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# Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar city

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**BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES**

**ANALYZING PUBLIC SENTIMENT TOWARDS THE ETHIOPIAN  
NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN  
AMHARA REGION CASE STUDY OF BAHIR DAR CITY**

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**BAHIR DAR, ETHIOPIA**

**BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY**  
**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL**  
**STUDIES**

**Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue  
Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar  
city**

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

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**January, 2025**

**Bahir Dar, Ethiopia**

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**Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar city**

**By**

**Wogayehu Shimelash**

Approved By Board of Examiners

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**January, 2025**

**Bahir Dar, Ethiopia**

## **Declaration**

I, Wogayehu Shimelash, registration I.D. BDU1401978 do here by declare that this study entitled “Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar city.” is done for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for Masters. It is prepared with my own effort. All information in this study has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. This is my original work and has not been presented for any academic requirement in this or in any other academic institution and I have made it independently with the advice and guidance of my advisor.

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This is to certify that Wogayehu Shimelash has carried out his research on the topic titled “Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar city.” The work is original in nature and suitable for submission for the reward of MA degree.

Approved by Board of Examiners

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## **Acronyms**

NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NDR	national democratic revolution
EPLF	Eritrean people's liberation front
TPLF	Tigre peoples liberation front
EPRDF	Ethiopian people's revolutionary democratic front
OLF	Oromo liberation front
US	united states of America
WW	World war second
PP	prosperity party
VIP	Variance inflation factors

## **Abstract**

The Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission has been considered as a solution for crucial problems a nation has faced. But it has not been successful as expected. Therefore identifying the key factors that may influence the commission's success are important. This study investigates public sentiment towards Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), and key factors that influence public sentiment towards the commission, focusing on credibility, transparency, impartiality and inclusivity of the commission in line with this, the thesis examines the degree of influence these factors potentially cause on public sentiment. Adopting a mixed-methods research approach, the study integrates quantitative data from structured surveys and qualitative insights from interviews, targeting 400 respondents from the public and known political intellectuals, political parties and civic associations. Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple linear regressions, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The findings reveal that credibility, transparency and impartiality significantly predict public sentiment towards the commission, with credibility is the strongest predictor of public sentiment. The study concludes that credibility, transparency and impartiality have been highlighted as essential for fostering trust and engagement among the public. For instance, inclusiveness ensures that all voices, especially those from marginalized groups, are heard and considered. Transparency helps in building trust by making the process open and clear to everyone involved. Credibility and impartiality are vital for ensuring that the dialogue is seen as fair and unbiased. The findings indicate a moderate level of public trust in the commission, with a mean value of 2.832, translating to 56.6% public trust. These factors attribute 69.7% in the change of public sentiment. However, there are still other factors not discovered in this study which contribute for 30.3% of the change in public sentiment.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

The concept of national dialogue is not new. The phrase national dialogue refers to a wide range of activities, from high-level negotiations and mediation to community attempts at reconciliation. National dialogues have been held throughout modern history and across the world under different names and in various contexts. For example, the American constitution-making process of 1787 was arguably a form of national dialogue as it included representatives of all states in a negotiation on the future direction of the nation. Political reforms, transition processes, and the creation of new constitutions were aided by procedures similar to national dialogues in southern Europe (e.g., Portugal, Spain) and South East Asia (e.g., South Korea, the Philippines) in the 1970s and 1980s (Elayah, Schulpen, van Kempen, Almaweri, Abuosba, & Alzandani,2020 p.101).

In the early 1990s, national dialogues were popular in several African nations. Inclusive constitution-making negotiations often took the name of the so-called national conferences with the mandate to facilitate peaceful and sustainable political reform. For example, the 1990 national conference in Benin sought to ease the pressure generated by a deep economic crisis and a parallel erosion of political legitimacy. In the following years, Gabon organized its own conference (1990), followed by Republic of Congo-Brazzaville (1991), Togo (1991), Mali (1991), Niger (1991), Zaire— leading to the Democratic Republic of the Congo— (1991–1992), and Chad (1993), (Elayah, Schulpen, van Kempen, Almaweri, Abuosba, & Alzandani,2020 p.101).

In the mid-1990s, political reforms coupled with constitution-making and peacemaking processes took place in South-East Asia and Latin America. Striving to be inclusive, many shared features typical of today's national dialogues. For example, in Thailand, the brand-new Constitutional Drafting Assembly (1996– 1997) turned into produced from each provincial representative and criminal and educational experts. Domestic dialogue has continued to contribute for the past 15 years peace process, political reform and / or constitutional enactment Somalia (2000, 2002-2004), worldwide tests from Afghanistan (2002, 2003–2004) and Nepal

(2008– 2012) to Egypt (2011), Yemen (2013-2014) and Tunisia (2013-2014), (Paffenholz, Zachariassen, & Helfer,2017).

Based on the perspectives of national dialogue scholars define national dialogue in different ways. For instance, for (Blunck, et al., 2017 p.21) national dialogue is “nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions”.

Others define national dialogue as an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and managing political transformation. It can broaden debate regarding a country’s trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers. It is one of the tools used to build consensus among contending political forces to resolve major political differences and avoid violent conflict. National dialogues have been used as an instrument to resolve political crises and pave the way for political transitions and sustainable peace (Paffenholz et al., 2017 p. 8).

National dialogues can also be defined as an official negotiations forums which are typically convened to address far reaching national concerns which are often long-standing root causes of violent conflicts that political protest or armed insurrection have brought to the fore inclusive peace(Andualem, 2022).Such dialogues can transform a given country from a dictatorship system where war is possible to democratic system where peace prevails as liberalists argue that democracy avoid conflicts and promote cooperation (Ozkan and Cetin, 2016).

Harlander (2016) define national dialogues are a popular tool for structural reforms, as they provide access for parties and groups often excluded from or under-represented in political negotiations. They are usually accompanied by broader, inclusive societal consultations aimed at channeling people’s concerns and demands into the process; enhancing legitimacy; ownership over the process and its outcomes (CEG, 2017; Paffenholz et al., 2017; Papa, 2014). They are often attempted after exclusive elite-based negotiation formats have failed or are considered inadequate to prevent further instability (Harlander, 2016).

National dialogues can either replace or complement more exclusive talks (Harlander, 2016 p.8). They can also entail a combination of formal processes, informal discussions and ad hoc negotiations (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015). Civil society leaders, even external actors can initiate



informal dialogues between key actors, even if they have lesser mandates than one initiated by the state. These informal dialogues can entail trust-building meetings, negotiations and consultations that lay the groundwork for formal national dialogue (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015).

National dialogues have clear structures (often a mix of plenary sessions and working groups) and defined rules and procedures for dialogue and decision-making. Their size and composition can vary considerably and they can last from several days to several years. Their objective can involve broad-based change processes, e.g. negotiating a new social contract, redefining state society relations, establishing new political institutions and/or determining the process through which reforms will take place etc. (Blunck et al. 2017; Kaplan and Freeman, 2017; Paffenholz et al., 2017; Harlander, 2016).

National dialogues also with short-term endeavor's and/or a narrower set of objectives (e.g. establishing security arrangements, constitutional amendments, truth commissions etc. (and/or geared specifically for resolving or preventing the outbreak of violence) are usually more limited in their mandates, smaller in size and shorter in duration. They also typically entail less inclusive structures, such as in Tunisia in 2013, which gathered only political parties with the goal of addressing outbreaks of violence (Blunck et al., 2017; Harlander, 2016). National dialogues pass through three successive phases: preparation, process and implementation (Blunck et al., 2017).

The preparation phase can be as long as or longer than the official process, as it often entails a mini-negotiation process in itself to establish key parameters and the institutional framework (i.e. mandate, agenda, participant selection, decision-making procedures, etc.). Some countries task a key institutional body with preparing the process. Once the key parameters are established, preferably by consensus, the process (or negotiation) phase - the most public phase of the national dialogue - begins. Once an outcome is reached, the implementation phase begins (Blunck et al., 2017).

However, it does not mean that all countries which conduct national dialogue can succeed; some countries have solved their political problems through national dialogues but others did not. For example, Tunisia has undergone national dialogue and solved its political crisis in 2013 and saved the country from collapse (Kraetzschmar, 2015). Sudan, on the contrary, had held national dialogue from 2014–2016 and failed because the ruling party interfered in the process (Institute for Security studies [IFSS], 2020). This means that there are situations where national dialogues

are successful or futile. There are pre-dialogue, during dialogue and post-dialogue factors which contribute for the success or failure of national dialogues. The pre dialogue and during dialogue factors are related to the general principles of national dialogues whereas post dialogues are related to implementations of the agreed upon points (IFSS, 2020).

The success of national dialogues can be lined in to two levels, they become concluded in agreement or not and the extent to which the agreement was actually implemented (Paffenholz et al., 2017). A national dialogue's context and objectives have a significant impact on its development and outcome. There is no guarantee that any national dialogue will succeed and many have failed (Harlander, 2016).

Whether a national dialogue has actually succeeded is often a contentious question. The outcomes of national dialogues are sometimes intangible and difficult to measure. They may include: the strengthening of a culture of debate and free speech; the breaking of taboo issues; the entrenchment of certain norms of inclusion and representation of marginalized groups; and the ability to keep all the political actors inside the political process (Papaginni, 2014). In addition, dialogues may at first be considered successful, but then be followed by disastrous instability or even war. In 2013–2014, the Yemeni national dialogue conference (NDC) was praised for its inclusiveness and technical quality, but its recommendations were not implemented and the country went on to face a violent conflict and deep humanitarian crisis (Harlander, 2016). Participants' willingness and the technical quality of the process thus do not guarantee a positive outcome (Harlander, 2016).

In one way or another, national dialogues are common tools to reform political, social and economic structures where parties or groups are under-represented or marginalized (Harlander, 2016). Especially, for countries where there are ethnic tensions like in Ethiopia, inclusive and genuine dialogue is vital to maintain peace. Such countries have entered into bloody civil war because they failed to solve their problems through dialogues. For instance, nations in countries of the Balkans like Yugoslavia first lost their central cohesion under the name of self-rule, but later, they led themselves towards bloody civil war and disintegration (Ariye, 2015). If they had under gone all-encompassing and honest dialogue among themselves, there would have been a chance to curb the civil war and the disintegration they went through.

As we see in the above national dialogue is a consultation of different bodies facilitated by the concerned body like Ethiopia is already delegated the national dialogue Commissions at the Federal and Regional level in authorizing through the Proclamation No 1265/2021; with in the nominated commissioners which is based on institutional based conflict resolution mechanism. Hence, arbitration can promote procedural justice, fairness of procedures, and policies for dealing with the partner (Kumar, 1996). Therefore, the Ethiopian national dialogue will be held with conveners of Ethiopian national dialogue commission commissioners in the manner of international principles of national dialogue to dispute our problems.

There is no agreed rule about who should initiate a national dialogue and define its mandate. Depending on the specific political context and rationale, national dialogues may be initiated by governments and/or transitional governments, armed groups, citizens and social movements for an overall reform agenda, mediators or facilitators (International or regional organizations). Broadly, these actors initiate national dialogues to address political divisions and security crises including post-election violence and other forms of violent conflict (Dawit and Meresa, 2020, cited in Bekele, Y. (2022).

According to Hibachi, National dialogues can be understood as an “argumentative interaction of political elites in the framework of an institutionalized or non-institutionalized process outside a constitution or established associations that aims at engaging as many relevant actors as possible on a national level in negotiating socio political issues relevant to the whole society” cited from (Planta, Prinz, & Vimalarajah, 2015).

National dialogue is a progressively popular tool for conflict resolution and handling political transformation (Mossa, E. and Lau S.etal, 2020, cited in Bekele, Y. (2022). It can widen debate regarding a country’s paths beyond the usual elite decision-makers. It is one of the tools used to build harmony among contending political forces to resolve major political differences and avoid violent conflict through mediation. Mediation considered as a constructive conflict resolution mode.

And also, it can be forums to ease tensions, manage political crisis and deadlock, reach political agreement and re-establish a new institutional framework and transit from civil war (Bergh of Foundation, 2017). In other way, national dialogues are made for broad-based change processes like negotiating a new social contract or narrower objectives (Haider, 2019).

Generally national dialogues were a response to mounting domestic pressures and usually erupt in the context of political crisis. This was especially true when issues of fundamental national concern arose or the survival of a ruling government was in question. In many cases governments take the initiative for national dialogue as a strategy to regain legitimacy in times of crisis. The objective of a dialogue is to achieve practical and peaceful solutions to problems and conflicts (Elayah, Schulpen, van Kempen, Almaweri, AbuOsba, & Alzandani, (2020).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Ethiopia is one of the ancient countries in northeast Africa. It has a long history of independent statehood that goes back at least three thousand years (Bahru, 2002; cited in Halabo, 2016). However, though the country is an ancient state, it has faced a continuous crisis in nation building process. Ethiopia has undergone a steady transformation in its political, economic, and cultural aspects since the mid-19th century when the process of forming a modern state began and until Emperor Menelik II completed the formation of the modern state of Ethiopia in the late 19th century. Following Menelik's death, Ethiopia entered in to an era of effective centralization policy under the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930-1974) who was the last ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty (Bezabih, 2021 pp. 33-38).

The monarchical regime was a strong centralized state that designed homogenization as a nation building strategy that gives the best guarantee for the state integration (Mengisteab, 1997; Tronvoll, 2000; Van der Beken, 2008). In pursuance of this policy of national integration, the regime wanted to create a common identity. Successive imperial regimes advocated for the use of one national language as an instrument for maintaining the country's integrity. Ethiopia is occupied by Italy in 1935. As a result, by 1938, a proclamation put the country into six divided administrative regions with languages of education: Eritrea- Tigrigna and Arabic; Amhara Amharic; Addis Ababa- Amharic and Oromifa; Harar- Harari and Oromifa; Sidama- Oromifa and Kafficho; Somali- Somalia (Richard Pankhurst, 1974 cited from Aschale, A. 2013).

As we see from the policy of Italy, there is no suitable condition to live together and also the country was become fragmented. Apart from this, introducing other languages for instructional purposes had been conceived as national disintegration. (Alemu & Tekleselassie, 2006).

As a result of this policy, Amharic was used for the language of administration purposes. As a result of dissatisfaction with the national integration policy of the monarchy, several rebellion groups emerged (Habtu, 2004; Van der Beken, 2007). Among such groups, the students' movement raised substantial issues such as the land tenure system, poverty, education for the poor, class and problems of ethnicity (Tegegn, 2008). Finally, after 45 years in power, in 1974, Haile Selassie's regime was overthrown by the Provisional Military Administrative Council which was well known as the 'Derg'.

The Derg, which was oriented towards Marxist-Leninist ideology, aimed to address long-standing issues related to land, ethnicity and religion, which had been criticized by the majority of the population as threats to national unity. In 1975, the Derg introduced a land reform proclamation, followed by the declaration of the national democratic revolution (NDR) in 1976 and that was seen as a response to addressing and emphasized equal recognition of history, culture, language, and religion, in accordance with the principles of socialism. However, according to some sources, the actual implementation of these reforms fell short of societal expectations (Adamu, 2013).

Because of the aforementioned problems, several ethnic based rebellion groups such as the Eritrean people's Liberation Front (ELF), Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) intensified their outbreak on the military government. In 1991, the coalition effort of the ethno nationalist movement mainly led by TPLF overthrew the military regime.

Before the demise of Derg, an American sponsored peace conference were held in London from May 26-28, 1991. The armed rebels with their secessionist agenda, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a core of the EPRDF, and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), met in London on May 27, 1991. The Ethiopian government was represented by Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinka at the London conference. The US proposed a plan of action to facilitate the conference. That plan of action includes the following:

1. A transitional government would be composed of all political groups, including exiles;
2. Free elections would be held within one year;
3. A general cease-fire would prevail;
4. All parties would support emergency relief activates;
5. All existing administrative controls, whether government or insurgent, would remain in place; and
6. The Eritrea issue of secession was dropped in the conference.

The US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Herman J. Cohen, chaired the 1991 London conference. Convinced the Ethiopian delegation to sign a cease-fire and allow the rebels to enter Addis Ababa in order to help "stabilize the situation." Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinka, who led

the government delegation and attended the London conference, strongly opposed this new arrangement (cited from Metaferia, G. /2009).

And also, the July transitional conference was held in 1991 in Addis Ababa with the following objectives: A. the formation of multinational parliament; B. The creation of transitional government and a multinational cabinet; C. A new regional administrative division of the country based on language and nationality; D. The holding of general elections aimed to pave the way for the nationwide election and regional elections scheduled (Mengistu, 2022).

The overwhelming participants of which were ethnic groups, adopted a charter that granted ethnic groups the right to self-determination including and up to secession with minimal reflection (Markakis, 2011).

Political agendas ranging from the very foundation of the nation building process to the constitution, state-society relation, federalism, party system etc. served as contentious issues. The Ethiopian political debate was fully occupied by the ‘Centripetal’ and ‘Centrifugal’ political forces to date. The Imperial regime, the Derg and the EPRDF contributed in different scale in aggravating political tensions in the country. In the last almost three decades the TPLF/EPRDF regime intensified the already simmering political and cultural antagonism. The ruling EPRDF coalitions systematically manipulated the federal setup to consolidate power and resources at the cost of escalating tensions (Abdulqadir, 2020).

Following the rebranded of the EPRDF regime in to prosperity government, TPLF were excluded primarily by Amhara and Oromo youth movements. There was a brief moment of optimism that the country would transit into a more effective system of governance, fostering peace and ensuring citizens' rights.

The new Ethiopian government has established ministry of peace by FDRE proclamation number 1097/2018 for building peace, preventing and resolving conflict, establishing contact between the federal and regional states to coordinate and supporting developing regions. Besides, it has the purpose to establish a government structure that can guarantee the rule of law and promote peace.

But in contrast, violence, internal displacement, insecurity etc. are increased in the last few years. The optimism has vanished too early conflicts and tensions started to erupt in different parts of

the country. Political assassinations, ethnic strife and migration became common phenomena. Postponement of the 6th Ethiopian general election which was expected to be held in August, 2020, further escalated tensions between the ruling party and opposition groups (Yitagesu, 2022).

Generally, Ethiopia continues to face significant political, economic, and social difficulties. As a result, the country is currently experiencing a massive and uncontrollable state of chaos and disorder, with conflict permeating every aspect of society. Having a national dialogue is crucial to mediating the conflicting issues in a peaceful manner. To address its severe problems and guarantee enduring peace to national unity or common ground, Ethiopia established a national dialogue commission. These days, national dialogue is seen as the shared platform for democratic nation-building.

However, as far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, adequate research endeavors were not conducted regarding the public sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission for sustainable peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar City. Some studies have been conducted concerning the national dialogue in Ethiopia such as Andualem 2022, National Dialogue of Ethiopia: is it on the right track? Abyssinia 2022, National Dialogue in Ethnically Divided Ethiopia: Experiences and Lessons to be learnt. Abdulqadir 2020, National Dialogue in Ethiopia towards Sustainable Peace and Democratic Transition summited for conference. Yitagesu 2022, National Dialogue or Election Matters in Ethiopia: Critical Analysis of The Current Political Situation and the 6th National Election, Tura 2023, Critical Appraisal of Challenges and Prospects of Ethiopia's National Dialogue conducted from document review and other state experiences of national dialogue. All these earlier studies have conducted mainly on the need to establish and begin national dialogue and lessons to be learnt from other countries to conduct successful national dialogue at the beginning and ongoing process of national dialogue.

As a result, the earlier research endeavors had not scrutinized Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission for sustainable peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar City. As to the best knowledge of the researcher no earlier study has comprehensively examined the perception of public towards Ethiopian national dialogue commission for enhancing sustainable peace in Amahara Region case study of Bahir Dar City. Thus, this research is investigated to fill these gaps.



### **1.3. Objective of the study**

#### **1.3.1. General objective**

The general objective of the study is to assess the overall public sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City.

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives**

1. To assess the statuses of public sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission.
2. To Identify key factors influencing public sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission.
3. To specify the public's expectations and aspirations from the Ethiopian national dialogue commission for sustainable peace in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

1. What is the perception of the public towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission as a strategy for conflict resolution in Amhara Region?
2. What are the factors to influence public perception towards Ethiopian national dialogue commission for the implementation its objectives to settle sustainable peace in Amhara Region?
3. What are the aspirations of public towards Ethiopian national dialogue commissions for sustainable peace in Amhara Region?

### **1.5. Hypothesis**

1. There is a positive significant relation between Credibility of Ethiopian national dialogue commission and Public Sentiment.
2. There is a positive significant relation between Inclusivity of Ethiopian national dialogue commission and Public Sentiment.
3. There is a positive significant relation between Facilitators of Ethiopian national dialogue commission and Public Sentiment.
4. There is a positive significant relation between Transparency of Ethiopian national dialogue commission and Public Sentiment.

## **1.6. Significance of the study**

This study will have a number of significances after its proper completion. Among others, some of the major significance of this study will be identifying and finding out the major challenge that impedes the effectiveness of Ethiopian national dialogue commission for sustainable peace in Amahra Region Bahir Dar City. It will have a significant contribution in enhancing the awareness of the society about the importance of national dialogue and its challenges and it will motivate the society to fighting and tackling the challenges. The study also will have a prominent significant for the researcher to have a good understanding about the study topic and it important to develop the experiences of conducting research. It also serves as a reference materials and clue for other researchers who aspire to engage themselves in research work related to this topic. It will contribute its part on investigating existing knowledge and playing parts on problem.

## **1.7. Scope of the study**

Concerning the geographical description, the study is limited to Bahir Dar City to assess the perception of public towards Ethiopian national dialogue commission. Thematically, it was delimited to explore the effectiveness of Ethiopia's national dialogue commission. The time specification of this study is since the inception of national dialogue commission; done at Addis Ababa, on this, 13th Day of January 2022. Since national dialogues is a very broad concept and have various dimensions, the focus of this study is aimed to investigating the successful implementation and effectiveness of the Ethiopian national dialogue commission objectives for sustainable peace in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City.

## **1.8. Limitation of the study**

In doing the study, the researcher faced the following two limitations. The first one is that in the office of civic organization in Bahir Dar, there was a challenge of considering the researcher as a spy man by the public and stakeholders of the office. To reverse this challenge, the researcher used the letter given by Bahir Dar University for data collection purpose.

The second limitation that challenged the researcher was due to the political sensitiveness of the title, the fear of being interviewed in to face to face. However, this limitation was challenged by the researcher through making Telephone interviews with suspected key informants.

The third limitation that challenged the researcher was due to the political sensitiveness of the title; the key informants were becoming unwilling and refer to other persons. However, this limitation was challenged by the researcher through step-up to other key informants.

The fourth limitation that challenged the researcher was due to the dalliance or absence of organized reports which indicates about the gathering agenda from the national dialogue commission Amhara branch office. All in all, the researcher challenged all these limitations in consultancy with his Advisor and the Department Head of Political Science and International Studies except the fourth limitation.

### **1.9. Organization of the study**

The paper structured in five chapters. The first chapter will discuss the introduction, which consists of back ground of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions and significance of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter focuses on reviews of related literature from theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The third chapter states about research methods of the study, description of the study area, sample size and techniques, methods of data collection, data analysis techniques and ethical consideration. Chapter four provides the results and discussions on the public sentiment towards Ethiopian national dialogue commission in enhancing sustainable peace in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City. Finally, chapter five summarizes the findings of the study, draw conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

An overview of the literature on dialogue as a conflict resolution management tool is given in this chapter. The literature review explains how Ethiopian conflict resolution can be managed through national dialogue. This chapter also includes the proclamation of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission within its duties; responsibilities and principles of the dialogue; the success and failure of national dialogue experience from selected case study is incorporated; theoretical framework of the research, which includes problem solving theory, deliberative democracy theory, game theory and conflict resolution theory; the phases of national dialogue; the importance of dialogue in conflict resolution; understanding sustainable peace and perception, with articulated peace in post-1991 in Ethiopia and public perception; and, finally, the conceptual framework of the study is incorporated with this chapter which are from secondary sources and articles.

#### **2.2. The Concept of National Dialogue**

There is need for knowledge of what dialogue is and the competence in how to employ dialogue and adherence to its use. Dialogue is an exchange of information that requires both difference and similarities; it is a form of communication with goal to understand the other. Change and cooperation have possible effects in dialogue as a form of communication and has to do with attitude and culture. Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction in which human beings listen deeply and respectfully to each other in a way that what they learn changes them. Each participant in a dialogue strives to incorporate the concerns of the other participants into their own perspective, even when they continue to disagree. No participant gives up his or her identity, but each recognizes the human value of the claims of the others and therefore acts differently towards others. (Stringer, 2013) The etymology of the word dialogue is from the Greek ‘dialogos’, meaning to speak, while ‘logos’ means word, meaning or reason. ‘Dia’ means through or across.

Blunck et al defined National Dialogue as “nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political

crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions” (Blunck et al., 2017, p. 21). A national dialogue is an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and managing political transformation. It can broaden debate regarding a country’s trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers. It is one of the tools used to build consensus among contending political forces to resolve major political differences and avoid violent conflict.

National dialogues have been used as an instrument to resolve political crises and pave the way for political transitions and sustainable peace (Paffenholz et al., 2017, p. 8). National dialogues are conceived to be better conflict resolution instruments used in response to crisis of overarching national importance and launched in times of political transition when old institutions are delegitimized and a new social contract between state and society is needed (Blunck et al., 2017). In the short term, and most notably in cases of mass protests, national dialogues have been able to minimize violence by transferring grievances from the streets into formalized processes. National dialogues are mainly accompanied by broader societal consultations, involving all sectors of society. Their objective can involve broad-based change processes, like negotiating a new social contract or more narrow objectives.

According to Stigant and Murray national dialogue can broaden debate regarding a country’s trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers (Stigant & Murray, 2015). Unlike exclusive elite negotiations, national dialogues are characterized by their intention to broaden participation which provide access for parties and groups usually excluded from or under-represented in political negotiations, and thereby air demands which could otherwise fuel future discontent if they are not addressed (Harlander, 2016). Consequently, religious, ethnic or tribal minorities, civil society, businesses, labor unions, women or youth are usually interested in such processes, as they see in national dialogues and opportunity to lobby for their interests. This makes national dialogues a popular tool for structural reforms.

National dialogues emerged in response to the desire to protect national sovereignty as well as to conviction about internationally directed interventions in many parts of the world which shifted the onus of conflict resolution from the international to the national (Blunck, Vimalarajah, Wils, Burg, Lanz, & Mubashir, 2017, p. 18).

National dialogues are usually summoned when the very foundations or survival of a government came under threat and are meant to resolve political crises, improve the legitimacy

of institutions, and lead countries into political transitions (Harlander, 2016; Paffenholz et al., 2017).

National dialogues will have a higher likelihood of success if they incorporate the following principles: inclusion, transparency and public participation, a far-reaching agenda, a credible convener, appropriate and clear rules of procedure, and an implementation plan. Moreover, critical analysis of the necessary conditions is needed for a successful national dialogue. The political context in which a national dialogue takes place can affect the likelihood of success or failure. Key factors include political will, Links to other transitional processes, common ground among parties, public support, learning from past experience, the role of external actors and national ownership (Haider, 2019).

National dialogues are nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far reaching political transitions. Depending on the context, national dialogues can be employed as mechanisms for (a) crisis prevention and management, a shorter-term endeavor, undertaken strategically as a means to resolve or prevent the outbreak of armed violence, breaking political deadlocks and re-establishing minimal political consensus (e.g. Tunisia); or (b) fundamental change, with a longer-term trajectory, envisioned as a means to redefine state society relations, or establish a new “social contract” through institutional and constitutional changes (e.g. Yemen),(Bergh of Foundation, 2017; IFSS, 2020; Haider, 2019;USIOP, 2015; ).

Now a days, national dialogues are a popular tool for structural reforms, as they provide access for parties and groups often excluded from or under-represented in political negotiations (Harlander, 2016). They are usually accompanied by broader, inclusive societal consultations aimed at channeling people’s concerns and demands into the process; and enhancing legitimacy and ownership over the process and its outcomes (CEG, 2017; Paffenholz et al., 2017; Papagianni, 2014). National dialogues have clear structures (often a mix of plenary sessions and working groups) and defined rules and procedures for dialogue and decision-making. Their size and composition can vary considerably and they can last from several days to several years. Their objective can involve broad-based change processes /e.g. negotiating a new social contract, redefining state society relations, establishing new political institutions; and/or determining the

process through which reforms will take place etc. (Blunck et al., 2017; Kaplan and Freeman, 2017; Paffenholz et al., 2017; Harlander, 2016). National dialogues with short-term endeavors and/or a narrower set of objectives (e.g. establishing security arrangements, constitutional amendments, truth commissions etc.; and/or geared specifically for resolving or preventing the outbreak of violence) are usually more limited in their mandates, smaller in size and shorter in duration. National dialogues pass through three successive phases: preparation, process and implementation (Blunck et al., 2017). The preparation phase can be as long, or longer, than the official process, as it often entails mini negotiation processes in itself to establish key parameters and the institutional framework, i.e. mandate, agenda, participant selection, decision-making procedures, etc. (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

### **2.2.1. Importance of Dialogue in Conflict Resolution**

Dialogue builds trust. With trust, a circle of communication is expanded as society is dependent on trust and trust is often low in conflict areas. There has been growing interest in the potential for dialogue as a tool for conflict resolution. Dialogue is used to refer to the more informal processes among opposing parties, leading up to formal negotiations. It is also quite extensive to describe the broader peace building processes, grassroots initiatives and bottom-up policy approaches that aim at avoiding the escalation of a conflict or crisis. The role of dialogue differs according to the context or the specific conflict in question, factors like power relations and the existence and role of a third-party actor or facilitator. Dialogue aimed at leading to a progressive force in fostering mutual understanding and resolving conflicts. According to (Shepard, 2005), dialogue is an important tool for strengthening governance and democracy, preventing violence and building peace, it facilitates a shared understanding of complex societal problem like in Ethiopia.

### **2.2.2. Phases of a National Dialogue**

#### **❖ Preparation phase**

National dialogues pass through three successive phases: preparation, process and implementation (Haider, 2019). The preparation phase of the national dialogue is very crucial and critically shapes the next phases. Hence sufficient time, sometimes longer than the process, need to be allocated. At least major parameters of the dialogue need to be agreed upon in this phase. The common parameters include mandate of the national dialogue, agenda, participant

selection, convener, decision-making procedures, etc. The preparation phase should distinctly set out the institutions and mechanisms needed to lay the groundwork for a smooth and successful national dialogue. This is also the phase where potential pitfalls and challenges are anticipated and system designed to resolve as and when happened (Blunck et al., 2017). It must be understood that the preparation phase constitutes a mini-negotiation process. Preparation phase is essentially a political bargaining process. It needs an institutional infrastructure dedicated for this purpose like the Ethiopian national dialogue commission. A consensus on core objectives of the dialogue needs to be reach during the preparation phase, which may include, but not limited to, avoiding violent conflict, rebuilding state-society relationships, reconstructing the political system etc. having clear objectives will determine the structure of the dialogue, the process and the outcome. Building confidence and technical capacity are key elements in the preparation phase.

According to Blunck et al within each phase different functions need to be developed into an institutional set-up. However, caution is needed to realize the fact that there is no such thing as the one-size-fits-all or ‘correct’ format. Every national dialogue is unique and need to be designed based on a thorough analysis of local circumstances and the specific objective of the national dialogue process. The preparation of a national dialogue process can often be lengthy and is central to its success (Papa Gianni, 2014).

#### ❖ **The process phases**

Once the key parameters are established the process phase will start, which is the most public phase of the national dialogue (Haider, 2019). It is the formal national dialogue phase and covers major aspects related to implementing issues like including agenda-setting, determining a convener, establishing principles, producing decision-making modalities, selecting participants, ensuring public consultation and outreach, establishing effective support structures and thinking about timing and sequencing (Blunck et al, 2017).

#### ❖ **Implementation phase**

The implementation phase is dedicated to executing the decisions taken during the negotiations. The implementation of a national dialogue’s recommendations or decisions represents the final challenge for parties and facilitators and should be planned carefully during and after the



dialogue (Harlander, 2016). Depending on the objective and mandate of the national dialogue, planning for implementation happens during the process phase or even as early as the preparation phases (Blunck et al., 2017).

In summary, procedures for preparing, conducting, and implementing national dialogues have played a decisive role in whether processes are perceived as representative and legitimate (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

For the purpose of this research, the conceptual framework lined with Blunck et al defined national dialogue as “nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions” (Blunck et al., 2017, p. 21).

In Ethiopian context, National dialogue” means consultation of different bodies facilitated by the Council of Commissions at the Federal and Regional level on the agendas identify in accordance with the Proclamation and the Directives to be issued by the Council of Commissioners.

### **2.3. Theoretical framework of the research**

Theory provides the structure in showing how a researcher defines his/her study philosophically, methodologically and analytically (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). This study is premised on theory of deliberative democratic theory and problem solving theory. There are number of theories to substantiate national dialogue. Among them Game theory and conflict resolution theory are theories for national dialogue.

#### **2.3.1. Theory of problem solving**

This study is premised on theory of problem solving in advancing inclusivity in conflicts resolution. Burton (1979) formed the theory of problem solving and it was also advanced by other scholars like de Reuck, A. (1990) and Kelman, H. (2016). This theory focuses more on changing conflicts into constructive summation that brings transitions in the society or crisis situations. Burton argues that, solving conflicts using problem solving approach considers the awareness of the parties involved, issues as well as accommodation. It gives room for the parties to understand each other’s challenges at hand, hence working on ways of promoting cooperation and coordination for mutual inclusive win.

Rothschild argues that, solving disputes requires an in-depth analysis of what triggers conflict as well as relations. This is in agreement with Burton in relation to problem solving since it recognizes human desires as the focal point in analyzing the disputes by third party. Problem solving theory helps in understanding the mandate of third parties/actors in a conflict as an essential body that helps in decision making basically on needs that are not yet fulfilled. It helps parties to a conflict to understand the importance of cooperation in realizing their desires. This ensures availability of fairness and equitable use of resources by involved parties.

The theory promotes various ways of conflict resolution like mediation, adjudication, peace enforcement and keeping and all these are enshrined through mutual cooperation and coordination between the actors involved.

The theory is essential for this study in that it explores the need for cooperation between and amongst actors within states to promote peace and security. States have the responsibility to protect their citizens from the scourges of war and this can be achieved through collective cooperation of the competing interest so that triggers of conflicts are mitigated. Problem solving theory gives room for negotiation and dialogue between the parties. This is also important in advancing cooperation in nation building through Ethiopian national dialogue commission structures by mitigating the various segments of the society by identifying the root causes of the difference on fundamental national issues like governance issues, resource disputes as well as humanitarian crisis and so on.

Problem solving has been viewed as the appropriate tool for solving conflicts. It gives room for exchanging information on issues of priority and preferences in the search for collective and fulfilling remedy to the challenges, controlling conflict conditions as well as respect to socio-economic and political relations.

### **2.3.2. Game theory**

This theory has been helpful in promoting the works of social science scientists in the development of conflict of interest terms. The theory was advanced by Schelling (1960). It demonstrates that there are different people involved in a conflict; with interests that are interdependent hence their destinies are interconnected. Game theory illustrates that cooperation and competition of interests are likely to be interlinked in conflict situations as explained further

by Schelling who stated that, conflicts have a nature of mixed motives. Cooperation aspects of conflicts illustrates that there is bargaining as well as negotiation in which groups that are in conflicts can reach mutual consensus that benefits all the concerned parties. Also, competition aspects demonstrate the scenarios where a single group may use power and capacity to bargain and gain more or rather win over the other party.

Game theory has been taken as a theory that promotes rational decision making in conflict or crisis situations. The theory enhances the participation of various policy actors(players), with each player assigned various framework/ strategy, set of results that originates from the decisions that are made by the parties based on a specific role as well as payout that is given to each participants based on the results that are attained. This theory presumes that participants in a game are rational and the options they take are guided by the capacity of the possible return. Since every participant is seen as rational, they use other party's payout to guide the nature of strategy since this helps in understanding the way the other party's strategies are made. The payouts of the parties are different resulting into a conflict of interest and therefore for the parties to maximize absolute gain, they have to come to a consensus which leads to peace. The game theory is therefore essential in this study in that it involves rational actors and parties that can discuss key issues of concern. National dialogue can therefore only be enhanced by rational decision makers who are interested in peaceful coexistence.

### **2.3.3. Conflict Resolution Theory**

Conflict Resolution Theory was advanced by Deutsch (1990). The main principle of this theory is that conflict resolution processes is enhanced through efficient and effective cooperation. The theory also states that resolving conflicts involves competition whereby the parties involved compete in order to emerge as a winner. The result of the competition is always a loss to both parties. The guiding principles of cooperation entails respect, accountability and responsibility, trust, justice, honesty, equality as well as fairness in behavior to both friends and team members. The theory posits that mutual cooperation enhances adequate measures for managing crisis.

This theory enhances the creation of common grounds where disagreements are placed, responding to challenges in situations of differences as well as avoiding attacks on others. The theory also gives room for understanding other people's opinions so as to expand their views and

to recognize their potentials. It puts emphasis on the strength of the other parties as well as the possibility laying efficient and effective conflict resolution strategy. It also limits and controls negative expressions and feelings that one is to take responsibility of the dangerous consequences directed at others hence affecting the norms for cooperation. Hence, parties must at all times be careful of their actions, to always not get involved in activities that affect others negatively and to apologize whenever there is wrong doing. It also advocates for forgiveness, reconciling with one another in case one part hurts the other instead of breeding hatred and grudges.

The theory calls for the empowerment of one another so as to enhance better participation in the cooperation process and assisting each other whenever need arises. It also calls for honesty since it advances the principles of cooperation. The theory promotes proper communication that does not promote fear or suspicion that can jeopardize peaceful coexistence and relations in the society. It calls for parties involved to maintain morality in the conflict resolution process through commitment. These are relevant in the processes of promoting both national and international dialogues in conflict resolutions. National dialogue between and amongst different groups of people requires mutual cooperation and coordination for a sustainable and lasting peace to be realized. Many studies show that conflicts must not necessarily end in a win-win situation; at some point, one party may emerge victorious or in compromise and therefore this study is guided by problem solving approach that involves direct participation of the parties in resolving the disputes to shape and facilitate third parties that have knowledge of conflict management.

#### **2.3.4. Deliberative democracy theory**

The idea of deliberative democracy is traced back by many of its proponents to Aristotle and the polis of ancient Greece, to 19th-century political philosophers such as Burke and Mill, but mostly to Dewey's (1984) *The Public and Its Problems*. Through time, Deliberative democratic theory emerged in the 1990s partly as a response to the "aggregative" view of democracy advanced by rational choice theorists (Rosenberg, S. W. 2007).

Gutmann and Thompson (2004: 7) defined it as a 'form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching

conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future'. The main aspects of the idea of deliberative democracy, namely the need in democracies to communicate, deliberate, and reflect over one's preferences prior to decision-making.

Deliberative democrats specifically emphasize the character of the processes, with the starting point that different views have to be adjusted or confronted by means of argumentation. Thus, the starting point is the presence of two or more conceptions concerning a specific problem, represented by individuals in a confrontation, where a key demand is openness of argumentation: 'While acknowledging that we are destined to disagree, deliberative democracy also affirms that we are capable of deciding our common destiny on mutually acceptable terms' (Gutmann and Thompson 1996: 361).

The very nature of the deliberative process of justification sends a signal that its participants are willing to enter into a dialogue in which the reasons given, and the reasons responded to, have the capacity to change minds. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 20) To deliberate implies a number of related meanings such as to weigh, to ponder, to consider, and to reflect. The supporters of deliberative democracy believe that a more robust and active public engagement is indispensable to democracy and democratic deepening, and deliberation is one key means of addressing the current democratic deficit based on argumentative exchanges and public debates which precede decisions.

Deliberation promotes the legitimacy of collective decisions, encourages public-spirited perspectives on public issues, promotes mutually-respectful processes of decision-making, and exposes all decisions to critical scrutiny. There are a number of big questions in deliberative democracy such as whether deliberation should be seen instrumentally or in expressive terms, whether the focus should be on the procedure of deliberative democracy or on its substance, whether consensus should be a goal or more pluralist/agonist forms are desirable particularly in heterogeneous societies, the question between representation and participation, whether the target of democratization should be the government or civil society and whether deliberation should be confined to the domestic realm or go beyond the level of the state (Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Democratic deliberation could be studied and justified in the following three approaches.

### **A. Preference-Based Model**

The model grounded in economics and social choice theory according to which deliberation corrects information problems that prevent transformation and stabilization of individual preferences, and aggregation of individual into collective preference and transformation from ‘self-regarding’ to ‘other-regarding’, individual self-interest to the common good.

### **B. Rational Proceduralist Model**

Which is grounded in normative political theory (arguments around justice (e.g. Rawls) and legitimacy (Habermas) by which moral claims are to be couched in rationalist debate, language and reasons knowable to all (the ‘reason-giving requirement’) enabling the better argument to win, leading to agreement and legitimacy of collective decisions.

### **C. Integrative Model**

Finally, the Integrative Model that seeks to integrate heterogeneous views and publics; deliberation integrates a public as public, producing a public where none existed (McAfee 2004).

Therefore, this research used both problem solving theory and deliberative democratic theory in mitigating prolonged disputes within and between peoples as witnessed in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City. Apart from the perspective of deliberative democracy theory, the researchers use Rational Proceduralist model of theory which is relevant in advancing the role of national dialogue for peaceful coexistence in the context of Amhara Region.

## **2.4. Types and Objectives of National Dialogues**

National dialogues can be used to fulfill a range of objectives. They may focus on a narrower set of specific or substantive objectives or on broad based change processes, which may entail building a new political system and developing a new social contract (Blunck, Vimalarajah, Wils, Burg, Lanz, & Mubashir, 2017). Blunck et al identified two main types of national dialogues, identified according to the function they seek to fulfill. These are national dialogues as mechanisms for crisis prevention and management and national dialogues as mechanisms for fundamental change.

The first type is a short-term endeavor, undertaken strategically as a means to resolve or prevent the outbreak of armed violence. Such type of national dialogue aims to break political deadlock

and re-institute political understanding among political actors (Blunck, Vimalarajah, Wils, Burg, Lanz, & Mubashir, 2017). Such a national negotiation has limited mandates, smaller size and shorter duration. Tunisia is good example in this type of national dialogue.

The second type in which national dialogue is used as an instrument for fundamental change envisages redefining state-society relations and developing new social contract, with eventual goal to introduce fundamental institutional changes. Such an initiative has broader mandate, reasonably diverse participants. Depending on the peculiar circumstances of a country national dialogues should be designed to realize immediate and/or far-reaching outcomes; managing crises or reframe state-society relations. They should not, however, be conducted as a tool to calm mounting political pressures or appease local stakeholders and international partners (Yohannes & Dessu, 2020, p. 18).

## **2.5. Understanding sustainable peace and perception.**

### **2.5.1. Peace**

Numerous scholars define the term ‘peace’ in various ways. But there will never be any universal agreement on the concept of peace (Hakan Wiberg, 2005:21). Hence, the term peace has no single definition. It is vague, elusive, dynamic and subjective term. Thus, it is very difficult to conceptualize the term peace easily. For instance, in the early years of peace studies, it was assumed that peace is the opposite of war or absence of uproar (Matsuo, 2005). It was defined as the absence of war, partially because the early peace studies were strongly motivated by the reflection on the tragedies of the WWII with a sense of crisis of human survival caused by the danger of a total nuclear war on the two super powers. From this viewpoint, the writer infers that, it can be said that the peace concept during that time (WWII) consisted of only one peace value, that is, the absence of war. However, Galtung argued that, violence is everything which prevents the full realization of innate somatic and mental human potentials. He forwarded a broader theoretical framework which could deal not only with the issue of war, but also issues of poverty, disease and human rights violations. Thus, in a nutshell, violence is anything which produces a gap between the physical and mental potentials of human beings and their actual conditions (Galtung, 1969). From this viewpoint; poverty, underdevelopment, oppression and other social troubles upsetting many people largely in developing countries in one and another way can be seen as manifestations of violence. In his writing, Galtung coined two types of peace such as, ‘negative and positive peace’ (emphasis added). According to Galtung (1964), negative peace “is

absence of war and direct violence which inflicts human suffering from individual, national, regional and international levels” while, positive peace “is working towards the elimination of unjust structures, inequitable relationships at inter-personal, group, national, regional and international levels or the integration of human society”.

In 1964 he did not specifically mention the word structural violence but human integration (Manfred Peters, 2014). Galtung also identifies eight components of negative and positive peace (Galtung cited in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, 2007). Accordingly, the first components of negative peace is absence of direct violence (ceasefires, disarmament, prevention of terrorism and state terrorism, nonviolence) the second components are humanitarian aid, food aid, alleviation of poverty and misery the third are, liberation from oppression, occupation and dictatorship and the fourth components are overcoming prejudice based on nationality, race, language, gender, age, class, religion, etc., elimination of the glorification of war and violence in the media, literature, films, and monuments while, issues considered under Positive peace components are: first, life enhancing cooperation and prevention of direct violence (peace-building, conflict transformation, reconciliation and reconstruction) second, building a life-sustaining economy at the local, national and global level in which everyone’s basic needs are met third, good governance and participation, self-determination and human rights fourth, promotion of a culture of peace and mutual learning; global communication and dialogues; development of peaceful deep cultures and deep structures; peace education; and peace journalism.

#### **2.5.1.1. Peace in Post-1991 in Ethiopia**

In order to evaluate the situation of the current Ethiopian peace based on Johan Galtung’s typology of positive and negative peace, the researcher have tried to evaluate the nature of peace in contemporary Ethiopia with particular emphasis of current ethnic-federalism, inter-ethnic and religious conflicts, the situation of political competition and election, violation of civic and political rights are the immediate consequences of threat of terrorism in Ethiopian peace and security.

As indicated in Galtung, he comes up with two types of peace namely negative peace and positive peace. According to him negative peace refers to absence of war or direct violence which inflicts human suffering from individual, national, and regional level. On the other hand,



positive peace has to do with working towards the elimination of unjust structures, inequitable relationships at inter-personal, group, national, regional and international levels or the integration of human society. The broader theoretical frame work forwarded by Galtung also deals with issues of poverty, diseases and human right violations. Currently in Ethiopia, there is war or direct violence which implies the prevalence of negative peace in the country. On the other hand, Conflicts between federal government of Ethiopia with TPLF in Tigray, and also with Shane in Oromia and Fano in Amhara region, Somalis and the Afar- Issa conflict happened in recent years and which are stifled by undemocratic intervention of both the federal and regional governments are indicators of the presence of structural violence what Galtung characterizes as a harm done by socio political structures and decisions that deprive someone of their access to basic needs. This is because most of the problems have been solved in a manner depriving the rights of one group at the expense of the other party to the conflict. Religious conflicts erupting in different parts of the country and acts of terrorism are also the manifestations of the presence of structural violence. Physical hurts, deaths and displacement of people are violent in their nature. Election and the presence of unhealthy competition for power and violation of basic civil and political rights which are manifested in unlawful treatment of citizens, killing and imprisonment are also indicators of the prevalence of structural violence.

According to Galtung's view Positive peace holds good governance, participation, self-determination, human right respecting, and promotion of a culture of peace and mutual learning. Here, one can realize it as negative peace since it is structural violence. Besides, the current condition of relationship between some opposition political parties and the ruling party/PP in one and another way looks like negative peace because most political parties including PP have undertaken violence as a means of achieving various political objectives. Uproar exists on national and regional election in Ethiopia. Tension is common phenomenon during and immediately after election result announced. Therefore, according to Galtung conceptual lenses of peace, one can conclude that, during and immediately after election at different levels of government the nature of peace in Ethiopia has been categorized under negative peace. Positive peace has to do with the presence of peaceful, just structures and cooperative relationships, social and economic development. When evaluates the current condition of peace in Ethiopia in the light of this attribute of positive peace, there is a complete mismatch. This is because of the presence of different situations in one way or another negatively influences the peace and

security as well as the socio-economic development of the country. Such as dissatisfactions which are waiting to precipitate events to be surfaced, illegal trading, smuggling, proliferation of light weapons, diseases, migrations and environmental degradations. In general, the contemporary peace condition of Ethiopia is categorized under negative peace.

### **2.5.2. Perception**

Perception means third-person observation rather than something that happens in the context of interaction. The perception involved seems to be amazingly impoverished or ill-informed about the particular object (i.e., the person) which the subject perceives (Gallagher, S. (2008). Perception is an individual's view making it a powerful driving force for action. Processing sensory information and relating to past experiences enables one to create a lens in which to view their interest through a filter of sociocultural influences like negotiating and reconciliation in Ethiopia. Perceptions of the authority of the Ethiopian national dialogue or body that launches, organizes and facilitates dialogue are decisive in either enabling or constraining the process to achieve their objectives.

Perception is never objective. It is an individual's or group's unique way of viewing a phenomenon that involves the processing of stimuli and incorporates memories and experiences in the process of understanding (McDonald, S. M. (2011).

National dialogues are 'formally mandated, inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation frameworks, which can resolve political crises and lead countries into political transitions. Politicians and scholars believe a national dialogue in Ethiopia is imperative in order to reconcile contending visions of the future and to put the country's political reforms back on track in a more inclusive manner.

The critical determinant for a legitimate national dialogue is the creation of sufficient opportunity to inform the public and also allow citizens to feed into the dialogue and its process. This could be achieved by linking the national dialogue with other local dialogues or through consultations with the public, regular outreach and media coverage.

## **2.6. Ethiopian national dialogue commission proclamation**

Ethiopia as a country fulfilled with difference of opinions and disagreements among various political and opinion leaders and also segments of society in Ethiopia on the most fundamental

national issues and it is a necessity to resolve the differences and disagreements through broad based inclusive public dialogue that engenders national consensus;

Whereas, enormously conducting inclusive national dialogues is important to bolster national consensus along the way a culture of trust and of working together as well as mend degraded to restore social values; the national dialogue process societal values and since it has become necessary to legally institute a system that facilitates the national dialogue process;

Whereas, the legitimacy and credibility of national dialogue processes is contingent upon among others the capability and impartiality of the entity that facilitates and leads the deliberations and since it has become necessary to establish an institution with widespread legitimacy that could coordinate and lead the deliberations capably and impartially;

Now, therefore, in accordance with Article 55(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, it is hereby proclaimed by Proclamation No.1265/2021 as follows.

#### **A. Principles of the National Dialogue**

The Ethiopian national dialogue and the general works of the Commission shall be directed by the following principles: a) inclusivity; b) transparency; c) credibility; d) tolerance and mutual respect; e) rationality; f) implementation and context sensitivity; g) impartial facilitator; h) depth and relevance of Agendas; i) democracy and rule of law; j) national interest; k) using national traditional knowledge and values.

#### **B. Objectives of the Commission**

**The Commission shall have the following objectives:**

1/ Facilitate consultation between the various segments of the society by identifying the root causes of the difference on fundamental national issues and identifying the topics on which the discussion will take place; 2/ Implement an effective national dialogue process by ensuring that national dialogues are inclusive, led by a competent and impartial body, with a clear focus on the cause of disagreements, guided by transparent system, and have a plan to implement the results of the consultations; 3/ Establish a system of deliberations that will improve the relationship among the different segments of the population as well as between the public and the Government so as to enable the creation of new political dispensation that is marked by mutual

trust; 4/ Support the implementation of the recommendations made by the dialogues and build a democratic system of trust between citizens, the government and the People at the national level; 5/ To develop a political culture that can solve internal problems that have been simmering for centuries through dialogues and create a conducive environment for the building of a democratic system; 6/ Lay the social and political foundations on the basis of which current problems can be solved in a sustainable manner, ensuring lasting peace; 7/ Lay a firm foundation for national consensus and the building of a State with strong legitimacy.

### **C. Duties and Responsibilities of the Commission**

**The Commission shall have the following duties and responsibilities: -**

1/ It shall establish Committees and teams of experts that will facilitate and implement dialogues, conduct studies and generate recommendations; 2/ It shall study national dialogue processes that had been carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities and their outcomes, and shall use the same as input in national deliberations it will conduct; 3/ It shall identify differences among different political and opinion leaders and also between societies on national issues through studies, public discussions or other appropriate modalities; 4/ Craft agenda for dialogue, based on issues identified in accordance with Sub-Article (3) of this Article organize dialogues and facilitate deliberations; 5/ It shall organize and convene dialogue forums at the Federal and Regional levels that would bring about national consensus with the participation of representatives of various segments of society drawn from the entire country; 6/ It shall identify and enable participants to take part at a national dialogue conference in accordance with clear criteria, issued detail directive on this matter; 7/ It shall cause dialogues to be chaired by commissioners or facilitators to be appointed by the Council of Commission, it ensures that the person who are appointed as facilitators meet the qualifications for Commissioner as provides under Article 13 of this Proclamation as much as possible; 8/ It shall appoint professionals who will take minutes of dialogues, consolidate and organize the recommendations of the dialogues and present the same to the Council of Commission; 9/ It shall enact and implement internal Regulations and Directives pertaining to the secretariat internal working procedures, the selection of topics or Agenda for the dialogue and selection of participants to take part in national dialogue forums; 10/ Prepare a document for the national dialogue conference agendas, the process of the dialogues, the recommendations obtained from the dialogues and strategies to

implement the recommendations, and submit the same to the House of Peoples' Representatives, to the Executive organ and to the relevant organs, and also disclose to the public; 11/ Provide support to the government in the preparation of a clear and concrete plan that would enable it to implement the recommendations arising out of the national dialogue; 12/ It shall devise a system to monitor the implementation of recommendations; 13/ It shall carry out other activities necessary to accomplish its objectives.

## **2.7. Success and failure of Nation Dialogues experience from Selected Case Study**

Ethiopia's violence and instability have their roots in long-standing state-building deficits. These primarily include divergent interpretations of the country's political history, a lack of social cohesion, and an absence of national consensus on major state symbols and institutions. The process must account for realities on the ground, in particular, conflicts elsewhere in Ethiopia. For a national dialogue to succeed, it considers the following many valuable lessons drawn from the case studies such as: -

### **A. Political will**

Based on a comparative analysis of 2 cases of national dialogues held between 1990 and 2014, Paffenholz et al. (2017) find that the support or resistance of elites to national dialogue is a crucial factor determining the chances of reaching and implementing agreements (Paffenholz et al., 2017). In such situations, for example in Sudan, negotiations can be conducted in bad faith; with declared objectives of a national dialogue not necessarily reflecting the actual objectives of the parties (Harlander, 2016; El-Battahani, 2014).

For national dialogue to work in Ethiopia at the current moment, the government needs to recognize the enormity of the moment and create a political environment that would enable an inclusive national dialogue. Ending the armed hostilities in Amahra, Tigray, Oromia, and Benishangul Gumuz and releasing all political prisoners are among the necessary conditions for an inclusive national dialogue (Awol, 2022). Its success, however, depends on how genuine the government is if the governments is planning on using the national dialogue as a "fig leaf" and not engage in it in good faith, it is doomed to fail. With this in mind, it is useful to analyze the national dialogue process so far using internationally accepted yardsticks (Buli 2022).

Drawing lesson from the cases studies discussed above the planned national dialogue of Ethiopia must first agree to a process through which decisions and compromises will be reached. On the other hand, the initiative for the dialogue has been taken and some of the activities have been done exclusively by the ruling parity, the opposition political parties should not seek to impose preliminary substantive red lines, which would undermine the process. On the other hand, the government should also accept that it is one of the participants in the dialogue, rather than seeking to impose its way (Adem, 2021).

### **B. Neutrality**

Convener Experience demonstrates that procedural fairness and inclusivity are key features of national dialogues that are successful in transitioning toward lasting and sustainable peace. First and foremost, a successful dialogue requires that the custodian is neutral. It is this body that plays the essential function of deciding on the objectives, participants, agenda, and structure of the process. Accordingly, for the dialogue to be legitimate, the custodian must build trust among participants by being neutral. A National dialogue has three phases: preparatory, process, and implementation. Each of these phases reinforces or undermines the other (Buli, 2022).

Experiences of countries such as Poland and Iraq show the significance of forming neutral working groups or committees during the preparatory stage. Having credible conveners also enhances the legitimacy of national talks. Consultation methods, screening, selection and appointment of the organizers are essential to the integrity of both the process and its outcomes. For example, one of the failures of Sudan dialogue was the conveners were appointed by those countries' presidents, with limited or no consultation with opposition parties and armed groups. (Meressa and Dawit,2020). Therefore, Public trust in who convenes a national dialogue is especially critical in a deeply polarized society in Ethiopia. The whole process should depend on the integrity, impartiality, and public perception of the convener.

### **C. Links to other transition processes**

National dialogues must be embedded in larger change processes in order to stimulate real structural change (Blunck et al., 2017; Murray, 2017). A national dialogue's mandate should outline what powers it has and how it relates to the rest of the political process and to existing institutions (Pagagianni, 2014). If a national dialogue is designed to play a role in the writing of a

new constitution or to reform problems with an existing document, for example, it needs to be linked to a process and set of institutions that achieves one of these objectives (Blunck et al., 2017). Establishing structured links between national dialogue and other political processes is another vital measure, which helps avoid a competitive environment (Meressa and Dawit, 2020). In South Africa, political dialogues determined the constitutional framework and the process for the establishment of a constitution-making body and holding of elections (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015). In contrast Sudan national dialogues weren't sufficiently linked to other ongoing processes.

The Ethiopian Government should ensure that the national dialogues are not perceived as an end goal, but rather as part of a larger transitional roadmap that is accompanied by economic, structural, political, and judicial reform processes. Therefore, the Ethiopian government is encouraged to facilitate the development and implementation of humanitarian relief measures and economic stabilization programs, as these are immediate peace dividends.

#### **D.Common ground**

Successful national dialogue processes have involved negotiating parties that had a strong support base and credible claim of legitimacy in representing their constituency, alongside the political will to implement what was agreed (El-Battahani, 2014). The different agendas of the key conflict actors in Sudan during 2005- 2011 (El-Battahani, 2014), for example, and between conflicting factions in Yemen (alongside an externally driven agenda) undermined the development of a common view or shared objectives in dialogue. This, in turn, aggravated distrust among conflicting actors (Elayah et al., 2018).

Ethiopia is chronically divided along ethnic, religious, and political lines, which is why a national dialogue is essential. There are fundamental differences over its history, national emblems, system of government, and so on (Buli, 2022). The country will only survive if its leaders and the elite come together to forge a new national consensus and build a new political order that will ensure the dignity, co-existence and solidarity of its people (Awol, 2022). Drawing from failure and success of national dialogue from other countries, Ethiopia's National dialogue process should consider where all stakeholders can come together such as key political actors, armed groups and civil society and explore critical national issues to arrive at a shared and sustainable political settlement. At the same time the planned national dialogue should consider

some critical differences among groups but the goal should be to arrive at a common national agenda.

### **E. Public buy-in**

Public support or lack thereof is another key element that either enables or constrains progress in the national dialogue process (Paffenholz et al., 2017). Public information, good communication, and media engagement are thus key elements, as they influence the degree of public support and perceptions of legitimacy. In contrast, if the public is unaware of the national dialogue, it will neither be able to provide input nor feel inclined to promote its results (Blunck et al., 2017). In Iraq, for example, the national dialogue proceeded without any sound public information campaign or public debate and with minimal media attention. In addition, the agenda was set in a very short time, only days prior to the event. This lack of information sharing effectively hindered any meaningful participation by opposition groups and civil society, resulting in a narrow, politically one-sided process involving immediate political elite (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

Transparency and public engagement are also central to the national dialogue process, and can be achieved through public consultations, regular outreach and media coverage. Sudan and Iraq had their own limitations in this regard. In Sudan, debates took place only in the conference room used for the talks. Media coverage was inadequate and the government introduced repressive measures such as arresting some key opposition figures (Meressa and Dawit, 2020). On the other hand, the dialogues in Tunisia were centered on political elites, and public participation was limited. In Sudan the talks were started by the incumbent presidents, without much participation by some major opposition and armed groups. This proved to be a weakness, undermining the dialogues credibility in the preparation phase, and later hampering the implementation of recommendations (Berghof Foundation, 2017). Drawing from the lesson, the planned Ethiopian national dialogue process should consider public outreach programs and consultation to citizens across the country, while the media should meticulously cover every single step. Work could start with the national dialogue commission, which could educate the public about the dimensions of reconciliation and what the commission aims to achieve.



## **F. Inclusiveness and broad-based participation**

For the National Dialogue Commission and the resultant national dialogues to have the desired reconciliatory effect, there has to be inclusion of all stakeholders, including civil society actors, women, youth, and marginalized groups in Ethiopia. Additionally, there must be inclusion of power-holders from the informal and traditional sections of Ethiopia including religious leaders, and cultural leaders (SIHA, 2022). Inclusivity and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders during negotiations are crucial to accommodating divergent interests and needs. For example, one of the failures of Sudan national Dialogue is despite including many participants; dialogues didn't adequately involve key opposition political parties and armed groups. The groups were either excluded from the talks intentionally, or boycotted the processes due to dissatisfaction regarding government's role (Meressa and Dawit, 2020). Inclusion and broad-based participation are most important as the lesson indicate one of the failures of Sudan national dialogue is the exclusion of the participant from the process. Therefore, in order to ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the planned national dialogues in Ethiopia inclusiveness must exist since the beginning starting from the initial formation of committees to the implementation of the negotiated outcome.

## **G. External actors and national ownership**

Although national dialogues are widely recognized as a nationally owned process, support or resistance of external actors can also influence the degree of success of national dialogues (Odigie, 2017; Paffenholz et al., 2017). Relevant external actors can include neighboring countries, international support groups, or regional and international organizations. However, it is important to strike a balance between external support and national ownership (POMEPS, 2013). It can be challenging to navigate the involvement of various external actors as they may have opposing objectives or views in supporting the national dialogue (Harlander, 2016). For example, in Yemen, there were concerns among the local population that the NDC was more of an externally driven process rather than a Yemeni national process (Kestement, 2017); and those external actors differed from local actors and each other in their interests and objectives.

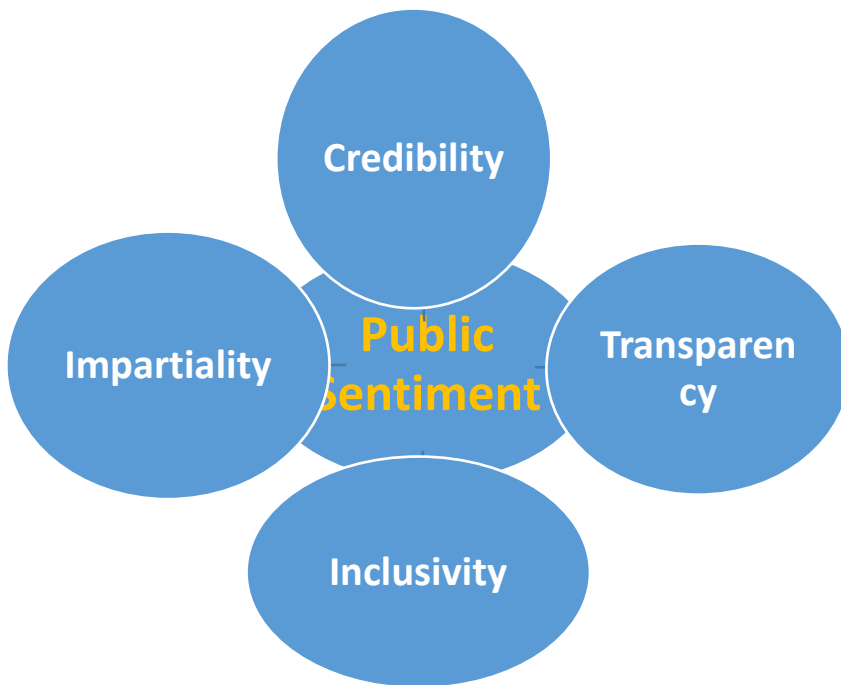
The lessons from the cases study discussed above shows for the successful conduct and implement the negotiated outcome of national dialogue that the planned national dialogue of Ethiopia should consider where all stakeholders can come together and explore critical national

issues to arrive at a shared and sustainable political settlement. On the other hand, the national dialogue should be the nationally owned but internationally supported process (Awol, 2022). The commissioners and technical support staff should take important lessons such as capacity building training from international expertise in national dialogue as well as facilitation and negotiation. Further, the National Dialogue Commission should ensure that there is national capacity to effectively implement the mandate of the commission. This in turn will ensure national ownership and that the dialogues are seen as an Ethiopian process and not an external imposition (SIHA, 2022).

## 2.8. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the objectives and hypotheses outlined for the research. The study aims to evaluate various factors related to Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission and their impact on public sentiment. The following conceptual framework is derived from the objectives and hypotheses.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Approach**

According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This study will employ a mixed research approach or integration of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. According to Creswell (2014), mixed research approach is an approach to inquiry that involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, mixing or integrating these quantitative and qualitative data, and using different research design that may involve philosophical and theoretical frameworks. The rationale for using the mixed approach is that using both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a comprehensive complete understanding of the research problem than using only a single approach. It helps overcome the weaknesses of using only one approach and to triangulate quantitative and qualitative data. Using mixed approaches is also useful to capture the strength of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and to keep the validity and reliability of the study. Although this study employs mixed approach, more emphasis is given for qualitative approach and methods. Thus, it is more of qualitative and less of quantitative or mixed notation.

This is due to that qualitative research approach helps to explore or investigate the research topic or problem in-depth (deeper understanding) from different perspectives and holistically. According to Kothari (2004), qualitative research approach is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. This research approach generates results either in non –qualitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis, and it is important in to explore and understand concepts, reasons, feelings, impressions and trends which cannot be measured, expressed and analyzed quantitatively or in numbers. In this study, the second and third specific objectives of the study, i.e. exploring the public sentiments about the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission in Bahir Dar city respectively can be best achieved by using qualitative methods or through the inclusive and in-depth qualitative data collection (questionnaires ), presentation and analysis. Thus, more of interpretative and holistic approaches were used in this study to understand the issue under study in a natural setting and to gain deep and complete understanding of the issue.

Quantitative (interview) approach uses to explore the perception of people and to summarize collected data using descriptive statistics.

### **3.2. Research Design**

According to Kothari (2004), “the research design is the conceptual structure within which research will be conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data.” Study design is important because it facilitates the smooth flow of the various research operations and processes, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimum expenditure of effort, time and money. As the approach of study is mixed, this study will employ distinct research designs. Thus, this study will be used exploratory and descriptive survey research design methods to assess, investigate, and understand the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission as well as the perceptions and feelings of public in non-numeric and numeric (through survey using percentage) forms at the study area.

### **3.3. The study location**

The study is conducted in Bahir Dar City, commonly known as the capital city of Amhara national region state. Bahir Dar town is the capital city of the Amhara National Regional State and the seventh largest city in Ethiopia (Kindu et al., 2020). The town is 565 km northwest of the capital, Addis Ababa, and has an average altitude of 1830 sea level. The absolute location of Bahir Dar City is about 11° 37' north and 37° 25' east. Bahir Dar has six urban sub-cities, (Belay-zeleke, Atse-Tewodrose, Dagmawi-minilike, Tana, Fasilo, and Gish -Abay). Bahir Dar is a crucial location to understand public sentiment towards the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue.

### **3.4. The study population**

According to Bahir Dar City Administration Mayer Office (2023/2024) the number of population is about 439, 121. Of which 207, 306 are male, and 231, 815 are female. The target population refers to the aggregate number of persons from which the research sample is drawn from. This study targeted personnel who can participated in the 2022 national dialogue process in Amhara Regions, Political party officials, civic organization representatives, political intellectuals and

the people who lives in Bahir Dar City. This population was chosen due to their democratic rights to involve the gathering of agendas with Ethiopian national dialogue

### **3.5. Types and Sources of data**

In order to collect relevant data and responses from respondents and informants about their perceptions of the Ethiopian national dialogue commission in Bahir Dar city, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. As the mixed research approach and study design is adopted for this study, it is mandatory to employ both quantitative and qualitative data and mixed data sources. According to Kothari (2004), “primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character and the secondary data, on the other hand, are those which have already been collected by someone else.” Primary data will be gathered from semi-structured interview and key informants’ interview, and survey questionnaire. Secondary data will be obtained from analysis of different document reviews and sources such as reports, research documents (reports), journals, books, magazines, newspapers, websites, articles, working papers, and from analysis of relevant published and unpublished materials written on the perception of national dialogue commission since 2022 in Amhara Region Bahir Dar City. Then quantitative and qualitative data are put together to get comprehensive conclusion of the findings of the study.

### **3.6. Sampling Technique**

The main objective of this study is to assess public sentiment towards the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar City. Selection and determination of appropriate sample size is also important to ensure that the sample size is good representative of the target population of the study area. Due to this and time and resource limitations, determination of appropriate sample size is necessary. According to Bahir Dar City Administration Mayer Office (2023/2024) the number of population is 439,121 Out of the total number of population 21 and above age group is 261,000-target population, 400 individual respondents, who are living in the town, are selected as samples or representatives of the target population. The researchers choose above 21 ages because individuals within this age group have a better understanding about dialogue than others (0-20). The sample size is determined using the following Yamane’s (1967) sample size determination formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + [N \times (e)^2]}$$

Where, n= the sample size

N= the size of population

e = the error of 5% (0.05)

Using this Yamane's formula with confidence level of 95% and 5% of error, the calculation of sample size from a target population of 261,000 is: -

$$n = \frac{261,000}{1 + 261,000(0.05)^2} = 400$$

For the purpose of this study, both probability and non-probability sampling designs will be employed to select respondents and informants. From probability sampling, multi stage cluster sampling techniques used to select individual respondents of the study. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the selected respondents at the age of 21 and above randomly from Bahir City. The respondents will be asked to fill questionnaire, prepared to explore their perception on the national dialogue commission, randomly. According to Kumar (2011), in simple random sampling, "each element in the population is given an equal and independent chance of selection." From non-probability sampling design techniques, purposive sampling will be employed in this study. As Kumar (2011) states, purposive sampling is very important to describe a phenomenon which only a little is known. Using purposive or judgmental sampling technique, the researcher selected key informants from commissioners, ruling party leaders, government officials, and opposition political party officials. They will be selected based on their experience and know how, and they will be asked for key informant interview to reflect on the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission. This technique will used for the qualitative parts of the study. The key informants will be selected from individuals living in the city.

### **3.7. Methods of Data Collection**

Gathering data through different data collection methods is useful for the accurate results of the study. As the research approach and design of this study is mixed, the researcher is obliged to employ both quantitative and qualitative primary and secondary data collection methods. The

researcher will use the following major data collection methods to obtain relevant data from target respondents and informants of this study.

### **3.7.1. Key Informant Interview**

Key informant interview will be used in this study to obtain detailed data and in-depth answers about public sentiment of the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission from a small number of well-informed key informants who have better understanding and knowledge on the research topic. Informants who will be participated in this key informant interview were; 1 ruling party officials, 3 opposition political party officials whether they participate or not in the process of national dialogue, and 1 member of commissioners; 4 civic organization and 1 political scholar total 10 informants. These informants will be selected purposively because they are well informed and have better know-how about the issue under study. Semi-structured questions will be used in key informant interview. Key informant interview will intend to achieve all specific objectives of the study; assessing the perception of people towards the 2022 national dialogue commission (first objective), identify public sentiments (second objective) and exploring expectations (third objective) of the 2022 national dialogue in Bahir Dar City. During the interviews, the researcher will take interview notes and tape recording.

### **3.7.2. Survey**

In this survey, data will be collected through survey using closed-ended questionnaire to triangulate and collect primary quantitative data. Survey method will be used in this study because it is cost effective and efficient ways of obtaining data and it is useful to gather data from a large number of respondents. Survey questionnaire with closed –ended questions will be distributed to 400 sample respondents in face –to- face or in person. The questions used to collect data will be first prepared in English and then translated in to local (Amharic) language. Likert scale is best method to measure the perceptions, attitudes and opinions, it is also easy to construct. Thus, it is used to measure the perceptions of respondents on the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission in Bahir Dar City Administration( specific objective 1).data will be gathered at one point of time(cross-sectional survey) from respondent and triangulated using descriptive statistics.

### **3.7.3. Document review**

Document analysis method will be used to obtain secondary data, it can be quantitative or qualitative or both. Data will be collected from secondary sources to supplement data collected from primary sources. Secondary data for this study is collected through reviewing (document review) relevant documents and literature. In document analysis and literature review, data will be collected through analyzing contents of documentary materials and works of other authors on the public sentiments of the 2022 Ethiopian national dialogue commission. Different relevant books, reports, working papers, theses, journals, articles, and magazines were consulted to obtain data necessary to achieve this study. Documentary analysis will used to achieve all of the specific objectives (1, 2 and 3) of the study.

### **3.8. Reliability of the Research Instrument**

Reliability testing is an important step that helps ensure the quality and consistency of the research findings. Overall, reliability testing ensures that the research instruments are valid, consistent, and reliable for collecting accurate data.

According to Mugenda (1999), the reliability of an instrument is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials.

Ensuring the reliability and validity of data collection instruments was crucial for maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.

For the quantitative data collection instrument (structured surveys), reliability was ensured internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha). Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the consistency of items within each section of the survey.

For the qualitative data collection instruments in interviews, reliability was maintained through inter-rater reliability and consistency in the moderator's approach. Inter-rater reliability was assessed to ensure consistency in coding and interpretation of qualitative data, and the lead researcher's approach was consistent across focus group discussions.



Table 3. 1 Reliability statistics

Variable	No of items	Cronbach's alpha
Public Sentiment	5	0.779
Credibility	4	0.803
Inclusivity	4	0.796
Impartial Facilitator	3	0.646
Transparency	2	0.953
Over all	18	0.848

Source: research survey, (2024)

Reliability analysis used to measure the consistency of a questionnaire. There are different methods of reliability test, for this study, Cronbach’s alpha is considered suitable. Cronbach’s alpha is the most common measure of reliability. As shown above in the table 3.1, the Cronbach alpha result of the variables is between 0.646 and 0.953 thus it is acceptable for the research analysis. The overall Cronbach alpha scale calculated as a reliability indicator is 0.848. As described by Andy (2006) the values of Cronbach’s alpha more than 0.8 is very good. The alpha values in this study are very good its value 84.8% it is greater than 80%.

### **3.9. Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **3.9.1. Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered for the purpose of this study from primary and secondary sources will be analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. Qualitative data collected through qualitative methods such as key informant interview, and document analysis will be analyzed qualitatively by summarizing, categorized, interpreting and expressing or describing in words or in the form of texts and phrases. In other words, data gathered through qualitative methods will be presented and analyzed qualitatively by directly reflecting and narrating the informants’ word. Data will collect from review of documents of relevant sources will be presented and analyzed by quoting, paraphrasing, summarized and reflecting on issues of the subject matter under study. Data or information obtained will also categorize and grouped into themes. The process will identifying the main

themes, assigning code to the main themes, classifying responses under the main themes, and integrating themes and responses to the text format. Thus, thematic (by forming themes) analysis will be employed in this study to analyze and present qualitative data.

Quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources using quantitative data collection instruments will also be processed, presented and analyzed using quantitative data analysis techniques. Data will be presented by using tables. Then data gathered through quantitative data collection methods; structured surveys, and review of records is analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods such as mean and standard deviation of the data collected on each variable have been analyzed. The mean score of each variable levels the position public perception on that specific variable. And the standard deviation is essential to ensure the validity of the data collected. The dependent and predictor variables have also been analyzed using correlation method the check the presence of a positive relationship between them. These quantitative data will also be analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to tabulate data and calculate scores and the reliability and validity of results.

Generally, quantitative data obtained through selected appropriate quantitative data gathering instruments will be coded, categorized, organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics. In data analysis, quantitative data is put together with qualitative data to get comprehensive conclusion of the findings.

Credibility, transparency, impartial facilitation and inclusiveness of the national dialogue commission are identified the predictor variables and public sentiment is a dependent variable used for correlational analysis and multiple linear regression analysis.

### **3.9.2. Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data collected from interviews underwent summarized and condensed form. Interpretation: Meaningful insights and interpretations were extracted from the qualitative data to understand the causes of results obtained from quantitative analysis.

### **3.9.3. Triangulation**

The study employed triangulation, where findings from both quantitative and qualitative data sources were compared and integrated to strengthen the overall validity of the study. Triangulation allowed for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the relationship between credibility, transparency, inclusiveness and impartiality of facilitators of the Ethiopian

national dialogue commission and public sentiment. By rigorously addressing reliability and validity in the data collection instruments and employing a mixed-methods approach, the study aimed to enhance the robustness and credibility of its findings, providing a solid foundation for understanding the public sentiment towards the national dialogue commission and factors. Research approach and design, population, sample size, sampling process, data sources, data collection method, and methods of data analysis were meticulously crafted to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between factors and public sentiment.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, along with a rigorous approach to data analysis, contributed to a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the effect of creditability, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness on the public sentiment.

### **3.9. Trustworthiness of the Research**

As Shenton (2004) stated that quantitative researchers often challenge qualitative researchers for their exclusion of validity and reliability principles. However, researchers like Shenton introduced the principles of trustworthiness to make qualitative studies rigorous. Based on this, to ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher triangulated data collection methods through using key informant interviews, the discourse of elites, observation of political debates, and document analysis. Besides, the obtained data are accurately interpreted and analyzed. Again, to make the study transferable, a description of key informants was done. Moreover, to ensure dependability and replica, the methodologies of the study were described in detail.

### **3.10. Ethical consideration**

The researcher should be guided by research ethics, which is universally accepted. That means the researcher should respect the dignity of all research participants so as to not to use them simply as a means to achieve research objectives. In order to ensure this ethical principle, the researcher will rely on the principle of informed consent. The researcher will make them to aware the purpose of the study so that they become voluntary to participate in the study or not. Since the issue is to some extent politically sensitive, it must be confidential to the informants for whatever information they provide to the researcher. Moreover, the researcher will withhold the name of the participants to secure their privacy. The most important thing that the researcher will perform is that they will acknowledge the participants that they will use in doing this study. Plagiarism will be strongly condemned by the researcher throughout the whole part of this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. RESULTS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion of the results and the process through which the results were obtained. The respondents' initial demographic information was shown. These data included demographic information and general facts about public sentiment towards the Ethiopian national dialogue commission. The questionnaire was designed using five-point interval scales, with values ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). 400 questionnaires were distributed to residents in Bahir Dar city, and 399 of them were duly completed and returned. The SPSS version 26 software was used to process survey data. The degrees of the link between the various variables under consideration were analyzed using correlation analysis. Additionally, regression analysis was utilized to examine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable.

#### **4.2. Background Information of the Respondents**

Those questionnaires were distributed to 400 respondents, 399 questionnaires were collected, and these are valid for analysis. Thus, the rate of return for the questionnaire paper was 99.7% response rate, which is great to represent the population as well as to generalize the findings to the entire population. A percentage and frequency characteristic of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table 4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	245	61.4	61.4
	Female	154	38.6	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	
Age	Under 35	210	52.6	52.6
	35 – 50	161	40.4	93.0
	51 – 65	21	5.3	98.2
	Over 65	7	1.8	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	
Level Of Education	Uneducated	28	7.0	7.0
	Reading and Writing	14	3.5	10.5
	Primary (1-8)	35	8.8	19.3
	Secondary (9-12)	63	15.8	35.1
	Diploma	70	17.5	52.6
	Degree	105	26.3	78.9
	Master's Degree	77	19.3	98.2
	PhD	7	1.8	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	

## Gender

Gender is an important character that can influence people’s attitude towards the system. The data collection for this study considers gender diversity to get true response that can represent the whole population.

Previous studies show that women are more likely than men to answer, “Don’t know” when asked to express their views about the state of democracy. However, some scholars argue that Women tend to differ from men in several political issues endorsing more welfare policies and progressive policy changes and are less racist than men are. As presented in the table above, 61.4% of respondents were male and 38.6% female.

## **Age**

Age is an important demographic character that may influence individual's perception towards political systems. A person's age at different stages in life brings about different economic and social experiences, which affects their opinions. As people age they experience psychological and physiological development that influence their perceptions of reality. These different stages in life present different experiences that shape one's perceptions of the national dialogue commission.

The data for this study was collected from respondents at different stages of age. As shown in the table above, 52.6% of the respondents were between 20 and 35 years of age, 40.4% of the respondents were between 35 and 50 years of age, indicates that most of the respondents were between 20 and 50. It is a reasonable selection that most of the state's population lies between these ages and most concerned individuals are also in these stages. The survey also includes those individuals aged above 50 years, 5.8% between 51 and 65 years and 1.8% above 65 years.

## **Level of education**

While the robust and positive association between education and political engagement has been widely documented, the direct causal link is still a subject of debate. The study made by "My Nguyen, Huong T. T. Hoang, Thuy Trang, Khoi Duc, Kien Le & Hang Khanh" finds that an additional year of education raises the individual's interest in politics by 6.7% and increases the individuals self-perceived political knowledge by 8.5%. Education further fosters supportive attitudes towards political freedoms. Particularly, a one-year increase in education raises the probability of the individual endorsing the organization of public meetings and marches-demonstrations to protest against the government by 6.0 and 8.0 percentage points, respectively. The individual is also 10.4 and 6.2 percentage points more likely to support revolutionists' organization of public meetings and book publication to express their views. Nevertheless, the better educated are no more likely to neither vote in the election nor adopt any specific position in the left-right political spectrum.

Therefore, selecting respondents with various education levels is the best way to represent the population and to get optimized responses. Table4.1 presented the frequency of respondents

along with their education level. Respondents with first-degree education level took 26.3% of the population followed by respondents with master's degree education level 19.3%.

### 4.3. Mean and Standard deviation

The responses were rated starting from 1 to 5. These ratings measure the level of trust or satisfaction. The mean and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables are presented in the following table.

Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Credibility	1.00	4.00	2.5921	.88971	.792
Inclusivity	1.00	4.25	2.5000	.84911	.721
Impartial Facilitator	1.00	4.00	2.3392	.81282	.661
Transparency	1.00	4.50	2.6140	.92590	.857
Public Sentiment	1.00	4.00	2.8316	.76699	.588

#### 4.4. Inferential Analysis

##### 4.4.1. Correlation Analysis

The significance of the relationship between the dependent and predictors variables has been evaluated based on the correlation coefficients results indicated in the correlation coefficient table.

Table 4.3. Correlation coefficient

Variables		Credibility	Inclusivity	Impartial Facilitator	Transparency	Public Sentiment
Credibility	Pearson	1				
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Inclusivity	N	399				
	Pearson	.860**	1			
	Correlation					
Impartial Facilitator	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	399	399			
	Pearson	.866**	.793**	1		
Transparency	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	399	399	399	399	
Public Sentiment	Pearson	.797**	.869**	.770**	1	
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	399	399	399	399	399



From the above correlation table, we can see that all of the independent variables were significantly correlated with Public Sentiment. The correlation between Public Sentiment and Credibility was significant with p-value less than 0.01 and  $r = 0.830$ . The relationship between Public Sentiment and Inclusivity was significant with  $p=0.000$  and  $r = 0.696$ . The relationship between Public Sentiment and Impartial Facilitator was significant and strong with  $p=0.000$  and  $r=0.785$ . In addition, the relationship between Public Sentiment and Transparency was significant with  $p = 0.000$  and  $r = 0.706$ .

Among the relationship between variables the highest correlation coefficient was found between Public Sentiment and Credibility, followed by Public Sentiment and Impartial Facilitator, Public Sentiment and Transparency and Public Sentiment and Inclusivity. The significance level of the correlated variables is  $p<0.1$  that is its level is 0.01.

#### **4.4.2. Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis is a way of predicting an outcome variable from one predictor variable (simple regression) or several predictor variables (multiple regressions) (Andy field, 2009). The model of regression shows how much of the variance in the public sentiment is explained by independent variables. The regression model used to examine the predictors of the public sentiment towards the national dialogue commission. Shows that the predictors collectively explain a large portion of the variance in the dependent variable.

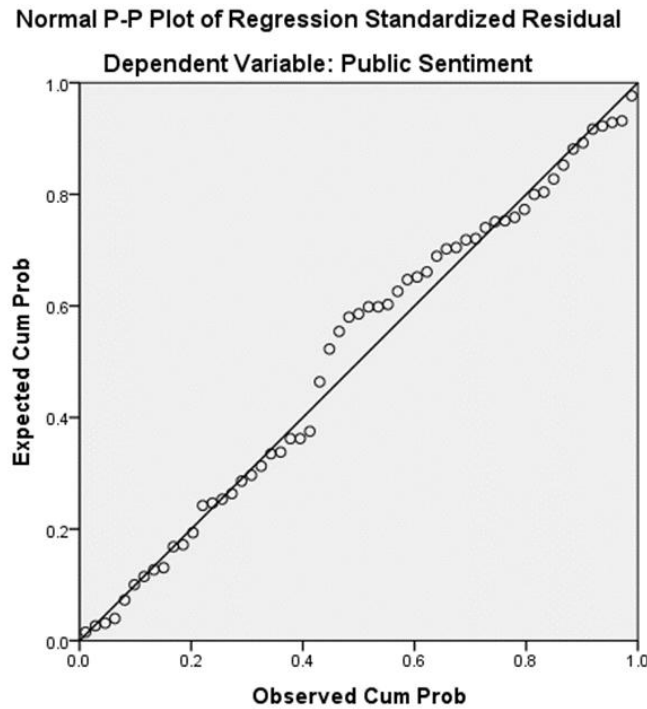
##### **4.4.2.1. Assumption tests**

Before interpreting regression results, it is essential to ensure that the data fulfill the basic assumptions of classical linear regression analysis. These assumptions are critical for the validity of the regression results, ensuring that the model provides reliable and unbiased estimates. The main assumptions are:

Before fitting important variables into the multiple regressions, it is necessary to test regression assumptions such as normality test, multicollinearity test, outliers and linearity of the model.

Linearity of the model

**Figure 4. 1. Normal P-P plot**



The normal P-P plot of regression standardized residuals for the dependent variable "public sentiment" compares the observed cumulative probabilities of the residuals with the expected cumulative probabilities under a normal distribution. The points on the plot closely follow the diagonal line, which represents a perfect normal distribution. This alignment suggests that the residuals are approximately normally distributed. There are some deviations from the diagonal line, particularly at the lower and upper ends, indicating slight deviations from normality. However, these deviations are minimal and do not significantly detract from the overall conclusion that the residuals are normally distributed. The close fit to the diagonal line supports the validity of the regression model. The implications of these findings are that the regression model used to predict "public sentiment" is appropriate and well-calibrated. The normal distribution of residuals indicates that the model's assumptions are largely met, enhancing confidence in its predictive accuracy. The minor deviations at the extremes suggest there may be some non-normality in the tails, but this is not enough to undermine the overall reliability of the model. The model's robustness, as indicated by the normal distribution of residuals, ensures that predictions are generally accurate and reliable. However, attention should still be given to the

slight deviations at the extremes to identify any potential areas for improvement and to ensure comprehensive understanding and continuous enhancement of the model.

Test for the relationship between residual variables and independent variables

Table 4.4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.848 <sup>a</sup>	.719	.697	.42194	1.563

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transparency, Impartial Facilitator, Credibility, Inclusivity

b. Dependent Variable: Public Sentiment

If the Durbin-Watson value is between 1.5 and 2.5, there is no relationship between the residual variable and the independent variables. Therefore, as shown in the table above, the Durbin Watson value is equal to 1.563, indicates that there is no relationship between residual variable and independent variables.

### Normality Test

This test was applied to control whether a data is well-modeled by a normal distribution or not, and to calculate in what way likely an underlying random variable is designate normally distributed the residuals are normally distributed.

Table 4.5 Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Studentized Residual	.110	57	.086	.979	57	.441

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results obtained from the Shapiro Wilk test indicate that all the variables had a P-value greater than (0.05), meaning that the variables in the study follow a normal distribution; therefore, it can be concluded that the residual value is normally distributed indicating that the regression model fits the data reasonably well.

**Multi collinearit test**

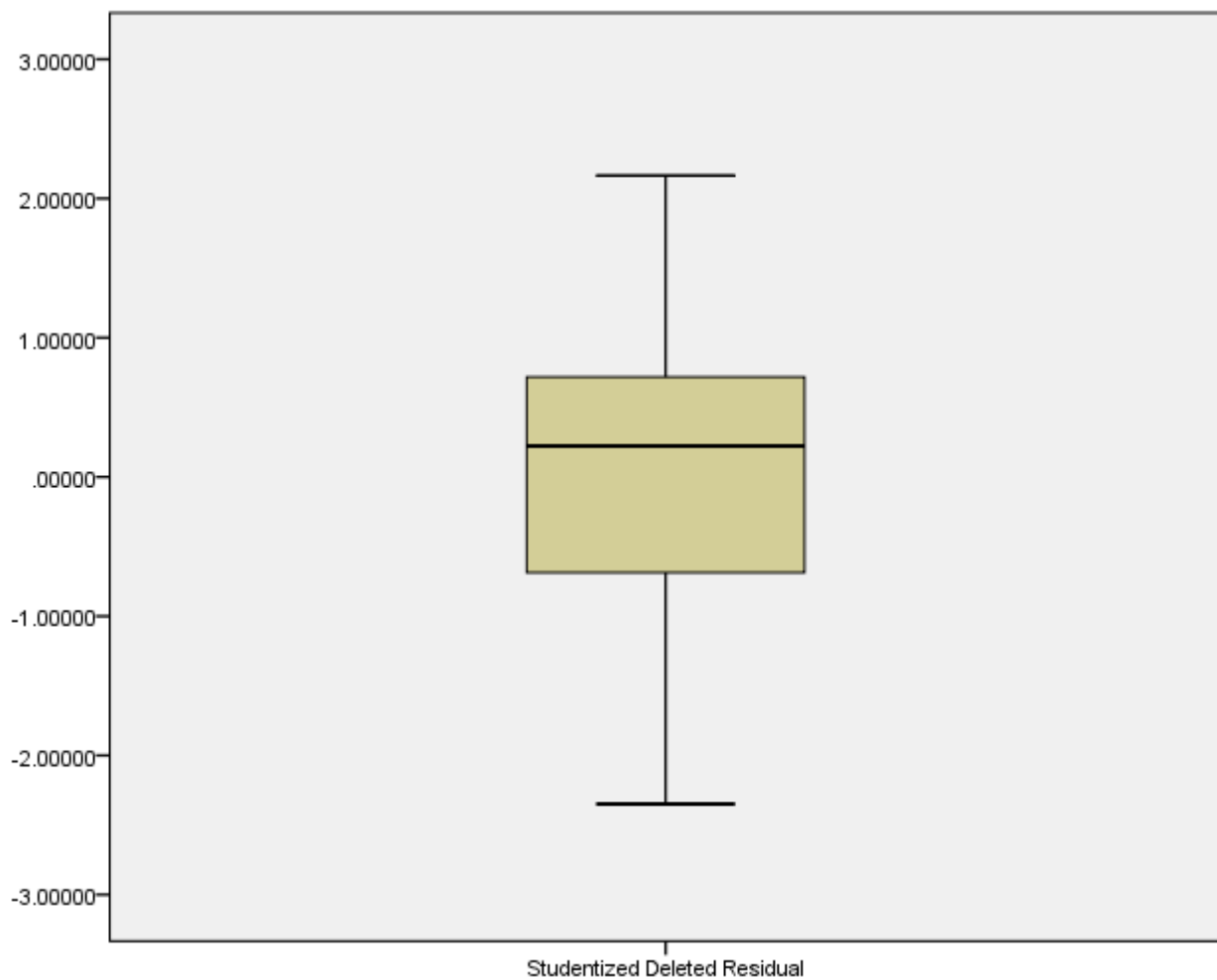
Table 4.6. Collinearity Statistics

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Credibility	.170	5.898
Inclusivity	.168	5.947
Impartial Facilitator	.233	4.297
Transparency	.227	4.407

In analyzing the multicollinearity statistics for the model assessing public sentiment to Ethiopia’s National Dialogue Commission, we observe that all variables show tolerance values greater than 0.1 and variance inflation factors (VIF) below 10. These findings indicate that multicollinearity is not a significant concern in this model. The collinearity statistics presented in the table above suggests that there is no substantial overlap between the predictor variables in the model, which is crucial for ensuring the reliability of the regression coefficients. Low variance inflation factors (VIF) values indicate that the predictors are not highly correlated with one another, thus

confirming that each variable independently contributes to explaining the variance in the dependent variable, which in this case is public sentiment. The absence of multicollinearity means that the relationships observed between the predictors and the outcome are likely to be valid and interpretable. Each predictor, including credibility, transparency, impartial facilitators and inclusiveness, can be considered to have an independent effect on public sentiment. This enhances the robustness of the regression analysis and supports the validity of conclusions drawn from the model.

**Figure 4. 2 Test of outliers**

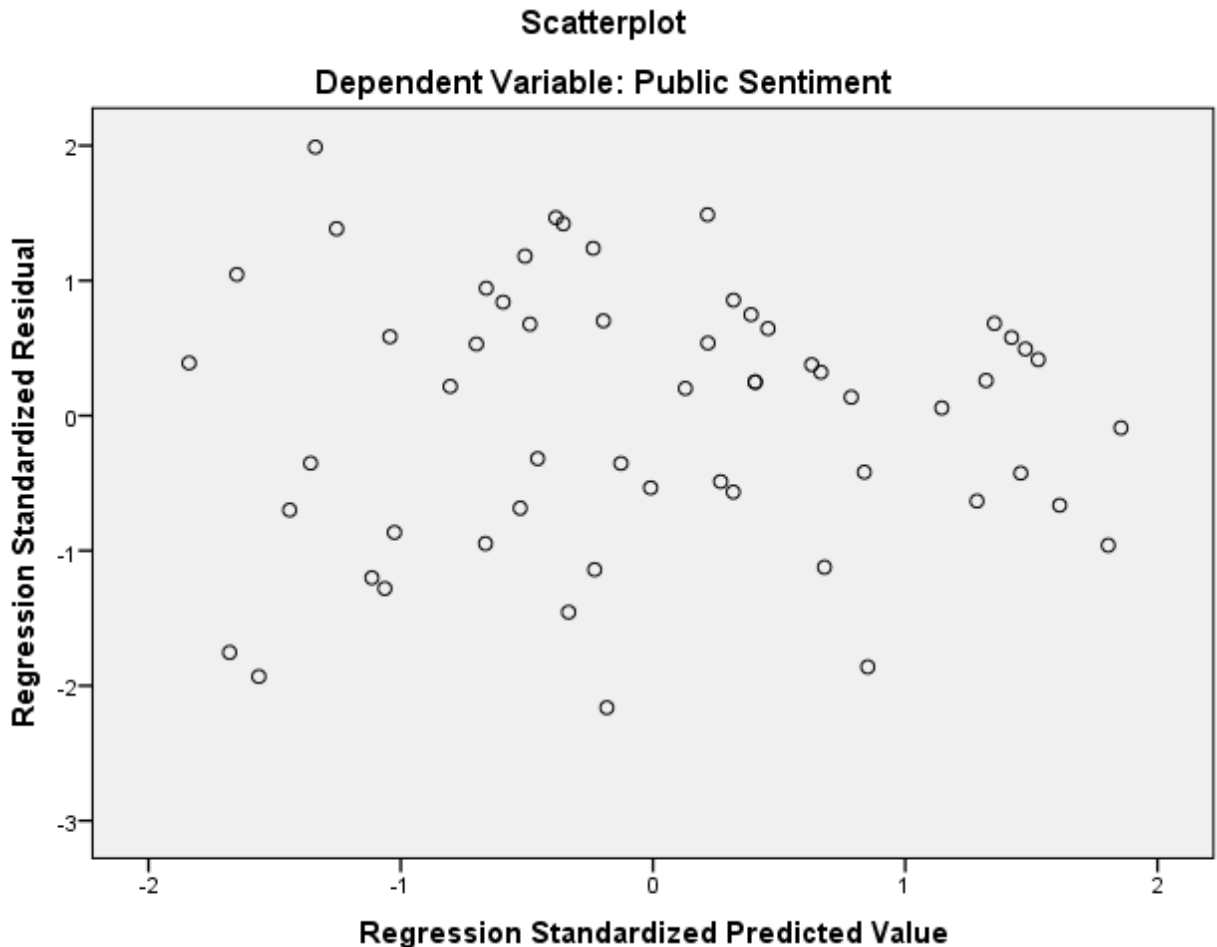


An outlier is an observation that appears to deviate markedly from other observations in the sample. Identification of potential outliers is important that outlier may indicate bad data. For example, the data may have been coded incorrectly or an experiment may not have been run correctly.

The presence of asterisks or circles in the box plot is the indication of potential outliers or extreme values that differ from most other data points in a dataset.

As shown in figure above the plot is clean no circles or asterisks indicating that there are no outliers in the data set.

**Figure 4. 3Heteroskedasticity Test**



The scatterplot shows the relationship between the regressions standardized residuals and the dependent variable "public sentiment." The points are distributed across the range of residuals, indicating how the residuals vary with different levels of sentiment. The vertical spread of points at each level of public sentiment suggests variability in the residuals, which is expected in regression analysis. The plot does not show any clear patterns or systematic structure, which is a positive indication. The absence of patterns suggests that the residuals are randomly distributed

and do not exhibit heteroscedasticity or non-linearity. This randomness supports the assumption that the regression model's residuals are independent and identically distributed, reinforcing the model's validity. The implications of these findings are that the regression model used for predicting "public sentiment to the national dialogue commission" is appropriate and reliable. The random distribution of residuals implies that the model does not suffer from significant issues like heteroscedasticity or non-linearity, enhancing confidence in its predictive power. The variability in residuals across different levels of public sentiment suggests that the model captures most of the variability in the data, though some unexplained variability remains.

### Overall significance of the model

Table 4. 7 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	23.685	4	5.921	33.260	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	9.258	52	.178		
Total	32.943	56			

a. Dependent Variable: Public Sentiment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transparency, Impartial Facilitator, Credibility, Inclusivity

The model can be represented by the following equation, as the dependent variable is expressed as a function of four independent variables.

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4$$

Where Y represents the dependent variable (Public Sentiment),  $b_0$  is a constant value assumed to be the value of the dependent variable without the presence of any factor or if the value of all the independent variables is set to be zero.

$X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$  and  $X_4$  represents the independent variables Credibility, Inclusivity, Impartial Facilitator and Transparency respectively.

B1, b2, b3 and b4 are the coefficients of the independent variables.

The above model to be significant, at least one of the coefficients should be different from zero. Otherwise, the model is insignificant and the dependent variable has no relationship with the independent variables.

As shown in the table above the significance value is zero ( $PV = 0$ ). Moreover, if the significance value is less than or equal to 0.05, the model is significant indicates that at least one of the coefficients of the independent variables value is different from zero.

The model summary

Table 4.8. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.848 <sup>a</sup>	.719	.697	.42194	1.563

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transparency, Impartial Facilitator, Credibility, Inclusivity

b. Dependent Variable: Public Sentiment

As shown in the table above Adjusted R Square value is 0.697, which indicates that 69.7% of the changes in Public Sentiment could be attributed to the combined effect of the predictor variables. However, 30.3% of the variance is affected by other factors not covered in this study.



## Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. 9 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.918	.184		4.999	.000	.550	1.286		
Credibility	.582	.154	.676	3.785	.000	.274	.891	.170	5.898
Inclusivity	-.226	.162	-.250	-1.395	.169	-.551	.099	.168	5.947
Impartial Facilitator	.236	.144	.250	1.638	.107	-.053	.524	.233	4.297
Transparency	.160	.128	.193	1.249	.217	-.097	.416	.227	4.407

a. Dependent Variable: Public Sentiment

The variable with the highest beta value contributes the most to explaining the dependent variable’s variance, which is controlled by all other variables in the model, as shown in the beta column beneath standardized coefficients. Credibility (0.676) followed by Impartial facilitator (0.250), Transparency (0.193) and Inclusivity (-0.250).

The analysis reveals a coefficient for credibility of 0.582 with a standardized beta of 0.676 and a p-value of 0.000. This result is highly significant, indicating that credibility is a major predictor of public sentiment. The substantial positive coefficient supports the hypothesis that when the National Dialogue Commission become credible, the community is more likely to engage in support of the commission.

The coefficient for impartial facilitator stands at 0.236, with a standardized beta of 0.250 and a p-value of 0.107. This positive and statistically significant coefficient supports the hypothesis that impartiality of facilitators in the Ethiopia’s National Dialogue Commission will add a significant value on public sentiment in the positive direction.

Work difficulty shows a coefficient of 0.160, a standardized beta of 0.193, and a p-value of 0.217, confirming that transparency is a significant predictor of public sentiment. The positive relationship indicates that the transparency of the National Dialogue Commission will change public sentiment significantly.

Inclusiveness on the other hand has a coefficient of -0.226, and a standardized beta of -0.250, showing that inclusiveness is not a significant predictor of public sentiment.

#### **4.5 Qualitative Analysis**

Exploring the public sentiment towards Ethiopia's national dialogue commission reveals a complex array of factors that influence how sentiment in the public changes that is the major driving force for the national dialogue commission able to resolve Ethiopia's violent past and inspire national consensus.

The findings from the qualitative analysis emphasize that public acceptance and community support are important for the effectiveness of national dialogue and consensus, suggesting that the National Dialogue Commission has to start from getting public acceptance before starting the dialogue. The current problem in the country arises from political instability and extreme nationalism. Therefore, the commission should work with the community rather than the government.

One major insight is the importance of credibility that the complexities of the bonding between the national dialogue commission and the audience are premised primarily on credibility. It is a key dimension that plays a central role to meet the objectives. The successfulness or failure of the national dialogue commission is mainly depended on the fact that gaining or losing credibility.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is expected to have a positive impact on resolving the ongoing conflicts, but it needs to demonstrate its effectiveness and gain credibility. The commission needs a robust legal framework to ensure its effectiveness. The public desires unity, coexistence, and national dialogue for sustainable peace. For the commission to achieve its goals, it must gain the trust of the people and the elites, and the commission should have a legal framework to implement its decisions. The importance of building trust between the government

and armed forces before the dialogue has been found important to keep the national dialogue process on the right track.

Another significant factor on processing and implementation of the national dialogue commission to resolve ongoing conflicts between armed forces in different regions of the country such as Amhara, Tigray and Oromia with the government is transparency and accountability. This finding highlights the importance of transparency and accountability as a crucial driver of achievement, suggesting that the commission being neutral, collecting ideas without rejecting them and being accountable to the House of People's Representatives, not any political party can change the dimension of the audience's perception.

The significance of impartiality is also evident in the success of the national dialogue process. It depends on fairness and freedom. The community support to the national dialogue commission depends on its impartiality. The finding emphasizes the effectiveness of the commission is contingent on the absence of government intervention. Suggesting that the commission should be free from partisan practices and work with all sides, equal treatment of all disputants, to avoid government influence and being free from partisan practices and work with all sides. The doubt on the commission's ability to enforce decisions and the platform it has to implement people's decisions is also the major concern that influences public sentiment. Engaging all parties involved in armed struggles is crucial for the success of the national dialogue. Fairness and independence of the commission has the ability to decide the potential outcomes of the national dialogue process.

Inclusiveness contributes to the effectiveness of the national dialogue commission and public sentiment which is a crucial factor in determining the success of the commission. Inclusiveness is important, ensuring all ideologies, nations, religions, genders, and sections of society are represented. The finding suggests the commission must be open to all nations, nationalities, and peoples without discrimination, allowing them to raise their questions and interests. The agenda should be collected from the people and organized for political and legal decisions to achieve the goals. The commission also has the potential to either improve or worsen Ethiopia's political landscape and social cohesion. It aims to accommodate everyone's needs and turn individual questions into mutual benefits, thereby opening the political space to all.

In summary, the findings reveal that several factors are crucial for making a change on a public perception and the national dialogue commission to get full community acceptance and support. Credibility and transparencies are key contributors, showing that public acceptance and support thrives when the commission demonstrates its credibility and the dialogue process is being transparent. Impartiality and inclusiveness of the commission also proves to be a significant factor to decide the potential outcomes the national dialogue process. The commissions being free from political influence and including all parties in the process plus collecting ideas without diminishing them will make the community's trust on the national dialogue commission.

#### **4.6 Triangulating the Descriptive Findings with Qualitative Insights**

The quantitative method starts from the hypothesis driven by the researcher that public sentiment plays a vital role in functioning of the national dialogue commission. The hypothesis includes major factors that potentially influence public sentiment such as credibility, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness. But the qualitative method was designed to discover the potential factors. In addition, the work in progress of the commission has been assessed along with its effectiveness.

The descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis offer a comprehensive view of factors influencing public sentiment to the National Dialogue Commission, while the quantitative data provides a snapshot of the public's perceptions of credibility, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness of the National dialogue Commission, the qualitative findings deepen our understanding of how these factors affect public sentiment.

The quantitative data indicates a moderate level of credibility for the national dialogue commission with a mean score of 2.59. This result suggests that the people of Ethiopia have some degree of trust on the National Dialogue Commission in resolving the current ongoing conflicts in vast areas of the country but feels there is a considerable gap between the commission and the people. This finding is echoed in the qualitative analysis, which highlights that, the successfulness or failure of the national dialogue commission is mainly depend on the fact that gaining or losing credibility. The community that experiences the commission's credibility is more likely to participate in the dialogue process and to the support the commission wholeheartedly.

The descriptive statistics reveal that the National Dialogue Commission is poorly impartial with the mean score of 2.34. The public has some level of trust on the impartiality of the commission but there is a significant difference between the National Dialogue commissions being impartial and the public perception. The qualitative data supports this finding, emphasizing that the effectiveness of the commission is contingent on the absence of government intervention. Suggesting that the commission should be free from partisan practices and work with all sides, equal treatment of all disputants, to avoid government influence and being free from partisan practices and work with all sides. In addition, the qualitative finding reveals that the doubtful effectiveness of the commission is due to the community perception that it is not impartial.

With the mean score of 2.61, the quantitative data shows that the public has a moderate knowledge of the National Dialogue Commission's work in progress, how it has been established, how it is processing and how it is implementing. The quantitative data indicates that there is a room for the commission to fill with transparency so as to connect with the people of Ethiopia. The qualitative data also highlights the importance of transparency and accountability as a crucial driver of achievement, suggesting that the commission being neutral, collecting ideas without rejecting them and being accountable to the House of People's Representatives, not any political party can change the dimension of the audience's perception. The qualitative data also reveals that there is doubt about the National Dialogue Commission being transparent.

Even though the quantitative data analysis shows inclusivity does not directly influence public sentiment towards the Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission, it does not necessarily mean that inclusivity is not important for effectiveness of the commission. The descriptive statistics result shows that the public perception about the National Dialogue Commission being inclusive is in a moderate level with the mean score of 2.50. This result can be considered as 50% positivity on the issue of concern. This finding is also the indication of the commission's weakness either being inclusive or convincing its inclusiveness. The qualitative data further explores this aspect, revealing that Inclusiveness is important, ensuring all ideologies, nations, religions, genders, and sections of society are represented. The finding suggests the commission must be open to all nations, nationalities, and peoples without discrimination, allowing them to raise their questions and interests. The qualitative finding also highlights the presence of questions about being excluded from some groups and civic associations.

In conclusion, the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a coherent picture of the factors influencing public sentiment towards the Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission. The quantitative data provide a broad view of the public's perception of the National Dialogue Commission's credibility, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness. The qualitative data although offers deeper insights into how these factors impact public sentiment towards the National Dialogue Commission and suggests specific areas for improvement. Being credible, Transparent, inclusive and free from any political influence, the Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission can resolve the country's current problems. These strategies are well-supported by existing literature and offer practical pathways for resolving disputes in countries like Ethiopia with diverse nations and nationalities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

Chapter Five presents a comprehensive summary of the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study on public sentiment towards Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission and factors that influence public sentiment. This chapter synthesizes the critical insights gained from analyzing the factors influencing public sentiment, such as credibility, Transparency, impartiality and inclusivity of the National Dialogue Commission. It aims to provide a clear understanding of how these elements impact the trust of the public in the National Dialogue Commission. Additionally, useful recommendations are offered to enhance the dialogue process.

#### 5.2. Summary of major findings

The regression analysis reveals that credibility, transparency and impartiality are significant predictors of the public sentiment towards the National Dialogue Commission. Each factor influences the public sentiment differently, highlighting key areas for enhancing effectiveness in the dialogue process.

Credibility is a strong predictor of a positive public sentiment towards the commission, with a standardized beta of 0.676. Credibility and public sentiment have a direct relationship an increase in credibility will increase public sentiment. Statistically, a unit increase in credibility will change public sentiment by 0.676. This finding indicates that fair and unbiased dialogue is more likely to get notable community support for sustainable peace in the country.

Impartial facilitation also positively affects the public sentiment towards the commission, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.250. It is the second major predictor of public sentiment. Statistical findings reveal that, a unit increase in impartiality will increase public sentiment by 0.250. Based on the findings from this study, the dialogue process free from political influence will have more potential to become successful.

Transparency has a notable impact on public sentiment towards the commission, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.193. This coefficient indicates the magnitude and direction of

relation between transparency and public sentiment. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship between transparency and public sentiment and its magnitude tells that, a unit increase in transparency will increase public sentiment by 0.193.

The regression analyses results with a negative standardized beta coefficient of inclusivity with -0.250, indicates that inclusivity is not a direct predictor of public sentiment.

Overall, the study confirms that credibility, impartial facilitation and transparency all play a vital role in shaping the public sentiment towards the National Dialogue Commission. These factors attribute 69.7% in the change of public sentiment. However, there are still other factors not discovered in this study which contribute for 30.3% of the change in public sentiment.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

The research on public sentiment towards Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission comes with comprehensive and insightful findings. The researcher has identified credibility, transparency, inclusiveness, and impartiality as the main factors impacting public sentiment. These elements are indeed crucial for the success of any national dialogue process.

From quantitative and qualitative analyses, these factors have been highlighted as essential for fostering trust and engagement among the public. For instance, inclusiveness ensures that all voices, especially those from marginalized groups, are heard and considered. Transparency helps in building trust by making the process open and clear to everyone involved. Credibility and impartiality are vital for ensuring that the dialogue is seen as fair and unbiased.

The research aimed to measure public sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission along with identifying influencing factors. The findings indicate a moderate level of public trust in the commission, with a mean value of 2.832, translating to 56.6% public trust. The study underscores the importance of enhancing the commission's credibility, impartiality, and transparency to foster greater public trust and support. These strategies are crucial for the commission to effectively address Ethiopia's current challenges and promote sustainable peace.

The strength of correlation between dependent and independent variable analysis result indicates that Credibility is the major influential factor on public sentiment towards the national dialogue commission. Impartial facilitator is the second influential factor followed by Transparency.



The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that credibility, impartial facilitation, and transparency are significant determinants of public sentiment. However, inclusivity was not found to be a major factor. But qualitative insights emphasize the importance of inclusivity for the effectiveness of the dialogue process. This is an indication of difference in political attitude between elites and the ordinary people. The public does not pay much concern about the inclusiveness of the commission but political intellectuals, political parties, and civic associations recognize inclusiveness as notable factor for the success of the dialogue process.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Contemporarily, the government gave emphasis for the issues of Ethiopian national dialogue with the establishment of an independent commission. Nevertheless, much work and emphasis have to be given for the practical implementation of those policies and strategies so as to make the national dialogue part of the engines of change in all aspects of development including the political issues.

The culture of dialogue among the people is important to communicate and share information on the activities of the incumbent Ethiopian national dialogue. Back then, it is recommended that political institutions (such as political parties), public media, civil-society organizations, pressure groups and agents of the ruling government has to provide transparent information, create awareness and mobilize the mass to actively engage in the overall agenda gathering. Much has to be done on awareness creation about national dialogue and the ways of influencing politics to augment the attitude and practice of community participation by the aforementioned bodies.

The national dialogue commission has been poorly leveled in credibility, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness. All of these factors have a mean score value below 3.0, can be considered poor. So, the commission communicates and improves his influence on the community.

Further research studies on factors not discovered in this research, the identified factors only contribute 69.7% of the change in public sentiment. Therefore, there are other factors yet to be discovered which contribute for 30.3% of a change in public sentiment.

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**APPENDICES**  
**BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**Appendix 1: Interview Questions**

Dear key informant, the purpose of this interview is to collect data in doing my MA Thesis,

Titled; Analyzing Public Sentiment towards the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for Sustainable Peace in Amhara Region case study of Bahir Dar City, which is a requirement for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science. Therefore, I thank you for your voluntariness to be my key informant. The data that you give me will be used for this academic purpose. Thus, primary data were collected through the face to face and telephone interviews from the following stakeholders:

1 key informant were from ruling party officials

3 opposition political party officials which they participated in the process of national dialogue.

1 member from Ethiopian national dialogue commissions

4 civic organizations

1 political scholar

❖ Interview Questions to the Political elites of Amhara Prosperity Party (APP), National Movement of Amhara (NMA), Enat Party, All Ethiopian Unity Party.

1. What is your assessment of the political content and current situation in Ethiopia at the time of the launch of the National Consultative Commission?

2. How many parties are involved in the Ethiopian Consultative Commission? Do you have a participant in your party?

3. What are the main historical, ethnic and political ideas that the Commission should include in the consultation process?

4. In your opinion, what are the risks and problems that the Commission may face?

5. What do you consider the public's view of the Commission's independence and fairness?
6. What role do you believe foreign political actors and the international community should play in the national consultation?
7. What are the most important criteria for measuring the success or failure of a commission's work based on your institution's analysis?
8. What is your assessment of the national consultation process that will affect the future political landscape in Ethiopia?
9. Do you believe that Ethiopia's consultation process and approach have learned lessons from the national consultation processes of other African countries?

❖ Interview questions for members of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission

1. What are the basic objectives and objectives of the National Consultative Commission?
2. How were the members of the Commission elected? What do you think of the different types of stakeholders?
3. What are the main challenges you have encountered in the consultation and reconciliation process so far?
4. What are you doing to engage the broader Ethiopian population in the national consultation? Is it possible that the work you're doing is participatory?
5. What procedures are being implemented to ensure transparency and accountability of the Commission's consultation process?
6. What is your assessment of the public's attitude towards the consultation work currently undertaken by the National Consultative Commission?
7. What strategies are you using to build trust and positive thinking for the Commission in all sectors of the community?
8. How are you monitoring and assessing the impact and outcomes of the national consultation process? Is it possible that the consultations you have carried out so far have been effective?

❖ Interview for Political analysts and academics specializing in Ethiopian politics and conflict resolution

1. What is your professional observation of the political content and current situation in Ethiopia at the time of the establishment of the National Consultative Commission?
2. What are the main historical, ethnic and political ideas that the Commission should include in its consultation process?
3. In your expert opinion, what are the risks and difficulties that the Commission may face in its consultation process?
4. What is your assessment of the public's observations regarding the independence and fairness of the Commission?
5. What role do you believe foreign political actors and the international community should play in the national consultation?
6. Based on your career analysis, what are the most important criteria for measuring the commission's job success or ineffectiveness?
7. How are you monitoring the national consultation process that will affect the future political landscape in Ethiopia?
8. Do you believe that Ethiopia's consultation process and approach have learned lessons from the national consultation processes of other African countries?

❖ Interview for Civil society leaders and organizations involved in the peace process

1. What involvement and relationship does your organization have/has it had with the National Consultative Commission?
2. From your perspective, do you believe that it is a commission that represents the diverse interests and voices of all Ethiopians?
3. What are the main issues or criticisms your organization has regarding the national consultation process?

4. How effective do you believe the Commission is in communicating and collaborating with the general public?
5. In your opinion, what are the main factors influencing public attitude?
6. How can the Commission better incorporate civil society perspectives and community voices?
7. What recommendations would you make to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Commission?
8. What impact do you think the outcome of the national consultation will have on the future of peace and stability in Ethiopia?

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire

### Part 1: Background information

#### Gender

Male  Female

#### Age

Under 35  35-50  51-65  Over 65

#### Level of Education

Uneducated  Reading and Writing  Primary (1-8)  Secondary (9-12)  Diploma   
Degree  Master's Degree  Third Degree

### Part 2: Credibility

1. The National Dialogue Commission has a potential to bring peace and solidarity to the people of Ethiopia.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

2. The National Dialogue Commission facilitators are working with all their efforts to end the disputes and have shown a good progress.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

3. The National Consultative Commission of Ethiopia will effectively resolve questions and grievances in the disputed area, especially in the Amhara and Tigray regions.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

4. The National Dialogue Commission will produce tangible results that address meaningful and key national issues.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

Part 3: Inclusivity

5. Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is discussing with all concerned bodies.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree



6. The national dialogue commission fully represents all the diverse opinions resource requests in the country.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

7. The National Dialogue Commission of Ethiopia is working to address the problems and grievances of people who claim to have equal opportunities in Ethiopia.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

8. All concerned and interested parties were included during the formation and agenda formulation of the National Dialogue Commission of Ethiopia.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Part 4: Impartial Facilitator

9. The peace and security situation in Ethiopia has improved through the implementation of the National Dialogue Strategy.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

10. The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is effectively leading the ongoing conflict resolution process.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

11. The Commissioners facilitating and conducting the national consultations are independent and faithful to their responsibilities.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

Part 5: Transparency

12. The national dialogue process is transparent and reliable.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

13. The decisions made by the National Dialogue Commission were fair and transparent.

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

#### Part 6: Public Sentiment

14. You have learned that Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has been established and operating.

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

15. The work of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is crucial for the future wellbeing of Ethiopia.

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

16. The National Dialogue Commission of Ethiopia has established to settle disputes permanently.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

17. The National Dialogue Commission of Ethiopia has been successful in its work so far.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

18. The statutory term of office of the National Dialogue Commission is sufficient.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree