities each member of the five-member committee that governs the garee is personally responsible for following up on five or six of the garee’s households. In some areas these smaller groups are referred to as shanee (“the five” in Afan Oromo). As one seventy-year-old farmer from just outside of Dembi Dollo put it, “The government has its hands and the garee are like the fingertips... The garee is very near to you. The kebele was not.

Garee officials in many communities have been instructed by gott, kebele and woredas officials to gather information about individuals who make comments they believe to be critical of or hostile towards the government in public meetings or even during private conversations. In addition to farmers from communities throughout western Oromia, Human Rights Watch interviewed several current and former gott and garee officials from several rural kebeles who confirmed that they gathered such information about the households under their supervision. Most claimed that they were deeply reluctant to do so but felt they had no choice. One garee committee member from East Wollega said, “They said that this garee were for development work, but the actual thing is for watching each other. They tell us to report whatever we observe, but I avoided doing that. I try to solve problems myself and avoid reporting because [the information] is usually used for other purposes... People who speak their minds are noted. We report what people said and who said it.

This heightened level of surveillance was felt acutely by most of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch. One farmer from a rural kebele near Ambo complained, "If you pass information upwards you are seen with sympathy by the OPDO. But what they need is not information that is helpful to the country but information like, what does this man think and what does that man think... They [garee officials] are always asking us, 'What does this man say? What does he talk about? With whom does he pass the day?' Another man from east Wollega said, "They watch your mouth, what you say. If you talk about the kebele administration, the woredas, about [party] cadres, it becomes a problem. A third farmer, asked to explain what his experience living under the garee was like, said, "You can almost say that the people {in a garee} are tied to one another because we are so closely watched. It is as though they have us in their firs.

Several farmers said that some people in their communities had tried to question the garee's need for the information it was trying to gather but were rebuffed without any real explanation. One teacher from a rural primary school said, "we are very suspicious about why they want to know these things. We think there must be a reason for this. But when we asked why they want to know these things, there is no answer. They [kebele officials] say only that they have their own structure and we should be administered according to what they tell us. One farmer said that the people in his community had given up questioning the garee's actions because "when we ask [them], 'why are you doing this to us,' they accuse us of being anti-development.

The Chilling Effect of the Gote and Garee System on Speech

Many farmers said that because their words were so closely scrutinized for subversive undertones they generally avoided questioning local officials or government policies in public. One man said that he no longer spoke in garee or kebele meetings because, since the garee were introduced in his community in September 2004, "If you speak your thoughts out loud now it is given some dangerous meaning. They suspect you of being OLF." Another farmer from just outside of Dembi Dollo said that, "If in a [garee] meeting someone, says, 'why is this being done, this is not correct,' they tell him that this is not his thought but the thought of OLF which is speaking through his mouth. One garee committee member from a rural kebele in West Wollega said that he disliked participating in the committee but was afraid of being labeled a dissident himself if he resigned his position. Since the garee were created, he said:

Our people do not speak. They have become mute because they are afraid. If two or three people are standing they avoid going to speak with them because those people may listen to what you say and give it a different meaning. If they [local officials] hate someone they say, 'You are an OLF.' If you say something they don't like, they say the OLF is behind you and telling you what to do... When this thing started we cooperated because we thought it was actually

for development, but things were better before... Since the garee came you cannot even have a visitor in your home without being asked to report on him.

In some communities, the garee have subjected people labeled as opponents of the government to unrelenting harassment and public denunciations. One young man from just outside of Dembi Dollo said that both he and his mother were arrested on charges of providing support to the OLF in March 2004. Both were released without charge within three months of their arrest, but since then their garee committee had subjected them to a sustained campaign of harassment that had destroyed the family's already precarious ability to make a living.

They organized the gott and garee against our house. My mother was selling shiro to earn a living and they said, 'this is an OLF house and no one should be here.' Accidentally [without knowing who he was], a relative of ours had come from his village and the garee told him, 'you are a new person here and you should know that because that is an OLF house you should not go in there.' But because he was our relative he came and told us this... No one comes to buy from my mother now, and whenever they meet me they ask me where I am going and why.

Another man from a rural kebele near Nekemte said that garee officials in his community had labeled him a supporter of the OLF and regularly denounced him during the course of garee meetings as a "thug" who is promoting an "anti-peace" agenda. "I raise my hand to talk [in response] and they say you have no right to speak," he said. "How can someone accuse me and then say I do not have the right to speak?"

Restrictions on the Freedom of Movement

Ethiopian and international law guarantees respect for citizens' freedom of movement. However, local authorities in much of Oromia have used the garee to enforce drastic new restrictions limiting the rural population's ability to travel outside of their communities. These limitations on movement vary considerably between different woredas and between different kebeles within a single woreda and between different kebeles within a single woreda as to their strictness and the zeal with which they are enforced. In almost all of the communities surveyed by Human Rights Watch, however, interviewees said that new regulations had been put in place through the garee to prevent them from traveling outside of their villages without permission unless they returned the same day. "You have to go and tell them if you are leaving, and you need to have a good reason for this," said one farmer from East Wollega. "If you only want to go and drink some tella [local beer] in Nekemte, they will not allow that. In most communities, farmers said that they asked orally for permission to travel from their garee, but in some places the garee have implemented a more formal set of procedures. In some communities in Ambo woredas, farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said the garee officials required them to obtain a signed paper authorizing their travel whenever they spent a night away from home. A group of farmers from Wedessa told Human Rights Watch that their garee had threatened that

anyone who passed the night in Ambo without obtaining written permission would spend their first night back home in the kebeleprison.

Generally, villagers who travel away from home without first obtaining permission from the garee are interrogated as to their whereabouts upon their return and are often chastised or punished as well. One garee committee member from a community in East Wollega said that people who left his village without permission “will be interrogated-why did he go, what did he do and why does he think he has more rights than what the law gives him. Many of the farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they complied with the garee’s reporting requirements because villagers who did not were often accused on involvement in OLF-related or other illegal activities. One farmer from a rural kebele ninety-three kilometers from Nekemte said, “If we just leave without saying anything they will accuse us of going somewhere illegal. Even when we go to nearby markets [for the day] we try to inform the. Otherwise we might be accused of belonging to a certain organization [the OLF].

Around Dembi Dollo in West Wollega zone the garee’s new restrictions on movements have been taken to unusual extremes and provide an illustrative example of the coercive power at the garees’ disposal. Towards the end of 2004 woreda officials in Dembi Dollo instructed all of the gott and garee within the woreda’s jurisdiction to inform farmer in their communities that they would no longer be able to travel to nearby markets on any day of the week other than Saturday. Farmers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that their garee told them this measure had been taken because their travel to various local markets throughout the week was “jeopardizing development” by keeping them from their fields.

Unfortunately, the local rural economy is in large measure driven by precisely the markets the woredas had set out to abolish and many people depend on them as outlets for their produce. This fact meant that the new restrictions were quite onerous, and farmers in much of the woreda’s county side simply refused to comply with them. The garee reacted by imposing fines on people who participated in non-Saturday markets. When this failed to curb farmers’ disobedience in some areas, several garee gathered together groups of young men who were authorized to use force to prevent people from traveling to “illegal” markets. Local garee and government officials interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that the men were posted along several secondary roads, arrested several dozen farmers they caught traveling to unauthorized markets and imprisoned them overnight in kebele jail houses. Before they were releasedk, kebele officials either fined them or confiscated the goods they had been traveling to market to sell. In some cases, the men who arrested the farmers reportedly beat them with sticks before imprisoning them.

Despite such draconian measures, popular resistance to the new restrictions proved so widespread that woredas officials ordered the garee to relax them around the beginning of 2005. while this has led to the reemergence of weekday markets in large towns and villages, many smaller communities continued to be prohibited from holding them at the tinme of Human Rights Watch’s visit to the area in March 2005.

These drastic restrictions of the freedom of movement take on added significance in the context of the current electoral process. The garee's controls make it more difficult for villagers to exercise the rights to assembly and freedom of association, rights which are an essential prerequisite of any democratic election and which are guaranteed by both Ethiopian and international law. Most obviously, villagers cannot travel to neighboring towns to participate in the political discussion or rallies that are more commonly held in urban areas without obtaining permission or, at the very least, expecting that they will have to answer for their whereabouts to local officials.

Source: The Reporter