

2021-09-30

An Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities

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Bahir Dar University

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Political Science and International Studies

**An Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National
Election: Challenges and Opportunities**

By

Amare Asefa

August, 2021

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Bahir Dar University
Faculty of Social Science
Department of Political Science and International
Studies

An Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National
Election: Challenges and Opportunities

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science and
International Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science

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August, 2021
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Amare Asefa

Approved by Board of Examiners:

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Internal Examiner's Name	Signature

External Examiner's Name	Signature

Declaration

I, the undersigned, confirmed that this thesis entitled, ‘An Assessment of The Impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities’ is my original work and had not been presented for a degree or any other purpose in any institutions. All the references mentioned in the study have been acknowledged in the best way.

Name	Signature	Date
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This thesis was submitted for examination with my approval as an advisor of the candidate.

Name	Signature	Date
Mr Mossa H.	_____	_____

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I would like to thank the almighty God and Saint Mary for the fruitful completion of this study. Secondly, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my advisors, Mossa Hussein for his critical learning input, constructive feedback and comments, and well-coming relationships in recommending the way for achieving the desired knowledge in line with the research process. Thirdly, I pull out my heartfelt thanks to my friends who helped me in several ways. Finally, I want to express my gratefulness to the Arba Minch University and Bahir Bar for sponsoring and coaching me respectively.

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Acronyms

AAPO	All-Amhara Peoples Organization
ARDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
CCI	Commodity Channel Index
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
ECSJ	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice
EPRDF	Ethiopia People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
EU-UEOM	European Union Election Observation Mission
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FMOH	Federal Minister of Health
HoF	House of Federation
HPR	House of People Representatives
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFHR	International Federation for Human Rights
IRI	International Republican Institute
NAMA	National Movement of Amhara
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEBE	National Election Board of Ethiopia
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo people democratic organization

PP	Prosperity Party
SEPDF	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
UEDF	United Ethiopian Democratic Front
UN	United Nation

Abstract

In Ethiopia, like some world countries, the national election has been postponed. However, the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia more than two times had socio-political impacts on the country. Therefore, the investigator has assessed the impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities. The qualitative approach has been used in this study. The design that has been applied in this research is exploratory design. And lastly, the collected data based on semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis were analyzed by the thematic data analysis method. Accordingly, the finding reveals that the extension of the election has political gains like, the extension of the election has created an opportunity for the NEBE to be more prepared for the next election and also, it was important for political parties to get time for a political campaign and announce their ideologies to the people. On other hand, the prolongation of elections has political costs. An extension of the election used as a triggering factor to starting the war and conflict in some parts of the country that results to tarnished the image of the country internationally, it has put diplomatic pressure on the country and, the conflict has caused neighboring countries to intimidate the country. In terms of social security, as an assumption, the extension of the election has saved the people somewhat from the expansion of the Coronavirus epidemic to some extent. On other hand, the prolongation of the election was used as a reason for a good opportunity to start war and conflicts in some parts of the country. As a result of the war and conflicts, a severe social crisis has occurred. For instance, the death of innocent citizens, human rights abuses, the rape of women and children, and mass displacement of people.

Keywords: Impacts, Election, Postponement, Prolongation, National Election, Ethiopia

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction about the study. It encompasses the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, basic research question, philosophical paradigm of the study, research approaches, research design, sampling technique and frame, sources of data, the instruments of data collection, methods of data analysis, delimitation, significance trustworthiness, ethical consideration and organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

mostly, the principle of the election is extant but the substance of an election is misplaced, as when voters do not have a free and honest choice between at least two alternatives. Many countries of the world hold elections in at least formality, but in most of them, the elections are not competitive (Gibbins, ... et al, 2020).

Singh (2013), has indicated that election is the essential component to the democratic procedure which allows many political actors to compete over selections and issues. The development of democracy mainly rests on the electoral system and its participation. Free and fair elections are the keystone of any democracy. They are crucial for the quiet move of control. Moreover, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2020) stated that the opportunity for a society to approve officials in elected office or remove them, within a constitutionally secured timeframe, is a column of democratic values and standards.

The origin of elections within the current world lies in the gradual occurrence of representative government in Europe and North America beginning in the 17th century. During that time, the holistic notion of representation feature of the Middle Ages was transformed into a more private conception, one that made the individual the critical unit to be counted. During the 18th century, entree to the political arena was based mostly on belonging to an aristocracy, and participation in elections was regulated mostly by local customs and arrangements. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the increased usage of competitive general elections in Western Europe had the significance and consequence of institutionalizing the diversity that had happened in the countries of that region (Gibbins, ... et al, 2020).

Competitive elections based on universal suffrage were introduced in sub-Saharan Africa in the three distinct periods. Following decolonization, many countries held elections in the 1950s and '60s. While exceptionally most of them were reverted to authoritarian forms of rule. At the end 1970s, a smaller number of countries were introduced elections when some military dictatorships were dissolved and another country in Southern Africa underwent decolonization. In the beginning, the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War, and the decrease of military and economic aid from developed countries brought about democratization and competitive elections in more than a dozen African countries, including Benin, Mali, South Africa, and Zambia (ibid).

African elections are in basic terms, window-dressing ceremonies with no genuine political meaning other than the stuffing of the vote boxes behind closed entryways. Currently, many Africa state's elections seem to be a fading shadow of democracy, imperiling the breakable democratic project itself. African leaders mostly had a sluggish contempt for open and competitive elections which might threaten the sinew of their power and authority (Adejumobi, 2000).

Ethiopia has held five series of national elections including 1992 elections (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015) since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ousted the military dictator regime in 1991. However, none of those series of national elections is free, fair, and competitive. With the prominent exception of the national election in 2005, none has been competitive (Lyons, 2010).

There is some provision in international law and standards. Article 21(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights notes that states must have regular, periodic elections (UN General Assembly 1948). Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), meanwhile, states that “in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed, the States Parties may take measures derogating from their obligations under the present Covenant to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation” (ICCPR, 1966. P.2.).

COVID-19, is a world pandemic, has far-reaching impacts on socio-cultural, political, economic, and environmental issues all over the world (NDI, 2020a). It is causing huge stress on the health care system of all countries in the world (FMOH, 2020). The combination of escalating economic disruption and the slow and uneven response to the COVID-19 outbreak is contributing to political

crises in several of sub-Saharan Africa's largest democracies (Devermont, 2020). According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), as of 11 June 2020 at least 66 countries and territories across the globe had decided to postpone national or subnational elections due to COVID-19.

Ethiopia is one of the African countries which is affected by the pandemic of COVID-19 disease. "Considering the gravity of the COVID-19 health crisis within global social, political, and economic impacts, the government of Ethiopia has taken various measures" (Haile, 2020: p. 5). Due to the immediate threat posed by the pandemic, the Ethiopian National Election Commission (NEBE) announced on March 31, 2020, its decision to cancel or indefinitely postpone the election schedule and operational plan for the eagerly awaited August 29, 2020 election, and then postponed again to June 5, 2021, invoking the ongoing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. The election was also postponed for the third time for June 21, 2021.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Holding periodic elections is an indispensable character of democratic practices. The case for postponing elections is often made during emergency circumstances. Despite the rational nature of the issue for democracy, peace, and security, there has been sparse academic literature on election suspension. Exercising periodic, free, and fair elections is one of the crucial characteristics of democracy (Przeworski, 1999). This necessity was famously hallowed into Article 21(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948). There are also circumstances where a natural disaster like a pandemic or tsunami may mean that practicing an election will possibly present greater dangers to human lifecycle and safety. Since COVID-19 is one natural disaster, it has also affected the 2020 election. Between February 21 and August 18, 2020, elections in at least 70 countries and territories around the world had suspended (IDEA, 2020).

Devermont, (2020) has shown that several of the governments not quite certainly will find it enticing to usage COVID-19 to incline the playing arena in their favor in which the occurrence presents a chance for incumbents to establish themselves, postponement elections, and outlaw street protests on community care grounds. For the sake of defending the health and safety of their citizen's countries of the world proclaim the state of emergency. Declaration of state of emergency and postponement of the election, for instance, challenged the political opposition in some

countries. Especially governments of African countries face such challenges on the basis that the government habits the interference as a device for blocking the political and democratic right of the societies and underneath their political power (Devermont, 2020).

COVID 19 is a worldwide epidemic that poses a greater challenge not only on the health system but also on the politics and economy (NDI, 2020a; FAF, 2020). Predominantly, the pandemic has a far-off reaching implication on the election of large countries of the world (IDEA, 2020; NDI, 2020a). IFHR, (2020) also stated that the Covid-19 epidemic has a great consequence around the world, particularly concerning elections, it postures hazards for democracy and basic rights and freedoms in sub-Saharan Africa predominantly and other world countries. Because of the epidemic of COVID-19 many world countries postponing their election and could face various challenges. Many African countries have suspended the prescheduled election for the reason of the occurrence of COVID -19 since it is impossible to hold an election as per the timetable. Such postponement resulted in critical political and economic costs in several countries.

IDEA, (2020) puts the negative and positive impacts of postponing elections during emergencies or epidemic. The first negative impact is the loss of voice, Elections are the opportunity for citizens to eliminate and substitute a representative government. This opportunity is lost for some time if an election is postponed. The second negative impact of postponing elections is claims of political opportunism. Postponement ideally should be agreed upon through consensus among all political parties. The risk that incumbent governments may act unilaterally for political advantage, or at least succeed political advantage, should be considered (IDEA, 2020).

On other hand, the prolongation of the election has positive impacts. The first positive impact of the postponed election affects turnout. High turnout is one vital characteristic of democratic elections. Without this, the result of an election may be shaped by some groups more than others. Holding an election during a pandemic could undermine, or be perceived as undermining, this aspect of democracy by reducing turnout. Then postponed of the election during the pandemic is vital to make the electoral process move inclusive. Citizens might be less likely to vote if they are concerned for their health and the health of their family members. The legitimacy of the contest may therefore be undermined by uneven participation. the second advantage of postponed election is important to political debate, democratic elections should feature a wide political campaign and

extensive public debate on public policy issues, which may be curtailed if citizens are restricted from moving freely. Moreover, any election campaign may be dominated by the current pandemic, preventing a comprehensive discussion on wider public policy issues from taking place. Then postponement of the election is important for a free and effective political campaign and public debate (ibid).

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19), on March 31, 2020, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) submitted a proposal to the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR), approved on 30 April 2020, to postpone the sixth national election, which was scheduled to be held in August 2020, for an unlimited time. A week after the de facto lockdown, the formal state of emergency was declared for five months since 8 April 2020 and has effectively postponed the election schedule. The postponement of these elections is noteworthy for many reasons. Ethiopia has benefited from a mature cadre of politicians who can be relied upon to put public health above their political ambitions (Bruton, 2020).

The postponement of the election has political and socio-economic significance. The first major benefit of postponing the election, it contributes to mitigating the expansion and transition of Coronavirus (COVID-19 pandemic) and protecting the country from safer devastation. If the election was held in the regular time the patient number become intensified and then that was difficult, because the economy of the country is incapable to treat several COVID-19 patients. Political instability has been observed in Ethiopia for the past two or three years up to now, therefore, postponement of the election has benefits to protect the country from severe instability than today. There are also other benefits related to an election like broad political debate and high turnout as IDEA stated.

On another hand, the postponing of the election has its costs in Ethiopia. As some scholars stated the postponing of election is not for the people rather for the political benefits. The postponement could be a source of conflict as some of the key opposition groups and one of the key regional governments of the Ethiopian federation (i.e., Tigray) have voiced their opposition to these developments (Kelbesa, 2020). As Chhabra (2020) stated the other cost is related to its violet constitution or contradiction related to the constitutional ground of postponing. Raised a critical

constitutional question that has never been thought of before in the country's constitutional law jurisprudence.

Generally, the prolongation of the election may have a serious cost related to the constitution, use of unconstitutional authorities, enter the country to war, and political instability. There was two-position related to the postponement of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia, the first one is postponing the election as the best option for Ethiopian and the second is opposing the postponement, they argued the postponing of election costs Ethiopia a lot, and it has a political game context. The postponement of elections in Ethiopia has political instability in some cases has benefits and costs. Basically, there is a knowledge gap in the study area because of the newness of the issue. Due to the above problems, this research had been conducted to fill the gap to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. The General Objective of the Study

In this thesis, the researcher has assessed the impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities

1.3.2. Specific Objective

Being derived from the above general objective, this study has addressed the following specific objectives.

- A. Find out about the causes of the suspension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia
- B. Explore the benefits of suspension the 2020 national election of Ethiopia.
- C. Find out the cost of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia.
- D. Examine the implication of the extension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the above specific objectives, the researcher has answered the following basic research questions in this thesis:

1. Why the 2020 national election of Ethiopia were postpended?
2. What are the benefits of the suspension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia?

3. What are the costs of the suspension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia?
4. What was the implication of the postponement of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia?

1.5. Research Methodology

In this section, the investigator has to deal with elucidates the research methodology by containing research approaches, research design, data collection instruments, sources of data collection, sample size determination and sampling techniques, truthfulness, and method of data analysis. Finally, the research has included the issue of ethical consideration.

1.5.1. The Philosophical World View of the Study

There are several philosophical views in existence today due to the development in the human way of thinking and varied ways of explaining the existence and implications of the phenomena existing in the world. Constructivism, pragmatism, and positivism are the most common philosophical view in social science. Constructivism's philosophical view gives a strong basis for researches, particularly in humanities, education, and other behavioral researches (Adom, 2016). Besides this, from the numerous philosophical worldwide views, the researcher had been conducted under the constructivist view.

The researcher has been conducted the study in line with the constructivism paradigm because as Creswell, (2014) stated, constructivism or social constructivism is such a perspective, and it is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. Constructivists argued that individuals pursue the understanding of the world in which they live and work. In this perspective, the goal of the research is to depend as much as possible on the participant's view on the condition being studied. The question becomes wide and general then the participant can construct the meaning of a condition (Creswel, 2014). The constructivism philosophical perspective is an effectual instrument that can yield numerous significances when applied in the carrying out of research in different fields of study as well as in undertaking to teach and learning actions at any educational level. Constructivism's philosophical view gives a strong basis for researches, particularly in humanities, education, and other behavioral researches (Adom, 2016).

1.5.2. Research Approach

Depending on the nature of the study, the data claims, and the capacity, or experiences, researchers utilize diverse approaches, techniques, and strategies to form certain requests over a specific inquire about the issue. According to, Creswell (2009) quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research as the approaches to be utilized for scientific investigation. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to present among the people and observe institutions or record behaviors in their natural settings; conducting discussions, interviews, and observations (Creswell, 2009). As Kumar, (2012) argued the major emphasis in qualitative research is to comprehend, clarify, discover, realize and explain circumstances, feelings, insights, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people.

For the rationale of accomplishing the objectives of the research, which is centers on an assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on the 2020 national election of Ethiopia: challenges and opportunities, has more helpful for a qualitative approach. Hence the researcher has utilized a qualitative research approach.

1.5.3. Research Design

Basically, the research design is a plan and method for investigation, it is vital to address the whole study. moreover, it is a choice and strategy in the examination of information gathering. And also, it is a method of investigation that is regarded to get answers to investigate questions or issues (Creswell, 2009 and Kumar, 2011). Research design, as Kothari (2004), is the plan for the collection, estimation, and investigation of information and also is the process of building a structure or arrangement of the study.

Accordingly, the investigator to the accomplishment of this study purposefully has selected the design of exploratory design of research. Exploratory research design is the process of investigating a problem that has not been studied. The purpose of exploratory design is to accomplish new insights into a phenomenon. This is used when there are rare or no former studies to which references can be made for information. Exploratory studies are usually more suitable in case of problem about which little research knowledge is available (Akhtar, 2016).

Exploratory research design is a study that try to find to answer a question or address a phenomenon. The nature of the entity being studied does not allow a variable to be manipulated by the researcher, it cannot be accomplished in a controlled situation, or almost certainly, the researcher can't control all the effects on the entity, therefore a more exploratory look at the topic is more advantageous. (Ajit, 2021).

Besides, to effectively accomplished the study, the researcher has used exploratory research design from research design. Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done. Exploratory design helps the researcher to establish a strong foundation for his research and to choose the correct research design and variables which are important for the analysis. Exploratory research helps the researcher to build understanding about the problem of the research. It enables the researcher answer what and why questions. As the result of aforementioned reason the researcher conducted the study based on exploratory research design.

1.5.4. Source of Data Collection

To gain the appropriate data for the study, the researcher has employed both primary and secondary sources as methods of collecting data.

1.5.4.1. Primary sources

As stated in Muhammad (2016), Primary data has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore, its validity is greater than secondary data. to gain genuine information about the objective of the study, the researcher has gathered primary data from the national election board of Ethiopia, political parties, House of People Representatives (HPR), and political elites.

1.5.4.2. Secondary sources

In addition to the primary sources, the researcher has collected data through the secondary sources of data techniques. The researcher has utilized secondary sources for the purpose of review the existing literature and coordinate with primary sources (Kothari, 2004; Bryman, 2016). Hence, the researcher has gathered secondary sources from book magazines, published and unpublished materials, articles, thesis, and online internet sources about the concept of postponing the election and related concepts.

1.5.5. Data Collection Instruments

Following the study, the researcher has utilized interviews (semi-structured) and document analysis from multiple instruments of data collection techniques.

1.5.5.1. Interview

More importantly, the semi-structured interview provides reliable, relevant data, valid and it allows respondents the freedom to precise their viewpoint about the study (Hancock, Windridge, & Ockleford, 2007; Macdonald & Headlam, 2008).

To gather qualitative data, the researcher has used interviews as an apparatus of data collection. Among diverse forms of an interview, the semi-structured interview has been used by the researcher. Because it helps the respondents to talk about a set of questions through their own words and allow the researcher to inquiry questions during the interview on the issues that are vague and need further explanation. in-depth interviews may allow to examining the needs, interests, and feelings of the respondents about the cases. Even, it increases the relationship between the investigator and informants. Accordingly, the semi-structured interview was conducted with the main informants, after which the researcher prepared the interview and prepared all the necessary materials for the interviews. The researcher interviewed the National Election Board of Ethiopia, political parties, HPR, and political elites. During the data collection, the researcher interviewed the respondents face-to-face.

1.5.5.2. Document Analysis

Document analysis is a social research method and is a vital research instrument in its own right, and is an invaluable portion of most schemes of triangulation, the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, pick up understanding, and create empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

To collect the data the researcher was analyzed legal documents that depict election and election postpone related legal documents, such as federal and regional constitutions, proclamations, laws, rules, videos and any other documents that have relevance to the subject under investigation has

critically consult, examine and analyze. Furthermore, mainstream pieces of literature on the issue under study were analyzed by triangulating with the legal documents.

1.5.6. Sampling Techniques and Sampling Size

Since the study has used a qualitative research method, the researcher has utilized non-probability sampling techniques. Among different types of non-probability sampling techniques, the researcher has applied purposive sampling as it helps to get relevant information to the issue or knowledge about some groups to select subjects who represent the population (Teddlie, 2007). This sampling is important to identify highly knowledgeable key informants and participants. A purposive sampling strategy is the most effective one when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable expertise (Tongco, 2007).

Purposive sampling allows the selection of the appropriate body that can give advanced, detailed, and wide-ranging information about the study. In fact, this kind of sampling is momentarily valuable when the analyst develops a chronicled reality, elaborate a phenomenon, or generates somewhat almost as it were small is known. Hence, selected purposive sampling was an appropriate sampling method in this study. Because it allowed that the researcher to select key informants or basic concerned bodies purposively in the study area. Moreover, it was suitable to select the concerned informants for this study. As a result, the researcher purposely selected informants from government officials, competing political parties, and political scientists familiar with this study. Therefore, the researcher has employed a purposive sampling strategy to have the participants who have a good knowledge and exposure to the issue under study and to get relevant and reliable information.

1.5.6.1. Sample Size Determination

As an effect of the several factors that can determine sample sizes in qualitative studies, while, the concept of saturation is the important guiding principle for qualitative data size. Many researchers shy away from advising what establishes a sufficient sample size. Though, some visibly find this frustrating (Mason, 2010). Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, (2006) suggest, the idea of saturation is helpful at the conceptual level, it provides practical guidance for guessing sample sizes for robust research before data collection. Saturation in the research process when no new information is

founded in data investigation, and this redundancy signals to researchers that data collection may cease.

Saturation is when the researcher stops collecting data due to a lack of new insights and additional evidence in the study area. This means that based on the saturation sampling size, the researcher may stop collecting information when the researcher cannot get any new information from the informants. As a result, in qualitative analysis, this can be thought about as a sign of the adequacy of the sample size. The assumption of saturation is helpful at the conceptual level of the sampling size and it provides practical guidance to the research for guessing sample sizes for robust research before data collection. Besides this, the researcher has applied data saturation as the sample size of the research.

1.5.7. Methods of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis is mostly determined by the research approach one decided to use, the methods of data collection to employ and the sort of data to be gathered. The qualitative research approach which has utilized in this study was to allow a researcher to apply the triangulation method, which involved comparing and contrasting the data for validation purposes as maintained by (Robson, 2002).

Thematic analysis demonstrates the data in great detail and bargain with different subjects through interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic Analysis is considered the foremost suitable for any study that looks to find utilizing interpretations. It gives a precise component to data analysis. It allows the researcher to relate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the total contents. The thematic analysis allows the researcher to determine surely the relations between concepts and compare them with the duplicate data. Thematic Analysis provides a chance to understand the potential of any issue more broadly (Marks & Yardley, 2004).

As a result, the collected data through in-depth interviews and document analysis have been analyzed using this thematic analysis method. Accordingly, after the researcher has transcribed and translated of data: First, the data that was collected through semi-structured interviews, the researcher has given initially codes for each respondent raw data. Subsequently, the researcher has developed themes based on the specific objectives of the study. Therefore, based on the nature of

the research approach, the researcher has employed thematic analysis as a method of data analysis to accomplish the study. This means is a type of qualitative analysis, it is used to analyze classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. in this study, all data has been collected through qualitative techniques and analyzed qualitatively and secondary data has been organized thematically and analyzed by triangulating with the primary data. Finally, the conclusion has depicted based on the major findings of the study.

1.6. Scope Of the Study

Geographically speaking, this study has concentrated in Ethiopia generally. The time frame has incorporated the postponement of election in Ethiopia since 2020. Thematically, the basic issues that would be treated here are the positive and negative impact of the postponement of election related with the politics and social security in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the researcher has focused on the political and social security impacts of the postponement of the national election.

1.7. The Rationale of the Study

Because of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous countries of the world postponed the election schedule suddenly. Ethiopia also postponed the national election for the first time since the election was started in Ethiopia. The postponement of the election has a new phenomenon for our country. This study has addressed the impacts of COVID-19 on Ethiopian 2020 election which is not studied so far where the newness of the issue under study coupled with the aforementioned reasons makes the topic relevant and needs a scientific study. The researcher had been conducted this study to find out what value has added and what is loosed because of the postponement of the election.

1.8. Significance of the Study

This research has a substantial contribution both to fill knowledge gaps and to improve the free, fair, and periodic elections in the study area. As its importance in the academic area is concerned, studying the impacts that delayed the national election of Ethiopia has valuable as it fills the gap in this regard. Apart from such academic significance, the paper has a contribution to the policy-making and practice of the electoral system and electoral board of the country. In Ethiopia elections have a great problem because of the manipulation of elections and people-intensive are difficult to

elect their representative. Moreover, the election is the cornerstone of democracy and it has an input for undertaking further studies either to counter or to underpin the future findings of this research.

1.9. Limitation of the Study

Shortage of previous works to rely both on the target population and the case under research in addition to the researcher's lack of experience has constrained the research.

1.10. The trustworthiness of the study

The data for this study was collected gaining the informed consent of the participants and analyze objectively and in a way to meet the intended objectives. The literal accounts of informants were inserted in the middle of the analysis as sampling. In this study, the appropriate respondents were select with all-rounded consideration.

The researcher has applied triangulation and pair assessment. The study has utilized appropriate data and description, clear-cut and emphasis thoughts, references with comprehensive acknowledgment to ensure trustworthiness. The data collected from the interviewee will also triangulate with available documented sources. All unsure thoughts of respondents were totally avoided in the analysis. Long deliberation and probing use will ensure trustworthiness. The interview will conduct after proper abridgment and introducing the purpose of the study in clear terms.

1.11. Ethical Considerations

The researcher has emphasized essential ethical considerations. Then, in order to get accurate data and to make respondents feel free; the researcher was told the objective of the study and clarify the study was used only for academic purposes, and informed consent of the participants has given priority. Besides, to ensure anonymity and kept everything confidential participants have not been vital to write their names. The actual names of participants and facts that show their clear identity are unnoticed and substitute by codes. Furthermore, the study has freed from any biasedness, and the researcher analyzes and interpret based on the participant responses. Added to these, the

participants and authors of different sources have properly been acknowledged and plagiarism has been strongly condemned by the researcher throughout the whole work of study.

1.12. Organization of the Study

This study has been organized into five chapters. The first chapter of the study is an introductory part that incorporated the background of the study, statement problem, objective, basic research question, the philosophical paradigm of the study, research approaches, research design, sampling technique and frame, sources of data, the instruments of data collection, methods of data analysis, delimitation, significant, trustworthiness and ethical consideration. The second chapter has contained a review of related literature about the postponement of the election and related concepts. The third chapter comprised a survey about the history of five consecutive national elections of Ethiopia. The fourth chapter has encompassed data interpretation and analysis. Finally, the fifth and last chapter included the conclusion and recommendation.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In this chapter, this study carried out varieties of issues as a review of the literature related to the election, prolongation of the election, and related aspects. Secondly, it deals with the theoretical perspective on the suspension of the election. Finally, it presented about when the election is postponed, the election postponement experience of other country and the constitutionality of Ethiopia's election postponement.

2.1. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1.1. Understandings on Election

An election is a proper and organized choice by a vote of a person for a political position or another further office. Election sets away for the remaining of people, they support people understand what lies ahead; they also support people imagine what we might realize, and they inspire people and encourage them. Without elections, a group of human beings rapidly degenerates into dispute and conflict, because people understand things in diverse ways and learn toward diverse resolutions without leadership. Leadership supports drawing attention in a similar direction and harness the effort together (Chinedu, 2019). McLenglet defines effective elections as a vital way to keep a nation governed fairly. It is one of the few times you are able to get feedback from a large group of people all at once, so you should make sure to take full advantage of such a great opportunity to gain knowledge and new perspectives (McLenglet, 1992).

Abbink describes that “Elections in general are, one would expect, meant to allow choice and possible alternation between parties or persons in government. They also are meant to permit the involvement of different parties or stakeholders in a consultative process” (Abbink, 2017. P, 207). Election gives competition for office and a means of holding the victors to account is the main prominent purpose of elections. However, that elections are not competitive. several authoritarian governors preserve a legislature, and characteristically undergo rig elections as a system of selection to their assemblies. Even these non-competitive elections can provide a measure of

legality with the international community, besides a panel of compliant representatives who can securely be acceptable to advance harmless complaints originating from their local area (Hague & Harrop, 2004).

2.1.2. Electoral Systems

Electoral systems are the rules and procedures via which votes cast in an election are interpreted into seats won in the parliament. An electoral system is intended to do three key activities. First, it will interpret the votes cast into seats won in a legislative chamber. Second, electoral systems act as the channel through which the people can hold their elected representatives accountable. Third, diverse electoral systems give motivations for those competing for power to couch their appeals to the voters in separate ways. In the divergent social order, for example, where language, religion, or other forms of ethnicity represent a significant political cleavage, specific electoral systems can be intended to inspire candidates who act in a cooperative, accommodator means to compete groups (Reilly, 2003).

For any democracy selection of the electoral system is one of the most significant institutional decisions. Mostly, the selection of a specific electoral system has a deep effect on the upcoming political nature of the country worried, and electoral systems, once selected, often remain fairly constant as political desires harden around and reply to the inducements presented by them (Colomer, 2004 & Farrel, 2001). Most controversy about electoral systems cores on the rules for changing votes into seats. Such rules are as significant as they are technical and they develop the internal workings of democracy, occasionally as diminutive understood by ordinary voters as the engine of a car but just as crucial to the process of the political machine (Hague & Harrop, 2004).

2.1.2.1. Classification of Electoral System

There are several numbers of diverse electoral systems presently in usage and many more arrangements on each form, but the major electoral systems are categorized into three broad families. Those are; plurality/majority systems, proportional systems, and mixed systems. Within these three are nine "sub-families" (Pokharel, 2007).

2.1.2.1.1. Plurality (Majority) System of Election

The plurality system of an election is based on constituencies (districts) within the area covered by an elected body. They may operate either in single or multi-member constituencies. Plurality-majority systems typically give more emphasis to local representation via the use of small, single-member electoral districts than to proportionality. The candidate or party that wins the highest number of votes or less usually the majority of votes within a constituency wins all the representative positions for the constituency. In non-proportional systems, parties are not rewarded in proportion to the share of the vote they obtain; instead, ‘the winner takes all’ within each district (Hague & Harrop, 2004). Plurality/majority systems can be identified into five categories. Those are; First Past the Post (FPTP), Two-Round System (TRS), Alternative Vote (AV), Block Vote (BV), and the Party Block Vote (PBV). From those FPTP and TRS are the major ones.

2.1.2.1.1.1. First Past the Post (FPTP)

The First Past the Post system is the easy and most commonly utilized form of plurality/majority system, using single-member districts and candidate-based voting. The elector is presented with the names of the nominated candidates and votes by choosing one, and only one, of them. The one who gains more votes than any other candidate is the winning candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes. Countries that use this system include the United Kingdom, the United States, India, Canada, and most countries that were once part of the British Empire (Pokharel, 2007 and Reilly, 2003).

2.1.2.1.1.2. Two Round System (TRS)

The Two-Round System is a plurality/majority system in which a second election is held if there is no candidate or party reaches a given level of votes, most commonly an absolute majority (50 plus one), in the first election round. A Two-Round System maybe take a majority-plurality from more than two candidates compute the second round and the one who wins the majority number of votes in the second round is voted, irrespective of whether they have won an absolute majority or a majority run-off from only the highest two candidates in the first-round competition the second round Reilly, 2003)

A Two-Round System might take a majority-plurality form, more than two candidates can compete in the second round. An example is the French system, any candidate who has got the votes of over 12.5 percent of the registered voters in the first round can stand in the second round. The candidate who victories the highest number of votes in the second round is then declared chosen, irrespective of whether they have won an absolute majority. This system is widely used in France, former French colonies, and some parts of the former Soviet Union (Pokharel, 2007).

2.1.2.1.2. Proportional Representation (PR)

Proportional representation is a newer system rather than non-proportional systems; it occurred in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, inspired by the formation of associations dedicated to electoral reform. Even so, Proportional representation is currently more common than plurality and majority systems; it has been the way of choice for most democratic countries since the early 1920s (Blais and Massicote, 2002).

The guiding principle of Proportional representation is to denote parties other than territory. The idea is direct and credible: explicitly, that parties should be awarded seats in straightforward proportion to their share of the election. In a flawlessly proportional system, each party would obtain a similar share of seats as of votes; 40 percent of the votes would mean 40 percent of the seats and a minor party with 10 percent of the votes should likewise gain 10 percent of the seats. Although the system of Proportional representation is designed with the principle of proportionality in mind, utmost Proportional representation systems are not flawlessly proportional (Hague & Harrop, 2004).

The important base of all Proportional representation systems is the conscious transformation of a party's share of the votes into a consistent proportion of seats in the legislature. There are two major types of Proportional representation systems; List Proportional representation and Single Transferable Vote (STV). Proportional representation needs the practice of electoral districts with more than one member (Pokharel, 2007).

2.1.2.1.3. Mixed Systems or Semi-Proportional System

In mixed Systems the elections expressed by electorates are used to vote representatives through two different systems, one proportional representation system and one plurality/majority system

in other words, Semi- proportional systems interpret votes cast into seats won in a way that falls somewhere in amongst the proportionality of proportional representation systems and the majoritarianism of plurality-majority systems. Most commonly, there are two kinds of mixed systems: Parallel systems and Single Nontransferable Vote (SNTV) Systems (Pokharel, 2007 and Reilly, 2003).

2.1.3. Function of election

Elections are a process typical for democratic systems, but also systems that do not respect the principles of democracy often serve them. However, as a result of their diverse purposeful positioning, they achieve numerous functions. The approved model of generality has allowable for the identity of seven basic functions, exist in all elections: delegation of political representation; selection of the political elite; legitimization of power; control over authorities; political accountability; creation of political programmed; the recreation of public opinion image. The existing classification allows for its usage both in diverse types of elections (parliamentary and presidential) as well as in relation to diverse electoral systems (Wojtasik, 2013).

2.1.3.1. Delegation of Political Representation

The function of delegating political representation allows electorates to elect those persons who, in their view because of the views and values held, look to be the finest representatives. Because of the democratic mandate to apply power, the chosen have adequate legality to make decisions in the best interests of the public, and their decisions have the equivalent value of lawfulness. The practical will of shifting the decision-making level from every qualified to those who were chosen may be as a result of three key reasons: First to the intensification of the competence of decision-making. Second, the assumption that those chosen have advanced capabilities than the average, and this will certainly affect the correctness of their decisions, and thirdly to give an advanced degree of significance to the decisions made, and thus intensification their social influence (Żukowski, 2004).

Delegation of political representation because of the elections and transference of the decision-making authorities' rests on the supposition that electorates will be capable of elect from amongst themselves those who have the suitable qualities (knowledge, integrity, loyalty to the principles,

capability to collaborate and reach a compromise), and moreover that those who are chosen will not make decisions on the behalf of their specific interests (Haman, 2003).

Elections in a democracy are not an easy transference of decision-making authorities onto the level of political representatives, correspondingly as the mere ownership of political subjectivity by an elector does not at all times control his or her participation in the elections. Supplementary circumstances have to be satisfied, amongst which the most significant are: ownership by those chosen of some of the political possibilities of enforcement of the planned goals, apparatus of the authority with authoritative powers, allowing the comprehension of assumed responsibilities, capability to choose competing objectives appreciations to political collaboration and negotiations. In the current context, elections are not only a political instrument to select who will hold the office they relate to, but also who will denote the people (Medvic, 2010).

2.1.3.2. Elite selection role

The purpose of elite selection has a two-stage character. The first outcomes from the prevalence of political parties as entities the activities of which lead to the institutionalization of the political scope, the second takes into account the causal role of the people entitled to vote. Oppose the background of the democratization procedure, the parties have developed a factor in establishing the disorderly political objectives and demands of individuals, grouping around themselves members and supporters. Choice carried out by the parties can have two main dimensions: substantive and political, while one may also identify its other priorities that occasionally receipts the leading role. The political dimension presumes the requirement of membership in the party, or at least ideological identity with the essential values that form its axiological and planned values (Sokół, 2003).

The second phase of political elites' choice denotes the role of the people entitled to vote in their determining by participating in the elections, and by the appearance of their personal favorites for the individual characteristics of the candidates and their political relationships. In the framework of individual elective behavior, there are three categories of electoral votes: The first vote of opinion, which is the outcome of the examination of election planned made by the elector, the second vote of belonging, which is an expression of social and party documentation of the elector, vote of exchange, assumed as a manifestation of the robust affiliation amongst the elector and an

assumed candidate (Żukowski, 2004). In the case of the choice of political elites, a single elector can concurrently perform upon diverse types of incentives to elect for a specific candidate, with the subsequent deciding about the ultimate vote allocation (Wojtasik, 2013).

2.1.3.3. Legitimization of power

Democratic legitimization of those in power is showed as one of the fundamental purposes of the elections and outcomes that they bring (Raciborski, 2003). The opportunity of universal participation in the elections, the resultant transference of decision-making onto representatives, and the legitimization of authority are the calming elements, giving legality to the political scheme. The interrogation of the legality of political regimes is one of the dominant problems that are posed by the investigators of political schemes, particularly in the framework of change and shift on the way to democratic resolutions. Democratic elections in the existing approach are a legitimized process of the peaceable overthrow of power, giving those exercising power the suitable of having a social mandate, contributive to the consolidation of the political arena (Wojtasik, 2013).

2.1.3.4. Control over authorities

Enforcement of the purpose of control over those in power occurs in two basic dimensions: negative when as an outcome of the elections the mandate of the ruling is revoked, and positive, when the governing, through elections, reintroduce their mandate to administer for the succeeding period. The key political outcome of the elections is the separation into winners and failures, and indirectly those who will work out political power and the opposition (monitoring the authority). Those in power acquire a mandate to administer appreciations to legitimizing characteristics they were granted, and their political challenger is legitimized to control the political powers that be and generate political alternatives to authorized governmental action (ibid).

The effect of the control purpose of elections is established in two main areas. Firstly, it is conceivable for the electorates to control those in power. If electorates decide to once again offer their support, the mandate to rule is rehabilitated and awarded for the succeeding time in office. In a circumstance where electorates take out their support, a change of power is a possibility. It is technical protection for individuals and groups against probable dictatorial of power, selected in democratic elections in the final case, the citizens give their power of attorney to indirectly control

in their name, carried out by the opposition over those in power. One factor that may determine the level of support for the challenger, even though the authorities are assessed critically, is whether the challenger is a right political alternative. If a spring political group is not seen as skilled in replacing the governing and doing their work well, the electorates may abstain from giving their support, in spite of the declared opposition to the existing government (Medvic, 2010).

2.1.3.5. Political accountability

The function of the implementation of political accountability undertakes the opportunity of drawing outcomes against persons taking public office. It contains in the expression of disapproval for their political action and the outcome thereof, containing the political outcomes. This differentiates political accountability from other kinds of responsibility that exist in the political arena, such as constitutional or criminal. The implementation of political accountability is stated through the cyclic nature of the elections, utilizing which the before given power of attorney may be lengthy if electorates are pleased with the policies and the strategies or canceled, as a sanction for loose to meet the expectations positioned upon the government (Antoszewski, 2004).

Implementation of political accountability necessitates electorates to participate in the elections by casting an effective vote. Amongst the factors influencing the level of elector turnout in this situation may contain, for instance, the real allocation of power as an outcome of the elections, unexpected of the last result, and interrelated competitiveness, in addition to the related media attention (Czeńnik, 2007).

2.1.3.6. Creation of political programs

Elections are not only a field of political competition, but also, for the candidates and political parties, a method to communicate with the community. The most communal form of communication is a widespread political program and their informal electoral forms, created as part of the election programming function. A significant average influencing the enforcement of the programming function is the political parties that make political agenda, denoting to the represented values and their political parties assume preparation of political and electoral programs and their public dissemination, mostly in order to get communal support and conversion into the

realm of ideological abstracts. Realization of the programs making function by votes (Migalsk, et al, 2006).

2.1.3.7. Reaction of public opinion

The last purpose of the elections enclosed the image of public opinion. They are used as an instrument for interpreting public preferences into legitimization of power, and also through the opportunity to actively involve citizens in the processes of choosing authorities and systemic channeling of their action in this field. Elections build a map of the purpose of private topics in the public consciousness and interpret them into the realm of contemporary policy. Cyclic nature of the election's licenses observation of conceivable dynamic forces of change in this respect, since both on the foundation of the issues covered in voting discourse, and also the concentrating of electors' desire on specific demands, progression in the public perception of politics can be observed (Turska-Kawa, 2010A).

2.2. Theoretical Perspective of the study

In political science, there are numerous theories that theorizing election and the election process. From those theories, rational choice theory, behaviorist perspective and, institutionalism theory are the major theories related to election and voting. Therefore, it is better to conceptualize each theory how to theorizing the election process.

2.2.1. Behaviorist Perspective

Behavioralism is the view that the subject matter of political science should be restricted to phenomena that are self-sufficiently observable and measurable. It presumes that political institutions largely reflect underlying social forces and that the study of politics should start with society, culture, and public opinion. To this end, behaviorists use the methodology of the social sciences to found statistical relationships between independent variables and dependent variables (Wogu, 2013).

behavioralist in political science tried to dispose of intuition, or as a minimum to support it with empirical observation. Possibly the greatest significant behavioral contributions to political science were election studies. Additionally, though behavioral research yielded significant insights

into the political behavior of individuals, it often explained slightly about actual governance. Voting studies, for example, rarely provided consideration of public policy. Because behavioral research leans towards being restricted to topics that were compatible with a quantitative study. Finally, many behavioral findings revealed nothing new but simply restated well-established or obvious conclusions. (Roskin, 2020).

the justifications that the investigator didn't use behavioralist tends to shy away from the theoretical and objective analysis of interests - they prefer to leave the field open to scholars who work in unrealistic traditions. There is big division and difference among the behavioralist that have made the behavioralists complex and confusion. Because of those divergence argument and division of behavioralist arguers the researcher confused to apply this theory as theoretical perspective. In addition, behavioralist advocates study of facts not values are neither possible nor desirable. as this regard values free politics is not acceptable. Furthermore, the behavioralist perspective is more preferable for quantitative research or behavioral research tended to be limited to topics that were amenable to a quantitative study and need survey data. However, this study has conducted through a qualitative approach and used in-depth interview and document analysis as a method of data collection. Whereas as expressed above behavioralist perspective is more compatible with the quantitative research approach and needs survey data. Because of this, the investigator of this study did not use a theoretical perspective.

2.2.2. Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory. It's one of the dominant theories in political science. rational choice theorists believe that to understanding political behavior it is adequate to know the actors' interests and to assume that they pursue them rationally. Rational choice theorists tried to implement a long way more formal theory to all facets of political life. They claimed that important elements of political life could be elucidated in terms of voter self-interest. The father of rational choice theory William Riker and his supporters implemented this rational choice theory to clarify almost the whole thing, including voting, legislation, wars, and bureaucracy (Roskin,2020 and Ogu, 2013).

According to this theory, a political party desires to maximize supports by defining its policy and programs to the improvement of support. While electorates expect political utility which is the

satisfaction of their desires. Electorates will go after a political party deliver such utility for them (Ibrahim, Liman, and Mato, 2015).

Rational choice theory identified as a minimum two main explanatory factors that some political scientists had neglected: (1) that politicians are infinitely opportunistic and (2) that all decisions come to pass in some type of institutional setting. Rational choice theorists viewed those political institutions structure the chances available to politicians and thus help to describe their activities. some rational choice theorists started calling themselves “new institutionalists” to bring attention to their view that all political choices take place within identified institutional structures (Roskin,2020).

The investigator of this study has not used the rational choice theory as the framework of the study. Because, rational choice theorist argued that all actors are rational in political behavior and, they also viewed almost everything humans’ activities as rational, even philanthropy and self-sacrifice. However, as the result of the study indicates all actors and all forms of actions in the postponement of the election process were not rational. It’s difficult to expand to include all forms of action as rational because a non-rational action becomes part of the model. So, it is not clear how the standards of what is rational and what is not being made. Therefore, besides of the above reason the researcher didn’t use rational choice theory as the framework of the study.

2.2.3. Institutionalism theory

As Schmidt noted that “Institutionalism encompasses a range of methodological approaches in political science that have at their core an emphasis on institutions, understood as the rules, regularities, structures, and the context more generally which influence political outcomes and shape political conduct” (Schmidt, 2014, p. 1). Institutionalists try to illuminate how institutional and organizational factors affect political events (March & Olsen, 2011).

As James March and Johan Olsen briefly explain,

the notion of institutionalism connotes a general approach to the study of political institutions, a set of theoretical ideas and hypotheses concerning the relations between institutional characteristics and political agency, performance, and change. Institutionalism emphasizes the endogenous nature and social construction of political institutions. ... They

are collections of structures, rules, and standard operating procedures that have a partly autonomous role in political life (March & Olsen 2006, p. 4).

Institutional theory in political science has made great advances in current years. Institutions can be distinguished from occurring within a wide range of political settings and performing a wide range of public responsibilities or tasks. Also, institutions come to a visive volte-face to be related with variances in the behavior of individuals and variances in decision-making outcomes. Institutions also help minimize variance in political behavior and therefore help to advance the possibilities of the forecast. Likewise, institutions are more readily identifiable. Therefore, that institutionalists comprise a useful point at which to begin every analysis (Peters, 2000). In a general way, an “institution” can be viewed as a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations. Institutionalization refers to the emergence of institutions and individual behaviors within practice and rule. An institutional approach emphasizes the role of institutions and institutionalization in the understanding of human actions within an organization, social order, or society (March & Olsen, 1998).

Unquestionably, in the election process without institutions such as political parties, electoral rules, legislatures, and the National Election Board of Ethiopia, a democratic election is unthinkable. However, the political institutions, civil society, political system, and society essentially play their role in election process (Doorenspleet and Mudde, 2008). As noted in March and Olsen, the highest of the foremost role performers in the contemporary life of political systems are essentially formed organizations, institutions, and bureaucratic office (March and Olsen, 1984).

Consequently, the investigator has used the institutionalism theory as the theoretical perspective to assess the impacts of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia. As discussed above, the political institutions can play a prominent role in terms of the election process. while Ethiopian political institutions have not played a viable role for genuine and free election. National Election Board of Ethiopia is one of the political institutions which is the institution that hold the election and the overall election process. However, it lacks the capacity to hold the election on time.

Basically, in this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 national election: challenges and opportunities. Specifically, how the election was

postponed, what are the costs and benefits of the postponement of the election, who are responsible for the postponement of the election, and what are of the prolongation of the election are the central focuses. Having this, the researcher conducted the study based on institutionalism perspectives. Therefore, it is better to justify why the investigator uses institutionalism perspectives as the theoretical framework of the study or to study the impact of the prolongation of the 6th national election of Ethiopia. As the finding of the study indicates, the lack of the capacity of the National Election Board of Ethiopia was one of the main reasons for the suspension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia. therefore, to hold a free and democratic election, a strong and capable institution (like an election board) is required. Besides this, the investigator has been conducted the study in line with institutionalism perspective.

2.3. When Election is Postponed?

2.3.1. Elections during Emergencies: Experiences of Constitutional Provisions of Other States

Although the assembly time limit for holding elections is often baked into a country's lawful or constitutional outline, international law allows for the derogation of some rights including the right to vote and stand for election in emergency circumstances with strict rules to stop abuse (Ellena, 2020). In some states have either constitutional provisions or lawful rules to entertain election suspension because of the emergency condition. In the time of the state of emergency, the Indian Constitution, for example, permits Parliament's period of once to be prolonged by law for a period not exceeding one year at a time and not prolonging in any case above a term of 6 months after the Announcement has ceased to function (Ellis, et al, 2020). The Bangladesh constitution, if the Republic is involved in the war, also permits the period of one of the parliaments, deprived of holding elections, to be prolonged not for than one year but shall not be so prolonged above six months after the end of the war (Bangladesh constitution).

In case of a serious disaster, the Cameron constitution permits election suspension and declares that the election of a new Assembly shall take place not less than 40 days and not more than 100 and 20 days following the finishing of the abridgment term (Anna, 2009). The Constitution of Estonia also forbids the election of members of the new parliament in time of the state of emergency nor shall authority of the occurring one be finished, and elections must be held within

3 months after the end of the emergency (the 1992 Estonia Constitution). Whereas the Constitution in Myanmar gives that after the finishing of the ruling government period, the President and the Vice-Presidents shall proceed their duties up to the time of the new President is accordingly elected but no similar provision occurs for members of Parliament (the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar).

It is inescapable in some settings that decisions to suspend or adapt election terms and modalities will become politicized and deeply contested, let alone to a country like Ethiopia which has many separated interests, but to democratic states too. The duty to creating these problematic legal and operational decisions concerning the suspension of elections differs among countries and can become fraught with difficulties, particularly where the legal foundation for suspension is not clear cut. The Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral issue affirms that constancy of the law is crucial to the trustworthiness of the electoral procedure and recommends no legal variations in the year prior to an election (Venice Commission, 2020).

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in its Guidelines and Recommendations for Electoral Activities in time of the COVID-19 Pandemic has also stated the following legal elements to consider in relation to election suspension and modifications: (IFES, 2020)

- ☛ Legal elements to consider in relation to election postponements and medications
- ☛ Source of authority for setting or moving election dates
- ☛ Legal or constitutionally mandated deadlines for transfers of power
- ☛ Provisions for continuity of power beyond the end of a term, or for caretaker governments
- ☛ Legal or constitutional authority for temporary derogation of rights or postponement of elections in emergency situations
- ☛ Laws or regulations enabling medication of methods or modes of carrying out election processes
- ☛ Set timelines in the legal framework for key electoral processes such as voter registration, candidate registration, and campaigning
- ☛ Statutory authority for Election Management Bodies (EMB) to develop regulations and procedures

- ☛ Provisions in the legal or regulatory framework requiring certain forms of accessibility, inclusion, or consultation

When states, in the terrible of public health environments, are impossible to hold elections which are an essential right and are crucial to facilitating nonviolent and democratic transferences of power, they are obliged to use various legal mechanisms to suspended elections and or make platforms for all-inclusive involvement or participation of all political parties (Kotanidis, et al, 2020).

2.4. Election and COVID-19 In Ethiopia: Towards Solving the Puzzle of Constitutional Politics

Since 2018, Ethiopia has been within the way of political reform. 2020 was scheduled as the year of election and Ethiopia was scheduled to hold the election on August 29, 2020. However, as the result of the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, it brought unforeseen hazards and biological risks to society. Besides the emergence of the virus cut human regular activities in unprecedented means, its impact was too felt and be scared in Ethiopia. The governing party, assuming the serious influence of the COVID-19, has declared a state of emergency for five months. On the declaration of the state of emergency almost there was political consensus among the politicians and it was constitutional. However, it affects the lawfulness issue of the governing party as the HPR and also the Prime Minister's office will come to an end in September 2020. This, in turn, generates a “government shutdown” wherever the government turns out to be a “caretaker government”. Unavoidably, although a state may exist without government, the nonexistence of effective government will weaken the state. In the face of COVID-19, and election what lawful options that the ruling government may come up with is serious attention for both the governing and opponent political parties (Zelalem, 2020)

Election suspension in Ethiopia, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, has raised critical constitutional questions that have never been truly thought before in the country’s constitutional law jurisprudence. This is the result of the state of an emergency measure in Ethiopia, to includes the spread of COVID-19, is in contrary with constitutional deadlines or limit for elections. The constitutional gap is complicated by the non-appearance of clear constitutional provisions that unquestionably govern election suspension. (Chhabra, 2020).

The government has discussed with the opposition political parties. And the research findings on the viable constitutional options were presented. Through the Deputy Attorney General, four constitutional options were presented: The Dissolution of the House of Peoples Representatives and conducting new election within six months-(Article 60(1) of the FDRE Constitution), Declaration of emergency and extension of election period-(Article 93 of the FDRE Constitution), Constitutional Amendment-(Article 104 of the FDRE Constitution) and Constitutional Interpretation- (Article 62(1) of the FDRE Constitution) (Zelalem, 2020; Jalale, 2020 and Chhabra, 2020).

2.4.1. The Dissolution of the Lower House

The Prime Minister's office, before the termination of its office, may dissolve the parliament and assume a new election within six months. Article 61(1) of the FDRE Constitution perusing: “With the consensus of the House, the Prime Minister may cause the disbanding of the House before the termination of its time in order to hold new elections.” Does this constitutional provision appropriate to the present social and political situation of Ethiopia? It is not at all. The intention of this constitution is clear from the perusing of Article 60(2) of the FDRE Constitution itself. The disbanding of the HPR takes place, primarily if not significantly, when the alliance of the political parties is unsuccessful to form a coalition government. While assuming the disbanding of the HPR in a situation where the governing party has 100% seats is easily absurd. It is absurd for the reason that, the parliament appoints the prime minister, not vice versa (Chhabra, 2020 and Zelalem, 2020).

2.4.2. The Declaration of State of Emergency and the Extension of Election

The second alternative is the extension of the election period by way of the declaration of emergence. Ethiopia has already declared a state of emergency to fight COVID-19. Since the nature of the virus disallows social gathering, handshaking, and Cetera prefers social distancing, self-isolation, and et cetera; organizing such grand national activity in the face of the deadly virus appears morally questionable. Life weighs over politics. As per Article 93 (3) (c), the declared state of emergency limits political rights such as election, and this clearly suspends, if not extends, the election period. That is, it becomes a matter of priority where let's save lives first, and then we will back to politics later kind of argument. As stated above, however, this does not save the government from becoming a caretaker government. And above all, a state of emergency suspends

political rights, but it does not extend the election period. Here, one can clearly see that there is a difference between “suspension” and “extension”. The declared state of emergency suspended political rights such as the election process, but it does not extend. It is the NEBE that can declare the extension of the electoral period. But this raises two questions: the neutrality of the NEBE and whether such a decision can answer the looming constitutional crisis. Extending the election period for an unspecified time gives rise to serious neutrality issues on the NEB. Even if extended, say congruent to the declared five months state of emergency, it does not save the ruling party from becoming caretaker government and possibly opens the door for interest groups looking to found an “interim government” in Ethiopia (Jalale, 2020 and Zelalem, 2020).

2.4.3. The Constitutional Amendment

This 3rd option has been the favorite option of most dictators in African countries. In fact, the constitutional amendment is healthy and desirable when the quest for amendment arises from the social and cultural developments that force the government to adjust its constitutions to make them fit the new developments. Considering the current political condition Ethiopia is in, especially the legal and political loopholes going to happen in Ethiopia, a constitutional amendment may not be the best and sustainable option. It is not best since the demand for the constitutional amendment is not coming from society. It is not the best mechanism for it would be an evil lesson for a country expected to build a democratic system. Wholly above, rather than solving the contemporary problem, it invites other genuine problems to the degree of destabilizing the constitutional arrangement for there are interest groups that request the wiping of the constitution altogether. Hence, far from solving the problem, thinking of constitutional in such a serious time attracts more complexions than the solution. It is a recipe for disaster (Zelalem, 2020; Jalale, 2020 and Chhabra, 2020).

2.4.4. Constitutional Interpretation

As Zelalem noted in his article:

This is the fourth and the most viable option that most politicians would agree upon. In fact, the fourth option is more viable than the above three proposals for the following reason. The complexity of nature and geopolitical condition Ethiopia is

in demands innovative approaches and inward-looking solutions. In other words, it requires strengthening the political institutions in Ethiopia and thus working towards interpreting the constitution in a way that capacitates institutions such as the House of Federation (HoF) and the Council Constitutional Inquiry (CCI). However, there is still question such as: which constitutional provision worth interpretation and answer the incumbent constitutional dilemmas? How the constitution would fairly be interpreted in a way that reflects the interests of all political parties? There is no magic answer to these questions. Although constitutional interpretation is a viable and economic option, it adduces serious moral and professional tests for the experts in the field. In order to come over this test, professional honesty and legal expertise is a very important quality. In order to come up with a detailed and agreeable constitutional interpretation, the CCI's independence and impartiality shall be agreed upon among all political parties. And the ruling party shall play its lion's share in making sure that the members of the CCI are free, autonomous, and mirrors of Ethiopia's political reality. However, one should never forget that the CCI does not give the final decision, but the House of Federation (HoF) (Zelalem, 2020. P, 5).

2.5. Opposition Parties Vs 2020 National Election of Ethiopia

All five national elections held in our country are considered acceptable by the constitutional deadline held every five years. In addition to the fact that the election period has not been moved to another year, the last five national elections in the last 25 years have been not free, fair, impartial, and credible for anyone except the EPRDF or the ruling party. The results of this election, which will be announced by the Electoral Board, which is controlled by the EPRDF itself, were not public except for the EPRDF staying power (Abbink, 2017). Controversy over the next national election has continued to escalate. There is a lot of controversy over whether the election will be held or not on time by 2020. Many national political parties say the election should be postponed due to the security situation in the country and other related issues, but regional parties or nationalist parties want the election to be held on the scheduled date. Opposition parties, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), in particular, have boasted that they could sign up to 10 million signatures

for the 4,000 members requested by the Electoral Board, thus highlighting the differences between the political parties (Fitih magazine, 2020).

There are currently 137 political parties in Ethiopia, of which 107 are registered with the Electoral Board. It is known that in any country there are at least three opposition parties, but in Ethiopia, there is an embarrassing number of opposition parties. The sheer number makes it difficult for people to decide which one to go for, other than to express different views. The national election board of Ethiopia (NEBE) submitted a proclamation of political parties to the house of people's Representatives for approval to the next coming election and the house of people's Representatives imminently approved. However, this proclamation is also against by opponent parties just like the earlier proclamation. Even though opponent parties discussed the proclamation before approval, the proclamation did not include the ideas raised by the opponents, this is the main ground of opponent parties against the approved proclamation (Addis Gize magazine, 2020).

In article 33, the national election board of Ethiopia formulates law to the needs of 10000 signatures for the formulation of the national party and 4000 for the formulation of the regional party. However, opponent parties protested, saying the law was a repressive law that deliberately undermined existing political parties and prevented new ones from being considered. In this regard, the chairman of the Electoral Board, Birtukan Medeksa, told to Gulele Post Magazine that all this is being done for the benefit of the people. She also stated all those things done for the outback of real optional political parties. The Chairman also added: It is for the parties based on the people to come forward and be an alternative to the people. It is clear, however, that opponents, even in their current form, would find it difficult to obtain such a large number, let alone a small number. Some political parties are so small that they formed like a family group, with their name being highlighted rather than their party name, even not holding a general assembly, and their political agenda and ideology are not even clear to themselves (ibid).

Many political parties wanted the election to be postponed, but many political parties wanted the election to be held. Prof. Merara is one of them, he said, "Nothing will come by postponing the election". Prof. Merara also stated that the Electoral Board should run the election process as soon as possible and the election must be held. "If the election is held, all the people will pay attention to the election and there will be no current instability and conflict," as Merara said. He also stated

in 2014, for example, there was a conflict in the country, particularly in western Oromia. But since the 2015 election, the conflict has stopped. Although Prof. Beyene shares Prof. Merara's views, he said the political space needs to be expanded before the election. Prof. Beyene said the proclamation issued by the Board of Elections does not focus on political parties, it is said to be discriminatory and the proclamation should be amended in a participatory manner by all political parties. He explained the other is the EPRDF man who is still at the lower polling station and that this needed to be adjusted and reorganized, otherwise, the choice is still a joke (Fitih Magazine, 2020).

Ethiopian Citizens for social justice party (*ye Ethiopia Zegoch Lemahiberawi Ftih*) say it is better to extend the election in light of the current situation in the country. Andualem Arage, the party's vice chairman said "We want the current election to be a true democracy". He said that the election should be extended for not our interests, but the country's current reality. Another former Ethiopia Democratic Party (EDP) chairman, Mushe Semu, said the election would be extended. As Mushe explained, there is a problem with whether or not to vote, so we compare the problems they bring with us and say that we should come up with something better, even if it is difficult. He added that peaceful and fair elections cannot be held at a time when our country is in crisis. While elections are an integral part of a democracy, it is smarter than democracy to prolong elections for Ethiopia who have not solved any of the problems yet (Gulele Police Magazine, 2020).

2.6. Election and National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)

One of the major obstacles to free and fair elections in the past has been the lack of impartiality of the Electoral Board. The Board operates under the supervision of the EPRDF, not independently, and does not oversee the election process. As a result of this none of the five elections were conducted neutrally. Prof. Merara and Prof. Beyene strongly condemned the fact that the Electoral Board acted in the interest of the ruling party and left the people's vote in vain. In particular, when the EPRDF declared a complete victory in the 2015 elections, two senior politicians, Prof. Merara and Prof. Beyene, summoned journalists to the forum's office at 6 Kilo, and criticized the Electoral Board for undermining public trust. Prof. Merara criticized an Oromia voting card that has been added to a toilet, while Prof. Beyene criticized the election board is like that of a teacher who is giving full results to a student without seeing the exam. In line with Prime Minister Hailemariam

announces the 100% EPRDF victory of the election, Prof. Beyene said that the statement of the Prime Minister was like killing and bragging. In all, there have been five elections in which the Board of Trustees was disloyal to itself and the people, here is the sixth round of the election process. (Fith magazine, 2020).

The first step was taken by the Prime Minister, Dr. A, to reorganize the Electoral Board was to place a person who was acceptable to the Electoral Board. One of the most suitable candidates was to appoint Birtukan Medeksa as the Chairman of the Electoral Board. The chairperson began her work by restructuring the board. She has reorganized the board by appointing non-partisan and non-partisan members in various leadership and responsibilities positions. In an interview with Gulele Police Magazine, she said they are professionals who are committed to serving their communities and have a lot of experience in direct contact with the Electoral Board (Addis Gize magazine, 2020).

However, complaints to the Electoral Board have not yet been resolved. So far, 65 political parties have stated opposition to the new election proclamation. The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has said it will not accept the new proclamation despite strong opposition from political parties. In a press statement issued on September 7, the chairman of the board, Birtukan, said that we had about three consultative meetings with the parties. This is not to say that it is not enough, but to say that I did not see the law as a lie. Despite this, the chairperson said that the opposition parties were still excluded from the proclamation before the proclamation was issued, adding that it was no more different than the previous repressive law. Solana Shimeles, Public Relations Officer of the Board, said it has taken a long time to resolve the party name dispute. As Soliana said, the party argued that the name deserves for me between unidentified parties and also in the Ethiopia Democratic Party, the Sidama Unity Movement, and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) is highly affected the work of the board's political party department. This has prevented the board from doing other work, Soliana said. The other problem facing the Board of Elections is the rising tide of regionalism and the question of zonal administration (Fith magazine, 2020).

Chapter Three

Survey on the History of Ethiopia National Elections

Introduction

This chapter deals with the survey on the history of Ethiopia's national elections. In this chapter, the study encompasses the 1995 national election, 2000 national election, 2005 national election, and 2015 national election. Free and fair elections are one of the hallmarks of a country's democracy. In a democratic electoral system, the right of citizens to vote and stand for an election is guaranteed, and the outcome after the election must be non-violent and credible. This is a basic electoral principle, but Ethiopia is not fortunate enough to hold such an election. All five national elections in Ethiopia were not free and fair, and the ruling party acted alone without any genuine competent parties.

3.1. The 1995 National Election of Ethiopia

The May 1995 national election was the first held election under the new constitution of Ethiopia and 1995 was envisioned to stand as a democratic conclusion of the transition period, but among accusations of closure of political space, the chief organized opponent proceeds its previous boycotts (Tronvoll, 2001). The voting clears the culmination of a four-year campaign by EPRDF to transform the country from a vastly centralized, authoritarian state, snowed under civil war to ethnic-based federal republic constructed regions. The 1995 elections made the setting for the solidification of the EPRDF into a national party. From its introduction in 1989, the EPRDF had been extended and improved institutionalized in the north had penetrated and formulated its origins less fully in the south and had not much of a direct existence in the small frontier regions were robust, traditional elites and local, parochial issues continual to play a significant role (Vaughan, 2003).

In 1995 the Tigray people liberation front (TPLF), not surprisingly, won all seats in Tigray, its northern base, and the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ARDM), the EPRDF Amhara part or wing, established its ability to mobilize the people and won all but one constituency in the Amhara region. A chief political party with the possibility to win assistance from important

numbers of voters in the region, the All-Amhara Peoples Organization (AAPO), did not take part in the election. In the large Oromo region, the Oromo people democratic organization (OPDO) won all but three of the 177 constituencies. It electioneered on the common EPRDF five-year strategy. 32 parties participated in the 1995 elections, but only those affiliated with the EPRDF, group Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (SEPDF), won the seat. Addis Ababa, a chartered city outside of the ethnically organized significantly more political space than the rural part (Lyons, 2010).

In the 1995 general election, opponent parties contested the by-elections for pretend. Whereas, they did not bring effects in the overall election results (Addis Gize magazine, 2020). Ongoing patterns of harassment and politically inspired arrests were the characters of the 1995 elections. By remaining out of the elections, though, the chair of the opponent played a main portion in the consolidation of the EPRDF's control. They followed a policy of demanding vicissitudes in an all or nonentity package by arguing that to attempt to "flat the playing area by playing on it, " as several embassies in Addis Ababa stated, would only legalize the domination of the EPRDF. The opponent boycott did little to stop the EPRDF's increasing domination and consolidation of power. One of the greatest striking features of the 1995 elections was the degree to which the EPRDF demonstrated its jointure and strength as an only party all over Ethiopia (Lyons, 2001).

3.2. The 2000 National Election of Ethiopia

Lyons has noted in his article that

the pattern of non-competitive, boycott every constituency in Ethiopia in 2000. (Particularly Addis Ababa) and a few p numbers were never sufficient to threaten such as the Hadiya National Democrat and harassment and election day saw manipulations, the opposition party won well as another six seats elsewhere in the country. After the election, according to US State Department reports, the opposition ruling party punished opposition voters may denying them fertilizer. (Lyons, 2010. p. 114).

For the 2000 national elections, the opposition party gave up its non-involvement strategy and for the first-time electorates at the national level were given actual alternatives to the EPRDF-affiliated

parties. Because of both poor organizational capabilities and harassment and intimidation, the opponent did not pose an actual electoral hazard to the EPRDF party structure without the exception of one district in the Southern region (Tronvoll, 2009).

Similar to the 1995 national election, in the 200 general elections, opponent parties contested the by-elections for pretend. Whereas, they did not bring effects in the overall election results (Addis Gize magazine, 2020). Addis Ababa showed once more promising degrees of openness, as the government allowable political space to opponent chairs to conduct rallies and to be interviewed in the press. However, on the ground in rural areas, the opponent confronted limits and harassment by local authorities and cadres (Pausewang, et al. 2002).

3.3. The 2005 National Election of Ethiopia

the 2005 elections were very democratic in the run-up to the by-elections, with opponent parties organizing, campaigning, media debating, and attracting voters. It was a time when the people were ready to freely vote for their chosen party. However, the election results were unreliable, the ballot box was rigged, the polling station observers were powerless, and the ruling party (EPRDF) rigged the election by saying, "If you want, take Addis Ababa, you can take" but in the rest of the country, I won. Unfortunately, it was confirmed by many independent bodies and European observers that the ruling party did not win the election. Whereas, the collation for unity and democracy (CUD) party, which is expected to have won the election in all over the country, has been embroiled in controversy over whether to accept the result and take Addis Ababa or not and other position differences between the lads to increasing the instability of the country. Then the ruling party arrests most of the leaders of the collation for the united and democracy party (Addis Gize magazine, 2020).

The 2005 elections to federal assemblies seemingly constituted a radical change from previous elections. During the electoral course, the voters witnessed the first-time situation of openness and plurality (participation of more than two political parties in the election process) of political opinions through campaigning and broadcast through public media. For the first time, 'politics' as an open critique of the governor was primarily accepted, and the shared fear which had prevailed in the population since the cruel and fearful Red Terror remove in the 1970s faded away (Tegegn, 2008). Furthermore, in the 2005 election the ruling party was for the first time truthfully

challenged through the ballot box by a coordinated opposition at a state level. Two opponent groups, the United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF) and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), fielded candidates in many parts of the country's constituencies, posing a factual political alternative or option to the EPRDF government party (Tronvoll, 2009).

Instantaneously after the closing of the polls, though, the democratic spirit fed in the campaign was intimidated, as the government imposed a blanket prohibition on freedom of assembly in Addis Ababa, and concurrently postponed the counting process in numerous areas. The EU observer mission evaluated the closing and counting process negatively in nearly half of the urban polling stations subserved and even more in rural polling stations. (EU-EOM, 2005a). After a doubtful procedure of re-count and re-elections in some polling stations, the Ethiopian National Election Board announced the EPRDF as the victor. Although the opponent group had gained a theatrical increase in representation in the parliament from previous elections, winning one-third of the seats, they complained at the proclamation. Transformed countrywide demonstrations were called, in which close to 200 demonstrators were killed in Addis Ababa throughout protests in June and late November 2005 (Tronvoll, 2009).

3.4. The 2010 National Election of Ethiopia

In the 2010 elections, the ruling party was computed of many parties which are formed by the ruling party itself and claiming to have won 99% of the seats only leaving one seat from the parliament to Girma seife and control 546 seats of the parliament. At the time, Prof. Merara joked that this was not a choice but a basket. It is not to be forgotten that former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi raised his hat and greeted the people in a message to his supporters in Meskel Adebabay, thanking those who voted for his party and those who did not (Addis Gize magazine, 2020).

The 2010 elections seem certain to reoccurrence to the patterns seen in the 1995 and 2000 elections rather than the exception of the 2005 election. The 2010 elections were significant as an arena in which opponent leaders and also groups within the governing party jockey for position with an eye toward an upcoming transition while ware not be competitive or offer meaningful election to Ethiopian peoples (Lyons, 2010). The 2010 election outcomes led numerous observers to express the further closure of political space and, in consequence, of founding a one-party system. An

obvious deterioration in the political arena and increasing intolerance of critical argument on any issue was seen (Abbink, 2017).

3.5. The 2015 National Election of Ethiopia

The 2015 election is very similar in content and form to the 2010 election. As usual, the ruling party (EPRDF) facilitated the polling station, the observers and the election officials were from the ruling party (EPRDF), even the Electoral Board itself, this indicated the fantastic game of the EPRDF in Ethiopia election, the then time election board chairman Prof. Merga Kana and Haile Mariam Desalegn, conformed or announced the ruling party (EPRDF) won 100% of the seats of the parliament and control and all (547) seats of parliament. However, the result of this election was the cause for the failure of the EPRDF. Months after the election results, the rebellion was started in western Oromia Ginchi and then Ambo, Gendeberet, Dinsho, Jeldu... spreading throughout all of Oromia and the Amhara region. Finally, EPRDF was eliminated by people's opposition and the result of the election was rivers of EPRDF conformed, which is 100% failed (Addis Gize magazine, 2020).

As Abbink indicated that

The 2015 elections in Ethiopia had a predictable outcome, showing an entrenched system of one-party dominance that self-referentially enacts the political order created by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) since 1991. EPRDF spokespersons continued to defend the party's hegemony as inevitable, grounded in a logic of technocratic authority and with reference to 'stability' and 'development' Abbink, 2017. P, 303).

The feeble viewing of the opponents in 2015 mirrored that politics hardly allowed opposition forces and no social and civic activities or interest groups to describe alternatives. There were no socially or regionally grounded groups actually conducive to political contestation and claim-making. The 2015 election was basically a reappearance of the 2010 exercise, only better prepared. On the 23 May 2010 round, the elections had produced one opposition seat out of 547. That means 0.4% of the seats. At the time, this near to 100% governing party victory was the main shock to the public and observers. As to organization, the 2015 elections went easily, as the EPRDF party-state

mechanism and the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) did a technically good job. (NEBE) is a government bureau whose independence is reliably questioned by the opposition parties (Abbink, 2017).

Chapter Four

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Ethiopian 2020 National Election: Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the researcher discussed the impacts of the suspension of the 2020 national election in the description of the study area. Exploring the costs and benefits of the postponement of the election is the central focus of this chapter. Empirical data collected through interviews and secondary materials were employed to accomplish the goals of this chapter. Based on the empirical data, the first part of this chapter analyzes the reasons for the prolongation of the election. The second part of the chapter presents the political significance of suspension and the importance of suspension of election in terms of societal security. Thirdly the chapter presents the political losses caused by the suspension of election and the crisis of prolongation of election in terms of societal security. The section in particular focuses on the costs and benefits of postponement of the election. Lastly, the chapter discussed the implication of the extension of the election.

4.1. The Reason for the Prolongation of the 2020 National Election of Ethiopia

Ethiopia's sixth national election has been extended three times for various reasons. For the first time, the election was extended to August 29, 2020, secondly, the national election of Ethiopia has been extended to Jun 5, 2020, and, for the third time, the 2020 national election of Ethiopia has also been suspended to June 21, 2020.

4.1.1. The Reasons for the Extension of Election for the First Time

There were compelling reasons for the suspension of the election for the first time. The main reason for the suspension of the election was the election board has just appointed new leadership. So, the board has a lot of work to do and they are not in a position to do that. Therefore, it would be pointless to hold an election without the election board being prepared to vote. Then, this led to the first extension of the election to August (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/o4/2021; KI-7, Addis Ababa,

21/04/2021; KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021; KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021, KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021; KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021).

Another reason for the suspension of the election was, there was instability among the ruling forces and, there were Government reform measures that were applied have just begun. For example, security forces reform (like Police force reform), Reform on the justice system, Reform in the armed force, Civil service reform, and others. Since these reforms were not completed, holding elections was disadvantageous. Because if there is a conflict during the election, the policy has not completed the reform, it could lead to more crises if it goes beyond the old systems (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021, KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021).

During that time, there were conflicts in some parts of the country and that existed conflicts were also another reason for the suspension of the election. for example, in Oromia, Amhara, and somewhat in other regions. In that situation holding an election is difficult because an election needs peace and stability by its behavior. So, the election was postponed until favorable, peace and stable conditions were reached for the election (KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021; KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021).

The displacement of more than 3 million people in the country was also another reason for the suspension. During that time many people were displaced from their constituencies. If the election were held, those 3 million people were not elect calmly because they had fled their constituencies. There is also the psychological crisis and instability that results from displacement (KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021). This indicates that, If the election were held, it would exclude 3 million people. Then, for the inclusion of those 3 million displaced people to participate in the election, the election has suspended. So that, the displacement of more than three million people was one reason for the suspension of the election.

Therefore, as most of the key informants expressed above the main reason for being extended of the election for the first time to August 29, 2020, was because the Electoral Board has not completed the work required to conduct the election. Among them, voter registration; recruitment of poll workers; training and deployment; voter education; and dissemination of voter registration materials, etc. This indicates that the NEBE election board was not ready to hold the election on

time. then, the national election board of Ethiopia has announced the election has extended to August 29, 2020.

Even though the main reason for the prolongation of the election from May 2020 to August 29, 2020, was the lack of preparation of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, there were also other additional reasons for the suspension of the election. Those are, reform measures of the government have already begun during that time (security forces reform, Reform in the justice system, Reform in the armed force, and Civil service reform), there was the conflict in some parts of the country, the displacement of more than 3 million peoples and the country was not in a stable situation. Generally, because of the whole above reasons, the election was extended for the first time. After the election was postponed for August, the COVID-19 has emerged in March before the election took place in August, which led to the second suspension of the election.

4.1.2. The Reasons for the Postponement of the Election for the Second Time

When NEBE was prepared for the August 29, 2020 elections, the occurrence of Coronavirus in the world was the reason for the protracted election for the second time. Following the outbreak of the virus, measures were taken to prevent the spread of the disease, makes it difficult for NEBE to carry out its pre-election activities and hold the elections on time. Then after the election board announced to HPR they can't hold the election on time then, the House of People Representatives (HPR) accepted the request of the board and decided to extend the election, knowing that it would not be possible to hold the election according to the schedule (NEBE,2021; IRI and NDI, 2021; KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021; KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021).

During that time, there was not a clear understanding of the pandemic, and also the government takes actions, such as a state of emergency, were declared immediately. As a result of the declared state of emergency, the election board faces difficulties to do actives based on their schedules. During that time more than 70 countries of the world were extended their election due to the epidemic, then taken into account that experience the election was extended to ensure the safety of our citizens (KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021; KI-7, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021). The effects of the virus on developed countries, such as Italy, Spain, Brazil, China, the USA, and others, have been alarming, and precautionary measures have been taken. The precautionary measures

restricted the activities of the Electoral Board. Therefore, the election was extended in order to make it possible for the election to be held in a way that does not harm the welfare of the citizens (KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021). This shows that the outbreak of the COVID-19 is the dominant reason for the prolongation of the 2020 national election for the second time.

In addition, KI-9 & KI-5 also expressed that, the main reason for the postponement of the election from 2020 to 2021 for the second time was the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus. At the time, there was no awareness of the epidemic, the severity of the epidemic was alarming, and there was no clear direction on what to do, so the election was extended to ensure public safety without determining of time but after sometimes election schedule was determined for Jun 5, 2021 (KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021; KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021).

In general, the mere reason for the postponement of the August 29, 2020, national elections to June 5, 2021, was the accidental occurrence of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the world. the outbreak of the pandemic has disrupted the implementation of the activities of the NEBE. The threat of this pandemic has forced many countries to suspend government plans, including elections. Similarly, in our country, the government has introduced different restrictions including social distancing, and to that end, has mandated most federal public servants to work from home. While the government has introduced several preventive measures to contain the pandemic, regional state governments have also proclaimed a state of emergency imposing a ban on international and inter-state travel and sanctions on public gatherings. the measures are taken by the government, NEBE's international technical assistance providers have also mandated most of their staff to telework. The outbreak of the Coronavirus has caused all of the above issues and problems. In the midst of all of this, it was difficult to hold the election, as a result, the 2020 national election of Ethiopia has suspended for the second time.

4.1.3. The Reason for the Prolongation of the Election for Third Times

As NEBE noted that:

Similar to the first reason for the postponement of the election, the main reason being extended the election for the third time to Jun 21, 2021, was because the Electoral Board has not completed the work required to conduct the election. Due to the fact

that the ballot paper needed to cast the ballot was printed abroad, the printing was not completed and did not enter Ethiopia, which caused the election to be delayed (NEBE, 2021).

From this one can understand that the election was postponed until June 21 because of the logistical problems that faced the election board of Ethiopia.

In addition, when the NEBE has a meeting with political parties on May 15, 2021, announced that elections would be further delayed due to logistical problems. With a date set for June 21. The board stated that voting could not take place on the scheduled June 5, 2021. Then, the board announced that a 2–3 weeks preparation period would be required (IRI and NDI, 2021). Further, Meldrum also expressed that, the elections were to have taken place on June 5, but the election was postponed after officials of the NEBE announced the electoral board needed more time to print ballot papers, train polling staff, and register voters (Meldrum, 2021,p.1).

As commonly expressed by NEBE, Meldrum, IRI, and NDI, the 6th round national election which has scheduled for June 5, 2021, was suspended for the 3rd time to June 21, 2021, primarily because the NEBE faced logistical challenges. Those logistical challenges are; printing process for the ballot paper was not completed and the transportation problem of the ballot paper since it was printed out of the country not completed. The Incompletion training of polling station staff and voter registration is also the other reason for the suspension of the election to June 21, 2021. Accordingly, one can conclude that logistical challenges were the main reason for the prolongation of the election for the 3rd time.

4.2. The Constitutionality of Election Postponement in Ethiopia

Coming to Ethiopia, the FDRE Constitution sets the time limit of the members of the parliament to be chosen by the people for a period of 5 years on the foundation of universal suffrage and by regular, free, and fair elections held by secret ballot. The present members of the Parliament were chosen before 5 years in May 2015 and their period of office will be ended at the end of August 2020, before another election is held which is required to establish a new government. As before the FDRE constitutional provisions, the following national election is supported to be held before August 2020. Of course, it would have been planned for 29 August 2020 had it not been for the

COVID-19 pandemic. Then the declared state of emergency, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, has overall suspended immediately the scheduled election. Except noted as there will be a regular national election to be held every 5 years, the FDRE Constitution doesn't have any provision to the spirit of election suspension (FDRE Constitution, 1995).

Chhabra indicated in this article:

The government, when it comes to elections, is one of the actors not, the sole decision-maker. One can also argue that the absence of constitutional provisions to postpone the election schedule was made intentionally by the architects of the constitution. This is because the Constitution was drafted after long years of civil wars and to prohibit any incoming government from extending its term limit under the guises of election postponement provision. The postponement of the election in Ethiopia creates a constitutional crisis and legal vacuum. The state of emergency, due to the pandemic, comes at a precarious time for Ethiopian short-lived (democratic) transition in which the country is already struggling to meet the expectations of its populations. (Chhabra, 2020. P, 4).

The prolongation of the planned election under the support of constitutional interpretation, deal with by legal professionals and political parties, was unconstitutional and created the decision of the House of Federation as a constitutional interpretation by name and political decision in exercise. The Ethiopian parliament demanded and proposed that the marly possible resolution, to the present constitutional crisis regarding election suspension, should be exhausted within the condition of the Constitution as opposed to the extra-constitutional mechanism. And the parliament has ally endorsed constitutional interpretation, from the 4 optional 'alternatives', as the slightest complex decision to exit the present constitutional dilemma. For the reason that the 'practice and interpretation' of the Constitution must be underneath the scope of the Constitution (FDRE Constitution, 1995).

The aforementioned data articulated that the constitutionality of election prolongation in Ethiopia, in the nonappearance of the clear constitutional provision, is not accordingly legalized. As far as elections are extended beyond the scheduled plan, even if the constitutional interpretation was a

legal remedy as maintained by the ruling government, questions arise as to the legitimacy of officials.

4.3. The Political Significance or Gain of the Postponement of the Election

The suspension of the election was significant for high voter turnout or the number of participants in the election. If the election had been held on time, there would have been little public participation in the election due to the impact of the virus (NEBE,2021). During that time more than 3 million people were displaced. So, if the election was held at that time, these 3 million people were not elect calmly or would exclude in the election. Because they had fled their constituencies and there is also the psychological crisis and instability that results from displacement (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021). Consequently, the delay of an election during that time creates an opportunity for them to participate in the election.

At that time, there was a high level of tension in the society because of the Coronavirus epidemic, the community had little awareness of the disease and it was a time when most of the community closed their homes and left the city to go to the countryside. If the election were to be held in that circumstances, it affects the number of voter's registration or the voter turnout rate in the election and also influenced the competing political parties would not be able to inform the public about their alternative ideas and ideologies (KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021).

Additionally, KI-9 also stated:

the extension has contributed to the full participation of the community in the registration process. If the election had been held on time, there would have been little public participation in the election due to the impact of the virus. Therefore, prolonging the election has helped the community to better understand the virus and to participate in the election (KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021).

As articulated by key informants above the extension of the election has contributed to increasing voter turnout and the number of voters in the elections process. If the election had been held on time, there would have been little public participation in the election due to the high tension of the pandemic and the displacement of many people resulted in the exclusion in the election if it was held. One can conclude that the extension of the election has been useful because the people

understand the virus behaviors and calmed the public's fears of the epidemic that have significance for free participation of the people in the election.

Yet again, the prolongation of the election contributed to the credibility of the election. If the election were held on time, the credibility of the election would be in jeopardy. Because of the impact of the virus, it was difficult to make everything clear to the public, it was not possible to register voters freely and, If the election was held during that time, it was difficult for opposition parties to inform the community about alternative ideas and ideologies (NEBE, 2021; KI-8, Addis Ababa, 22/04/2021 and KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021). In general, if the election was held at that time, the virus will affect the election process not free and credible. So, the suspension of the election helped to minimize those factors and helped form a more credible election, and also the extension of the election was important for political parties to get time to for political campaign and announce their ideologies to the people.

Furthermore, the extension of the election was contributed to NEBE to get full support of the operating support agencies. If the election was held at that time, it was a very difficult situation to get support from the operating support agencies at that time. Because it was suspended due to the virus, it was very difficult to get support because many institutions were in a difficult situation to operate (NEBE, 2021 and KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021).

This means, prolonging the election was significant to get operational agencies' support. If the election was not extended, difficult to get the support of the operational agencies because most operational supporter agencies have been forced to work in the home and they have stopped working due to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. So, to get the operational agencies to support, the suspension of the election was important

The election was extended by using one of the four proposed options (dissolving parliament, amending the constitution, declaring a state of emergency and extending the election, and making a constitutional interpretation) which is extending the election and making a constitutional interpretation. Therefore, the process of the constitutional interpretation has gone it selves has left a political mark on our country and when the election was extended, the way of going to make the election process to be constitutional (KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021 and KI-8, Addis Ababa, 22/04/2021).

In particular, the first phase of the process involved the participation of various experts in the interpretation of the constitution, live coverage of the experts' suggestions, prolonging the election in line with the constitution, and the ongoing debate is of great political significance. The suggestion of Experts about the prolongation of election and time schedules determination when the election is postponed also considered another significance as the political gain, even though no date has been set for the extension of the election immediately.

As KI-5 mentioned, the election does not provoke a major political debate, which means that majority of the political parties agree that the extension almost certainly has the political significance of the suspension of the election (KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021). This indicated that the absence of opposition to the extension of the election is seen as a political gain.

In addition, prolonging the election has greatly benefited the government / ruling party. For instant. The ruling party gets the opportunities to be well-organized themselves and it was very important for them to better organize the reforms they started. Because of the pandemic of covid-19, it was a terrifying, frightening time and it was a time when the nature of the disease was unknown, and it was a time when so many lives were being lost. As a result, it creates a disturbance in society. The Electoral Board was not well prepared, and some members of the Board were infected by the virus. The prolongation of the election has great importance to give solutions for the above problems (KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021).

The prolongation of the election significant to the Electoral Board has got the time and done some work, improved the appearance and to identify political parties that have run in the election (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021 and KI-7, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021). The above explanation shows that the extension of the election has created an opportunity for the NEBE to be more prepared for the election and do the activities like the election board get additional time for voter registration, recruitment of polling works, train the polling staff, and developing, voter education and transportation dissemination the ballot paper and materials, etc.

Furthermore, the suspension of the election is important to the reform process is energies in somewhat better even though that was not completed. For example, the election law has been passed, the reform of armed force, the justice reform, the police reform, and other reforms taken by the government somewhat went in a better manner. (KI-7, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021; KI-8, Addis Ababa, 22/04/2021 and KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021). From this one can conclude that

because of the suspension of elections most of the started reforms have begun to improve. Therefore, the postponement of elections is given a better chance of holding free and peaceful elections.

One can conclude, the extension of the election has political significance like, the extension of the election has created an opportunity for the NEBE to be more prepared for the next election and it was contributed to NEBE to get full support of the operating support agencies, it was contributed to the next one election to increase voter turnout and a number of voters in the elections process, and also the prolongation of the election was important to hold a more credible election to the next one, In addition, the extension of the election has given the opportunities to the ruling party be well-organized themselves and it was very important for them to better organize the reforms they started. And also, it was important for political parties to get time for political campaigning and announce their ideologies to the people.

4.4. The benefits of the prolongation of the election in terms of social security

In terms of social security, the prolonging of the election has not that much significance. However, the postponement of the election has important to puts the public interest first and it has given a priority to the well-being of the people. (KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021; KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021; KI-7, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021; KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021). In fact, the extension of the election has not that match benefits in terms of social security. The assumption that protected the people from coronavirus was the first importance. Given priority to public security was one indicator of political change and advantages. This indicates accordingly, the extension of the election has protected the community from the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As KI-9 viewed that;

the postponement was important to save the people from the COVID-19 pandemic destruction. If the election were to take place in that time, it may be an opportunity for the transition of the pandemic becomes increased and the death of the people. Because there was no understanding of the virus and was high tension of coronavirus pandemic. Indeed, the extension has reduced the chances of catching a large number of people (KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021).

Yet again, prolonging the election has its contribution to the social good and safety of the community. Because the virus was not controlled or its behavior is unknown, it was difficult to endanger voter registration and other election processes. so, Prolonging the election is important for the well-being of the community (NEBE, 2021, and KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021). As an assumption, the prolongation of the election has saved the community from the COVID-19 pandemic and the high risk of the transition of the various. Because if the election had taken place at that time, the spread of the epidemic might have increased, since the nature of the virus was unknown and it was little awareness about the epidemic, when the community may go to registration for election and for elect their representative, the risk of the pandemic was high.

Therefore, the assumption of protecting the people from coronavirus and given priority to public safety & security is considered as one importance of interims of social security. This means the extension of the election has saved the people somewhat from the devastating effects of the Coronavirus epidemic.

4.5. Political costs caused by the extension of the election

The extension of the election has a reason for occurring conflict between the central government and the Tigray regional state and in some other parts of the countries, as a result of this, it faced heavy political costs. Among the political costs are the situation that threatens the unity of the country, the distortion of the image of the country, it has put a lot of diplomatic pressure on the country, the escalation of racism, the high cost of military equipment, The war waged by the country's army and neighboring countries challenge (KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021; KI-8, Addis Ababa, 22/04/2021). This means prolongation of the election has led to a political crisis. For example, the Tigray Regional State held an election on the pretext that the extension of the election was not constitutional, which results in a dispute between the federal government and the Tigray regional state. Their conflict led to war, which led to a great political crisis.

Some political parties and organizations that have been at fragment with the central government have taken advantage of the suspension of election to provoke a great national crisis. For instance, financial loss and Economic crisis, Destroying the image of the country, Diplomatic Influence in the country and Cause for facing challenges from neighboring countries like Sudan, Conflict with each other, and Destruction of infrastructure and development (KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021;

KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-7, Addis Ababa, 21/04/2021). The aforementioned data indicate that the extension of the election was the cause for starting the war and indirectly the reason for the whole political costs that faced the country.

Furthermore, KI- 6 also articulated alternative proposals which were suggested by many political parties were rejected. In general, the Inquiry Council decided to extend the election without setting a deadline, and again without deciding what decisions the government could make within the extended deadline. So, this disappointed the extension of the election. Regarding this, those who were at loggerheads with the central government used the prolongation of the election as a pretext to further their political interests, leading to a lot of economic and infrastructure destruction. The suspension also causes the current conflict in some parts of the country state (KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021).

Generally, one can understand the postponement had a political cost in the country however, all political costs had not been created because of only the extension of the election. Even if the election was held during that time, There were indications that a crisis could occur until the TPLF did not accept the central government. Because of using an extension of the election as a triggering factor to starting the war and conflict between the federal government and the TPLF party that results in tarnished the image of the country internationally, it has put diplomatic pressure on our country, The conflict has caused neighboring countries to intimidate the country. This means postponement of the election has indirectly reason for all the above political costs that faced to the country.

KI-4 clarified that; the other major political cost of the election was related to the withdrawal of some political parties. Many of the political parties agreed that it should be extended. As long as the country is unstable, the suspension was important. Because even though the EPRDF has been ousted, there are still serious security problems in various areas of the country, such as security problems in the Benishangul Gumuz, some parts of Oromia, the issue of Sudan occupied some territorial land, the situation on the Nile Dam, and so on. Despite all these problems, it is still difficult to hold an election. On the other hand, waiting until all of the above problems are resolved without election is another problem. So even though they are both problematic, holding elections was relatively important and then, we got into the election process. Most of the political parties suggested that a transitional government was needed when the election will be suspended because

the government in power is running out of time. Their ideas were not accepted, and they were not happy that the election had been postponed without them reached an agreement. (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021). Accordingly, the extension was used as the reason for some political parties have withdrawn from the election and the government's arrest of political party members led to some riots.

The suspension of the election would be consequentially exacerbating the fragile national security of the country. In this regard, political groups from within and outside of the country can use the matter to play their subversive games. It takes to understand that these groups achieve their vested interest only at the peril of a destabilized Ethiopian state. Prolonged elections have contributed significantly to keeping in the power of a government that is not recognized by the people (Habtamu, 2020).

Based on the above data at most one could say, even though, all political costs had not been occurred because of only the extension of the election. An extension of the election was used as a triggering factor to starting the war and conflict between the federal government and the TPLF party that results to tarnished the image of the country internationally, it has put diplomatic pressure on our country, The conflict has caused neighboring countries to intimidate the country.

4.6. Crisis over protracted elections in terms of social security

Protracted election, there was not that match damage to social interaction. It is our political version and political process that has brought us into a social crisis. Ethnic thinking has contributed to the crisis in our society. However, from a security standpoint, the prolongation of the election has been used as a good opportunity for arising the war and conflict, as a result of the war and the conflict many civilians were killed and many were displaced (KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021).

The prolongation of the election was indirectly the reason for the creation of tension between the people of Tigray and others. The TPLF was abducting the people and spreading propaganda so that they have the tendency to saw the other community as enemies and they have created themselves as a de facto state and disrupted social relations. All of this can be attributed to the social damage caused by the prolongation of the election (KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021).

The extension of the election alone did not result in all of the occurred crisis, but it was used as a reason for groups who were at loggerheads with the central government used the prolongation of the election as a pretext to further their political interests, leading to the loss of innocent lives and, the lives of many citizens have been disrupted. The prolongation of the election has not reduced the Covid-19 epidemics (KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021). Consequently, in terms of security and national stability, the extension of the election has not changed anything. In fact, after the extension, the threat to peace and security has increased.

In addition, KI-3 and KI-5 viewed that the prolongation of the election has affected the interaction of the community. If there was an election and a stable government and if only the people would send their own elected representatives to parliament, the relationships between societies were good and improving. But because the election was not held, the hate speech and rhetoric in the EPRDF has continued. The hatred we see everywhere has not changed. We have experienced many social crises because of not do actions for social security. Prolonged elections were the season for led to clashes between the central government and the Tigray regional state as a result of the war the conflict has Human rights violations (KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021; (KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021).

This indicates that, as a result of the war and conflict, there was a great social security problem, which includes innocent deaths, mass displacement of the people, violation of human and democratic rights, and a high level of tension within the society. Indirectly, the prolongation of the election has caused the above serious social security problems. The scar left by the conflict in Tigray are severe and have led to many social crises and also, cause for conflict has intensified in other areas. In fact, it is very difficult to say that we are in a better situation than before and many things are worse than last year. Prolonging the election itself does not that match disturb the interaction of the community while it was worrying. In Oromia, for example, political parties like, Medrek and OFC were withdrawal from the election posed a dread to some communities.

The suspension also affects the interaction of the people and the government. If the election had been held, it would have strengthened the relationship and created a more transparent relationship between the community and the government. However, due to the suspension of the election, relations between the government and the community remain unclear. in terms of social security, the suspension of the election was used as a cause for the emergence of war and conflict between

the central government and the Tigray regional state (KI-8, Addis Ababa,22/04/2021; KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021).

Generally, the aforementioned data shows that by using the prolongation of the election as a triggering factor or as a good opportunity, war and conflicts have outbreaks in the country. as a result of war and conflicts sever social crisis has occurred. It includes the death of innocent citizens, human rights abuses, the rape of women and children, and the displacement of large numbers of people. The worst atrocities in the history of Ethiopia had the massacre of the innocent and the atrocities committed against the country's military are the other wounds because of the war and conflicts. The scars of war and the conflicts make us look at each other as enemies, and it will have many sacrifices for the future.

4.7. The Implication of Postponement of the Election

Prolonging the election had implied before the election was extended, many extremist forces were existing with armed. If the election had not been extended and If those forces are still alive with their power, the country would probably have become even more chaotic. Even they were strongly opposed to the extension of the election. Because, they feared that as time went by, they would lose their strength. Thus, the extension of the election has weakened the strength of the extremist forces. The main implication for the prolongation of the election was to protect and prevent the public from the Covid-19 epidemic (KI-5, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-2, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021). KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021; KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021).

Yet again, the prolongation of the election was primarily intended implied to protect the lives of citizens, ensure their safety, maintain peace and ensure the unity of Ethiopia. Therefore, the predominant implication of the extension of the election was to protect society from the devastating Coronavirus epidemic (KI-6, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-8, Addis Ababa, 22/04/2021; KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/o4/2021; KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021).

At the most one can conclude, the implication of the postponement of elections has the country is in a state of the impossibility of holding elections. Therefore, the prolongation of the election has implied that for the potential to keep the country's continuity as a state and the assumption of protecting and prevent the public from the Covid-19 epidemic.

Even though the main implication of the prolongation of the election for the potential to keep the country continuity as a state and assumption of protecting and prevent the public from the Covid-19 epidemic. the suspension of the election has also political implications (KI-4, Addis Ababa, 15/04/2021; KI-1, Addis Ababa, 16/04/2021; KI-3, Addis Ababa, 14/04/2021; KI-9, Addis Ababa, 21/ 04/2021).

Tefera and Wadajo stated that:

The political implications constitute the lack of confidence in the incumbent government by opponent political actors and the absence of trust among political actors and citizens. This is one of the major challenges of political institutions and public administration in Ethiopia. In this regard, dysfunctional distrust among political parties since the 1990s and citizen's distrust in government and public administration, due to historical and sociological factors, disturbs institutional response to the pandemic. Specifically, in connection to the current situation, some scholars and political actors believed that COVID 19 is a covering factor for the government to remain in power (Tefera and Wadajo, 2020. p. 18).

Mehari stated that the reason for the constitutional argument cannot be relegated merely to the Coronavirus pandemic. Covid-19 simply aggravated the preexisting situations of the Ethiopian state and politics. This implies that the former political condition of the country was unstable which reason for the expansion of political mistrust in the country (Mehari, 2020). Another political implication is that, historically, political competition in Ethiopia faces nonstop and continued political suppression. It is the current history that the competition in Ethiopian politics as overall and in an election in specific formerly faced political repression (Tefera and Wadajo, 2020)

In general, the aforementioned data implied that the ruling party used the suspension of the election to stay in power and acted improperly to strengthen and organized itself. It also implied the intensify absence of trust between the opponent political parties and the ruling party.

Chapter five

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is the last chapter of this study and it is dedicated to the conclusion of the overall content of the study.

5.1. Conclusion

The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic has far-reaching impacts on socio-cultural, political, economic, and environmental issues all over the world. Ethiopia is one of the African countries which is affected by the pandemic of COVID-19 disease. As a result of the pandemic, the government of Ethiopia has taken various measures. Due to the immediate threat posed by the pandemic, the NEBE announced on March 31, 2020, its decision to cancel or indefinitely postpone the election schedule and operational plan for the eagerly awaited August 29, 2020 election, and then after the election was postponed for two times.

Accordingly, the prolongation of the election may have a serious cost related to the constitution, use of unconstitutional authorities, enter the country to war, and political instability. There was two-position related to the postponement of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia, the first one is postponing the election as the best option for Ethiopian and the second is opposing the postponement, they argued the postponing of election costs Ethiopia a lot, and it has a political game context. The postponement of elections in Ethiopia has political instability in some cases has benefits and costs. Basically, there is a knowledge gap in the study area because of the newness of the issue. Due to the above problems, this research had been conducted to fill the gap to assess the impacts of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia.

Basically, four specific objectives were used in this study to assess the impacts of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia. Such as (1) Find out about the causes of the suspension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia; (2) Explore the benefits of suspension the 2020 national election of Ethiopia; (3) Find out the cost of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia and (4) Examine the implication of the extension of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia.

In terms of the methodological aspects, a constructivist philosophical perspective was used in this study. Regarding the research approach, the researcher has used the qualitative approach. The case study design was selected research design to investigate and complete the research. According to the sampling technique, judgmental sampling was designated by the investigator, in addition, in this study data saturation sampling frame was utilized. Moreover, data was collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. Those collected data has analyzed through the thematic analysis method. Finally, to assess the impacts of the prolongation of the 2020 national election of Ethiopia, the investigator has used institutionalism perspectives.

Ethiopia's sixth national election has been extended three times for various reasons. The main reason for being extended the election for the first time to August 29, 2020, was the lack of preparation of the NEBE. The occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world was the mere reason for the postponement of the August 29, 2020, national elections to June 5, 2021. The 6th round national election which has scheduled for June 5, 2021, was extended for the 3rd time to June 21, 2021, primarily because the NEBE faced logistical challenges.

the extension of the election has political significance or gains like, the extension of the election has created an opportunity for the NEBE to be more prepared for the next one election and it was contributed to NEBE to get full support of the operating support agencies, it was contributed to the next one election to increase voter turnout and number of voters in the elections process, and also the prolongation of the election was important to hold a more credible election to the next one, In addition, the extension of the election has given the opportunities to the ruling party be well-organized themselves and it was very important for them to better organize the reforms they started. and also, it was important for political parties to get time for a political campaign and announce their ideologies to the people. On other hand, the prolongation of the election has political costs. Even though, all political costs had not been occurred because of only the extension of the election. An extension of the election used as a triggering factor to starting the war and conflict in some parts of the country that results to tarnished the image of the country internationally, it has put diplomatic pressure on the country and, the conflict has caused neighboring countries to intimidate the country.

In terms of social security, the prolonging of the election has not that much importance. However, as an assumption, the extension of the election has saved the people somewhat from the expansion of the Coronavirus epidemic to some extent. On other hand, the prolongation of the election was used as a reason for a good opportunity to start war and conflicts in some parts of the country. As a result of the war and conflicts severe social crisis has occurred. For instance, the death of innocent citizens, human rights abuses, the rape of women and children, and mass displacement of people.

The prolongation of the election has implied that for the potential to keep the country's continuity as a state and, for the assumption of protecting and prevent the public from the Covid-19 epidemic. And also, the postponement of the election has a political implication. Which is the ruling party used the suspension of the election to stay in power and acted improperly to strengthen and organized itself.

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Appendix I

Interview Questions Guideline

Bahir Dar University

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Political Science and International Studies

Dear interviewees, the objective of this interview is for collecting essential data for the thesis titled “**An Assessment of The Impact of postponing the 2020 National Election of Ethiopia**”. The purpose of this study is to the partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Degree of Master of Art in political science and international studies. So, thank you for devoting the time to answer my interview and for your kind cooperation. Lastly, I want to assure you that your response will be confidential. Further, it will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank You for Your Cooperation!

By: Amare Asefa

Phone No: +251927627349

Email: heluamex1921.ethio@gmail.com

Interview questions

1. What is the reason for the prolongation of the 6th round national election of Ethiopia for August 29, 2020, for the first time? Please, elaborate in detail.
2. What is the reason for the suspension of the national election to June 5, 2021 f the second time? Please, elaborate in detail.
3. What is the reason for the postponement of the national election to June 21, 2021, for the third time? Please, clarify in detail.
4. What are the political significances of the postponement of the national election of Ethiopia? please, please enumerate and elaborate on them.
5. What are the political losses that occurred because of the extension of the 6th round national election of Ethiopia? Please, briefly elaborate.

6. Do you think, the postponement of the 6th round national election of Ethiopia has disadvantages in terms of social security? If yes, please enumerate and elaborate on them.
7. what are the crises that occurred because of the prolongation of the national election of Ethiopia in terms of social security? Please, elaborate in detail.
8. What types of implications does the postponement of the 6th national election of Ethiopia have? Please, explain your outlook.

ባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ

ማህበራዊ ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ

የፖለቲካ ሳይንስ እና ዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ክፍል

የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች መመሪያ

ውድ መላሾች፣ የዚህ ቃለ-ምልልስ ዓላማ “An Assessment of The Impact of postponing the 2020 National Election of Ethiopia” በሚል ርዕስ ለመመረቂያ ጽሁፍ ጥናት አስፈላጊ መረጃዎችን ለመሰብሰብ ነው። የዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ በፖለቲካ ሳይንስ እና በዓለም አቀፍ ጥናቶች የማስተርስ ድግሪ በከፊል ማሟያነት ነው። ስለሆነም ቃለመጠይቁን ለመመለስ ውድ ጊዜዎን ስለሰጡኝ እና ስለደግ ትብብርዎ አመሰግናለሁ። በመጨረሻም፣ ላረጋግጥላችሁ የሚፈልገው ነገር፣ የእርስዎ ምላሽ ሚስጥራዊነት የተጠበቀ ይሆናል። እንዲሁም በተጨማሪ ለአካዳሚክ ዓላማ ብቻ ይውላል።

ለትብብርዎ እናመሰግናለን!

አማራ አሰፋ

ስልክ ቁጥር፡ +251927617349

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1. የኢትዮጵያን 6ኛ ዙር ብሔራዊ ምርጫ ለነሐሴ 22 ቀን 2013 ዓ.ም ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ የተራዘመበት ምክንያት ምንድነው? እባክዎን በዝርዝር ያብራሩ።
2. የግቦት 28 ቀን 2014 ዓ.ም የታቀደው ብሔራዊ የኢትዮጵያን ምርጫ ለሁለተኛ ጊዜ የተላለፈበት ምክንያት ምንድነው? እባክዎን በዝርዝር ያብራሩ።
3. የኢትዮጵያን 6ኛ ዙር ብሔራዊ ምርጫው እንደገና ወደ ሰኔ 14 ቀን 2023 ዓ.ም ለሦስተኛ ጊዜ የተላለፈበት ምክንያት ምንድነው? እባክዎን በዝርዝር ይግለጹ።
4. የኢትዮጵያን ብሔራዊ ምርጫ ለሌላ ጊዜ ማስተላለፉ ፖለቲካዊ ፋይዳዎቹ ምንድናቸው? እባክዎን እባክዎን ይዘርዝሩ እና ያብራሩላቸው።

5. የኢትዮጵያ 6 ኛ ዙር ብሔራዊ ምርጫ በመራዘሙ የተከሰቱት የፖለቲካ ኪሳራዎች ምንድን ናቸው? እባክዎን በአጭሩ ያብራሩ።
6. የኢትዮጵያ 6 ኛ ዙር ብሔራዊ ምርጫ ለሌላ ጊዜ ማስተላለፉ ከማህበራዊ ዋስትና አንጻር ጉዳዮች አሉት ብለው ያስባሉ? አዎ ከሆነ ፣ እባክዎን ይዘርዝሩ እና ያብራሩላቸው።
7. በማኅበራዊ ዋስትና ረገድ የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ምርጫ በመራዘሙ ምክንያት የተከሰቱት ቀውሶች ምንድን ናቸው? እባክዎን በዝርዝር ያብራሩ።
8. የ 6ኛው ዙር የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ምርጫ መራዘም ምን ዓይነት አንድምታ አለው? እባክዎን የእርስዎን አመለካከት ያስቀምጡ።

Appendix II

Informants Background Profile

No	Code of Key Informant	Position or Academic Rank	Institute	Interview date and time	Interview type	Place of interview
1	KI-1	Chief of the Party	Balderas	16/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				5:40-6:00		
2	KI-2	Main Secretariate	Enate party	16/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				11:15-11:30		
3	KI-3	Main Secretariate	OFC Party	14/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				11:10-11:36		
4	KI4	Ph.D. Professor	AAU, Dept. of PSIR	15/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				4:40-4:50		
5	KI-5	Ph.D. Professor	AAU, Dept. of PSIR	15/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				5:10-5:30		
6	KI-6	NAMA executive	NAMA party	15/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				9:10-9:35		
7	KI-7	Public relation Officer	NEBE	21/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				4:00-4:25		
8	KI-8	Head of the training	Prosperity Party	21/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				5:20-5:50		
9	KI-9	Vice president Of ECSJ	ECSJ party	22/04/2021	Face-to-face Interview	Addis Ababa
				4:45-5:05		

Appendix III

Letter of Cooperation

<p>ባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ ሶሻልሳይንስ ፋኩልቲ የፖለቲካ ሳይንስና አለም አቀፍ ጥናት ት/ት ክፍል ባህር ዳር - ኢትዮጵያ</p> <p>☎ +251 058 820 97 61</p> <p>Fax: +251 058 220 22 35</p>	 <p>Wisdom at the source of the Blue Nile</p>	<p>Bahir Dar University Faculty of Social Sciences Department of Political Science & International Studies Bahir Dar - Ethiopia Email: fss@bdu.edu.et</p> <p>website: www.bdu.edu.et</p>
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ቁጥር/ Ref.No. PSIS/783/3A/t.t

ቀን/Date. 15/07/2013 ዓ.ም

ለሚመለከተው ሁሉ

ጉዳይ:- ትብብር እንዲደረግለት ስለመጠየቅ

በባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ ፖለቲካ ሳይንስና አለም አቀፍ ጥናት ት/ት ክፍል የፖለቲካ ሳይንስ የሁለተኛ ደግራ ORSA ተማሪ ጌሚኒ ለሳ መመሪያውን An Assessment
On the impact of Postponing of the 2008 national election of Ethiopia

ለማሰባሰብ ይረዳው ዘንድ የትብብር ደብዳቤ እንዲጻፍለት በቀን-----ዓ.ም በተፃፈ ማመልከቻ ጠይቋል።

ስለሆነም ተማሪው ለመመሪያ ወረቀቱ አጋዥ የሚሆኑ መረጃዎችን ማሰባሰብ እንዲችል በመስሪያ ቤታችሁ በኩል ቀና ትብብራችሁን ታደረጉለት ዘንድ በትህትና እንጠይቃለን።



"ክህላምታ ጋር"
[Handwritten signature]
የፖለቲካ ሳይንስና አለም አቀፍ ጥናት ት/ት ክፍል ተጠሪ

መልሱን ሲጻፍሰን፡ ስባክዎ የስኛን ቁጥር ይጥቀሱ
In Reply, Please Quote our Ref. No.