

T.C.

ISTANBUL COMMERCE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND AFRICAN STUDIES

PROGRAMME



**POLITICAL COMPETITION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AN
ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL COMPETITION ON SOCIO-
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE GAMBELLA REGION IN ETHIOPIA.**

MA Thesis

THARJIATH DOBUOL LUL

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Istanbul, 2019

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ADVISOR: Dr. BASAK OZORAL

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ONAY FORMU

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess and explain the impacts of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella region in Ethiopia. To fulfill the aim of the study, the researcher predominantly used qualitative research approaches, although some quantitative techniques were used. From qualitative research approaches, descriptive, explanatory and analytical research methods were used because they are considered best suited to the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Key informant interview and informal interview techniques were used to collect primary data. A total number of ten regional key officials with the ratio of seven to three men and women respectively were purposively selected and interviewed. To supplement the collected primary data, the researcher made a rigorous document reviews of secondary information. The researcher used qualitative content analysis technique to analyses and interpret qualitative data. In addition, techniques such as tabulation, percentage and inferential were used to quantify political representation and power distribution between different ethnic groups in the Region.

The findings of this study revealed the complex and the dynamic relationship between political competition and socio-economic development in the Gambella Region in Ethiopia. According to the data, the researcher found that political competition between the indigenous people of the Gambella region has been an obstacle to the socio-economic development of the region for many years. To put it differently, political competition has played negative role on the socio-economic development of the region for many years. Thus, this study is important because it clearly state, describe and explain the negative impact of political competition on socio-economic development of the region, a problem that has been endured by the people of the Gambella Region for almost three (3) decades. And as the famous saying goes, “a problem clearly stated is a problem half solved.” Finally, logical recommendations were given.

Key terms: Political competition; Socio-economic development; Indigenous ethnic (people) groups; Highlanders; Gambella Region; Ethiopia.

ÖZET (ÖZ)

Bu çalışma, Etiyopya'nın Gambella bölgesindeki politik rekabetin sosyo-ekonomik gelişme üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirmeyi ve açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın amacına ulaşması için, araştırmacı bazı nicel teknikler kullanmasına rağmen, ağırlıklı olarak nitel araştırma yaklaşımlarını kullanmıştır. Nitel araştırma yaklaşımlarının yanı sıra; betimsel, açıklayıcı ve analitik araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır, zirâ bu yol çalışmanın amaçlarına en uygun yol olarak düşünülmüştür. Bununla irtibâtlı olarak hem birincil hem de ikincil veriler toplanılmıştır. Birincil verilerin toplanmasında kilit bilgileri teşkil eden resmî görüşme ve gayr-ı resmi görüşme teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Toplamdaki on kişinin yedisi erkek ve üçü de kadın olarak şuurulu bir şekilde seçilmiş ve hepsiyle görüşülmüştür. Bununla birlikte; araştırmacı, toplanan birincil verileri destekleme amacına ma'tûf olarak ikincil verilerin titiz bir doküman incelemesini yapmıştır. Araştırmacı, nitel verileri tahlil etmek ve yorumlamak için nitel içerik analizi tekniğini kullanmıştır. Ayrıca; tablolama, yüzde ve çıkarım gibi teknikler, bölgedeki farklı etnik gruplar arasındaki siyasi temsili ve güç dağılımını ölçmek için kullanılmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Etiyopya'nın Gambella Bölgesi'ndeki siyasi rekabet ile sosyo-ekonomik gelişme arasındaki karmaşık ve dinamik ilişkiyi ortaya koymaktadır. Verilere göre, araştırmacı Gambella bölgesinin yerli halkı arasındaki siyasi rekabetin, bölgenin sosyo-ekonomik kalkınmasında uzun yıllar boyunca bir engel teşkil ettiğini tespit etti. Başka bir ifadeyle, siyasi rekabet bölgenin sosyo-ekonomik kalkınmasında uzun yıllardır olumsuz rol oynamıştır. Bu çalışma bu sebebe binâen önem arz etmektedir; çünkü Gambella Bölgesi halkının yaşadığı bir sorun olarak politik rekabetin bölgenin sosyo-ekonomik gelişimi üzerindeki olumsuz etkisini açıkça tasvir etmekte ve açıklamaktadır. Ve meşhur bir sözde söylediği gibi, “açıkça ifade edilen bir sorun, yarısı çözülmüş bir problemdir”.

Anahtar terimler: Siyasi rekabet; Sosyo-ekonomik gelişme; Yerli etnik gruplar (insanlar); Highlanders; Gambella Bölgesi; Etiyopya.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSA:- Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia

EPLF: - Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front

EPRDF: - The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

FDRE: - The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GDP: - Gross Domestic Product

GPLM: - Gambella People Liberation Movement

GPNRS: - The Gambella Peoples National Regional State

HCE: - Ethiopian Household Consumption – Expenditure survey

TPLF: - Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Political competition, which is broadly defined as a “non-violent” contest for political influence and power, is a global phenomenon which is by no means restricted to democratic polities where free and fair elections take place on a regular basis Tsui (2006, as cited in Besley, Timothy, Torsten Persson, & Daniel M. Sturm, 2010). Although there is no agreement on how to measure the term, many scholars seem to have common understanding that political competition can be quantify by using elections and seats occupied by the competing actors. In the same way, the process of social and economic development in a society is what we generally termed socio-economic development. Like political competition, socio-economic development is also a very dynamic term that could not be easily measure. However, many researchers have suggested that indicators such as: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, and level of employment and infrastructure are often used to quantified socio-economic development.

Since its formal integration into the Ethiopia state in 1902, the Gambella Region is known throughout the country for its poor socio-economic development records. Many factors such as historical legacy of isolation, victimization, economic and political marginalization by central governments, lack of educated indigenous people, conflicts within and around the region, etc....were mentioned by different researchers to be the main cause for the poor socio-economic performance of the region. The relationship between political competition and socio-economic development of the region has been observed by many researchers. However, they (the researchers) failed to show the direct link between the terms. Instead, they cited political competition as a cause to many conflicts in the region, and not directly as a source of the poor socio-economic development of the region. This study is, therefore aimed to assess and to explain the impacts of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Regional State in Ethiopia.

To fulfill the aims of the study, the researcher predominantly used qualitative research design, from the data collection to the data analysis and interpretation. From qualitative research approaches, descriptive, explanatory and analytical research methods were used because they are considered best suited to the objectives of this study, which is to describe, understand and explain the influence of political competition on socio-economic

development in the region of Gambella. Based on their expertise knowledge and experience, a total number of ten regional key officials with the ratio of seven (7) to three (3) men and women respectively were purposively selected and interviewed. Quantitative research approach was also used to quantify political representation and power distribution between different ethnic groups who reside in the region. In brief, this study is explanatory, descriptive and analytical in its design.

To analysis the generated data, the researcher predominantly used qualitative data analysis and interpretation. From qualitative data analysis, qualitative content analysis technique (a highly interpretive technique) was used to analyses and interpret data. To put it differently, explanatory, comparisons, interpretation and logical arguments were used to analyze, describe, discuss and qualified the qualitative data. In addition to the qualitative data analysis, statistical data analytical techniques such as tabulation, percentage and inferential were used to quantify political representation and power distribution.

In conclusion, the findings of the study reveal the direct, complex and dynamic link between political competition and socio-economic development in the Gambella Region. This research is therefore, important because it clearly state, describe and define the impact of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Region. And as the famous saying goes, “a problem clearly stated is a problem half solved.”

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The Gambella Peoples National Regional State (GPNRS), or the Gambella region in short, was established as a region in 1991 by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). Before 1991, it was a district under Illubabor region. As it was mentioned before, since its formal integration into the Ethiopia state in 1902, the Gambella Region is known throughout the country for its poor socio-economic development records. As Young (1999) observed, “education, transport links, and other indicators of development remain poor in Gambella Regional State.” It would therefore, be wise for both the Regional and the Federal governments to recognize and accept the misery that the Gambella people have endured for so long.

In 1991, the Derg regime (1974 -1991) was overthrown by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which is the current Ethiopian ruling party, and introduced a decentralized system of governance commonly known as Ethnic Federalism. Since the introduction of the ethnic federalism by the FDRE twenty-five years ago, Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in term of socio-economic development. According to the 2015/16 Ethiopian Household Consumption – Expenditure (HCE) survey, “in a marked departure from its historical past, Ethiopia has been registering robust economic growth and remarkable social and human development over the past two decades.” Despite this remarkable progress registered by Ethiopia as a country, a huge gap has been observed among the Regional States. As Asmelash (2000) and Meheret (1998) stated, “Ethiopia’s decentralization is characterized by market differences in populations and territorial size, natural resources endowment, trained and educated personal, level of economic and infrastructure development among Regional States.” This gap is clearly visible in the Gambella region, a place that has been isolated and ignored by the successive Ethiopian regimes for so long. In term of resources, Gambella region is one of the blessed regions with many natural resources; however, it is ranked as the last, if not the least, developed region in the country. How come a region with such enormous resources become underdeveloped like this was/is the main concern of this researcher. For example, it has large grazing and arable land, petroleum, gold, fishes and many more. Despite having huge potential to grow, the region is presumed to be the last, if not the least, developed region in the country. This poor socio-economic development performance of the Region is therefore, the main concern of the researcher.

Many researchers tried to figure out why the Region is underdeveloped. Young (1999) observed that the underdevelopment of the Gambella region is due to the historical legacy of isolation, victimization and economic and political marginalization by the successive regimes at the central or federal governments. In addition, the destabilizing impact and legacy of the various wars that plagued the area in the 1970s and 1980s has also been obstacles to the socio-economic development of the Gambella region (Young). As an example, the longtime Sudanese civil war and the Ethiopia civil war were the most major ones. Moreover, lack of many educated indigenous people was also cited as one factors that contributed to the underdevelopment of the region. To the researcher, many of these factors, if not all, were/are externals cause to the problem. Nevertheless, the main interest of this researcher is to assess and explain the internal causes, and one of the internal factors that was suspected to have

influenced the socio-economic development of the region is the political competition between the indigenous people of the Gambella region.

Since the coming of the EPRDF into power in 1991, the five (5) indigenous ethnic groups of the Gambella Region, particularly the two big ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Anywaa have been locked up in a power struggle on who should rule the Region. In fact, the competition between the Nuer and the Anywaa started long before 1991. As Feyissa (2008) stated, “Power struggle between Anywaa and Nuer elites started in the 1980s during the Derge period.” However, this power struggle has been intensified by the introduction of the decentralized policy (or the ethnic federalism) by the current Ethiopian ruling regime, the EPRDF in 1991. This political competition has caught attentions of many national and international researchers, although the way in which it was addressed was not directly connected with the poor socio-economic development of the region. As it was mentioned before, the researchers cited the term as a cause to many conflicts in the region and forget to assess its direct relationship with the socio-economic development. As Feyissa (2006) has indicated, the major cause of conflicts in Gambella is the political competition between the indigenous people, particularly between the Nuer and the Anywaa ethnic groups. Young (1999) also repeated the same thing by saying that political competition seems to be the major cause to many conflicts in the region.

On this basis, it may be inferred that the direct link between political competition and socio-economic development has not been adequately addressed in this region. The researcher therefore, was very fascinated to assess and explain the influence of Political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State.

1.3. Research Objectives (General and Specific)

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess and explain the impact (s) of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State in Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The study was specifically meant to:

1. To explain how the political competition is affecting the socio-economic development of the Gambella Region.

2. To find out the impacts of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Regional.
3. To explain why the level of democracy and the mode/way in which political competition is played important for the socio-economic development of the Gambella Regional State.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How is political competition affecting socio-economic development in the Gambella region?
2. What are the effects of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Region?
3. Is the level of democracy or the mode/way in which political competition is played important for the socio-economic development in the Gambella Region?

1.5. Significance of the Study

First and foremost, this study is primarily important for the Gambella Politicians who have been enslaved by ethnic political competition for almost three decades. The study assessed and explored the impact (s) of political competition on socio-economic development, and then present them to the Regional government officials so that they could see how this tribal politics has been an obstacle to the Regional development. In general, the study is believed to change the mindset of Gambellian politicians who have been slaves to ethnic political competition.

The study is also believed to benefit the ordinary citizens of the Gambella Regional State. Ordinary citizens of the Gambella Region have been blindly following tribal politicians who have been caring only for their self-interests. The finding of the research is believed to open the eyes of the ordinary citizens of this region. The research is believed to impact significantly their lives and inform them about the dangerousness of the immature ethnic political competition. Generally, the finding of the research stressed that the enemy of the Gambella people is poverty and backwardness, not other things else.

Finally, the study is believed to be an asset for the researchers who want to do research in this area of specialization. So far, the researches that were conducted in the Region have focused

highly on the external causes of underdevelopment in the region. This study, however gave much emphasis on the internal causes of underdevelopment. For instance, the political competition between the five ethnic groups of the Gambella Region was found to be an obstacle to the socio-economic development of the Region. As conclusion, this study revealed the dynamic relationship between political competition and socio-economic development. Its findings and valuable recommendations are believed to benefits the Gambella Politicians, the ordinary citizens of the Gambella Regional State, and the researchers who are concerned with the poor socio-economic development performance of the region.

1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State (GPNRS), one of the Nine Regional States in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) established in 1991. The researcher assessed the influence (s) of political competition on socio-economic development in the Region. It mainly examined the relationships between the political competition and the socio-economic development from the period of 1991 to the present-day. Generally, the researcher observed the socio-economic development of the region. Each socio-economic development indicators such as GDP/income index, education, health, unemployment, and infrastructure levels were not analyzed individually. This is because socio-economic is a huge concept, and it is beyond the researcher's capacity to address all its indicators one by one within this limited time and resources. The researcher also chose the period from 1991 to the present-day because it was at this time that the local political power or regional power was handed over into the hands of indigenous people. It is also at this period that the power struggle between the indigenous ethnic groups of the Gambella Region have reached its climax level. As it was stated earlier, the political competition between the indigenous people; particularly between the Nuer and the Anywaa started long before 1991. However, this power struggle has been intensified by the introduction of the Ethnic federalism by the current Ethiopian Regime in 1991.

This study didn't focus too much on socio-economic development records of the pre-1991 period because of the limited resources and the little time the researcher had. Moreover, the study didn't focus much on the pre-1991 political competition between the indigenous people of the Gambella Regional State although it touched it a little bit. In addition to the above-mentioned limitations, the researcher encountered many challenges while conducting the

research. To mention few of them, lack of funding, shortage of time and unwillingness from higher government officials to be interviewed because of the sensitivity of the topic were the major challenges faced by the researcher.

1.7. Definitions of Concepts/Key Terms

- **Political competition:** - is broadly defined as a “non-violent contest for political influence and power (Marshall & Jagers, 2009). It can be quantified through elections and seats occupied by the competing actors.
- **Socio-economic development:** - is commonly defined as the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, and levels of employment and infrastructure.
- **Indigenous people) or ethnic groups:** - are the five different ethnic groups that have lived in Gambella region for many years. They are the Nuer, the Anywaa, the Mejang, the Opo and the Komo They are believed to be the native or original people of the region.
- **Highlanders:** - are other Ethiopian Nationals who originate from other parts of the country but move to Gambella to look for job and economic opportunities.
- **Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State (GPNRS):** - is the ninth (9th) region in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) proclaimed by 1995 constitution.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Rationale

Political competition is a “global phenomenon which is by no means restricted to democratic polities where free and fair elections take place on a regular basis Tsui (2006, as cited in Besley et al. 2010).” In other words, the political competition takes place both in more democratic and less democratic government systems. Political competition is a very complex term, and it is very difficult to define because of its multidimensional nature. Nevertheless, it is generally defined as a “non-violent contest for political influence and power (Marshall & Jagers, 2009). The problem with this definition is that it overlooks the fact that political competition in less democratic countries (developing countries) usually, if not always, occurs in a violent way. Like that of political competition, socio-economic development cannot be

easily defined. However, it is commonly defined as the process of social and economic development in a society, and it is measured by indicators such as: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy level, and employment and infrastructure level.

In the same way, assessing the influence of political competition on socio-economic development is as difficult as its definitions. This is because the relationship between the two terms is very dynamic, and it is highly influenced by the level of democracy of the country and/or the way political competition is played in that country. For example, in western democratic polities where free and fair elections take place on a regular basis, scholars seem to have positive view on the relationship between political competition and socio-economic development. For instance, Besley, Timothy, Torsten Persson, and Daniel M. Sturm (2010) asserted that, “political competition leads to more pro-business policies and has a positive and sizeable effect on growth”. On this basis it may be inferred that political competition is good for the growth in general and for the socio-economic development particularly.

On the contrary, many researchers (this researcher included) share a pessimistic view about the relationship between political competition and socio-economic development, especially in the less democratic countries where free and fair election is not a part of culture. Usually in the developing countries, the distribution of power is extremely unequal and development outcomes are correspondingly inequitable (David Goldsworthy, 2014). It must therefore be recognized that political competition could be an obstacle to socio-economic development in less democratic countries where competition for political power brings unfair distribution of resources which usually results in violent conflicts.

This study is intended to assess this complex link between political competition and socio-economic development in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State in Ethiopia. The researcher expected a negative relationship between the two variables, and as it was expected, the analysis revealed that political competition among the indigenous people of the Gambella Peoples National regional State has been an obstacle to the socio-economic development of the region for almost three (3) decade. Now, let's have a quick look at the overview of the socio-economic development and political competition in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State.

2.2. Overview of the Gambella's Socio-economic Development

As it was stated before, since its formal integration into the Ethiopia state in 1902, the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State, or the Gambella Region in short, is known throughout the country for its poor socio-economic development records. As Young (1999) observed, "education, transport links, and other indicators of development remain poor in Gambella Regional State."

Since the introduction of the decentralization policy (or ethnic federalism) by the FDRE twenty-five years ago, Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in term of socio-economic development. According to the 2015/16 Ethiopian Household Consumption – Expenditure (HCE) survey, "in a marked departure from its historical past, Ethiopia has been registering robust economic growth and remarkable social and human development over the past two decades." Despite this remarkable progress registered by Ethiopia as a country, a huge gap has been observed among the Regional States. As Asmelash (2000) and Meheret (1998) stated, "Ethiopia's decentralization is characterized by market differences in populations and territorial size, natural resources endowment, trained and educated personal, level of economic and infrastructure development among Regional States." This gap is clearly visible in the Gambella region. For example, reference to information on website about Gambella Region (as of 2005) revealed that 44% of the indigenous people of the region live below poverty line, 57.5% and 22.8% of adult literacy rate for men and for women respectively; and 92 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, a number that is bigger than the countrywide average of 77 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gambella-Region>).

In addition, in an article by Abu Girma (2003), Gambella region was ranked last with 5.4% in the socioeconomic variation scheme across regions from the period of 1999 to 2002. Moreover, in 1995/6 and 1999/2000, Gambella region has 0.22% and 0.26% profile of Regional Income and Poverty Indicators respectively. Health services are in a very poor condition, and up to today, there has only been one hospital in the Region. As indicated in the 2012/13 Labour Survey, the rate of unemployment in Ethiopia declined from 8.2 per cent in 2005/06 to 4.5 per cent in 2012/13. However, evident indicate that the unemployment rate in the Gambella Region is going up. These evidences seem to be strong that the socio-economic development in Gambella Region is in a dire situation. A situation that needs an immediate intervention, not only from the regional government but also from the federal government and the international communities or developmental partners.

Not to point our fingers on the harmony between population growth and socio-economic development, the 2007 census proved that the Region's population could not be blamed for the low socio-economic development of the region. As of 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), "Gambella is one of Ethiopia's smallest and least populous regions. The Region has total population of 307,096, consisting of 159,787 men and 147,309 women; urban inhabitants' number 77,925 or 25.37% of the population. With an estimated area of 29,782.82 square kilometers, this region has an estimated density of 10 people per square kilometer (CSA, 2007)." This small population could be an opportunity for the region to expedite its socio-economic development. Unfortunately, it did not help any way. And as it was mentioned before, the region is blessed with many resources. It has large grazing and arable land, petroleum, gold, fishes and many more. Despite having these enormous resources, the region is presumed to be the last, if not the least, developed region in the country. These low socio-economic records of the Region were therefore, the main concern of the researcher.

Articles that the researcher reviewed on socio-economic development of the region frequently cited four (4) main variables as causes to poor socio-economic performance of the region. To begin with, isolation, victimization, and political and economic marginalization by the successive regimes at the central level were the first factors mentioned. Next, researchers also talked about the wars and the ethnic conflicts within or around the region. Then, the lack of educated indigenous people in the region was also cited. Finally, some cultural related factors such as lack of work culture were also mentioned. Although these factors could contribute to the underdevelopment of the region, the researcher considers them as external causes to the Gambella's socio-economic problem. Nevertheless, the main interest of the researcher is to look for the internal factors, and he suspected political competition, a concept that created division and hatred among the indigenous people of the region for almost three decades.

2.3. Overview of the Gambella's Political Competition

2.3.1. Pre-1991 Political Competition

The competition between the five endogenous ethnic groups of the Gambella Region; particularly, between the Nuer and the Anywaa did not start in 1991. It goes back to the second half of the 19th Century when a section of the Nuer (*Jikany*) expanded their territory

to the east from southern Sudan Jal (1987, as cited in Feyissa, 2006). It was believed that the expansion was caused by the need to occupy the vital natural resources, cultivation and pasture lands along the tributaries of the Sobat river for economic purpose. This territorial expansion project has mostly occurred in violent forms. Consequently, the Nuer has successfully managed to displace and control large area of the Anywaa lands. In their nineteenth century eastward expansion, the Nuer are said to have increased their territorial size fourfold, at the expense of their Dinka and Anywa neighbors, Kelly (1985, as cited in Feyissa, 2006). The Anywaa made attempts to regain the lost territories (Bahru, 1976), but they were not successful.

After the nineteenth century dramatic expansion, organized Nuer territorial expansion halted, and various Nuer clans entered peaceful exchanges with Anywaa villages, Jal (1987, as cited in Feyissa, 2006). In other words, for some reason (s), the Nuer changed their initial violent expansion strategy into peaceful means such as inter-ethnic marriages and friendship networks. This strategy did not stop Nuer from occupying the Anywaa lands. Instead, it officialized their settlement project. To quote from Dereje (2006), “these settlements gradually come to serve as a nucleus for more immigrants and, in due course, the immigrants outnumber the Anywaa, who are then left with the option of joining the Nuer kinship and political structures or leaving their villages in order to maintain their identity.”

As we can understand from the above discussion, the evidences seem to indicate that the pre-1991 competition between the Nuer and the Anywaa ethnic group was not more about political power. It was more about two main natural resources: the land and the water. Because of their earliest migration in to the area, the Anywaa occupied the best and large part of the land. In addition, in term of population, the Anywaa are less in number, and this has relieved them from the pressure created by population-resources relationship. After following their Anywaa cousin, the Nuer wanted to access the land (occupied and non-occupied) because it is the only mean for survival. The population pressure has also increased the Nuer’s demand for the land. This competition for the access of land and water has resulted in many ethnic violent conflicts; specially, between these two big ethnic group, the Nuer and the Anywaa.

Another very important point that we should know about the pre-1991 competition is that the main players in the competition were the Nuer villagers and the Anywaa villagers, not the

political elites or parties. However, after 1991, things have changed. The Competition that was about access to natural resources is now shifted into struggle for political power of the newly established region, the Gambella region. At the same time, although villagers still play important role in this game, the main actors have become the Nuer political elites/parties and the Anywaa political elites/parties. Let's have a look at the post-1991 political competition of the Gambella Region.

2.3.2. Post-1991 Political Competition

As it was mentioned before, political competition between the Nuer and the Anywaa started a bit earlier before 1991. As Feyissa (2006) said, "power struggle between Anywaa and Nuer elites started in the 1980s during the Derg period (1974 - 1991)." At that period, the competition did not get much attention from the scholar's world because there was no too much power to fight for. The political power was highly concentrated in the hand of the central government, and the local players have nothings to struggle for if not only scarcity natural resources in the region. Hence, they (the local actors) were not very visible, and their influence was very limited. Because of this, the competition could not draw too much attention from the academic world.

Although power was concentrated in the central government, little powers were given to the provinces (regions). And during the Derg regime (1974 – 1991), the Gambella's political power was in the hands of the Nuer and the highlanders. Few Nuer political elites such as Thowath Pal Chay, to mention at least one were promoted to higher government positions by the Derge regime. This political ally between the regime and the Nuer created discontent within the Anywaa elites and villagers. As a result, the Anywaa started to rebel again the regime whom they accused of favoring some ethnic groups on another. In addition, the Anywaa's discontent with the regime was also fueled by the regime's move to replace the old Anywa's traditional ruling system with what the regime called the modern ruling system. For these reasons, the Anyawaa political elites formed a tribal party called Gambella People Liberation Movement (GPLM) in 1987 to fight against the Derg regime whom they thought to favor the Nuer and the highlanders.

Looking for an ally, the GPLM moved to Eritrea where they would be connected to Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) by Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF). At that time, the TPLF was the leading opposition arm group to topple the Derg regime. The GPLM was

presumed to operate around the Gambella area, however, they never liberated a single town in the history of the Ethiopian struggle against the Derg regime (Young, 1999). In 1991, the Derg regime was toppled, and a new system of governance called Ethnic Federalism with a decentralized policy was formed.

2.3.3. The Impact of Ethnic Federalism or the Decentralization Policy

As it was stated above, the socialist Derg regime (1974-1991) was overthrown in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and a new federal government system known as ethnic federalism was formed. At this time, "Gambella, which was formerly a district, became a regional state (Feyissa, 2006)". As it was also said earlier, the Nuer dominated Gambella's local politics during the Derg regime (1974 – 1991). And soon after the regime change in 1991, the Anuak seemed to have signed a political agreement with the TPLF lead EPRDF government. They were soon politically promoted by the EPRDF and took over the Gambella's political power from the Nuer whom they accused of siding with the defunct regime. Feyissa (2008) made clear that, "while the Derg regime appeared to favor the Nuer as well as to some extent the highlanders who were resettled in the region, the federalism after 1991 brought a new game which initially favored the Anuak. These favor of one ethnic group on another has fueled the old resources-derived competition among the indigenous ethnic groups of the Gambella Peoples National Regional State. The introduction of Ethiopian federalism, however, not only refueled tensions between the Nuer and Anuak, it also aggravated latent conflict lines between local, lowlander groups and the highlanders who were seen as external newcomers to region (Feyissa). Other factors such as the 1994 census, the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea border war, and the Ethiopia's land right policy were believed to have influenced the Nuer-Anywa's political game. Let's see them one by one.

2.3.4. The Impact of the 1994 Census Result

In 1994, Ethiopia conducted its second nation-wide census, and the objective of the census was defined to help better design development policy. The 1994 census exposed the buried fact by showing that the Nuer as the first largest ethnic group in the region. According to the 1994 census, the Nuer make up 40 percent of the region's population, almost double the 27 percent recorded for the Anuak (CSA, 1994). Immediately after the official announcement of the census, the Nuer started to shift their political struggle by claiming the majority rights in the region. According to them, the Nuer deserve more political representation from both regional council and executive committee because of their large population.

Nevertheless, this majority-minority political game did not sound good in the ears of the TPLF lead federal government. This is because the TPLF who lead and dominated the central government is itself a minority group. So, it would be a problem to itself if they accept the majority rule and minority right claim of the Nuer people. In fact, some changes were made after the census. However, nothing much has been rewarded to the Nuer just for being the majority in the region. Since the coming of EPRDF into power in 1991, the presidency position or the chairmanship of the Gambella ruling parties has remained in the hand of the Anywaa until 2013 when the first Nuer president Ato Gatluak Tut Khot was selected to lead the region. Many Nuer (both politicians and ordinary citizens) believe that the Nuer got the presidency not because they are the majority in the region. They say it's God plan because we (the Nuer) has questioned and complained about the minority Anywaa's domination for so long, but nothing has changed. In addition to what they believed as God's plan, the Nuer also said that the 1998 to 2000 Ethio-Eritrea border conflict might have contributed to the Nuer's recognition and promotion in the regional politics. Nevertheless, "out of the political Effect that is brought by the census, the Nuer are not getting their development rights as being the majority in the region (Feyissa, 2003)." So, this contradicted with the above-mentioned main objective of the census, which was to help better design development policy. In another words, the census was conducted in order to help answer the development questions of all Ethiopian citizen based on their population ratio.

2.3.5. The Impact of Ethio-Eritrea War (1998 -2000).

In 1998, a war broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea because of the border land town called Badime. As need for soldiers became high, the federal government made a call to its regions to mobile and recruit youths to participate in the war. As a result, good number of soldiers were brought from the Gambella region, mostly from the Nuer ethnic group. In the war, the Nuer were believed to fought bravely in defense of their country although majority of them did not make it back home a life. When the federal government scrutinized and checked the records of soldiers who have fought well in each region, the data of the Gambella region showed that majority of the soldiers (if not all) who were awarded for their bravery happened to be from the Nuer ethnic group. As Young (1999) has indicated, "the EPRDF dramatically increased the political representation of the Nuer in the regional council in what appears 'thanks-giving' to their contribution during the Ethio-Eritrean border conflict (1998-2000)."

The Ethio-Eritrea war has brought huge impact in the Nuer's socio-political life. First, it has erased (at least a little bit) the accusation that the Nuer were/are the supporters of the previous Derg regime and should not be trusted by the current regime. The federal government was believed to understand that the promotion of few Nuer officials by the previous regime does not mean that the whole tribe is a pro-Derge regime.

After the war, the federal government decided to answer the Nuer's long time claim of being politically marginalized by the minority Anywaa in the region. Nuer seats or political representations have been increased in both the regional council and the executive committee. As Fiyissa (2003) said, thanks to the Nuer for travelling far distance to get their political freedom. In addition to the Ethio-Eritrea war, the Ethiopia's land use policy is another factor that was believed to bolden the relationship between the Nuer and the federal government. Let's have a look at that.

2.3.6. The Impacts of Ethiopia's Land Policy

Another factor that might have influenced the Nuer-Anywaa political game is the way in which these two ethnic groups address the question of land. Ethiopia throughout many regimes, has got the same land policy with just minor changes. Being the Imperial or the Derg regime, both claimed the ultimate ownership of the land. The current EPRDF regime also inherited the same culture from its predecessor regimes. As Desalegn (1994) and Birhanu (2003) stated, "despite its high profile and populist rhetoric, the new ethnic regime followed suit by stubbornly clinging to state ownership of land despite the increasing economic and social argument for the privatisation of land." This monopoly of the land by the successive Ethiopia regimes contradicts with the Anywaa's view about the land.

According to the Anywaa, the land belongs to them not to the government because it is their ancestors' land. Thus, they claim full ownership of the it, and this resulted in many confrontations between the Anywaa and the federal government. In contrast to the Anywaa's view, the Nuer have a modern view about the land. According to the Nuer, the land belongs to Kuoth (a Nuer word for God), and people only have a right to use it not to own it. They also believed that Government is the representative of God on earth. Therefore, it is the government that can have full claim on the land, not ordinary people. Whether the Nuer are serious about this view or they do it just for a political reason is something that require further study. Unlike the Anywaa's view, the Nuer's modernized way of dealing with the

issue of land seems to impress the federal government. As a result, many Nuer's complains about the Anywaa's political domination have been answered, but with great care because the TPLF lead EPRDF government don't want to disappoint their old ally.

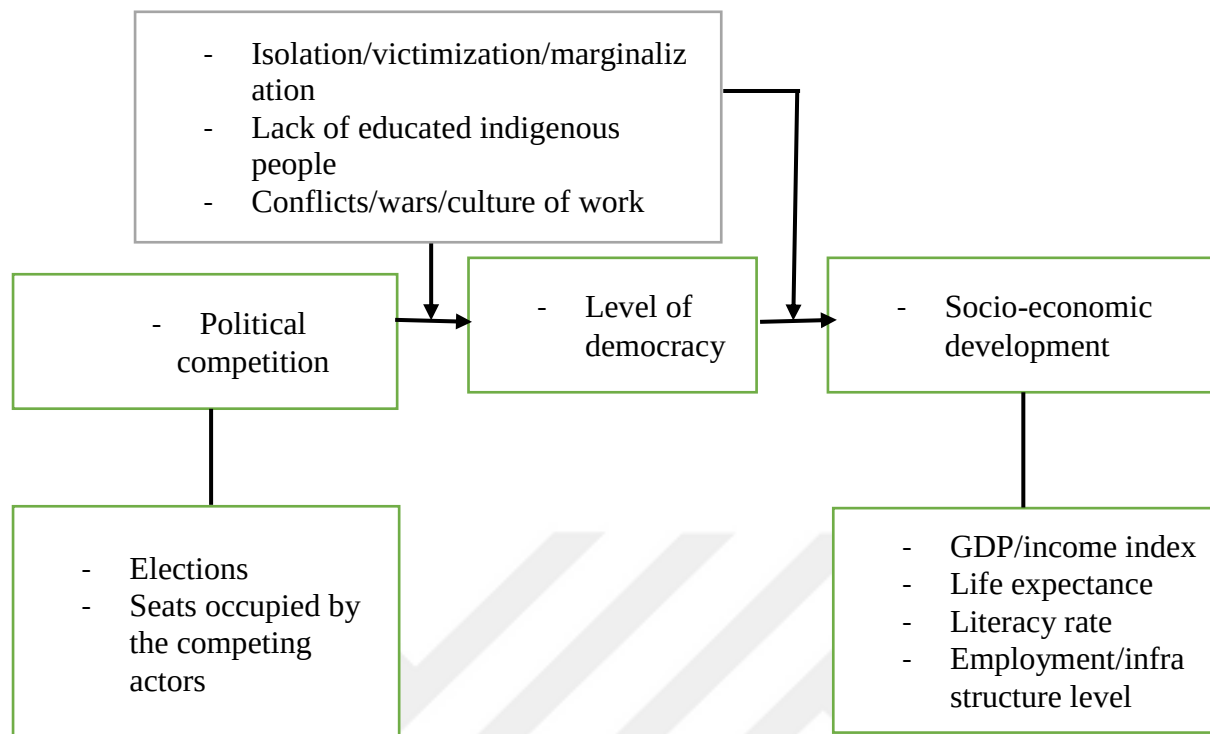
2.4. Conceptual Frame work of the Study

As it was made clear before, In western democratic polities where free and fair elections take place on a regular basis, political competition is believed to have positive impacts on socio-economic development. According to the supporters of this argument, Competition (or political competition in particular) induces good and holistic development policies and prevents the support of small, special interest groups at the expense of the public, and these policies could faster the development rate. As Besley et al. (2010) argued, political competition leads to more pro-business policies and has a positive and sizeable effect on growth.

In contrary to the above argument, many researchers (this researcher included) are very pessimistic about the relationship between political competition and socio-economic development, especially in the less democratic countries where free and fair election is not a part of culture. According to this group, political competition affects socio-economic development in many negative ways because it is played in a very immature manner. The researcher strongly supported this argument and expected the relationship between the two variables to be negative. Although elections have been taking place in these parts of the world, their results are frequently contested. At the same time, the divisive and the ethnic nature of this political competition in this part of the world always lead to violent conflicts which in turn affect the socio-economic development in many negative ways. On another words, the pre or post elections violence in the developing countries is believed to create negative impact on socio-economic development.

This study was intended to examine this complex relationship between political competition and socio-economic development in the Gambella People's national Regional State in Ethiopia. Below here, the researcher tried to show the relationship between the two main variables: Political competition and the socio-economic development. Other confounding variables which may affect the relationship between two variables are also shown. Let's have a look:

Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework



Sources: researcher, 2019

As we can see from diagram 1, political competition influences socio-economic development, and whether that influence is positive or negative depend on the level of democracy of the country under investigation. In western democratic countries where free and fair elections take places, it is believed that the relationship between the two variables is positive.

However, in the third world countries where political competition happens in a violent form, many researchers (this researcher included) believe that the influence of political competition on socio-economic development could be negative. The researcher strongly supported this argument and expected the relationship between the two variables to be negative.

Other cofounding variables such as isolation, victimization, marginalization by the central government, lack of educated indigenous people, tribal conflicts, civil wars, and culture of work were cited by many researchers to have contributed to the poor socio-economic performance of the region. Their influence in the dynamic and complex relationship between the political competition and socio-economic development is also recognized.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in Gambella Peoples National Regional State of Ethiopia. The Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) is one of the Nine Regional States in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), established in 1991. It is located 766 km away from Addis Ababa, the capital city of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). The region has a total area of 34, 063 square kilometers in a lowland plain of 500 meters above sea level as compared to highland elevations that rises up to 3, 000 meters (Dereje, 2011: 11). According to the 2002-Revised Constitution of the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS), the geography of the Region shall be that bordered in the East with Oromia Region; in the south, in the West and in the North -West with the republic of Sudan, in the North with Benishangul Gumuz Region and in the South and South -East with the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State.

According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) has a total population of 307,096 with 159,787 and 147,309 as male and female respectively (CSA, 2007). Among these, 77,925 live in urban area while 229,171 live in rural area. The Gambella Region is home for five (indigenous) ethnic groups namely: the Nuer (46%), the Anywaa (21%), the Mejang (6%), the Opo (3%) and the Komo together account for 3% of the Regional Population (CSA, 2007). The Region is also inhabited by Highlanders (other Ethiopian Nationals who originate from other parts of the country), and according to the 2007 census, the Highlanders comprise 24% of the Gambella population.

The administrative structure of the Region is currently divided into three ethnics administrative Zones namely: the Nuer Zone, the Anywaa Zone and the Majeny Zone. While the first two Zones, the Nuer Zone (Lare district, Jikow district, Makuey district, and Wanthoar district) and The Anywaa Zone (Abol district, Abobo district, Gog district, Jor district and Dimma district) have five districts each, the third zone, the Mejang Zone has only two districts (Godere district and Mengeshi district). In addition to these three zones, the Region also has one special district and one administration council (the constitution of GPNRS, 1995 and Dereje, 2011, [2012]).

This livelihood of the Gambella people is based on mixed agriculture (crops and livestock) with some fishing, mining and wild food collection. As Tewodros (2004) stated, agriculture being the major occupation, the regional economy is characterized by subsistence farming where traditional crop production, cattle rearing, fishing, bee keeping, and wild honey harvesting predominate all other activities. The topography of area dominated by plain land. Agroecology of the area is kolla/ lowland. April to October is the rainy season having annual average rain fall 1500 -2000 mm and temperature in the range of 24 -44oc. Gold, forest, wild food, game animals and construction stone are natural resources available in the region (Livelihood Profile of Gambella Region, 2009). Compared to its small population, the region has a huge potential to grow and prosper. Unfortunately, it didn't happen anyway. The Region has not been able to advance its socio-economic development. Until today, the residents of the Gambella Regional State; particularly, the indigenous people (the natives) compared to the Highlanders (the new comers), have not enjoyed any sustainable development. Majority of them are still living in poor condition of life.

3.2. Research Approach

To fulfill the aims of this study, the researcher predominantly used qualitative research approach, from the methods of data collection to the methods of data analysis and interpretation. As to Hancock (2002), qualitative research deals with explanations of social phenomena and find the answers to the questions like: how opinions and attitudes are formed; why people behave the way they do; how and why cultures have developed in the way they have; how people are affected by the events that go on around them; and the differences between social groups. Consequently, qualitative research method is used to understand and qualify the complex relationship between social phenomena, which in this case, between political competition and socio-economic development.

From qualitative research approaches, descriptive, explanatory and analytical research methods were used because they are considered best suited to the objectives of this study, which is to describe, understand and explain the impact (s) of political competition on socio-economic development in Gambella Peoples' National Regional State. This study hence, is explanatory, descriptive and analytical in its design. Quantitative research approach was also used to capture numerical trend of socio-economic development of the Region. The method was also used to quantify political representation and ethnic power distribution among different ethnic groups in the Region from the period of 1991 to present.

To analyse the generated data, the researcher predominately used qualitative data analysis and interpretation. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is basically interpretive. On another words, the researcher interprets the data, this interpretation may include analyzing and giving meaning to data and drawing conclusion about its meaning. accordingly, from the qualitative data analysis, the researcher used qualitative content analysis technique, a highly interpretive technique, to analyses and to interpret data, and then made some recommendation to different stakeholders and researchers who might be interested in this special area of study. This is to say, the data were analyzed, described, discussed and qualified using explanatory means, comparisons, interpretation and logical arguments. In addition to the qualitative data analysis, statistical data analytical methods were used to capture numerical trend of socio-economic development and to quantify political representation and power distribution among different ethnic groups in the Region from the period of 1991 to present.

3.3. Methods of Data Collection

In this study, both primary and secondary sources were conducted. Key informant interview and informal interview were used to collect primary data. Based on their expertise knowledge and experience, a total number of ten regional key informants with the ratio of seven to three men and women respectively were purposively selected and interviewed. The purposive sampling technique was used because the researcher used his judgment when selecting key informants. To supplement the primary data collected throughout the whole study, the researcher made a rigorous document reviews to collect the necessary secondary information. The researcher applied self-study review and make a critical analysis of the existing literature on the subject, official documents and the quantitative data collected by the governments, international organizations and the academic and non-academic research units (such as university research centers or think tanks).

3.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Since this study is predominantly qualitative in its design, the researcher used qualitative data analysis and interpretation. Hence, qualitative content analysis of words, texts, ideas, etc.... was used to analyses and to interpret the meaning of data. This is to say, the data gathered, being primary and/or secondary, were analyzed and presented in explanation forms. The data

were analyzed, described, discussed and qualified using explanatory means, comparisons, interpretation and logical arguments.

In addition, the quantitative data analysis was used to capture numerical trend of socio-economic development of the Region. The method was also used to quantify political representation and ethnic power sharing among different ethnic groups in the Region from the period of 1991 to present-day. In this juncture, quantitative analysis techniques such as percentage and inferential were employed.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In every research work (this research included), the ethical considerations are given due attention. Given the political sensitivity of the topic under study, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of the informants were given the most priority. This is to say that the researcher followed all the ethical rules and practices throughout this research work.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDING AND PRESENTATION

4.1. Rationale

In line with the research questions of this study, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and interpretation to analyze and interpret the collected data. Although both techniques were used, the qualitative one was predominantly used because of the qualitative nature of the study. Accordingly, the impacts of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella People's National Regional State (GPNRS) was qualitatively analyzed. On another words, the data gathered, being primary and/or secondary, were analyzed, described, discussed and qualified using explanatory means, comparisons, interpretation and logical arguments.

In addition to the qualitative data analysis, the researcher also used some quantitative data analysis techniques such as tabulation, percentage and inferential to quantify the political representation and the ethnic power sharing among different ethnic groups in both regional council and executive committee from the period of 1991 to present-day. This was done by

referring to six (6) elections conducted in the region since the coming of the EPRDF in to power in 1991. In short, the numerical data collected from primary and secondary sources were quantitatively analyzed.

On the other hand, socio-economic development, as agreed by many researchers, can be measured by gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy level, and employment and infrastructure level. While keeping these indicators in mind, it is very important to know that the researcher was not interested in analyzing each one of these socio-economic development indicators. Instead, the attempt was to assess the holistic socio-economic development of the region and link it to the political competition that has confined the indigenous people of the Gambella region for almost three (3) decades. However, let's have a quick look of some of the socio-economic development indicators of the year 1991 and 2011.

Table 1: Gambella's Socio-economic Development Indicators (1999/2000 & 2010/2012)

Indicators	1999/2000 (%)	2010/2011 (%)
GDP	0.505	0.32
Literacy rate	46.3	59.0
Unemployment rate	-	8.0
Health	13.5	33.8
Infrastructure	-	81

Source: UNDP Ethiopia, MDG report, 2014

Table 1, shown the socio-economic development indicators in the Gambelia region. Most of the percentages that we have seen here are the lower, if not the lowest rate in the country. The data prove the claim that the level of socio-economic is in a dire situation that need an immediate intervention, not only from regional and federal government, but also from the international developmental partners. It is a known fact with no exaggeration in it. The people of Gambella have suffered for so long, and that suffering must stop once and for good.

In general, what is needed here is to find out both the internal and external causes of the low socio-economic development of the region. After that, good plans, strategies and techniques to deal with such a problem will be formulated. Then, logical recommendations are forwarded. As it mentioned before, the researcher suspected political competition between the indigenous people of the region, and this factor is seriously examined. First, its relationship with socio-economic development, whether positive or negative was assessed. Then all the impacts that it has caused to the socio-economic development were explained.

To quantify or measure how political competition affect the socio-economic development, I have observed political representations or seats share and executive share of all ethnic groups in both regional council and executive committee in all six (6) elections that have taken place so far. And for purposes of analysis, I classify the effect of political competition into two: positive and negative. I consider the political domination of one ethnic group as “negative effect” and the equal share of seats among the five ethnic groups based on their population ratio as “positive effect.” Using these two classifications, I have calculated the percentage of all the six (6) elections: the 1992 election, the 1995 election, the 2000 election, the 2010 election and the 2015 election.

Generally, the findings of the analyzed data were presented in the following ways: First, the data that involve numerical information such as tables and percentages were analyzed, interpreted and presented. In another words, a logical inference was made to all data that involve numerical elements.

Next, the qualitative data that contain opinions, attitudes and perceptions of the key informants were analyzed, interpreted and presented. Now let’s have a look at table 2, which shows the political representation of the GPNRS council in the first three elections: the 1992 election, the 1995 election, and the 2000 election.

Table 2: Political Representation in the GPNRS Council (1992 – 2000)

Ethnic Groups	1992	(%)	1995	(%)	2000	(%)
Anywaa	19	50.00	25	59.52	29	52.73
Nuer	12	31.58	10	23.81	19	34.55
Majang	5	13.16	5	11.91	4	7.27
Opo	1	2.63	1	2.38	1	1.82
Komo	1	2.63	1	2.38	1	1.82
Highlanders	-	0	-	0	1	1.82
Total	38	100	42	100	55	100

Sources: Adopted from Dereje Feyissa's 2005 field note

As it was mentioned before, six (6) elections have been held in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State since the coming of the EPRDF into power in 1991. These were: the 1992 election, the 1995 election, the 2000 election, the 2010 election and the 2015 elections. Table 1 only shows the first three (3) elections.

As illustrated in table 2, the percentages of each ethnic groups in all three elections are composed as follow: First, the Anywaa with 19(50%) in 1992 election, 25(59.52%) in 1995 election, and 29(52.73%) in 2000 election. Next, the Nuer with 12(31.58%) in 1992 election, 10(23.81%) in 1995 election, and 19(34.55%) in 2000 election. Then, the Majang with 5(13.16%) in 1992 election, 5(11.91%) in 1995 election, and 4(7.27%) in 2000 election. After that, the Opo and Komo with 1(2.63%) each in 1992 election, 1(2.38%) each in 1995 election, and 1(1.82%) each in 2000 election. Finally, the Highlanders with 1(1.82%) only in 2000 election. These political representations contradict with the population ratio of each ethnic groups. As of 2007 census, for instance, the population of the Gambella People's National Regional State comprised the Nuer (46%), the Highlanders (24%), the Anywaa (21%), the Majang (6%), and the Opo and Komo together with 3% of the regional population (CSA, 2007).

From this, we can understand that the regional council was dominated by one ethnic group, the Anywaa in the first three consecutive elections with 19(50%) in 1992 election, 25(59.52%) in 1995 election, and 29(52.73%) in 2000 election. According to our analysis, the more the council is dominated by one ethnic group, the more negative impact it has on the

socio-economic development of the region. As David Goldsworthy (2014) said, when distribution of power is extremely unequal, development outcomes are also correspondingly inequitable. Thus, we can conclude that there has been negative impact of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella People's Regional State from 1992 election up to 2000 election. Table 3 presents the political representation in the GPNRS council of 2005, 2010, and 2015 elections.

Table 3: Political Representation in the GPNRS Council (2005 – 2015)

Ethnic Groups	2005	(%)	2010	(%)	2015	(%)
Anywaa	35	47.30	48	30.96	44	28.39
Nuer	25	33.78	60	38.71	60	38.71
Majanger	8	10.81	28	18.06	28	18.06
Opo	2	2.70	7	4.52	7	4.52
Komo	1	1.35	3	1.94	5	3.23
Highlanders	3	4.05	9	5.81	11	7.09
Total	74	100	155	100	155	100

Source: Researcher's field work

As shown in table 3, the Anywaa still dominated the regional council with 35(47.30%) in 2005 election. However, in 2010 and 2015, some changes have been made. The Nuer seats were increased and became the dominate in the regional council with 60(38.71%) in both 2010 and 2015 elections. There has been an increase too on the political representations of the other ethnic groups. For example, the highlanders' political representations have increased so swiftly from 3(4.05%) in 2005 election to 9(5.81%) and 11(7.09%) in 2010 and 2015 elections respectively. The same is true for the Komo. These changes were announced in 2003 when a formula of equal power sharing among the endogenous group was introduced by the federal government as a way of minimizing the domination of one or two ethnic groups in the region. The power sharing was also believed to reduce the conflicts between the ethnic groups because of power struggle.

The reason why the federal government introduced power sharing has generated a lot of arguments and discussions among the indigenous people and with the federal government. According to some key informants, this policy was introduced because of one very important reason: "the contribution and the sacrifice made by the Nuer people during Ethio-Eritrea

border conflict (1998 – 2000).” They said the federal government increased the Nuer seats as a way of thank-giving to them for their contribution in the war. Other informants and the federal government itself stated that the Nuer and the others ethnic groups ‘seats were increased because of the result of 1994 census that revealed that the Nuer are the majority in the region with the population of 40%, followed by the Highlanders (24), then the Anywaa (27%).

Whether the above statement is true or not is still under question. This is because the census was conducted in 1994, and between 1994 and 2010 election, three (3) general elections (the 1995, the 2000, the 2005) were held in the region, and no changes have been made in those elections. So, the main factor behind the policy is still unknown to many people. Anyway, whether it is because of the Nuer’s contribution in the war or the result of the 1994 census, is not the main issue. The main important thing here is that justice, fairness and equality has been introduced in the political system of the Gambella People National and Regional State.

The domination of the regional council also influences the power sharing in the executive committee, particularly the position of the president and the vice president of the executive committee. Table 3 presents the presidents of the executive committee of GPNRS from the period of 1991 up to today.

Table 4: Presidents of the Executive Committee in Gambella Region (1991 – present)

Name	Position	Year	Party	Ethnic group
Agwa Alemu	President	1991 - 1992	GPLM	Anywaa
Okello Oman	President	1992 - 1996	GPLM	Anywaa
Okello Nyigelo	President	1996 - 2004	GPDF	Anywaa
Okello Aquay	President	2004 - 2005	GPDF	Anywaa
Omod Obong	President	2005 - 2013	GPDUM	Anywaa
Gatluak Tut	President	2013 - 2018	GPDUM	Nuer
Omod Ojulu	President	2018 - present	GPDUM	Anywaa

Sources: Researcher’s field work, 2018

Since the coming of EPRDF in to power in 1991, the Gambella Peoples National Regional State has seen seven (7) presidents. As shown in table 4, the executive committee has been dominated by one ethnic group, the Anywaa. Six (6) out of seven (7) presidents were/are

from the Anywaa ethnic group, and only one from the Nuer ethnic group. There has never been a president from the Majang, the Opo and the Komo ethnic groups. From these evidences, we can conclude that the key players in the Gambella politics were/are the Anywaa and the Nuer ethnic groups, and the other three indigenous ethnic groups remained politically isolated and marginalized.

In normal circumstances, the president of the executive is the chairman of the ruling party and the president of the region. However, in some situation the chairmanship of the ruling party might be given to the vice presidents, which of course from different group. This usually happens when the competition reaches its maximum level and becomes so fierce that it might result in violence. According to some key informants, the domination of the executive committee by one or two ethnic groups has posted direct negative impact (s) on socio-economic development of the region. As one informant whose name has been hidden for security reason explained:

“The occupation of the president’s position by the Anywaa for 23 years was not fair. In term of population, the Anywaa account only 21% of the regional’s population next to the majority Nuer who account 46% of the regional’s population. However, the federal government has allowed the Anywaa to enjoy and misuse the little resources that the region has for 23 years. In every annual socio-economic development report, the Anywaa zone or districts rank first. This could probably be because of their domination of both the regional council and the executive committee for almost three decades. So, I don’t surprise when I see the Anywaa zone taking the first rank in the regional annual reports.”

According to the data, the domination of the executive committee by one ethnic group with no common agenda has been an obstacle to socio-economic development of the region, and it has resulted in many negative ways. As many informants, for example, explained, the domination could mean awarding social services such as: educational, health, infrastructures, and other socio-economic indicators to one ethnic group. In addition, it could possibly mean providing employment opportunity to only one ethnic group. Moreover, it could affect the distribution of the regional ministerial posts. Finally, the domination of the executive committee by one ethnic group could have a great influence on the budget allocation and the distribution of the NGOs (both local and international) operating in the region. To fully

understand how the executive committee was dominated by one ethnic group, let's have a look at the picture below:

Picture 1: Presidents and Vice Presidents of the GPNRS (1991 – Present)



Sources: Researcher, 2018. Captured from the President's office

This picture presents the Presidents and the vice presidents of the GPNRS from the period of 1991 up to present-day. At the top are the presidents with their vice presidents below. Except the one at the top right corner which is from the Nuer ethnic group, all the five (5) presidents were/are from the Anywaa ethnic group. In contrary, all the vice presidents are from the Nuer ethnic group, except the first and the last, which are from the Anywaa ethnic group. The current president who is an Anywaa and his vice president who is from the Nuer are not included in this picture. This is because the picture was prepared before they took offices.

From the above picture, we can clearly understand how much the post-1991 Gambella politics has been dominated by two ethnic groups: the Anywaa and the Nuer, particularly the

Anywaa ethnic group. The other three indigenous ethnic groups remain dormant for almost three decades.

The domination of the post-1991 Gambella's politics by the Anywaa could also be confirmed by looking at the period of 1991 to 1996 when both the president and the vice president's positions were occupied by the Anywaa ethnic group.

Furthermore, the successive occupation of the president's position by the Anywaa could also be a clear sign of the Anywaa political domination in the region. Finally, the domination of the post-1991 politics of the Gambella Peoples national and Regional state can be vividly seen in the ministerial allocation among different ethnic groups. Now let's have a look at the table 5 below:

Table 5: Allocation of the Managerial Posts in GPNRS (1992 – 2002)

Year	Regional ministries	Anywaa	Nuer	Majang	Opo	Komo	Highlanders
1992	20	15	3	1	-	1	-
1995	19	14	4	-	-	1	-
2000	19	13	5	-	-	1	-
2000	18	11	6	-	-	1	-

Sources: Dereje Feyissa, 2003

As you can see from table 5, the lion share of the ministerial posts were allocated to the Anywaa, and this was a clear sign of the Anywaa's political domination of the regional politics after 1991.

Other qualitative data that contain informant's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions and are believed to have affected the socio-economic development of the region were qualitatively analyzed below:

4.2. Impact of Amharic language on socio-economic development of the region

According to the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia, Amharic which is the working language of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, should be used in the central government, and every region was granted a right by the same constitutional to choose their local language (s) as a working language in their respective regions. However, due to the present of multi-ethnic groups in the region plus the fierce political competition among these ethnic groups, the Gambella Peoples National Regional State could not agree on one language to be used as an official language in the region. As a result, Amharic language was endorsed by the regional constitution to be the working language of the region, and this move has negatively affected (directly or indirectly) the region's socio-economic development in many ways. For instance, as a periphery region, the Gambella region was not fully integrated into the dominance culture of Ethiopia, which is of course the Amhara culture. Consequently, majority of the indigenous people of the region could not write and speak Amharic fluently. As one of the informants explained:

“the endorsement of Amharic as a working language of the region has limited the capacity of many brilliant indigenous people to effectively participate in the working force because they could not write and speak Amharic very well. This can negatively affect the socio-economic development of the region and reduce the participations of the indigenous people in both the regional and the country's growth.”

In contrary, this endorsement has only favored the highlanders (the recently migrated people to the region) because they have deep root in Amhara culture. This could be one of the reasons why the highlanders have occupied the civil servant offices in the region, which in turn could negatively affect the socio-economic development of the region. As one of the key informants stated:

“the highlanders have come here to search for job opportunities. They don't have any agenda to develop this region. Even if this region remains poor forever, it is none of their business. Tomorrow, they will go back to their respective regions and enjoy their lives there.”

In general, according to the data, majority of the key informants agreed that the endorsement of the Amharic language as a working language of the region was/is an obstacle for the socio-

economic development of the region because it reduces the capacity of the rightful people (the indigenous people) of the region to develop their region.

4.2. Domination of the Region's economy by the Highlanders

Another potential factors that was found to be an obstacle for the socio-economic development of the region was the domination of the regional economy by the highlanders. Because of their good connection with their highlanders in the highland, the highlanders become successful in business and dominated the region's economy. It is assumed that 95% of the region's economy is in the hands of the highlanders. Seeing their wealth being taken away by the newcomers (the highlanders), some indigenous people respond violently by attacking or robbing properties of the highlanders. Some time, they use abusive words as a way of frustration. For example, they tell highlander: "Go back to your regions. You don't belong here" In general the low economic status of the indigenous people could increase the immature political competition among themselves, which in turn can negatively affect the socio-economic development of the region.

Most of the key informants expressed their fear that the political power, which is currently in the hand of the indigenous people, may fall into the hands of the highlanders tomorrow. This is because the political power usually go hand in hand with the economic power. As one of the informants asked, "If the highlanders hold the economic power of the region today, what would prevent them from taking the political power of the region tomorrow?" Another key informant also narrated to me:

"In 1992 and 1995 elections, there was no highlander representation in the regional council. However, in 2000 election, the highlanders have begun to have political representation in the regional council, and now their political representation is increasing so quickly. As to me, their fluency in the working language (the Amharic), their economic power in the region and their connection with the central government, all these things make me worried that they could take the political power of the Gambella region tomorrow."

The final part of this chapter discussed why the manner or mode of political competition is so important for socio-economic development. As it was mentioned above in chapter two, Political competition is a global phenomenon which is by no means restricted to democratic

polities where free and fair elections take place on a regular basis (Tsui (2006). In other words, political competition takes place both in democratic and non-democratic government systems. In the same token, when we talk about the relationship between the political competition and socio-economic development, the way the political competition is played is very important. In western democracies where there is mature politics, political competition could bring positive impacts to socio-economic development. For instance, Besley et al (2010), investigated the relationship between political competition and growth (socio-economic development in this case) in one of the developed countries, the USA. According to the author, competition induces business-friendly economic policies (tax cuts and infrastructure spending) and prevents the support of small, special interest groups at the expense of the general economy. These policies translate into faster growth, and he finds that political competition leads to more pro-business policies and has a positive and sizeable effect on growth (Besley).

In contrary, in the developing or third world countries where politics is played immaturely or violently, the result is always negative and can reduce growth. For example, in the case of the Gambella where political competition is carried out based on ethnic line and self-interests, the outcome is always negative.

In general, the relationship between political competition and socio-economic development is highly dependence on the level of democracy of the country or the way political competition is played. If political competition is carried out in mature manner through free and fair elections, it can have positive affect on socio-economic development. However, if it is carried out in immature manner through self-interests and violent ways, it can negatively affect the socio-economic development.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study assessed and explained the impact (s) of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State in Ethiopia. Political competition can be broadly defined as a non-violent contest for political influence and power (Marshall & Jagers, 2009). The problem with this definition is that it overlooks the fact that political competition in less democratic countries (developing countries) usually, if not

always, occurs in a violent way. Political competition takes place both in more democratic and less-democratic government systems, and it can be measured by looking at the elections and the seats occupied by each competitor. On the other hand, socio-economic development is commonly defined as the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured by using indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy level, and employment and infrastructure level.

Understanding the impact(s) of political competition on socio-economic development would be even more complex than its definition. This is because the relationship between political competition and socio-economic development is highly influenced by the level of democracy of the country under investigation. For example, in the western democratic countries where free and fair elections take place, political competition is argued to bring positive impacts on socio-economic development, while in less democratic countries where free and fair elections do not exist, political competition appeared to have negative impacts on socio-economic development. This is to say, if political competition is carried out in mature way through free and fair elections, it can have positive affect on socio-economic development; however, if it is carried out in immature manner through violence and self-interest agenda, it can negatively affect the socio-economic development of the particular country under investigation.

To understand the effect of political competition on socio-economic development in the Gambella People's National Regional State, the researcher observed political representations or seats share and executive share of all ethnic groups in both regional council and executive committee. This was done by referring to all six (6) elections that have taken place so far in the region. And for purposes of analysis, the researcher classified the effect of political competition into two: positive and negative. The researcher considered the political domination of one ethnic group as "negative effect" and the equal share of seats among the five ethnic groups based on their population ratio as "positive effect." Using these two classifications, the researcher has calculated the percentage of all the six (6) elections: the 1992 election, the 1995 election, the 2000 election, the 2010 election and the 2015 election.

From the analyses, as the data revealed, the domination of the executive committee by one or two ethnic groups with no common agenda has been an obstacle to the whole socio-economic development of the region. To repeats, the political competition among the indigenous people of Gambella region has aggravated the poor living conditions, low access to education, poor

health conditions, and high unemployment rate records of the region that has been there for many years. The researcher found that the domination has benefited (if there was any) only small portion of the region's population and left majority in dire situation. As many informants explained, the domination has provided the lion shares of social services such as: educational, health, infrastructures, and other socio-economic indicators to small group (s) of the region's total population. In addition, the domination meant more employment opportunities to that dominant ethnic group (s). the domination has also affected the distribution of the regional ministerial posts among the five indigenous groups. Finally, the domination of the executive committee by one or two ethnic groups have influenced the budget allocation and the distribution of the NGOs (both local and international) operating in the region.

In addition to these poor socio-economic development indicators such as poor living conditions, low access to education, poor health conditions, and high unemployment rate, the researcher found that political competition promoted misuse of public fund and corruption, which in turn affect the socio-economic development of the region. The researcher also found that when corruption cases or misuse of public funds have been reported, there was no actions or corrective measures being taken to discipline such people especially when they belong to your either ethnic groups.

Moreover, as the data revealed, majority of the key informants believed that the endorsement of the Amharic language as a working language of the region contributed negatively to the socio-economic development of the region because it reduces the capacity of the rightful people (the indigenous people) that can develop the region. Instead, this article provides an opportunity to the new comers (the highlanders) to continue their domination on the civil servant offices because of their ability to write and speak Amharic fluently.

Furthermore, the domination of the region's economy by the highlanders was found to be another negative factor to socio-economic development of the region because it worsens the poor living conditions of the indigenous people of the region. The highlander's domination of the regional economy intensified the political competition among the indigenous ethnic groups of the region. This is because political power is the only power that the indigenous people have and get their incomes from at least for now. The more the competition

intensifies, the more it turns violence, and this can negatively affect the socio-economic development and reduce the growth in general.

To sum up, this study examined the complex and the dynamic relationship between political competition and socio-economic development in the Gambella region in Ethiopia. The researcher expected a negative relationship between the two terms, and as it was expected, the finding revealed that political competition has been an obstacle for the socio-economic development in the Region. The relationship the two terms is highly dependence on the level of democracy of the country. If political competition is carried out in mature manner through free and fair elections, it can have positive affect on socio-economic development. However, if it is carried out in immature manner through self-interests and violent ways, it can negatively affect the socio-economic development.

The analysis showed that, the region's politics has been dominated by one or two ethnic groups. Both regional council and executive committee were/are dominated by one or two ethnic groups. This mean, there was no equal power sharing among the indigenous people, and when there is unequal power distribution, there will also be an unequal socio-economic development in the region. In another words, political domination of the regional council and the executive committee by one or two ethnic groups who do not have common agenda for the region is not good for the over whole region's socio-economic development. It means promoting all types of corruption, such as nepotism, clientelism, misuse of public fund, etc. This has been the problem of the Gambella People's National Regional State for almost three (3) decades. To tackle this problem, the following recommendations have been given:

5.2. Recommendations

- The people of Gambella region, whether politicians or ordinary citizens, must liberate themselves from the slavery of the immature political competition. They should learn to play mature politics that respect human right and freedom of speech. A politics that is based on common interest not on self-interest or on ethnic lines. Their focus should be on how to change the lives of every citizen of Gambella and not to dominate one another. Therefore, I recommended the federal government as well as the international developmental partners to give more training to Gambella people on how to develop mature politics and build strong democratic region.

- The domination of one or two ethnic groups was found to be an obstacle for the socio-economic development of the region. The researcher therefore, suggests an equal political representation of all ethnic groups based on their population ratio.
- The Gambella people, these include the politicians, intellectuals, youths, women, elders and religious leaders should come together and have dialogue on the contentious issues. There is a local saying in Nuer: “Ruach ejen la thabuuny loaco kene wic.” Literally translated as, “discussion is the soap of the heart and mind.” This mean when people discuss, the dirty in their hearts and minds will be washed away. And to strengthen this point, constructive dialogue and discussion is the solution for any disagreement or problem.
- The indigenous people of Gambella must endorse one of their local language to be an official language of the region. This could reduce the influence of the highlanders in the region. If not, they should learn to write and speak Amharic fluently, so that they can fully compete with the highlanders in the job markets. Learning Amharic could also increase their participation and influence in the national power game.
- The indigenous people of Gambella should find ways to do business side by side with their highlander brothers and sisters instead of using violent or abusing words as a way of expressing their economic hardship. They should look for connections with the highlander in the highlands or with the central government in Addis Ababa. In addition, the Gambella government or the federal government must develop policy that can help the local business men and women to grow their local businesses. For example, priority should be given to the local business men and women it come to doing business with neighboring countries like that of Sudan and South Sudan because it is the only economic space where they can develop good and quick social network with its people. If this is not done, the fear expressed by the indigenous people that the highlanders may also take the political power of the region is real, and it is likely to happen soon or later. As we have seen from the recently held elections, the political representations of the highlanders are increasing so swiftly.
- The federal government should pay special attention to these backward regions, especially, the Gambella People National Regional State. It should provide special

support to this region by allocating huge amount of money and/or by allowing many international developmental partners or NGOs (both international and local) to help the region elevate its socio-economic development.

- The political system of the Gambella region must have a room for political pluralism. Unless Gambella politics accommodates political pluralism, it is likely that this immature political competition will continue, and the continuation of the immature political competition means the continuation of the poor socio-economic development of the region. To paraphrase Abraham (2002), the Anuak-Nuer relations have been and will continue to be characterized by persistent conflicts over land entitlement, resources and political representation unless a political system that accommodate political pluralism that guarantee rights of every citizen who live in Gambella is put in to place.
- Finally, more researches need to be done in this specific area of specialization, especially on how political competition could be done in a mature way. Scientific Researches that are supported by strong scientific evidences with some cultural elements of the local people in it will play great role in solving this problem. The researcher expects the Gambella university takes lead on this initiate, and then the regional government's support from behind. This is because Gambella University is the only academic institution located in the region.

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APPENDIX 3: LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSA:- Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia
EPLF: - Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front
EPRDF: - The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE: - The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP: - Gross Domestic Product
GPLM: - Gambella People Liberation Movement
GPNRS: - The Gambella Peoples National Regional State
HCE: - Ethiopian Household Consumption – Expenditure survey
TPLF: - Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

APPENDIX 4: Table 1: Gambella's Socio-economic Development Indicators (2012)

Indicators	1999/2000 (%)	2010/2011 (%)
GDP	0.505	0.32
Literacy rate	46.3	59.0
Unemployment rate	-	8.0
Health	13.5	33.8
Infrastructure	-	81

Sources: UNDP's MDG, 2014

APPENDEX 5: Table 2: Political Representation in the GPNRS Council (1992 – 2000)

Ethnic Groups	1992	(%)	1995	(%)	2000	(%)
Anywaa	19	50.00	25	59.52	29	52.73
Nuer	12	31.58	10	23.81	19	34.55
Majang	5	13.16	5	11.91	4	7.27
Opo	1	2.63	1	2.38	1	1.82
Komo	1	2.63	1	2.38	1	1.82
Highlanders	-	0	-	0	1	1.82
Total	38	100	42	100	55	100

Sources: Adopted from Dereje Feyissa's 2005 field note

APPENDEX 6: Table 3: Political Representation in the GPNRS Council (2005 – 2015)

Ethnic Groups	2005	(%)	2010	(%)	2015	(%)
Anywaa	35	47.30	48	30.96	44	28.39
Nuer	25	33.78	60	38.71	60	38.71
Majanger	8	10.81	28	18.06	28	18.06
Opo	2	2.70	7	4.52	7	4.52
Komo	1	1.35	3	1.94	5	3.23
Highlanders	3	4.05	9	5.81	11	7.09
Total	74	100	155	100	155	100

Source: Researcher's field work

APPENDEX 7: Table 4: Presidents of the Executive Committee in Gambella Region (1991 – present)

Name	Position	Year	Party	Ethnic group
Agwa Alemu	President	1991 - 1992	GPLM	Anywaa
Okello Oman	President	1992 - 1996	GPLM	Anywaa
Okello Nyigelo	President	1996 - 2004	GPDF	Anywaa
Okello Aquay	President	2004 - 2005	GPDF	Anywaa
Omod Obong	President	2005 - 2013	GPDUM	Anywaa
Gatluak Tut	President	2013 - 2018	GPDUM	Nuer
Omod Ojulu	President	2018 - present	GPDUM	Anywaa

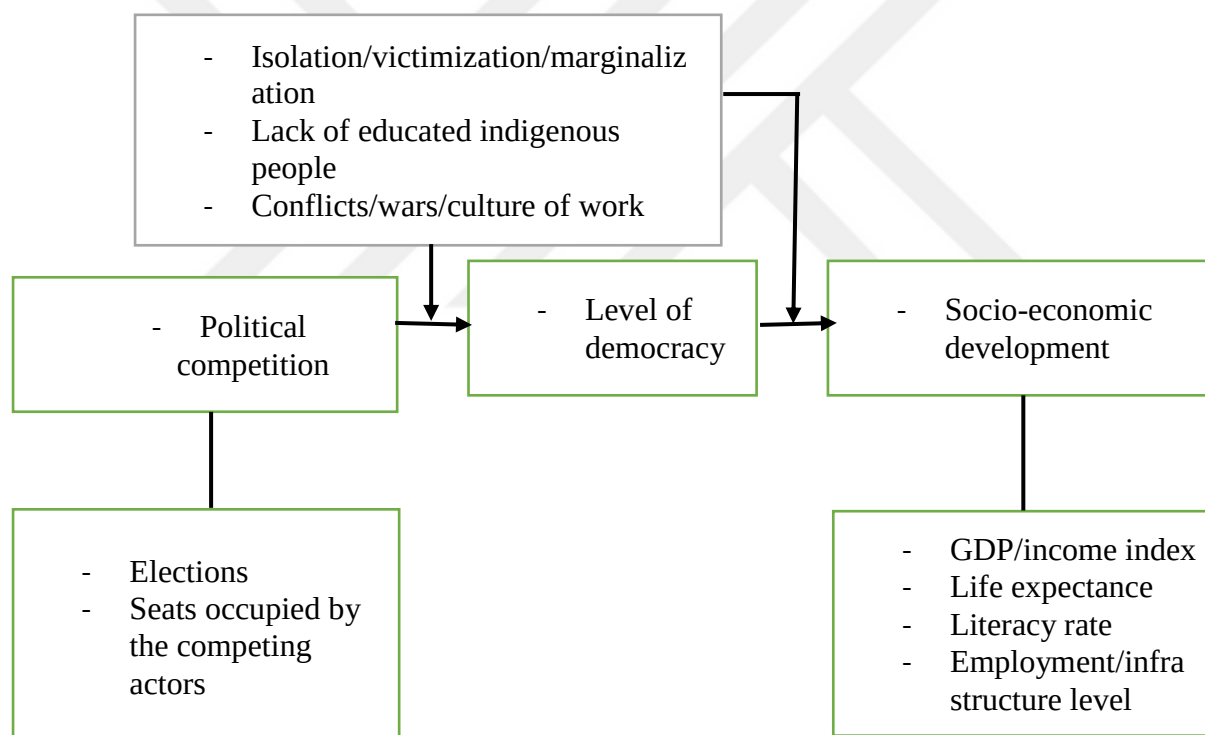
Sources: Researcher's field work, 2018

APPENDIX 8: Table 5: Allocation of the Managerial Posts in GPNRS (1992 – 2002)

Year	Regional ministries	Anywaa	Nuer	Majang	Opo	Komo	Highlanders
1992	20	15	3	1	-	1	-
1995	19	14	4	-	-	1	-
2000	19	13	5	-	-	1	-
2000	18	11	6	-	-	1	-

Sources: Dereje Feyissa, 2003

APPENDIX 8: Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework



Sources: researcher, 2019

APPENDEX 9: Picture 1: Presidents and Vice Presidents of the GPNRS (1991 – Present)



Sources: Captured from the President's office by the researcher, 2018

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