Research on Prevailing Crucial Socio-economic And Political Issues in Ethiopia

Research on Prevailing Crucial Socio-economic and Political Issues in Ethiopia- Input to Knowledge-based Inclusive National Dialogues

Forward

The "Inclusive Knowledge Based Dialogue" was initiated in Ethiopia during the time insecurity and political turmoil gripped the nation.The pressures for change through widespread protests and the worsening political volatility along with the inability of the ruling elite to change the status quo, spurred some individuals and non-governmental actors to take it upon themselves to advance the idea of public dialogue on diverse grievances that resulted in the mass protests witnessed in 2014-2018.The underlying causes of the protest were interlinked socio-economic factors and included: poverty, unemployment, corruption, economic disparity, growing authoritarian tendencies, increasing restraint on exercise of basic freedoms and dwindling political space.

The continued widespread protests paved the way to several political reforms introduced since 2018. These reforms created an enabling environment for loosening security, political competition, enhanced civil society engagement, independent expanded media role, and relative economic liberalization. Despite the reforms introduced, the country is still faced with tumultuous security and entrenched political and governance problems. Its politics is deeply polarised along major fault lines, manifested in proliferation of inter-ethnic discords and conflicting views. Furthermore, the expected national election of 2020, in its run-up-to and aftermath, might exacerbate the volatility of the political landscape. .

While the loosening of state control, and widening of political space, was thought to provide opportunity for Ethiopians to engage in a participatory dialogue to exchange views on the current political

challenge, there is limited informed and knowledge-based public deliberation on the challenges the country has faced. Hence, the "Inclusive Knowledge-based Dialogues in Ethiopia" project, envisaged to be executed before the 2020 national elections, is aimed at filling this gap. The project's primary objective is to facilitate an evidence based dialogue platform where civil exchange of views on selected researched crucial thematic issues will be deliberated among political party leaders and relevant stakeholders.

Advisory Board Meeting

The project is implemented under a tripartite partnership of International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA), Inter-Africa Group (IAG) and International Revival Ministry (IRM). It entails undertaking ten researches on vital national issues of concern and organizing dialogue on the research outcome. IAG is tasked with the research component of the project and IRM is mandated to facilitate the dialogues. IIDEA is the overall coordinator of the project. The project is funded by EU.

This compilation of ten researched themes is the output of the project's research component executed by IAG. The selected research themes cover controversial and unresolved vital issues of national concern. They include the following: the institutional and constitutional structure of the Ethiopian state(federalism and regional state relationships); identity and group rights vs. civic citizenship; division of powers and checks and balances among government branches; language policy; political party systems; the role of youth, women's role in politics gender-representation in the public sphere; social media role in society; economic policy in transitional politics; and the role of security in an election cycle. The research papers were reviewed critically by reputable experts on the respective themes in the five validation workshops organized by IAG.

We trust the closely analysed issues on the respective thematic papers and the recommendations tabled will be fruitful inputs to the envisaged dialogue component of the project. IAG will readily collaborate in the process of executing this subsequent phase of the project.

Finally, we would like to thank EU for providing financial and technical support for the project. Likewise, we would like to extend our appreciation to our partners IIDEA and IRM for their continued collaboration and support in our joint endeavor under the project. We would also like to thank all the researchers who took part in the project.

Tamrat Kebede
IAG Executive Director

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Part I explores the pillars of the federal political system. It discusses the structure of Ethiopia government and the relationships between the two layers of government(federal and regions) and the attendant vertical relationship between civic citizenship and the state in a political system that tends to emphasize identity and group rights. It also touches on division of powers and check and balance among the three branches of the government. Moreover, it discusses the language policy in Ethiopia where diversity is celebrated but monolingualism has been a de facto language policy for long.

1. **Rescuing Ethiopia's Integrity:**
    Emergent Dilemmas Facing Ties between
    Federal and Regional Rule

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and
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Rescuing Ethiopia's Integrity: Emergent Dilemmas Facing Ties between Federal and Regional Rule

Abstract

The paper opens by drawing attention to two divergent strands of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, roughly corresponding to the distinction between "coming-together" and "holding-together" origins of federalism. The former finds expression in the provision which holds that ultimately sovereignty belongs to national communities and the regional states representing them, a power bolstered by their virtually unconditional right to secession. The latter can be seen in the government's mandate to create a single economic and political community, the federal state's responsibility to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all citizens, its authority to plan and execute development policy and to promote affirmative action for historically neglected cultural communities and important social groups such as women. These divergent strands assume greater significance, crystallizing in two rival visions of the federal arrangement and the future of Ethiopian politics, with the gradual decline of the dominant party and the accompanying frayed ties between federal and regional rule. The peculiar public circumstances that unfolded during this period include: the rise of populist nationalist movements—a force behind the ascent of the present political leadership; growing divisions and hostilities among the members of ruling coalition and their respective constituencies, including consequent decline of the party's control over the coalition and government. This political landscape of cleavage and contest made room for the emergence of two rival visions. One urged the radical autonomy of regions, with weakened central rule approaching a confederation where political rule is lastly based on consensus. Its rival envisioned a recovery of strong federal rule through ethnic majoritarianism. Each is motivated by mistrust and avoidance of the other. Both pose great jeopardy to the integrity of the Ethiopian state. Neither can meet basic demands for public justification. The paper concludes that to find reasonable common ground among political actors and to rescue the Ethiopian state requires reaching mutual agreement on taking both visions off the political agenda in favour of a political life that firmly affirms the freedom and equality of all citizens and communities.

I Introduction: Emergent Dilemmas Facing Ties Between Federal and Regional Rule

The Historical Anomaly of the Present

Ethiopia's many present discontents seem puzzling and intractable to students of Ethiopia and citizens alike. Of these, the highest stakes have to do with the growing loss of confidence in the integrity of the Ethiopian state.

At the risk of nostalgia, the recent anxiety over the fragility of the state seems disconcerting in the light of the country's modern history. Modern Ethiopia faced mortal dangers from powerful external enemies. Yet, Ethiopia overcame these threats without descending into despair over the survival of the state. Famously, at the Battle of Adwa, Ethiopia valiantly resisted a European power. Ethiopia became, perhaps for the first time, an independent black state that defeated a European power.[1] The victory was achieved by the collective efforts of its diverse peoples, including those only very recently assimilated into imperial Ethiopian rule. What started as a mortal threat to Ethiopia's sovereignty, culminated with international recognition of the Ethiopian state's sovereignty over its territory and people. Even during the later Italian fascist occupation of Ethiopia, in the absence of a functioning Ethiopian government, patriots, including Ethiopia's champions from the Italian colony of Eritrea, waged an unrelenting resistance against Italy until the defeat of the Italian occupation and the restoration of the Ethiopian state.

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[1] See, for example, the following remark in the classic of 1902 by G. F-H Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik* (Westminster Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd.), viii: "… from the broader standpoint of politics and history, it seems possible that [the battle of Adowa] heralds the rise of a new power in Africa – we are reminded that the natives of that continent may yet become a military factor worthy of our closest attention. The suggestion has even been made – absurd as it appears at present – that this is the first revolt of the Dark Continent against domineering Europe. And what a series of anomalies that Abyssinia represents!"

At the conclusion of the civil wars that gripped Ethiopia in the last quarter of the twentieth century, despite the collapse of the military dictatorship and the proliferation of secessionist, nationalist movements, the existence of a cohesive front enjoying military control over the country – thereby satisfying Max Weber's celebrated definition of a modern state in terms of monopoly over the legitimate means of violence in a given territory – averted any apprehensions concerning an imminent risk to the integrity of the Ethiopian state. Perhaps, for many observers, the closest historical analogue to the current state of affairs is the so-called Era of the Princes.

It is all the more striking, therefore, that today, without any clear and present external threats or raging civil wars, we witness among the public palpable, pervasive skepticism and anxiety concerning the integrity of a sovereign Ethiopian state.

Intractable Problems, Tragic Choices

The citizenry's sense of insecurity and helplessness is understandable against the backdrop of the vexing dilemmas that the Ethiopian political community now encounters. First, it was the revolt against the dominant ruling party, both by members of the party and populist movements, which propelled the present leadership's ascent to power. Yet, it is far from clear how either the present leadership or the political order can do without the dominant party that the revolts sought to do away with.

Second, there was a general conviction that, its intrinsic value aside, a democratic thaw, allowing the political inclusion of hitherto illegal political parties and their supporters, was necessary in order to contain instability and disorder. While the opening of a democratic space was, rightly, widely welcomed, it did not result in the expected gain in stability and order. On the contrary, the change emboldened populist ethnic nationalisms and increased the influence they exercised over organized political parties, resulting in greater ethnic division, contest and conflict, of which the vast displacements are the saddest manifestation.

Third, the spread and intensification of these cleavages and clashes has produced widespread disbelief that they can be tamed or contained. This, in turn, has bred deep ambivalence about the possibility of holding free and fair national elections. Many fear that elections could instigate greater divisions and more aggravated conflicts, with little likelihood of yielding outcomes that could enjoy public legitimacy among the contestants or their supporters. On the other hand, postponing the elections offers no assurance of enhancing peace and stability due to the unavoidable disregard for constitutional electoral requirements and the consequent lack of a government with constitutional legitimacy.

A critical site and source of these dilemmas lies in the progressively tortured relationship between federal and regional rule in Ethiopia. Vivid signs of this disarray are many and disquieting. In certain regions, notably Tigray, the authority of federal rule has been rejected or challenged in favour of a robust assertion of regional rule. There are other areas of the country where regional rule has been wholly – for example, the Southern regional state– or partially supplanted by federal, martial rule. Albeit in diverse directions, ties between federal and regional rule are in acute constitutional crisis.

The crisis notwithstanding, there is no obvious, workable path to a national political life with or without ethnic federalism. A move away from ethnic federalism in favour of either a non-ethnic federalism or, still more, a unitary state is bound to encounter, not only formidable constitutional barriers, but also vigorous, widespread political opposition. Yet neither is it easy to see how ethnic federalism can be sustained after bidding farewell to a cohesive dominant party capable of subduing the centrifugal force of ethnic regional powers and entitlements.

II The Constitutional and Historical Background

A Conflicted Constitution

Some of the dilemmas noted above are rooted in tensions between two basic strands of the Constitution of the FDRE: roughly, a "holding-together" aspect and a "coming-together" aspect[2]. "Holding-together federalism" refers to the search for new centres of sovereignty or autonomy designed to accommodate diversity in an existing polity. "Coming-together federalism" suggests pre-existing states limiting their sovereignty to join together in a common political community.

The elements of the Constitution fitting the "holding-together" conception include the Preamble's commitment to establish a single political and economic community[3]. Also consonant with this conception is the federal state's responsibility to uphold the supremacy of the federal constitution[4] and to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all citizens[5]. Furthermore, the vast domain of developmental policy and practice – a chief business of a state in a poor country – is principally under the authority of federal government[6]. Finally, redistributive and affirmative action provisions to benefit historically neglected communities and groups are a critical responsibility of the federal state[7].

The second strand, more expressive of the "coming-together" aspect, can be detected in many elements of the Constitution. The opening statement of the Preamble designates the title of authorship

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2 See Alfred Stepan, "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model," *Journal of Democracy,* 10.4(1999): 19-34.
3 In the authoritative, Amharic version of the Preamble.(Strangely, the phrase "a single political community" is attenuated in the official English version to read only as "a political community".)
4 Article 9: "The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Any law, customary practice or a decision of an organ of state or a public official which contravenes this Constitution shall be of no effect."
5 Article 13.1: "All Federal and State legislative, executive and judicial organs at all levels shall have the responsibility and duty to respect and enforce the provisions of this Chapter."
6 Article 51.2: "[The federal government] shall formulate and implement the country's policies, strategies and plans in respect of overall economic, social and development matters.
7 Article 89.4: "Government shall provide special assistance to Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples least advantaged in economic and social development."

of the Constitution, not as "We the People", but rather as "We the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples". In keeping with this authorship, there are constitutional provisions recognizing the title of cultural communities to self-rule[8], conferring legislative, judicial and executive powers upon ethnically constituted regional states[9]. Collective right to land ownership belongs to the nations, nationalities and peoples[10]. Crucially, nations, nationalities and peoples have a robust unilateral right to secession[11], a right which affords its bearers prodigious bargaining power in relation to the federal government. Each regional state has a right of veto on amendments pertaining to Chapter Three of the Constitution, which importantly includes rights of self-determination[12]. Moreover, residual rights and powers – those not explicitly conferred on the federal government – are vested in regional states[13].

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8   Article 39.3: "Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments."

9   Article 52.1: "Consistent with sub-Article 1 of this Article, States shall have the following powers and functions:
(a)To establish a State administration that best advances self-government, a democratic order based on the rule of law; to protect and defend the Federal Constitution;
(b)To enact and execute the State constitution and other laws."
Article 78: "States shall establish state supreme, high and First Instance Courts."

10 Article 40.3: "Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange."

11 Article 39.4: "The right to self-determination, including secession, of every Nation, Nationality and People shall come into effect:
(a) When a demand for secession has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Legislative Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned;
(b) When the Federal Government has organized a referendum which must take place within three years from the time it received the concerned council's decision for secession;
(c) When the demand for secession is supported by a majority vote in the referendum;
(d) When the Federal Government will have transferred its powers to the Council of the Nation, Nationality or People who has voted to secede; and
(e) When the division of assets is effected in a manner prescribed by law."

12 Article 105: "All rights and freedoms specified in Chapter Three of this Constitution, this very Article, and Article 104 can be amended only in the following manner:
(a)When all State Councils, by a majority vote, approve the proposed amendment;
(b)When the House of Peoples' Representatives, by a two-thirds majority vote, approves the proposed amendment; and
(c)When the House of the Federation, by a two-thirds majority vote, approves the proposed amendment."

13 Article 52: "All powers not given expressly to the Federal Government alone, or concurrently to the Federal Government and the States are reserved to the States."

The "holding-together" aspect gives us a federal state in the conventional sense, with a federal authority that enjoys extensive national powers and prerogatives in domestic affairs. Taken together, the elements of the second, "coming-together" strand, suggest a more confederal arrangement, where sovereignty, ultimately and at the most important level, resides in the regional states. The tensions between these two divergent strands of the Constitution surfaced to the foreground with the gradual decline of the dominant party and the accompanying frayed ties between federal and regional rule.

Validation Workshop on Emergent Dilemmas Facing Ties between Federal and Regional Rule, Sept. 2019, Addis Ababa

Party Dominance and Federal Practice

The ascendancy of the federalist, "holding together" strand was for long assured by the dominance of the ruling party tightly disciplined by democratic centralism and exercising full power in both federal

and regional government. Put differently, an extra-constitutional institution, the EPRDF, not only successfully checked the confederal strand, but, in many eyes, prohibited the full, proper exercise and testing of the federal experiment.

However, steps undertaken – good or ill – to extend the powers and functions of the party and the federal government, over time, raised fundamental questions in the regional states and their populations regarding the authority of the federal state and the dominant party.

Plans for the regional state and strategies for their execution were drawn up at central party headquarters in Addis Ababa. Moreover, the Office of Federal Affairs under the Prime Minister's Office was established to extend, in the name of capacity building, party and central government control over the newly formed regional states, and especially over the so-called developing or emergent regional states that were not part of the EPRDF. These interventionist federal processes and measures were later formalized by the establishment of a Ministry of Federal Affairs chiefly in charge of caretaker functions in the peripheral regional states[14]. The Ministry did not occasion a departure from the aim of extending EPRDF's dominance in peripheral regional states, where it had no official, formal presence or authority.[15] The various efforts by the party and the federal government to extend its reach were felt by many in the newly formed, and especially in the peripheral, regional states to be paternalistic and high-handed, reminiscent of centrist, imperial rule[16]. In what is perhaps an even more significant subsequent phase of stretching the powers of the party and the federal government, the expansion of the federal state's mandate over development in the ambitious quest for

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14 Proclamation 256/2001, Proclamation to Provide for the Reorganization of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 11.1 c: "give assistance to the Regions with particular emphasis to the less developed ones [italics ours]".

15 Assefa Fiseha, "The System of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) in Ethiopia: In Search of Institutions and Guidelines", Journal of Ethiopian Law, Volume 23, No. 1(2009): 120.

16 See Assefa Fiseha, Ibid, especially, 119 – 126, Lovise Aalen, Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: The Ethiopian Experience 1991-2000 (Bergen: Chr Michelsea Institute, 2002), John Young "Along Ethiopia's Western Frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in Transition," Journal of Modern African Studies, Volume 37, No. 2(1999): 321-346.

a developmental state created more centralizing powers encroaching on regional states. A notable example was federal usurpation from regional constitutional jurisdiction of land appropriation and administration for purposes of promoting large-scale commercial agriculture on the basis of a dubious upward delegation of a regional power[17]. This overreach gave rise to a perception – international and domestic – of infringing on the entitlements of the peasantry, hitherto deemed to be the social base of the dominant party and the chief beneficiary and agent of its developmental program.

Public disgruntlement over these and related effects of rural development and its envisioned transition to industrialization as well as the perceived submission or suppression of regional states and parties to an overbearing federal government aroused popular protests in certain regions against dominant party and federal rule. The government's response did not address either the problems posed by the joint pursuit of federalism and the developmental state or the public discontent springing from growing regional subordination to central party and state. Instead, the federal government's reaction consisted in the proclamation of prolonged states of emergency — from October 2016 to August 2017, and again in February 2018 – exercising draconian measures in the regional states. Protracted emergency rule over the regional states further fuelled populist nationalist movements and their gradual alliance with regional parties in joint revolt against the dominant party and the greatly expanded claims of central rule[18].

It is significant to recall that upon the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012, there was a deeply and widely felt sense of a vacuum in political leadership. Besides an inward-looking contest of power within constituent parties, his death prompted earnest challenges

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17 See Regulation Number 283/2013, Ethiopian Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency, Articles 5 and 6.

18 For a parallel, it is useful to look at the rise of ethnic majoritarianism and its crisis in India following the emergency declaration. See Pankaj Mishra, "A long & Undeclared Emergency". New York Review of Books, Volume LXVI. Number 12 (July 18 – August 14, 2019): 32-35. The essay does not address Modi's recent assault on Kashmir's autonomy.

to TPLF's status as the first among equals within EPRDF.[19] These trends toward more inward-looking constituent parties and their disaffection with central rule and its expansive aspirations glimpsed on Meles's death came to a head with the rise of populist local nationalisms allied to the constituent parties and their open resistance to the dominant party and federal authority.

The rise of the new leadership is plainly marked by the gradual demise of democratic centralism, the glue that held EPRDF together and enabled federal rule and its robust national policies and programs. The absence of democratic centralism together with the entanglement of regional parties with warring regional forces, driven by rival populist nationalisms, appears to leave little room for a stable and coherent national coalition.

III Two Visions of the Future of Ethiopian Federalism

The fact of federalism and its persistence coupled with the unravelling of the dominant party has given rise to two opposing visions of the future of the federal state: One is a minimalist vision seeking to insulate regional rule from federal authority by limiting shared rule to some sort of confederal arrangement. The second puts forward a more inclusive vision of federal rule whereby ethnic majoritarianism (singly or in coalition) restores a strong federal government that holds together diverse regional states. It is worth examining these visions in order to ascertain whether or not they uphold constitutional or popular aspirations for the integrity of the Ethiopian state.

The minimalist vision is motivated by the legitimate desire to avoid subordination to what it perceives to be a hostile, dominant federal state. To guard against this threat, the vision proposes severe limits on federal powers and their exercise in the regional state. The envisioned curtailment of federal authority cedes limited powers to national

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19 For a chronicle of party deliberations following Meles' death, see Brehane Tsegab's "EPRDF's Descent" (2005 -2010, EC)የኢህአዴግ የቁልቁለት ጉዞ የስብሰባዎች ወግ (2005-2010), Soderetube. com.

government, among them: foreign relations and national defense, with all domestic cooperation and action subject to consensus among regional states. This vision captures and capitalizes on confederal elements of the Constitution, backed by the leverage drawn from the regional right to unilateral secession. What appears compelling is the hope of salvaging the bare survival of the Ethiopian state – above all, from the threat of outright secession -- by circumventing conflicts between the federal state and the regional state. [20]

The second, maximalist vision seeks to restore national rule by asserting the democratic legitimacy of majoritarian rule, in this instance exercised by numerically dominant ethnic groups. Claims to democracy to one side, this vision is animated by constitutional and popular interests in the persistence of a national government and an all-encompassing federal state. Its compelling claim lies in the affirmation of a workable national government and the consequent avoidance of the regional fragmentation of the state. The vision seizes upon and champions the powers and responsibilities of federal government to enforce the rule of law, thereby assuring fidelity to the federalist strand of the Constitution.

The Limits of the Confederal Vision

This vision requires a retreat from salient commitments of the present constitution. For one thing, how this vision can live up to the aspiration to build a "single political and economic community" is far from clear. This pregnant phrase in the Preamble affirms common standards of equal and free citizenship. Sustaining a shared sense of citizenship no doubt requires that we all have a legitimate say on how a regional state treats its own members, including minorities. How, on the confederal vision, can there be shared standards of citizenship that can be insisted upon across all regional states? It is not even clear how there can be a common regime of criminal offenses or, more generally, the rule of law. Unlike countries with entrenched

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20 For a thoughtful and principled defense of this point of view, please refer to the authoritative voice of Mehari Taddele, "Can Ethiopia Make the Transit to Stability?", Addis Standard (March 5, 2019).

traditions of liberal democracy, there can be little assurance that the rights of citizens and minorities are equally honoured in all regional states once enforceable federal jurisdiction is put aside.

Moreover, without enforceable, national legal norms, political rights, and economic freedoms it is difficult to see how free movement of capital and labour can be guaranteed across regional states. It is not obvious that a national economy can exist without free movement of labour and capital.

Other worthy aims, for example, development and the fight against poverty, call both for division of labour in accord with the comparative advantages of regional states as well as pooling of human and other natural resources. Development in each regional state alone is not a coherent objective. Social justice, including distribution among regional states or affirmative action in favour of historically deprived states and groups is not readily accessible in a confederal scheme of government.

Though advocates of the confederal state regard themselves as champions of the Constitution, it should be plain that their vision demands radical revision of the Constitution. It is a measure of how radical these revisions are that they call into question the very integrity of the Ethiopian state. Nor does the proposal offer a solution to our present predicament of interethnic and interregional division and conflict, but rather embraces, or worse, aggravates it. The single-minded focus on keeping federal rule at bay at the obvious cost of weakening or doing away with all dimensions of interregional solidarity only serves to enlarge and inflame nationalist clashes and conflicts among the regions. The idea that we can cut our losses by lowering our sights regarding federal rule in an attempt to avert outright disintegration is an illusion fostered by looking at Tigray's relation to the present federal state to the exclusion of problems directly arising in interregional ties.

The Limits of Ethnic Majoritarianism

Though this vision draws upon majoritarianism as a feature of democratic rule, it is undeniable that in workable, mature democracies majoritarian rule is severely constrained by liberal measures extending protection to minorities and citizens. The hazards of illiberal democracy are all the more clear and present where the majority is avowedly, openly ethnically constituted. A peril of ethnic majoritarianism is the creation of permanent political minorities.[21]It would not be altogether a surprise if minority regional states were to fear being subject to enforceable federal state measures in which they had no meaningful say. In a multinational society with diverse identities and with vastly unequal numbers and assets these hazards are greatly intensified by fears of subordination and even threats to existential survival.

Ethnic majoritarianism jeopardizes legitimate claims to political, economic and cultural equality. What would prevent a national state governed by an ethnic majority or an ethnic majoritarian ruling coalition from asserting supremacy in high political offices or in access to economic privileges or in assuming cultural hegemony? In sum, national rule and the integrity of the state under ethnic majoritarianism can only be secured at the risk of ethnic and regional subordination and the affront of unequal citizenship.

In a society driven by mutually antagonistic nationalist divisions, the prospect of ethnic majoritarianism can hardly hope for a strong and stable national state, a promise of ethnic majoritarianism. Ethnic dominance – whether exercised by a minority or a majority – cannot avoid ethnic fragmentation. More fundamentally, ethnic domination – by a minority or a majority – cannot ever secure either equal and free citizenship or the integrity of an Ethiopian state that enjoys inclusive legitimacy.

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21 Note here the deep misgivings of consociationalism about majoritarianism in deeply divided societies. See Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, Journal of Democracy, Volume 15 (Number 2 April 2004), Thinking About Democracy, Power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice(New York: Routledge, 2008).

Shared Shortcomings of the Two Reigning Rival Visions: Failure to Meet the Publicity Condition

Each vision is mounted on the guiding aim of averting or overcoming the perils posed by the other. One might say, each vision feeds on the weakness of the other. A deliberate or inadvertent result is insufficient attention to the fate, under the vision, of other regional states and the country as a whole. A telling disability of each vision is the inability to meet what John Rawls calls the publicity condition. The publicity condition requires that in public life one may appeal only to those reasons that one can reasonably expect others to accept. In Rawls' own words, "publicity allows that all can justify their conduct to everyone else."[22] The failure to satisfy the publicity condition may explain why these rival visions lack recognizable champions and open advocates, despite the fact that each is a likely default position in the wake of EPRDF's decline and the threat posed by its rival.

Under the coercive pressure of regional, populist nationalisms, each of the regional states has, explicitly or tacitly, proclaimed what can be characterized as the "my group first" doctrine. The rival visions are both complicit in this affirmation of self-supremacy. Each is of the conviction that its claims and interests override those of others. It is perfectly clear that this posture violates the publicity condition and does not admit reasonable acceptance by any others. "We come ahead of you" is not a posture that can be freely endorsed by anyone else. This message can only be addressed to one's own group; it

is impossible to be openly addressed to others with any hope of securing their reasonable endorsement. No group can pretend to offer this self-indulgent view as fit for a shared Ethiopian vision.

The minimalist, confederal vision, though understandable in light of the perceived threat of ethnic majoritarian domination and marginalization, cannot easily satisfy the publicity condition. Among

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22 John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Revised Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 510.

other things, it is by no means clear that Tigray's self-insulation is being dictated or, instead, recommended to others. One can reasonably ask if Tigray can impose on all other regional states – for example, peripheral states dependent on federal support or otherwise vulnerable communities in need of federal protection – to reasonably accept self-insulation from a federal state. This raises the question of whether confederalism is a self-interest of Tigray and other similarly situated regions or whether it is a positive proposal to be reasonably endorsed by all Ethiopian regions and citizens An arrangement suited to mitigating the dangers of ethnic majoritarianism should also prove reasonably acceptable to all regional states and citizens reliant on the integrity of the Ethiopian state. After all, there cannot be unilateral confederalism to the extent that confederal rule governs none or all.

The competing vision of ethnic majoritarianism – singly or coalitional –cannot hope to fulfil the publicity condition stated above either. No ethnic community, however numerically or otherwise dominant, can publically and openly claim a rightful title to rule Ethiopia. A claim to majoritarian rule may be asserted in the name of democracy. However, the liberal limits on majoritarian rule aside, ethnic majoritarian rule invites the obvious risk of ethnic domination and ethnic marginalization. Ethnic majoritarianism would require the political subordination of minority ethnic communities and regional states and the inevitable creation of second-class citizenship. Can anyone publically advocate a regime of ethnic supremacy whereby all others accept a permanent political minority status and second-class citizenship?

Against this background, it is not merely difficult for the proponents of either vision to win the reasonable assent of others, but even to be convinced of the fidelity of their present posture to their own past. The irony in the reversal of roles among the chief protagonists will not be lost on anyone. The party that presided over the expansion of a centralized developmental state is now insisting on self-insulation, while the rival movement, among the first to call for liberation

from imperial rule and doggedly opposed to ethnic discrimination and oppression, is dangerously poised to succumb to the hubris of domination.

In sum, the evident failure of each vision to meet the publicity condition – or even a historically consistent self-image - demonstrates that neither can ensure a legitimate, stable political order.

IV Conclusion: Towards the Constraint of Shared Interests, Shared Values and Shared Norms

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate why we cannot do away with the aspiration to a fair and stable Ethiopian state without a betrayal of our common destiny: our deep shared interests, values and practices that carry a historical weight and directly bear upon our existential fate. Put differently, we should accept that we swim or drown together.

No citizen or community would knowingly contribute to or acquiesce in a fragmented or failed Ethiopian state, with all its dire consequences not just for ourselves but also for all our neighbours. No one can reasonably deny that we have a common cause in the defeat of poverty, in upholding free and equal citizenship and in the equitable development of all regions and cultural communities.

What in our present circumstances is minimally required in order to realize these worthy aims and to avert the calamity of state collapse? The burden of meeting these daunting challenges call for sacrifices by the chief protagonists now vying to shape Ethiopia's future. Any reasonable hopes for reconciliation and meaningful political settlement must begin with a disavowal of both the confederal and ethnic majoritarian visions for the country's future. Can anyone with ethical passion and commitment reasonably reject these terms for a common ground to rescue the integrity of the Ethiopian state? Proponents of both visions must acknowledge that their respective

visions stand in the way of our shared, worthwhile interests and values as well as our joint obligation to rescue the integrity of the Ethiopian state.

Practicable steps must be taken by citizens and organized political groups to create and cultivate the common ground proposed here. This can be a very exacting task even for those sympathetic to the need for such a common ground. Within their respective region, it would involve persuading opposition groups and populist movements. Beyond the region, it would call for a capacity to overcome animosities and antagonisms of other communities. However, exacting this exercise may itself serve to rejuvenate a sense of civility and patriotism.

It is worth underscoring that this is only a minimal condition. A great deal of positive public action is indispensable to the successful pursuit of our worthy shared aims and to escape efficaciously our present perils. Similarly, the political bracketing or rejection of the two rival visions does not foreclose a wide range of possible ways to answer to our shared fate and to avert our common defeat as a failed state. Arrangements equal to these demands may include many alternative practicable measures which can be subjects of democratic negotiation and accommodation. The ambition of this essay is not therefore to pre-empt the choice among rich, varied alternatives. Instead, ours is the far more modest aim of carving out a common ground, where the chief political protagonists and contestants can seek mutually acceptable as well as reasonable positions endorsable by all citizens and communities.

Without pre-empting practicable solutions best put forward by the public and the chief political actors, it may be useful to sketch the upshot of putting aside the rival visions from Ethiopia's political agenda. The upshot consists of significant negative and positive constraints essential to safeguarding the integrity of the Ethiopian state.

On the negative side, what is shown is that neither self-survival nor self-indulgence – isolationist or supremacist visions -- can offer a basis for a principled public life. Motivated by fear or triumphalism, these rival visions vainly aspire to a mere *modus vivendi*, a way of peaceably living together that, even if attainable, falls far short of the demands of a public life based on mutually shared principles and values[23]. As is familiar from international politics, a *modus vivendi* draws only minimally on shared values and principles, tending to rest on the contingencies of the balance of interests and power.

The removal of the two visions from the political agenda comes to an affirmation of vital public values. The positive values upheld by the common ground thus created consist in the endorsement of equal and free citizenship and the equal consideration of all minorities and cultural communities. The common ground also embraces the value of solidarity in a variety of ways. Solidarity calls upon all to respect and defend the equality and freedom of citizens and minorities everywhere. Solidarity also champions diversity – not just as a tolerance of cultural identities and differences, but a positive pride in their existence and flourishing.

Some think that solidarity effectively emerges not so much from a joint commitment to shared principles and values, but from the impulse to join together in the fight against common foes. Now plainly political disenfranchisement and poverty are formidable common foes, foes which can only be overcome through the collective efforts of all citizens and communities. The cause of freedom and social justice belongs to all and can be pursued in principle and practice only by all.

In sum, the conditions for securing the integrity of the Ethiopian state consist in the principled respect and defense of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens and the joint advance of substantive conceptions of the common good, among them the celebration of diversity and the release from the indignities of poverty.

23 See John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 299) pp. 44-45.

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2. The Challenges of Ensuring Inclusive Citizenship and Managing Diversity in the Current Ethiopian Discourse

Yussuf Yassin

The Challenges of Ensuring Inclusive Citizenship and Managing Diversity in the Current Ethiopian Discourse

Abstract

There is little disagreement that citizens are denied their rights and sometimes discriminated against by the state they call their homeland on the grounds of religion and ethnicity and a host of other parameters of identity, here in Ethiopia and elsewhere. So, at this juncture, identity and citizenship get intertwined at this point of their convergence. Citizens' response to claim back their recognition, redistribution and representation is a "…set of struggles for citizenship rights by those who are oppressed and excluded" (Stoke, 2017). This paper has heavily relied on Stoke's work on these processes of exclusion, inclusion and the consequent response as components of politics of citizenship by concluding that "... ethnic movements for recognition, redistribution, and representation in the broader sense are politics of citizenship" (Stoke, 2017). The Ethiopian constitution of 1995 primarily put in place a decentralized federal system and other institutions, policies, rules and regulations to ensure all the above rights of ethnic movements. But, still, in spite of all these constitutional arrangements, the conceptualization as well as the realization of those schemes continues to be a bone of contention, and much controversy in the Ethiopian political landscape and the discussion has gone on unabated for the last three decades, still to this moment. It is the epicentre of Ethiopian politics and most probably will continue to be during the transition to democracy and beyond. It might determine not only the stability but,the mere existence of this country.

Starting with this point of interconnection between citizenship politics and identity politics, which are not only being juxtaposed and counter posed as opposites by discussants in the current discourse, the paper not only re-examines this assumed polarity at closer range

but also demands political actors and scholars do the same. A re-examination, which in turn, might help us strike a balance not only between those two versions of politics but, also between the equally controversial individual and collective rights discourse.

2. Historical Background to Statelessness and Citizenship

Let us start with the concept of a stateless person. A person who does not have any relation of belonging to *any* state is *stateless*. The international legal definition of a stateless person is "a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law". In simple terms, this means that a stateless person does not have the nationality of any country. Some people are born stateless; others become stateless for various reasons. Sometimes a person is born *Stateless* while others lose this affiliation, again on the grounds of multiple reasons; such a person cannot claim any rights from a state simply because he cannot establish belongingness or affiliation to any state even though he is born in the country or is a national of the country he calls home. Formulated, a stateless person does not have a relationship of belonging to any state whatsoever. In my *Asabaasabi Mannnet (*Yussuf Yassin 2018), chapters 7 and 8 I elaborate in greater detail both the concept of citizenship as well as its antithesis of non – citizenship *(Eezeeginet)*.

In the same book, I assert that this relationship of belongingness is made more explicit and more understandable than most other traditions by the German term of *Staatsangehörigkeit,* which can literally be translated to belongingness to a state. The Scandinavian languages use more or less one form or the other of variations of the state belonging concept while other clusters of languages emphasize belonging to the home country, as we can see in Arabic, Japanese and our Amharic usage.

As we have seen in all those traditions, the affiliation is connected to the country of origin, or the state one is born in originally, as is the

case of *teewelaj* in Amharic, *Muuwatin* in Arabic, and Kokamin in Japanese. In this paper, *Citizen* will mean the relation of individual national to his state. In the book, (Asabassabi Mannenet p. 2018) in spite of the fact, I preferred to use *hagrlejj* and *hagerlijjnet* for citizen and citizenship, respectively. But, I assume that the neologism of *zeega* has fully gained wide corroboration and authentication in the field of subject literature as well as official documentation, although I didn't deny my preference for the German *Staatsangehorigkeit* as it is more illustrative as well as illuminative, as is the case with most German phraseology. But, if citizenship is the relation of a person to the state and citizens were addressed as nationals, natives or subjects of that entity, it implies this affiliation or belongingness relates to the state. In monarchies as well as in colonial states, their nationals were designated as *subjects* to the monarch or the head of the colonial authority. Because of the different approaches of the British and the French, the French colonial subjects were called *citoyen* or citizen just as their colonial masters, and not subjects. The legal affiliation to a state can be approved through a host of attaining citizenship procedures such as being born there, through parents, naturalization and other systems and processes. Similar systems and methods are used for exclusion too. That is why it is wise to be reminded again that citizenship rights and entitlements are just as much about inclusion as they are about exclusion.

If we presume citizenship is the relationship of an individual to the state he calls his home country, then this relation presupposes the existence of that state in the first place. It also assumes this entity has secure borders, sovereignty over its territory as well as recognition of other states in the state system. So, we can trace back the inception of this state system to the Peace of Westphalia of 1664 which ended wars among many European countries and established the "Westphalian system" in reference to the Treaty of Westphalia or Peace of Westphalia (1648), which not only brought the European Eighty Years ad Thirty Years War to an end but also lied the foundations of modern interstate relations and territorial

sovereignty of states. Although some important European states of the time were not represented in peace assemblies, scholars of international relations consider this treaty of paramount importance because there, nation-states began differentiating between citizens whom they assigned to their state and others whom they considered nationals of other states (countries). This is also considered the point of departure for nation-states' inception in Europe.

Most commonly, the idea of a nation-state was and is associated with the rise of the modern system of sovereign European states, which came into existence because of the Peace of Westphalia and was later consolidated by the French Revolution. In other words, those sovereign states not only separated their nationals from nationals of other countries but established obligation to those whom they considered their rights were denied. The exchange of diplomatic missions, as well as the establishment of consular services in receiving states in order to facilitate the wellbeing of their citizens resident in the receiving states, followed later.

But, millions of people in South East Asian, the Middle East, and African and European countries have been and still, today, are denied their citizenship rights, and some are even stripped of citizenship in their own countries solely because of their national descent, ethnic background, race, and/or gender. These denials or exclusions emanate from one of the parameters of their *Identities*. So, citizenship is also an identity or a form of identity. As we will substantiate in many instances, citizenship and identity crisscross each other in a knotted web of complex entanglements as we encounter those two terms again and again. So, citizenship not only becomes a web of relational processes but also multidimensional and complex, as we will soon detect. But, one fact must be made clear from the outset; it is state, which assures the host of civic, social, economic, and political rights of a person. Here the state recognizes their rights and includes them as a group (Group Identity). Through recognition of those rights, we do away with their inequality and ensure equality through inclusive

citizenship, at least theoretically. But, Kristian Stoke, as we have seen in the introduction part, states that ethnic movements for recognition, redistribution, and representation in the broader sense are politics of citizenship (Stoke, 2017). In this paper one seems to find here the link which connects the struggle for inclusive citizenship and ethnic group fight for their rights.

3. Citizenship -Dimensions, Exclusion and Inclusion in Contextual Power Relations

We know now that from the outset of its inception, citizenship has been as much about exclusion as it was about inclusion. This can easily be noted throughout history and under different state forms spanning the experiences of ancient Athens, the Roman Empire, and medieval Europe, the advanced industrial countries both with colonial and post-colonial legacies. This was also the case in homogeneous states as well as multicultural nation. These complex and multinational relationships interplay and entangle not only the central concepts, namely citizenship and identity but also citizen and identity politics. It is these complex and multidimensional relationships in interplay and entanglement of the central concepts, namely citizenship and identity, but also citizen politics and identity politics. It is this process of inclusion and exclusion that we will scrutinize from a closer range in the interplay of social players and various actors in contextual power relations and dynamics, both on the national level as well as globally.

T.H. Marshall, in his seminal work, identified three sets of rights that an individual was able to secure in West European countries, namely: civil in the 18th century, political in the 19th century, and social-economic rights in the 20th century. According to him, each set of rights was connected to one of the institutions of the state. For example, civil rights were close-knit with courts and justice institutions; political rights with parliament and the executive; and social-economic rights were linked to education and other service

provision institutions. (Marshall, 1950) Here, again, to render those rights, these institutions must not only be accessible but must also have the capacity to do so. Even then, some categories of citizens were not enlisted in the networks. Neither women nor men of colour were to be included in this network, neither in Western European countries nor the United States until the 20th century. So, they were excluded from enjoying these rights on the grounds of race (colour) or gender. Here we discover, again that exclusion takes place on the grounds of one marker or another of identity; ethnicity, religion, race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

There was the king and his subjects but later "…the emergence of the individual as a citizen, a sovereign human being, equal to all others, subject only to the laws of the land and the forces of the market place" was a product of the Enlightenment and later the French Revolution. W. R.Bruker characterized the evolvement by concluding "The Revolution, in short, invented not only the nation-state but also the modern institution and ideology of national citizenship" (William R.Brubaker,1989).

Workshop on the Challenges of Ensuring Inclusive Citizenship
and Managing Diversity

During the French Revolution, citizenship was to be the most dominant identity, replacing alternative identities of the estate, family, region, and religion of the *ancient regime*. Since then, citizenship politics has undergone vital changes, but the rights continue to expand. This was a long journey in all-inclusive citizenship. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the material conditions enhanced citizenship rights, particularly for the property-owning class. But, this comprised only the male population, again leaving women uncovered. Both in Britain and France marital conditions allowed women to be relatively more included. Citizenship not only provides the right to have rights in two important senses, one is having access to rights and by providing the means for claiming these rights and shaping its orientation and implementation. There must be the state, but, above all, it must be in a position to guarantee those rights enshrined in policy documents and constitutions.

In most cases, an African state cannot fulfil these requirements, simply on the grounds of the material as well as the political situation prevailing in the countries. Here, again, the correlations between politics and citizenship rights are glaringly evident.

T. H. Marshalin his original book called "Citizenship and Social Class," published in 1950, analyzed the development of citizenship as attainment and expansion of civil, political, and social rights consecutively. Civil rights was the first to be established, this included free speech, free religion, property ownership, and equal access to the legal system. Political rights followed with the right to vote and democracy. Lastly, social rights came with positive freedoms such as welfare rights. Social rights were attained because of the arrival of the modern welfare state in many European countries. The USA stands, even today, as an exception to the rule where an industrial state cannot offer full welfare rights to its citizens. In spite of the universality of citizenship concepts and models, it is not easy, even today, to understand the citizenship concept and its ramifications thoroughly.

Several writers wrote on the development and expansion of rights, but T.H.Marshall, who expounded in his seminal essay of Citizenship and Social Class (1950), gave the liberal nation-state model (approach) the name Marshallian Model. It is to be remembered that the writer specifically addressed the issues of citizenship within the nation-state model while others took the freedom of looking for other supranational models, as we see around us today.

Today, politicians in the European Union (EU) can think of "Supranational or borderless" citizenship, which is proving challenging to grasp as its multilevel trajectories branch. By contrast, the post-national trajectory means that citizenship becomes located outside the nation-state framework, in the sense that it constructs new forms of community which transcend the state institutional framework such as supranational references like the European Union or as in federal states, in which individual citizens hold rights and responsibilities at the level of both the federation and the sub-states (Heater 1999).

However for clarity sake we will maintain the traditional model. Thomas Bottomore, a renowned Marxist sociologist who co-authored the book as mentioned above with Marshal, asserts that citizenship and right attached to it are 'continually developing and should not be regarded at any historical moment as having attained a final, definitive form' (Bottomore 1992). This means it is on a continuous process of expansion and development. It is on a continuous process of expansion and development. It is this multidimensional multilevel progress in an ever unfolding transformation. Such citizenship politics is inherently complex in terms of actors, interests, strategies, and capacities. It is equally multifaceted in geographical terms, as citizenship is politicized and institutionalized within diverse territories and places, at multiple and interrelated scales, and through spatial networks across places, territories, and scales (Stoke, 2017). The above discussion highlights that citizenship is always a matter of politics in the sense that the substance of membership, status,

rights, and participation are all contextual outcomes of political contentions and negotiations. One can generalize with Stoke when he defines politics of citizenship as struggles for institutionalized and substantive membership, legal status, rights, and participation (i.e., cultural, judicial, social and political justice). Citizenship, as said earlier, provides the right to have rights in two important senses, one is having access to rights and the other is getting the means for claiming rights and institutions that ensure the entitlements.

At this stage, these claims become part of power politics and power politics can be seen in the light of power relations as we have seen in Ethiopia for the last three decades. Even today, what we witness concerning the entitlements ethnically organized groups raise gives rise to countless problems, mainly when those entitlements emanate from shared experiences of injustice done to their group in the past. Commentators on ethnic politics warn against the fact that constructed identities appear so real and so emotional, sensitive, and so non-rational. Can the recent developments in Ethiopia be drawn as an example?

4. Citizenship Politics and Identity politics in Ethiopia

As we have seen in the European nation-states, the development of civic, social and political rights in Europe took almost three centuries to be fully realized. But, citizenship (Zeeginet) is a new concept in Ethiopian tradition, as we have observed. It begins with the modern state and the first constitution of 1931, where the talk is about *tewlaj* (born in the country) while there was no mention of citizen (*Zeega*). The Consecutive imperial constitution of 1955 refers only to a subject(s) and people, but again no trace of the citizen as conceptualized by the liberal nation-state model we have experienced above.

Although Ethiopia's first written constitution of 1931 is said to be modelled on the Japanese Meiji Constitution of 1900, the institutions which were necessary for the modern state formation of Japan,

Ethiopia might have taken the ideas of Japan's constitution but neither were the institutions in place nor was the society at large fertile to such purposes described by Ikagami in her book. By 1900, Japan had already equipped itself with a modern Constitution that defined citizens' rights and obligations, a parliamentary system, an updated judicial system, universal education, a restructured national and local bureaucracy, national standing army, private ownership of land, and a nation-wide taxation system." (Ikagami, 2005). None of those institutions were in existence in 1931 and a few might be merely in initiation at the time of its promulgation. So, in spite of several similarities in the two constitutions, neither the Ethiopian state of the time nor the societal forces could be compared to the Japanese Meiji dynasty's period (1868-1889).

As Ethiopia has no colonial legacy, there can be no comparison also to Mahmadani's colonial state in Africa either (Mamadani 2015). So, Ethiopia, with no legacy of the colonial state and by extension of the logic, cannot blame such legacy as an impediment to its democratization process as Mamadani attributes to colonial masters and the heritage of their state. In the Ethiopian case, few individual and collective rights were granted by the grace of the Emperor under the 1955 constitution; but there was no reference to citizens.

The document spoke of subjects and not of citizens. In 1987, Derge's constitution was the concept of citizenship introduced and consolidated with the recognition of several rights and obligations. One can argue with certainty that it was the 1995 EPRDF constitution, which reads in its preamble, "All sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia" (Article 8) introducing ethnic politics as well as citizenship politics to Ethiopia. The 1995 constitution proclaimed federal arrangement and attendant restructuring of the country as nine language/based regions or Kilils.

The term 'subject' is used rather than 'citizen' because it is assumed that under a monarchy, the monarch is the source of authority in whose name all legal power in civil and military law is exercised. The people of a monarchy were regarded as the monarch's subjects who were under certain obligations, such as owing allegiance to the king. Others, most in ethno nationalist camp, would rather ascribe this to the coarse State-building \Ethiopian state went through particularly, in its initial inception. (Ikagami 2005) Thus ascribing the term subject to its "colonial" character, which fits the Ethiopian state and its relationship with its colonial "subjects" rather than equal "citizens" in the nation-state model of citizenship... Few would disagree the Ethiopian Emperor was the ultimate authority all kingdoms and empires. He had his subjects not citizens, which goes contrary to the claim/argument of Ethiopian royalists and nationalists.

5. Citizenship and Identity Politics as Challenge to Managing Diversity

As we have seen in the introduction, there is no agreement as to which event and date we can trace back the starting point for the initiation of identity politics and, consequently, the citizenship politics in the Ethiopian body politic. Leenco Leta, one of the founders of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), sees no reason for inconclusiveness and ambiguity. For him, it has its origins in none but the 1933 Education Policy of SahluTsedale, the then Minister of Education (Leenco 2019). The minister meant that the policy would facilitate the national integration and hence, national unity, nation-building, and consequently national identity. But, its opponents insist it has bedevilled all endeavours in this direction. Leenco and his comrades insist it was assimilations. But, one thing is sure for ethno nationalist forces, the integration meant nothing but assimilate, and therefore, there was agreement on the purpose of the policy. For them, the policy leaves few doubts as it plainly state. A country's (State " s) power stems from unity, and unity emanates

from language, tradition, and religion. So that Amharic and Geez continue to be reinforced both in the spiritual and worldly sphere, all the atheistic (heathen) languages must be abolished "ጉልበት አንድነት ነው አንድነትንም የሚወልደዉ ቋንቋ ልማድና ሃይማኖት ነዉ።በመላ ኢትዮጵያ ግዛት ለሥነጋዊና ለመንፈሳዊ ሥራ ያማርኛና የግዕዝ ቋንቋ ብቻ በሕግ ጸንተዉ እንዲኖሩ ሌላዉ ማናቸውም የአረማዉያን ቋንቋ ሁሉ እንዲደመሰስ ማድረግ ያስፈልጋል! (Leenco, 2019)

So, accordingly it is neither Walelegne Mokennon's famous article of 1968 nor Ethiopian Students' preoccupation with National Question but, it is this policy statement that is responsible for the controversy around national integration and consequently national identity formation. Leenco puts the blame squarely on the doors of Ethiopian Nationalists by stating that "The critics of the present multinational federation blame the spokespersons of these struggles for self-determination for politicizing ethnicity/language for the first time in the country's history. Nothing could be further from the truth. On the contrary, these struggles were simply a natural response to a prior state-driven policy of politicizing ethnicity/language". He is referring to the above-mentioned Education policy.

Although it does not impact directly Leenco's point of view one cannot disagree with Walker Conners who was considered "one of the scholars of nationalism and ethnic conflict who has contributed most towards establishing a conceptual grounding" (Conversi,(2004) widely cited for his insistence on the inherently ethnic character of nationalism, its impediment to national integration and nation-building and national identity. Conners also criticized scholars like Karl Deutesh, whom he accused of sidestepping and treating the ethnic element in citizenship and ethnic diversity and identity as a minor impediment to effective state integration. We are witnessing now that this is not far from the truth, globally as well as in the illustrative case of today's Ethiopia. Of course, besides this impediment, we can add numerous factors that can be considered stumbling blocks to democratization.

Those who mistrust that *Itiyopiyawenet* or Ethiopianess "will blossom on the graveyards of *Oromonet, Sidamanet, and Tigrawinet* (Lencoo, 2019) have their reasons not only to doubt it but, also their doubts about unity, national integration and eventually building of national identity. If *Itiyopiyawenet* is meant to consolidate national and consequently national identity, they will do everything in their power, to hinder it from flourishing on graves of their respective nationalities".

For some ethno nationalist, the call for reviewing the divisive federal system sounds like a call to return to the old unitary system of the Derg era or Imperial era. This seems to pose another menace to this camp. There is no doubt that the prevailing contentions and power relations that have increased the intensity of conflicts, the aggravations of contradictions and consequently the thundering voice in protests are all not good omens. The federal structure was meant to ensure inclusive citizenship, align the apprehensions and create trust as well as foster peace among all identity groups in the country. Some made federalism responsible for all the contradictions. Others think it was never meant to solve problems.

But on the other hand, Edmond Keller and Edith Omwami in their study of federalism and national identity concluded that "even though it is characterized by some federal institutional forms, it does not function on a day-to-day base though it is truly federal system. It is highly centralized; and this hyper/centralization makes Ethiopia operate very much like a unitary system". (Keller. E. E. Omwami. HAS 2007) so the federal system is dysfunctional. Others also insist the federal arrangement was in fact over centralized. That can be invigorated and brought to life by a simple formula: less over centralization and less decentralization. However, this formula cannot be a readily made remedy for all.

The restructuring of the country as federal federation, which politicized ethnicity and ethicized politics divided the country into

language-based groups or regions with the insistence of the ruling party. Without any doubt, Ethiopia today is a divided country.

The question, which first politicized ethnicity/language, seems not to be so significant nowadays as we must find solutions to our country's unstable situation. The fragile state, ethnic divisions and conflicts and armed conflicts, and religious radicalism, which we witness in today's Ethiopia is the result of interplay of contextual power relations among these forces.

Today, even an ethnic organization like the Tigrai Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) is of the opinion that any attempt to institute national identity or strike a balance between the two as an attempt to reintroduce the old centralized unitary system of the Imperial era and that of the Derg times. The TPLF also purports itself as protector of the federal system and calls on minority groups to defend the constitution and federal system; after three decades of unabated hegemony and supremacy they lost their grip on power. TPLF ruled for three decades as it stood for 'Minority Might' rather than a 'Minority Right '.. As the core and creator of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) they ruled as hegemonic as possible. They started with majoritarian interpretation of the rule and now they are calling for consensus democracy, something they never did when they were at the helm of power.

Nevertheless, it is true that the Ethiopia political landscape is in need of consensus on several crucial issues. It needs to definitely strike a balance on a number of contentious rights, principles and values. Foremost among them is keeping the balance or equilibrium between individual rights and collective rights. Subordinating one right to other or giving priority to one over the other needs fine-tuning and nuanced equilibrium where no right infringes on the other. It is easy to this than doing it in reality. So, it will continue to be controversial not only during the transition period but beyond.

Some renowned Ethiopianists like Christopher Clapham doubt that the Ethiopian Federal System would survive its creator or TPLF, which is now fading away from the centre. The two contending national groups still try to hoodwink each other with sugar-coated, hallow mottos such as *Oro-mara* instead of negotiating a historical compromise. Any imitative in this direction could have stimulated further coalition buildings and, consequently, national dialogue and consensus on the crucial national issues.

Stoke argues that a broad conception of citizenship may provide an appropriate framework for studying political contentions over cultural, legal, social, and political exclusion and inclusion. He starts by identifying four key dimensions of citizenship defining politics of citizenship as contentious interactions over the institutionalization and realization of substantive membership, legal status, rights, and participation.

Edmond Keller and Edith M. Omwami, in their essay entitled Citizenship and National Identity in Ethiopia, assessed the complex interplay between Ethiopia's policy of federalism and the notions of citizenship and national identity. They tried to study by submitting questions to citizens in nine regions of the federation, and one of the central issues in the survey was if the average Ethiopian citizen sees himself or herself as a citizen of the state of Ethiopia first, and his or her nationality group as second. It is a very detailed study but, the number of Ethiopians who see themselves first as Ethiopian does not fill the heart of Ethiopian nationalists with hope and encouragement. According to the results of this survey most Ethiopians look upon themselves as a member of an ethnic group they belong to and as a citizen of a country called Ethiopia. Such perceptions are not all fears of power elites or contradictory dreams (wishes) as Dr. Meraara assumes to be. It is more than that. The ethnic focused identity dashes hopes and everyone else's dream. It is an obstacle in aligning fears; we need a dialogue that can inspire hope and lead to understanding and consensus. We were not able to recognize our diversities let alone accommodate them.

3. Concluding Remarks

I decided to make use of several materials and look for diverse perspectives on all matters under scrutiny in this paper but, Kristian Stokes's article is used as an analytical framework. Thus, many quotes of him have been to explain concepts, dimensions, types, models, and approaches to citizenship and identity. His work has also been utilized to illuminate equally the political contentions and contradictions in our society.

At the conclusion, the answer to the question "what is citizenship?" is not easy to answer, but "the way we define citizenship is linked intimately to the kind of society and political community" (Mouffe 1992)

But, in spite of the difficulties we can sum up, "…the issues at stake in citizenship politics, with particular attention to its three interrelated dimensions: politics of recognition for cultural inclusion, politics of redistribution for social justice, and politics of representation for political inclusion", according to Stoke. To simplify, it is RECOGNITION, REDISTRIBUTION & REPRESENTATION (3 Rs). One can observe that the 1995 FDRE constitution tried to address those inequalities by recognizing all the three dimensions, namely, recognition, redistribution, and representation, but it proved to lack the resourcefulness to the tackle any of them correctly.

We detected several impediments to democratization such a fragile state; ethnic divisions, and a host of other stumbling blocks to peaceful transition and democratization process, in general, and transition that can conclude in peaceful election process in the foreseeable future.

Armed conflicts, ethno linguistic, ethno nationalistic disputes, and religious radicalism, which we witness in today's Ethiopia, are interplays of contextual power relations among forces organized around ethnic identity and those not being able to organize around nation-state liberal citizenship formula. It has been argued

that identity politics fails to capture the complexity of identity and freezes categorical characters, thereby limiting individual autonomy and replacing 'one kind of tyranny with another' (Appiah 1994, 163). Some believe, that one group is trying to replace and hijack the reform by substituting the *Woyane* tyranny with that of Oromo organizations. That is another source of mutual mistrust. Citizenship has four interconnected components: membership, leg status, entitlement and responsibilities. We have seen that it takes time to ensure the achievement of these components. Some ethnic nationalists are in hurry to realize them.

However, this understanding of identity as a discursively constructed subject positions is challenged by the strong sense of group attachment demonstrated by identity politics. The core challenge for constructivism is thus to explain that socially constructed identities appear as real and emotionally charged. (Isin& Wood 1999), the border between real and constructed can often be blurred and cause bafflement.

To sum up again, a call for critical attention to be paid to the articulation between the emotional and the non-rational elements of ethnic politics is crucial. Here, social media is at the forefront of this tug of war. When social media engages in hate speeches the debate reaches a boiling point, and the dialogue becomes meaningless. When they engage in hate speech, the debate reaches a boiling point, and the dialogue becomes meaningless. As we have noticed above since the controversy rages between the supporters of the federal arrangement and those who vehemently oppose it as an impending danger to the national security and even the mere existence of Ethiopia as a country. Our political actors must first realize that they must secure the mere existence of the country first.

The national question is interrogated from different disciplinary vantage points to reveal how it impinges on contemporary challenges of nation-building, development, devolution of power, language questions, and citizenship on the one hand and ethnicity, religious

radicalism, on the other side. Ethiopia, at this juncture of its history, is a fragile state. For others, it is already a failed state, and even a state on the brink of a civil war. That is precisely where we stood when the former Prime Minister Haile Mariyam Desalegne submitted his resignation to trigger the process, which brought Prime Minister Abiy to the forefront to accept the challenge. Probably, Pauline Baker was warning us when she asserted that "… the biggest danger facing fragile states in transition is not the rise of a new dictatorship, as is often assumed, or even the emergence of extremist factions, which usually represent a minority of the population. These outcomes are possible, but the larger threats are a civil war, state collapse, mass atrocities, humanitarian emergencies, and a possible break-up of the country." (Baker, 2012) Don't you think she has none in mind but, Ethiopia, which is dashing back to the brink of civil war again?

If we opt for the liberal nation-state model of citizenship whose form and substance reflects contextual power relations and political contentions in the current Ethiopia, face our immediate challenges and start with due seriousness to talk about differences one can hope. I will muster the courage to propose the following 8 points as recommendations.

We must do our homework of filling our citizenship policy alternative with FORM AND CONTENT. This means schemes must be worked out, and all shareholders must submit elaborate studies for policy directions.

If all political forces, actors are for decentralization of authority and a power-sharing federal arrangement of a sort, as almost all of them vehemently claim, those who want to change the existing federal arrangement must SUBMIT without delay THEIR PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE for the decentralized system, particularly the controversial boundary delimitations of the suggested regions. This might help to align the fear of relapsing back to a unitary system.

In light of the challenge, the existing course of discourse, the juxtaposing and counterpoising of citizenship politics and identity politics as two opposing opposite notions by certain political parties have been doing and are still doing now must be RE-EXAMINED.

In light of the existing course of discourse by certain shareholders, political parties, and scholars have on record juxtaposing and counter-posing of individual rights and collective rights as two opposing polar points or sometimes subordinating one to the other must be RE-EXAMINED(emphasis mine).

The core challenge for constructivism is thus to explain that socially constructed identities appear as real and emotionally charged. The core challenge for constructivism is thus to explain that socially constructed identities appear as real and emotionally-charged; thus emotional and non-rational at times. Shareholder, political parties and scholars have to THINK RATIONALLY and consider the fact that others are also THINKING RATIONALLY(emphasis mine). Hate-speeches disseminated through social media should be regulated to make to achieve a responsible and civilized use of digital exchange of information.

The primary two contending national groups (Amharas and Oromos) who try to hoodwink each other by sweetened hallow words of promise the other side wishes to hear instead of speaking truth to each other. Hence, the two can negotiate HISTORICAL COMPROMISES. Others can join the understanding at a later stage.

Strive for mutual understanding on issues where there are mutual mistrusts, particularly regarding antagonistic historical narratives among political forces vying for power.

The granting of Nobel peace Prize to Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed might generate, hopefully, the necessary momentum as well as pressure him and the Ethiopian government to recognize the dangerous situation and accelerate the steps to tackle the challenge.

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3. Language Policy in Multi-ethnic Societies: the case of Ethiopia

Dr. Getachew Assefa

Language Policy in Multi-ethnic Societies: the case of Ethiopia

Abstract

The 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia accords equal state recognition to all Ethiopian languages, designates Amharic as the working language of the federal government, and allows members of the federation to determine by law their respective working languages. Following the federal Constitution, regional states have designated their own working languages in their respective constitutions. In some regional states such as the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples regional state, several sub-regional self-governing nationalities are given the power to determine their own working languages. In 1994, the education and training policy of the country set forth broad language in education regulations that have since been generally followed. The federal government and all regional states (except Harari) have opted for a monolithic working language. The paper argues that this formal or constitutional monolingualism needs to change. Ethiopia's government and education language policy must reflect its multi-linguistic societal composition. In order to do this, the paper suggests, Ethiopia must adopt a comprehensive language policy.

Key words: Ethiopian languages, language policy, multi-ethnic societies, language in education policy

I. Introduction

The Ethiopian Constitution declares in its Preamble that the diverse peoples of Ethiopia are committed to building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing their economic and social development. It also acknowledges that the peoples of Ethiopia have built up common interests and common outlooks and are desirous of living in one economic community to promote their common interests.

The Constitution puts in place a federal state structure that gives political salience to ethnic identity by making it the loci of sovereign power (Article 8). It gives to the ethno-linguistic communities of the country it calls "nations, nationalities and peoples" (NNPs), an unconditional right to self-determination (including secession). In terms of the language policy, the Constitution contains key provisions. Article 5 of the Constitution declares "All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition". It also designates Amharic as the working language of the federal government and empowers members of the federation to determine their respective working languages by law. The Constitution further stipulates language rights of NNPs under Article 39(2).

It has been rightly claimed that a language policy must endeavor to deliver political goods such as effective communication with public and private institutions around oneself and enable one to get sufficient information for her to fully participate in and make informed choice about all things that matter to her; ensuring the autonomy of the individual by facilitating her participation on a wide variety of choices in society; and accord recognition to the citizens that express themselves in particular languages, thereby enhancing the psychosocial satisfaction of the community of speakers.[24]

The realization of these political goods as well as the commitment and understanding put forth in the preambular declaration of the Ethiopian Constitution noted earlier needs to be helped by a language

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24 Lara Smith, "The Politics of Contemporary Language Policy in Ethiopia", *Journal of Developing SocietiesI* 24, 2 (2008), 207, 213-14.

policy that respects individual groups' cultures and languages, but at the same time provide for common linguistic platform(s) for overall interaction and communications. Studies have shown that the development of a common national identity depends greatly on the ability of citizens to be able to speak to each other through the creation of a 'community of communication'.[25] This paper tries to investigate whether or not the language policy of the Ethiopian government is well designed to realize the above-noted political goods and declarations made in the 1995 Constitution. It will also examine the language policy of the federal and regional governments from the standpoint of ensuring linguistic rights of the linguistic communities and ensuring the uninhibited communication among the peoples of this country.

The paper proceeds as follows.

Part II briefly describes the methodology used for writing the paper. Part III provides an overview of the theoretical and comparative literature on language policy and planning in order to supply some conceptual clarity to the subject of the paper and for ideation purpose. Part IV deals with the language policy of the past Ethiopian governments where both the overall policy dispensations and language policy in education are descriptively analyzed. Part V discusses the language policy of the current Ethiopian government. Part VI takes a discursive approach and attempts to outline the considerations that should guide Ethiopia's language policy. Part VII provides a brief conclusion and suggested actions.

II. Methodology

The paper employs a descriptive and analytical synthesis of primary and secondary source materials. Primary sources include governmental policy documents, research and sociolinguistic surveys, census data and websites of relevant organizations. The secondary sources used include a wide range of academic writings such as journal articles, books, monographs, and edited volumes on

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25 Jon Orman, *Language Policy and Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Springer, 2008), 121.

language policy, language planning and linguistic rights in multi-ethnic societies. I have also made use of my own observations of the language issues in Ethiopia and insights I have gleaned from informal conversations with Ethiopian academics and practitioners with similar concerns.

III. Language Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Overview

In order to fully grasp the trajectories of Ethiopian language policy and planning, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of these notions and create a common understanding around them. This section shall be devoted to creating this conceptual clarification and describing language policy issues in some multi-ethnic jurisdictions.

The term 'language policy' could be understood at different levels of narrowness and broadness. "Employed in its narrowest sense, it usually refers to the formulation of laws, regulations and official positions regarding language usage and the allocation of linguistic resources by some government or other political organization".[26] The broader understanding considers the range of linguistic variables of a language community. Spolsky is widely quoted as having identified three different components that determine the character of a language community's language policy. The first is its language practices, i.e., the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire. The second component is the community's language beliefs and ideology: its belief about language and language use; and finally, any kind of language intervention, planning or management at play in the community.[27] Language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority. Many countries and institutions do not have formal or written language policies and the nature of the language policy must be derived from a study of their language practice or beliefs.[28]

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26 Ibid, 39.
27 Ibid, 39-41.
28 B. Spolsky, Language Policy: Key Topics in Sociolinguistics (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8.

In most instances, language policies are the result of language planning. In this process, officials determine the linguistic needs, wants, and desires of a community and then seek to establish policies that will fulfil those goals. Such goals might include cultivating language skills needed to meet national priorities; establishing the rights of individuals or groups to learn, use, and maintain languages; promoting the growth of a national lingua franca; and promoting or discouraging multilingualism.[29]

Cooper suggests that there are three foci of language planning: (a) status planning (the allocation of a community's language to various functions or uses), (b) corpus planning (graphization or reduction of a language to writing, standardization and codification (writing rules) and modernization where a language is permitted to fulfil new communicative functions by expanding its vocabulary, developing new styles, genres, and registers through the processes of elaboration and cultivation; and (c) acquisition management/planning (planning how to promote and facilitate acquisition of new language(s)).[30] Language planning in all its three dimensions outlined by Cooper involves deliberate future oriented language change that is aimed at problem solving among other things.[31]Administrators and politicians primarily undertake status planning, while corpus planning generally involves planners with greater linguistic expertise.[32] In the case of language acquisition management (also known as language education or language-in-education policy[33]), although it is the responsibility of all sectors of society, the educational sector is most often charged with its development, management and implementation.[34]

29 See J. E. Petrovic, "Language policy" in L. D. Soto (ed.), The Praeger handbook of Latino education in the U.S. (Greenwood.2007), 239.

30 Joyce B. G. Sukumane, "Issues in Language Policy and Planning: The Case of Namibia", Studies in the Linguistic Sciences, Vol.30, No.2 (Fall 2000), 206-07.

31 J. Rubin and B. H. Jernudd, Can language be planned? Sociolinguistic theory and practice for developing nations (University Press of Hawaii, 1971), xvi.

32 Gibson Ferguson, Language planning & education(Edinburgh University Press 2006), 21

33 R. B. Baldauf, Jr., M. Li, and S. Zhao, 'Language acquisition management inside and outside the school', in B. Spolsky and F. M. Hult (eds), The handbook of educational linguistics (Wiley-Blackwell 2010), 234

34 Ibid, p. 234

Language acquisition management may be a passive process as well as a matter of active policy planning. An active language acquisition management is often ideologically driven, non-consultative and a top-down affair.[35] This is the case in many countries around the world especially those that aspire to have a homogenizing national language. An active language acquisition management policy involves a great deal of corpus planning, which includes standardization, codification and modernization of the language to develop its lexical base for purposes such as science and technology.[36] It also involves corpus planning which was noted earlier, that often is undertaken through legislation to ensure the language had predominant roles in the key domains of education and administration with the purpose of moving the entire community in a certain desirable direction.[37] Thus, in terms of their effects or purposes as Cooper states, language policies are often intended "to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes".[38]

From a different perspective, Annamalalai notes that the language policies of governments (in multilingual settings) may broadly be classified into three kinds in terms of the goals of the policy, implicit or explicit: policy of elimination of multilingualism, tolerance of multilingualism, and maintenance of multilingualism. Elimination is sought to be achieved primarily by prohibiting and penalizing the use of minority languages even in private domains. Tolerance is being indifferent to minority languages and their exclusion in the policy formulation about language use in public domains. Maintenance and promotion could be fine-grained into allowing non-governmental efforts and funds for the use of minority languages in public domains, such as education, disallowing discrimination by language, and institutionalizing the use of minority languages in public domains most critical of which are public administration, law enforcement and justice dispensation, and education.[39]

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35 Ibid, p. 235
36 Saran Kaur Gill, Language Policy Challenges in Multi-Ethnic Malaysia (Springer, 2014), 11.
37 Ibid, 11.
38 Robert L. Cooper, Language planning & social change (New York: CambridgeUniversity Press, 1989), 45.
39 E. Annamalai, "Reflections on a Language Policy for Multilingualism", Language *Policy* 2 (2003), 113, 122 (citing Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988), 113, 119, 122.

The fact that the policy of elimination and of even mere tolerance of multilingualism has been tested and failed is a well-documented fact, and our own country's history provides sufficient attestation, making it unnecessary to belabour the point. Thus, language planners need to understand that in multilingual societies like Ethiopia, the approach that works best is embracing multilingualism and putting in place a rational policy for status, corpus and acquisition planning of the languages alongside disseminating its advantages to the various linguistic communities subsumed within the polity.

Unlike the 1950s and 60s, there seems at the present time to be much more understanding that linguistic pluralism is not a problem in and of itself. The cohesive social and political dispensations in multilingual societies like Switzerland, India and South Africa demonstrates that what is needed is a rational language policy and planning to harmoniously integrate various linguistic communities of a given polity. In fact, the history of states like India tells us that the right balance is struck after a lengthy search of options on the constitutional platform or at sub-constitutional levels. For example, in the case of India, its 1950 Constitution states that the official language of the Union is Hindi in Devanagari script and that English would be replaced 15 years after the Constitution took effect (Article 343). But, this policy of the framers was greeted with much uproar in the non-Hindi speaking India leading to the passage of the Official Language Act in the 1960s (further refined in the 1970s) that effectively made English the second official language of the Union.[40]

The Indian Constitution also makes provision for having more than one official language at the state level, which "may be for a specific region or for specific purposes" (Article 345). In practice as well, many Indian states have therefore recognized more than one language for official purposes. The language policy in education in India is that children learn in their mother-tongue from grades 1-4 or 5. In most states, the medium of instruction is the official language of the state or the child's mother-tongue from grades 1-4. For children

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40 See Braj B. Kachru, "The Indianization of English – the English Language in India", World Englishes, Vol. 25, No.1, (1983), 167.

whose mother-tongue is different from the official language of the state, the latter is made the subject of study from grade 3 onwards. With regard to English, students could opt for it as the medium of instruction from standard v onwards.[41] Overall, both for public administration and for education, India has now a policy of 3=1. This means that English and Hindi are languages of business of the Union government, which have to be learnt at the primary education level. The third language is the language of business of the state within which one abode. In a state where either of the two Union languages is also its working language, one needs to learn just those two Union languages; hence, 3-1. Those whose mother-tongue is neither Hindi, English nor the state's working language must equip themselves with four languages (3+1): the two Union languages, the state's working language and their own mother tongue.

Switzerland is another country that has a successful multilingual policy. Switzerland made a deliberate policy of turning the multilingual composition of its society into an advantage while the whole early 20th century Europe looked at it as an oddity midst monolingual, unitary state-nation building aspirations of the other European states.[42] It consciously worked on developing a national outlook that embraces the diversity of its society. Referring to the success of its quadrilingual national official policy, Grin states: "What could be perceived as a fatal rift had to be asserted (and was actually proclaimed) as the essence of the Swiss nation: a *Willensnation* ("nation of the will") defined precisely by its linguistic diversity, gaining its sense of national self and expressing its very soul through diversity, not in spite of it".[43]

Switzerland works constantly on language acquisition issues at both levels of government. For example, in 2004 the Cantonal Ministers of Education adopted a national strategy of language teaching with

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41 See B. Mallikarjun, "Language policy for education in Indian states: Karnataka." *Language in India* 2:9 (2002), available at: http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2002/karnatakaeducationpolicy. html

42 François Grin, Language Policy in Multilingual Switzerland: Overview and Recent Developments (conference paper, Barcelona, 4 December 1998), 2.

43 Ibid.

objectives including the reinforcement of language of schooling, the compulsory study of two foreign languages (meaning languages other than the Canton's official language) at primary school level and other (national) language as an option from the ninth school year. The strategy also declares the need to develop the pupils' skills in their first language (if different from the language of schooling in the Canton).[44] In 2009, an agreement on the harmonization of compulsory education between the Cantons came into effect. This agreement asked for new multilingual educational policy documents covering the 2004 national strategy for language teaching and a federal act passed in 2007.

In 2010, the Swiss Constitution was amended to include the following provisions:

1. The official languages of the Confederation are German, French, and Italian.
   Romansh is also an official language of the Confederation when communicating with persons who speak Romansh.
2. The Cantons shall decide on their official languages. In order to preserve harmony between linguistic communities, the Cantons shall respect the traditional territorial distribution of languages and take into account the indigenous linguistic minorities.
3. The Confederation and the Cantons shall encourage understanding and exchange between the linguistic communities.
4. The Confederation shall support the plurilingual Cantons in the fulfillment of their special duties.
5. The Confederation shall support measures by the Cantons of Graubünden and Ticino to preserve and promote the Romansh and Italian languages.

Plurilingual in South Africa has also dealt with its linguistic diversity in an upright manner. It could be a good model for Ethiopia to make

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44 Adrian Lundberg, Multilingual educational language policies in Switzerland and Sweden
    A meta-analysis, available at: https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.00005.lun|, . 52-53.

its language policy more complete and fairer. The most important document in this regard is the 1996 Constitution. Under its Section 6, the Constitution provides the following:

- The official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.
- Recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of South Africa, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.
- The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned.
- The national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages.
- Municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.
- The national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must regulate and monitor their use of official languages. To this effect, while the state is required to take positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages, all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.
- A Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) established by national legislation shall promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of all official languages; the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and sign language; and promote and ensure respect for all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu; and Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa.

PANSALB was established in 1995; mandated to provide language facilitation services to those who need it.[45] Contrary to most of the African countries that made the languages of their colonizers sole official languages, South Africa opted for a different course, promoting indigenous languages of its peoples. But, there obviously could be a lot of practical challenges, including of resources and national and sub-national political dynamics that need to be attended to. [46]

In Singapore, English is a compulsory medium of instruction in all schools but at the same time it is compulsory for students to learn their mother tongue as a subject.[47] Three other languages of Singapore: Malay, Mandarin and Tamil are official languages of the country.[48]

I would like to end this comparative excursion by mentioning the decision of the European Union in regards to the Union's language policy. During the 2002 European Council in Barcelona, the Heads of State or Government of the EU called for at least two foreign languages to be taught from a very early age. This eventually resulted in the policy objective of "Mother tongue plus two other languages," already described in the European Commission's action plan being implemented beginning 2004.[49]

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45 Neville Alexander, 'Language Policy and Planning in the New South Africa', African *Sociological Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1997), 82, 87.

46 See, for example, Jon Orman argues that enough attention has not been given to Afrikaans which has more speakers than English and therefore serves as a lingua franca more widely than English. See Orman (note 2 cited above).

47 Gill (n 13 above), 5.

48 It is noted that Singapore chose to adopt English as a school language for economic advantages and global competitiveness; Ibid, 5, 7.

49 Lundberg (n 21 above),48.

Validation Workshop on Language Policy

IV. Language Policy of Past Ethiopian Governments

Ethiopia is one of the most diverse countries in Africa, both culturally and linguistically. Two of the four language phyla in Africa, Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan, are found in Ethiopia.[50] Out of the six branches of Afro-Asiatic languages, three of them, namely, Cushitic, Omotic and Semitic are spoken in Ethiopia.[51]

Ethiopia's language policy does not have a long pedigree. Anything that could go by that name in a formal sense may, extend as far back as the 1930s, associated with Emperor Haile Selassie.[52] Of course, there had always been a court language through which official communication took place. But, as far as the people were concerned there was not any documented language choice or planning to which

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50 Zelealem Leyew, "The Ethiopian Language Policy: A Historical and Typological Overview", 1 Ethiopian Journal of Languages and Literature Vol. XII No. 2 (2012)1, 2 (citing Heine and Nurse, 2000).

51 Ibid.

52 It might be worth mentioning that the Fetha Negast ('law of the Kings') believed to be imported from Egypt, (Alexandria) during the 14th century and used both as religious and secular law of the country till 1930, had something to say about considerations that needed to be made of versetility in languages of judges to be assigned to serve in linguistic communities.

they were subjected. During the Axumite kingdom, Geez was the language of official communication of the kings, the language of education of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, and a lingua franca among the various cultural communities inhabiting the Empire.It was gradually succeeded by Amharic as a language of communication of the kings with the coming to power of the Zagwe dynasty from mid-12th century onwards.[53]

In terms of the early origins of Amharic, some literature posits it at the 3rd or 4th century.[54]After the decline of the Axumite Kingdome from the beginning of the 12th century and during the lead up to the reign of the Zagwe kings (1150-1272), Amharic was used as an additional language in the court alongside the mother-tongue of the kings. Some evidence suggests that Amharic became a written language from the 14th century onwards by 'inheriting and modifying the writing system from Geez.[55] Emperor Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868) was also credited for keenly overseeing attempts in the standardization of written Amharic.[56] This was continued by his successor, Emperor Yohannes IV, who maintained Amharic as the language of the court and the major lingua franca. Menelik II's time witnessed further spread of Amharic as a language of communications among most of the cultural communities of present-day Ethiopia with the expansion of central state's power and institutions.

As it is well known, Emperor Haile Selassie clung to the policy of 'one language one nation 'especially after the restoration of his government following the defeat of invading Italy in 1941. This policy was given a constitutional status in the 1955 Revised Constitution, which designated Amharic as the "official language" of the country. This seems to have been hastened in reaction to some of the divisive measures taken by fascist Italy aimed solely at creating discord between the various linguistic and cultural communities of

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53 Zelalem (n 27 above), 2 (citing Bahiru Zewde, 1991).
54 Ibid, 5 (citing Bender, 1983).
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid, (citing Pankhurst, 1969).

Ethiopia. Of course his language policy was in tune with his drive of centralization of political power forging "one nation" out of the diverse people of Ethiopia, which started from the beginning of his reign. His reference to the Ethiopian people as "አንድ ቤተሰብ" (one family) in his speech on the occasion of his granting of the 1931 Constitution is a testimony to his aspirations. In fact, his views of a "nation" are typically modelled on the Western ideas of nationalism.

In the 1950s and 60s, the predominant thinking in the West was that monolingualism and Western-style cultural homogeneity were necessary requirements for social and economic progress, modernization, and national unity.[57]As Kymlicka notes, Western states have historically been 'nation-building' states.[58] They have encouraged and sometimes forced all the citizens on the territory of the state to integrate into common public institutions operating in a common language. They have used various strategies to achieve this goal of linguistic and institutional integration such as citizenship and naturalization laws, education laws, and language laws.[59] There is a striking similarity between the Western states' attempts at nation building and Emperor Haile Selassie's efforts towards the same goal.

Likewise, the desire of forging a nation-state with a common national language characterized the new states of Africa that emerged out of colonialism in the 1960s. In fact, as Basil Davidson observes this had started early in the 1950s during the anti-colonial struggle. The leaders of the struggle considered "Africa's wealth of ethnic cultures both distracting and hard to absorb into their schemes. They regarded it as tribalism".[60] Davidson further stated that the educated elites of Africa, when they took over from the colonialists, "they demanded a complete flattening of the ethnic landscape"[61] thereby wishing

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57 Thomas Ricento (ed), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method* (Blackwell, 2006), 15.
58 W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*(Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.
59 Ibid.
60 Basil Davidson, *The Black man's Burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state* (Times Books, 1992), 99.
61 Ibid.

it away and longing for a monocultural society communicating in one official/national language. This engendered the adoption of the languages of former colonial powers as their official languages.

During the Derg, ostensibly more attention was given to local languages other than Amharic. For example, Derg's "National Democratic Revolution Program of Socialist Ethiopia" (1976) provided that the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality were accorded equal recognition and that each nationality had regional autonomy to decide on matters concerning its internal affairs, including the right to determine the contents of its political, economic and social life, and use its own language.[62]

The Derg did not have an ideological opposition to multilingualism and cultural pluralism (and in fact seemed to embrace it). But the practical steps it took to promote linguistic and cultural pluralism were limited.

The Academy of Ethiopian Languages, which was first established in 1968 and ceased to operate during 1974-75, was reopened in 1976.[63]The Academy was mandated to, among others, study all Ethiopian languages, create alphabets for those which did not have writing systems, encourage the speakers to read and write in their own languages, study the phonological and morphological systems of all Ethiopian languages and prepare dictionaries and grammar books for all of them in the long run[64]. It is interesting to note that the Academy was tasked with the study of the relationship between the different languages so as to find common elements that would aid in developing a national language, drawing on common words from many languages.[65]

Through the 1980s, the Academy undertook works such as a contrastive analysis of Amharic and Gedeo phonology, transcribing of nearly 30,000 words in Omotic languages, compilation of a bibliography relevant to preparation of writing systems for Afar,

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62 Cited in M. Lionel Bender, "Ethiopian Language Policy 1974-1981", *Anthropological Linguistics*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Fall, 1985), 273, 273.

63 Bender, ibid, 273.

64 Ibid, 274.

65 Ibid, 274.

Amharic, Gedeo, Hadiya, Kembata, Oromo, Silti, Somali, Tigrinya, Welaita, and some level of study of a number of languages by engaging experts from the Institute of Language Studies of Addis Ababa University.[66]

The Derg regime also established the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities by law in 1983. The Institute was mandated, inter alia, to undertake studies on the nationalities of the country, their territorial locations, and thus document their cultures and languages. Some of the policy decisions in the PDRE Constitution and those that followed it, such as, the establishment of autonomous and administrative regions were said to be informed by it.[67] Article 2(5) of the PDRE Constitution stated that "PDRE shall ensure the equality, development and respectability of the languages of the nationalities" and Article 116 provided: "Without prejudice to Article 2(5) of this Constitution, in the PDRE, the working language of the state shall be Amharic".

The above noted activities of the military government show that some attention was paid to other vernacular languages other than Amharic, and the latter was referred to merely as a "working" language and not as an official national language, which was the case under Haile Selassie's language policy. However, when it comes to formal language policy measures and changes, little was done by the Derg. Amharic remained the only language of official business and the medium of primary education, with English as a semi-official second language of limited scope and the medium of secondary and higher education.[68]

The lack of attention towards and the sidelining of the development of languages of the various Ethiopian NNPs was one of the rallying cries of the ethnic liberation movements that sprouted in many parts of the country in the 1970s and 80s. These movements demanded

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66 Ibid, 376. The Academy was transferred from Ministry of Culture and Sports to the Addis Ababa University in 1997. Currently it exists as the "Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures" as part of the same University; see http://www.aau.edu.et/aelc/.

67 The fine works of the Institute have also been made use of by the EPRDF following its assumption of power in the 1990s, including for the establishment of ethnic-territorial self-governments.

68 T. Bloor and Wondwosen T., 'Issues in Ethiopian Language Policy and Education', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (1996) Vol. 17(5), 321, 327.

the official recognition, use and development of their communities' languages.[69]And as is discussed in Part V of this paper, the ethnic liberation movements led by TPLF/EPRDF got the upper hand and assumed state power, thereby changing the state language policy to one that denationalizes Amharic and embraces more working languages at the sub-national levels.

Language Policy-in-Education

Formal education started in Ethiopia in the early 20th century. The earliest effort at formal education by way of literacy campaign was undertaken by Emperor Menelik II around 1898 where Amharic was used for the adult literacy programs.[70]Before the coming to prominence of formal education, however, religiously dominated education was given both by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and Islamic establishments in different parts of the country. Church schools were known to be up and running in the 10th century or even earlier where education ranging from reading and writing to church music, poetry, theology, church history and philosophy were given.[71]

The medium of instruction in the few schools that were opened at the time when formal education started was French, English, Arabic or Italian with Amharic and Geez as subjects of study in primary education. French was mandatory while the rest were optional.[72] Amharic and Geez started to be offered in 1919 in the two state-run schools at the time. The nascent education system of Ethiopia experienced a fundamental retrogressive change during the Italian occupation (1936-41).

69 Gedion Cohen, "The Development of Regional and Local Languages in Ethiopia's Federal System" in David Turton (ed), *Ethnic Federalism: the Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective* (James Currey, 2006),165, 169.

70 Richard Pankhurst, 'The Foundation of Education, Printing, Newspaper, Book Production, Libraries and Literacy in Ethiopia, *Ethiopian Observer* (1963), 6, 3:241-290.

71 See Ibid.

72 Ronny Meyer, "Amharic as lingua franca in Ethiopia", *LISSAN: Journal of African Languages & Linguistics,* Volume XX, No. I/II, 120; Thomas Bloor and Wondwosen Tamrat, "Issues in Ethiopian Language Policy and Education", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Vol. 17, No. 5, (1996), 321,

Soon after its occupation of Ethiopia, Italy quickly moved to define its overall educational policy in terms of the race of the students, content of the curriculum, and the language or languages of instruction.[73]While by a law it issued in 1936 it legalized the existence of two separate school systems: "Italian type schools" and schools for "colonial subjects", its implicit policy for the native schools was for them to serve as a "political instrument for the peaceful penetration and moral conquest of the native population".[74]

The colonial government decided to replace Amharic with Italian as an official language and to adopt a multiple language policy as far as the indigenous languages were concerned. This latter principle was laid down in the Administrative Ordinance for Italian East Africa of June 1, 1936. Article 32 of the Ordinance stated that the teaching of colonial subjects should be in the main local languages of the six administrative divisions of Italian East Africa, as well as in Arabic in the Muslim areas.[75] Instruction in Eritrea was thus to be in Tigrinya; in Amhara in Amharic; in Addis Ababa in Amharic and Oromifa; in Harar in Harari and Oromifa; in Oromo-Sidama in Oromifa and Kafficho; in Somalia (comprising of the whole Somali population in East Africa) in Somali; and in other additional languages the Governor General might wish to introduce.[76]

Within the frame of the two types of schools earlier mentioned, educational changes in Addis Ababa were quickly brought about upon the capture of the city: the old Tafari Makonnen School was converted into two "Italian type" schools, the Liceo-Ginnasio Vittorio Emanuele III and the Istituto Tecnico Benito Mussolini, both reserved for European children, while the prewar Empress Menen School for girls was converted into the Regina Elena military

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73 Richard Pankhurst, "Education in Ethiopia during the Italian Fascist Occupation (1936-1941), *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1972), 361, 365.

74 Ibid, 366.

75 Ibid, 369.

76 Pankhurst reports that though the use of these languages was thus officially prescribed, the regulation was not strictly followed as could be seen from the "Four Power Commission report on Eritrea" which observed that instruction was in fact "given almost entirely in Italian in the State-operated schools". Ibid, 369.

hospital. Secondary education for Ethiopians came to an abrupt end, since the pre-war schools in Addis Ababa and other parts of the country were largely appropriated for the education of Italian (other European) children or for entirely non-educational purposes.[77]In addition to restricting the education of what it calls 'natives', to primary level where they would be taught mainly in the Italian language and fascist culture and be made suitable for the modest and largely menial role required of them in the Italian colonial empire, and to prepare them for military service in the Italian army.[78]

Undergirded by the "no proper education for the 'natives'" policy of fascist Italy, education of Ethiopians (and Eritreans) during the occupation period was devoid of any proper content but was used as a platform for the indoctrination of the young girls and boys with fascist propaganda. This can be shown clearly by the observation of a British officer, Gandar Dower, who arrived in East Africa soon after the collapse of Mussolini's rule:

> Under the Italians, 'native' education served a political purpose… the textbooks, expensively produced, were written in Italian, and glorified the Duce on almost every page. Military service was lauded. Boys were encouraged to become 'little soldiers of the Duce'; the Fascist salute was compulsory, and at the morning hoisting of the flag Italian songs were sung.[79]

Thus, by the end of the Italian occupation in 1941, the education system in Ethiopia was practically non-existent. After the restoration of Haile Selassie's government in the same year, attempts to mend the educational system were made. More explicit measures were taken, for example, in regards to the language of education, perhaps as a reaction to the medium of instruction policy that colonial Italy sought to implement. Meyer reports that in 1944 Emperor Haile

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77 Ibid, 373.
78 The open anti-educational stance for Ethiopians of the fascist invaders was not only restricted to doing away with proper education of the local people but was also adamant to exterminate (kill, exile and imprison) all the young educated citizens of the country. Ibid.
79 Quoted in Pankhurst (n 50 above), Ibid, 395.

Selassie decreed Amharic to be the only language used in education, which forced missionary schools to use only Amharic as the medium of instruction instead of other vernaculars. But other literature depicts that the Emperor's 1944 decree on medium of instruction was targeted particularly to the missionary schools in the various parts of the country and was not a decision on the whole of medium of instruction.[80]

French remained the medium of instruction until 1947 when it was replaced by English. From 1947-1958 English was made the medium of instruction in all schools while Amharic was offered as a subject of study. In 1958, decision was again taken by the imperial government to make Amharic the medium for primary education throughout the country and that English be taught as a subject of study from as early in the curriculum as possible.[81] Bloor and Wondwossen note that since 1941 English remained the medium in secondary school with Amharic as a subject of study and also moral education which was offered in Amharic.[82]

The elementary school curriculum made public in 1963 stated that elementary schools be comprised of six years of study and taught wholly in Amharic with English has a subject as early in the program as possible with a possible delay for non-native speakers of Amharic, extra attention being paid to Amharic.[83]During Haile Selassie's time no Ethiopian language other than Amharic was taught in the school program at any level.

As noted earlier, the military government, which ruled the country from 1974-1991, followed Marxist-Leninist ideology with regards to the languages of nationalities in Ethiopia and other matters. Without doubt, there was a clear departure from its predecessor, albeit mostly

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80 See, eg., Hirut Woldemariam "Language Planning Challenged by Identity in a Multilingual Setting: The Case of Gamo", in Biniyam S. Mendisu and J. B. Johannessen (eds), *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts*, *Oslo Studies in Language* 8 (1) (2016) 295, 296.

81 Hirut, 296; Bloor and Wondwossen,(n 45 above), 327.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid, citing Tesfaye Shewaye (1976).

rhetorically. One noteworthy departure was the introduction of the famous "National Literacy Campaign" which started in 1975. Fourteen local languages other than Amharic were used as medium of instruction in the Literacy Campaign.[84]The literacy programs continued through the 1980s being offered in Amharic, Oromifa, Somali, Tigrigna, and Welaitigna and some other languages as well. But, formal education continued, as noted earlier, in Amharic and English throughout the country.

V. Language Policy of the EPRDF Government

In terms of the articulation of language policy, the EPRDF government that has been in power since May 1991 shows a clear departure from the previous governments of this country. This is not surprising of course, given its political (ideological) position with regard to the rights of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (NNPs). Following its assumption of power, the EPRDF led-government enacted a transitional period Charter which declared among others that every NNP has the right to use and develop its language (Article 2). This was followed by a law that established the national/regional self-governments, (Proclamation No. 7/1992) which established 13 regions (Addis Ababa being the 14th region) in which 64 identified nationalities were given self-government status at regional and sub-regional levels.

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84 The languages were Afaan Oromo, Tigrinya, Tigre, Wolaitta, Sidaama, Haddiya, Kambaata, Afar, Saho, Gedeo, Somali, Kafinono, Silte' and Kunama; Zelalem Leyew, 24 (citing Tilahun, 1997; Hailu, 1993).

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The EPRDF gave its preferred language policy a constitutional status by enshrining it in the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia. Thus, Article 5 of the Constitution deals with the status of languages in the country. It provides that all Ethiopian languages have equal state recognition while declaring that Amharic is the working language of the federal government and that states (members of the federation) may determine by law their respective working languages. The Constitution also enshrines linguistic rights of nationalities as part of its Bill of Rights provisions (Article 39(2)) by virtue of which "every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language".

The Constitution also establishes language as one of the main considerations in the delimitation of the states of the federation. Further, as part of individual rights protected by the Constitution, Article 19(1-2) stipulates that persons arrested have the right to be informed promptly, in a language they understand, that they have the right to remain silent; to know the reasons for their arrest and any charge against them; and that that any statement they make may be used as evidence against them in court. Article 20(7) likewise

provides that accused persons have the right to request the assistance of an interpreter at state expense where the court proceedings are conducted in a language they do not understand. Articles 25 and 38 of the Constitution stipulates that language is one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination among persons in providing equal and effective protection of the law and in the exercise of the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to elect and be elected.

The above two paragraphs summarize the language policy and language rights in the Ethiopian Constitution. Compared, for example, to the South African Constitution discussed earlier, it says very little and displays several loopholes. For one, it adopts a monolingual policy at the federal level with almost no justification articulated. What is even more problematic about it is, by saying (Article 5(3)) that "members of the Federation may by law determine their respective working languages" it left the decision on regional language choice entirely to the states without giving any policy guidance on how, at least the most diverse ones should go about this decision. This seems to have sent a message that like the federal government, states and local governments also need to designate just one language as their working language.

This idea of designating one language per government level resulted in either the imposition of the language of the dominant group on smaller groups living within the state or sub-state administration or attempts at harmonization of the languages that are believed to be closely related. The attempts in the Southern NNPs state at forging one language out of Gamo, Gofa and Dawro languages into GaGoDa first, and then Wolaita, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro languages into WoGaGoDa later, both of which ended disastrously, are good examples.[85]

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85 See, eg., Hirut Woldemariam, (note 57 cited above).

Policy on Language-in-Education

Soon after the change of government in 1991, some of the newly created regional governments[86] embarked upon the adoption of the languages of the dominant groups as a medium of primary education and government affairs. This followed the adoption by the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1995) of its "Education and Training Policy" in July 1991 (officiated in April 1994). The policy dubbed grades 1-8 as 'primary' and grades 9-12 as 'secondary' education.[87] The first two years of secondary education were designed for general secondary education where students would identify their interests for "further education, for specific training and for the world of work" while the second cycle of secondary education (grades 11-12) would "enable students to choose subjects or areas of training which [would] prepare them adequately for higher education and for the world of work".[88] In regards to the medium of instruction, the Policy states the following:

1) Recognizing the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning in the mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education will be given in nationality languages.
2) Making the necessary preparation, nations and nationalities can either learn in their own language or can choose from among those selected on the basis of national and countrywide distribution.
3) The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area.
4) Amharic shall be taught as a language of countrywide communication.
5) English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education.

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86 The regional (transitional) governments were formally established by Proclamation No. 7/1992 which was issued in January 1992 but had existed de facto since July 1991.

87 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Education and Training Policy* (Addis Ababa, 1994), p. 14.

88 Ibid., p.15.

6) Students can choose and learn at least one nationality language and one foreign language for cultural and international relations.
7) English will be taught as a subject starting from grade one.
8) The necessary steps will be taken to strengthen language teaching at all levels.[89]

Although the Policy reiterated that "Amharic shall be taught as a language of countrywide communication" it did not specify the grade from which it should start to be offered in regions in which primary education is offered in regional/nationality languages. This was so unlike English, which was explicitly stated in the policy that its instruction as a subject starts at grade one. This resulted in a diverse approach to the teaching of Amharic as a subject of study in the regions where in regions like Oromia, Amharic is offered from grade 5 onwards[90] while in others it starts much earlier. Furthermore, the policy is silent about the level where it ceases to be offered as a subject of study.

As can be seen from the terms of the policy, education in the mother-tongue is not compulsory. In terms of the practice as well, not all regions opted for mother-tongue primary education. Regions such as Afar, Beneshangul-Gumuz, Gambella and most nationalities in the SNNPS retained Amharic as the medium of primary education along of course with the Amhara region and Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities. Over the last few years some of these regions have switched to a mother-tongue primary education.

The Education and Training Policy was silent about the graphization of nationality languages for education and indeed for all other purposes. This enabled all the regions to go their separate ways with the exception of Tigray and Amhara regions and some self-administering zones in the Southern NNP state, all other regions have chosen Latin alphabets for the graphization of their languages. It is to be noted that prior to 1991, regional languages such as Oromifa, Somaliand Wolaitigna were written in the Geez (also

89 Ibid., pp. 23-24.
90 Bloor and Wondwossen, (n 45 above), 328.

known as Ethiopic) alphabet, in those limited instances where they were officially used in literacy campaigns and as a print medium in newspapers and magazines.

A recent study by the Ministry of Education found that 85% of children around the country use mother tongue in pre-school education.[91] This, coupled with the stated 94.3% net enrolment in primary education, plays a fundamental role in the realization of the policy of mother tongue primary education and access to education in general. The Study depicts however, that there is a great disparity in access to education between the regions with regions like Afar (59.2%), Somali (81.1%), Benshangul-Gumuz (89.3%) and Dire Dewa (56.9%) lagging behind the others.[92]

VI. Looking Ahead: What is the Appropriate Language Policy for Ethiopia?

Language policy in Ethiopia cannot be extricated from the whole issue of identity politics. This admittedly has also been the case in other states in Africa and elsewhere in the world although the saliency of ethnic politics is not as pronounced as it is in Ethiopia. Language policy and planning endeavors in Ethiopia needs to be informed by two fundamental considerations, both of which I believe have their niches in the 1995 Constitution. The first consideration should be the language rights of both individuals and speech communities. The second has to do with the nexus between language and group identity. I shall attempt to explain each in the following paragraphs.

As rightly characterized by Mazrui and Mazrui, language right referees both to the right of language(s) and the right to language. The notion of the right of language refers to the right of every language in a multilingual society to existence and equality of opportunity for it to develop legal and other technological capabilities and to flourish. The right to language on the other hand refers to the right to use the language one is most proficient in, as well as the right of access to the language(s) of empowerment and socio-economic

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91 Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap 2018-30) (draft for discussion, 2018)https://
    planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/ethiopia_education_development_
    roadmap_2018-2030.pdf, p. 14.
92 Ibid, 15.

advancement.[93] In both meanings, therefore, language rights call for a holistic policy and plan to cater for all languages and their users in Ethiopia, including those not coded and sign languages of persons with special needs, to realize the existence and development of the languages and for their users to have access to the political goods referred to earlier in the paper.

Language rights advocates argue that individuals have to have access not only to their mother tongue but also to the dominant language(s) of school and government business in their countries. This means that linguistic communities, whose languages are not used in schools and government businesses, have the right to protection against forced assimilation, discrimination or segregation. At the same time, such linguistic communities should be enabled to have a high command of the language(s) of work in order to get access to the material and social benefits of the languages.

Likewise, members of the dominant groups need protection from forced monolingual reductionism.[94] The language repertoire of the majority linguistic community is that it tends to live with one language while a minority community often uses more than one.[95] This is for the obvious reason that members of the minority community could access economic benefits that often require communicative capability in the language(s) of the majority. On the contrary, the majority would normally be the dominant group and its language often is the language of government business. Language policy must aim at increasing inter-community communications whereby members of both the majority and the minority speech communities are proficient in as many languages as possible. Language policy in education is the main vehicle to do this.

Closely related to the issue of language right is the desirability of promoting multilingualism, as opposed to monolingualism. First, in a society made up of several language communities, embracing multilingualism is a simple and necessary act of democracy.

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93 Ali A. Mazrui and Alamin M. Mazrui, *The Power of Babel; Language and Governance in the African Experience* (James Currey, 1998), 115.

94 See generally Miklós Kontra et al. (eds), *Language, a Right and a Resource: Approaching Linguistic Human Rights* (Central European University Press, 1999).

95 Annamalai (n 16 above), 118.

As Recinto avers, in a society that accepts multilingualism, the constituent groups of the state are better positioned to participate as equals since their cultures and languages are respected and afforded legitimacy through institutional recognition and support.[96] Thus, a multilingual language policy has undoubtedly democratic and nation-building importance.

As Kymlicka and Patten note "language policy can build identification with, loyalty to, and membership in a particular national political community or it can significantly undermine any efforts in this direction".[97] Multilingual language policy ensures a cohesive national political community by taking care of the needs of individuals, linguistic communities and the country as a whole. Privileging only certain language communities by making their language a language of government business undermines any effort at nation-building because those excluded and disadvantaged will resent the state of affair and cannot cherish their membership in such a political community.

Thus, the bottom line is that factually multilingual polities like Ethiopia cannot but embrace multilingualism and work towards harmoniously integrating its diverse languages and cultures. In this case, Ethiopia has come a long way. But there is more critical policy, legal and institutional measures that it needs to take into account in order to create a cohesive multilingual society. South African language policy could serve as a very good model for Ethiopia to take the necessary further steps.

As South Africa (and in fact others like Switzerland and India) has done, Ethiopia needs more federal working languages that take into account its major languages. Likewise, the members of the federation and, where diversity warrants, the local governments should adopt more working languages, not just one language, because we know

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96 Thomas Ricento, "Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy: An Overview", in Thomas Ricento (ed), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method* (Blackwell, 2006), 16.

97 Will Kymlicka and Alen Patten (eds), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

for sure that the states and local governments in reality are mostly linguistically diverse. Municipalities have to be multilingual as well, taking into account the language patterns of their residents.

As documented in the 2007 Population and Housing Census, there are 83 indigenous languages spoken in Ethiopia. As it can also be gleaned from the Census, Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Tigre, Sidama, Wolaita, Gurage, Afar, Haddiya, Gamo and Gedeo have each a population of more than a million. This means that a sizable population of the country speaks one of these 11 languages. Together, they are spoken by close to 90% of the country's population. It seems compelling to think therefore that these languages are considered working languages of the federal government.

In the same way the regional states and the urban and rural local governments would elevate major languages in their jurisdictions to the status of working languages. Importantly, accompanying these measures (which are of language status nature), there should be well thought about corpus and acquisition planning for these languages, not only for intra-speech community's purposes but also for inter-speech community communications. This obviously calls for revisiting Ethiopia's language in education policy about which I will say a few things.

As noted in the previous parts of this paper, although English was not a colonial language for Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie's government made a policy decision in 1944 where English became the medium of instruction for all levels of school till 1958. And, also from 1958, Amharic was adopted as a medium of instruction for primary education across the country (with English being offered as a subject at that level) while English became a medium of instruction from grade 7 to tertiary education.[98] This state of affairs had been generally maintained under the Derg with a few practical steps taken towards enhancing the positions of other languages of the country.

The position of English as a medium of instruction in Ethiopia remains as controversial as ever. In fact, similar debates on the

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98 English is also the language for Ethiopia's international communications and a second language of publication of federal laws and some regional laws.

appropriateness of the official use of the English language in former British colonies in Africa is going on. Alexander argues that in the African countries, despite all the efforts in making the European languages available to their citizens, they have been resounding failures. In countries such as Zambia there are now fewer people able to communicate effectively in English than before that country's independence despite an English-only policy in schools.[99] Consequently, English has succeeded neither as a language to facilitate national unity nor as a language of empowerment for the public at large. It empowers only a shrinking minority. This squarely applies to the situation of English in Ethiopian schooling. There is a unanimous view that the overall English proficiency in all public schools in Ethiopia is at a disastrous stage.

The National Education Roadmap designed by the Ministry of Education based on the study by experts has made some suggestions about language in education. Accordingly, it is recommended that mother tongue, as a medium of instruction has to be offered from grade 1; the teaching of English as a subject should start at grade 1 with a focus on developing the speaking and listening skills of the pupils until grade 3. The study also recommended that Amharic, the working language of the federal government, should be offered as a subject of study from grade 1.

The debate of whether English should continue to be the medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels in Ethiopia is not worth having at the moment because English is going to continue as such for an unknown time period.[100] But, unless the acquisition planning for it is given serious attention to raise the level of proficiency in this language, the whole educational system is being pushed to the brink

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99   Alexander (n 22 above), 86.
100 It is widely accepted that a full-fledged economic and social development of a country is not possible if the great majority of the people are compelled to communicate in a second or third language (Alexander, n 22 above),87). All the economically developed nations of the world use their own language for education. Therefore, it seems to me that Ethiopia has to also eventually use its national languages for higher education and scientific research. But preparations for that have to be made in terms of corpus planning of the languages to make them suitable for these purposes and that transition be made smoothly and phase by phase.

of collapse. There needs to be a paradigm shift in the teaching of the English language at the primary level, which is the most defining level for acquiring language proficiency.

The National Education Roadmap (noted earlier) has suggested among others that Ethiopia revisit its language education approach with a view to strengthening it at its teacher education colleges. The Roadmap also advises that Ethiopia has to introduce proficiency strategy for language education to be implemented through development of resource materials, promotion of communication skills, introduction of language labs and other inputs. Particular attention needs also to be given to the training of language education teachers.

These suggestions of the Roadmap are worthy of implementation. By investing in the education of primary level teachers and ensuring their high proficiency, it is possible to turn around the current regrettable level of English language proficiency at schools and universities in Ethiopia. This should be one of the priorities of language policy in education for the Ethiopian authorities as immediately as possible.

Since 1953 when the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization first clearly advocated for children's education in their mother tongue at least during the early years of school, there is no disagreement on the propriety of this idea. Furthermore, this has been endorsed as a human right of children in international and regional human rights instruments. But, its practical implementation has not been so easy. In Ethiopia too, the EPRDF's government has resoundingly endorsed this idea but due to several challenges including that most of the languages of the speech communities do not have literary forms, it has not been fully realized. But a noteworthy additional problem is that there does not seem to be any public body or institution (at federal or regional level) that is charged with the responsibility to resolve the issue of graphization of the languages that do not have writing systems and oversee the preparation of human and material resources required for the purpose. It is also necessary to call to our attention that no concerted efforts are visible

in regards to languages that are inching towards extinction with a view to save them.

An equally important issue of language in education policy is that of providing access to the knowledge of dominant languages necessary for higher education and the world of work. In countries where you have some dominant languages and several minority languages, it is pivotal that mother tongue medium of instruction (MoI) is paired with high quality instruction in the languages widely used in the country or the region: as working languages of governments and MoI of higher education and maybe secondary education as well. Lack of access to such instruction is an important source of economic, social, and political inequality in many settings. Thus, in such settings, the right to high quality instruction in second and third (and even more) languages should be treated as the right of the pupils. Ethiopia's education policy seems to have paid attention to this when referring to English to be taught from grade 1; Amharic to be studied as a subject at primary level and pupils should learn one additional local language. But, this has not been well planned and articulated and the implementation of the policy so far has been haphazard. The policy has to be revised and revitalized.

In this connection, it is necessary to underscore the constitutional mandate of the federal government vis-à-vis the states in regards to language policy in education. As noted earlier in this paper, Article 5 of the Constitution empowers the states by law to determine their respective working languages. The Constitution does not contain any clear statement on the power of the states pertaining to language in education.

On the other hand, Article 51 stipulates in respect to the federal government's power that, "It shall establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for public health, education, science and technology as well as for the protection and preservation of cultural and historical legacies". Thus, this means that establishment

and implementation of national standards and policy matters on education and training including language policy in education falls within the federal competence. Although this seems to be the understanding with which the 1994 education and Training Policy of Ethiopia was enacted with country-wide application, there is also a widely shared understanding that primary education is within the constitutional competence of the states. This understanding, in my view is engendered by the provisions of Article 5(3) of the Constitution and one may argue that it is a valid position.

However, my contention is to the contrary. Article 51 of the Constitution specifically bestows the power to establish and implement standards and policies on education to the federal government. This includes policies and standards, including language policy in education, for primary education. If this reading of the Constitution is correct, the federal government has to therefore step up its efforts towards the standardization of acquisition of both mother tongue primary education and high quality instruction in English and other languages of the country, which should be determined based on practical considerations and preferences of the speech communities. This is particularly important in the selection of additional local languages that should be acquired at school.[101]

Turning to my second consideration in crafting a language policy in Ethiopia, i.e., the nexus between language and group identity, the first obvious thing is that Ethiopia's current constitutional-political dispensation has paid a great deal of attention to group language rights. As noted earlier in this paper, the Constitution uses language as one of the main criteria for state boundary delineation and enshrines bold linguistic rights of NNPs. It has allowed states to adopt their own working languages. Mother tongue primary education has been endorsed in principle.

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[101] Researches indicate that there was a limited discussion and debate on the 1994 Language and Training Policy of Ethiopia before it was enacted, and that after its implementations there were both negative and positive reactions to it. See, e.g., G. Cohen, 'Identity and Opportunity: The Implications of Using Local Languages in the Primary Education of SNNPR, Ethiopia' (PhD thesis, University of London, SOAS, 2000).

Thus, one can see that the intimate relationship between language and ethnic identity[102] is in principle accepted and cherished in Ethiopia. There is robust understanding that an attempt to undermine a language of an ethnic community in a language policy creates a deep discord among the society. A desire to create a coherent society is possible only through a language policy that treats the languages of its society fairly and equitably.

Indeed, it has been shown that the development of a common national identity depends greatly on the ability of citizens to speak to each other through the creation of a 'community of communication'.[103] As Wierzbicka rightly observes, "languages are the best mirror of human mind and cultures, and it is through the vocabulary of human languages that we can discover and identify the culture specific conceptual organizations characteristic of different people of the world." He advises that there should not be an unrealistic expectation of assimilation but instead there should be active measures taken towards establishing integration, with the incorporation of the different ethnic groups as equals into the larger society.[104]

Creating a community of communication and thereby a common national identity is possible by consciously and deliberately working on increasing the repertoire of languages of members of the various cultural-linguistic communities. As Das Gupta notes, language, as the most immediate and salient expression of culture, transcends the ethnic and religious differences, and establishes the bonds across ethnic lines that will provide a means for a sense of national identity. This, he says is because it is language that enables a person to be culturally ethnically rooted and yet reach out communicatively to a national level—it provides the bridge between the "segmental attachment" and the "civil ties of the nation".[105] Mastery of a

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102 Orman (n 2 above), 39.

103 See S. Wright, "Community and communication: The role of language in nation-state building and European integration", *Multilingual Matters* (2000).

104 M Wierzbicka, *Semantics, culture and cognition*. (Oxford University Press, 1992), 22.

105 J. Das Gupta, "Language diversity and national development" in J. A. Fishman, C. A. Ferguson, & J. Das Gupta (eds.), *Language problems of developing nations* (John Willey and Sons, 1968), 19.

repertoire of languages is a human capital benefit for the citizen, viewed as assets.[106]

Thus, from the point of view of both language rights and the recognition of language as a marker of ethnic identity, it is compelling to believe that Ethiopia needs to step up and craft a language policy. A policy, that expands on the constitutional gains and corrects the existing not well thought through dispensations and in the end provide not only that which endorses multilingualism at national and sub-national levels but also takes concrete planning steps to implement the policy. The best instrument for this as earlier noted is the language in education policy to enable pupils to acquire high quality proficiency not only in their mother tongue but in as many Ethiopian languages as possible and in the English language as well.

VII. Conclusion and Suggestions

With the backdrop of theoretical and comparative literature on language policy and planning, this paper has attempted to analyze the past language policy and practices of Ethiopia and those currently in operation. It has shown that Emperor Haile Selassie's regime worked actively to build the national identity of the country with the Amharic language while the Derg, although it in principle dissociated itself from the policy of monolingualism, did very little in terms of transforming the country into a genuine multilingual landscape. The language policy of the EPRDF government took more concrete steps towards enhancing the status of many Ethiopian languages.

Under part VI the paper argued that in order to build a cohesive and well-integrated political community, Ethiopia has to revise and enhance its multilingual language policy. To this effect, it has to revise its current position on the status of the major languages at federal, regional and sub-regional levels. It should undertake corpus planning for the languages equitably for all languages but particularly

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106 Grin 1999, cited in Gill (n 13 above), 21.

for the major ones. Concomitantly, there should be a paradigm shift in regards to language acquisition approach, especially at the primary education level so that the pupils acquire high level proficiency in both the local languages and in English. The need for the language communities to be versed in as many Ethiopian languages as possible cannot be overemphasized. The beauty and empowering capability of code switching by citizens wherever they go can easily be seen. But, over and above the benefits to the individuals, the trust and level of cultural understanding and synergy this generates serves as glue to the political community that is Ethiopia.

We should be able to say for Ethiopia what the Secretary General of the Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. P. Schwab, said about Switzerland in 2014, that "plurilingualism is an integral part of Switzerland's identity and is a key element of the national culture".[107] To refer to another momentous event in Canada, when the Canadian Official Languages Act was presented to the House of Commons for adoption in 1969, a Minister who expressed the view of the Canadian government said: "The measure is extremely important.... because it touches the very foundation of Canadian unity ... this bill is a gesture of faith in the future of Canada"[108]. It is my claim that a language policy in Ethiopia must be regarded with that sense of importance: as a policy direction that is essential for strengthening the foundation of Ethiopian unity.

Along the line of the arguments I made in this paper, I suggest that the following measures in order to help the endeavour towards making Ethiopia an ever more cohesive and well-integrated multilingual political society.

1) In Ethiopia the current situation is devoid of multilingualism in some sense although it does adopt a policy of multilingualism in another sense. As discussed, a typical multilingual policy is

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107 Quoted in Lundberg (n 21 above), 52.
108 Donald G. Cartwright and Colin H. Williams, "Bilingual Districts as an Instrument in Canadian Language Policy", Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1982), 474, 475.

sourced from Article 5 of the Constitution, which declares the equality of all Ethiopian languages and grants the states the power to choose their own working languages. But Article 5 of the Constitution also decides that Amharic is the working language of the federal government thereby adopting a monolingual language policy for the public domain. The states have followed suit. This needs to change. The overall language policy and the language in education policy of Ethiopia should be revised in order to elevate the major languages of the country to the status of working languages at federal, regional and sub-regional levels. This decision on the status of the languages must be dovetailed with language acquisition planning that ensures citizens acquire high-level proficiency in the mother tongue and as many Ethiopian languages as possible and as preferred. Along with this, members of the society must also be widely educated about the advantages of being multi-lingual, both for strengthening national cohesion and for personal economic and social benefits.

2. Related to the above point is the need to ensure access to the federal, state and sub-state working languages of the linguistic communities whose languages are not the medium of government business and education. It is rightly claimed by linguistic rights advocates that minorities need to be ensured access to their mother tongue and the official/working languages of the various levels of their governments. Therefore, language policy in Ethiopia needs to be informed by these concerns and work towards ensuring that minority linguistic communities are not left behind.

3. An Ethiopian languages commission should be established with mandates to oversee the development and implementation of language policy and planning of the country, and work with the Ministry of Education and other relevant organs to design best practices for the acquisition of languages at schools. It can

also serve as a body to oversee the equitable treatment of the languages of the country.

4. As noted in this paper, the study conducted as an input to the Ministry of Education's National Education Roadmap has confirmed that the lack of competence of English teachers is actually a very crucial problem for the education of students in English. There should be a national plan to work on bringing to acceptable levels the English language proficiency of Ethiopian English teachers, particularly those at the primary education level. One way of doing this can be to prepare in collaboration with donors to bring English language teachers and experts from the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, and/or Canada to give intensive training to a robust number of Ethiopian English language teachers who will then cascade the training to other teachers.

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4. Separation of Powers and the System of Checks and Balances in Contemporary Ethiopia: Comparative Perspectives and Possible areas for Reform

Assefa Fiseha (Phd)

Separation of Powers and the System of Checks and Balances in Contemporary Ethiopia: Comparative Perspectives and Possible areas for Reform

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary." (James Madison, The Federalist Papers No. 51).

Abstract

This paper examines the system of checks and balances in parliamentary systems. It also analyses the concept of separation of powers as applied to parliamentary systems. Applied to the Ethiopian case, it identifies factors that have contributed to executive domination of an apparently sovereign parliament, after which it recommends that a number of legal and institutional reforms be made in order to swing the balance in favour of parliament. Ethiopia is characterised by cabinet supremacy rather than parliamentary sovereignty, but the article goes beyond this obvious conclusion by finding that legislative-executive relations cannot be understood fully without taking into account intra-party politics and their impact on democratic institutions. Some comparative insights are drawn from selected parliamentary systems to explain gaps and controversies of specific issues under discussion. Constitutional principles, policies issued by the government, laws, internal regulations of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), focus group discussions, author's decade old observation and trends observed in the parliamentary practice are some of the useful resources employed in analysing the article. The judiciary remains critical in the system of checks and balances but its role is very much limited by the mandate and constitutional position defined in the constitution as well as political reality in most developing countries. This paper nevertheless highlights its bare minimum roles and proposes areas for reform to enhance the system of checks and balances.

1. Introduction

The parliamentary system is not new to Ethiopia.[109] The 1931 and revised constitution of 1955 provided for a bicameral parliament, albeit in an absolute monarchy in which the chambers played merely an advisory role. The military regime (1974 – 1991) deposed the monarch ruled by decree until 1987 when it issued a socialist-oriented constitution with some presidential elements. After the overthrow of the military in 1991 and four years of transition, the constitution of 1995 established a federal parliamentary system, one which remains in effect to this day.

It is possibly the case, however, that the narrative of Ethiopia's parliamentary system is taking a new turn. Soon after the death in 2012 of the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a senior member of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) spoke publicly about the government's failure to build democratic institutions, notably a vibrant parliament, quipping that 'parliament's programme on Ethiopian Television is the least attractive [of them all]'. This perception is confirmed by a survey that shows the legislature enjoying a little trust from the public.[110]Likewise, a Member of Parliament observed that 'until recently the House of People's Representatives [HoPR] did not even exercise the right to approve its own budget'; that budget 'was decided by the executive'.[111]

As these remarks suggest, Ethiopia's parliament is regarded as subordinate to the executive, yet there are now trends showing MP's using new found autonomy to exercise their mandate following the

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109 Ethiopia's parliamentary practices before 1991 are discussed in several publications. For example, see: Berhanu, K. (2005) Parliament and dominant party system. In: Salih M (ed) *African Parliaments: Between Governance and Government*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan; Markakis J (1974) *Ethiopia: Anatomy of Traditional Polity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Clapham C (1993) Constitutions and governance in Ethiopian political history. In: *Constitutionalism: Reflections and Recommendations*, *Symposium on the Making of the New Ethiopian Constitution*. Addis Ababa: Inter Africa Group.

110 Public survey made by the Inter Africa Group (2008) p.69.

111 Former Member of Parliament, conversations with the author. Addis Ababa, April 2009.

loosening of party discipline since 2018. While it is too early to tell what this betokens, it offers food for thought. Is it, for example, simply a transient phenomenon, the result of a temporary political vacuum created by the crisis within the ruling party, or is it the first sign of emergent institutional reform, an indication that strict party-discipline is weakening and that the centre of political gravity, as it should be, is shifting to parliament?

During the wide spread protests since 2015, neither the federal nor regional state legislative bodies attempted to address the causes of the protests and the way out. As is well known, one of the key functions of the legislature is to represent the people and serve as a forum for political debate. Yet, there was clearly disconnect between the voter and parliament. Protesters thus chose to take their anger to the streets as institutions such as parliament were not responsive to their demands. While there are signs showing parliament's willingness to reflect voter's interests and engage in possible reforms to prepare the country for the 2020 elections, it is hardly possible to state that the legislature has emerged as a centre of political debate. The country is going through a difficult transition since the coming to power of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in April 2018. Yet, the Parliament has not emerged as the primary centre of debate for political reforms. It has not put enough pressure on the government to table its political road map and the direction of reform. As a result, it has been unable to monitor the successes or failures of the one-year political and institutional reforms.

The notion of separation of powers

The importance and role of the three branches of government (legislature, judiciary and executive)[112] has long been recognized, although each branch's organization, interaction with other branches, jurisdiction and role vary from one political system to the other. It

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112 With the increased role of the government, administration is sometimes mentioned as fourth branch. Media is also discussed as fourth branch. Independent institutions such as Ombudsman, auditor general, anti corruption are also considered as new additions to the three branches.

was Montesquieu who first articulated the importance of the trinity of the political branches without necessarily defining the kind of relationship, the complex network that exists among the three branches in the different polities.[113] The concept also varies across different political systems.[114] For example, the way it is understood and applied in Germany, UK and the USA remains different. At a minimum, it assumes the existence of three branches of governments and that the three powers cannot rest in the hands of one person or institution. Anything beyond these minimum elements remains contested.

Nonetheless, over the years, the concept has evolved with at least three essential elements with serious implications on the role of the judiciary.[115] Firstly, it means that every branch of government has a distinct function that one may call a primary or major function. In polities with written constitutions, the constitution establishes the key political institutions, defines their powers and indicates some *limit* on their powers. The main function of the legislature is to make laws, that of the judiciary to settle disputes and of the executive to implement laws. This notion, however, also implies that each branch may, in addition to its major function, undertake another minor function that belongs to the other branch, so long as that minor function is strongly linked to the main function. For example, it is not a violation of the notion of separation of powers if parliament takes disciplinary measures or removes the immunity of its members, functions that resemble more of adjudication than law making. The same holds true if the executive or the administrative agencies decide technical cases related to the civil service, labour etc. The judiciary as well sets some precedents and fills gaps in the law while deciding cases, a matter that has some impact on policy making.

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113 Separation of powers is understood and interpreted differently depending on whether the system is presidential or parliamentary one. See for details Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes,* 2ⁿᵈedn., (1997): 101-114; Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1949).

114 For details see M. J. C Vile (1967), *Constitutionalism and Separation of Powers* Oxford: Clarendon press.

115 See for details Ahron, Barak (2006), *The Judge in a Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Secondly, separation of powers implies that every branch of government discharges its function according to its own understanding of its powers and without intervention from the other branches. Every branch determines the scope of its authority. If every branch is to exercise some discretion, that is, options from among many, each branch remains autonomous within its zone. But, this autonomy for the exercise of the major and minor function remains valid only as long as the branch acts within the limits of its jurisdiction. If it exceeds its limits or exercises it unlawfully, it is voided by some legal process and this takes us to the third element.

The third element is about 'checks and balances' among the three branches, a concept applied differently depending on the constitutional position of courts but nevertheless relevant even in situations where the judiciary has limited powers as in, Ethiopia. The general premise as already indicated, is that in the absence of some level of checks and balances among the three branches, one branch is likely to accumulate power and endanger democracy as well as liberty. In other words, although each branch is autonomous in the exercise and determination of the scope of its powers, if a dispute arises as to the legality of the interpretation, then the judiciary renders a final and binding decision.

Separation of powers is not about absolutism of each branch, nor is it a license to violate the law. Each branch can only have a mandate as provided in the constitution, because separation of power is not an end in itself. Rather, its end is to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of one governmental institution, political party or person and to strengthen freedom. Separation of power is, therefore also, about limiting power. It follows that a body external to the branch that has allegedly exceeded its power or deviated from its authority gives a final decision. In the Ethiopian context, this calls for specific interpretation, given the fact that the House of Federation (HoF) has the final authority on constitutional issues. In most advanced constitutional systems the task of umpiring and resolution of constitutional matters is assigned either to the Supreme

Court or constitutional court. Such institutions remain autonomous and fairly insulated from the day-to-day political heat giving them the advantage to umpire disputes on a principled basis.

2. Historical and constitutional basis of parliamentary sovereignty

First, a quick remark regarding the choice among different systems: Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and some political actors suggested the need to shift to a presidential system.[116] In principle, there is no good or bad system. Whether a country should chose a parliamentary or presidential system depends on the country's political context and the nature of the cleavage. States have responded quite differently to demands by mobilized ethno-national groups.[117] One softer choice is the integrationist/centripetal presidential federal system advocated by Donald Horowitz[118] and practised in Nigeria and to some extent South Africa. The underlying assumption of this model is that a charismatic and selfless president (somebody like Nelson Mandela) will unify the cleavages. Strong federal government run by the president and weaker states where the major ethno national groups are broken down to many smaller units will be less a threat to unity and integrity of the country. Yet, in the first place in societies with deep divisions,[119] where the country has no clear demographic majority (the Oromo are 35% and the Amhara 28% only), getting such a president is a rare possibility. Secondly, where societies are deeply divided as in Ethiopia today, there is no guarantee that the

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116 In his visit to the Southern regional states after assuming power, the Prime Minister stated he will propose constitutional amendments and he indicated presidential system as preferred model. See also Messay Kebede, On Transitional Government and Ethnic Federalismhttps://www.ethiopiaobserver.com/2018/08/03/on-transitional-government-and-ethnic-federalism/ 3 August 2018

117 Richard Simeon, *Managing Conflicts of Diversity*, in Building on and Accommodating Diversities 54 (Ronald Watts & Rupak Chattopadhyay eds., 2008).

118 Donald Horowitz, *Constitutional Design: Proposals, Process*, in The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy 18 (Andr ew Reynol ds ed., 2002).

119 This expression refers to cases in which identity-based politics have a high degree of prevalence exceeding that accorded to alternative forms of political mobilization such as ideological, class, and gender, and the relationship between groups is affected by deep levels of mistrust making it less cooperative. *See* Donald Horowitz, *Constitutional Design: Proposals, Process*, in The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy 18 (Andrew Reynolds ed., 2002).

presidential candidate will win across ethno national divides. On the contrary, communities seem to be keen to choose their own candidates. Thirdly, the record with presidential systems in Africa is dismal. Instead of unifying different communities, the presidential institution remains a divisive institution combined with no term limits, it is a bone of contention and cause of electoral violence. Fourthly, the presidential federal model works where there is a softer and not deep cleavage. The nature of the cleavage and level of ethno national mobilization is a major factor in selecting one option over the other. For countries with deep divisions where ethno-national groups are politically mobilized and identity is politically salient, the two well-recognized alternatives are power sharing and federalism or a combination of both within a parliamentary system.

The works of Arend Lijpart[120] and of the late O'Leary and McGarry[121] have articulated the various elements of consociational as opposed to majoritarian democracy. The inclusion of the major political actors in the political institutions through a proportional electoral system along with representation of the different groups in public institutions is one of the vital elements. Power sharing, unlike federalism, often takes a non-territorial form.[122] In other words, it is often recommended for societies that are deeply divided by identity differences, but the groups are found to be geographically intermixed. Through a combination of power sharing that enables them to influence policymaking at the centre and autonomy that entitles them to decide issues related to language, education and culture, the groups are believed to contribute to political stability.

One could not rule out the relevance of power sharing in the Ethiopian context, given the fact that none of the ethno-national groups taken alone constitutes a "50 plus 1" majority. O'Leary has argued that in a context where there is no *staatsvolk* (a dominant group that

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120 Arend Lijphart, *Consociationalism and Federalism: Conceptual and Empirical Links*, 12 CANADIAN J. POL. 499 (1979).

121 JOHN MCGARRY & BRENDAN O'LEARY, THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONFLICT: CONSOCIATIONAL ELEMENTS 1–51 (2004).

122 *Id.* at 10–12; Simeon, *supra* note 34, at 64.

enjoys absolute majority and hence has the demographic advantage), political instability will prevail unless there is an inclusive political system that brings the major political actors to power.[123] The solution he proposed is to have executive power sharing among the major political actors based on a proportional electoral system.

Now let us return to parliamentary systems. Modern parliamentary systems first evolved in Europe,[124] notably in Great Britain where the cardinal principle is that of parliamentary sovereignty[125]. What the latter means is that parliament can make and unmake any law whatsoever,[126]that a law enacted by parliament is sovereign, and that, conversely, no individual or institution is allowed to set aside such an act of parliament.

Although the principle is centrally important, its actualisation was a slow process spanning nearly three centuries of contestation and negotiation between the monarch and parliament. The process began with the revolution of 1688 and its limitations on monarchical power, saw ministers becoming accountable to parliament at the end of the eighteenth century, and entered an especially significant phase thereafter with the extension of voting rights to a widening circle of the population and, eventually all adults.

In sum, the locus of power shifted from an absolute monarch to a sovereign parliament, with the result that 'parliament inherited the King's omnipotent position'.[127] Crucially, the most efficacious in limiting the monarch's power was occupation of seats in parliament by way of elections, a lesson that is crucial to contemporary thinking.

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123 Brendan O'Leary, *An Iron Law of Nationalism and Federation? A Neo-Diceyian Theory of the Necessity of a Federal Staatsvolk, and of Consociational Rescue*, 7 Nations & National ism273 (2001).

124 See Hoogwoods P & Roberts G (2003) *European Politics Today*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pg. 155.

125 Sartori G (1997) *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*. New York: New York University Press, pg.101.

126 The adage is that there is nothing the British parliament cannot do except make a woman a man, and a man a woman. De Lolme's popular expression is quoted in Dice AV (2008) *An Introduction to the Study of the Constitution* 10 ed. New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing, pg.43.

127 Koopmans, T (2003) *Courts and Political Institutions: A Comparative View.* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, p.19.

As it is understood today, democracy is manifested primarily, if not exclusively, through elected legislative bodies; at the heart of democracy is the recognition of the central role of the legislature.

The parliamentary systems of government that originated in Britain and Continental Europe spread to other countries, among them Ethiopia, which too has adopted the principle of parliamentary sovereignty. Although the country's parliament is subject to the supremacy of the constitution,[128] the latter enshrines it as 'the *highest authority* of the Federal Government',[129] one which expresses 'the will of the people' through regular and competitive elections[130] and which serves as the primary source of laws. The legislature has the strongest democratic credentials in the state; as for the executive, it gains its legitimacy indirectly from parliament – as discussed in the sections below, it comes from and is accountable to parliament. In this respect, parliament legitimises the executive and hence a key institution of governance.

3. Government accountability to parliament

While the separation of power between the legislature and the executive remains a cardinal rule in presidential systems, fusion of power between the two branches explains parliamentary systems.[131] Examining legislative-executive relations in the context of a sovereign parliament leads to a second core feature of parliamentary

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128 Other limitations include the introduction of constitutional courts as distinct institutions that check the compatibility of an Act of Parliament with the constitution, and the notion of human rights as constitutional entrenchments by which the lawmaker must abide.

129 Art 50(3), emphasis by the author.

130 See Art 54 (1), which provides that members of the HoPR are elected by the people for a term of five years on the basis of universal suffrage and through direct, free and fair elections held by secret ballot.

131 In a presidential system, the legislature and the executive are separate and both drive their legitimacy from the voter. The President is directly elected and serves as head of state and government. The President is responsible for making and unmaking of the executive and his/her term is not dependent on the legislature and enjoys his term unless he/she commits treason which may lead to impeachment. Yet it is possible that president's party could be a minority in congress and the system could enter into a deadlock. The success thus depends on whether members of congress are free to violate party discipline and thus could support draft law even if it is authored by another party. In the US this fairly works well but in most Latin American and African presidential systems, a frustrated President often resorts to rule by decree and has led to tyranny.

democracies. Inasmuch as there is a fusion of power between a legislature and executive, the executive *derives* from and is constitutionally *accountable* to the legislature.[132] That is to say, the cabinet, including its prime minister (PM), is *appointed, supported* and, if need be, *removed* from power by parliament.[133]

Parliamentary systems, however, are not all the same. In the United Kingdom (UK)[134] the leader of the majority party in parliament assumes the position of PM, a convention that often results in a one-party cabinet, though not necessarily a one-party parliament – unlike the case in Ethiopia's HoPR, largely dominated by a single party and thus unreflective of the people's divergent opinions.

By comparison, in Germany the chancellor is 'first among un-equals'[135] in that he or she is elected by parliament as chancellor and is often not the party leader.[136] Any MP with a majority support in parliament has the opportunity to become chancellor, but once elected, stands above the other cabinet ministers as their head and takes responsibility for designing the government's policies. In addition, the fact that the German parliament is frequently run by a coalition limits the chancellor's power to establish his or her government, given that the coalition parties decide on their own which candidates to nominate for ministerial positions.[137] This paves the way for a more balanced relationship between the legislature and executive.

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132 'Parliament makes and breaks the government' expresses this in an extreme form. See Giannetti D & Benoit K (eds) (2009) *Intra Party Politics and Coalition Governments*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis, pg. 10.

133 Sartori G (1997), p. 101, see note 4 above; Flinders M (2002) Shifting the balance? Parliament, the Executive and the British Constitution. *Political Studies*, pp. 50: 24.

134 It has been argued that the UK parliament's supremacy over the executive is thwarted by the latter's tight party discipline and procedural control of the House's timetable. More than 95 per cent of the bills proposed by the executive are adopted, while 82 per cent of all laws are initiated by the government. See Meny Y & Knapp A (1998) *Governments and Politics in Western Euro*pe, 3 ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pg 189; Flinders M (2002), pgs 30-31, see note 11 above.

135 Sartori G (1997), pg. 102, see note 4 above. In the UK the PM is 'first above unequals', i.e. parliament has little role in his or her appointment or the PM's hiring and firing of ministers. The PM's powers are comparable to those of the president of the United States.

136 Sartori G (1997), p. 105, see note 4 above.

137 Oeter S (2006) Republic of Germany. In: Le Roy K & Saunders C (eds) *Legislative, Executive and Judicial Governance in Federal Countries.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press,v.3 pg.146.

Whatever the parliamentary system, though, once a government has been appointed to power by parliament, it must secure a functioning majority in parliament to stay in power.[138] In other words, a government's durability depends on continuous support in parliament. Conversely, parliament can ensure executive accountability[139] through a number of mechanisms, the most prominent of which are the vote of confidence or the constructive vote of no-confidence[140]in which a parliamentary majority can remove government out office.[141]

The notion that the executive comes from and remains accountable to parliament is expressly provided in the Ethiopian constitution. With regard to the establishment of the government, the constitution declares, 'The Prime Minister shall be *elected* [emphasis added] from among members of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR),'[142] while Article 74 states that the PM is required to submit nominees for ministerial posts to the HoPR for approval. Similarly, in relation to government accountability to parliament, the constitution states that the HoPR 'has the power to call and question the PM and other federal officials and to investigate the executive's conduct and

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138 Some authors present this as a matter of mutual dependence between parliament and executive; others, like Sartori (pg.117), argue that the fact that parliament is sovereign rules out a reciprocal dependence between parliament and the executive.

139 Related to this is the cabinet's collegial responsibility to parliament, which applies differently across systems. In the UK, for example, the PM is first above unequals and cabinet members are often more accountable to the PM and less to parliament. In parliamentary systems such as those in Germany, with its principle of 'first among unequals', and Scandinavia, where the PM is first among equals, collegial responsibility is more apparent. See Cheibub JA & Limongi F (2011) Legislative-executive relations. In: Ginsburg T & Dixon R (eds) *Comparative Constitutional Law*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

140 For details on the initiation of vote of confidence, see Storm K, Muller W & Bergman T (2003) Parliamentary democracy: Promises and problems. In: Storm K, Muller W & Bergman T (eds) *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pgs 13-19; Art 67 of the Basic Law; Ackerman B (2000) The new separation of powers. *Harvard Law Review*, 113(3):654-655. In Ethiopia, Arts 93 and 94 of Regulation No. 3/2006 require the approval of the Business Advisory Committee and support of one-third of the MP's to initiate a motion of no confidence. See also Art 6/94 of the same regulation.

141 For details on other mechanisms of control, see Meny Y & Knapp A (1998), pg. 208 ff.

142 See Arts 73/1 of the constitution and Art 95 (2) of Regulation No. 3/2006, which reinforce parliament's mandate to elect the PM. Nevertheless, Art 97 (2) of the Regulation suggests that the party or coalition of parties with a majority in the House shall be given the privilege of introducing the candidate PM to the House through the Speaker, which in turn might imply that the party's decision does not, as such, need the House's approval.

discharge of its responsibilities'.[143]Furthermore, the HoPR 'shall at the request of one third of its members, discuss any matter pertaining to the powers of the executive. It has in such cases, the power to take decisions or measures it deems necessary.'[144]

Yet while the constitution ensures parliamentary supremacy over the executive and is thereby consistent with parliamentary systems, it is not clear how ministers who fail to discharge their responsibility are removed; in other words, they are appointed subject to the approval of parliament, but it is unclear who has the final say when it comes to their removal.

The leading precedent in this respect is the Tamirat Layne case. In a report to parliament after dismissing Tamirat, Meles Zenawi expressly said he was doing so to inform the House of the decision rather than because such decision-making is a mandate of the House, hinting that the dismissal of ministers is the PM's exclusive domain. However, under paradigmatic parliamentary systems this is not the case, because the executive – be it collectively or individually – remains accountable to the House, and a House dissatisfied by the executive's performance can take whatever measures it deems necessary.

Constitutionally, Ethiopia is comparable to the German rather than Westminster system in that the PM must be *elected* from among the members of the House. This implies that he is not necessarily the party leader, given that two or more candidates can be nominated. In practice, however, during the first two terms (1995-2000 and 2000-2005) parliament had voted on the PM's appointment albeit there was only one nominee for the position. In the later two terms (2005-2010 and 2010-2012), the party simply declared its decision to the House who the PM was going to be and the parliament endorsed it without voting on it. The appointment of PM Haile Mariam Desalegn

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143 55 (17) of Regulation No. 3/2006. Art 4 (1)(b) goes even further by stating that parliament has the mandate to control government bodies – a stronger expression than the softer and commonly-used term '*oversight*'.
144 55 (18).

as the new PM in September 2012, following the death of the former PM Meles Zenawi in August 2012, however seemed to reinstitute the former practice. Parliament was requested to approve the nomination of the only candidate from the party. The latter practice indicated EPRDF's (or its leader's) intention to shift away from the German practice to the Westminster type. The significance of these developments is that, due to internal party differences, it is possible that two or more contenders for the premiership could emerge from the same party, thus accordingly the House could play the pivotal role of having to decide between them. If legislative-executive relations were rendered as a triangle, the legislature would occupy the apex and the executive and judiciary, the bottom two corners. However, compared to the German system, the Westminster version of parliamentary democracy gives the executive greater leverage since the PM has a dual role as both head of the executive branch and leader of the majority party in the legislature, the cohesiveness of this group being enforced by party discipline.[145]

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145 In Germany and other parliamentary systems the House elects the PM because often it is composed of a coalition government and there may be no clear majority; in addition, overlaps between the PM and the party leadership (in parliament) are not conspicuous. See Krotosznski R (2011) Separation of legislative and executive powers. In: Ginsburg T & Dixon R (eds) *Comparative Constitutional Law*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pg. 242.

Workshop on Separation of Powers and the System of Checks and Balances in Contemporary Ethiopia

What this discussion highlights is that important contextual factors shape the operation of parliamentary systems in general and Ethiopia's in particular, so much so that in certain cases the executive could gain supremacy over the legislature. In this respect, three interrelated factors are crucial: the nature of the dominant political party and its internal rule; the overlap of functions between key party leadership and the executive; and the widespread practice of delegated legislation with little or no political control. The following sections elaborate on them in the context of the Ethiopian parliamentary system.

4. Parliamentary-fit party and internal party rule

4.1 Parliamentary-fit parties

An effective parliamentary system depends on what Sartori calls 'parliamentary-fit parties'.[146] For a government to stay in power, it must obey the 'majoritarian imperative'[147] and ensure that its party members in parliament continue to support and approve its policies; if its MPs rebel, it may not be able to garner a majority in parliament. The way to achieve governmental stability, then, is to maintain a parliamentary-fit party.

Depending on the nature of the parliamentary system, such parties manifest their fitness through *party cohesion* or *party discipline*.[148]Conceptually, this is where the political party and its leadership come into the picture as central institutions defining legislative-executive relations in parliament, because parliamentary fitness is a key factor determining whether the government is able to sustain itself or is at risk of being ousted. If there is too little fitness, a government could collapse; if too much, it could turn into a cabinet dictatorship.

In this regard, authors often draw a distinction between cohesive and disciplined political parties.[149]Why do members of a party in parliament vote together and differently to those of another party? One answer is to look at the sources of cohesion within the party and within parliament, which can be of two kinds: party cohesion or party discipline.

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146 Sartori G (1997), pg. 102, see note 4 above. By this he means parties that do not cross House party lines when voting. See also Storm K, et al (2003), pg. 67, see note 18 above. The term refers complex relations between the party and its members both within the party's internal decision-making processes and outside of it (usually in public institutions such as parliament and the executive).

147 Cheibub JA & Limongi F (2011), supra,, pgs 222; 11.

148 Giannetti D & Benoit K (2009), suprapgs 1-6; Cheibub JA & Limongi F (2011), supra, pg 118.

149 Giannetti D & Benoit K (eds) (2009), supra, pgs 1-6;
    Cheibub JA & Limongi F (2011), supra, pg118.

In the former, party members vote together because intra-party organisation and democratic decision-making processes enables them to reach consensus on the main issues and thus stand by the positions that the party adopts. The assumption is that members debate freely inside the party machinery, after which they present a united front in parliament. In other words, the party secures loyalty and support from MPs by ensuring the right to debate within the party. If the party does not do this, the normal expectation is that MPs may rebel on the floor of the House, potentially bringing about the collapse of the government and early elections.

Party cohesion is common in Germany and other coalition-based parliamentary systems, where it usually makes for a balanced relationship between the legislature and executive. For example, the German parliament has the mandate to set an agenda of its own, one which need not align with the government's initiatives. Parliamentary autonomy is further enhanced by how MPs view themselves, given that Germany is noteworthy for the way it promotes the legislature's autonomy by separating parliamentary and cabinet leadership.

The Chancellor and leader of the majority party is not necessarily the same person; they have different jobs, and in terms of their hierarchical positions the latter is not necessarily a servant of the former. By extension, German MPs tend to see themselves as members of the Bundestag (House of Representatives) *first and members of their party, second.*[150] King notes that 'members of the Bundestag take seriously their work as members of parliamentary committees and approach it in a non-party or more precisely a cross-party frame of mind', examining bills on their merits and making concessions on this cross-party basis; as implied by Article 38 of the Basic Law, MPs represent the people and are supposed to act as a check on government.[151]

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150 King, A (1976) 'Modes of Executive – Legislative Relations: Great Britain, France and West Germany,' *Legislative Studies Quarterly* v. 1 No. 1, pp.28-29.
151 Ibid p.27.

In the case of party discipline, however, party members vote together – be it within the party or in parliament – not so much because there is consensus but because party leaders have the leverage to impose party discipline on rank-and-file members. The party and its key leaders take priority over MPs, who are members of the party first and members of parliament only second. Through its leadership, the party mobilises voters, finances election campaigns, serves as a gatekeeper to political careers, nominates candidates for election and office, and determines the substance of policy proposals as well as, at times, even the order in which these proposals appear on the parliamentary calendar.

In a balanced legislative-executive relationship, parliament as an autonomous institution has the mandate to determine its own agenda and rules of procedure,[152] a situation in which the executive proposes and the parliament disposes (i.e. accepts, endorses or rejects). However, where party discipline obtains, the legislature takes executive proposals as decisions.[153] Through the cabinet, the party has virtually monopolistic control of the parliamentary agenda,[154] a tendency that seems to apply in the case of Ethiopia. Regulation No. 3 of 2006, Article 32, states, 'In all cases, a government agenda shall be given priority and submitted for debate.'[155] The legislature's function becomes a mainly executive-driven operation, especially so in a context where the party system is crucial to political life and party members who are also MPs can achieve their career and policy goals only if they act in line with their party's preferences.[156]

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[152] Hoogwoods P and Geoffrey Roberts, (2003) *European Politics Today*, 2nd edn. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.155.

[153] Laver M (1999) Divided parties, divided government. *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 24(1):8; Storm K, et al (2003), supra, pg 71.

[154] Flinders M (2002), supra, pgs 25-26.

[155] Article 31 of Regulation No 3/2006 states: 'Initiating an Agenda: The business to be debates may be initiated by: (1) The Executive, (2) The Speaker, (3) The Committees, 4) Members, and (5) Parliamentary groups.' In practice the executive controls virtually all agenda-setting.

[156] Laver M (1999), supra, pg 8; Storm K, et al (2003), supra pgs 68-69; Flinders M (2002), supra, pg 24.

The fact that party leaders can employ a carrot-and-stick strategy to ensure discipline, necessarily also has impact on the autonomy of individual MPs and the question of whether they are free to decide on matters of public concern or must abide by party dictates; a related question is whether MPs represent their specific constituencies, and are thus merely agents of those who voted for them, or if they are elected as trustees competent to decide issues on the floor according to their own free judgment and without instructions from voters.

Ethiopia's constitution addresses these issues in its declaration that '[m]embers of the House are representatives of the Ethiopian People as a whole. They are governed by the constitution, the will of the people and their conscience.'[157] Furthermore, it adds that '[t]he House is responsible to the People.'[158] The fact that MPs represent people 'as a whole' suggests that they have the mandate to decide national issues freely based on what is best for the country rather than on the basis of constituency interests. It should also be noted that the article makes no mention of a party to whom MPs should defer or consult in arriving at their decisions.

Nevertheless, an MP who is tempted to ignore constituency demands will pay dearly come the following election; nor can he or she afford to ignore the role of the party, which emerges as a dominant force influencing decision-making in the House. The reality is thus that there are three conflicting interests. One is the constituency voter who wants the MP to address his priorities and concerns; if the MP fails to do so, the voter may rebel in the next election. Moreover, as noted, parties nominate candidates, finance election campaigns and mobilise voters, which implies that, through its leaders, the party has full control of the process.

Lastly, MP's are bound by their own conscience. A crucial issue which arises is this: What happens in the event of a conflict between party priorities and voter/national priorities, or between the latter and

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157 Art. 54(4).
158 Art. 50(3).

the MP's conscience? How should he or she decide in such cases, and which interest ought to prevail? The constitution dictates that MPs are bound by the constitution, their conscience and will of the people, while party discipline dictates that MPs should obey party lines or be purged from parliament and the party.

It is here that intra-party democracy is vital. If the party is internally democratic, it can handle situations where MPs are in a dilemma, and perhaps also tolerate deviation from the party line; if not, it gives rise to party autocracy instead of parliamentary democracy. In more developed parliamentary systems, the issue of whether MPs who deviate from the party line on the floor of the House should be tolerated is linked to whether the government enjoys a large majority or only a bare minimum.

If it is a large majority, of, say, 80 per cent of seats, then a degree of deviation by MPs from the ruling party do not necessarily put the government at risk of losing power. Seen from the perspective of MP's of a majority party, the expectation is that the legislature would be more autonomous in its functions as there is little or no fear that the government could collapse as a result of defeat in the House. The size of the opposition (in this case, 20 per cent of seats) is not significant enough to cause trouble to the government; the legislature can therefore be vigilant in relations with the government and act as a 'debating club'.

However, if a government has only a slender majority (for example, 52 to 48), then deviation by two or three of its MPs might be enough to throw it from power. Here, a party would be likely to impose tight discipline on its members to toe the party line in parliament to ensure the government continues in power. As a result, the parliament has a dilemma in its relations with the executive in that the fear of parliamentary dissolution could lead to a reduction of parliamentary autonomy. The compensation is that MPs stand to enjoy more freedom in the intra-party decision-making process

and that whatever has been approved at the party level will become government's/parliament's decision in the House.

The EPRDF has controlled Ethiopia's parliament for four consecutive elections since 1995; in none of these elections has the opposition posed a threat.[159] While this would seem likely to lead to a situation in which EPRDF MPs would be relatively autonomous, parliament has, on the contrary, remained a weak institution unable to monitor the executive, and, save for the 2005-2010 term (see below), less than vibrant in representing voters' concerns.

Two explanations for this are the excessive use of party discipline and the hegemonic nature of the ruling party. Excessive party discipline, rather than party cohesion, requires MPs to support the government no matter what the circumstances, thereby undermining parliament's role in holding the government accountable and, in the worst case, turning it into a rubber-stamp institution serving as a mouthpiece for the executive. Where MPs might otherwise be compensated for this through heightened intra-party democracy, party documents suggest that the EPRDF has problems in this regard owing to its practice of 'democratic centralism'.

According to one such document, 'members of the ruling party in parliament or in other places shall have the right and the duty[160] to support the party's policy and decisions'[161]. What is noteworthy is that the need for an MP's complete loyalty to the party is in no way linked to any perceived threat of government collapse or to the size of the ruling party in parliament. Indeed, the document states that should MPs experience a contradiction between the party's policy and their own conscience, they have the option of leaving

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159 Following the 2005 elections, a coalition of opposition parties secured improved representation in parliament, but even so it was not enough to pose a threat to the government.

160 If someone has a right, then there must be an entity that bears the duty. So, if MPs have a duty to support their party, the party has the right/authority/power to impose it on its members in parliament. Something cannot be a right and a duty at the same time.

161 Ministry of Information (1994) *Be Ethiopia Ye Democracy Sirat Ginbata Gudayoch*. Addis Ababa. p. 66.

the party.[162] By implication, if the party's policy and decisions are in contradiction with those articulated in parliament, the former then prevails over the latter.

While parliament's supremacy over the executive is stipulated in the constitution, in practice 'democratic centralism' seems at odds with an autonomous, sovereign legislature. A recent publication on 'democratic centralism' and how it is incorporated in the EPRDF's internal regulation likens it to the 'command and control/order system' in the military.[163] Lower-level party members must accept decisions made by the higher level (hence 'centralism');though this does not rule out the possibility of grass-roots participation and influence over the higher levels of party structure (hence 'democratic'), in practice whatever comes from the political leadership must be obeyed at all costs. In short, it is 'centralism with little or no democracy'.

If this is so, it suggests something of the nature of intraparty democracy in the EPRDF in particular, and political parties in general. Since the mid-twentieth century, these have become key institutions of democracy,[164]making it critical to understand their internal politics and the impact thereof on the wider polity.

In Ethiopia the Party is omnipresent: both within the party and parliament, voting is more a matter of organisational coercion than of a democratic decision-making process. Operating under party discipline, MPs are consequently not free agents but instruments of party preferences as determined by party leaders. In effect, the

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162 Ministry of Information (1994), see note 39 above, pg 67.
163 See the book by the former ruling-party politbureau member, Siye Abraha (2002) *Nestanet ena Dagninet be Ethiopia,* pgs 39-9 and 48. Among the numerous publications describing democratic centralism in Ethiopia, see, for example: Bach J-N (2011) Abyotawi democracy: Neither revolutionary nor democratic – a critical review of EPRDF's conception of democracy in post-1991 Ethiopia. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5(4):641-663; Aalen L (2002) *Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: The Ethiopian Experience 1991-2000*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.
164 According to Przeworski, (p.23) political parties were detested institutions in the nineteenth century, when they were known s factions with parochial interests; political parties are a twentieth-century phenomenon. Przeworski, A (2010) *Democracy and the Limits of Self Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MP's mandate as trustee is 'expropriated',[165] with the executive occupying the apex of a triangular hierarchy and the legislature and judiciary, the bottom corners. The legislature is replaced in position by the executive; parliamentary supremacy is replaced by cabinet predominance. As Kassahun Berhanu aptly remarks:

[T]he Ethiopian Parliament has consistently depicted a feature of dependence on mainstream centres of power to which it is inextricably linked. ... Successive Ethiopian Legislatures have increasingly been subservient to the wielders of power, notably the political executives.[166]

An important point to draw from parliamentary systems such as Germany's is that the government has no monopoly over the parliamentary agenda and, that bills introduced by the government do not necessarily have priority:[167]The speaker, not the government, defines the legislative agenda. There is also a degree of separation between party/executive positions and parliamentary leadership, enabling parliament to maintain certain autonomy from executive control.

In light of such lessons, Ethiopia should consider amending its internal rules of procedure to allow MPs more initiative in the legislative process and ensure they can set their own priorities, amendments, which could pave the way for a more negotiated policy-making arrangement between the legislature, executive, and ruling party. Furthermore, a healthy parliamentary system requires a cohesive rather than a disciplined party, one which does not undermine parliament's autonomy as a democratic institution.

4.2 The nature of the party system

The party system in Ethiopia (at least until the coming to power of PM Abiy Ahmed in April 2018) also tends to sway legislative-

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165 Cheibub JA & Limongi F (2011), supra, pg 226.
166 Berhanu K (2005), supra, pgs 178-179.
167 Cheibub JA & Limongi F (201), supra, pg 126, 131.

executive relations in favour of the executive. A thin line distinguishes 'hegemonic' parties from 'dominant' ones[168], and in Ethiopia there are growing doubts whether the country is a multiparty or one-party state.[169] While the constitution stipulates that '[a] political party, or a coalition of political parties, that has the greatest number–of seats in the HoPR shall form the Executive and lead it',[170] thus declaring Ethiopia a multiparty system, the actual political practice is more complicated.

The 2010 and 2015 national and regional elections made it clear that Ethiopia's transition to genuine multiparty democracy is far from being achieved. The ruling party along with its ideology of "revolutionary democracy" and hegemonic control of power has also made multiparty democracy a farce.[171] The ruling party claims, particularly following the 2010 national and regional state elections, that Ethiopia needs an *Awra*/vanguard/dominant party.[172] This claim is illustrated in various documents of the ruling party citing examples from other countries such as Japan (from 1954 to 1993).[173] Yet, the analogy is problematic because there seems to be a thin line that differentiates between hegemonic and dominant party systems. In a dominant party system, the political system is not against multi-partyism as such, but it happens that voters satisfied with the performance of the Liberal Democratic Party continue to elect the same party in consecutive elections. In this system, there is a regular and free election and opposition parties take part in the competitive election. There is little or no complaint about the electoral process on the basis of voting irregularities or fraud. The outcome of the

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168 See Sartori, G (1976). *Partyand Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. v.1 Cambridge University Press. Pg.109.

169 Tronvoll has already concluded it is a one-party state. Tronvoll K (2010) Briefing: The Ethiopian 2010 federal and regional elections: Re-establishing the one-party state. *African Affairs,* 110(438):121-136.

170 Art. 56.

171 Some have already hinted that "while federalism may survive the EPRDF, the present political framework is so dependent on the regime that created it and its survival is unlikely," *see* Christopher Clapham (2009), *Post War Ethiopia: The Trajectories of Crisis*, 36 REV. AFR. POL. ECON. 191.

172 *See, e.g.*, Addis Raey Hamle-Nehase,2002 E.C v. 3 No. 3 Bulletin of EPRDF: 30–38.

173 *See* GIOVANNI SARTORI (1976), PARTY AND PARTY SYSTEMS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS 109..

election is also respected by both the winners and the losers. There is no fear that if the party loses an election it will engage in "extra-legal measures" to stay in power.[174]

The hegemonic party system is a bit different. To a large extent this type of party system is not competitive and yet it is not the same as a one-party state.[175] The same party controls more than 50 per cent of the power for consecutive elections (two to three terms).[176] There are various restrictions placed on political parties that want to engage in elections. Complaints on the electoral process are very common as either of the parties might engage in various kinds of election rigging. Political pluralism is far from ascertained as well. As is well known, competition and uncertainty of outcomes are vital elements of a democratic electoral process.[177] In a hegemonic party type, there are indicators that hint at the certainty of the outcome: the hegemonic party will retain power. More important, there is no guarantee that if the hegemonic party loses the election it will transfer power peacefully. At the very least it is uncertain.

As indicated above, the EPRDF, following the 2010 election, declared itself a dominant party. The ruling party has controlled power since 1991 (five consecutive elections) and with the exception of the third term where the opposition had 171 seats, it enjoyed more than 95 per cent control of power. It is also difficult to ignore the various election irregularities mentioned by several international observers. True or not, in nearly all five elections held between 1995 and 2015, various kinds of electoral irregularities have been reported.[178] Despite the constitution proclaiming a multiparty system, the reality has been a hegemonic party in power where the opposition plays little role.

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174 *Id*.; *see also* JOSE ANTONIO CHEIBUB (2007), PRESIDENTIALISM, PARLIAMENTARISM AND DEMOCRACY 29–30..

175 *See* CHEIBUB, *supra* at 29–30.

176 Matthijs Bogaards (2004), *Counting Parties and Identifying Dominant party Systems in Africa*, 43 EUR. J. POL. RES. 174–175.

177 *See* CHEIBUB, *supra*.

178 Even the moderate Jimmy Carter stated critical shortcomings. *See* Comments by Christopher Clapham on the Ethiopian crisis written in mid-November 2005, http://www.ethiomedia.com/ fastpress/Clapham_on_Ethiopia_crisis.html, and Jon Abbink, *Discomfiture of Democracy? The 2005 Election Crisis in Ethiopia and Its Aftermath*, 105(419) AFR. AFF. 187 (2006); *also* Terrence Lyons, *Ethiopia in 2005: The Beginning of a Transition?* 25 CSIS: AFRICA NOTES (Jan. 2006).

While the opposition remained fragmented with only a dozen seats in the 547-seat parliament in the first two elections, some progress was seen in the third term (2005–2010). In the 2005 election, following a more open and relatively democratic process, the opposition gained 171 seats in parliament and won all seats of the Addis Ababa City Council, but disagreements among the opposition itself and with the EPRDF led to a violent demonstrations in June and November 2005, which resulted in loss of life and destruction of property and imprisoning of some opposition party leaders.

The political context after the 2005 election crisis is even more worrisome. Authoritarian tendencies from the ruling party[179] and fragmented opposition together yielded a one-party electoral outcome in 2010 when only one seat went to an opposition and another one to an independent candidate. In the 2015 elections no single seat went to the opposition. The effect is that participation in political life is restricted to the members of the ruling party and its allies,[180] leaving a large section of society unrepresented and in disarray. As a result, some have gone to the extent of concluding that the multiparty system in Ethiopia has given rise to a one-party state.[181] This scenario certainly hints where Ethiopia's democratization process is heading. In essence, elections are becoming "ritual performances," a formal routine process without competitive electoral policy options for the voter. Opposition parties, however fragmented, exist but are tolerated or provided controlled freedom[182] as long as they do not pose a major threat to the ruling party in its bid to stay in power to implement developmental goals. This scenario has weakened moderates in the opposition and led to widespread social movements and street protests emboldening hardliners.

179 Repressive laws that restricted the role of civil society groups and the political opposition were issued giving rise to what the political opposition calls "narrowing down of the political space." *See* Abbink, *supra* .

180 Leonardo Arriola & Terrence Lyons (2016), *Ethiopia: the 100% Election*, 27 J. Democracy 76

181 Kjetil Tronvoll (2010), *Briefing: The Ethiopian 2010 Federal and Regional Elections: Re-establishing One Party Stat*e, 110 Afr. Aff. 1..

182 This was common expression used by the ruling party following the aftermath of the 2005 election crisis telling the opposition that their freedom is symbolized by "chicken with a long rope" where its freedom is limited by the size of the robe to which it is tied.

As some argue "In Ethiopia, an election victory of 100 per cent of parliamentary seats sends the message to potential rebels that there is only one game in town and that to imagine otherwise would be futile."[183] This is exactly what transpired in 2016. When the political opposition was weakened and lost political space in parliament, the discontented section of society was left with little option than the social media and outlawed parties outside the country. During the protests in Oromia and the Amhara region, it was all clandestine and as *The Reporter* rightly wrote, "it was a revolution without leaders,"[184] in the sense that the leaders were not the traditional loyal opposition figures but clandestine and new ones using social media as an outlet.

Providing space to political pluralism thus remains the top priority, if Ethiopia is to avoid further protest and violence. Indeed the protests in Oromia and other parts of the country following a 100 per cent electoral win in May 2015 are clear signs that demonstrate that the dominant party system is deeply fractured. It is not common to witness a discontent of this magnitude immediately after 100 per cent win in elections. In this respect the promise by the new leaders of the EPRDF to conduct free and fair elections in 2020 is a major step forward, provided that it is preceded by key institutional and political reforms.[185]

The EPRDF retained control over the economy and political process, something which will certainly create hegemony and which is likely to embolden its leadership in dominating institutions of governance created by the constitution. These institutions are perceived as tools for achieving the party's economic and political goals rather than checking or balancing power. As such, contrary to what the constitution declares, they are not regarded as superior to the party but subordinate to it.

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183 Arriola & Lyons, *supra*, at 86.

184 *See Rebellion without leaders: Where is Ethiopia Heading?*, THE REPORTER (Amharic) '(vol. 21, no. 1702), Aug. 21, 2016 (*Nehase* 15, 2008 E. C.)

185 Law on civil society, election and political parties, national electoral board have been revised to prepare the country for the upcoming election but the ongoing political crisis within the ruling party, regular break down of law and order, the rise of informal youth and armed groups, youth un employment continue to threaten Ethiopia's peace and stability.

4.3 Post-2005 Parliamentary Reforms and Procedure

The discussion above describes a reversal of legislative-executive relations in favour of the executive, a shift arising from the EPRDF's dominance over the political process in general and parliament in particular. Certain of its members explain this as a development in common with those in other parliamentary systems such as that of the UK, but it oversimplifies key differences between the two systems.

While a one-party cabinet may be the norm in the UK, a one-party parliament is certainly not. The opposition plays a critical role in parliament: along with the existence of vigorous mass media, centuries of democratic parliamentary practice counter-balances executive dominance in parliament. Ethiopia, however, has not only a one-party-dominated cabinet but also a one-party-dominated parliament that restricts the reflection of diversity of opinion.

An important exception is the third parliamentary period (2005 – 2010). After the election outcomes of May 2005, the outgoing parliament was engaged during the summer of the same year in making new laws for the forthcoming parliament composed of the ruling EPRDF and two major opposition parties, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF). This gave rise to a widespread uproar in June and November 2005 that claimed 192 lives. Once a larger section of the opposition joined the parliament, it became clear that the HoPR's internal rules had to be revised to accommodate this new development. Intense negotiations between the government and opposition led to an agreement that the revision would be based on the parliamentary practices of Canada, Germany, India and the UK.[186] Among the major reforms was the enactment of a new

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[186] See the final report of the committee of experts of all these countries, which made important suggestions that served as basis for the new rules of procedure of the HoPR issued in 2006 (Regulation No. 3/2006): Committee of Experts (2006) *Integrated Comparative Study of the Rules of Procedures of the House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE Ethiopia and the Rules of Procedures of the House of Commons of Canada, of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, of the Lok Sabha of the Parliament of India and of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom*. (Available with the author.)

regulation.[187]One pitfall of the former practice was that the agenda could be set only through the ruling party. In the new regulation, agendas for debate and the time allocated for discussion are to be decided by consensus in the Business Advisory Committee.[188] If this fails, the matter is referred to the floor of parliament by the speaker as it is to be decided by a one-third vote (in a 548-seat parliament).[189] The total number of the opposition seats (diverse in itself) was 173, if all the opposition were to vote together.

In response to this development, a former opposition MP remarked, 'The irony of the matter is that all of the opposition combined cannot add up to one-third of the vote of the total members of parliament. It is therefore a foregone conclusion that the ruling party will have a simple majority vote on any issue either in the committee or the floor.'[190] Another former opposition MP noted that although the opposition may have been better represented in parliament than ever before, this did not improve its effectiveness because the new rules required the support of 183[191] members for an agenda item to be tabled for debate, whereas previously they required only 20.[192]

Thus, despite the reforms, it remains difficult for the opposition to set an agenda in the House without the agreement of the ruling party. The only way to do so is through the 'one hour a month' schedule; known as 'opposition day', it enables the opposition to discuss its agenda, as provided in the regulation.[193]

187 The House of Peoples' Representatives of FDRE Rules of Procedure and Member's Code of Conduct Regulation No. 3/2006. [Hereinafter, 'the Regulation.]
188 According to Arts 32 and 142 of the Regulation, the House's Business Advisory Committee is composed of the speaker, deputy speaker and party whips (presumably including the government whip in parliament). It is responsible for key business related to the House, such as agenda-setting time allocation for MPs in parliament.
189 Art 31 and 32 of the Regulation for details; the four experts suggested that the restriction be removed.
190 Zewdie T (2009) One year of experience with democracy in the Ethiopian parliament. In: Muller-Scholl M (ed) *Democracy and the Social Question: Some Contributions to a Dialogue in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. Pg 150.
191 Combined, the opposition had 173 elected MPs.
192 Gudina M (2011) Elections and democratization in Ethiopia, 1991-2010. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5(4):672.
193 See Art 35 of the Regulation. For an item to be tabled on the agenda as per this provision required the support of the majority of the opposition MPs in the Business and Advisory Committee.

Modest efforts were also made to accommodate opposition MPs in various committees. The number of committees rose from 12 to 13 (even increasing after 2010 to 16), and membership in each committee increased from 13 to 20, allowing members of the opposition to participate in committees; in addition, in line with parliamentary traditions elsewhere, the budget and finance affairs standing committee was chaired by the opposition. The number of committees has again been downsized to ten in October 2018.

Overall, the reforms do not appear to have satisfied the opposition, and in the 2010 elections such gains as had been made were reversed when the ruling party took control of 99.6% of the seats in parliament.[194]

Experts from the countries from which the reform process drew for its models noted that, despite the differences between their respective systems, 'all have in common either that the opposition parties are given a formal role in drawing up the agenda or, as in the UK, are given many safeguards under the rules and practices of the House to provide space for them to pursue their own wishes ....'[195] In particular, the experts underlined the value of understanding the mutual roles of government and opposition: the former needs to make the necessary decisions, pass laws and explain policies in parliament; the latter needs to be able to criticise the executive and present and deliberate political alternatives.[196] It is to be recalled, one of the main functions of parliament is representing diverse opinions that exist in society. It is 'a forum for the expression, consideration and accommodation of different opinions.'[197] Ethiopia's parliament role is marginal in this respect.

Because the business of parliament is often decided by a majority, one-party dominance stands to make the life of the opposition

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194 Only two seats exist, one for an opposition candidate and another for an independent.
195 Committee of Experts (2006), supra, pg 115.
196 Committee of Experts (2006), supra. The experts recommended that the opposition be represented in the office of the speaker, for example as deputy speaker (pg 38), a position which in Germany is occupied by a representative from the largest opposition party (pg 42). It was also recommended that open, recorded and secret ballots be introduced in parliament (pg 48).
197 Markus Bockenforde (2011), the Design of the Legislature (IDEA) p.11.

difficult and its voice insignificant. To minimize this risk, a minority in parliament may be given procedural guarantees to ensure its voice is heard. Filibustering/blocking is one such measure, but if it is overused it can create complications for the majority.[198]As a result, certain parliaments make use of a motion of closure in which the speaker initiates a vote that enough debate has taken place; if it is supported by a majority, the motion terminates the filibustering. In Ethiopia, the absence of a significant opposition and procedural guarantees to the opposition diminishes parliament's role of reflecting diversity of opinion.

Given these realities, the post-2005 reforms saw some improvements favourable to multiparty democracy but did not cause any significant shift in legislative-executive relations. If such a shift is to occur, it requires an overhaul of the parliamentary system that goes beyond small, tinkering amendments to the House's internal rules of procedure. Indeed, political scientists have maintained that the most important variable in these systems is not the number of parties in parliament but the number of parties in government.[199]

Currently, the operative law in Ethiopia[200] is based on the notion of First Past the Post (FPTP). In an ideal parliament with three parties, A, B and C – each with three, four and five votes, respectively, in a parliament of 12 seats – C is the winner even though it secures less than half of the votes; in fact, seven (the sum of the votes for A and B) of the voters are opposed to C. Party C obtains 100 % of them despite the fact that it has not won with an absolute majority ('50' plus one vote). As for A and B, they get zero seats, and the votes cast for them are effectively thrown into the dustbin. Ethiopia's electoral system, in other words, discards the preferences of innumerable voters, while the winner in turn is not necessarily the party with an absolute but merely a relative majority.[201]

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198 Meny Y & Knapp A (1998), supra, pgs 202-205.
199 See Lijphart, A (1977) *Democracy in Plural Societies.* Yale: Yale University Press,pp.68-75.
200 Article 54 (2) states that members of the HoPR shall be elected from candidates in each electoral district by a plurality of the votes cast.
201 See for details Lijphart, (1977) supra

By implication, Ethiopia has to consider shifting from an FPTP to proportional (PR) electoral system in which parties with a minimum threshold of five to ten per cent of voter support can share executive as well as legislative positions, a development which prepares the way for genuine power-sharing and multiparty democracy. A first step would be to reform the electoral law to require an absolute majority to win in elections, that is, to require a candidate to win absolute majority in each district. The more radical reform, though, as above, would change from an FPTP to PR system. The latter is a workable instrument for translating voter preferences into seats in parliament and executive power; whether it would work in Ethiopia in particular is another question, but this is a debate worth having.[202] In any case, Ethiopia's parliamentary system has remained a victim of dominant party that in turn has made multiparty democracy a farce.

4.4 Overlapping functions between the executive and party leadership

Another factor subordinating parliament to higher-level leadership is the overlap of functions between key party figures and top government executives. The EPRDF has a clear tendency to assign party leaders to the executive rather than parliament. Almost all party executives are MPs; in turn, party MPs who do not also hold government portfolios – and who are hence parliamentarians in the strict sense – are nearly all junior party members. For example, the EPRDF has not once assigned its deputy-chair to lead parliament as the HoPR speaker; the rule instead is that he or she and the party chairman/woman occupy top positions within the executive.

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202 The challenges of coalition-based parliaments are well known but Germany's is a workable example. For details, see Sartori G (1997), note 4above, pg 111; Lijphart A (1979) Consociationalism and federalism: Conceptual and empirical links. *Canadian Journal of Politics*, 12(3):499-515; McGarry J & O'Leary B (2004) *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Elements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pgs 1-51; Mehler A (2009) Introduction: Power-sharing in Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 44(3):2-10.

The resulting problem is what Kaare and Storm term 'adverse selection'.[203] The executive is bound to prevail in parliament,[204] because it is hard indeed to see how junior political figures in parliament could control or exercise oversight over their own party leaders, especially so in the context of democratic centralism and party discipline.

4.5 Widespread delegated legislation and lack of political control

Central to limited government is the assumption that all administrative authority must be conferred by legislation. Consequently, if the executive assumes powers not conferred by the constitution or proclamation, it can be challenged either as unconstitutional or *ultra vires*, that is, beyond delegated authority. Delegated legislation is often preceded by guidelines and principles contained in the constitution or a proclamation. It is, in other words, a conditional grant of power by the legislature to the executive.

As discussed in this section, the widespread practice of delegated legislation,[205] combined with parliament's failure to exercise effective political control over it, can be considered as a final factor contributing to executive predominance in Ethiopia's parliamentary system.

Viewing the issue in a comparative perspective, the shift in the twentieth century from the *laizzez faire* to welfare state saw a huge expansion in the government's role in the economy and society at large. Punder argues there are some justifications for this: owing to the complexities of the modern state and a lack of time and resources, the legislature cannot be expected to get involved in the level of detail required in regulations.[206] In this regard, studies suggest that

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203 Storm K, et al (2003), pg 25. It means the legislature as a principal cannot control the executive as agent.

204 Laver M (1999) Divided parties, divided government. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 24(1):8.

205 Powers exercised under delegation from parliament have different names across jurisdictions. For present purposes they can be taken to mean the same thing, and 'regulations' will be the term of reference used.

206 Punder H (2009) Democratic legtimation of delegated legislation: A comparative view of America, Britain and German law. *International Comparative law Quarterly*, 59:354.

governing by executive-issued regulations has become the rule rather than the exception.[207] In the UK some 3,000 regulations are made annually, while in the US the number increases to about 7,000.[208] Similarly, in Ethiopia it is estimated that the number of regulations issued every year far exceeds proclamations made by parliament.[209]

The government's expanded role is not without consequences, notably the risk of arbitrariness and abuse of power. Increased executive discretion through the use of delegated legislation tends towards legislative inflation, a multiplication of legal sources that creates uncertainty and thereby jeopardises the rule of law.

Another difficulty relates to the separation of powers and the specialised roles of each branch of the state. If parliament's main function is to make laws, delegating its powers in this regard to the executive may reach the point where it undercuts its relevance and, indeed, its reason for being. In addition, delegated legislation has fuelled concerns about the 'new despotism' of rule of bureaucracy[210] and raised the question of whether there are sufficient mechanisms of political control over such delegated powers.

More importantly, powers exercised through delegation can lead to a democratic deficit or crisis of legitimacy. Whereas the executive is only indirectly responsible to the electorate via a legislature which represents the will of the people, the legislature derives legitimacy directly from voters; however, overuse of delegated authority causes a shift of significant power away from the legislature and, by implication, the voters they represent. To address the democratic deficit and ensure executive accountability, then, parliament must exercise political control over delegated legislation.

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207 Page E (2001) *Governing by Numbers: Delegated Legislation and Everyday Policy-making.* Oxford: Hart Publishing.
208 Page E (2001), supra, pgs 4;14.
209 A recent study indicates that in 1991-2010 parliament made 313 proclamations and the government, 325 regulations. See Worku L (2012) Express repeal of Delegated Legislation in Ethiopia. www. abyssinialaw.com.accessed on June 10, 2012.
210 Punder H (2009), supra, pg 356.

In the United States, the country's non-delegation doctrine has become largely irrelevant in limiting executive discretion but still applies to human-rights issues. When fundamental rights and interests are at stake, the choices must be made not by the executive but Congress, with its diverse membership, bicameral houses and multiplicity of voices; the courts will not permit the executive to intrude on liberty or limit rights without congressional authorisation.[211]

Moreover, while the US apparently grants wide powers to the executive, the latter is subject to a range of political and judicial checks and balances. For instance, regulations (issued by the executive as a body) and rule-making (directives issued by agencies or individual ministers) are strengthened in their democratic legitimacy by the requirement for public participation. The American Administrative Act provides for participation by interested persons as a necessary step in all cases of delegated legislation (553 APA). The Act also provides details on the process of rule-making, which is strictly monitored by state and federal courts.[212] Public participation thus compensates for the lack of substantive predetermination by Congress.

Another mechanism for giving regulations democratic legitimacy is to limit executive discretion by requiring that regulations be made only when there is an explicit provision in the primary legislation.

In the UK, for example, regulations cannot stand on their own: nearly all of them must be consistent with the parent law, which implies that the executive has no inherent power to make regulations separately from a primary source. Delegated legislation must be aligned with the intentions of the parent law,[213] and delegated powers are to be used only for that law's express or implicit purpose. Setting guidelines and principles in the parent law – the details of which are fleshed out by regulation – is *ex ante* political control of delegated legislation

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211 Sunstein C (2001) *Designing Democracy: What Constitutions Do*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pgs 138-139.
212 Punder H (2009), supra, pg 369-370.
213 Punder H (2009), supra, pg 357.

and has been termed 'parliamentary substantive predetermination of executive rule'.[214]

The UK also provides *ex post* parliamentary mechanisms of control over delegated authority. These take many forms over and above the normal requirements that the executive report to parliament and reply to questions. Most regulations are subject to an affirmative resolution procedure in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, a requirement which can be met in a variety of ways.

First, the draft regulation is laid before parliament for approval within a certain period of time to come into effect; here, parliament may annul or endorse it. Secondly, the regulation is laid before parliament, coming into effect immediately but only for a specified period (often 40 days), its fate dependent on parliamentary approval; if there is no approval within that period, the regulation expires at the end of it. In a third possibility – a negative resolution – the executive allows parliament to annul the regulation in a stated period after submission to a special committee; if it is not annulled within, say, 40 days of submission, it remains effective.[215]

This third practice emanates from Germany, which has even stricter requirements than the UK for issuing regulations. According to Article 80 (section 1) of the Basic Law, 'The Federal government, a Federal Minister, or the Land (state) governments may be authorised by a law to issue statutory instruments [regulations]. The *content*, *purpose* and *scope* of the authority conferred shall be specified in the law ...'[216]. Not only is delegated authority required to emanate from the parent law but the parent law also determines the content, scope and purpose. If this is not complied with, the Constitutional Court can quash the law. Ordinary courts are also competent to check the compatibility of the regulation with the parent law.

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214 Page E (2001), supra, pg 20.
215 Page E (2001), supra, pgs 26; 155-157.
216 Emphasis added by the author.

The Basic Law thus places a substantive limit on parliament's power to delegate, given that proclamations must predefine the 'content, purpose and scope' of the delegated authority. In other words, parliament may not simply give the executive broad authorisation to do as it wishes; moreover, post-enactment political control applies in Germany as it does in the UK, in that parliament can veto delegated legislation. These requirements ensure that, as the representative of the people, parliament bears political responsibility for all laws issued by the executive, an arrangement that in turn guarantees the executive's constitutional responsibility to parliament.[217]

The procedures discussed in respect to Germany, UK and the US, are all tools for exercising parliamentary control over the executive, and, more particularly, for legitimising delegated legislation and thereby addressing the problem of a democratic deficit. By contrast, Ethiopia has a very weak system for doing so, with delegated legislation subject neither to prior substantive predetermination by parliament nor to plenary or committee approval after having been enacted. Instead a common trend is for the parent law to make a general statement that enables the executive to issue regulations but which gives little in the way of guiding detail.

An example is Article 34 of Proclamation No 691/2010 on the Re-organization of Federal Government, states:

> The Council of Ministers is hereby empowered, where it finds it necessary, to Re-organize the Federal Government executive organs by issuing regulations for the closure, merger or division of an existing executive organ or for change of its accountability or mandates or for the establishment of a new one.

Such a broad authorisation to the executive, literally entitling it to 'make and unmake' itself, does not sit well with the principle that the executive derives its existence from, and is accountable to, parliament. In this case, parliament has not so much delegated authority to the executive as abdicated its core function in favour

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217 Punder H (2009), supra, pg 358.

of another branch of state, a function which, in view of the notion of separation of powers, is arguably non-delegable. As Scalia has noted, '[t]he legislative power is the power to make laws, not the power to make legislators'.[218]

What purpose has it left to serve, then, if a parliament not only delegates a primary function – that of organising, supporting and supervising the executive – but sets no guidelines or principles in terms of which it could later check to see if the executive has complied with its intentions? By the same token, this delegation of authority endows the executive with powers more comparable to those in a presidential than a parliamentary system, such a system being one in which the presidents gets a mandate from direct election and remains the sole office for making and unmaking the executive.

In short, the executive takes away one of the powers of parliament and at the same time keeps the latter in the dark about what it then does with it – a situation revealing how emboldened Ethiopia's executive is and how impotent its parliament.

A second case relates to the executive mandate emanating from a parent law. Proclamation No. 587/2008 deals with the establishment

of the Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority and, in Article 19 sub 1 (b), declares 'the administration of the employees of the Authority shall be governed by regulation to be issued by the Council of Ministers. This proclamation, in other words, is meant to serve as a parent (enabling) law to the regulation to be issued by the Council of Ministers. The latter issued Regulation No. 155/2008, Article 37 of which states:

1. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Director General may, *without adhering to the formal disciplinary procedures,* dismiss any employee from duty whenever he has *suspected* him of involving in corruption and lost confidence in him.

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218 Scalia A (1997) *A Matter of Interpretation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pg 35.

2. An Employee who has been dismissed from duty in accordance with sub article 1 of this Article may not have the right to reinstatement by the decision of any *judicial body*.

The regulation mandates the Director General (DG) with two contested powers.The first of which is that the DG is not required to prove that the employee is corrupt, since a mere suspicion is enough to dismiss an employee;[219]secondly, contrary to the separation of powers, the DG is a judge on his or her own case and has no need to subject it to a court decision or investigation by an impartial body.

Here, the parliament has set no guiding principles against which the decisions of the DG are to be checked via the institution of political control. In effect, it wrote a blank cheque, leaving the executive free to fill in whatever amount it pleases – and, as a bonus, parliament even ousted the judiciary from adjudicating cases arising from such unlawful dismissal, a power the executive lacks under Ethiopia's constitution.

As these examples show, the executive enjoys wide and unrestrained discretion while the judiciary and parliament exercise little or no control over it. Executive enactment of delegated legislation is widely practised, not subject to accountability, and therefore, often democratically deficit.

To redress these problems, parliament needs to limit executive discretion in regulations by stating some general principles when it authorises secondary legislation. Each standing committee must also be expressly empowered by the HoPR to check the compatibility of delegated legislation of the respective executive wing with the law enacted by parliament. In addition, the committees need to check whether executive discretion has been exercised in line with the purpose stated in the legislation. A more comprehensive reform would require parliamentary approval of regulations issued by the

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219 Article 20 sub 3 of the Constitution states that 'accused persons have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty'. Corruption is an increasingly serious issue in Ethiopia and proving such sophisticated crimes is certainly a difficult job, but one wonders if it is not possible to fight corruption without violating rights.

executive before they come into effect. Such institutional reforms, it is hoped, would mitigate executive power and help to restore some balance in favour of the HoPR.

5. on the Roles of the Judiciary

"…The major work for the judge is to settle chicken and goat theft cases…"[220]

Disputes are an inevitable consequence of social interaction in every society. As an alternative to violence, governments have established judicial systems for the purpose of impartial resolution of disputes.[221] When disputes arise about legal rights and duties among individuals or between an individual and the government, we want a mutually acceptable third party adjudicator to settle the dispute.[222] Impartial resolution of disputes is one of the crucial functions of the judiciary.

The judiciary is expected to be an impartial and neutral third party trusted to settle controversies after considering only the facts and their relations to relevant laws. The judge is required to have no relations to the litigants and should not have any interest in the outcome of the case.[223]

Another crucial but vague function expected from the judiciary is ensuring the rule of law.[224] This is a very broad and ambiguous concept but there are certain minimums where many agree on.[225] Formally,

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220 Statement by President Museveni of Uganda made in 2004 quoted in Justice R.R. Mzikamanda, *The Place of the Independence of the Judiciary and the Rule of Law in Democratic Sub Saharan Africa*www.saifac.org.za/docs/2007/mzikamanda_paper.pdfas accessed on August 11, 2009.

221 Barak, *The Judge in a Democracy*, (2006): 101; Impartiality is at the bed rock of the judicial process hence the image of justice as 'blindfolded'.

222 Russell, "Towards a General Theory of Judicial Independence" in *Judicial Independence in the Age of Democracy: Critical Perspectives from Around the World* Peter Russell and David O' Brien eds., , : 9

223 C. Larkins (1996), "Judicial Independence and Democratization: A Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis," *Am. J. Comp. L.*44 : 608. He emphasizes, party detachment, political insularity and institutional respect from the other branches as crucial elements of judicial autonomy.

224 In polities where the judiciary is empowered to interpret the constitution and settle constitutional disputes this notion includes ensuring the supremacy of the constitution. In Ethiopia, this power belongs to the House of Federation. See Art. 62 of the Constitution.

225 For example, Barak strongly argues about the inherent morality in the law and the fact that rule of law is incomplete without human rights, *supra*: 52-56. While Rachel Kleinfeld doubts if rule of law has any human right contents. Else they agree on the other elements of the rule of

the rule of law at a minimum means let the law rule. All actors and office holders must act according to the law and any violation must be met with organized sanctions of society. It is about the legality of the government and about ensuring law and order[226] in the polity that tells little about the content of the law. This is so because using this element even Nazi Germany and the Apartheid system in South Africa would qualify.[227] In this sense, it can exist in a dictatorship. Hence, the need to consider the other elements of the rule of law. Thus many would agree that the law be general, must be published, it should be clear and stable to enable citizens to conform to it and should not be retroactive. More importantly, the rule of law should ensure equality before the law, due process, as well as impartial and efficient ruling for the parties. More controversial is whether rule of law imposes substantive limits to the political process and here one observes divergences among authors.[228]

Whatever the divergence in the content of the rule of law, the judiciary is considered to be the guardian of the rule of law. The judiciary ensures that the political branches operate within the limits provided by law and when violation occurs, the courts provide remedies to the victim.

This principle in a way is linked to the notion of separation of powers, a concept that has also a purpose of ensuring limits to power.[229] In order to curb abuse of power and arbitrariness, the powers of government should reside in different branches. In today's world, there is as such no complete separation but some form of separation coupled with

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law. See Rachel Kleinfeld (2005), *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law: Implications for Practitioners*. ttp://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp55.belton.final.pdf as accessed on May 17, 2010.

226 This may appear obvious but the situation in Somalia indicates that it is as vital as the other elements.

227 This is rule by law, not rule of law. The former implies that the law becomes an instrument of oppression.

228 See for details Barak *supra* note 14; also Kleinfeld *supra* note 18.

229 Montesquieu asserted, If the judiciary power be not separated from the legislative and executive. Were it joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control; for the judge would be then the legislature. Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with violence and oppression. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws,* (1949): 152.

some form of 'checks and balances' among the branches. Yet, even under this limited notion of separation of powers, it is widely accepted that, the executive, legislative and judicial functions be exercised by distinct institutions. Judicial powers are then often vested on the ordinary courts. The consequences of unchecked political power are grave and the world has witnessed the worst forms of horrors.[230] It is in this context that one can speak of the notion of limited government. Hence, impartial resolution of disputes, ensuring the rule of law and the need for limited government are among others, the key justifications for establishing the judiciary.[231]

However, the overall constitutional position of the judiciary *vis-a-vis* the two other branches, the role the judiciary is expected to play in the polity and the kind of relationship that is supposed to exist between the judiciary and the two other branches vary from one polity to the other. On one extreme, one finds a judiciary as in India and the United States where every court is mandated to settle both ordinary disputes and interpret the constitution. Although this arrangement has at times led to judicial law making (policy making where courts under the pretext of interpreting the law issue a law on abortion, draw electoral districts, allow flags to burn etc), the common law system has since 1803 (Marbury vs Madison) tolerated the role of courts in ensuring the supremacy of the constitution. On the other hand, one finds courts as in Ethiopia where they do not handle issues related to the resolution of constitutional disputes. The HoF, as advised by the Council of Constitutional Inquiry, decides constitutional disputes. Most European courts are somewhere in between, as they exercise some level of review over the branches of governments but the key question of resolution of constitutional issues is reserved to constitutional courts. This depends, among others, on the legal norms provided in the constitution regarding the judiciary, judicial and political practice and more importantly on our conception of liberty and justice. As Learned Hand articulated, "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no law, no constitution, no court can save it…."[232]

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230 Two World Wars and all forms of dictators in many parts of Africa are vivid cases.
231 Russell, *supra* , p. 10.
232 Learned Hand, (1960), *The Spirit of Liberty* 189-90.

While the establishment of the HoF as an institution to resolve intergovernmental disputes and misunderstandings between regional states –issues more political than legal may be tolerated, this does not mean that such a unique institutional design is without implications to human rights and the rule of law that depend on strong, and impartial and autonomous body for their enforcement. It is naive to expect a political organ dominated by the ruling party to enforce limits on its power.

Both theoretical as well as empirical evidences prove that unless the regular courts are in one way or another expressly mandated to enforce and interpret provisions of human rights in the constitution, the constitution will remain as a paper tiger law. In the short run, the existing ambiguity on the role of courts with respect to the section on human rights must be interpreted to authorise the courts as having an implicit mandate to enforce and interpret, albeit short of having the final word. In the long run, it is difficult to envisage a functioning multiparty federal system without an impartial and autonomous institution that interprets the constitution and umpires intergovernmental disputes. This will likely demand constitutional reform and the establishment of a constitutional court. This is hoped to ensure checks and balances among the public institutions.

A leading expert in constitutional law Mark Tushnet (2014) states that 'courts in nations where a single political party dominates the system for an extended period rarely find national legislation unconstitutional.' One may add, even naïvely to expect the HoF, a political organ controlled by the same party at federal and state level to carefully and impartially demarcate the mandates of the federal and state governments and keep the federation on balance. A political institution will likely remain under the influence of those who wield power at the centre. The HoF's latest pro centre position (cases related to land administration in rural and urban areas, large scale agricultural investments and impact on self-rule etc.) on key federalism related issues can only be understood in this context. The cases related to concurrent power and the thorny issue of demarcating

the mandates of the federal and state governments in relation to self-rule and citizenship rights demonstrate the difficulty of mandating a political organ to umpire the federation.[233]

The CCI/HoF's record in the protection and enforcement of human rights and setting limits on power is even worrisome. Political institutions such as parliament and the executive are the articulators of majority will. These institutions had to be reminded of the limit of their powers. Political majority is capable of looking after its own interests. They have the political institutions at their disposal. Indeed political institutions are first suspects when it comes to rights of citizens and of political minorities not fairly represented in the political process.

Thus the need for an independent, impartial non-majoritarian institution to polish, monitor and enforce human rights, particularly, when political institutions are reluctant to address rights of citizen. Right now civil rights and political freedoms entrenched in the constitution have not been taken seriously. The regular courts have found several excuses not to 'respect and enforce' such generously provided human rights as limits to power. The HoF has little incentive to actively enforce such rights and even worse has conflict of interest. The majoritarian political institution controlled by a dominant and strong party sits as judge on its own case to determine the scope and limit of its power.

There is a growing tendency in the CCI/HoF and the highest Court that reflects a merely positivist conception of the rule of law. The robust understanding of the rule of law however assumes that it regulates political power and public institutions, limits the power of political institutions, the law exists for the well-being of the human dignity through protection of human rights. This lofty task is assumed to be discharged by the highest courts and the HoF. Institutions responsible for human rights enforcement need to be strengthened and the political leadership needs to equally demonstrate equal commitment.

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233 See for details Assefa Fiseha (2017), 'Constitutional Adjudication through Second Chambers in Ethiopia' *Ethnopolitics* v.16 No 3 pp.295-310

The existing confusion among judges, members of the CCI and the HoF needs to be clarified through amendment, based on the Canadian experience where the courts will be clearly mandated to interpret chapter three though final and authoritative decision is reserved to the HoF. This is hoped to provide courts with ample opportunity to enforce constitutionally entrenched rights and freedoms. This is then hoped to pave the way for the rule of law to shape the behaviour of public institutions and serve as limit on power by protecting human rights. Such conception of the rule of law could prevent the political system and the role of law from degenerating to become a mere instrument of power and oppression, key challenges in the recent political history of Ethiopia. If consensus emerges, the ideal way out is to indeed shift to the constitutional court system.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter has analysed the Ethiopian case in light of two key notions: parliamentary supremacy and government accountability to parliament. What the analysis demonstrates is that, if Ethiopia is any guide, parliament's role as an institution of democracy hinges on intra-party democracy, particularly in the ruling party. If the party is authoritarian, parliament will become a rubber stamp for an executive composed of party leaders, with parliamentary supremacy replaced by executive supremacy, even cabinet dictatorship; if it is democratic, parliament may become a viable institution for policy debate and oversight of the executive.

Ideally, parliamentary systems require 'parliamentary-fit parties' based on party cohesion, not party discipline. These systems, to be sure, need some manner of party rule at their disposal to ensure that MPs continue to support their party's positions, yet that should not be extended to allow party leaders to impose discipline on MPs under all circumstances no matter if the government is threatened with collapse or not. The reality is that 'democratic centralism' and an excess of party discipline have compromised, if not defeated,

parliamentary supremacy in Ethiopia. The executive thus remained not accountable and it is no surprise that there has been wide spread corruption in the country. The executive remains the key actor in initiating and drafting of laws. It is rare to find laws initiated from within the House.

It is therefore recommended that there be a shift from party discipline to the practice of party cohesion. Parliament may then have the means to initiate policy and laws on its own. Through the speaker and party whips, parliament should have an undisputed mandate to set its own agenda and revise its internal rules of procedure in ways that restore its supremacy.

Furthermore, the overlap of functions between party and executive leadership needs to be reconsidered. The fact that heads of the party are automatically heads of the executive sends the message that, in the opinion of the party, the legislative body is of lesser import and encourages voters to adopt the same attitude. It is crucial to assign key party figures to head the legislature without assuming executive positions. This new approach can pave the way for the evolution of the differing institutional interests and enhance parliament's role as a democratic institution. It is naive to expect junior political figures in parliament to exercise effective oversight and control of the executive and the party leadership at the helm of power.

Closely related to these considerations is the idea that parliament should represent society's diversity of views. Except for the 2005 – 2010 term, Ethiopia has been a one-party-dominated parliament, a state of affairs due in part to its FPTP system. Revisiting the relevant electoral laws is crucial to ensuring better representation of diverse political views in parliament. In most advanced parliamentary systems, it is rare to find a one party parliament. An opposition in parliament plays a critical role in the process of checks and balances. It represents the views of the opposition, sets motions of censure

and can initiate vote of no confidence. It can propose alternative policies to the government and checks the government in power by exposing malpractices and abuse of power. In many systems, it is the opposition that chairs the committee for financial audits thus providing a check on how resources are spent by the government.

Parliament has limited oversight role. Parliament played little or no rule despite wide spread abuse of human rights at federal and regional state levels. Indeed unlike many other legislative bodies, the Ethiopian parliament does not have a committee on human rights. Besides, parliament rarely uses report of human rights institutions including reports from the Human Rights Commission. The scope of its oversight function is also limited. It does not, for example control regulations issued by the executive, and as a result one finds many regulations that contradict the parent law. The absence of *ex ante* and *ex post* control of parliament over delegated legislation and the widespread practice of executive discretion are matters requiring that parliament give priority to establishing mechanisms for checking the executive. In other parliaments, executive discretion is subject either to parliamentary guidelines set before secondary legislation is enacted or to approval by parliament after to their enactment. None of these mechanisms exist in Ethiopia. It is high time to revise parliament's internal rules and establish these practices in order to enable parliament to exercise political control over the executive.

Overall, so far the legislature played a marginal role in the political process in Ethiopia, it remains subordinate to the executive and the party. It has weak institutional links with the voter, civil society groups and the public.

The role of the judiciary in terms of serving as an institutional check on the political institutions has remained very marginal. This is partly owing to the constitutional position of the judiciary. A constitutional reform that establishes a constitutional court that enjoys a monopoly over the interpretation of the constitution and that serves as guardian

can boost the system of checks and balances. Political power is yet to be institutionalized in Ethiopia and constitutional court is a time-tested solution to un -checked executive and political power.

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PART II: Political Actors and Playing Field

Part III covers three issues. The first one is related to the role of social media in contemporary society, where fast flow of information on social media is increasingly challenging the conventional media and equally creating worrisome drawbacks, often stirring tension and causing unrest. The second deals with the political system in Ethiopia; the third deals with election cycle and security issues and the landscape for elections, the actors and their complex inter-play with security implications.

5. **The Role of Social Media in Politics: The case of Ethiopia**

Dr. Admassu Tassew

The Role of Social Media in Politics:
The case of Ethiopia

Abstract

The advances in communication technology and especially the flourishing of the social media such as Face-book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, in turn increased interconnectivity, presence of vertical and horizontal communication, swiftness of information accessibility, as well as availability of various differing opinions nationally and at a global level. The social media and social networking has also enabled people to connect nationally as well as internationally on real-time, and exchange personal, political, and business information on a laptop or Smartphone at any place or time. The social media are proving everyday their power by stirring public opinion for changing the status quo, and also effectively act as arms of government for spring maintaining the consensus as events in Ethiopia (since 2010) and elsewhere, e..g., Arab, Honk Kong, China, Russia, have proved. In Ethiopia, social media has demonstrated its ability to reach and mobilize hundreds of thousands of people, parties, etc. on a level much greater than traditional media outlets. Its emergence in the political communication scene has also exhibited positive and adverse effects. To manage the pronounced effects of social media, measures like silencing bloggers, censoring the internet and blocking social media platforms such as Face book, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Dropbox were implemented. Nonetheless, with the ever growing need to manage the adverse effects of the social media what remains to be seen is rethinking and reinvigorating the old methods of management by a democratic and a rights based approach and perspective which will not infringe the hard won democratic freedoms regarding free expression, organization and above all respect for rule of law.

1. Introduction

The advent and further acceleration of globalization enhanced advances in communication technology with the birth of new communication technologies such as satellite television, internet, social media and social networks[234] among others. This advance especially the flourishing of the social media such as Face-book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. in turn increased interconnectivity, presence of vertical and horizontal communication, swiftness of information accessibility, as well as availability of various differing opinions nationally and at a global level. Besides, its apparent role in promoting equality is also phenomenal.

The social media and social networking has enabled people to connect nationally as well as internationally on real-time, and exchange personal, political, and business information on a laptop or smart-phone at any place or time. It has also increased voter participation facilitating political change, notwithstanding the fact that it can also 'endanger the military, journalists and activists' in a country (Hatcher, 2017). Besides, the use of the social media site Face-book for health information or misinformation dissemination purposes is also well documented (Sharma et al, 2017). Furthermore, in the eyes of educators, social media helps 'increase student engagement' and also "….build communication skills by allowing students to feel more comfortable expressing themselves in a less intimidating environment" thereby enriching the learning experience (Guy, 2012:13). At the same time, it ought to be noted that issues like social peer pressure, cyber bullying, substituting offline interaction by online interaction and 'distraction and procrastination' are social

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[234] "In the literature a distinction is often made between social media and social networks. The former would be services like Twitter which are aimed at reaching a broad public (anybody can read the tweets which somebody posts), while networks are aimed at connecting people without the intention of reaching the public, such as WhatsApp. Many services combine both aspects. Face-book allows the creation of public websites (political parties use such sites) and even for private accounts allows that posts are publicly posted" P.10, Michael Meyer-Resende, A new Frontier-Social media/networks, Disinformation and Public International Law in the context of Election Observation (2018) *https://democracy-reporting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/A-new-frontier_social-media_election-observation_Briefing-Paper-by-Michael-Meyer-Resende.Pdf*

problems which have propped up that also required an appropriate resolution (Moreau, 2019).

In addition, social media is rapidly becoming a place where commercial, political and at times very private dialogue is taking place. Their ability to 'increase access to information' and 'lowering barriers of participation' have also exhibited their 'democratizing potential' (Meyer-Resende, 2018).

On the other hand, some nefarious activities conducted by some individuals, agencies and/or governments using social media has at the same time triggered us to inquire if the very democracy we give high value is under threat. For example, the U.S Senate select committee on intelligence released reports linking alleged Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA) whereby the agency creating social media accounts on Face-book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTUBE, Reddit Tumblr, Pinterest, Vine and Google+ used disinformation techniques for sowing distrust, confusion and social divisions, inciting polarization 'in target populations of social media users' (McCarthy, 2017; Naughton 2018).

These adverse effects of social media have in turn triggered governments to take measures to manage these effects. Later, in the coming chapters we shall discuss about these effects on national politics of different countries and the management of these effects in each country including Ethiopia.

1.1. Social Media: A novel addition to the media paraphernalia

The mass media, i.e., print media, radio, television, films/movie, have now quantitatively and qualitatively grown by including the Internet[235]

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235 The widely used social media sites as per January 24, 2019, according to https://buffer.com/library/social-media-sites are:
-Face-book – 2.23 billion MAUs. Face-book is the biggest social media site around, with more than two billion people   using it every month. ...
-YouTube – 1.9 billion MAUs. ...
-WhatsApp – 1.5 billion MAUs. ...
-Messenger – 1.3 billion MAUs. ...
-WeChat – 1.06 billion MAUs. ...

which encompasses social media. Their numbers have grown with the variety and sophisticated refined services they provide to audiences. The social media, the new entrants to the media empire are proving everyday their power in influencing the audiences' buying, voting etc., behaviour. Especially as events in Ethiopia (since 2010) and elsewhere, e..g., Arab spring, Honk Kong, China, Russia, etc. have proved, they help by stirring public opinion for changing the status quo, and also effectively act as arms of government for maintaining the consensus.

Social media is the use of web based technology for broadcasting information for a broad public. Examples of some popular social media platforms include, Face-book, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Linkedln, Sina Weibo, VKontakte, Reddit, Pinterest, etc. It is believed that at present three billion people use the social media at regular basis. Regarding the internet use about four billion people are its users (Meyer-Resende, 2018).

1.2. Social Media and its Role in Politics

Social media has proved its ability to increase political participation and mobilize publics both locally and Internationally; and particularly during political elections its being a much used media channel for public dialogue and discussion especially in countries with weak traditional media is also becoming more apparent (khan, 2018; Meyer-Resende,2018). The prevalent use of social media as means of political action along with the youth's dominant role and the political parties absence as the main organizers is the common element of the political action movements of the Third Wave Democracies[236] (Valenzuela et al, 2012).

-Instagram – 1 billion MAUs. ...
-QQ – 861 million MAUs. ...
-Tumblr – 642 million MUVs
236 "The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century is a 1991 book by Samuel P. Huntington which outlines the significance of a third wave of democratization to describe the global trend that has seen more than 60 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa undergo some form of democratic transitions since Portugal's "Carnation Revolution" in 1974", *Wikipedia*

Participation in protest behaviour among youth is promoted by social networks as they "…. facilitate access to a larger number of contacts, thereby enabling social movements to reach critical mass... By allowing multitude channels for interpersonal feedback, peer acceptance, and reinforcement of group norms, these sites also promote the construction of personal and group identities that are key antecedents of protest behaviour... Social network sites function as information hubs that allow users to remain in contact and exchange updates regarding their activities with others that share their interests. Those who belong to social movements and political groups can thus build relationships with one another, receiving mobilizing information that they may not obtain elsewhere, thus expanding their opportunities to engage in political activities" (Valenzuela et al, 2012:302).

Shared experiences that are essential conditions for successful protest movements are created by social network sites. Therefore, according to the authors who studied the Youth Protest Behaviour in Chile (Valenzuela et al, 2012), Face-book use and protest behavior have a 'positive relationship'. Furthermore, the likelihood of the frequent Face-book users protesting is high as they are involved in information learning, forming opinion exchange about social issues, and common identity construction which are crucial for action which is collective. Besides, the great role played by the social media, especially Face-book in political mobilization of people in Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya, and Guatemala is still a reverberating social undertaking (Kumlachew, 2014:104)   .

1.3. The Ethiopian Political landscape and Social Media

In Ethiopia, social media has demonstrated its ability to reach hundreds of thousands of people with varying occupations, classes, ages, and gender in different parts of the country swiftly and at a relatively low cost (Freedom on the Net, 2018; Gagliardone et al, 2016; Abrha, 2019; Kumlachew, 2014). Furthermore, its accessibility

via a smart phone or/and the internet cafes at different towns in the country has also made it a communication media of choice.

In the words of a group of researchers from Addis Ababa University and University of Oxford who studied social media communication in Ethiopia, "…social media represent an opportunity for ordinary citizens, politicians, activists, and media actors to experiment with new forms of engagement online that may also come to influence offline debates" (Gagliardone et al, 2016:11). Furthermore, the authors' of the study note that social media 'acts as a space allowing ordinary citizens to express their anger towards power' and "…the majority of users do not log in to social media simply to attack others, but rather to casually share experiences, interests, and information." (Ibid, P. 8). On the other hand, in a recently finished MA thesis for the School of Journalism of Addis Ababa University, the author says that online 'hate speech among Ethiopians' is a common characteristics (Abrha, 2019).

In the final chapter of this paper we shall be discussing social media in the Ethiopian political and media scene; and will also review the road travelled so far, and query as to where it will take the country.

2. Social media and Political Communication

The social media platforms like Face-book, Twitter, or YouTube, etc., provide space to areas of political communication that resemble the traditional 'news coverage of politics'. They are used by politicians for political campaignsand by journalists as sources and topics of political news coverage. Furthermore, 'the public uses them to comment on political events and to discuss politics' (Jungherr, 2014). This role of the social media in political communication is exactly in line with what the noted Communication scholar, Professor Denis McQuail once wrote about political communication where he said that "…'better' political communication would at least involve more active interest, involvement and participation by the public in choosing and responding to political messages of a diverse and often opposed kind about issues of substance. The content of political

communication should stem from the real political divisions of society and give voice to them, should expose and carry forward debate" (McQuail, 1986:136).

What differentiates social media from the top-down traditional news media is that "users share their reactions to political events and their coverage in traditional media online. Up until now, these reactions were confined to exchanges between audience members. Today, reactions to political events and campaign items are immediately available – and public." (Jungherr, 2014:239-40; see also Jamali, 2015:4). In social media unlike the traditional media the "power of the public predominates". Very recent events have also shown that Face-book had presented political, informational, and media platform functions for the Tunisian revolution. Especially its social networking function was pivotal (Kumlachew, 2014:104). The Egyptian revolution had also benefited a lot from Face-book political mobilization drive.

In regards to national political election, social media manipulation by spreading disinformation and fake news during election time is getting very common and has also shown an increase from '28 to 48 countries' worldwide (Meyer-Resende, 2018). The Brexit experience and the US 2016 Presidential election campaign have also taught a lot as 'more campaigns are using bots, junk news, and disinformation to polarize and manipulate voters'[237].

237 To manipulate the public debate and create polarization the following techniques are used:"- **Targeted ads/dark ads**: It is not clear whether the possibility of targeting political ads at users, which other users do not see, affects the right to political participation. Do they represent in some ways an undue manipulation, especially when based on psychological profiling? Certainly they need to be looked at from the angle of election campaign financing provisions. Otherwise targeted ads are mostly considered a problem of civil (rather than political) rights, for example when specific ethnic categories are targeted with job ads. It is noteworthy however that Face-book has accepted their relevance to the integrity and transparency of elections in principle and changed its policy. Users should now be able to see who posted an add and allow everybody to search an archive of political ads (at the time of writing it only seems to show US and Brazilian political ads).- **The use of social bots** (i.e. automated accounts): Social bots are used for many purposes that do not raise concerns (car navigation or banking for example), especially because they are transparently automated speech. Bots become problematic when they conceal the fact that they are automated and used to artificially inflate engagement on social media, for example pretending that there is wide public traction on an issue. Given that public engagement not only influences how users may look at an issue ("if so many people are concerned, maybe I should too?"), it may also influence how prominently stories are posted in a newsfeed. The more engagement a story has, the higher it will be posted with more people. Face-book and other social media companies have increased their efforts to close down fake accounts, but the struggle between those who create

On the other hand, according to Reza Jamali (2015) who extensively researched, analyzed and wrote about the Arab Spring movement and social media effects "…expansion of social media affects the public trust in the ruling system…The corruption of rulers can no longer be concealed from the public. As they learn about how developed countries are ruled and how people in these countries live, people in developing countries are asking why their rich natural resources (such as oil) do not bring them a minimum level of economic and social welfare, while their rulers have a luxurious lifestyle. Raising such questions in social media grabs the attention of other users and from there the attention of the general public" (PP.33-34).

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political bots and those who try to detect and close them resembles an escalating arms race. "The next generation of bots is rapidly evolving", notes an analyst of technology and politics "Owing in large part to advances in natural-language processing—the same technology that makes possible voice-operated interfaces like Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant, and Microsoft's Cortana—these bots will behave a lot more like real people."- **Paid Trolls** are human beings who promote a certain agenda on social media for a client. Like bots, they represent a manipulation of discourse because they give an impression of a widely held public mood, when in fact they only represent the political interest of the person or organization that pays for them. They are comparable to the 'claqueres' in the Paris Opera in the 19th century, who were paid to promote or to discredit performances. The Oxford Internet Institute notes: "We found reports of state-sponsored trolling campaigns targeting political dissidents, members of the opposition, or journalists in 27 of the 48 countries in our sample."- **Falsifications:** Focusing on misinformation in elections, the most relevant aspects would be false news stories that can have a significant impact on electoral choices or behaviour (a false story about violence may deter voters from going to a polling station). Such stories can be intentional and potentially highly harmful, such as the 'leaking' of a manufactured document that suggested that Emanuel Macron had a secret offshore bank account right before the French Presidential elections. Likewise, they may not have a political intention, as was the case of the Macedonian fakes news sites that suggested before the US Presidential elections that Donald Trump's candidature had been endorsed by the Pope. The intention behind the story way purely commercial (to attract many viewers and sell advertising space), but its harm may have been much higher than that of many politically motivated false stories (900,000 Americans read the story). In this area too, there are country-to-country variations. In a survey 49% of Turkish respondents and 42% of Hungarian respondents indicated that they were exposed to completely made-up stories in the previous week, while in Denmark and Germany the number was 9%.- **Hate Speech/ Defamation**: Hate speech if often part of a systematic attempt to suppress certain opinions or political dissent. Hate speech may intimidate people to withdraw from social media discourse or to avoid certain subjects and opinions. It may also spill over beyond online discourse. For example, it may intimidate not to attend rallies or going to vote. The concept of 'hate speech' is contested. Although it has a basis in international law (see for example Article 20 ICCPR), its legal contours are often described without precision and it can be abused to suppress freedom of speech.- **Abuse of User Policies**: While social media companies have increased their attention to content, user policies have been perverted for disinformation purposes. For example, "bots are being used to report legitimate content and accounts on a mass scale, so that social media platforms automatically suspend accounts or remove content until it can be reviewed by a human moderator"", Michael Meyer-Resende, A new Frontier-Social media/ networks, Disinformation and Public International Law in the context of Election Observation (2018), PP.14-16 *https://democracy-reporting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/A-new-frontier_social-media_ election-observation_Briefing-Paper-by-Michael-Meyer-Resende.Pdf*

2.1. Social media effects in national politics

Trust between government and the people it rules is paramount for governance and the country's economic, social and political developments. In situations where trust among the government and the people is low, whilst the trust between groups in the people is high, *social media* takes over as 'public power is redirected' to it and 'extends to the streets when their solidarity grows'. On the other hand, when trust is low 'both among the people and between the people and their government'. "… the probability of regime change will increase but divergent groups may infiltrate the movement and attempt to subvert the revolution as the overthrow of the government begins. This was emphatically the case in Egypt" (Jamali, 2015:3).

The socio-political role of the social media with its numerous communication networks that make up social movements helps popular movements for political change especially reaching the 'unemployed and disaffected urban youth' who show "biographical availability[238]" (Lim,2012). Besides, social movements are networks of people who gathered with a common interest and goal. And the features of the social media are, "…the need for freedom of expression of pro-democracy attitudes and the other is the sense of being seen and having power" (Jamali, 2015:2). The Tunisian social media activists who connected and mobilized for freedom of speech and people in the U.S. who connect with friends to 'escape routine life and share their hobbies, such as videos, music, photographs' are among the two examples the social media features. On the other hand, in Ethiopia during the Oromo protest movement, the social media was used "to mobilize, organize and guide a social movement. It seems Jawar[239] recognized early on social media's power to collect

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238 Biographical availability is defined as "the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities" Merlyna Lim "Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses : Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011" *Journal of Communication* vol.62, No.2 (2012) P. 235

239 "the Oromo Protests' greatest and most enduring innovation is the merger of social media with a social movement. And Jawar Mohammed is a leading architect of the merger of these two forces and the consequent revolution" Ezkiel Gebissa "In defense of Jawar, a brilliant and dedicated agent of change" *Ethiopia Insight* November 9, 2019 www.ethiopia-insight.com/

information from volunteer "reporters" on the ground all over Oromia. Images, written reports and audio recordings streamed into Jawar's laptop and hand held devices. He collated, crosschecked and verified the information and disseminated it back to Oromia using his Face-book account and via the OMN satellite"[240].

2.1.1. Arab Spring

There was a joke making rounds in Egypt after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarek which goes like this (Lim, 2012:231):

> Hosni Mubarek, Anwar Sadat, and Gamal Abdel Nasser are having tea in the afterlife. Mubarek asks Nasser, "How did you end up here?" "Poison," Nasser answers. Mubarak then turns to Sadat. "What about you?" he asks. "An assassin's bullet," Sadat says. Sadat and Nasser then turn to Mubarek, "And you?" To which Mubarek replies; "Face-book."

This particular joke pointedly shows the perception that was prevalent about social media effects in the national politics of the countries which are part of the Arab spring. Even though, "Social media in the Arab Spring proved to be an effective tool to guide the conversation of the public agenda" (Khan, 2018:12); nonetheless, the uprising's only cause was not social media as longstanding grievances regarding democracy, freedom of speech, corruption, rampant inequalities, unemployment, and related issues were present in countries of the Arab Spring.

"In Egypt's oppositional movements, social media provided space and tool for the formation and the expansion of networks that the authoritarian government could not easily control….Social media functioned to broker connections between previously disconnected groups, to spread shared grievances beyond the small community of activist leaders, and to globalize the reach and appeal of the domestic movement for democratic change." (Lim, 2012:244). It was the

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240 Ezkiel Gebissa "In defense of Jawar, a brilliant and dedicated agent of change" *Ethiopia Insight* November 9, 2019 www.ethiopia-insight.com/

social media that has become 'the voices of the people' and that spread the news for gaining support and mobilization of the young people (especially the urban youth), the labor opposition and other concerned opposition groups. (Khan, 2018, Lim, 2012; Jamali, 2015).

2.1.2. Hong Kong

In Hong Kong Face-book is the most used social network by more than half of the population, whilst WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Tencent which is owned by WeChat, and Weibo follow suit (The Desk, 2019, Steimie, 2014; Shao, 2019). As Twitter is blocked in China there is a homegrown version called Sina Weibo.

Social media platforms are enjoying an ever-increasing level of influence in Hong Kong and their effect is being widely felt. The political movement in Hong Kong has shown the social media's role in the documentation, organization and assembly of large scale protests. Both the demonstrators and the authorities have used the social media "as a tool in the battle for public opinion" (Shao, 2019). The protesters have also shown a heightened awareness of encryption and anonymity of cyber security as well as effective communication with the medium.

Telegram groups and channels served as mobilization channels and also as coordination tools. Besides, the platform of Face-book's Instagram has served to share visually campaign posters and slogans, show image and video evidence of police brutality (like the one with female protesters injured in the eye by the police) 'to win hearts and minds of people'. On the other hand, the Chinese authorities have also used the social media by 'circulating videos of protesters disrupting public transit operations'.

Moreover, the Hong Kong demonstrators have used social media to avoid being identified and arrested so that they can remain anonymous which in turn has earned them the name 'Leaderless'

action. Nevertheless, it ought to be noted that it is difficult for the online community to verify social media communication content between misinformation and fake news and the associated damage that ensues especially when it is leaderless and the communication sent is anonymous.

2.2. Managing Social media effects in politics: global experience

Social media use in the political processes and especially elections have come up with risks that will confuse the stake holders or at the maximum derail the healthy political processes. Spreading fake news, though not a new undertaking in the history of the homosapiens, is nevertheless seen to 'undermine electoral integrity' as the recent 2016 United States election campaigns have proved. Therefore, some countries have taken initiative in applying legal measures to counter fake news (Law Library of Congress, 2019; Meyer-Resende, 2018; Schwartz, 2018; Ziebell, 2018).

Different countries have responded to the issue of disinformation, fake news and other propaganda on social media by employing different forms of actions ranging from criminalizing the types of information, to deploying heavy cybercrime laws which result in closing down websites, deleting posts and prosecuting users (Meyer-Resende, 2018; Peskoe-Yang, 2018). "For example in Egypt the website of Al-Jazeera and the Egyptian site Mada Masr were closed down. Reportedly 35 journalists, bloggers and citizen journalists are detained in Egypt" (Meyer-Resende, 2018:11). Globally, various countries including Ethiopia at different times (Freedom on the Net, 2018; አዲስ ዘመን, 2011 ዓ.ም; Borkena.com, 2019) resorted to managing the adverse effects of social media and took different measures. Some of the measures adopted in managing social media adverse effects by different countries all over the world is briefly discussed in the following paragraphs (Law Library of Congress, 2019; Meyer-Resende, 2018; Peskoe-Yang, 2018; Khmer Times, 2018; Reuters, 2018; BBC, 2019; Schwartz, 2019; Zeibell, 2018).

2.2.1. Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Bhutan, Japan, Malaysia

Bhutan: Bhutan's government election commission has put on a notice to the effect that "…all conduct on social media will be monitored and that candidates or their representatives must abide in social media speech as much as elsewhere abide by the election code of conduct and relevant legislation" (Meyer-Resende, 2018:16). It also precisely stressed that election advertising under 'false identity' which would include 'operating social bots' will be viewed as a criminal offence to be prosecuted.

Cambodia: According to the Khmer Times July 5, 2018 news, the Cambodian government ministry of information says that it is joining a global fight against fake news. And it also said that the government is "…aiming to control the flow of information in broadcasts, messages, audio clips, images and video on websites and social media" (Khmer Times, 2018).

China: The Chinese "the 2016 Cyber Security Law" prohibits manufacturing or spreading fake news online that disturbs the economic and social order. The Law also requires service providers, when providing services of information publication or instant messaging, to ask the users to register their real names. According to the rules on internet news information services issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China, entities providing such services must obtain a license…The service providers and users are prohibited from producing, reproducing, publishing, or spreading information content prohibited by laws and administrative regulations. Once service providers find any prohibited content, they must immediately stop transmitting the information, delete the information, keep the relevant records, and report the matter to competent government authorities (Law Library of Library of Congress, 2019:18).

In addition, the Chinese government acquired numerous social media platforms and 'refined its censorship tools to target specific content

within each site'. For example, "The blog Blocked on Weibo keeps a running list of banned terms on Chinese social media, including names of dissidents, uncooperative Chinese political blogs, and coded allusions to revolutionary political moments. In recent years, images of such events, which users had begun to share as a workaround to the text-based content filters, have also been censored" (Peskoe-Young, 2018).

India: The Indian election commission extended obligations that already existed to social media by issuing instructions to candidates such as "the notification of all accounts of a candidate to the election commission; pre-certification of social media ads by the Commission (in line with pre-certification of ads in other media); costs for social media advertisement need to be included explicitly in the campaign cost statements of candidates." (Meyer-Resende, 2018:16).

Indonesia: Indonesia has established cyber security agency to give protection to government institutions, private companies, and the public ahead of simultaneous local elections set to take place across the country. The agency will track cyber crimes and identify perpetrators. (Reuters, January 5, 2018).

Japan: Japanese government's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is considering to take measures to counter fake news. "Several laws exist that can be utilized to counter fake news" (Law library of congress, 2019).

Malaysia: In Malaysian Anti-Fake News Act 2018 was enacted by the Malaysian parliament in April 2018. Furthermore, "a government agency operates a fact-checking portal and app, where people can search for and submit information being circulated online in order to check its accuracy. Agencies also use social media to correct false information related to government activities. In addition, legal information is available through government web portals, including statute law, regulations, bills and other parliamentary information, and court decisions" (Law library of congress, 2019:67).

2.2.2. Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom

Canada: In Canada other than the 'Section 181 of Canada's Criminal Code that prohibits the spreading of false news' and which 'was declared unconstitutional in 1992 by the Supreme Court of Canada', there is no new law enacted on fake news. Nonetheless, the Canadian government 'provides a variety of official online sources of legal information that are publicly accessible' (Law Library of Congress, 2019:11).

France: "The French government can rely on the 1881 Law on Freedom of the Press to stop the dissemination of fake news that could disturb public peace. Additionally, a provision of the Electoral Code prohibits the spread of fake news that could affect an election…, France recently adopted a new law that requires large-scale online platform operators to adhere to certain standards of conduct during the three months preceding general elections." (Law library of Congress, 2019:29).

Germany: Germany's NetzDG law which came into effect at the beginning of 2018 applies to companies with more than two million registered users in the country. And it requires these companies "…to set up procedures to review complaints about content they are hosting and remove anything that is clearly illegal within 24 hours. Individuals may be fined…for failing to comply with these requirements". (BBC, 2019). Germany has a number of civil and criminal law provisions that may be applicable to safeguard individuals or the public from fake news in social networks…(it) also tries to ensure that citizens have access to accurate legal information by providing free access to legislation and court decisions online" (Law library of Congress, 2019:33).

Israel: In Israel a report of a high-level committee of experts "… recommended extending application of the substantive provisions of the Elections (Modes of Propaganda) Law to the internet and social platforms to ensure fairness and transparency, and to require

disclosure of the identifying information of those persons on whose behalf the election advertisement was published".

"In adjudicating fake news-related claims, judicial bodies have evaluated legal aspects of the dissemination of fake news based on general principles of law" (Law Library of Congress, 2019:41).

Russia: Russia has enacted legislation aimed at countering fake news. The existing Federal Law on Information, Information Technologies and the Protection of Information, that addresses the spread of inaccurate or false information is complimented by this legislation. "Anti-defamation and anti-libel provisions of the Criminal Code establish liability and punitive measures for spreading libellous news" (Law library of congress, 2019:80).

Sweden: In Sweden "Media publications and broadcasts are bound by law, and media outlets must correct erroneous information. Several ethical boards enforce ethical compliance with media laws. The enforcement of laws and principles that forbid the publication of erroneous information is done by the Chancellor for Justice, the Swedish Broadcasting Commission, and self-regulatory boards. Crimes such as defamation or war instigation are addressed through the regular court system with the Chancellor of Justice acting as the prosecutor" (Law library of congress, 2019:87).
  Furthermore, for combating fake news the media industry has 'voluntarily adopted several measures to combat fake news'.

United Kingdom: In UK "The Electoral Commission compiled recommendations with the following measures to be taken: - requesting information from any person who may have relevant material, such as digital campaigners (as opposed to only those who are registered election campaigners)   - Increasing the maximum fine for breaking campaign finance rules- Making big providers like Face-book or Google apply UK election campaign rules; consider restrictions to buying ad space to national organizations" (Meyer-Resende, 2018:17).

2.2.3. Australia, New Zealand

Australia: A security task force to guard against election meddling and cyber-attacks is launched in Australia. The Task Force will identify and tackle risks to the electoral process in Australia (Ziebell, 2018).

New Zealand: The New Zealand Electoral Commission's newly published rules that apply to voters using social media include: "If a voter expresses views on behalf of a party, election advertising rules may apply; voters should not make and post selfies in ballot booths or photos of ballot papers; on election days no encouragement to vote in favour of a party of candidate should be posted." (Meyer-Resende, 2018).

2.2.4. Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua

Argentina: Argentina has proposed a legislation that would create a Commission for the Verification of Fake News within the National Election Chamber. The Commission for the Verification of Fake News would be responsible for the 'detection, recognition, labelling, and prevention of fake news exposed through digital media broadcasts during national election campaigns'. Besides, the National Election Chamber "…has already created a National Registry of social media accounts and websites of candidates, political parties, and party leadership, which is intended to enable the detection of false accounts" (Law Library of Congress, 2019:4).

Brazil: Unlike the other countries in the area, Brazil is making use of existing federal laws to manage the source and effects of fake news. Several bills of law to criminalize the practice have been presented to the country's Congress. (Law Library of Congress, 2019).

Nicaragua: In Nicaragua, in the existing Penal Code there are provisions that protect individuals from false news that affects their reputation, and electoral advertisements are regulated by the additional provisions contained in the Election Law (Law library of congress, 2019).

2.2.5. Egypt, Kenya

Egypt: In Egypt, the passing of several measures to battle false information dissemination is very timely, as for example, in 2017, 53,000 false rumours had spread in Egypt in just sixty days according to the Egyptian Parliament's Communication and Information Technology Committee revelation. Among the measures passed there are 'three domestic laws to regulate the distribution of information and its accuracy in print and online media as well as online social networks'.

And these "… laws include Law No. 180 of 2018 on Regulating the Press and Media, Law No. 175 of 2018 on Anti-Cybercrime, and Law No. 58 of 1937 and its amendments on the Penal Code. To facilitate the access to accurate legal information, the Court of Cassation, the Supreme Constitutional Court, and the Administrative Court post on their websites laws and regulations published in the official gazette and recent decisions issued by those courts. There are no fees to access such legal information"(Law library of Congress, 2019:25).

Kenya: On May 15, 2018, the Kenyan President signed a new Bill called The Computer and Cybercrimes Bill, 2017 into law, criminalizing cybercrimes including fake news, cyber-bullying and cyber-espionage (Schwartz, 2019).

Furthermore, "In March 2018, the United States Embassy in Kenya launched a one-year media literacy campaign aimed at countering the spread of false information in Kenya. The program has been expanded with the opening of an academic institution for the study of social media development and trends (Law library of Congress, 2019:57).

3. Social Media in the Ethiopian Political and Media landscape

The Ethiopian media scene, print as well as electronic cum social media, was characterized with significant level of polarization after the fall of the Military Derg regime. According to a group of communication researchers from Addis Ababa and Oxford

Universities "…the roots of this polarization can be found in a complex mix of factors that characterized the period following the end of the war against the Derg regime in 1991: the liberalization of the press initiated by the government led by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to respond to international pressures, and signal that it was different from its predecessors; the occupation of the newly created spaces for debate by some of the very political forces that had been ousted from power; and the absence of a culture of engagement between political actors belonging to opposing factions….When the new leaders came to power they opened the space for debate but refused to engage with the very debates they had allowed to bloom (Gagliardone et al, 2016:14). For example, it was the Transitional Government of Ethiopia's Press Law – Proclamation number 34/1992- that was instrumental for ending "pre-print censorship" thereby opening up for tolerance of alternating views, notwithstanding the fact that it was not properly put to practice by the government as it was eclipsed with a rather harsh revised version in 2008 (Freedom On Net, 2018; Tassew, 2018).

On the other hand, in regards to prevalence and use of social media, one has to take into account that Ethiopia's internet penetration rate is very low which categorizes it among countries with least connection in the world. Furthermore, the ICT services that are underdeveloped and which are under the government monopoly are very expensive to the common man or woman. Nonetheless, it is the mobile phones penetration that have been responsible for 'incremental growth in internet access' (Freedom On Net, 2018).

As to the role of social media and political communication in the Ethiopian political and media environment, it is noted that in the 2015 election, all contesting main parties have accepted 'social media as an important new space for electoral politics', and especially EPRDF had 'well-staffed structure organized at a directorate level' (Gagliardone et al, 2016).

Nevertheless, due to the fact that the public has accepted that elections 'have a predetermined outcome' the political campaigning done on Face-book was little. But, the opposition parties compared to the incumbent party have taken advantage of the opportunities the social media offered. Even though "campaigning on Face-book slightly increased in the weeks immediately preceding the elections, but was limited in terms of frequency and volume. It was mostly circumscribed to the official Face-book pages of opposition parties, and remained sporadic in other online spaces" (Gagliardone et al, 2016:73). As social media has come to be an alternative platform to entertain other views in some elections of countries like Kenya; in Ethiopia too, it has 'acted as a 'leveller' of existing inequalities in access to media outlets and campaign resources' (Gagliardone et al, 2016; Kumlachew, 2014).

After 2010 popular upheaval and the subsequently carried reforms which resulted in freeing detained journalists and bloggers, unblocking 260 websites, opening up censored media landscape, the tug of war between the social media and the government is still observed (Jeffrey, 2019). Some journalists even go back to history and relate the situation to what happened since the fall of Haile Selassie with every regime change where there had been a lull in censorship and persecution of journalists to then resort to the old practices once the new regime settles down.

3.1. Social media joins the Ethiopian media scene

Ethiopia with an internet penetration rate of only 15 per cent is a least connected country in the world, whilst the mobile phone penetration is 60 per cent (Freedom on the Net, 2018). Furthermore, internet access is mostly found in cyber cafes, universities and government offices. Despite this shortcoming, social media engagement in Ethiopia made possible a large-scale mobilization of various, sometime even opposing, parties and people on a level much greater than traditional media outlets.

In Ethiopia, online spaces which are popular possess identities that are distinctive regarding the choice of topics, user demographics, and the interaction types they publicize around 'religion', 'politics', and 'popular culture' (Gagliardone et al., 2016). One of the social media platforms, i.e., Face-book, is used as 'more preferable and alternative media' than newspapers, television and radio among people in the young age of 18-34 years (Kumlachew, 2014). In addition, the Face-book users also merge on limited online pages they choose to show their concurrence with the Face-book page owner or 'to dissent' or censure the political line of the page. And most users do not comment on more than one page, neither does page owners post on other pages. Therefore, as the page followers are different from other pages' followers, the Face-book each page has a 'distinctive identity' (Gagliardone et al., 2016).

Furthermore, regarding Face-book use in Ethiopia and the online space's structure, Gagliardone and his associates based on their study on online debates and elections in Ethiopia note that:

"Despite Face-book's architecture, which is structured on the relationship between the owner of a profile or page and followers or friends, a complex, often adversarial relationship exists between them. This is reflected both in the issues that are discussed – with comment-makers often moving away from a topic suggested in a post to address other issues – and in the tone of the discussions, whereby commentators tend to be more antagonistic than the public figures or institutions owning the page(s). While conversations in these spaces tend to be distinct and stove-piped, there are a few events that attract the attention of these communities, such as national elections and events where Ethiopians as a whole appear to be threatened (e.g. the killing of Ethiopian migrants by ISIL in Libya)" (Gagliardone et al., 2016:48).

The above sited two year study further notes that the most influential Face-book pages show a top-down style of broadcasting communication because of absence or 'very little interaction between

page owners and page followers' or other Face-book pages with similar political line. Though this is true for 'government affiliated pages', on the other hand, the oppositions' Face-book pages were seen to use 'media in a more dialogic way'.

In another study intended to find out about Face-book challenges and opportunities in Ethiopia, Sileshi Semahagne Kumlachew (2014:109) brings to light that the majority of "..Ethiopian Face-book users utilize Face-book to release emotion when they experience happiness or depression". And, the study also notes that the majority of users especially teenage students use it more for recreational and social networking purposes.

3.2. Emerging social media effects in Ethiopian Politics

The emergence of social media in the Ethiopian political communication scene had its pronounced effects. According to a representative of the Semayawi party in 2015 elections, it was learned that the information they get from Face-book sets an agenda for mobilizing the electorate, notwithstanding the fact that it also helped the party to get engaged 'with its supporters and members, and the overall public (Gagliardone et al., 2016). At this juncture, it brings to our attention the role social media plays in public opinion formation by setting public agenda, which then brings to light the potential function of social media in the process of media agenda setting.

The agenda-setting tradition is based on a hypothesis that bypasses the established direct effects research tradition by supplanting it with the indirect effects alternative as the hypothesis affirms that the media have a public agenda setting indirect effect (Rogers and Dearing, 1988). The most important point about the agenda setting research tradition is that this hypothesis emphasizes on the audiences learning about issues from the media than attitude change per se. Besides, an inter-media agenda setting, a condition where the agenda of other news media being substantially influenced by the elite news media also occurs (McCombs, 2014).

According to Arianna Kahn (2018:12) "the combination of dictatorial governments hindering the dissemination of significant messages to the public, the biased framing techniques used by conventional media, and the growing need for realistic information and collective action against the censorship and repressive rulers all contributed to a transfer of agenda setting power from traditional media outlets to social media." Furthermore, the social and digital media's frequent use has allowed individuals with a social media account become their own citizen journalists, editors, publishers and gatekeepers with a global audience access.

On the other hand, according to a study done on Ethiopian Secondary School Students "…there are various undesired effects and uncertainties associated with excessive use of social media such as peer humiliation, cyber-bullying, depression, isolation, and academic fluctuations" (Mulisa and Getahun, 2018:296). In addition, disruption of study times, failing to do homework on time, and absenteeism from school are also observed.

Furthermore, in the political communication scene the appearance of a social media forum in the form of Zone 9 bloggers had also filled the vacuum left for critical information and independent coverage. When the bloggers were detained and the blog was blocked because it asked for the right for free expression and freedom of assembly as well as respect for constitution, the campaign for the release of the bloggers was taken as a 'universalistic agenda' by the Face-book discourse. Likewise, social media and communications platforms were prime instruments for mobilization of anti-government protests in Oromia and Amhara region by posting news about police brutality, arrests and trials of protesters (Freedom on The Net, 2018).

On the other hand, the previously sited study on online debates remarks that comments found on the Face-book 'are a bitter response to power, and to those who represent it or engage with it, rather than an expression of hatred towards a particular group'. Besides, the social media is seen to offer opportunity for voicing disappointment, 'not just towards the speakers, but at the processes through which power is exercised more broadly'(Gagliardone et al, 2016).

The findings of the study conducted on online debates and elections in Ethiopia also suggests that in the social media in Ethiopia dangerous and hate speech are marginal forms of speech[241]. Regarding hate and dangerous speech and ethnicity, "almost all dangerous statements in our sample are uttered by individuals seeking to hide their identity (92%).….Shifting the focus from speakers to targets, dangerous statements appear to focus exclusively on ethnicity. The salience of ethnicity can be found also in other types of messages. 75% of hate speech and 58% of offensive speech have ethnic targets, but they also target individuals based on their religion, and, to a much smaller extent, their sexual identity. This finding, more than others, is likely to be "specific to the context of Ethiopia, where ethnicity has a central role in national debates, but it also offers new ground to explore some of the distinctive features of dangerous speech as compared to other form of speech" (Gagliardone et al., 2016:7 emphasis added; see also Kumlachew, 2014:105; Freedom on the Net, 2018:7). Besides, this study which was concentrated on Face-book communication has also found that "discussions on religion displaying the lowest per centage of statements going against'.

On the other hand, during the sustained widely held protest movements (which at times are called Oromo protest), the social media especially Face-book in concert with the satellite TV OMN media had a pronounced effect. Jawar Mohammed's "Face-book posts and other social media distributions informed and organized the protestors on the ground for collective action."[242]

3.3. Coping with social media effects

Management of the effects of social media has taken different forms at different times in the Ethiopian context. During Prime Minister

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241 "Dangerous speech is a distinctive and more deliberate form of attacking other groups or individuals When compared to hate speech, as well as to other types of messages, dangerous speech reflects a more deliberate strategy to attack individuals and groups" Gagliardone, I. et al. *MECHACHAL: Online debates and elections in Ethiopia. From hate speech to engagement in social media.* (Oxford and Addis Ababa, 2016) P. 7

242 Ezkiel Gebissa "In defense of Jawar, a brilliant and dedicated agent of change" *Ethiopia Insight* November 9, 2019; see also *Freedom on the Net,* May 31, 2017 – June 1, 2018

Hailemariam Desalegn's rule at the time of the nationwide unrest, measures like silencing bloggers, censoring the internet and blocking social media platforms such as Face-book, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Dropbox were implemented to manage social media effects. Even after his resignation, during the interim period with the imposition of state of emergency, accessing or posting content related to the protests on social media was criminalized as well as mobile internet services were shut down nationwide for several days[243] (Freedom on The Net, 2018). Furthermore, in 2014 six bloggers that belonged to the "Zone 9" online group who were active through social media communication were arrested under Anti-Terror Proclamation. Besides the prominent activist, Jawar Mohammed's Face-book page was 'continually blocked' during February 2018 protests. This is actually in line with internet shutdowns which frequently occurred throughout 2017 and 2018[244].

In addition, Ethiopia passed a Computer Crime Proclamation act in June 2016 which "…strengthened the government's surveillance powers, enabling real-time monitoring or interception of communications authorized by the Minister of Justice. The law also obliges service providers to store records of all communications and metadata for at least a year" (Freedom on the Net, 2018:10). This law for example punishes up to three years in prison for a content that "incites fear, violence, chaos or conflict among people".

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[243] It is worth noting Reza Jamali's observation regarding the Arab Spring where he notes, "The case of Egypt is an example whereby cutting mobile communication and Internet speed and filtering specific websites are all nothing but passive measures that cannot manage the movements. When Internet access is limited by the government, the first question people ask is, what could possibly have been on the Internet that made the government cut it? The limitation imposed increases the eagerness of the public to learn about what is going on in society via the Internet, which leads to the development of political knowledge." Reza Jamali *Online Arab Spring : Social Media and Fundamental Change* (Waltham, MA, USA & Kidlington, UK, 2015) P.33

[244] "Since his appointment in April, new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has projected the image of a reformer, easing restrictions on the media and promising democratic reforms in his inaugural address. Under his short tenure, the internet has become more accessible, as networks were less disrupted and content became less censored. Citizens have flocked to social media to participate in conversations about their country's transition from authoritarianism and to hold the new government accountable to promised reforms, resulting in a palpable decline in self-censorship online and off", **Freedom on the Net,** May 31, 2017 – June 1, 2018, P.2

Besides, Ethiopia is said to have a 'nationwide politically motivated internet blocking and filtering scheme that can be redeployed at any time'[245]. A centralized monitoring system developed by ZTE which is used to monitor internet and mobile phone networks and which has the ability to intercept emails and webchats is also deployed, according to a 2015 Human Rights Watch Report (Freedom on The Net, 2018).

Furthermore, other social media effect management methods include, the Telecom Fraud Offences Proclamation of 2012 that prohibits Cyber-cafes from providing VoIP (Voice-over-IP) services (Ibid). In addition, the SIM card registration requirements process in place has also helped the government control the communication process that took place among individuals[246]. In the management of social media effects, the Ethiopian government has also resorted to online manipulation tactics by employing an army of trolls which the opposition groups and journalists scornfully called "Kokas" (ኮተታም ካድሬ), to distort Ethiopia's online information landscape (Freedom on The Net, 2018). Exiled dissidents were also targets of the social media effects management undertaking by targeted surveillance malware[247].

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245 "To filter the internet, specific internet protocol (IP) addresses or domain names are generally blocked at the level of the Ethio-Telecom-controlled international gateway. Deep-packet inspection (DPI) is also employed, which blocks websites based on a keyword in the content of a website or communication (such as email)", *Freedom on the Net*, May 31, 2017 – June 1, 2018, P.6

246 "Anonymous communication is compromised by strict SIM card registration requirements. Upon purchase of a SIM card through Ethio-Telecom or an authorized reseller, individuals must provide their full name, address, government-issued identification number, and a passport-sized photograph. Ethio-Telecom's database of SIM registrants enables the government to terminate individuals' SIM cards and restrict them from registering for new ones. Internet subscribers are also required to register their personal details, including their home address, with the government. During the antigovernment protests in 2016, state-owned ICT provider Ethio-Telecom announced plans to require mobile phones to be purchased from Ethiopian companies and to create a tracking system for all mobile devices in Ethiopia. Observers believe the plan aims to allow the government to track and identify all communications from subscribers on its network" Ibid. P.11

247 "In February 2018, Citizen Lab published research detailing how spyware from an Israeli company had been used against Jawar Mohammed, the exiled executive director of the Oromia Media Network (OMN). OMN is a Diaspora-run independent satellite television, radio, and online news media outlet, based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that had been banned by the former Ethiopian government for inciting violence and promoting terrorism. Previous Citizen Lab research published in March 2015 found that Remote Control System (RCS) spyware had been used against employees of the Ethiopian Satellite Television Service (ESAT) in November and December 2014. ESAT is also a Diaspora-run independent satellite television, radio, and online news media outlet, based in Alexandria, Virginia" Ibid,, P. 10

It is also true that despite the democratic transition that is taking place in the Ethiopian political and media landscape, the laws that were designed to manage the effects of the cyber and social media effects are not yet revoked. Nonetheless, with the ever growing need to manage the adverse effects of the social media what remains to be seen is rethinking and reinvigorating the old methods used to manage the effects along a democratic and a rights based approach and perspective.

4. Quo Vadis Social Media in Ethiopian Transition Politics

Social media in Ethiopia have opened up a space for participation and engagement in the Ethiopian political communication landscape where 'different forms of tolerance and acceptance are displayed' (Gagliardone et al, 2016). And on the other hand hate speech is also an emerging phenomenon (Abrha, 2019). Nevertheless, the emergence and growing popularity coupled with widespread use of this communication media for political communication among others, has prompted the government of Ethiopia of the transition period to issue warning signals as the two page letter issued from the Prime Minister's office clearly demonstrates[248].

In a rather well-intentioned wrapping up of the discussion on social media in the Ethiopian politics, especially the transition's period politics, if I cite the following observation of a report of a member of an election observers' team, I believe will point to a likely scenario in the Ethiopian political transition context:

> "Imagine that an upcoming election somewhere in the world is very tight, with two competitors running neck on neck. A single per cent point change I support can determine the outcome. Shortly before election day a massive disinformation campaign is run on social media against the candidate who ultimately loses. Such a scenario is not far-fetched and possibly more likely today than traditional ballot-box stuffing which election observer are trained to detect.

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248 "ጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር ዶክተር አብይ አህመድ የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ አጠቃቀምን አስመልክቶ ያስተላለፉት መልዕክት - መርፌ ዓይናማ ናት ባለ ስለት"፣ አዲስ ዘመን መጋቢት 11 ቀን 2011 ዓ.ም

Yet the observers would have little to say. Quite possibly the whole extent of the disinformation campaign would only be uncovered months later, if at all" (Meyers-Resende, 2018:23).

To increasingly lessen if not diminish the outcomes of such a scenario or worse, several countries from the North and South part of the globe have been taking legal and educational measures. Ethiopia as part of the "Global village" has also to examine its vulnerabilities and resort to taking balanced measures that will not infringe the hard won democratic freedoms regarding free expression, organization and above all respect for rule of law.

As one of the Ethiopian blogs rightly pointed out "…there needs to be effort to strike balance between protecting freedom of expression and repulsing national security dangers that emerge from propagation of hate and misinformation[249]".

To begin with studying the legal and educational measures taken by different countries the world over for managing the adverse effects of Social media are a good starting point for Ethiopia wishing to manage the adversarial effects of social media communication. The legal and educational measures taken by the different countries falls under four approaches as per the well documented report of the Law Library of Congress (2019:1-3). The first approach is based on applying relelvant provisions of "existing civil, criminal, administrative, and other laws regulating the media, elections, and anti-defamation". This approach is pursued by Canada, Japan, Nicaragua, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The second approach focuses on passing "new and more focused legislation that imposes sanctions on social media networks that spread false news, usually imposing fines and ordering the removal of information identified as false". Countries that entertain this approach are, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, Malaysia, Kenya, and Russia.

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249 "Ethiopia issued advisory on social media hate speech, misinformation dissemination", **Borkena. com**, March 19, 2019

Argentina, United Kingdom, China and Malaysia adhere to the third approach which calls for "engaging election authorities and digital platforms to secure a well-informed electorate, either by identifying and blocking fake news, providing fact-checking resources for the general public, or through the mass publication of "real" news during election season and beyond". Finally, under the fourth approach we find Sweden and Kenya who try to "address the issue in a more general way by educating citizens about the dangers of fake news". At this juncture, we are observing that a country can pursue two or more approaches at the same time as the case with Sweden, United Kingdom, Kenya, China and Malaysia illustrates. Therefore, I believe that Ethiopia can learn from these different approaches pursued by these diverse countries and see if it can adopt some of it to be employed along with the home grown democratic and popular measures for managing the adversarial effects of social media practice.

Furthermore, "as attention towards the "darker" side of the Internet grows, however, in the absence of data that can contextualize how relevant and prevalent extreme speech is in the context of how online media are used more broadly, it may lead to creating an image of online conversations as a whole as potentially harmful" (Gagliardone et al, 2016:98).Therefore, I believe setting up a regulatory body of the type Swedish Broadcasting Commission, Korean Broadcasting Commission, OfCom of Britain, or similar others, or organizing the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority to function as such, will undoubtedly help in regulating and managing the adverse effects of the social media. To facilitate and institutionalize the regulatory work, setting up an advisory body comprising bloggers, traditional media personalities, active audiences in social media sector, communication intellectuals, and relevant sectors of the society is also worth looking at as it will be a stakeholders representation cum ownership of the problem and solutions as well.

Finally, the institution of the democratic and popular home-grown or otherwise measures entails political acumen which is needed in the transition period for combating political, social, and humanitarian crisis that are overblown or reinforced by social media networking platforms. To that effect, recognizing the problem caused by the social media and then searching for democratic solution/s to the problem is the right path to follow which is well justified by the history of new communication technologies[250].

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[250] "If history is any guide, we are fast approaching the final stage of our latest inflection point, at which societal change collides with technological scapegoat, leading to a wave of regulation intended to magically fix all of society's ills by legislating their underlying communicative patterns away. Putting this all together, every new communications technology undergoes the same evolutionary arc that ultimately ends with regulation designed to coerce our communicative conduits into forcibly shaping society towards the ends we believe are most productive for society at the moment. In the end, to understand the future of social media, we must look to the past of what came before", **FORBES**, APRIL 22, 2019 .

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6. The Status of Political Parties' Role in Ethiopia: A Functional Approach

Professor Kassahun Berhanu

The Status of Political Parties' Role in Ethiopia: A Functional Approach

Abstract

The genesis of Ethiopian political parties in Ethiopia is rooted in authoritarian tradition. The commencement of formal party politics was ushered in following the revolutionary overthrow of imperial rule, which culminated in the entrenchment of military rule. Under military rule, the Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE) emerged as a solo vanguard actor to the detriment of others that were forcibly precluded from participating in political processes. This trend triggered a full-fledged civil war that engulfed several parts of Ethiopia eventually terminating the incumbency of the military regime in May 1991. The July 1991 Transitional Charter recognized, for the first time in Ethiopia's history, the right of citizens to form and/or join political parties of their choice. This was subsequently reaffirmed by the 1995 constitution as a result of which dozens of political parties with varying orientations and programs proliferated. However, the post-1991 Ethiopian political landscape remained constantly in flux characterized by mergers, splits, and completes disappearances affecting the thriving Ethiopian political parties. Even though these initially played considerable roles in supporting the post-1991 liberalization reforms, they were later subjected to EPRDF's manipulations and unbridled control that forced them to operate under a highly restrictive environment.

With the foregoing as backdrop, this article examined the status of political parties' role in post-1991 Ethiopia and shed light on their performance relating to efforts of building a genuine and credible multiparty system. In analyzing the trajectories surrounding the evolution of Ethiopian political parties, the study dealt with the broader political milieu by focusing on institutional settings, legal frameworks, and the impacts of political culture that conditioned the performance of the Ethiopian party system in the post-1991 years.

In light of this, the study explored the functional status of political parties' role with a view to proposing feasible options that need to be considered in the effort aimed at rectifying the problems experienced so far. In so doing, a multi-method approach was employed in the bid to present and analyze the major findings. The study established that among a plethora of internal and external factors that explain the poor performance of many Ethiopian political parties, the most outstanding ones relate to their narrow social base and the simple-plurality electoral system that constrained their performance in the course of engaging in periodic multiparty electoral contests. Currently, ethnic cleavage structures and interests tend to influence party formation processes. Hence, the underlying stimulus for institutionalizing the existing party system in Ethiopia is expedited through ethnocentric disposition rather than the efficacy of ideological lines and feasibility of party programmes. This contradicted the rationale behind installing the Ethiopian party system presumed to serve as inclusive public space for interest bargain, articulation, aggregation and promotion. This notwithstanding, however, the centrality of the ethnic factor in the formation and operation of Ethiopian political parties became harbingers of their fragmentation. Even in the relative absence of stifling influence of the ruling Front as was in the past, many ethnic-based parties could not gain resilience and enhance their status and role under the current relatively liberal dispensation.

I. **Introduction**

Background

Political modernization spearheaded by the imperial regime, notably under the leadership of Emperor Haile Selassie I, did not consider the establishment of political parties in Ethiopia. Institutionalization as an aspect of political modernization[251] in the country includes the formation of a ministerial system, introducing constitutional arrangements, and installing of parliament under the rubric of a highly limited electoral system, among others. The aforementioned formal-legal and political infrastructures relate to a gesture of modernity that co-exited with aspects of viable elements of tradition. The process took shape with a view to transforming the age-old political culture and tradition that was long sustained. This notwithstanding, however, imperial rule totally excluded political parties from the orbit of political reforms that characterized the workings of the modernization scheme. In doing so, the shortfall in this regard relegated the legitimate aspirations of different sections of society that strove to exercise the right to proactive participation in socio-economic and political processes to the backstage. Popular participatory processes mediated by representation based on periodic free and fair elections was thus erased from the agenda of the imperial regime's modernization program.

It is to be recalled that the imperial project of political modernization was presumed to be expedited through mobilizing Ethiopian society without ushering in an enabling environment that could be instrumental in forming political parties and civil-society organizations. Instead, the option taken along this line was anchored in entrenching the politics of patronage, top-down control, and elite-led dispensation premised on the centrality of the state.

Subsequent changes expressed in expansion of education and other social and physical infrastructures, coupled with increased awareness on developments in the different parts of the world, culminated in the emergence of complex political and economic questions. Nevertheless, imperial rule had neither the capacity nor the willingness to address a plethora of new

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251 One of the three defining features of political modernization is "increased participation in politics by social groups throughout society and the development of new political institutions such as political parties and interest associations-to organize this participation". See Samuel Huntington. 1966.

claims and demands that were articulated by different sections of Ethiopian society. This led to the taking of shape and entrenchment of complex political activism in a gradual and piecemeal manner, eventually leading to the emergence of clandestine political organizations and opposition groups. The history of Ethiopia's party system, therefore, unravelled the formation of insurgent liberation movements poised against the *ancien regime*.[252] The pioneers in this regard include the Eritrean fronts and various ethno-national liberation movements.

The first generation of political organizations in the Horn of Africa came on the scene as a result of the quest for self-rule by staging opposition to the colonial episode. It was in 1940s that the first political organizations emerged in the region in response to oppression perpetrated by colonial powers. The formation of the Somali Youth League in 1941 espousing the Greater Somalia doctrine[253] was the first in this regard. This was accompanied by the advent of one of the first political organizations in Eritrea, namely *Mahber Fikiri Hager* (Society for the Love of the Country) that later became the "Unionist Party" in 1942.

Subsequently, many other political groups like the Muslim League (ML), the Eritrean Liberal Progressive Party (ELPP), and the National Muslim Party (NMP) were created in Eritrea during the same decade (the 1940s). These served as sources of inspiration that indirectly paved the way for the emergence of political organizations in Ethiopia at a later stage.[254] Nevertheless, most of the political organizations that came on the scene between the 1940s and the early 1970s were ethno-national liberation movements comprising the Eritrean Liberation Front (1957), the Western Somalia Liberation Front (1960), and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (1961).[255] According to Andargachew's chronological classification, these are dubbed as second-generation political groups that surfaced.

The commencement of the Ethiopian revolutionary process in the mid 1970s entailed the coming to the fore of left-oriented and other political organizations amidst the takeover of power by the Provisional Military Administrative council, the *Derg*. The revolutionary process thus transformed, if not created, the mode of operation of clandestine political

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252 Kassahun Berhanu. 2010.
253 Andargachew Tiruneh. 2015.
254 Ibid.
255 Ibid, pp. 35-39.

movements. Numerous clandestine groups with postures of program-based semblances began to closely work with the military regime. These included the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (*Meisone), Woz League, Echat, MALERID, and Abyotawi Seded*. Perhaps the content of the revolutionary measures that transformed the country's political landscape could have not taken effect in the absence of these organizations. On the other hand, those that presented themselves as opposed to the military regime since their genesis were outlawed. These comprised the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, (EPRP), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF), and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU).

The consolidation of military authoritarian rule was signified by the prevalence of personal omnipotence, which took effect after the elimination of the legally-recognized political groups between the end of the 1970s and the mid 1980s. The initiated process in this regard finally culminated in the emergence of a one-party system monopolized by the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), which served as the civilian facade of military rule spearheaded by ex-strongman Mengistu Hailemariam. Polarization and incompatibility between the party state and different sections of society that espoused divergent interests ushered in a civil war that culminated in the demise of military rule in May 1991. It should be noted that the outlawed political organizations in general and the military success of ethno-national insurgent movements based in Eritrea (EPLF) and Tigray (TPLF) in particular, played key roles in facilitating the demise of the *Derg*. While EPLF controlled and expedited Eritrea's secession, TPLF seized power in Ethiopia by forming a coalition of like-minded groups under the umbrella of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF).

As an offshoot of the Ethiopian student movement that upheld Marxism-Leninism, TPLF along with other members of the EPRDF coalition assumed state power in the era of global liberalization of the 1990s. Despite its leftist orientation, TPLF chose to experiment multiparty politics and market-based liberal economic direction from the transitional period (1991-1995) and thereafter. Such hybrid political orientation and attendant practice defined the pragmatic evolution of EPRDF's regime[256] creating a contradictory political context that militated against the wind of

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[256]Jean-Nicolas Bach. 2011.

political liberalization[257] in Ethiopia. The relative success in delivering on the promises it made during both the transitional period and following the promulgation of the FDRE Constitution, EPRDF's role in sustaining the initiated process largely remained mere rhetoric. This took shape in the face of the Front's quest to gradually emerge as a domineering actor that monopolized every available political space.

Study objective and research questions

With the foregoing as backdrop, this study seeks to examine the status of political parties' role in post-1991Ethiopia and critically identify their roles in building a genuine and credible multiparty system as stipulated in the FDRE constitution. In analyzing the trajectories of the evolution of parties and the party system in Ethiopia, the study considers the broader political milieu by focusing on institutional settings, legal frameworks, and the impacts of political culture that conditioned the genesis of the Ethiopian party system in the post-1991 years. The aim of examining the subject under study relates to exploring the functional status of political parties and party system. Based on the findings and attendant analysis, attempt is made to propose feasible policy options that need to be taken into account in the effort to rectifying the problems that Ethiopian political parties and party system face in terms of playing meaningful roles. The study uses multi-method approaches that are descriptive, analytical and normative. It is descriptive and analytical mainly in terms of exploring, examining, and diagnosing issues while it is critically normative in providing policy options that could presumably facilitate efforts towards entrenching a credible, feasible and legitimate party system.

In conducting the study, secondary data elicited from different sources (books, journal articles, scientific reports, and grey literature) including original research products, pertinent legal and policy documents, and political party programs and manifestos are consulted and reviewed. Moreover, trend analysis mainly focusing the dynamics of party politics within the context of contemporary political reform taking place in Ethiopia is undertaken. These are examined from the point of view of theoretical and conceptual debates on the role of political parties in the global south, while at the same time exploring the historically contingent factors that have

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257Bahru Zewde. 2002.

bearing on party politics in Ethiopia. As one scholar eloquently stated "the formalist [theoretical] definition of political parties allows those interested to generalize some universally assumed functions of political parties. Moreover, the substantive approach allows for teasing out the peculiarity [historical]" of political parties.[258].

In this vein, the study poses and attempts to address the following major research questions:

1. What are the defining features of the functional status (structurally, institutionally, ideologically, culturally etc.) of political parties and the party system in Ethiopia?
2. What roles can post-1991 Ethiopian political parties play in the making of a vibrant and robust multiparty system and how did they perform so far?
3. Which policy directions should be pursued to consolidate efforts to ensure the emergence of vibrant political parties in Ethiopia?

Contextualizing the problem

Similar to most post-liberation political regimes in the continent, EPRDF also operated against the democratic ethos that prompted its political metamorphosis and that of several other political groups.[259] Several post-liberation African regimes used ethnicity as a political instrument in their bid to mobilize the masses with a view to establishing what is termed "effective dictatorship."[260] Post-Cold War African politics is, therefore, characterized by ethnic ascendancy in the formal political milieu. Accordingly, Ethiopia is made a textbook case for politicized ethnicity whose incumbent regime engages in conducting periodic elections and building human right institutions while entrenching formal democratization but failing to lend substantive contents to the initiated reforms. As a result, allowing citizens to be agents in terms of deciding their destiny through exercising self-rule remained farfetched.

Electoral or constitutional authoritarianism as a discourse representing African politics signify the need for the rule of law and institutionalization of public management mechanisms as necessary but not sufficient conditions

258 M. A. Mohamed Salih. 2003. p.3.
259M. A. Mohamed Salih. 2007.
260Kassahun Woldemariam. 1996.

for democracy.[261] Popular insurgent movements and parties including their guerrilla leaders remain in power for long, brandishing mean democratic posturing and electoral pretension and manoeuvring. This depicts the structural condition under which contemporary Ethiopian political parties and multiparty politics evolved and continue to operate. It is worth noting that despite the aforementioned structural limitations, political parties continue to mushroom, creating a false image; the taking shape of a multi-party system in the country. As is now made clear, the outcome of such false starts inevitably lead to crisis as had been experienced in Ethiopia between 2015 and 2018.

II. Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings

2.1. Political Party

In the 20th century, political parties had largely continued serving as universal loci of power. Organizations designated as political parties controlled state power in most parts of the world.[262] However, there is no consensus on the issue of conceptualizing political parties. Like many other concepts in the domain of the social and political sciences, political parties are provided with ubiquitous definitions indicating their diversity in terms of motivation, goals, organizational settings, and functions. Since historically contingent factors always produce different types of political parties, the quest for a universally accepted definition remains a daunting task.

Most scholars define political parties, assuming that they emerge and operate to promote democratic and electoral politics. Accordingly, they are defined as organizations that contest political elections aimed at assuming public office.[263] Robert Huckshorn also defines a political party as "an autonomous group of citizens having the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections in the hope of gaining control over governmental power through the capture of public offices and the organization of government."[264] Epstein argues party means any group, however loosely organized, seeking to elect governmental office holders under a given label.[265]

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261 Lovise Aalen and Kjetil Tronvoll. 2009.
262 Richard S. Katz. 2008.
263 Jovanni Sartori. 1976.
264 Ibid cited in Katz. 2008.
265 Leon D. Epstein. 1980, p. 9.

All these definitions provided by scholars in the field assume the pluralist and liberal traditions under which political parties emerged in the west. Others define parties by focusing on their goals and modality of struggle. One can draw from the abovementioned definitions that election is taken as the sole means of assuming power by excluding those that seize power through revolutionary means and military coups. This associates political parties with liberal institutions operating in liberal political space where election is considered as the only means of accessing power. According to this perspective, "partyness" is dependent on exhibiting team behaviour in the pursuit of assuming power through election and only election as a mechanism.[266]

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Control of power is also central and a common denominator that characterizes the quest of all political parties. Many classic and contemporary scholars associate parties with power and hence present them as power-seeking entities. What differentiates political parties for example, from civil society organizations is the absence of aspiration to control public power on the part of the latter. Edmund Burke defines political party as a body of people united in promoting the national interest by their joint endeavours based on particular principles that members adopted.[267] The pursuit for power and the promotion of national interest could also be viewed as complementary depending on the programs, behaviours, and practical dispositions of those who enlist as party members and leaders.

266 Katz. 2008, p. 297.
267 Michels cited in Katz. 2008, p. 296.

Robert Michels questions the notion that emphasizes elections as sole mechanism for acquiring power by stating that the modern party is a fighting organization in the political sense of the term[268] that wages struggles against oligarchic and aristocratic tendencies.Taking note of the prevalence of non-democratic conditions and the absence of genuine electoral and multiparty politics, Michels dubbed political parties; their engagement is not solely limited to elections. For Michels, parties must fight for democracy and majority rule against oligarchy and aristocracy and hence "democracy is inconceivable without organization."[269]

Others concur with Michels by underlining that political parties create a democratic political space and hence democracy is unthinkable in the absence of parties.[270] In addition, Aldrich supports Schattschneider's claim by stating that democracy is impractical in the absence of political parties that are equipped with clearly articulated programmatic design.[271] The function of political parties in the global south in general including Ethiopia is thus associated with this normative assumption of democratic transition and consolidation.

Marxian political theory views elections as the core element of 'partyness' and emphasizes capturing power as a major driver behind the urge for creating political parties. It is thus presumed that the ultimate seizure of power could be expedited through well-organized revolutionary political parties. The maxim espoused by Marxist scholars and politicians is "If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party"."[272] According to this theory, "the vanguard party is the heart, brain and backbone of revolutionary movements."[273] In Marxist literature, the role of political parties is similarly presented by underlining its vanguard role.[274] Accordingly, the party is the politically conscious advanced section of the class it leads and thus the strength of the vanguard is much greater than that of its members.[275]

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268 Robert Michels. 1962, p. 40.

269Ibid., p. 20.

270 Schattschneider cited in John H Aldrich. 1995, p.3.

271 Ibid..

272 Mao Tse Tung cited in *Challenge*. 1972.

273 Academy of Social Science and Social Management. 1982.

274 Vladmir Lenin. 1902.

275 Pronin I. and Stepinchev M. 1969.

Political parties are thus considered indispensable for advancing the twin goals of achieving both revolution and democracy. Unlike scholars who define political parties on the basis of their goals and methods of achieving them, others define political parties by considering their political functions. Political parties function as agents for recruiting candidates for public office, training and mobilizing citizens with a view to garnering electoral support, aggregating fragmented interests and stabilizing political processes, and above all play key roles in ensuring representation of the electorate in established democracies.[276]

At the heart of the effort towards conceptualizing political parties from the point of view of both Liberal and Marxist traditions lies the assumption that political parties are crucial for transforming segmental interests into an all-encompassing public interest.[277] Unlike pressure groups, the main characteristic of a political party is its quality in mediating and compromising a 'combination of interests'.[278] Huntington claims that parties are buckles that bind one social force with another and consequently leads to the forging of loyalty and shared identity that transcend fragmented parochial aspirations.[279]

In divided societies like those in Asia and Africa, ethnic parties deviate from the functional definition of political parties in a manner that complicates the aforementioned conceptualization. This is due to the fact that ethnic parties could be identified by the cause of the ethnic groups they represent[280] and hence their efforts in this regard cannot go beyond the confines of sectarianism. Any party whose boundaries stop at ethnically defined group boundaries is designated as an ethnic party since it "identifies narrow group interest with the totality of the common interest."[281]Such parties lack capacity to either combine or buckle the interests of diverse groups in a society because their foundational narrative underscores incompatibility between diverse interests.[282]

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276 Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther. 2001.
277 Donald L Horowitz .198, p. 296.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid, p, 297.
280 Ibid, p, 296.
281 Ibid, p. 297.
282 Ibid, p. 297.

The aforementioned notwithstanding, it should be noted that all political organizations operating in divided societies are not only ethnic parties but there are also others that espouse multiethnic orientation in terms of their programmatic design, membership, and outreach. Multiethnic parties mobilize respective constituencies beyond the confines of ethnicity. In Ethiopia, the major political groups like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement, The Ethiopian Democratic Union, among others, that operated during the post-revolution years were largely multiethnic. On the other hand, coalition of ethnic parties operating under the umbrella of some kind of front or umbrella forums like the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front and *Medrek* cannot qualify as multiethnic organizations. This is due to the fact that such coalitions are the product of the mere integration of ethnic parties.[283]

2.2 Typology of political parties

Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond provided a comprehensive typology of parties based on three criteria: the nature of their organization (thick/thin, elite-based, and mass-based); programmatic orientation (ideological, particularistic, clientele-oriented); and tolerant and pluralistic (democratic). It is thus argued that developing typologies of political parties will be more comprehensive when their classification is undertaken by using multiple criteria.In their classification matrix, Gunther and Diamond include numerous organizations that they identify as elite-based, mass-based, ethnicity-based, electora list, and movement parties. The classification matrix also is presented as pluralistic versus proto-hegemonic parties on one hand and subcategories of parties based on their organization, membership and level of commitment towards an ideology or program on the other.[284]

Diamond and Gunther's matrix on political party typologies captures the stature of most political groupings identified above in the conceptualization section. Accordingly, most party nomenclatures depict their categorization as elite-based, indicating loose organizational features and personalized leadership patterns.

283 Ibid, p. 304.
284 Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther. 2001.

Most opposition parties in Ethiopia are elite parties influenced by one influential leader while their membership base is highly limited. The designation mass party applies to a situation where the masses are mobilized through employing ideological indoctrination. In their matrix, for example, Diamond and Gunther differentiated ethnic parties from others that mobilize large number of members and supporters across a broad range that goes beyond the spectrum of the ethno and socio-cultural divide. Similarly, they coined a category designated as electoral party to introduce those that focus on competing in elections to differentiate them from those that pursue non-electoral strategies as their approach. Almost all political parties in Ethiopia belong to the former category, while few like the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and *Ginbot* 7, among others, used non-electoral strategies prior to the advent of a new pro-reform leadership in early 2018.

The classification is not a perfect mirror image of what exists on the ground but may serve as insightful reference to party typologies but it can further be enriched by for example, adding non-electoral parties like those that engage in revolutionary activities. Others also consider business parties that engage in both politics and business as the modified table depicts.

Table 1: Party Typologies

[mode of organization]	Pluralistic	Proto-Hegemony
Elite Parties	Local Notable Clientelist	
Mass Based Parties Ideological/Socialist Ideological/Nationalist Religious	Class-mass-based Pluralist Nationalist Denominational mass	Leninist Ultranationalist Religious Fundamentalist
Ethnic Based Parties	Ethnic Congress	
Electoralist Parties [non-electoral parties]	Catch-all Programmatic Personalistic	[Leninist] [Revolutionary Parties]
Movement Parties [Business parties]	Left- Libertarian Post-Industrial Extreme Right	

Source: Modified by the author based on Diamond and Gunther, 2001.

2.3. Party systems

Political parties are units of analysis that should be viewed as sub-sets of political and party systems.[285] However, the analysis would be rendered incomplete unless the manner in which political parties enter into working relations with others and effect change in its disposition is probed further.[286] Parties are also classified according to their working systems and mode and manner of interaction with each other and eventually serve as a bridge between state and society. In this sense, a party system could be understood as a constellation of parties that collectively form of it. Hence, a party system could be precisely perceived as a system of interactions that form the basis for inter-party cooperation and competition.

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285 Giovanni.Sartori. 1976, p, 71.
286 Ibid.

The classification of party systems could be undertaken by taking their relative size, ideological disposition, resource capacity, capability, linkage with the electorate, and mode and manner of seeking and acquiring power in this constellation. Moreover, their ideological orientations, goals and strategies also form the basis for their classification. The central elements in defining party systems relate to elucidating how the system is formed and which operational patterns it follows.[287] In classifying party systems, some focus on the number of parties within the system is considered while others take into account level of institutionalization, goals and ideological orientation as a basis.

Duverger identifies single, two and multiparty systems by analysing how these interact with electoral laws.[288] He views a multiparty system as unique in the sense that it encompasses different varieties ranging from three to an infinite number of parties as its components.

Based on the number of major powerful competing parties, a multiparty system qualifies as such if it embraces those that range between three and more than five. Multiparty systems are also classified on the basis of their stability and durability as is the case with several in UK, US and continental Europe, among others. It should be noted that some party systems like those in Switzerland and Holland are stable, whereas others like in Italy are fluid and volatile.

The huge numerical size of political parties that is currently witnessed in Ethiopia can formally be described as a situation characterized by multi-partyism provided that these are sustained and consolidated. With detailed critique of the numerical size criterion, Sartori provides an additional yardstick presented as what he calls the degree of "ideological distance between parties.[289] As illustrated in Table 2, Sartori combined numerical criterion with ideological distance. Polarized pluralist party system indicates a situation where parities are both fragmented and polarized. In instances when parties are fragmented but not polarized, the party system is designated as moderate pluralist. However, his classification ignores the level of institutionalization that is important in classifying party systems.[290]

287 Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal. 2005.
288 Maurice Duverger. 1967.
289 Sartori, 1976.
290 Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal. 2005, p. 6.

Table 2 Sartori's classification: pattern, class and pluralist

Pattern	Class	Type
Low fragmentation (up to 5 parties)	Limited Pluralism	Moderate Pluralism
High fragmentation (above 5 parties)	Extreme Pluralism	Polarized Pluralism

Source: Sartori, 1976, p. 127

Critiquing Sartori's classification, Mainwaring and Torcal, classify party systems based on their level of institutionalization. Institutionalized party systems tend to "enjoy considerable stability" and regularity with strong root in society, legitimacy, and autonomy from being subordinated to the interest of a few ambitious leaders.[291] The same sources identify party systems with low degree of institutionalization as "fluid or weakly institutionalized" resulting in the absence of regularity, stability, legitimacy and autonomy from individuals. It should be noted that weak institutionalization is a defining feature of most political parties in Ethiopia.

1.4. **Non-competitive hegemonic party system**

This is a system that tends to block equity and fairness in contesting elections either de facto or dejure. For Sartori, the single dominant party is often reluctant to be a part of the constellation of parties within the party system.[292] Under such party systems, the dominant mode of politics is characterized by authoritarianism. As the name indicates, a hegemonic party system is dominated by a political party that uses several mechanisms to discourage the opposition from competing for power while at the same time displaying a posture that wrongly depicts as if a multiparty system is at work.

The Ethiopian model that came on the scene in the post-1991 years exhibits a party system in which the incumbent EPRDF plays undue

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291 Ibid, pp. 5-6.
292 Sartori. 1976.

hegemonic role. In this regard, Sartori posits that the self-styled hegemonic party can entrench a functional pseudo ideological dominance that does not allow other world views to engage in contestation. In doing so, it transforms itself into a pragmatic domineering party instead of becoming an ideologically acceptable hegemonic party.[293]

III. The Making and Unmaking of Political Parties in Ethiopia

3.1. Political Parties in Ethiopia

Ethiopia experienced three regime changes over the last four decades. The *ancien regime* was toppled by the revolution that unfolded in 1974. Between 1974 and 1991, the military regime, reigned. In 1989, this regime attempted to introduce a socialist style-"people's democracy" but failed to gain wide support as a constitutionally elected civilian government. The incumbent regime led by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front seized power in May 1991 as a result of its military victory over military rule. The 1991 regime change caused shifts with regard to the underlying ideology of the Ethiopian State signified by centralization of power under a unitary political system. The longstanding disposition of successive Ethiopian regimes was rebuffed when the EPRDF ventured into a project of restructuring and reorganizing the Ethiopian political landscape and state-society relations by adopting the principle and attendant practices of ethnic-based federalism.

In the political history of Ethiopia, two waves that mark the formation of political parties can be identified. The first wave commenced between the 1960s and 1970s, which gathered momentum following the revolutionary processes unleashed in the country. This was accompanied by events and occurrences that transpired in the early 1990s, which was caused by internal political dynamics and the rolling out of global liberalization trends.

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[293] Sartori. 1966.

The end of the Cold War mediated the ushering in of the second wave in Ethiopia. The recent popular upheaval and mobilization for change (2015-2018) are now in the process of expediting a series of political reform measures anchored in the broadening of the political space under a liberalized environment.

The genesis of political parties in Ethiopia is rooted in the emergence of vibrant opposition against imperial rule in the 1960s and 1970s. This was spearheaded by spontaneous activism of students and trade unions that were eventually radicalized and contributed to the unfolding of the 1974 revolutionary process.[294] Irrespective of its modernization drives expressed in the overhauling of Ethiopia's governance and socio-economic system, imperial rule remained averse towards the haphazard initiatives aimed at forming political parties. What was accomplished under imperial rule in this regard relates to allowing the holding of strictly controlled periodic elections in the context of a no-party system, at best. As is widely known, the Ethiopian revolution considerably affected the *modus operandi* of the Ethiopian State as a result of which numerous political parties with different colourings and orientations evolved.[295]

It is to be recalled that the first clandestine political groups that came on the scene in Ethiopia were a combination of ethno-national liberation groups and Marxist-oriented movements that espoused multiethnic programmatic agendas. As mentioned, the major liberation movements that embarked on political activities in the pre and post-revolution years included the Eritrean Fronts (EPLF/ELF), the ethnic-based Ethiopian National Liberation Front (ENLF), the Somali-Abo Liberation Front (SALF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). In the aftermath of the revolution, most multiethnic political organizations like the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement and other left-oriented groups were temporarily aligned with the military regime by engaging in semi-formal political activities during the onset of the

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294 Bahru Zewde. 1991.
295 Kassahun Berhanu. 2003.

revolution. These were later terminated prior to the formation of the solo officially recognized Workers Party of Ethiopia through co-optation or liquidation. It could thus be argued that the revolution did not midwife the emergence of a vibrant and democratic multiparty system.[296]

As discussed in the conceptual section, the preponderance of a one party system is often marked by pseudo semblance of inclusiveness, while in essence it essentially remains non-competitive. WPE's monopoly of the pre-1991 Ethiopian political scene as an omnipotent political actor is testimony to this. This notwithstanding, it was some of the aforementioned liberation movements that prevailed in the civil war and compellingly controlled the Ethiopian state apparatus in 1991.

The opportunity for entrenching multiparty competitive politics since the inception of the first generation of political organizations remained farfetched due to structural problems embedded in their programmatic drives and modes of operation. Even though the first generation political groups strove to voice the concerns of their constituencies against the undoing of the imperial regime, their ideological orientation and mode of organization were inimical to efforts aimed at promoting multiparty politics. To make matters worse, several in the ranks of different generations of Ethiopian political groups resorted to violence as their means of struggle, thereby providing the militarily regime with justification to thwart possibilities for introducing multiparty politics by sanctifying the need for a one party state.

3.2. **Multiparty politics under EPRDF rule**

The second wave commenced when the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ousted the military regime in May 1991 and installed Ethiopia's second republic. The new state building process that accompanied the overthrow of military rule used the Conference for Transition to Peace and Democracy, convened in

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296 Ibid.

July 1991, as its entry point[297] in charting the path for the conduct of national politics during subsequent years. Among others, the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination including and up to secession was presented as the cornerstone of the post-1991 dispensation.[298] To this end, the 1991 Conference adopted the Transitional Charter as an interim constitution, which embodied the contents and terms and conditions of the country's new political and social contract.

The Transitional Period Charter outlined the core features of Ethiopian politics and political system comprising democratic rights (part one), basic principles of foreign policy (part two), and structure of the then incoming transitional government (part three). It also stipulated the establishment of a constitutional commission and a constituent assembly that are presumed to facilitate the end of the transitional period and steer the course towards entrenching a viable constitutional order.

The Charter also stipulated that an 87-seat Council of Representatives (CoR) would be established as a transitional legislative body, mainly composed of representatives of EPRDF-affiliated national liberation movements (part three, article seven).[299] The EPRDF-led Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) legalized the introduction of a multiparty-political system by enacting a proclamation that provided citizens with the right to form and register political parties of their choice as a basis for engagement in political processes while at the same time banning the defunct WPE from the political scene.[300] This proclamation availed options for parties to organize themselves as multiethnic country-wide or ethno-regional entities, depending on their preference.

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297 Gebru Asrat. 2014.
Ibid.
298 Ibid.
299 TGE. 1991.
300 TGE. 1993.

It is worth noting that most political parties established during the transitional period and thereafter were ethnic-based in their orientation and programmatic design. Among these, the majority were affiliated with the ruling Front and hence lacked autonomy and operational freedom. It is also argued that these ethnic-based parties failed to aggregate broad interplay of political interests.

On the contrary, their dispositions and modes of operation nurtured a fertile ground on which fragmentation underpinned by polarization on various outstanding issues of common concern flourished.[301] While such structural factors impeded efforts of ethnic-based parties to forge viable coalitions based on common denominators enshrined in their programs, EPRDF continued to proactively engage in consolidating its quest for ensuring dominance and monopoly of the public space.

3.3. Trajectories of EPRDF's overbearing influence on the Ethiopian party system

Thriving Ethiopian political parties (both ruling and opposition) played considerable roles in supporting post-1991 drives associated with liberalization, electoral management, and constitution making. Despite the proliferation political parties that involved in periodic elections as stipulated in the Transitional Charter and the FDRE Constitution, Ethiopia's party system was gradually subjected to EPRDF's manipulations aimed at transforming itself into a domineering guru. The unbridled prowess of the ruling Front gradually forced opposition parties to operate under a highly restrictive environment.

In the literature, a political system that is devoid of aura of competitiveness as experienced in Ethiopia is dubbed as pretentious[302] in terms of adopting democratic values and hence the gaining ground of the phenomenon of electoral authoritarianism.[303] Such political systems promulgate liberal constitutions to formalize multiparty

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301 Merera Gudina. 2011.
302 Siegfried Pausewang, Kjetil Tronvoll and Lovise Aalen (eds.). 2002.
303 9Marina Ottaway. 1995.

politics on one hand and perform against the spirit of the constitutions they developed using legal and extra-legal prohibitive mechanisms on the other. At face value, these appear to have a semblance of multi-partyism when looking at the number of legally recognized parties. However, when evaluated against factors like institutionalization, competitiveness, representation, and actual roles and functions, they share several features that are inherent in the workings of single party dispensations.

During the transition period signified by the relative opening up of the public space and establishment of democratic institutions, the EPRDF-led regime organized three electoral contests, namely the June 1992 local and regional elections, the June 1994 elections to the constituent assembly, and the May 1995 national and regional elections. However, the said elections and the established platforms for expediting them were open mainly to ethnic-based parties while implicitly excluding multiethnic organized groups from participation in as long as they are located beyond the fold of the mainstream EPRDF orbit. According to Merera, while ethnic parties were visibly over-represented multi-ethnic coalitions were visibly excluded.[304] Moreover, the 87 seats in the transitional legislative council were asymmetrically distributed in favour of subservient ethnic-based groups including members of the EPRDF coalition. The worst case in terms of representation is the fact that there was only one woman out of 87 members of the council.[305] Structurally, the dominant parties that took the centre-stage in the political process of the transitional period were ethnic-based as a result of which the major feature of the Ethiopian party system was exposed to fragmentation.[306]

The exclusion and discouragement of multiethnic political parties can be considered as the original sin committed during the second wave of political party formation in Ethiopia. This served as an entry point in the making of the emergence of a dysfunctional party

304 Merera Gudina. 2003.
305 Gebru Asrat. 2014.
306 Sarah Vaughan. 2015.

system. Hence, the politics of exclusion exhibited in the same manner from the very beginning became the *Achilles' heel* of the post-1991 democratization process.[307] During the period in question, opposition parties became alternative sites for citizens to articulate, aggregate and promote their political interest despite the odds. Following the adoption of the transitional charter, self-governing national/regional states were created through proclamation 7/1992.[308] It was at the time when the regime organized the June 1992 local elections from which the major participants in the transitional process like OLF and others like the All-Amhara People's Organization withdrew. The withdrawal of OLF and other political organizations was indicative of the continuation of the process of excluding differing views and voices from the official political scene.

The next significant move made during the transition period relates to initiating the process of establishing the constitution commission and the constituent assembly in 1993 in which no member of the opposition was involved. Despite this, the constituent assembly approved the constitution in 1994, including the most controversial provisions dealing with ethnic right to self-determination and session.[309] The constitution established the second republic along with its major political features.[310]

The abovementioned moves as pathways of formal liberalization of the political space was reflected in the FDRE Constitution that promised to uphold the right to association, expression, and demonstration, as long as they are peaceful and free of violation of the constitutional order and other laws.[311] Concurrently, the EPRDF-led regime overtly declared liberalization, deregulation and privatization while it covertly entrenched itself in activities that allowed it to take

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307 For more critical analysis and detail presentation of the limitation of the 1990s political process in Ethiopia see Theodore M. Vestal. 1999.
308 TGE. 1992.
309 Siegfried Pausewang, Kjetil Tronvoll and Lovise Aalen. 2002.
310 Tafesse Olika and Aklilu Abraham. 2007. "Legislation, Institutions and the Post 1991 Elections in Ethiopia" in Kassahun Berhanu et al. (eds.), *Electoral Politics, Decentralized governance and Constitutionalism in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
311 FDRE. 1995. FDRE Constitution, Articles 30, 31 and 38.

control of the political and economic situation. As it rhetorically declared the coming on the scene of a multiparty system, EPRDF strove by vehemently engaging itself towards the taking shape of a dominant political party in practice. By the same token, it also declared a free market economy as the cornerstone of public policy while effectively monopolizing major aspects of economic life under the rubric of its new ideology dubbed as revolutionary democracy.[312]

3.4. Elections and associated political developments under FDRE

Institutionalization of elections as a process has significant symbolic and substantive impact on the political development of a country. Election seasons are marked by intense mobilization of the electorate with a view to influencing the political process and by extensions, election outcomes. The establishment of electoral institutions signals the opening up of political spaces through which elections serve as means of mobilizing the masses to engage in politics. In Ethiopia, the constitution and electoral and party registration laws govern election-related matters.[313] Article 102 of the FDRE Constitution stipulated the need for establishing the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) that replaced the transitional election commission whose legitimacy in organizing the June 1992 elections was rendered questionable. Following its establishment, NEBE reportedly performed better in terms of technical handling of electoral processes as compared to its predecessor. However, some rightly argued that technical efficiency alone may not lend democratic credentials to the process.[314]

The first post-transition national and regional parliamentary elections were held in May 1995 when voters' registration, conducting electoral campaigns, and casting votes took place in a relative stable environment. However, the elections lacked competitiveness and were marred by exclusionary practices that precluded several

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312 Theodore M. Vestal. 1997.
313 Tafesse and Aklilu. 2007. p, 117.
314 Ibid.

legally recognized political actors from actively participating.[315] The major problems experienced were the absence of a strong opposition whose ranks were highly fragmented as a result of which the party system was dubbed as a de-facto one party system.[316] The partisan disposition of the government and the public and private media played negative roles during the 1995 electoral campaign.[317] The most serious problem was that different local actors who managed the process were excessively subservient to the wills and whims of the ruling Front that controlled government power.

As the first national elections held after the promulgation of the FDRE Constitution, the 1995 national and regional elections could be viewed as a significant political milestone, although indications that there was still a lot to be desired in terms of making the process democratic and all-inclusive was abundantly clear. As the Ethiopian case clearly depicted, regimes often brandish multi-partyism and elections as mechanisms for obtaining legitimacy while controlling the process by de-politicizing the electorate in order to overcome outcomes leading to regime change. These prompted apathy on the part of constituencies as an expression of their indifference towards participation in non-credible and nominal elections.

The second national and regional elections held in May 2000 were described as "the first fully contested elections".[318] This resulted from the opposition's decision to engage in the politics of contestation by abandoning the boycotting of elections as an option. The outcome of the May 2000 election was similar to the 1995 electoral contest, signified by the ruling Front's landslide victory resulting from intensive use of its advantage of incumbency. It is to be recalled that the said elections were held amidst disconcerting developments like the Ethio-Eritrean conflict and split in the ranks of the top EPRDF leadership.

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315 Ibid.
316 Vestal. 1999.
317 Tafesse and Aklilu. 2007.
318 Christopher Clapham. 2002.

The third national/regional elections held in 2005 were characterized by new developments that were remarkable as compared to the preceding ones. This was signified by coalition formation on the part of some major opposition groups. Different coalitions like the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) served as umbrellas that brought together a constellation of previously fragmented groups through aligning their electoral platforms and programs. This move provided alternatives to the incumbent by availing policy choices to the electorate. The relative success of these coalitions contributed to their better performance and considerable gains witnessed in a manner unprecedented hitherto.

The success resulting from coalition forming during the 2005 elections can thus be considered as a breakthrough that lent functionality to the previously disparate political groups. The high voter turnout and active participation in the electoral process witnessed at the time is illustrative that the previously prevalent apathy of the electorate was rendered a phenomenon of bygone days. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, however, political unrest and violence ensued during the aftermath due to divergence between the ruling Front and the opposition on the announced election results. This posed serious challenges on the democratization process due to a series of state responses to contain the challenges that it faced at the time. The 2005 elections thus became a litmus test that the regime failed to pass in its pledge to entrench democratization and political liberalization.

Developments that accompanied the post-2005 election outcomes characterized by mass arrests, wanton killings, and other forms of repression entailed the evident shrinking of the political space subsequently. Rather than rectifying inadequacies and shortfalls experienced in managing the 2005 electoral process, the ruling Front and the regime it spearheads resorted to enforcing a series of draconian laws enacted to ensure regime survival and sustain its unbridled control of matters.

Between 2005 and 2009, at least six draconian laws that hampered the activities of political parties, civil society, the media, and rights' activists and advocacy groups were introduced. These include: the 2007 Amended Electoral Proclamation, the 2008 Political Parties Registration Proclamation, the 2008 Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation, the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Law, the 2009 Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies Proclamation, and the 2009 Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties. These legislations set strict legal and institutional limits against inclusive and participatory multi-party democracy that reversed the initiated process of democratization. Moreover, legislative assemblies and public institutions at different levels were effectively silenced and therefore rendered dysfunctional. Consequently, the domineering EPRDF remained the only channel through which political interests can be deliberated on and articulated.

The shrinking of the public space that took shape in the aforementioned manner assumed multifaceted forms paving the way for EPRDF's unbridled control of state of affairs. In addition to the aforementioned, the ruling Front took recourse to various measures that included massive enlisting of civil servants, private sector operators, members of women and youth groups, functionaries of mass-based associations, and members of urban and rural communities as members.

Incentives in the form of employment opportunities, retaining jobs, receiving training and career advancement, and accessing public resources like business and land use licenses were brandished as rewards for compliance. In instances of non-conformism, the danger of losing jobs and being subjected to other forms of scrutiny were posed as implicit threats thereby forcing potential dissidents to fall in line. The situation at the grassroots level more or less reflected the abovementioned situation. In both the urban and rural areas, what were once mass organizations openly and formally became appendages of the state apparatus where leading positions were filled

by supporters and members of the regime and the ruling Front. The unwritten but widely recognized role of each EPRDF member was to recruit as many sympathizers as possible, engage in mobilizing support during elections, undertake surveillance on individuals and groups suspected of harbouring grievance against the system, report on officially unacceptable behaviours and tendencies, agitate in favour of government policies and actions, counter the moves of legally registered opposition groups, among others.

The gaining of ground and unabated persistence of the abovementioned politics of control and patronage paved the way for subsequent events that temporarily ensured the absolute predominance of EPRDF during subsequent elections held in 2010 and 2015. The results of the May 2010 Elections are indicative of the absolute preponderance of the ruling Front and its affiliates that claimed to have won 99.6% of the seats in the federal and sub-national legislative assemblies. A repeat of the same was witnessed during the 2015 electoral contests when NEBE declared that all (100%) parliamentary seats were won by the EPRDF and its affiliates. This was justified on the basis of the workings of the electoral system premised on plurality of votes.

1.5. Impact of ongoing political reforms on status and role of political parties

Ethiopia is currently undergoing unprecedented political change that is taking course in a manner that denigrates the political economy of EPRDF's developmental state model. This is evidenced by the coming on the scene of a pro-reform leadership that emerged from the ranks of the ruling Front in April 2018. Popular protests staged against the political and economic dominance of the ruling Front by disaffected youth in different parts of the country between 2015 and 2018, coupled by power struggle within the EPRDF coalition, is accountable for the ongoing reform process. The impact of these developments forced EPRDF to undertake comprehensive political reform towards a significant loss of grip on the part of the

domineering Front thus, forcing it to embark on reforms presumed to correct the imbalances associated with institutional decay from which it suffered.

Following its ascendance, the new pro-reform leadership took several initiatives that can have far-reaching implications for overhauling the country's party system in various ways. These include releasing incarcerated leaders of major opposition groups; allowing those that were forced into exile to participate in the new political process; repealing and amending the draconian laws that constrained meaningful activities of marginalized parties; reconstituting the electoral management authority (NEBE) through broad participation of stakeholders and facilitating the rehabilitation of previously disenfranchised political parties in a manner that could contribute to efforts to rehabilitate themselves by taking advantage of the new enabling environment. It can be assumed that in so far as the ongoing reforms are sustained by overcoming intermittent challenges, the chance for boosting the status and role of political parties could be enhanced in leaps and bounds.

There are indications of progress along this line that are already being experienced. Progress made to date relates to the formation of broad coalitions based on similarity of programmatic contents, congruence of objectives sought to be achieved, and forging common understanding on means and ways of settling minor differences through debates and consultations. More importantly, renouncing violence as a strategy by all parties that came on board could be viewed as a move in the right direction. Undoubtedly, perseverance in this regard strengthens improvement of the status of political parties in a manner that enables them to play meaningful roles in transforming the political landscape and state-society relations.

On the other hand, proliferation of over several dozen new political parties of varying persuasions following the recent changes is disconcerting since it can lead to a new wave of fragmentation and volatility. It is nonetheless envisaged that undesired effects resulting from this phenomenon could be offset, provided that the thriving

groups follow suit in forming broad principled coalitions based on congruence between their objectives and programmatic designs.

IV. Explaining the Logic of Dysfunction of Status of Party Role

Like the politics of the state, party politics in Ethiopia is dominated by personalities that exercise overwhelming influence to the detriment of members' participation and collective leadership. In other words, the role of founder-leaders still remains paramount. The Ethiopian political culture embedded in hierarchical authority seems to be very much at work as regards a good number of political parties in Ethiopia. The autocratic mindset bequeathed on the behaviours and practices of party leaders by past rigid political culture and tendencies that uphold politics of command are very much alive today as they were during the imperial and revolutionary times. Lack of democratic governance arrangements within parties has considerable implications for the democratization process in Ethiopia. This could be among the reasons that efforts towards forging coalitions among opposition groups have not gained ground mainly due to inter-party squabbles and personality clashes.

As said, the participation of opposition groups remained inadequate, thereby undermining prospects for entrenching a democratic dispensation. Opposition groups often complain that they faced intimidation and harassment from both the government and the ruling Front, forcing them to mainly operate in some major towns. Even though opposition political parties endeavour to enlist as many supporters as possible, they were handicapped in various ways to attain their objective in this regard. Such factors as insecurity, lack of resources, and the bellicose stance of government, inhibited progress in enhancing their status that allows them to play meaningful roles in transforming the political milieu. Nevertheless, the degree and extent of their attracting sympathy varies. While some have managed to mobilize people who can make assertive claims and demands upon the political system by displaying valour and militancy, others are limited to submitting pleas and appeals for fair treatment.

The socio-economic background of opposition party leaders/founders is largely similar across the board. Like several other factors that were ushered in by the 'modernization' drive in transitional societies, party politics in Ethiopia too is a recent phenomenon. Hence, the coming to the fore of the leadership of political parties is conditioned by some kind of exposure to the various elements of "modernization" (formal schooling, urban life, etc.).

Most of the political parties in Ethiopia that emerged after the fall of the military regime were not rooted in society, particularly during their formative years. Urban-based academics, ex-civil servants, and businessmen with formal education seized the opportune moment of the liberalized political atmosphere of the early 1990s in forming political parties. It was only after the preliminaries of forming parties that they attempted to penetrate society at large. The leadership of Ethiopian opposition parties is exclusively composed of the cosmopolitan and urban elite with a considerable degree of exposure to various aspects of modernity. Despite odds, some of the parties have managed to enlist ordinary people in the urban and rural areas as their members.

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Role Ethiopia

In comparison, EPRDF's military victory contributed to its political consolidation right from the beginning of the transition period. EPRDF's consolidation of political power and unbridled use of its advantage of incumbency led to the weakening of opposition groups that limited their proactive participation and by extension their roles and status.

Moreover, the parallel structures of the ruling party and the government characterized by fusion obstructed incentives for competitive politics and legitimate electoral processes under a seemingly multi-party framework. Boundaries between state ruling coalition structures are too hazy to differentiate and this paved the way for the ruling party to liberally use public resources to its advantage without restraint. Despite the mushrooming of numerous political organizations, the weakness of opposition parties signified by fragmentation and lack of programmatic focus on one hand and undue pressure exerted on them by the ruling Front on the other. These led to the latter's increased prowess gained due to its longevity and relatively better experience in the arts and crafts of politics.

Among the several factors (internal and external to the parties) that explain the poor performance of many Ethiopian political parties, the most outstanding ones relate to their narrow social base and the simple-plurality electoral system that constrain the efficacy of multiparty competitiveness. Currently, ethnic cleavage structures and interests influence party formation and mode of organization that constitute the 'social base' of the majority of the political parties including EPRDF. Hence, the underlying stimulus for institutionalizing the existing party system in Ethiopia is expedited through ethnocentric disposition rather than the efficacy of ideological lines and feasibility of party programmes.

Political parties and the party system in Ethiopia are largely organized along ethnic lines, contradicting the major function of political parties as inclusive public spaces for interest bargain,

articulation, aggregation and promotion. The centrality of the ethnic factor in the formation and operation of parties thus became harbingers of fragmentation of political parties in Ethiopia. Hence, parties that claim to advance the interest of respective ethnic parties could not come together as a result of their own shortcomings and undue influence of the incumbent party. Even in the relative absence of a stifling influence of the ruling Front as was in the past, many ethnic-based parties could not come together to put strong impact on the ongoing political reform and gain resilience for enhancing their status and role.

V. Recommendations on the Way Forward

The functional role of political parties is conditioned and influenced by many factors. These include: internal organization, programmatic content, structural design, social base, impact of external political factors, and the workings of the party and political systems prevailing in the countries. Political parties are both the product of encountered governance problems and agents of change towards installing a vibrant democratic order.

One of the major problems that the Ethiopian party system faces is lack of democratic exercise within each political party, including the incumbent EPRDF. EPRDF, for long, adopted democratic centralism, which is an indication of a lack of unabridged democratic exercises. Other parties outside the fold of the EPRDF coalition also lack organizational structures and mechanisms that allow for proactive participation of their members. Decision-making within these parties is often dominated by influential individuals that dictate on the course of action to be pursued. Hence, there is a need to introduce avenues for broad-based intra-party consultations with a view to forging consensus and ensuring unity of purpose.

Undue rivalries, personality clashes, zero-sum game competitions, character assassination, and unnecessary labelling of one another as

enemy of the popular interest largely characterize relations between Ethiopian political parties. Civil negotiation, principled debate and dialogue, and responsible bargaining approaches aimed at finding win-win solutions to divergent positions on outstanding issues are largely absent in their interactions. The policy direction to be followed in this regard should take note of the seriousness of these problems that adversely impact on the democratization process. Hence, political parties need to recognize the efficacy of democracy in entrenching cordiality, civility, and empathy as hallmarks of their relations from which all could immensely benefit. To this end, they must work towards creating a common consultative platform on which they discuss common problems, share experiences, and make use of each other's comparative advantages regardless of differences in tactics, strategies, goals, and ideological orientations.

Democratic political culture in society gains ground only if parties are keen to learn about and practice democracy. This calls for promoting robust commitment towards entrenching democratic principles and ethos that create opportunities for broadening the political space. In doing so, political parties can serve as sites for engaging in training, knowledge and experience sharing, and exchange of views, allowing for broad agreements on issues of common concern.

Party fragmentation, which is exacerbated by polarization, parochialism, and lack of institutionalization, adversely affected the role and status of Ethiopian political parties, rendering their efforts to influence political processes futile. As Huntington (1968) noted, institutionalized party systems are not subordinated to the interests of a few ambitious leaders, but rather acquire an independent status and value of their own. They should, therefore, be encouraged to form principled coalitions that have the potential of enhancing their bargaining power in their dealings with the government and other stakeholders. Even though efforts in this regard have recently commenced in Ethiopia as evidenced by the coming together of five groups in forming a nation-wide party, several dozen still continue operating individually. It is presumed that successful coalition

formation increases the membership and support base of parties. It is thus recommended that those that shy away from doing so follow suit by considering the multifaceted benefits that could be reaped in forging broad coalitions. It should be noted that resource constraints that negatively impact on the role and status of most Ethiopian political parties, could be alleviated by pooling their fragmented endowments, capacities, and other amenities.

Moreover, the weak institutionalization status of most Ethiopian political parties has contributed to their losing ground in the effort to overcome various encountered problems. Forming viable coalitions has the potential that enables parties to avert the ever-present menace of fluidity and volatility resulting from paucity of institutionalization. Moreover, it can be justifiably claimed that adequately institutionalized party systems have the tendency of forcing governments to recognize the legitimacy of political parties. Institutionalization, therefore, prompts power holders to view political parties as necessary ingredients of democratic politics, despite their misgivings and scepticisms against either specific or all parties in general.

Political parties' role in Ethiopia has been mainly limited to election seasons when their concern is focused on mobilizing support. However, the function of parties cannot be exclusively limited to electoral contests alone. It is, thus, worthwhile to suggest that parties should also act as pressure groups for ensuring accountability of government, building up support bases, and broadening the political space in the period that falls outside election seasons.

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7. SECURITY IN THE ELECTION CYCLE IN ETHIOPIA

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SECURITY IN THE ELECTION CYCLE IN ETHIOPIA

Abstract

It is not external interference or widespread internal insurgency that poses the fundamental threat to the successful running of secure elections. The security of the election hinges on the interactions among political parties - mainly parties that have hitherto positioned themselves as representing particular ethnic communities. The existing Regional Political parties and the special/militia forces attached to them may guarantee local stability but they could also turn into sources of insecurity. Dealing with the threats requires a common understanding of threats on the part of all the stakeholders in the elections. This is essential to design holistic endeavour that safeguard the elections. Hence, the focus of this paper is on the political setting and recent developments in the nation that can pave the way for security threats to the upcoming 2020 national election. It suggests mechanisms to make an integrated response to election security threats.

1. The political setting and its challenges

With national elections scheduled to be held in August 2020,political discourse in Ethiopia has begun to revolve around the readiness of the country to handle what promises to be a competitive exercise whose outcome will decide Ethiopia's political trajectory for the foreseeable future.

Swinging from feudalism to socialism and 'revolutionary democracy' for a period spanning half a century, Ethiopia has yet to develop a culture of democratic elections and the tradition of executive, legislative and judicial institutions with checks and balances that mark rule by the consent of the people.

It is not that the Ethiopian people are not used to polls. They have voted in a number of elections in the past, more recently since 1991 under the EPRDF-led Government[319]. With the exception of 2005 when they were marred by violence; most elections pitted the powerful party against a fractured opposition with predictable outcomes. The ruling party emerged confident that it had received a new mandate while the Opposition felt disadvantaged by an uneven playing field. The general public realized there was really no choice to be made.

Convinced that peaceful competition held no prospects for success, some in opposition opted for prosecuting an armed struggle, a number of them operating from Eritrea. It was an uphill struggle in the face of a tightly organized state protected by a strong military, security and law enforcement apparatus. The ruling party's authority extended deep in the society. A high proportion of civil servants and administrators of the kebeles (neighbourhood units of administration) were aligned to the party, which at its height, boasted almost 8 million members. For many, losing an election threatened their livelihoods. For those in opposition, the political struggle was also a path to improve their lives and place in society, but with the lack of success, competing for power appeared futile and fed the growing frustration.

How suitable is the 'first past the post/winner take all' system when the reality is that the State is entwined with the party? The chances for change are virtually non-existent. Wouldn't a system of proportional representation provide a better opportunity for those in opposition to win seats and pose a real challenge? This is a valid question, no doubt, but unlikely to be addressed at present, given the fact that the old rules remain in place for the upcoming election.

Still, the fall from grace of the former EPRDF and the decision of three out of four of its constituent parties to merge into the newly

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319 Components of the EPRDF – Tigrai Peoples Liberation Front, Oromo Democratic Party (formerly OPDO), Amhara Democratic Party (formerly ANDM) and the Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM)

established Prosperity Party allows for the possibility to consider that the 2020 elections may introduce a level of competition perhaps not witnessed so far in the country.

Many observers agree that Ethiopia is not an easy country to govern. Divided by the mountainous terrain, Ethiopians comprise a wide variety of ethnic- linguistic and religious communities.[320]The politics of the past three decades with ethnic-based states and parties have drawn clear internal boundaries with most citizens identifying with their 'ethnic' party rather than pan-Ethiopian political organizations, reflecting shared political values and a national agenda.

The challenge of managing diversity has marked Ethiopian political life since the middle of the last century. Reeling from the traumatic separation of Eritrea, the decision to establish six regions based on ethnicity/language under a federal constitution with a controversial clause providing for secession may well have provided a respite from armed conflict. Political conformity was ensured by the omnipresent ruling party, which also solicited the support of allied parties from non-EPRDF-ruled regions.[321]What emerged since 1991 was a political divide between a) the supporters of the EPRDF, b) the opponents of the ruling party that stood for greater federalism, and c) opponents that favoured the dismantling of the ethnic federal system and the prioritization of national unity. Over time, the resentment engendered by the domination of the TPLF, fatigue of EPRDF rule, growing economic crisis and youth unemployment upended the status quo, bringing in Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who subsequently established the Prosperity Party through the merger of the three EPRDF components, minus the TPLF.

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320 Some 60 ethnic groups speaking languages from Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilo-Saharan language groups.
321 'Ethnic regions' – Afar, Amhara, Harar, Oromia, Somali, Tigrai 'Mixed regions' – Southern Peoples R, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz. Cities – Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa EPRDF ruled regions – Amhara, Oromia, Southern Peoples R and Tigrai + city of Addis Ababa

The evolving political picture in the pre-election period stands in clear contrast to that of the recent past. While pledging to honour the constitution and maintain the federal system, the Prosperity Party has abandoned the EPRDF principles of 'revolutionary democracy' that guided the 'developmental state.'

Opening membership to all Ethiopians, the Prosperity Party (PP) intends to compete in all regions, and not only those ruled directly by EPRDF in the past. In contrast, the TPLF stands in opposition, seeking to draw together all elements that consider the PP as a threat to the 'multi-national federation.' A number of other parties ranging from the long-established Oromo Liberation Front to the newly minted Amhara National Movement (NAMA), and re-organized Citizens Party who reflect various shades of federalist opinion have entered the political playing field. Alliances are expected though it's too early to guess who goes where at this point in time.

Certainly, there are those who argue that the 'developmental state' model pursued by the EPRDF did achieve some gains in the fight against poverty, and thus call for the State to continue to play a key role in the economy. Others retort that the more recent manifestations of high inflation, sagging exports, foreign exchange shortages, looming debt added to the uneven distribution of benefits are evidence that the country has outgrown the previous model. They call for liberalization measures to jump-start the private sector and create the jobs needed by the unemployed youth and millions who will join the job queue every year.

Whatever differences there may be between parties over the path to be followed by the Government, a commitment by all for democratic discourse leading to a peaceful election is essential. To this effect, a number of forums have been organized over the past few months including one titled 'The Ethiopia we want in 2032'[322] involving

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322 2032 in the Ethiopian calendar is 2040 in the Gregorian calendar. The reference is to a visioning exercise for 20 years.

all key political parties, representatives of civil society, business persons, religious leaders and prominent personalities of influence. In February, political parties and other stakeholders met to discuss how to frame a national dialogue. Even before that and following extensive negotiations, 107 political parties signed a 'Code of Conduct' that will hopefully guide their operations. They have agreed to establish a joint council tasked to settle disputes arising between themselves.

2. Learning from history – past elections in Ethiopia

Ethiopians view the arrival of elections with a mixture of hope, resignation and dread. The prospect of a competitive election generated hope in the 2005 elections, particularly for those who wished to see change. The violence that followed, however, gave way to a sense of dread. Elections began to be perceived as phenomena, when pent-up feelings explode in the open, aggravating the divisions in the society between those who (justifiably or not) feel cheated out of victory and others that feel an existential threat if the Opposition were to win.

Violent rioting, a heavy-handed response, prison sentences and exile marked the aftermath of the 2005 elections, in which official results indicated that the Opposition had won hands down in Addis Ababa and had taken 32% of the seats in Parliament (House of Peoples Representatives). Describing the elections as a 'historic event,' the Carter Centre – one of the key international observers - reported *"flawed counting and tabulation process in many areas…repeated incidents of serious post-election violence…a significant delay in finalizing election results,"* before concluding that the process *"did not fulfil Ethiopia's obligations to ensure the exercise of political rights and freedoms necessary for genuinely democratic elections."*

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The last two national elections in 2010 and 2015 were tolerated with a sense of resignation as the outcome in both cases was known, given the overwhelming strength of the ruling party in contrast with the divided and demoralized opposition parties that had yet to recover from the trauma of 2005.

The May 2010 election results indicated that the EPRDF won 90% of seats in parliament. The appeals filed by the Opposition with the National Elections Board (NEBE) and the highest court were rejected. The Chief EU observer This Berman reported that the elections were "peaceful and well organized" but noted an "uneven playing field" criticizing the ruling party for using state resources for its re-election campaign.

The May 2015 elections heralded complete victory of the EPRDF and allied parties. The EPRDF took 500 of the 547 seats while its allies took the remaining seats. Opposition parties complained of restrictive practices in the campaign period - including the arrest of leaders - and blamed the media for biased reporting. Despite the undercurrent of frustration with the status quo that prevailed in urban and some rural areas, the legislature had turned into, essentially, a one-party forum. The absence of violence notwithstanding, even Ethiopians who supported the Government felt let down by the outcome of the vote.

Only a year had passed before waves of unrest began to shake the foundation of the long-standing rule of the EPRDF, leading to the significant reordering of the political class with the withdrawal of the TPLF to Tigrai and the ascendancy of Oromo political leaders, supported by allies from the Amhara and the Southern components of the ruling party. With the opening of political space, the return of armed opposition groups and enabling legislation, the stage has been set for the 2020 elections that promise to be competitive. However, the palpable relief that comes from the prospects of real elections has been tempered by the fear of widespread violence and, deeper worry about the resilience of the country to absorb the shock of change that the election period may generate. This explains the concern among the Ethiopian public and the wider international community, given the short time remaining before the elections and the multitude of tasks that need to be completed. For the elections to be recognized as free and fair (or as significantly freer and fairer than ever before),

not only do they need to reflect lively competition, but, they need to be held in a secure environment that will be judged to have been acceptable in the eyes of the people, and all those witnessing the process.

3. **Political threats to the security of the 2020 Elections**

The political opening that ushered in the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in April 2018resulted in the release of prisoners, a return to the country of armed groups pledging to participate in peaceful democratic competition, and the resurgence of political activity spurred on by a newly vibrant local media. Proven to have a powerful – and at times deadly effect on the youth, social media has had a field day. Long suppressed resentments regarding borders between ethnic regions and the urge to settle scores with the EPRDF 'system' manifested themselves in public demonstrations and riots resulting in an upsurge in violence in various parts of the country. A significant number of the demands require amending the Constitution, a document that some of the strong-minded prefer to tear up once and for all. Needless to say, the conflicts have not been resolved and represent a serious threat to the security of the 2020 elections.

3.1. Hotspots

3.1.1 Inter-Regional State issues

<u>Afar- Somali:</u> Conflicting claims over territory between the Afar and the Issa (Somali) communities.
<u>Amhara-Tigrai:</u> The areas in Tigrai claimed by Amhara political leaders – Wolkait and Raya.
<u>Amhara- Benishangul:</u> The Metekel area in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State which used to be part of the Amhara populated West Gojjam Province prior to 1991.
<u>Benishangul – Oromia</u>: The area inhabited by Oromo speakers currently within Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State which used to

be part of West Wollega Province prior to 1991.

Gedeo-Guji/Oromo: Conflict over the use of pastureland and water resources between the Gedo community in South Ethiopian Regional State and Guji community of Oromia Regional State.

Harar-Oromia: Tension between the administration of Harar Regional State and the surrounding Oromia Regional State

Oromo-Somali – competition for natural resources and over traditional rights between communities belonging to the Oromo and Somali Regional States. This includes the tensions and violence witnessed in the city of Dire Dawa.

3.1.2 Intra-State and Inter-Party issues

Addis Ababa-Oromia: Tensions between Oromo Democratic Party (ODP-PP), and pan-Ethiopian parties over the identity and status of the capital.

Amhara: Community and inter-party confrontations in the Oromo zones of Amhara Regional State (along the Debre Sina-Kombolcha highway).

Amhara: Conflict between the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP-PP) and leaders of the Qemant community over governance.

Benishangul: Tensions between communities over representation in the Government of the Regional State.

Gambella: Between Anuak and Nuer communities over land encroachment and authority over the Government of the Regional State.

Oromia: Contestation over authority and influence between Oromo political parties, ODP/PP and Jawar Mohammed (political activist).

Oromia- Conflict between the Borana and Gerri communities over resources and traditional land/water use rights. Gerris closely linked with Somali RS.

Southern Ethiopian Peoples RS: Between communities in conflict in Tepi and Segen zones.

Southern Ethiopian Peoples RS: Tensions related to upcoming referenda in Wolaita and other zones in the Regional State.

3.1.3 Insecurity in institutions of higher education

Colleges and universities across the country, with few exceptions, have been hit by political conflicts between students that have turned violent on a number of occasions; conflicts fanned by cadres of political organizations and social media activists. The insecurity in colleges and universities has raised questions about inter-community relations and the value of the education being provided to students across the country in particular. If the youth in higher learning institutions cannot live and learn together what does this say about the viability of Ethiopia as a united country?

Pressed to keep doors open and cognizant that state universities are its responsibility, the Federal Government 2019 empowered the Federal Police early in December 2019 to provide security in institutions of higher learning. Interestingly, the provision of education in the dozens of private colleges across the country does not seem to have been disrupted.

5.2. Uptick in insecurity

Though the lack of readiness of political parties to mount effective campaigns in the remaining few months is seen as a major drawback, it is the uncertain security situation that threatens the holding of free and fair elections – even in relative terms – in Ethiopia. It is not that there is disorder all over the land. For the most part, people continue to go about their lives in near normal conditions. But with the Government stretched thin, putting out fires here and there even as it hesitates to avoid taking heavy handed measures, people are – at the very least – experiencing higher levels of uncertainty. The tension has been heightened by attacks on churches and mosques, something new in the country and a new low on the scale of intolerance in the highly diversified society. But in significant pockets around the country, what people face is more than a heightened state of uncertainty. Threats, accompanied by violence have led to unprecedented displacement. In some localities, public and private

properties have been destroyed and transportation and commerce disrupted for considerable periods of time. Authorities have noted a significant increase in the flow of illegal arms from neighbouring states like Sudan. The Southern Ethiopia Region and western Oromia have been placed under "Command Posts."The insecurity is intricately linked to the struggle for power between political parties and compounded by the ready availability of unemployed youth who resent the disparities in wealth and see little hope for the future.

Some youth find meaning in joining local ethnic security forces that now have to be reckoned with when considering options to deal with insecurity. Regional police forces under the command of the authorities of the regional states during the days of EPRDF appear to have lost their bearings with the transformation of central political authority. Even before ruling party components decided to merge into the PP (Oromo, Amhara), or remain outside (Tigrai), they had – more or less – adopted the popular ethnic-nationalist posture of their opponents. This development invariably affected the security organs of the regional states and they began to appear as 'militia' of their ethnic community. To this one can add the 'Special Police' of the Somali Regional State that, in addition to confronting insurgents in the state, played a role in the unprecedented displacement in the areas bordering Oromia.

3.3   Secure Elections –the role of parties

3.3.1. The new centre

The dissolution of the EPRDF in early December 2019, the birth of the Prosperity Party[323], and the decision of the TPLF to go its own

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323 Parties that merged to form the Prosperity Party
Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP)
Benishangul-Gumuz Democratic Party (BDP)
Oromo Democratic Party (ODP)
Amhara Democratic Party (ADP)
Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM)
Somali Democratic Party
Gambela Peoples Democratic Movement (GPDM)

way marks a major transformation in the political landscape. This development will have a major impact on the line up of political forces ahead of the elections, and on the security of the elections themselves.

With the ODP, ADP and SEPDM in its ranks now joined by the Somali, Afar, Gambella, Benishangul and Harari former 'sister parties', the Prosperity Party has placed itself at the centre of the political spectrum and is setting up its structures.[324]Availing itself of the EPRDF structures (minus TPLF), the PP is sparing no time to inculcate its cadres with Dr. Abiy's doctrine of MEDEMER (Synergy). Its membership based on residence rather than ethnicity, PP aims to attract the large minorities in the bigger regional states to its ranks. The change will not sit well with traditionalists still coming to terms with the new ways of doing things. The Prime Minister and his allies are already in campaign mode with the measures taken in Addis Ababa even before the merger to supply school children in government schools with uniforms and exercise books free of charge along with free school lunches.

Supported by the old EPRDF structure, embracing new regions as equals and narrowing its political gap with Addis Ababa centred multi-ethnic parties, the PP may have a stabilizing influence on the Ethiopian scene, given its potential size and reach across the country. This may have a calming effect on the elections, but much would depend on the PP's performance on the ground and the reaction of those that will organize to oppose it. The bad blood between the PP and TPLF is likely to continue as most Tigrayans would remain loyal to the latter. While this does not automatically translate into a security threat for the upcoming elections, the establishment of an opposition alliance spanning the country may raise political temperature, particularly in areas where the disputes (described earlier in the paper) already exist.

Harari National League (HNL)

324 Central Committee- Oromo 61, Amhara 50, Southerns 22, Somali 12, Tigrai 11, Afar 9, and 5 each for Benishangul, Harari and Gambela. The same ratio applies to the expanded Executive Committee. The Somalis, now ahead of Tigrai, is claiming more seats.

3.3.2 Competition in Oromia and Amhara Regional States

Given the geo-political positions of the two states in Ethiopia, preparations for the elections in Oromia and the Amhara regions will be watched with great interest. In Oromia, the ODP is challenged by the older and venerated Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Though OLF leader Daoud Ibsa has declared that his troops are fully involved in the demilitarization and integration process underway, there is an armed OLF wing active in western Oromia and pockets elsewhere in the region whose relationship with the main-line OLF are unclear. There are also other OLF related groupings whose leaders have returned from abroad, as well as the Oromo Federal Congress of Professor Merara Gudina and Bekele Gerba.

The OLF and other Oromo organizations are firm believers in ethnic federalism, which would signal that they share the general political lines of the TPLF in contrast to the policies advocated by Pan Ethiopian and predominantly Amhara parties. The impression gained from Oromo organizations is that except for the domination of the TPLF and the resultant democratic deficit, the former system wasn't bad. They do not advocate constitutional changes and insist on the maintenance of rights and privileges gained in the 1995 Constitution, including special rights to Finfinne (Oromo name for Addis Ababa). The most visible fault-line between Oromo organizations and others zeroes in on the question of the identity of Ethiopia's capital. There, the battle is joined between Oromo parties on the one hand, and the 'Balderas for Genuine Democracy' led by activist Iskinder Nega, supported by Pan Ethiopian parties like the Citizenship Party on the other. Where the PP eventually falls on this issue remains to be seen thoughPrime Minister Abiy has already questioned the legality of Iskinder Nega's movement.

Early in December, Daoud Ibsa told the media 'we think we will win a majority in Oromia and win significant seats in the federal parliament.' He described the OLF as an 'identity' - more than a

party. The OLF believes that the Oromos must be empowered on their territories just like others are in theirs. In addition, like other Oromo organizations, the OLF believes that Finfinneis an integral part of Oromia, even as it is the capital of Ethiopia.

Efforts have been underway since late September 2019 to identify modalities on how Oromo political organizations could cooperate in promoting stability in the period leading up to elections. It is rare to hear criticism between the ODP, OLF, other OLF factions and the social media activist, Jawar Mohammed. Despite the unfortunate incident of 22 October at the Jawar residence led to disturbances resulting in the death of 86 persons, both the Government and Jawar seemed to have recently buried the row. Following the decision of the OLF, OFC, OLF faction led by Kemal Gelchu and Jawar Mohammed to join hands, however, the battle to win hearts and minds in Oromia between the new coalition and the Prosperity Party has started in earnest in the New Year.

The merger of the former EPRDF components into the PP may have doomed efforts to mount a broad Oromo-wide front of organizations as the PP is not organized along ethnic lines. OLF's Daoud Ibsa finds the situation puzzling as the OLF would find it difficult to talk to the PP as an Oromo organization now that ODP no longer exists.

A wide-open aggressive political competition between Oromo political organizations in the upcoming elections may have the benefit of identifying real winners and losers but this may come at the cost of heightened insecurity and violence.

In the Amhara Region, the ADP has positioned itself as the guardian of Amhara rights, particularly in matters relating to lands in Tigrai, Benishangul and Sudan, which the Amhara community believe belong to them. Concerned over being outflanked by the new strongly Amhara nationalist party – the Amhara National Movement (NAMA) - and weakened by the split in its leadership

leading to the assassination of the former Regional State President and his colleagues, ADP has been busily engaged in an internal reorganization process.

At the same time, the ADP is engaged in a dual game of competition and collaboration with NAMA. The intention appears to be to develop a close working relationship while keeping Pan-Ethiopian organizations such as the Citizenship Party, the Ethiopian Democratic Party and others at bay.How long this can last is open to question. With the ADP collapsing into the multi-ethnic Prosperity Party, NAMA remains the only visible and prominent party standing solely for Amhara interests. But like the case of the ODP, the structures of the defunct EPRDF in the Amhara region are available for the PP to utilize, possibly enabling it to make a strong showing at the national elections.

Should the PP (through its former ADP elements) manage to develop a working relationship with NAMA, a trouble-free election may be witnessed in most parts of the Amhara region, although insecurity could persist in areas bordering Tigrai and Benishangul and in localities of the Oromo special zone within the Amhara region.

3.3.3 The new centre of resistance

Limited to operating mainly in Tigrai, the sole successor carrying the legacy of the EPRDF on its shoulders is the TPLF. From Day One of the new changes, the TPLF has staked its position on opposing the abandonment of 'revolutionary democracy' and the merger of the components of the former ruling party into the PP. Benefitting from a widely held view by Tigreans that they are being targeted by the new authorities, the TPLF has undoubtedly strengthened its position among the population.

With a long history of armed struggle, supplemented by twenty-seven years of occupying decisive leadership positions in the country, the TPLF commands authority over a well-financed endowment and a

development-oriented mass-based association that have now come in handy in the task of governing the defiant regional state. The TPLF can also count on the support of the affluent Tigrayan business community. That said, there are reports of widespread dissatisfaction in Tigrai with the TPLF leadership.

In addition to the TPLF, two small parties are now operating in Tigrai. ARENA for Democracy and Sovereignty led by Abraha Desta,a part of the MEDREK group of parties, has been in existence for a number of years. Recently, the Tigrai Democratic Party, led by veteran TPLF leader Aregawi Berhe made an appearance. Having secured the 4,000 signatures required of regional parties, TDP has applied for registration at the National Elections Board (NEBE) declaring its readiness to merge with other like parties, and in this regard has opened talks with ARENA. In terms of size, however, the two parties pale in comparison with the TPLF.

Taking into account the dominant position of the TPLF in Tigrai, it would be natural to assume that the elections will take place in relative security. Yet, there are compelling reasons to give attention to developments in Tigrai before, during and after the elections.
The first relates to security in the run up and during the elections in areas that are claimed by Amhara political organizations such as the ADP/ PP and NAMA. The NEBE will honor the constituencies and the regional state in which they are found today, but tensions are likely to be heightened starting as early as the period of voter registration.

The second concerns the estranged relations between the Federal Government in Addis Ababa and the regional Government in Mekelle. With the ascent to power of Prime Minister Abiy and the move to Tigrai of senior TPLF Government and Party leaders, the influence of the TPLF in the national capital and regions other than Tigrai has diminished significantly, as has the writ of the Federal Government over Tigrai. While the regional state remains part of

the Ethiopian federation, its relations with the centre continue to be fraught with mutual animosity and distrust that shows no sign of abating. The refusal of Mekelle to hand over former Security czar Getachew Assefa to federal authorities remains a painful reminder of federal limitations, while the recent denial of travel to Tigrai by a Chinese delegation demonstrated to Mekelle the sort of tools available to the Federal Government if it wished to employ them.

The third issue that needs close attention is the convening role played by the TPLF recently bringing together for consultations in Mekelle opponents of the Federal Government. In September, some 39 relatively modest parties representing almost all of the country's ethnic groups – including the Oromo Federalist Congress – gathered to express their concern over where the country was headed and to announce their readiness to cooperate in safeguarding the federal system, which in their view was under attack. A follow-up and reportedly larger meeting was held in Mekelle in early December, during which time participants from nine regional states agreed to undertake a peaceful struggle to 'save' the country. Warning that the constitutional order was in danger, participants affirmed that 'peoples, nations and nationalities are sovereign…the national elections must take place on time.'

Although the more visibly influential parties like the OLF and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) declined to accept the invitation to Mekelle, citing their history of antagonism with the TPLF, Prime Minister Abiy's Government is no doubt taking note of the developments and gauging the impact of these gatherings on the positioning of opposition parties in the upcoming elections. Beyond Tigray, it is attempt of the TPLF to build a nation-wide coalition to confront the Prosperity Party that is of interest and whether the confrontation will be a peaceful one or not.

Lastly, the proximity of Tigrai to Eritrea and the security of the international border need to be kept in mind. It is expected that the national elections will be held in areas currently under the control

of the Ethiopian Armed Forces even if the Boundary Commission rules that the areas fall within Eritrea. While Ethiopia has committed itself to implement the border ruling in full, the demarcation of the border has not begun. Though there may not be serious risk of security or conflict in the border areas where the election will take place given current relations between Addis Ababa and Asmara, it will be necessary to observe developments closely.

3.3.4 The South in fragmentation

The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) is as complex in its composition as its name implies. To date, some 56 ethnic groups have been registered in the region, which now boasts a population of more than 20 million. The EPRDF affiliate SEPDM held sway across the large region over the past quarter century with occasional challenges from the Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM) and smaller parties from Wolaita, Hadiya, Kembatta, Guraghe and other communities.

The sheer number of ethnic groups may have compelled the consolidation of ethnic groupings into one political organization (SEPDM), but this may well have not satisfied those like the Sidama who had their own SLM dating from several decades earlier. The location of the regional capital – Hawassa in Sidama zone – was a source of concern for those who had to travel up to 300 kilometers to reach it to conduct their affairs. For the Sidamas – who, at 4.1 million, constituted the largest ethnic group in the south, the priority was the elevation of the Sidama zone to the status of Regional State with Hawassa as its capital.

With the loosening of EPRDF's strings of authority, the Sidamas took the initiative to hold a referendum over the status and future of their region, resulting in a vote of over 98% in favour of establishing a regional state. While the voting, which took place on 20 November, was largely peaceful, the preparatory process was marred by poor communication and lack of trust. Suspecting that

the Federal Government was going to deny them the referendum as the statutory year had passed and the request submitted had not been addressed, Sidama youth rioted in late July in Hawassa and elsewhere in the zone. The violence resulted in the death of 53 people (mostly Sidama) and targeted destruction of property of non-Sidama residents of the zone. The Government placed the entire Southern Region under the authority of a military Command Post, arresting over 1,000 persons. Sidama zone and Hawassa city officials were suspended and warnings issued that such violence would not be tolerated in other zones.

Now that it is well on the way to becoming a regional state, the upcoming elections in Sidama may take place in a relatively peaceful – and non-competitive - atmosphere, though in constituencies such as Hawassa where non-Sidamas have a notable presence and may present candidates, competition could breed some tension. What needs to be closely watched in the south is the implementation of the decision of ten other zones for referenda to repeat the Sidama experience.[325]The second biggest ethnic group in the southern region – the Wolaita (2.2 million)– held a demonstration in its capital Soddo on 22 December along with what appeared to be a successful stay-home strike. There are reports that the Secretary General of the Wolaita National Movement (Andualem Tadesse Boltena) had been arrested a few days earlier.

Concerned over the impending fragmentation of the Southern Region into as many as 11 components and what the implications would be for the rest of the country, the ruling party's southern wing, SEPDM,

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325 Zones requesting statehood

Kaffa	November 15, 2018
Guraghe	November 28, 2018
Bench-Maji	November 29, 2018
Hadiya	December 1, 2018
Dawro	December 6, 2018
Wolaita	December 9, 2018
Gamo	December 12, 2018
Kembata-Tembaro	December 19, 2018
South Omo	April 23, 2019
Gofa	May 22, 2019
Gedo	No information. Zone detached from SNNPRS following Sidama referendum

announced a restructuring study to assess the mushrooming demands for statehood and came up with scenarios that suggested that the region be maintained as is, or break up into two or more regions. The study could not put the brakes on the demand by the zones for regional state status. Thedrafters of the Federal Constitution had chosen to make it relatively straightforward for referenda to be held and for results to be honoured.

At a January 2020 meeting with Southern Region leaders, Prime Minister Abiy once again pitched a solution that did not break up the regional state into 10 or more pieces. Without providing a magic figure, the PM announced that the implementation of the choice arrived at would have to wait for the completion of the August 2020 elections.

Given this fast-evolving situation, the elections in the remaining zones of the SNNPRS would have to be watched closely. Though hard to predict, it would appear that all candidates would be expected to pronounce themselves openly and favourably on the question of referendum. But whatever the choice, taking into account the tension and violence experienced in pockets of the SNNPRS, the authorities will have to demonstrate vigilance through all stages of the electoral cycle.

3.3.5 Resurgent Somali region

Covering just over a quarter of the territory of Ethiopia, the expansive Somali Region is rapidly entering the political mainstream for three main reasons. With a surge in population, Somali-Ethiopians have displaced the Tigrayans to constitute the third biggest language group in Ethiopia. Also, the dynamic Mustapha Omer, whohas since August 2018 taken over the leadership of the region and the ruling Somali Democratic Party, has made his mark as a charismatic figure with an appeal beyond his region. Last but not least, the Somali region has significant reserves of natural gas ready to be transported to Djibouti and the world through a pipeline to be built by China.

With the return earlier this year to Ethiopia of the mainline Ogaden National Liberation Front led by the recently retired Admiral Mohamed Omar Osman, the ONLF is set to mobilize support from the large Ogadeni clan as it plans for the next elections. Its competition will come from the former SDP, which has now merged with Prosperity Party. A new entrant could be the Somali Unity Party, which only registered with the NEBE on 11 December.

Elections in the Somali region have traditionally been less structured affairs with mobile polling stations marked by numerous irregularities, only tolerated given the size of the territory, inadequate infrastructure and hostile natural environment. This time around, though, with the ONLF present in the region, the competition between the two major parties is likely to be stiff. Given the circumstances, the election could generate considerable tension across the Somali-speaking community, and violent actions cannot be ruled out. The fact that the ONLF has in the past not shirked from announcing its intention to lead the region out of Ethiopia, raises the stakes of the election even more. There has, however, been a shift in the approach of the ONLF recently. No longer openly espousing secession, it chooses to advocate for self-determination within a real federation of equals.

Though the two parties could agree to work together and share power, the likelihood of a tense standoff and even violence cannot be ruled out, casting a long shadow over the elections.

3.3.6 Other ethnic based parties

The Prosperity Party has incorporated parties from Afar, Harar, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella into its ranks, something the EPRDF never got around to doing. The sense of ownership that this could generate is likely to motivate the newly integrated parties to campaign vigorously for the PP in these hitherto marginalized areas. Still, competition between- and within - communities could create conditions for existing parties outside of the PP to rise to the challenge.

Parties elsewhere in the country, committed to opposing the ruling party would be expected to seek allies in the peripheral regions and provide them with the support and encouragement to compete vigorously in the upcoming elections. Such a development could bring about a surge of welcome competition. Given the remoteness of some of these areas, it is incumbent upon the NEBE to undertake extra efforts that enable those responsible to maintain the standards required of a free and fair election.

3.3.7. Pan Ethiopia parties and Addis Ababa

The recent history of elections in Ethiopia has not been kind to pan-Ethiopia parties. With the exception of the 2005 elections, pan Ethiopia parties have, more often than not, succumbed to fighting among themselves while the EPRDF mobilized the rural population to win elections one after the other. To be fair, it must be said that opposition parties hardly had the opportunity to use national media, except for the few weeks before polling day. State and even private institutions denied providing facilities for opposition parties to meet and organize out of fear that they will be labelled as anti-Government and lose out in a country where so much depends on the Government. It remains to be seen whether this election will witness a major shift in the fortune of pan-Ethiopia parties. A number of them, including the **Blue Party,** have joined the offshoot of the exiled Ginbot 7 party, now rebranded as the Ethiopian Citizenship Party (Ezema) under the leadership of veteran politician Berhanu Nega. Ezema, iswidely believed to emerge as the primary opposition in Addis Ababa, other urban centers and some rural constituencies, is expected to be opposed by Lidetu Ayalew's 36,000 member Ethiopian Democratic Party(EDP,)given the bad blood between the two leaders. The EDP has recently been joined by the National Movement (Eng. Yilikal Getinet) and Hibr Ethiopia (Girma Bekele) in the new Abronet (Togetherness). While Ezema has unenthusiastically accepted the idea of holding elections this year, Abronet remains staunchly opposed. There are indications that Ezema may find itself at the

side of PP in the upcoming elections. Except for insisting on grass-roots democracy and direct elections to leadership positions, the differences between the two are not substantial.

Medrek (Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum) made up of the Ethiopian Socialist Democratic Party (ESDP), Arena for Sovereignty and Democracy (Arena-Tigrai), Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM) and Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) expects to participate in the upcoming elections at the national level. From its makeup it would appear that Medrek would compete in at least four regions plus the capital. The veteran Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party recently held a reportedly well-attended meeting in Addis Ababa but has not decided whether to participate in the elections or not. A new entrant into the political scene is the Freedom and Equality Party, inaugurated on 18 December. Reportedly founded to serve a mainly Muslim constituency, the party claimed that it stands for liberal values, that all languages should be given equal status and that the presidential structure of government be instituted in Ethiopia.

A yet Unnamed coalition is in the process of formation including the OLF, ONLF and eight other smaller formations (a total of 10 parties[326]) hailing from Afar, Amhara, Southern Region/Sidama, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambella. If this coalition gains traction, it could constitute the nationwide opposition that would compete against the Prosperity Party.

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326 Oromo Liberation Front
Ogaden National Liberation Front
Afar Peoples Freedom Party
Sidama Peoples Freedom Movement
Benishangul Gumuz Peoples Freedom Movement
Gambella Peoples Freedom Movement
Kemant Democratic Party (minority in Amhara)
Agaw National Assembly (minority in Amhara)
Mocha Democratic Party (Southern region)
Kaffa Green Party (Southern region)

At the centre of national politics and with a mixed constituency of its own, Addis Ababa will be the focus of all major parties, Pan Ethiopian or not. The capital also hosts a new party known as 'Balderas for Genuine Democracy' (BGD) led by a former opposition activist and journalist Iskinder Negga. Dedicated to the motto 'Addis Ababa for its residents' - a reaction to Oromo claims over Addis Ababa/ Finfinne - Iskinder's campaign has annoyed the ruling party, which considers BGD's 'Caretaker of Addis Ababa' concept as bordering on illegality. BGD has a considerable following in the city and counts numerous sympathizers in other parts of the country and in the Diaspora as well.

Security for the elections in Addis Ababa will be of paramount concern for the NEBE and the Government for a number of reasons, including the fact that the capital serves to showcase the new Ethiopia. The 2005 elections demonstrated that violence could be even more pronounced in the capital than elsewhere. Then, the hot-house atmosphere generated by suspicion and mistrust over the conduct of election sset off a political firestorm that city dwellers would prefer not to experience again. Given the lessons from the past, special attention will have to be given by the authorities to deliver a credible process in Addis Ababa.

6. New legislation and its effect on electoral security

The reforms that Prime Minister Abiy initiated after assuming power in April 2018 included a review of the existing legislation covering elections and political parties. Following extensive deliberations, which included the submission of 149 improvements on a new draft, the House of Peoples Representatives adopted new comprehensive legislation on 24 August 2019, entitled 'Ethiopian Electoral, Political Parties Registration, and Elections Code of Conduct Proclamation.' The 2020 national elections and the postponed elections for Addis Ababa and Dire-Dawa cities will be carried out simultaneously in accordance with the proclamation.

A sample of some provisions of the new law are presented below for the purpose of illustration:

- There are 550 constituencies with similar population size (plus or minus 15%).
- Voters must be 18 years of age, candidates for office must have reached the age of 21.
- Government employees can run for office. They would need to resign from their jobs until the election is concluded, and can regain their jobs after the election.
- National parties must be founded by at least 10,000 persons. The figure is reduced to 4,000 for regional parties.
- Candidates for the House of Peoples Representatives need 3,000 signatures to compete; candidates for regional councils need to secure 1,000 signatures.
- Political parties do not pay income tax on income collected from members and supporters.
- Parties can receive funding support from the Government based on votes they win at the national and state level.
- Parties cannot receive funding from foreign sources, religious and welfare organizations, NGOs and non-constitutional parties (armed groups)
- There is provision for the establishment of a Grievance Hearing Committee to consider disputes arising during the entire voting process.

A large number of political parties -reportedly the smaller ones - have registered their objections to the new law. They are particularly disturbed by the decision to raise signatories of founders of national parties from 1,500 to 10,000, and from 750 to 4,000 for regional parties. NAMA also objected to the provision requiring that civil servants vacate their jobs when running for office. Some 70 political parties threatened to carry out a two-day hunger strike in mid-October 2019, but the legislation had already entered into force on 24 August 2019.

With well over a hundred parties applying for registration, there is a sense that many will fall by the wayside even before the election is held. Comments in the media illustrate the feeling of the electorate that smaller parties must merge if they hope to compete with any chance of success. The proliferation of parties is not expected to have a noticeable impact on the security of the electoral process, and the objections that have already been voiced regarding the legislation are not likely to result in real threats to the integrity of the elections and security unless major foul-ups are experienced in the implementation of the mandate of the NEBE. Still, the arguments between the NEBE and parties have had the effect of delaying the publication of the election calendar – an indication that not all is well.

7. **Administering secure elections – the new NEBE**

Buoyed by the selection of former judge and opposition politician Bertukan Mideksa to the position of chairperson of the NEBE and with new members on board, high hopes have been pinned on NEBE's ability to implement its challenging mandate[327]. Despite protestations to the contrary, the NEBE had in the past frequently been accused of bias in favour of the ruling party, and the decline of competitive politics had considerably weakened its image. The Chairperson has vowed that the Board 'will resist any form of influence if it ever comes in the future.'[328]

The Board has undergone a brief 'baptism' by overseeing the Birr 76 million Sidama statehood referendum that was concluded in November. The Board set up 1,692 polling stations and undertook a training program for observers. The US donated 2,000 ballot boxes.

The Sidama referendum, the results of which could be predicted in advance, is one thing while the national elections are in another

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327 This view is not shared by the TPLF, and possibly by others who recall her leadership position in the Opposition in 2005. A successor party - Ezema - is competing in the 2020 elections.

328 NEBE briefing for journalists – 4 September 2019

category altogether. Yet, there appears to be greater trust in the capacity and integrity of Board members this time around. This, added to the adoption of the elections and parties' law, the stronger role envisaged for civil society organizations, the return of political parties to the country, and the Government's determination to go ahead, have contributed to building a favourable momentum around the elections.

But many in the public have deep misgivings about holding the elections this year. Over the past two years, they have witnessed unprecedented violence in more parts of the country than ever before and have found the Government's response to be weak and its commitment to national security inadequate. Some counsel that a national dialogue should precede elections, and that a 'grand elite bargain' would be preferable to holding elections now. Others call for the much-delayed census to precede the elections. Those that have never been comfortable with the 1995 Constitution and the internal boundaries between regional states would prefer the promulgation of a new constitution before anything else.

With the Government determined to go ahead with elections, the NEBE can only redouble its efforts to implement its mandate. The tasks it is facing are daunting. Some 50 million voters are expected to take part in the upcoming national election. Over 45,000 polling stations – GPS-identified - are to be set up with 100,000 translucent ballot boxes overseen by 135,000 poll workers. NEBE is instituting new security measures using best practices and purchasing new technology. As a security measure it has begun printing voting materials in six local languages in Dubai instead of at home. The new voting lists and voter cards are reported to contain security features. NEBE plans to set up an active Media Centre at its headquarters, and in February 2020, activated the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) which – with its local branches- will be responsible for election security and will start with a risk mapping exercise.[329]

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329   Information from press briefings and media reports

The NEBE's budget for this year is ET Birr 4 billion (USD 125 million) - of which Birr 2.6 billion has been allocated by parliament - and indications point to a well-resourced project. The international community is chipping in with USD 40 million mobilized from partners[330], and a project document entitled '*Supporting Elections for Ethiopia's Democracy Strengthening*' has been developed by UNDP, IOM, UN Women, UNESCO and the office of the UN High Representative for Human Rights.

Internal preparations aside, it is essential for the Board to build its relations with the many political parties that have registered their objections to some provisions of the recent legislation governing parties and elections. Even if the parties concerned may not be the 'big parties', they may resort to taking their case to parliament. Though such a move may not result in a satisfactory outcome for them, the atmosphere around the election process could be poisoned.

The NEBE is already feeling this and only in mid-February came out with the second draft of an electoral calendar, which has its detractors among some parties. According to the new proposal, voters will go to the polls on 29 August 2020 which – despite being in the inconvenient rainy season - falls within the year 2012 in the Ethiopian Calendar.[331]Earlier in November 2019, the NEBE tabled the first draft of a calendar that faced stiff resistance from parties that had already objected to the legislation on parties and the elections. The Board's engagement with parties - quite promising to start with –has been going through a crisis of sorts over the past few months. It is hoped that the air will be cleared through intensive even higher-level engagement/mediation.

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330 NEBE Communication Advisor Soliana Shimelis in interview with ENA
331 The Constitution requires national elections to be held every five years. According to the Ethiopian calendar the year ends on 10 September (11 September on Leap Year). The proposed campaign period runs from 28 May -24 August.

6. Electoral Security

6.1. General

Questions relating to the security of the upcoming elections continue to dominate discussion in Ethiopia and among neighbours and partners that reckon they have a stake in the peace and stability of Ethiopia. There is a particular reason for this. The one serious attempt to carry out competitive elections in 2005 ended in violence and has negatively influenced the political developments in the country since. Moreover, Ethiopians have endured two years of heightened tension and instability and have yet to be convinced that the country has turned the page. Given these considerations, it comes as no surprise that the issue of the upcoming elections commands attention with a mixture of hope and fear. There is still some way to go before the country feels that it is strong enough to handle such a complex political exercise.

Can regional police/special militia be counted on to provide security or will they serve as partisan instruments and irreparably harm the process? How united are the federal armed forces? Is the security establishment functioning at an optimal level? These are questions that reflect the concern of Ethiopians at this point in time. Word is out that in parts of Amhara, Oromia and Southern Ethiopia regions the state structure has suffered damage with the erosion of authority of the hitherto ruling party – EPRDF.

In some areas, local administration structures are said to have been overtaken by protest networks or their sympathizers. The past few years have demonstrated the power of individuals, in the case of Ethiopia, Jawar Mohammed, an Oromo activist and media operator in the USA -to mobilize youth in the wide-ranging Oromo community. It is believed that his local 'commanders' – at times working in close coordination with operatives in local administration – may exercise greater authority than organs of the government itself.

It is not external interference or widespread internal insurgency that is the fundamental threat to the successful running of secure elections, although there are pockets of armed insurgent activity here and there. The security of the election hinges on the relationship between political parties and mainly parties that have hitherto positioned themselves as representing particular ethnic communities. Hence the concentration of this paper is on the political setting and recent developments. Regional political parties and the special/ militia forces attached to them may guarantee local stability but they could also turn into sources of insecurity. That is why it is essential that political parties continue to consult closely and build confidence amongst themselves to avoid slipping to a path that would lead them to violence. This is much easier said than done. It would also be easy to prescribe that opposition forces consolidate themselves into a coalition to compete with the Prosperity Party. But as see in earlier elections, the opposition has not managed to achieve that objective.

6.2 Dealing with the threats

There are a host of actions employed by political combatants to win elections in an unfair manner. These include:

- Intimidation of voters and constituencies
- Arrest of political activists and officials
- Intimidation of electoral staff
- Corruption of election bodies
- Elimination of rivals, stoking ethnic conflict
- Employing hate speech against opponents and communities
- Displacing populations

The process of interference starts with the registration of parties and candidates, followed by voting registration, through the voting and counting process all the way to the announcement of results and the taking of office of the winner of the elections.

Dealing with the threats requires a common understanding of the

threats on the part of all the stakeholders in the elections**; a joined-up effort** to guard against the threats and a rapid response once an offence has been committed. The Government, the NEBE, political parties, civic society organizations, law enforcement and security organs and the members of the general public themselves have to be involved in the common endeavour to safeguard the elections.

In most cases the police force is designated with the primary responsibility for election security due to constitutional provisions prohibiting members of the armed forces from performing election security duties. Like in other countries, Ethiopia has a **Joint Operations Centre (JOC)** to be replicated at zonal and lower levels to handle election security. The JOC operates separately from the armed forces but is in close touch with the security and defence establishments. **Election Security Training** is believed to be essential and such training will be provided in Ethiopia as well. Security officials will be expected to consult with local communities to explain their role in the election.

According to the legislation adopted last August, candidates can campaign until 4 days before the vote (cooling off period). They have the right to call rallies and organize peaceful demonstrations without the need to request permission, but should at least provide written notification of such. On voting day (s) there is a weapons exclusion zone of 500 meters to a polling station.

Parties are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct they have already signed and to work actively in the Joint Parties Forum as well as at local Grievance Hearing Committees established to resolve problems encountered in the conduct of the elections.

There is a particular need for elections authorities and all other stakeholders to engage the media and to deal with the dangerous effects of unethical media practices particularly, hate speech. Long used to restricted media, Ethiopians have been eager consumers of

foreign media and for those who have access to it, social media. Furthermore, people have witnessed in recent times the effect that social media has on the society. The inexplicable outbreak of violence on October 23 following an appeal for help by activist Jawar Mohammed resulted in the death of 86 persons and there is no guarantee that a similar incident would not occur in the future.

According to recent legislation (August 2019), political parties contesting elections are entitled to equal access to state owned media, with candidates getting free time. A directive covering allocation is expected to be issued by NEBE in collaboration with the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority.

Given the frequent use of hate speeches in the (mainly social) media, a draft law on hate speech and disinformation has been tabled in Parliament. The draft law criminalizes anything inciting "hatred, discrimination or attack against a person or an identifiable group, based on ethnicity, religion, race, gender or disability." It also outlaws "dissemination of disinformation" or falsehoods.[332]

Human Rights Watch and David Kaye, the U.N. special rapporteur on freedom of expression have called on Ethiopia to amend the draft law to conform to definitions in which hate speech is speech 'that is likely to incite imminent violence.' The draft law in question was adopted in parliament on 13 February with a vote of 300-23 despite the appeals. Although the excesses in prosecuting bloggers and journalists under the counter-terrorism law has been noted with regret in Ethiopia, the fear of instability is greater than the worry over language that could be viewed by legislators as unnecessarily protective of the rights of a social media abuser.

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7   In Conclusion: Expectations

7.1. Expectations

- The national elections will be held as planned in late August 2020 unless a substantial deterioration in security is experienced. A major rescheduling would require a constitutional amendment. A further delay would give a negative impression that the country is fragile or even backsliding after such a promising start. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has stressed that democracy is a process. If this election is a marked improvement over the past, that is good enough.
- The ruling Prosperity Party will consolidate its position in all the regional states and aim to gain a majority that will retain elements of the existing federal system while priority is given to reforms that would promote national unity and greater integration. Most Pan Ethiopia parties would gravitate in the direction of the Prosperity Party
- The Opposition would comprise the 'ethnic-federalist' parties, at the centre of which would be the OLF and ONLF. They would be joined by eight other ethnic-based opposition parties that recently agreed to cooperate in what could be a new axis of opposition. The TPLF would be a natural candidate to join this group, though timing may be difficult.
- However, if the chances of PP in Oromia appear poor, the Prime Minister may move to strike a grand bargain with the OLF and other Oromo parties to reach a power sharing arrangement. Should this prove to be the case, the Opposition would lose a key pillar.
- The elections will be held in a tense political environment in most regional states and the capital. Old habits die hard and electoral tricks will be attempted. At the local level, intimidation by both the ruling and opposition parties in areas where they are strong cannot be ruled out.
- Despite all that, the 2020 elections are likely to be heralded as the most competitive yet and therefore historic.

7.2 Recommendations

- As a matter of priority, the relationship between some political parties and the NEBE must be improved with renewed resolve and the support of key actors in the Executive and Legislature. As parties prepare their campaigns, partners – including neighbors-should assist by advising on the importance of party coalitions from successful experiences elsewhere.
- The issue of referenda for some 10 zones of the Southern Region will have to be addressed in a practical and realistic manner. It would be impossible to hold the events in these zones prior to the elections, but by the time of elections a year would have passed since the zones formally requested a referendum. An arrangement should be made to deal with the issue after the elections. There may be a slight chance that some of the smaller zones may reconsider their request, but very unlikely.
- Though still relatively weak, national civil society organizations, assisted by their partners, could play an enhanced role by convening forums of political parties on important national agendas. These forums/retreats could be used to build confidence between parties.
- It would not be advisable to pack the next six months with too many activities. In this regard it would be necessary to consider the wisdom of convening a process of national dialogue while parties are undertaking political campaigns. National dialogues are lengthy processes and would consider all issues – including constitutional matters, which are best handled with the election out of the way.
- NEBE will be concentrating on training election and party officials at various levels. Partners could assist by contributing ideas and material to be covered in the training. For election officials, the principle of equal treatment of parties and their observers would be necessary. For party officials the inadmissibility of intimidation would need to be stressed.

- There may be need to support the work of the Joint Operations Center (JOC), which is responsible for elections security. JOC is said to be arranging security training, and external support and advice would undoubtedly be welcome.
- It would be natural for the Government to concentrate on providing security in the areas of particular tension and potential violence. Sixteen such areas have been referred to in this paper, but there could be more. It would be appropriate for partners to get an idea of the intended plans of the Government; whether it planned to deploy the regional and/or federal police and even the army, and in what conditions. If possible, partners could explore how they could be of help, be it in training or the provision of equipment.
- The relations between the Central Government and the TPLF-led Government in Mekelle continue to deteriorate. It is high time for discreet mediation – preferably by Ethiopians – to find face-saving ways out of the dangerous confrontation. Partners should quietly back such an initiative, and – if appropriate – undertake their own initiative as well.
- The NEBE's media profile should be elevated with regular press encounters with clear and focused messaging. Partners could make expert support available for this.
- In engaging with party leaders, it would be useful to advise them to tone down nationalist voices and avoid promoting hard-liners to top positions. This matter has to be handled with sensitivity as hardliners are known to attract the greatest support.
- If they have not done so already, partners should meet with the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Peace and National Defense and the Federal Commissioner of Police while also keeping a close line of communication with key opposition leaders to follow developments and provide support and criticism as warranted.

PART III: Youth and Women Participation in Public Sphere

Part III seeks to discuss about gender and youth representation in public spheres. Among others, it highlights major social, economic and political factors impeding effective participation of youth and women in decision-making positions and policy measures to enhance their participation in public spheres.

8. The Participation of the Youth in Politics in Ethiopia

Professor Gebre Yntiso Deko

The Participation of the Youth in Politics in Ethiopia

Abstract

There is a global understanding that effective and meaningful participation of youth in political, social, economic and other spheres of life is critical to attain democratic developments. Nevertheless, young people are inadequately represented in politics, and this leads to their disenfranchisement and the consequent frustration and youth activism. The space for effective youth participation in decision-making process in Ethiopia remains limited in spite of different initiatives that have been undertaken to address the concerns of young people. The socio-economic deprivation and political marginalization forced them to exhibit frustration, disillusionment, and vulnerability to extreme ideas and even violence. There is an urgent need to move beyond addressing current challenges and invest on youth as future workforce and untapped resource for development. Ethiopia can expect to accelerate its transition to the middle-income status by mainstreaming youth issues, perceiving the youth as resources (not liabilities), and ensuring meaningful political and economic inclusion. With these strategic directions in mind, the author identifies concrete actions to be taken by government agencies, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, communities, the youth themselves, and other entities.

1. Introduction

Effective participation of youth[333] in political, social, economic and other spheres of life is critical to democratic developments anywhere in the world. However, there is a general consensus that young people[334] are inadequately represented in politics, and thus are not able to participate in decision-making. Inadequate representation easily leads to youth disenfranchisement and frustration – a recipe for social movement and activism. Youth movements can mobilize masses of people to bring about or resist social change, and the process can be peaceful or violent, depending on the behaviour of parties involved. It is crucial to understand the causes of youth disenfranchisement and recognize the rights of young people to a fair share of education, skills, services, jobs, and political participation in such a way that they feel included and empowered.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, the reasons for youth frustration are associated with socio-economic deprivation and political marginalization. To be more specific, the common causes include unemployment (where even education fails to guarantee jobs), inability to become fully participating members of society, lack of confidence, feelings of worthlessness, lack of proper parenting, physical abuse during childhood, watching violence (real or videos), and social media addiction. In combination, these factors have made today's youth most prone to frustration and thus vulnerable to radical views that sometimes inspire violence.

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[333] The concept of 'youth', the focus of this study, is defined differently in different contexts, countries, and organizations. There are legal definitions, political definitions, scientific definitions, etc. There are categories and subcategories such as kid, child, teenager, adolescent, young adult and young people, some of which overlap with each other and with the concept of youth. The United Nations defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The African Union defines 'youth' as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. The age ranges of youth vary from country to country: 18-29 years in Nigeria, 14-35 years in South Africa, 15-29 years in China, 15-26 years in Germany, and 15-29 years in Ethiopia. Various dictionaries (Oxford, Macmillan, and Merriam-Webster, and Free) define youth as the time of life of a person between childhood and adult age. For the purpose of this study, therefore, the common dictionary meaning of youth (i.e., the period between childhood and adulthood) and the Ethiopian age range of youth (i.e., 15-29 years) are adopted.

[334] In this paper, the terms 'youth' and 'young people' are used interchangeably, although their meanings are not necessarily and exactly the same. Youth is the state of being young, while young is people who are young.

According to Alcinda Honwana (2012), most young Africans are living in a state of 'wait-hood', suspended in a prolonged limbo between childhood and adulthood. During this waiting period, young people are believed to feel powerless, dependent, and worthless. A lack of employment opportunities translates into prolonged dependency on parents and a delay in starting their own families, which is evidently agonizing and frustrating. Honwana (2012), who focused on the transformative potential of the 'wait-hood' generation, indicated that the youth have come to believe that overcoming their predicaments requires struggle (protests and revolution), which can then lead to political change.

Historically, youth in many countries have demonstrated the ability to shake and shape government systems. The 1960s Ethiopian student movement that led to the eruption of the 1974 revolution in the country was a case in point, and the recent Arab spring movement was another. It appears that national governments and international agencies have now recognized that the youth are excluded and marginalized. However, the efforts made thus far remain inadequate to ensure an active engagement of the youth in politics and other decision-making processes. Besides, the measures taken to engage young people often focus on responding to their frustrations to avoid protests and violence. It is true that the actions of agitated youth could cause social instability, loss of precious life, and destruction of property, which should be prevented and stopped. However, empowering the youth should be seen as a national strategy to prepare tomorrow's labour force to ensure sustainable development.

In Ethiopia, the National Youth Policy, which was adopted in 2004, aims "to bring about the active participation of youth in the building of a democratic system and good governance as well as in the economic, social and cultural activities … and to enable them to fairly benefit from the results." Many areas of action have also been identified; democracy and good governance, health, education and training, culture, sports, and entertainment. International initiatives

such as USAID's "Youth in Development Policy" have been launched to strengthen and expand youth programs.

However, the government's official commitment to involve youths in decision-making processes and the limited donor-initiated programs to expand opportunities for youths have so far not ensured active participation of young people in the socio-economic and political spheres. In the last two years, the emergence of extreme political dichotomy (ethno-nationalism vs. ethio-nationalism) in the political landscape of Ethiopia led to ethnic-based clashes in which the youth became perpetrators and victims. The recent resurgence of identity politics is poised to drive national sentiment and commitment out of young ethno-nationalist. Therefore, more needs to be done in terms of addressing the new challenges that divide the youth along political ideologies, creating an enabling policy/legal environment, providing concrete opportunities on a sustained basis, and creating institutional arrangements for young people. Developing Ethiopia's youth must be conceived as a necessity to contribute to future development goals of the country.

2. Youth Exclusion and Youth Activism:

Historical contexts

Although the youth is reported to constitute a fifth of the World's population, their participation in politics is very limited (UNDP, 2013). In most countries, young people are not adequately represented in political processes such as parliaments, political parties, elections, and public administrations. Globally, the participation of young people in decision-making processes is generally low when compared to older citizens. It is estimated that only 1.65% of parliamentarians around the world are in their 20s; some 11.87 % are in their 30s; and the average age of parliamentarians globally is 53(UNDP and IPU, 2012).

Based on a survey conducted in 186 countries, UN IANYD (2012) reported that young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their societies/communities due to limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making. Youth exclusion could overlap or come together with other forms of marginalization such as gender-based, locational, occupational or descent-based discrimination. Based on evidence from around the world (including Ethiopia), attempts are made in this section to characterize the history of youth exclusion and the consequent quest for inclusion through youth activism.

Validation Workshop on the Participation of the Youth in Politics in Ethiopia

2.1 Brief International Experiences

Young people have played a crucial role in numerous social and political movements around the world. In this section, attempts are made to understand youth activism and the factors that drive young people to become important advocates for change. In 2018, the New York Times reported seven cases where young people challenged established systems in the USA, France, China, South Africa, Iran, and the former Czechoslovakia (Astor, 2018). Some of the movements were successful while others were brutally crushed. For the purpose of this research, the following few illustrations are used to show the power the youth can have in triggering social change.

Until the Civil Rights Movement, racial segregation was lawful in most parts of southern USA. Through so-called Jim Crow laws (named after a derogatory term for blacks), legislators segregated almost everything: schools, public parks, theatres, swimming pools, restaurants and bars, residential areas, jails, and even cemeteries. On 01 February 1960, four teenagers (who came to be known as the Greensboro Four) walked up to a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro (North Carolina) and refused to leave, protesting against segregation. This lunch counter sit-in attracted 300 others within three days and spread to more than 50 cities by the summer of that year.

The actions of the Greensboro Four led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in April 1960 to coordinate the continuing sit-ins. The momentum that began at the Woolworth's lunch counter eventually changed American history in that it contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public spaces.

In South Africa, a policy of racial segregation (apartheid) lasted until the 1990s. The policy governed relations between the white minority and the non-white majority, in which the latter experienced political

and economic discrimination. Apartheid ended as a result of concerted local and international efforts. A major part of those efforts began on 16 June 1976, when black school children in Soweto protested against the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974, which introduced Afrikaans(a language associated with Apartheid) as the medium of local schools in a 50-50 mix with English.[335] Black South Africans preferred English and an indigenous African language rather than Afrikaans, the language of the oppressor.

The African National Congress came to national prominence in the anti-Apartheid movement on the back of the Soweto protests, which were met with police brutality. Students as far away as the University of California-Berkeley followed in the footsteps of the Soweto protestors, demanding that American corporations withdraw economic support from the Apartheid government. Although other factors (especially the global struggle) later contributed to the end of Apartheid, the Soweto student uprising sparked the movement and deserves to be recognized as the catalyst.

The 1960s saw a wave of youth activism throughout the world. University students often sparked many of the movements against various issues: capitalism, imperialism, war, discrimination, and gender rights, among others. In May 1968, civil unrest in France (demonstrations, general strikes, and occupation of universities and factories) initiated by leftist students and embraced by some 10 million workers brought the economy to a halt and nearly brought down the government.

In Eastern Europe, in 1968, there were protests against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. In Mexico, a broad coalition of students from major universities launched the 1968 student movement and garnered widespread public support for political change. From West Germany to Brazil, Poland

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335 South African History Online. The Youth Struggle. https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/user_uploads/tblPDF/1936_09_Black_Students_Politics.pdf|https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/user_uploads/tblPDF/1936_07_Black_Students_Politics.pdf|https://disa.nu.ac.za/articledisplaypage.asp?articletitle=Cosas+opposes+repression&filename=SfFeb84. Accessed on 26 October 2019.

to Senegal, Japan to Venezuela, students were able to mobilize mass protests to support the struggle for fundamental political change.

The recent Arab Spring has revealed the power that youth can have in shaking established political systems. During 2010's Arab Spring, social media helped the youth organize an unprecedented revolution that started in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Frustrated by economic anguishes, corruption, human rights violations and oppressive regimes, the youth took part in a wave of pro-democracy protests. These movements not only led to the ousting of leaders in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen, but also fed into prolonged and ongoing civil war in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Although young activists were not the only people who participated in the Arab Spring protests, the movement could not have occurred without the ideological and numerical push of a huge mass of frustrated youth (Mulderig, 2013).

2.2 Ethiopian Experiences

In Ethiopia, traditionally, young people are not eligible for important political and decision-making positions. Much like in other African countries, the successive modern governments have also been reluctant to include youth into formal political systems. The political marginalization and socio-economic exclusions have been pushing the Ethiopian youth to protest against three successive governments, thus, they can be said to have played critical roles in terms of initiating social change.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Ethiopian student movement against the imperial regime played a fundamental role in shaping the political ideology and development direction of the country (Bahru, 2014). Some of the issues that infuriated and frustrated the youth included the exploitative land tenure system, lack of social mobility, absence of freedom of expression, government repression, lack of civic rights protection as well as widespread unemployment and

poverty (Legesse, 1979). The student opposition (more than other causes) is believed to have contributed to the 1974 revolution that brought an end to the imperial regime and many other developments that followed, such as the adoption of socialist principles and the emergence of ethno-nationalism.

Initially, Emperor Haile Selassie tried to suppress the movement through censorship of student newspapers and others activities in classrooms and small groups. The tight censorship of ideas and actions did not stop the social unrest from simmering in the early 1960s or hinder the movement from becoming more unified in 1967, when the University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA) was established to demand the overthrow of the monarchy. The students' non-violent call, initially through artistic expression (poetry), for political and social change was reciprocated by a warning and the suspension of some of them from university. When the movement gathered momentum as evidenced by the increased number of demands and protests, the government resorted to heavy-handed police crackdowns including violent break ups of meetings and demonstrations, beatings, arrests, and killings.

In 1974, although the Ethiopian student movement was getting fragmented because of the crackdown and internal divisions, it had a snowball effect in terms of inspiring other discontented groups to demand a new political system. For example, the army mutiny for salary led by non-commissioned officers, the general strike of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Union for wages and union rights, the school protests due to curriculum changes and low teachers' salaries combined with public protests against increased fuel prices and lack of famine relief exerted maximum pressure on the regime (Bahru, 2014; Darch, 1976). Towards the end, the Emperor offered to discuss the student demands. He also released the arrested protesters, officially recognized the famine in Wollo, changed the Prime Minster, reshuffled cabinet members, and reconstituted the parliament. However, these concessions came too late and were too

little to stop the widespread protests triggered by the youth. The government was toppled.

The youth often find themselves in a perpetual struggle for fairness because changes of governments rarely address the underlying demands of citizens, including the youth. The injustice that occurred after the 1974 revolution soon necessitated yet another struggle against the new government. Before the Emperor was deposed on 12 September 1975, some 120 officers representing military and police units formed the Derg – a Coordinating Committee of Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (Van Wasbeek, 2004). The Derg demanded concessions from the Emperor with the intention to erode his ability to govern and ensure state control by the military. Early on, it appeared that the students, the discontented groups, and the general populace welcomed the military intervention as they all sought political change.

After ousting the Imperial government in September of 1975, the Derg soon transformed itself into the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) and became the new government. In 1976, borrowing ideology from the competing leftists parties that arose from the student movement, the Derg announced its 'Program for the National Democratic Revolution', which declared progress toward socialism under the leadership of workers, peasants, the petite bourgeoisie, and all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces (Messay, 2008). The action of the military government did not please the youth, who struggled for freedom and sought the establishment of civilian rule.

Consequently, in 1976, one of the leftist parties (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, EPRP) that comprised many young people as its members, declared an urban guerrilla war called 'White Terror' against the military rulers. The Derg immediately found itself under attack from civilian groups, whose demands reportedly found support among members of the ruling collection. The military countered 'White Terror' with 'Red Terror' - a brutal campaign against armed

and civilian opponents that led to killings, torture, imprisonment, and outmigration on a massive scale (Wiebel, 2017). Consequently, the enlightened group that achieved radical change in the country was crushed, and the generation that followed remained confused, frightened and mute for a while. In addition, the 1977-78 war with Somalia, the civil war within the country from 1974 to 1991,and the vast espionage network helped the military government avoid any youth activism from emerging.

However, the continued structural alienation of the youth from political participation, the crippling economy that caused widespread poverty, the staggering unemployment that hit the youth hard, and the continuation of the civil war without an end in sight, increased frustration among the young people and society at large. Refusing to stay on the receiving end or the losing side of life, the youth devised deliberate strategies to voice their resistance to the military regime. While some joined the armed struggle against the Derg, others withdrew their support for the war and instead engaged in sabotage and conspiracy that contributed to the collapse of the government in the early 1990s.

For almost three decades after the overthrow of the Derg, the government of the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) relied on force and repressive legislations to suppress the opposition and maintain a sense of national cohesion (Brechenmacher, 2017). In November 2015, protests began in Oromia Region and gradually spread across the country. It was based on an accumulated frustration and grievances against disproportionate economic and political power by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the dominant party within the EPRDF.

The fallout from mass protests and unrest led to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on 25 February 2018 and his replacement by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, a popular reformist, on 02 April 2018. The reformist leader's message of unity, prosperity,

justice and peace, made most Ethiopians optimistic about the future. His actions, which included the release of political prisoners, a peace deal with Eritrea, the invitation of opposition parties from exile, and the beginning of political and economic reforms, among other measures, increased the excitement of people.

However, the emergence of extreme political dichotomy (ethno-nationalism vs. ethio-nationalism) in the political landscape of the country not only complicated the reform process but also led to ethnic-based clashes in which the youth became perpetrators and victims. Apart from the rise of the extreme political ideologies, the government's inability or leniency to enforce the rule of law, the distrust within EPRDF, and information distortion on social media became major obstacles to peace and development. On 23 October 2019, Jawar Mohammed's (activist and owner of the Oromo Media Network) accusation on his Face-book page that security forces tried to orchestrate an attack against him instantly triggered youth violence that took ethnic and religious dimensions and, altogether, claimed the lives of 86 people. Today, the overall security situation in Ethiopia remains precarious and unpredictable, and the vibrant youth is a force to be reckoned with in the interest of ensuring peace and attaining prosperity in Ethiopia.

3. Youth Empowerment Approaches and Initiatives

3.1 Competing Approaches: Deficit-based and strength-based

Social Work theory distinguishes between two approaches in addressing social problems: the deficit-based (also called pathology-based, problem-focused) and the strength-based, also called abilities-based (Hammond & Zimmerman 2012; Yekoyealem, 2019). The deficit-based approach is an approach that focuses on needs and problems of the people and it comes with an assumption that there are failure and helplessness to be tackled through support mechanisms. This approach is challenged for it is

creating a sense of dependency on outside resources and solutions and at the same time lacks a proactive dimension as it comes late in time, that is, after problems have already occurred. As a professionally-driven initiative, the deficit-based approach is not considered effective in creating any sustainable change.

The strengths-based approach, on the other hand, values the capacity, skill, knowledge, connections, and potential in individuals. It is therefore believed to build existing resources, have long-term impact, involve proactive planning, and build and sustain the strength of individuals.

Studies reveal that organizations, government as well as NGOs working in the area of youth seem to dwell more on youth problems rather than on their competencies and positive development (Yekoyealem, 2019). The author are fully examines the positive development of the youth in Ethiopia, focusing on their assets profile and corresponding thriving outcomes. He concluded that though the youth were living in asset-depleted contexts, they demonstrated an adequate possession of internal assets implying that the youth were going beyond survival and demonstrating signs of thriving.

The strength-based perspective is consistent with the self-help approach and with the popular proverb, "Give a man fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." The challenge is that it is insufficient to address structural or systemic problems such as the absence of an enabling policy and legal environment, the lack of access to formal education/training, and the chronic shortage of key resources, such as finance. Therefore, a combination of the deficit-approach and the strength-approach is likely to ensure youth empowerment.

3.2 Youth Support Schemes: Lessons from other countries

Because of their sheer number and vibrant force, young people are recognized as crucial partners in development, peace initiatives, and democratic governance. It is widely recognized that the success of the 2030 Agenda[336] for sustainable development depends on the empowerment of young people. The 2030 Agenda is a commitment to achieve sustainable development and transform the world by 2030 by eradicating poverty, ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives and wellbeing, ensuring equitable and quality education, and achieving gender equality, to mention some. Youth empowerment can be achieved through international initiatives and national actions.

The UNDP (2011) supported innovative projects aimed at opening a space for youth empowerment and democratic governance, training the youth as effective leaders, and extending youth access to justice. The various UNDP-sponsored empowerment projects in different countries are summarized as follows:

In Bangladesh, the UNDP, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat, supported the establishment of the Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament (BMYP) to empower young people at both local and national levels. The intention of this initiative, which was piloted with the help of the British Council and other partners, was to ensure that young people in Bangladesh take an active role in public and political life, and that they have the opportunity to influence the country's policy through a direct dialogue between the Bangladeshi youth and policymakers.

Today, BMYP is a strong platform for young people, effective in raising their collective voices to the highest levels of Government on a wide range of issues relevant to their lives. Some of the activities of BMYP include lobbying and advocacy with parliamentarians,

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336 On 25 September 2015, at an historic UN Summit, countries through their leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) plus 169 targets. The SDGs are expected to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

organizing Children's assemblies, organizing youth parliament sessions, media advocacy, and supporting different initiatives of the government to contribute to the SDGs, especially targeting Goal 16.2 (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children).[337]

In Nigeria, the UNDP supported youth-based civil society organizations (CSO) coalition to participate in the constitution review process. This project inspired the adoption of the Nigerian Youth Agenda on Political Participation (NYAPP) on 27 October 2014 with the intention to redress the historical political exclusion and marginalization, and enable the youth to meaningfully participate in politics and decision-making. The youth agenda brought together all youth leaders of political parties and youth CSOs to deliberate on issues of common interest, especially the expansion of the frontiers for political participation, such as in electoral politics.

In Azerbaijan, UNDP supported a project that aimed at youth participation in decision-making and policy implementation. The project also aimed at developing their capacity as future leaders. The Ministry of Youth and Sports contributed to these goals by providing the young with the skills and knowledge to advocate for youth issues, attracting more youth to public services and strengthening their ability to participate at international levels. The primary means of achieving those goals included developing indicators for success of youth policy implementation, analyzing existing and future government programs to see how they could contribute to youth inclusion and civil service internships.

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337 Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament. End Violence Against Children. https://www.end-violence.org/members/bangladesh-model-youth-parliament. Accessed on 20 October 2019.

4. Youth Development and Empowerment in Ethiopia

4.1 Government Initiatives: Achievements and weaknesses

In Ethiopia, young people have been living under difficult situations (unemployment, food insecurity, poverty, political unrest, ethnic/ religion-based conflicts and violence, displacement, outmigration, poor quality education, health problems, and political exclusion) that have compromised their optimal development. According to recent USAID (2017) reports, more than 69% of the Ethiopian population is under the age of 30 (with 41% under the age of 15 years and 28% between 15 to 29 years), and youth unemployment is estimated at nearly 27%. Given the scale of youth challenges, the history of youth activism in the country, and the numerical importance of young people, Ethiopia cannot afford to exclude and marginalize the youth. This section, therefore, examines the efforts made thus far by the government not only to reduce youth disenfranchisement but also to realize their potentials for development.

The Ethiopian Government has shown its commitment to improving opportunities for young people. This was evidenced by the adoption of the 2004 National Youth Policy to promote young people's participation in governance and economic, social and cultural activities, and also to enable them to benefit from the results. However, there exists a mismatch between the policy commitment and the reality on the ground. In other words, the participation of youth in politics, economic spheres, and other aspects remained inadequate, as specified below.

First, following the government's commitment to involve the youth in decision-making processes, attempts have been made to form inter-ministerial cooperation to galvanize support from diverse stakeholders: relevant ministries, NGOs, and youth federations. However, this initiative encountered challenges emanating from a lack of willingness to cooperate, poor monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms, an absence of a clear strategy, and limited financial resources. What seemed to work better is the practice where state agencies and ministries invited representatives of youth federations[338] during the approval of youth-related policies. However, the elites of the youth federation have reportedly remained loyal to the party/government rather than to the masses of young people that they claim to represent. Moreover, persistent gender inequality, youth poverty, and a lack of facilities/services coupled with deficiencies discussed below significantly limited the involvement of the youth in decision-making.

Second, Ethiopia has been experiencing improvement in wages and a reduction in the level of unemployment. The Ethiopian government is encouraging young people to start small businesses in order to reduce the rate of youth unemployment. Young people who want to become entrepreneurs are encouraged to team up in groups to receive training in business start-ups and management and access financial support to start small and medium enterprises. Nevertheless, according to an OECD report (nd), "Almost three-quarters of the youth earn below the average monthly wage, while the majority of employed young people work in the informal sector or as unpaid family workers."

The OECD report further noted that the labour force participation of the youth is determined by geographical, socio-economic and gender disparities. For example, young women are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as young men. The rural unskilled youth engaged in subsistence agriculture, receive low income, remain underemployed, and migrate to urban areas out of desperation. Because of rural-urban youth migration and the growing number of young job seekers from within, the urban youth face higher rates of unemployment.

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338 The Ethiopian Youth Federation was established in 2009 and is composed of regional youth federations, which themselves consist of various youth associations and youth leagues (the youth wing of EPRDF).

Third, Ethiopia allocates more than 25% of government expenditure to the education sector, and has made remarkable progress in improving access to formal education (both gross and net enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education). However, according to the OECD report, there exist many challenges that impede school-to-work transition. These include, among others, low level of educational quality, high dropout rates, large numbers of out-of-school populations, gender disparity, and rural-urban disparity. Access to quality education remains low due to poor physical facilities, a lack of well-trained teachers, and a shortage of learning materials. Ethnic minorities, rural youth, children from poor households reportedly face obstacles in accessing basic education. The probability of having no access to basic education is twice as high for female youth as it is for male youth. According to a Young Lives survey (in the OECD report), in 2013, 85% of the boys in urban areas were proficient in reading, compared to only 58% in rural areas.

Fourth, although the country has made significant progress towards access to basic health facilities, young people continue to face multiple health challenges: inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, malnutrition, a prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and substance abuse. Young women are more disadvantaged and constitute a high-risk group due to gender inequality, gender-based violence, female genital cutting, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, early child bearing, maternal injury, and unsafe abortions. Many of these challenges are more prevalent in rural areas and among the less educated and poorest young women. Regarding knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and their prevention, disparities persist between young men and women. According to UNFPA (cited in the OECD report), "In 2011, only 42% young women and 74% young men knew a condom source." The higher HIV/AIDS prevalence among female youth compared to male youth may partly be explained by a gender disparity in knowledge of health risks.

4.2 Youth Support by External Agencies

In Ethiopia, different bilateral and NGO programs have been implemented with the intention to support youth empowerment initiatives. This subsection provides brief accounts of selected external programs and the focus areas of intervention.

In 2015, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched and funded a five-year program called 'Building the Potential of Youth Activity (POTENTIAL)' targeting unemployed and underemployed young people aged 15-29 living in 30 Woredas of six regions: Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Tigray (Mussa, Dershem & Abraha, 2018). The program was designed to help youth increase their assets and incomes through employment that eventually lead to economic self-sufficiency, while building the capacity of local institutions to ensure the sustainability of the initiative. The support aimed at providing rural youth with transferable soft skills training alongside vocational and entrepreneurship development activities through partnerships with training, small business, and microfinance institutions. The program, implemented by the Save the Children Federation and its partners, was expected to build the economic self-sufficiency of 34,537 youth across the 30 Woredas at the end of 2019.

The Government of the UK (through the British Council) has also been supporting the youth with an emphasis on building young people's capacity, especially enhancing their skills, knowledge and attitudes to drive positive change. In Ethiopia, the British Council had a program with three components with the following expected results: "increased understanding of the economic aspirations, challenges and lived realities for young people in Ethiopia to inform policy and practice; increased capacity of youth focused CSOs with tools and resources to deliver innovative program and operation models; and youth led community-based actions modelled to bring youths together, showcasing positive youth participation and leadership"(British Council, nd).

The Ethiopian government identified agriculture as a high potential sector for creating youth employment opportunities and generating economic growth. In an effort to respond to this call and tackle the unemployment challenges, SNV Ethiopia (a Dutch NGO) has engaged youth in development projects and reportedly created job opportunities for 10,217 young people in agriculture, energy and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) sectors(SNV Ethiopia, nd).

Canada and UNDP funded a 3-year entrepreneurship development program for the youth (UNDP, nd). Since its launch in 2013 by the former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, who recognized that lack of social capital, especially lack of entrepreneurial skills militates against industrial growth, tens of thousands of young entrepreneurs have been trained. The program is expected to help 200,000 entrepreneurs through skills training and business advisory services. In order to ensure the implementation as well as the sustainability of the program, there was a plan to train 25,000 trainers and 20,000 business advisors.

In July 2019, the Skill Initiative for Africa-Ethiopia Program, supported by the German Government, was launched with the aim to support occupational prospects of young people in technical and vocational education and training (ENA 2019).This program is part of African Union Commission's (AUC) Skill Initiative for Africa (SIFA) that aims to strengthen the occupational prospects of young people in Africa. In Ethiopia, the program is reported to provide funds (3 million Euros)to the government and private technical and vocational schools on a competitive basis for the implementation of innovative and sustainable skills development initiatives.

4.3 Achievement and Further Actions

In any country, achievements of youth empowerment may be explained in terms of increased educational attainment and skills training, improved social skills and behaviors, increased confidence and self-esteem, improved income and living conditions, and effective

participation in politics and decision-making. Have the Ethiopian young people attained these goals? As stated above, multiple efforts have been made to enhance the status of young people in Ethiopia. The government formulated a national youth policy and created certain platforms to allow youth involvement. International agencies provided support to the government to implement youth-focused policies and programs. There are also many talented, knowledgeable and ambitious young people, who are making a difference in their communities.

Despite all the efforts made and measures taken, the country is still at a crossroads, with one of the most pressing issues being the high number of young people expressing numerous concerns. Many youth experience unemployment, discrimination, and lack of adequate access to education and healthcare. Even worse, many of them are rather frustrated, disillusioned, and vulnerable to extreme ideas. It is to be recalled how the youth protests and violence in recent months and years has brought the country to a standstill. This warrants the need to harness the force/energy and potential of the youth in such a way that they unleash transformative impacts. The following measures may contribute to the genuine development and empowerment of young people.

Youth mainstreaming (bring youth issues to the center stage): From experiences of gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, one learns that mainstreamed issues are included in policy decisions, annual plans, project preparations, and annual budget allocations. Therefore, a mainstreaming of the youth would ensure that the needs, problems, concerns and expectations of young people are addressed systemically, which would enhance their participation in society as equal and valuable partners. Youth mainstreaming should not be limited to government institutions where planning and budget allocation are expected. Apart from government sectors, it can take place within the family, in educational institutions, in business organizations, NGOs, and in religious institutions. The country

would benefit from youth mainstreaming because the knowledge, thoughts/ideas, wisdom, and energy of young people will be activated to make positive contributions to peace and development.

The idea of mainstreaming the youth is consistent with the positions of the United Nations and the African Union. UNESCO (2006), which considers young people a resource (not a problem) and as partners (not merely as a target group), is mainstreaming the needs, concerns and requirements of the youth throughout all its programs and activities during all phases of program development, implementation and evaluation. The African Union Commission (AUC) has developed a youth mainstreaming guideline with the aim to fast-track the on-going youth activities at the Commission in a strategic manner, as a path to realizing the 6th Aspiration of Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2016). AUC's Aspiration 6 reads, "An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."

Youth as resource (employ the strength-based perspective): Traditionally, the youth have been viewed as liabilities and problems to be managed. Nowadays, however, there is a paradigm shift where young people are perceived as resources that need to be developed rather than problems that need to be fixed (Belay and Yekoyealem, 2015). The advocates of the strength-based perspective believe that all youths possess the capacity for positive development, and that they have a lot to contribute when their opinions are respected and their talents are tapped into. The belief that adults necessarily know more than youngsters should be checked for accuracy and the tendency to sideline youth perspectives should stop.

The Ethiopian youth demonstrated their resourcefulness. In the 1960s, the enlightened youth represented pioneers of change in terms of bringing about social and political transformation. As groups, many young people continue to inspire and help stir political reforms through pressure. At an individual level, many successful young

entrepreneurs are on the rise. Betelhem Dessie, 19 years old, the youngest tech pioneer in Ethiopia (a patented software programmer) is a case in point (Lewton, 2019). Since young people and children account for the larger proportion, the country can benefit from their talents, skills, and opinions. Ethiopia's youthfulness can mean two things: enormous potential for development or enormous risk of failure. Youth empowerment would enable the country to tap into the potentials in the form of demographic dividend.[339]

Economic inclusion (avoid youth idleness through an integrated approach): When young people are idle, they tend to fall into financial dependence, frustration, disillusionment, and extremism (religious, ethnic, etc.). Employment is one of the ways young people can channel their talents into a productive purpose, avoiding destructive tendencies. Besides, employment invigorates young people and boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

The efforts to reduce joblessness (or avoid idleness) should move beyond a momentary engagement that provides only temporary relief. There should be sustained financing of existing small businesses to ensure their expansion and growth. Efforts should also be made to attract domestic and foreign investors to invest in labour-intensive industries that could absorb a large number of young job seekers. For such initiatives to succeed, an investment-friendly climate is necessary. This may, among others, include enabling the policy/ legal environment, improved access to power and water and the availability of educated, skilled and healthy workers. It needs to be recognized that job creation requires other interventions in the areas of policy, finance, education, health, and infrastructure. In short, addressing the economic concerns of youth requires an integrated approach.

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339 Demographic dividend by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)".https://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend.

Political inclusion (enable the youth to exercise political rights): The participation of young people in inclusive political processes can be attained through three steps. The first step is to promote an enabling legal/policy environment for young people's participation in different processes (election, parliament, administration/governance, peace-building, etc.) at local, regional and national levels. Second, young people's participation in politics can also be achieved through the promotion of their skills and capacities (e.g., through leadership training) to participate actively in democratic practices at local, national, and global levels. Third, the promotion of young women's participation and presence in political office and decision-making at all levels can also improve the effective engagement of the youth in politics.

The above three suggestions are consistent with certain UN conventions/declarations adopted by Ethiopia. The idea of fostering the political participation of the youth is in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Program of Action for Youth, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Some UN entities such as the UNDP have been promoting the idea that participation is a fundamental democratic right, and that young people are entitled to take part in politics like the adult population. Since the UN provisions provide a frame of reference for a rights-based approach, youth-based initiatives and interventions in Ethiopia should be designed accordingly.

Youth in Governance (create an actual decision-making milieu): The sustainability of development initiatives in Ethiopia requires young people's ideas, ownership, and active engagement. The youth can become transformative catalysts for change through the 'youth in governance' approach. This approach promotes positive outcomes among young people by helping them understand how decisions are made; how ideas and activities are organized, planned and communicated; and how young people become informed and remain thoughtful and productive citizens.

For 'youth in governance' to function effectively, being part of the formal governance structure (e.g., the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children) or its informal affiliate (e.g., Youth League or Youth Federation) alone is not sufficient. There exist a variety of ways to involve young people in meaningful governance. These include, among others, involving the youth in project design, ensuring their participation in staff recruitment processes, and enhancing their decision-making power in management councils or boards. Besides ensuring active participation today, the 'youth in governance' approach is instrumental in terms of preparing the next generation of leaders.

5. Concluding Remarks

Appreciating the problem: In Ethiopia, efforts have been made to ensure socio-economic inclusion and political participation of the youth. However, the space for effective youth participation and decision-making processes remains limited. Large numbers of young people have been exhibiting frustration, disillusionment, and vulnerability to extreme ideas and even violence. The reasons behind youth frustration include socio-economic deprivation and political marginalization as evidenced by poor quality education, unemployment and inability to lead a decent living, inability to participate in decision-making, and a general feeling of worthlessness, among others. Given the history of youth activism in the country and their numerical importance (69% below the age of 30), Ethiopia cannot afford to exclude and marginalize young people. What needs to be done?

Strategic direction: The discourse and literature on youth empowerment tend to focus more on addressing challenges facing young people. In the context of Ethiopia, however, developing the youth should be seen as a strategy with a double advantage: fostering development and overcoming challenges. Today's youth represent tomorrow's work force and untapped resource for positive change.

If equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills, and capabilities, the youth will meet the future labour force demands in the industrial, service, and agricultural sectors. Ethiopia can only expect to accelerate its transition to the middle-income status by mainstreaming youth issues, perceiving the youth as resources (not liabilities), and ensuring political and economic inclusion. If implemented, these measures are likely to avoid youth disenfranchisement and the consequent negative outcomes. What concrete actions can be taken?

Specific action areas: The specific actions that aim to empower youth should focus on wide range areas that span from the family to the national government contexts. The following five major areas are identified to provide a sense of direction for possible program/project intervention by government institutions, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, communities, the youth themselves, and relevant entities.

1) Education/Training: The quality of education/training at all levels of learning must be improved to equip the youth with the knowledge and skills demanded in the labour market. Besides that, work ethics, morality, social values, and citizenry rights and duties should be an integral part of the education and training lessons.

2) Employment: The initiatives designed to create employment opportunities should consider, among others, entrepreneurial/ business ideas and skills, access to finance, adequacy of work environment (e.g., space, power, water, network, etc.), market link, sustainability issues, etc.

3) Political participation: Meaningful political engagement of the youth requires active participation and fair representation in political parties, elections, parliaments, public administration, government sectors, peace-building, and other areas where important societal decision-making is required.

4) Psychological factors: Social exclusion and disenfranchisement contribute to frustration, powerlessness, a sense of dependency, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness. Since social inclusion cannot be expected overnight, there is a need to maintain the psychological wellbeing of the youth at all times.

5) Family: If the youth have to be productive in society, concerted efforts must be to avoid child abuse, poor parenting, and other factors that negatively affect the healthy upbringing of children. Socialization on morality, values, ethics, and national sentiment should also start at a family level, and families should be supported to play their roles.

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9. Gender Equality and Women Participation in Politics in Ethiopia

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Gender Equality and Women Participation in Politics in Ethiopia

Abstract

Women's political participation is considered as an important measure of the status of women in any society. Hence, their participation in politics and decision-making has nowadays received due attention at both international and national levels. However, in reality, women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions. While notable improvement is gained after recent political reforms, the problem persists. The main objective of this study is to examine challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia. The finding of the study shows that different casual factors such as: economic, religious, social and culture have contributed to women's poor political participation in the country. It also indicates that economic and social empowerment of women is sustainable and reliable if women are integrated into the political decision-making process and if they are involved in the political and public offices.

It further reveals that women's equal participation in decision-making and politics is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but a necessary pre-condition to protect and respect women's constitutional rights.

Introduction: Historical Precedents

The historical precedents related to Ethiopian women's participation are hardly recorded. The few that mention women are quick to point that these women became leaders as a leader of their relations to male leaders. It is true that most women who held key political positions were related to men in leadership positions but so were the men as most leadership was inherited. There are recent studies that attempt to counter the faulty records. One such study for example states that while role of Emperor Menelik as the winner of the Battle of Adwa

is well documented, the role of Taytu as Menelik's partner, diplomat and military strategist has, however, not been given due credence, "to this end in 1930, Hiruy WeldeSelassie opined that "Had it not been for the farsightedness of Taytu, Ethiopia would have been a protectorate with loss of sovereignty as logical consequence." (quoted in). Other women include Queen Eleni of Hadya who is said to have been the most powerful political leader of Ethiopia during the period 1478-1520. Similarly, the first head of an African state in 19th century was Zauditu, Empress of Ethiopia, who ruled between 1917 and 1930.

Women's Role during the Imperial Period

The reign of Haile Selassie can be divided into two phases, 1931-1936 and 1941-1974 for the purpose of this study.

It was following the promulgation of the Revised Constitution of 1955 that the Emperor Haile Selassie granted women full citizenship.

The first phase witnessed the emergence of elite women's charitable organizations such as the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association (EWAA) that was established in 1935 and played a noteworthy role during the resistance to Italian occupation by supplying key information to combatants and provision of other needs. The two prominent members who later became prisoners of war for their effort included Woizero Shewareged Gedle and Woizero Senedu Gebru. In the 1950s other welfare oriented organization such as Association of Officers' Spouses organization were also formed and engaged in welfare-oriented activities focused on ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of poor women.

During the post-war period, that is the restoration to the throne of the Emperor in 1941 to 1974 the political system remained archaic. For example the revised Constitution of 1955 was mostly limited to the elaboration of the powers and prerogatives of the monarch and

refusal to entertain even a mild form of participatory and pluralistic political system. The centralization of power, the dissolution of Eritrea's federal arrangement, and reunification with Ethiopia triggered armed rebellions in various parts of the country. The failed coup d'état of 1960 primarily aimed at ending absolutist rule, advocated for constitutional monarchy and land reform led to open criticisms and deepening opposition by various constituencies most notable of which was the student movement that became very active and vocal in Ethiopia, Europe and the United States. Although few in number, women participated in these movements both at home and abroad.

The revised Constitution of 1955 provided for universal adult suffrage and for an elected Chamber of Deputies. As far as women are concerned, this mild reforms granted formal citizenship to Ethiopian women and provided equality of men and women before the law (Tigest, 2017: 132). Two of the explanatory factors identified by Tigest for the reform of the Constitution included the determination of the Emperor to 'modernize' the state and a search for international recognition (emphasis mine). A close look at gender-friendly legal and policy changes would seem to indicate the continuity and importance of the need for international recognition as a major motivation for reforms from then to the present. Another constant is the lack of implementation and enforcement of legal provisions and policies. Despite the limitations, these reforms and the oppositions to them opened a limited space for women's political participation.

Female Pioneers in the Legislature

In Ethiopia's first parliamentary election of 1957, Woizero Senedu Gebru was elected as the first women MP and was also elected as Deputy Speaker of Parliament by her fellow deputies. Soon after, 2 other women were also elected as MPs. However, when Woizero Senedu proposed changes to the highly regressive Penal Code that was submitted to Parliament, only one person supported her motion.

She was prophetic when responding to her failure to reform the civil code. She is quoted as having said 'You will see one day, after some years, there will be so many women in Parliament!'(Meheret et al. 2017).In the 1965 elections, 2 women were elected and by 1969 the number of women in Parliament increased to 5. There were only small incremental changes during parliamentary election of 1965 during which only 2 women were elected and with election of 5 women in 1969.

There were relatively more significant changes in gender relations during the imperial era as a result of women's growing educational and employment opportunities. By the time of the overthrow of imperial rule in 1974, women made up 32 per cent of elementary and 24 per cent of secondary enrolment and around 17 per cent of those enrolled in Technical Vocational schools[340]. The enrolment of women in higher education remained extremely low. However, these low enrolment figures that were the result of institutional gender discrimination at home, schools and work places, mask the heightened political awareness of female students as a result of their employment in the public services, their participation in the growing student movement and labour unions.

In one of the exceptionally few gender aware accounts of the student movement and female participation in the student movement at the then Haile Selassie I University (HSIU), Balsvik observed both the incipient debates on 'liberation of women' that took place between the late 1950s to the early 1970s and increased female participation in the movement (Balsvik, 2005: 60). Despite such debates however, Balsvik also explores gender bases by male students that are likely to have limited female participation. Although not recorded, increased political awareness of women was evident through their participation in the numerous movements that overthrew the monarchy.

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340 It is important to note that by 1970, overall educational enrolment in Ethiopia was extremely low and with extremely uneven geographically distribution of schools and very high attrition rate levels as well as extremely low and static educational expenditure.

Women's Participation during the Military Era

Imperial Rule was overthrown by the 1974 revolution that was triggered by the refusal and inability of the monarchy to address the numerous social, political and economic problems facing the country ranging from a devastating famine, low and static wages, inflationary pressures resulting from global oil prices and rising cost of living all of which led to growing demands for major political change. The depth of the popular discontent was revealed by growing demonstrations and strikes by large sectors of the society i.e. taxi drivers, students, teachers, a massive demonstration by Muslims demanding religious equality and finally the unrest and mutiny by the armed forces. Women participated in most of these revolts.

Although the Imperial government attempted to introduce a reform agenda including the establishment of the Inquiry Commission, it was the 'creeping coup' by the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces and Territorial Army popularly known as the Derg with its slogan of *Ethiopia Tikdem Yale Minm Dem* (Ethiopia First without any bloodshed) that replaced the monarchy on September 1974 and established military rule that lasted until May 1991.

The nonviolent reform was short lived and was replaced with the imposition of censorship of all alternative views to that favoured by the military. This phase also witnessed the deposition of the Emperor and the abolishing of the monarchy; the suspension of the constitution; the dissolution of the Parliament; and the detention of senior officials of the imperial government in custody. During this phase the military dictatorship faced numerous challenges to their rule and re-establishing security throughout the country. The 'peaceful' phase of the reform came to an abrupt end with the extrajudicial execution of the former senior officials and the proclamation of a series of radical reforms and the adoption of a new ideology known as *Hibertesebawinet* (Ethiopian Socialism). The major reforms included nationalization of industrial and commercial enterprises as

well as financial institution. This was followed by the Rural Land Reform Proclamation soon followed by the Nationalization of Urban Land and Extra Houses.

These two reforms were accompanied with the formation of Peasant Associations and Urban Dwellers' a Association known as Kebeles both of which were meant to empower the peasantry and the urban population and to be responsive to the socio-economic needs of their members. These institutions did provide member-centred services such as providing essential consumer products as well as credit and input supply to famers. Women benefited from the provision of consumer products but also became heavily dependent on these institutions. A related measure during this phase includes the National Development through Cooperation Campaign or Zemecha, a measure principally aimed at curtailing continued resistance by sending students and teachers out of Addis Ababa but with the stated objective of spreading literacy, and the implementation of land reform.

Although not sufficiently documented, female participation in the Zemecha tended to enhance women's participation that has begun during the student movement. Female students encouraged rural women to be active in peasant associations, claim their land rights provided in the land reform and to resist gender oppression in households. Such interventions were resisted by male peasants but the overall experience contributed to increased political consciousness of female students.

Despite hopeful beginnings these urban and rural associations soon became subservient to the military administration and increasingly oppressive policies. In the case of the Peasant Association for example, the leaders were made responsible for land distribution and administration, the recruitment of military conscripts, the fulfilment of grain-purchase quotas while urban Kebeles had to establish and operate local militias known as 'committees for the defence of

the revolution" and even have prisons where gross human rights abuses against young men and women prisoners were committed. It was during this early phase of military rule that witnessed the intensification of the insurgencies in the North and East of the country notably, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) both of whom were established during imperial rule and subsequently, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Somali-Abo liberation Front. It was also during this early phase of military rule that those opposition political parties such as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRP) and All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON) and a number of other smaller parties emerged. For its part, the Derg established the Workers Party of Ethiopia after almost a decade long preparation. Although few in number, women were members in most of these insurgencies and political parties.

Towards the Formation of Mass Organization of Women

A principle tool of the consolidation of military dictatorship included the formation of mass organizations of women known as the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women Association (REWA) and the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (REYA), at the national, regional and Kebele levels. The major activities of REWA included dissolving the women's charitable organizations and appropriation of their property. It is said to have mobilized five million members throughout the country mostly through forced membership in Urban Dwellers Associations (Kebeles) and Peasant Associations, in the civil service and factories. Although the organization advocated for 'women's rights and gender equality, and these rights were included in the Constitution of 1987 in practice the commitment to these rights was simply rhetorical. In addition to being forced to pay monthly fees, women were further forced to contribute their labour to prepare food items and clothing needed for the war effort. As studies have observed, the participation of women in these mass

organization reveals <u>regime-directed mobilization</u> (emphasis mine) where women's political interest and participation is deliberately used as a tool of authoritarian consolidation and not as a way of giving citizens the chance to influence decision-making (Aalen, L. et al. 2019). Perhaps the only positive activity that REWA engaged in is the promotion of literacy among women (Mignot, 2017).

A handful of women did become members of the Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE) the ruling party. However, studies reveal that only one woman was a member of the Central Committee of WPE the) and only six women among the 2000 delegates who attended the inaugural congress of the party. The overall and long term outcome of forced 'participation' throughout the military dictatorship was an aversion to belonging to women's organizations and political participation more generally. Ironically, it was during the military regime that Ethiopia became party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women(CEDAW), the most comprehensive treaty on women's human right salthough none of the provisions were actually implemented.

Validation Workshop on Gender Equality and Women Participation in Politics in Ethiopia

Women's Participation in Anti-Military Struggles

During the 1974 revolution, women continued to participate in the wide spread wave of protests against injustices during the Imperial rule and became members of the many opposition parties that emerged during this period. Moreover, records of the major opposition parties, namely EPRP and Meison do not give sufficient attention to the role and scale of activities of female members. However, accounts of female political participation are given by some female members of these organizations. For example, Original WoldeGiorgis[341] has underscored women's participation both in these activities of EPRP and the 'hideous torture' that they suffered when they were thrown in prison. As a result of which numerous young women were dead, maimed and crippled. Relatively large numbers of women were imprisoned for a relatively long time. These observations were affirmed by the recently published autobiographical account of her own and other women's political participation during the military regime by Hiwot Teffera (Hiwot, 2012).

Relatively larger per centage of Women participated in the liberation movements especially the EPLF and TPLF. In the later phases of these liberation movements, women made up almost 30 per cent of the liberation army and some reached senior leadership positions. One of the participants of the struggle has authored a book that reveals both the magnitude of women's participation in Tigray and the anti-democratic nature and gender biases of TPLF (Yewbemar, 2009). She provides a robust account of the effort of women fighters to set up an autonomous Women's Fighters Association and the reality of the subordination of the organization to the direct control of TPLF.

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341 Oral account given at the Meeting in Nazareth in 2010 to explore the oral history the Ethiopian Student Movement

The End of Military Dictatorship

Throughout the 1980s, the country was faced with a multitude of challenges including a deteriorating socio-economic and political landscape. These included the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War and the phasing out of Soviet support on which the regime depended heavily; a recurrent famine and the commitment to solve the intensified civil war through costly military means. By way of response to these multitudes of challenges, and disastrous military setbacks, the military government adopted a short-lived 'mixed economy' in 1988, a reform which only accelerated the demise of the Derg Era and the taking of power by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in late May 1991.

Emergence and Consolidation of EPRDF

The initial period consisted of the Peace and Democracy Transitional Conference of July 1991, the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia under a transitional charter. Despite their active participation in the liberation movement including a leading role in the takeover of Addis Ababa, women were not included in the national conference and in the crafting of the resultant Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia and the formation of the Council of Representatives (Yewbemar, 2009).

In brief, the two significant components of the Transitional Charter include paving the way for the establishment of ethnic-based federal state and the emergence of a multiparty political system. Focused as it was on ethnic pluralism, another characteristic of the transitional period was the lack of women's participation. However, two women were included in the Constitutional Commission that was established to draft the Constitution.

Women's Rights in the 1995 Constitution

Despite minimal participation by women in the five day symposium to discuss the draft of the Constitution, the final document provided for civil and political rights of women that are congruent with internationally recognized conventions and it provide for the domestication of all international treaties ratified by Ethiopia. The new ruling party committed itself to parliamentary democracy and a pluralist political system based on 'free' and competitive elections. Accordingly, elections have been held in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015. It is important to underscore that the holding of regular elections has not resulted in instituting a multiparty competitive politics. The net outcome of the four elections has resulted in the entrenchment of a one party rule. Although, a handful of opposition party members and independents were elected in the 2nd and 3rd election, the election of 2015 resulted in a 100 per cent win for EPRDF and its affiliates. The implication of women's political participation has to take this context into account.

As will be shown below, women's participation has increased incrementally between the elections of 1995-2015.

Overall, the Constitution provides for wide ranging rights of women including freedom of expression, freedom of association and the rights to assembly. In addition to the right of equality before the law without discrimination and rights within marriage including the necessity of consent, article 35 of is entirely dedicated to the rights of women with its provision of equal rights with men. In this regard, Article 35 (3) clearly states:

> "The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be 'to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions".

Yet another noteworthy article of the constitution that has the potential to enhance women's political participation includes Article 89 (6) which clearly states that "government shall at all times provide the participation of the people in the formulation of development policies and programs." The domestication of international conventions to which Ethiopia is a party implies that provisions such as those articulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) became binding. Ethiopia is signatory to a number of International Convention including the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) and CEDAW both of which underscore women's rights to participate in public life on an equal basis with men.

The political rights of women are clearly articulated in CEDAW. Article 7 of CEDAW clearly provides women the right "to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government". More specifically, Article 7 further stipulates that:

> "State Parties shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government".

It is important to underscore that CEDAW has a firmly established accountability framework through it requires governments that are a party to the Convention to table periodic reports on the progress made in implementing the Convention. In this regard, Ethiopia has been submitting periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee. The most recent report of progress made in implementing the Convention was submitted in February 2018 by the government and a shadow report by civil society organizations.

A much more recent international commitment towards gender equality comes from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More specifically SDG 5.5 that states "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life." In the specific case of Ethiopia, the major impetus for increasing women's political participation is predominantly local; the contribution of international pressure and norms should not be underestimated.

Despite such robust constitutional provisions, women continued to have minimal participation in the first phases of multi-party elections in Ethiopia, and had minimal participation in the formulation of development policies. While the underrepresentation women in the legislature continued, there were other changes that enhanced women's political participation

Gender Profile of Political Parties

The period 1995-2008, was a period that witnessed the rapid growth of political parties, a plethora of media outlets as well as the proliferation of professional and civil society organizations. In most cases, political parties are the 'real gatekeepers' to positions of power and decision making. To be sure, women's substantive political participation depends on the strategies for gender equality put in practice by political parties ((International IDEA 2008). A noteworthy development of the transitional period and the first decade of the EPRDF-led government included the proliferation of multiethnic and ethno-regional political parties. These political parties included the United Democratic Forces (UEDF), Ethiopian Social Democratic Federal Party (ESDEP) and Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) popularly known as Kinjit.

An exploration of the gender policies of these parties indicates varying degrees of awareness and inclusion of gender equality in political parties' policy documents. Despite the inclusion of

affirmative action in the Constitution, a gendered exploration reveals that the country lacks national legislation mandating a gender quota aimed at ensuring adequate representation and leadership positions in elective decision-making positions at the national or regional legislatures. Most parties researched seemed to be lacking in party rules and regulations for identifying, selecting and nominating women candidates. Moreover, while only one party has included gender-based target in internal party structures, most omit the inclusion of targets for leadership positions (Kandawasvika-Nhundu 2013).

Almost all parties lack effective implementation mechanisms for ensuring the transformation of the commitments into effective actions and outcomes. All the parties included in the study lack explicit provisions on equal access of men and women to leadership and decision-making positions within the party (Kandawasvika-Nhundu 2013). Nor do any of the parties studied include accountability mechanisms that would help in the monitoring of the implementation of even the minimal gender equality commitments.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) 2007 strategy program includes the objective of promoting and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the party lacked an effective implementation and enforcement mechanisms for achieving the stated objectives and an internal leadership quota. The General Congress and the Council make up the two highest leadership structures of EPRDF. The Council has 180 members of which 20 were women.

As for promotion of leadership positions, the EPRDF places responsibility for gender equality solely under the Women's League. Furthermore, while the party constitution states that the Women's League will be represented in the General Congress, the Women's League representative is not specified as one of the required leaders

of the General Congress ((Kandawasvika-Nhundu 2013: 68). As aptly observed by the same study, placing responsibility for gender equality under the Women's Wing can have the inadvertent consequence of removing gender issues from the mainstream priories of the party (ibid: 68).

Other parties simply indicate a rather broad commitment of principles. For example, in the case of the Oromo People's Congress (OPC), the programme stipulates that Oromo women shall be equal with men before the law or in work, under the section on democratic and human rights. For its part, the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM) party programme states that women will have the same rights to equal opportunity as men. Again neither of these two parties indicates as to how these commitments will be actualized.

The Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party

The party program of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP), popularly known as *Kenjit*, commits to ensure that the rights of women, children, the elderly, physically challenged and other groups in society that face discrimination are respected and that they receive the required care. More specifically, while the programme states that the party will ensure gender equality by changing the entrenched and erroneous relationship between the sexes and that the party will ensure the enhancement of women's political participation and their role in decision making, the programme does not indicate implementation mechanisms. The structure of the party included several committees, one of which is the Women's Affairs Committee. The head of this committee was a member of the Upper Executive Committee. The two noteworthy aspect of CUDP was the election of female, Birtukan Mideksaas, Vice Chair of the party, and their fielding a number of female candidates for the election of members of the Addis Ababa City Council.

Unity for Democracy and Justice Party

The primary distinction of the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJP) is that it was the first party ever to have been founded by a woman, namely Birtukan Mideksa. The programme document stipulated that 'the required support will be provided to enhance the participation of women in politics and their role in decision making' In the area of social affairs, the party programme articulated the objective of enhancing women's participation in all societal affairs and ensuring that women have real decision-making power, as opposed to using women 'as political instruments'. Beyond stating such objectives, the policy document does not specify an effective implementation and enforcement mechanisms.

All Ethiopian Unity Party

A party programme that included the objective of promoting and achieving gender equality and that articulated an explicit and minimum gender target was that of the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP). The party commits to ensuring that women's participation in politics, within the party and at the national level, reaches a minimum of 30 per cent. The policy document also recognizes that there should be no discrimination on the basis of gender, stating that 'women will be given an equal role in society without any gender based discrimination'. Here again, what distinguishes this particular party was the selection of a female, Sophia Yilma as Vice President of the party.

Emergence of Vocal Women's Organizations

There were a number of indicators that pointed to structural shifts in the roles of men and women in the public sphere, at work at home and work arenas in Ethiopia. Although still small in number compared to the growing population, more women were graduating from tertiary institutions, working both in the formal and informal market, erosion

of the male bread winner assumption by earning wages and salaries and contributing to household income.

The most significant social change during 1995-2008 was the growing number of urban women's exercising their newly found freedom of association, freedom of expression and rights of assembly. Overall, this was a period that witnessed the proliferation of professional and civil society organizations. The most prominent women's civil society organization included the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association, the Association of Media Women, Association of Women and Leadership, Progynist as well as Network of Ethiopian Women's Association.

A considerable number of women participated and debated in mixed meetings as well as convening their own well attended, and publicized public meetings. Of equal significance were their growing effort at advocacy and lobbying for the removal of gender-based legal restrictions and for other policy changes. Following a sustained advocacy by EWLA, the most significant reforms include the Revised Family Code Proclamation No.213.2000.

The new law addressed early marriage by increasing women's age of marriage from fifteen to eighteen years. Unlike the old Civil Code which recognized the husband as the head of the family and that stated that the wife owed her husband obedience in all lawful things he ordered, the revised law stated that both spouses owned each other respect, support and assistance and that the spouses should have equal rights in the management of the family.

An equally significant component of the revised Code was included in making divorce a matter of mutual consent, joint management of common property by the spouses while personal property and the resultant income are to be managed by each spouse. Finally, the revised code granted women the right to decide themselves if they want to take a job outside the home.

Women's civil society organizations also began to advocate for the implementation of the constitutional provision that provided for the participation of the people in the formulation of national development policies and programs (Article 89). This provision also specified that 'government will ensure the participation of women in equality with men in all economic and social development endeavours'. Furthermore Article 35, sub-article 8 of the Constitution "Women shall have a right to equality of employment, promotion, pay and the entitlement to bequeath pensions."

Based on the economic and social rights of women enshrined in the Constitution, women civil society organization advocated for the implementation of women's land rights, for wide ranging reforms related to women's employment and submitted a "Gender Focused Poverty Strategy in Ethiopia" to the government. Selected components of the proposed strategy was included in the governments revised Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Similarly, the advocacy focused on Pensions rights and culminated in the Public Servants Pension (Amendment) Proclamation No. 190/1999 which brought the Pension Law into compliance with the Ethiopian Constitution. The amended proclamation extends equal rights of women to pensions and also respected the entitlement of women to bequeath pensions thereby allowing widowers to claim their deceased wives pensions.

Women's Civil Society organizations took numerous initiatives to raise the political awareness of women as voters and candidates and to advocate for the increased representation of women in formal political arenas and broader decision making institutions**.** Part of this effort included lobbying political parties to increase the number of women in their party lists. Although these organizations supported independent women candidates, these private female candidates were not elected. Indicative of women's increased political consciousness, large numbers of women participated actively in the most democratic pre electoral period of the 2005 election including in both the state sponsored and counter rally called by CUD in 2005.

Inspired by initiatives of women in other African countries, in the period leading up to the 2005 elections, these growing and energized groups produced a Women's Manifesto that included women's economic, social and political demands related to the structure of political parties and demanded political party commitments to gender equality. Based on the issues raised by the Manifesto, these women's groups organized a meeting to which they invited representatives of the two prominent parties, namely, EPRDF and Coalition of Unity and Democracy (CUD)and demanded the gendered positions of these two parties. A large number of civil society organization including a sizable number of women participated as election observers and publicized election irregularities. However, following the highly contested and tumultuous election of 2005, the country witnessed the promulgation of diverse and highly restrictive laws and policies that silenced the vibrant debates, networking and policy advocacy by civil society organizations.

The Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSP) of 2009 recognized three types of charities and civil society organizations, namely, Ethiopian Charities or Societies, Ethiopian Resident Charities or Societies and Foreign Charities or Societies. The Proclamation placed severe restrictions on the work of human rights organizations. The major restriction on domestic CSOs was related to funding sources whereby only CSOs that receive no more than 10 per cent of their income from foreign forces were allowed to work on the promotion of human rights.

Moreover, the Proclamation highlighted the range of areas of work that foreign funded Ethiopian or Foreign organizations were prohibited from working on. More specifically, the prohibited areas included work related to gender equality, the promotion of children's rights and the rights of the disabled. As many observers have argued, the ultimate goal of the legal regime governing CSO/NGOs in Ethiopia was to redirect their work only to service delivery (Tadesse,2012). As intended, the Proclamation literally crippled

democratic and human rights activities and the contribution of civil society organization to the democratization process.

The implications of the new law on organizations engaged in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment was immediate. It resulted in significant reduction of budgets, reduction of staff and splitting of networks. In the case of the EWLA, the government appropriated the relatively healthy bank account of the organization thereby forcing the organization to reduce its staff both at the headquarters in Addis and in its branch offices in various regions. In the case of NEWA, the organization had to split into two organizations. Almost 75 per cent of NEWA's members were re-registered as resident charities and under Union of Ethiopian Women Charitable Association (UEWCA) while NEWA continued with only a membership of eight women's Associations that were registered as Ethiopian Societies Working on gender equality and women's right and gender equality. In such a restricted environment and narrowing of civil space, it would not be an organization to say that almost all rights based work and the vibrant networking by women's civil society organization came to a standstill.

Potential but Curtailment of the Media

The Constitution of 1995 guaranteed freedom of expression as the fundamental democratic right and also enshrined the free flow of information, ideas and opinion. Subsequent legislations related to the press tended to reaffirm the freedoms provided by the Constitution. However, there was a vast gap between law and practice as evidenced by government officials who routinely violated provisions in these laws when dealing with the private press. Despite these early attempts at stifling the growth of the private press, during the first decade of FDRE rule, there were unprecedented proliferation of privately run newspapers and magazines in urban areas of the country (Shimelis, 2002).

The growth and diversity of a robust media landscape is a critical tool in enhancing women's political participation. Among many other positive contributions, a diverse media can play a significant role in providing visibility of female politician and undermining gender-based stereotypes related to women in leadership. In addition to facilitating the creation of the Association of Women in the media, the freedom of expression and the proliferation of the media created sufficient space to discuss gender issues in the various media outlets. Taboo subjects such as various types of violence against women, including early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), discussed regularly as were other subjects that were the major focus of women's civil rights organizations including factors that enhance or inhibit women's political participation.

All these possibilities came to an end with the array of punitive and prohibitive articles of the Freedom of The Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation of 2008. The law resulted in constant harassment of journalists, publishers and even vendors as well as detention and forced exile of journalists. These restrictions and imprisonment included those who were active on social media. The resultant 'bleak landscape of the freedom of expression' severely restricted the relatively wide coverage of and the significant potential of broadening of public awareness of gender equality.

Tracking Women's Political Participation

Women were underrepresented at all levels of the election during the first multi-party election in Ethiopia that was held in 1995. Despite the inclusion of the need for affirmative action in the constitutions, the electoral law of 1995 did not include the need for Affirmative action. As a result, women only made up 2.83 per cent of elected members in the House of People's Representatives and that per centage increased to 7.7 following the national election of 2000.

As earlier stated, clearly in all African countries with relatively high numerical representation of women in the legislatures resulted from affirmative action policies and quota systems adopted by the dominant party. In the case of Ethiopia, the numerical increase of women in the federal, regional and local legislature is due to various affirmative action policies. Furthermore, in one of the key policy document the GTP II, the government articulated its commitment to increase women's participation in all levels of leadership and put specific targets. These targets include the plan to increase the per centage of women in parliament from the current 38.8 per cent to 50 per cent and from 9.2 to 40 per cent in the federal executive institutions and from 20.6 to 35 per cent in the judiciary by 2020.

The major contributory factors to the increase of women's presence in the legislature include the adoption of a voluntary internal gender quota of 30 per cent during national and local elections by EPRDF in 2004. This quota was only binding on EPRDF. The second measure entailed the adoption of political finance reforms that was aimed to address gender inequality through public funding. The Revised Political Parties Registration Proclamation of 2008 considered the number of female candidates by the political parties as one of the criteria for receiving public funding.

As a result the number of parliamentary seats held by women in the House of People's Representatives increased to 21.4 per cent following the 2005 election. Female representation in Regional Councils was 7.6 per cent in the House of Federal People's Representatives, 12.9 per cent in Regional Councils, and 6.8 per cent at the Woreda level. In 2010, seats held by women in the Federal Parliament increased to 27.9 per cent. Following the 2015 election, seats held by women increased to 38 per cent and from 17.7 per cent to 32.6 per cent in the House of Federation. Likewise, the representation of women at Regional Councils registered a significant increase although there are regional disparities.

In six of the nine regional states, women's representation is above 30 per cent. The highest representation is in Tigray regional state with 48 per cent women in the regional council (FDRE 2012:35-37). Similarly, progress has been made in Woreda and Kebele councils as evidenced by women's representation exceeding 30 per cent. The highest representation is in Tigray regional state with 48 per cent of women in the regional council. According to parliamentary documents women's representation has reached 50 per cent in Woreda and Kebele Councils (The FDRE 2012:35-37).

After the May 2015 national election, women's participation in the House of Peoples Representative (HPR) (lower house) rose from 27 per cent to 38.8 per cent.

See the following table summarizing the representation women in the five nations election held so far.

No.	Election Year	Total No. of Candidates	Distribution of Parliamentary Seats		% age of Women Members
			M	F	
1.	1995	2,871	526	11	2.01
2.	2000	—	505	42	7.68
3.	2005	1,594	410	116	21.21
4.	2010	2,188	395	152	27.79
5.	2015	1,828	335	212	38.76

4.5. Women Parliamentarians and their Participation of Women in the Parliament

Beyond the mere presence of women, the goal of gender balanced representation and gender equality in the Parliament requires a closer exploration of the day to day activities of parliament. In Ethiopia, the regular work of the Parliament is carried out by the 13 Standing Committees. Here the two key questions are: to what extent do women parliamentarians take part in these standing committees and to what extent are they able to raise gender issues in their respective areas of focus? Here again, women's participation in these committees is facilitated by an obligatory requirement to have five female members in every committee. And yet other regulations limit the number of members in each committee to 20 and membership in two committees simultaneously is prohibited (Meseret, 2010)

With regard to the leadership positions held by women parliamentarians, currently, one female parliamentarian serves as a deputy speaker of the parliament; 6 of them are member of business advisory committee of the House; 2 of them are chairpersons of standing committees and the other 2 are deputy chairpersons; Women have served and continue to serve as Deputy Speaker of the parliament. However, as far as leadership positions in Standing Committees of the Parliament, until 2015, only two women served as chairpersons. It is important to note that the two committees are Women's Affairs and Social Affairs Standing Committee (Meseret, 2010). These two areas are of course areas that are assumed to be appropriate for women. Since 2015, women lead five of the 16 Standing Parliaments and serve as deputy chair of five others.

Female legislatures have also been participating in the Pan African Parliament, the legislative body of the African Union and one member served as a leader of the delegation. Article 4 (2) of the 2014 Protocol of PAP specifies that at least two of each Member State's five members to be a women. These members are designated

by the legislatures of Member States and members of their domestic legislatures. In accordance with this provision, 51 female legislators serve as member of the House delegate to Pan African Parliament of which one is serving as a leader of the delegation; and 6 members are deputy chairpersons of the parliamentary friendship group of the parliament (HPR, 2009).

Women Appointment for Public Offices

Women's presence in the executive remained relatively low until the nomination of a gender balanced cabinet at present. In 2005, women's representation in the executive body was 13 per cent increasing to 16.5 per cent in 2010. Women's representation in cabinet was 7 per cent in 2005 increasing to 13 per cent in 2014. In April 2014, a woman was appointed as one of the Deputy Prime Minster. In 2010, women constituted 14.88 per cent of State Ministers, 20 per cent of Commissioners, 11.33 per cent of Ambassadors. In 2010, there was a slight increase in women's representation as State Minsters increased to 14.88 per cent of State Ministers, 20 per cent of Commissioners, 11.33 per cent of Ambassadors.

After the 2015 election, women held 13.5 per cent of Ministerial positions while they held 16.25 per cent of the position of State Minister. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, currently two out of four of the state ministers (deputy minister) are female while two out of five Permanent Secretary Positions are held by women. Moreover, currently women's representation as heads of missions stands at 18.6 per cent**.**

There has also been some progress in women's appointment to judicial position. Between 2008/9 to 2012, women's representation in the judiciary was 30 per cent while it was only 16.9 per cent in Federal and Regional Courts. Currently, women make up 28 per cent both at the regional and federal courts. The GTP II target was the increase of women's representation in the judiciary from 20.6 to 35

per cent by 2020. The existing data indicates that a concerted effort to meet the planned target by GTPII has not been reached. As will be shown below, women's relatively low presence in the judiciary is overshadowed by the recent appointment of women as President of the Supreme Court and Attorney General.

Women's Political Participation in the Current Transition

Following almost three years of political turmoil principally led by youth protests in various regions, the promulgation of emergency rule, increased political imprisonment and extrajudicial killings led to intense and lengthy internal debates within the ruling party. Subsequently, EPRDF held an internal election and nominated a new chairperson and Prime Minister (PM) in early 2018. In this inaugural address of April 3, 2018, Prime Minister Abiy highlighted his commitment to political reform with emphasis on democratic freedom, rule of law and due process. Accordingly, he has undertaken a raft of new political and economic reforms including ending of the state of emergency, freeing of large numbers of political prisoners and journalists; inviting exiled opposition prisoners to return to the country; signing a Peace Agreement with Eritrea.

Other reforms included appointing of a new President, a new cabinet and a revised electoral law, revised Civil Society Proclamation; liberalization of the media; the adoption of a 'Home Grown' economic policy in an overall environment that puts emphasis on a more democratic, transparent and accountable government.

Of equal importance is the introduction of participatory nature of the reform process. Participatory forums include the establishment of the Committee for Judicial System Reform with a mandate to engage in the discussion of laws that fail to respect the rule of law and due process, as well as those that are found to be restrictive to the right of citizen's to form autonomous organizations. Cases in point include the setting up an Advisory Council to investigate and

remedy the shortfalls of the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2008, invitation of stakeholders from media and civil society organizations to discussion, development and validation of media reforms and the future of media policy. Each of these reforms has tangible and potential possibilities of enhancing women's political participation. Although few in number, women have been invited as participants in these participatory forums.

Towards a Female President and Gender-Equal Cabinet

Moreover, the gender-friendly reforms include the nomination of a gender-equal cabinet, nomination and parliamentary election of a female President, female President of the Supreme Court and a female Chair of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) and 40 per cent female member of the NEBE Board. Of equal significance is the portfolios held by women in the current cabinet. Women were put in charge of key ministries including transport, trade, revenue, science and higher education as well as the newly established Ministry of Peace, one of the most powerful ministries, as it oversees the major security and low enforcement agencies in the county with a mandate to tackle the wave of ethnic violence that has engulfed the country.

In the course of nominating these women the PM noted that the initiative of creating a gender-equal cabinet was "meant to show respect to women's participation in nation building and to **disprove** the adage that women can't lead" (emphasis mine).   In addition to ministerial posts, 10 women state minsters out of 55 were nominated. Furthermore, more women have also been appointed as head of Commissions, Agencies, as Heads of Diplomatic Missions and city administrators. These appointments have generated numerous debates both nationally and globally. Although there are sceptics who continue to question women's ability to lead, other observers anticipate changes in gender beliefs and gender stereotypes related to women's leadership and capabilities.

At her swearing in ceremony in parliament as President the seasoned diplomat, Sahle-Work stated that "I know today I have said a lot about women's empowerment, but expect me to be even more vocal in the coming years about women's rights and gender equality." She has kept her word in terms of addressing gender equality issues in most of her public engagements and constantly reminding women in high offices not to be complacent emphasizing that these new appointments are just the beginnings of a long journey. As the then Chief of Staff of the Prime Minster tweeted[342] following the unanimous selection of Sahle-Work Zewde as the first female head of state in modern Ethiopia by the two houses of Parliament, "in a patriarchal society such as ours, the appointment of a female head of state not only set the standard for the future but also normalises women as decision-makers in public life'. In the view of Metasabia Yilma, President of the Ethiopian Women's Business Group (AWIB), 'placing women in power will bring new qualities and leadership styles to Ethiopia's government and provide inspiration to the next generation of girls'[343].

Continuity or Change?

These appointments have begun to reveal both the potential for change and the challenges related to removing or even minimizing the deeply embedded gender inequalities in institutions. Despite the gains, women continue to be underrepresented as a constituency in the emergent political landscape particularly in the numerous political parties.

The current debates by opposition parties are mostly focused on contesting the membership requirements of the new Ethiopian Electoral and Political Proclamation of 2019. In terms of membership, the new legislation requires that a national party ought to have at least 10,000 founding members to participate in an election while regional parties are required to have at least 4000 members.

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342 FistumArega @fistumarega, October 25, 2018.
343 Interview with National Public Radio (NPR) East Africa: www. npr.org

Furthermore, with few exceptions, the opposition block are also contesting the provision in the new electoral law that requires that civil servants wish to participate in election s/he should take unpaid leave from the office. What is the gender implication of the electoral regulation requiring public servants to take unpaid leave if they wish to participate in elections? The focus on these two items has severely limited discussion of political views, and policy platforms and the real effort of various political parties to promote equal and full participation of women and the inclusion of gender equality issues in their policies and programs, their leadership structure, campaign nomination and campaign financing.

The initiative by the UNDP Supporting Election for Ethiopia's Democratic Strengthening and within it Support Women's Effective Engagement and its planned collaboration with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia is promising. For its part, the Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA) has a two pronged strategy: holding consultation with opposition political parties and consultation with the objective of campaigning strategy to enhance women's political participation in the upcoming 2020 national election are noteworthy initiatives. Some discussion on the need for a focus on enhancing women's political participation is also initiated by the Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Election (CECEOE) has been initiated. Given the inertia towards women's political participation since 2008, ensuring women's substantive political participation requires sustained attention.

Initiatives to Increase women's Political Participation: NEBE

In the meantime, there has been mixed trends in terms of increasing women's political participation through the revised electoral law prepared under the leadership of its first ever female Chair, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) submitted the Ethiopian Electoral and Political Proclamation of 2019. In the

hope of increasing the number of women in the legislature, the draft proclamation proposed the inclusion of an article that gave priority to a female candidate if she received equal number of votes with a male candidate. Following a heated debate, the parliament rejected the proposed article as it considered it 'discriminatory' and one that undermines 'gender equality'.

It is important to note that some female members of parliament especially the female deputy speaker of the parliament put up a valiant struggle to maintain the gender-friendly article, an argument that is in keeping with the rights enshrined in the constitution, a parliament composed of 39 per cent female members most of whom became members of parliament following the adoption of party quota, voted to eliminate the proposed article.

Gender Equitable Disbursement of Public Funding

Ironically, the Parliament did not reject the portion of the legislation related to disbursement of public funding that explicitly aims to address gender inequality through the provision of public funding. For example, article 74, number 4 referring to By-laws of Political Party clearly states that

- "Every political party when conducting election for leadership position shall ensure gender balance consideration.

Similarly, Section 8: Source of Income and Property Affairs of Political Parties, Chapter One article 100 referring to Amount and Eligibility Criteria of Government Funding states, "that amount of financial support that a political party receives with sub -article 1 above shall be determined by a directive to be issued by the Board based on the following criteria: one of which is

- c) the number of female candidates it nominates;

- d) the number of female members of the party and number of female at leadership positions;

- e) and the number of disabled candidates it nominates

Leadership in Election Offices

In the meantime, the NEBE plans to assign some 250,000 election implementing officials throughout the nine regional states and the two chartered cities. In this regard, the Election Board has specified the qualification requirements of the head of election offices. More specifically, the heads of election officers are expected to hold first degrees and five years of work experience in the following academic fields: political science, management, information technology, statistics and related fields. Those with Masters Degrees in any of the above disciplines are expected to have four years of work experience. Given the current proportion of Ethiopian women first degree and especially with graduate degrees and their limited presence in the preferred academic fields, it will not be off the mark to speculate that there will be much fewer women heads of election offices.

As the process of recruitment is currently underway, it is not possible to analyze the gendered outcome of the recruitment of election officers. However, it is hoped that serious effort will be deployed in the recruitment of other field registration and polling staff. Going forward, NEBE will have to ensure the availability of gender disaggregation data of voter turnout, and election staff.[344]

Gender and the Prosperity Party

At present, the newly formed ruling party, the Prosperity Party (PP), is in the process of replacing the EPRDF. Unlike opposition parties whose public visuals portray all men membership and leadership, a few women were represented in the formation of the Congress of PP. A cursory glance at the recently released Prosperity Party Programme and Regulation (November, 2019)[345] states that the Party

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344 It is hoped that NEBE will be able to build on the experience of the post-election evaluation of the 2010 General Election which analyzed the level of participation of women as voters, electoral officers, observers and candidates in Ethiopia. See UNDP Ethiopia Country Office response provided to the UNDP Survey or Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Processes in UNDP country offices.

345 My own translation of the Amharic Version of the Prosperity Party Regulations

will respect the 1995 Constitution as well as regional laws. As stated earlier provides broad socio-economic and political rights of women although most of those provisions were neither implemented nor enforced in the past. However, the rest of the document only signals minimal provision as regards of women's inclusion in the party.

More specifically, chapter 2 on membership article 4 of the regulation refers to the inclusion of women's and youth wings as members of the party while chapter 3: Establishment and Organization of the Party article 20 states that the Party will ensure the participation of women's and youth wings at all levels of the party and in chapter 4: Standing Bodies of the Party, article 4 no. 2 once again refers to the inclusion of women's and youth organizations. Until other clarifications are provided, these references imply that the current mass organizations of women and youth will simply become members of the newly restructured party. As indicated earlier, mass organization of women and youth emerged during the military dictatorship, were recreated during the latter part of rule under EPRDF and as in other cases, women's wings lacked meaningful participation in political parties and habitually perform 'cheer leading' roles (Razavi,S, 1997: 2).
In the specific case of Ethiopia, studies have shown that in most cases, women's and youth membership in these structures were the result of clientalism, that is political support that is rewarded by material incentives and personal favours from those in power. In most cases, women and youth in these structures had better access to essential commodities, jobs in Kebeles, financial rewards, credits and related incentives. Given the emphasis on democratization as a guiding principle of the new party, what is the implication of simply maintaining these tainted organizations in regards to women's increased political participation?

Absence of Debates

Sadly thus far, there are only limited signs of women participating in debates about the forthcoming election, or priority issues related to

the gender implication of federalism, ethnic federalism or creating the political space for women to articulate a broader notion of citizenship. A number of women actively participated in the revision of the draconian Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2008 and the extensive consultation of the new Proclamation that was adopted by parliament in February 2019. The revised law calls on all CSOs to contribute to democratization encourages CSOs to engage in advocacy and lobbying for laws and policies.

However, unlike the pre 2005 period, women's organization do not appear to be utilizing adequately the political space created by the new civil society law and the overall heightened political mobilization as an opportunity to raise the level of political consciousness among women.

Initiatives worthy of note include the recent initiative by the Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA) that has adopted a two pronged approach, one holding a series of consultation with members of political parties and another with various stakeholders with the objective of promoting women's political participation. The consultations with various stakeholders are aimed at developing a campaigning strategy to enhance women's participation in the upcoming 2020 national elections.

The Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organization for Election (CECSO) is also exploring various strategies that would enhance women's participation in the forthcoming election. Another initiative include UNDP's Supporting Elections for Ethiopia's Democracy Strengthening (SEEDS) Project which has a component that supports women's effective engagement in electoral processes through the establishment of close relationship with the National Election Board of Ethiopia. It is hoped that these initiatives will be able to create reflections and training forums that are able to go beyond advocating for the numerical increase.

Similarly, there is no evidence of gender equality concerns in the media. Recent studies of the media were informed that some media houses have signed gender mainstreaming and equality pledges. However, there is a lack of evidence of the commitment and enforcement of these media codes and gender policies (Rashweat, M & Finn, R, 2018)

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PART IV: Economic Issues

The last part discusses economic policy issues during transitional period. It touches on the growing tendency towards liberalizing the economy and attempts made to tackle the dire economic condition of the nation since the recent political reforms.

10. Ethiopia: Economic Policy Issues during Political Transformation

Dr. Marit Y. Kitaw

Ethiopia: Economic Policy Issues during Political Transformation

Abstract

This paper analyzed the economic policy reforms underway in Ethiopia during political transformation, to highlight the major challenges in implementing the reforms, and to provide recommendations for the way forward. While it was initially written in December 2019, it was revised in May 2021, following the COVID-19 pandemic and rising internal strife in the country, which had an impact on the economy. It assessed the results of the past regime's developmental state and thoroughly reviewed the economic reforms under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, including sectoral reforms and imminent privatizations. It found that the major challenges in implementing the reforms were the internal strife and politics, the lack of a compelling economic vision, deficiencies in human and institutional capacities, and the underdeveloped financial institutions and markets that deter a thriving private sector. To structurally transform Ethiopia's economy to become a middle-income country, it is recommended to have a compelling economic vision, based on a mixed policy whereby the state and the private sector cooperate. From that vision, policies and strategies can clearly be articulated in terms of appeasing the polarized ethnic politics and internal strife, focus on productive sectors to provide decent jobs for the youth; emphasize human development through investment in quality education, productive skills, research and knowledge base, infrastructure, and gender equality; and create dynamic financial institutions and markets that encourage a vibrant private sector.
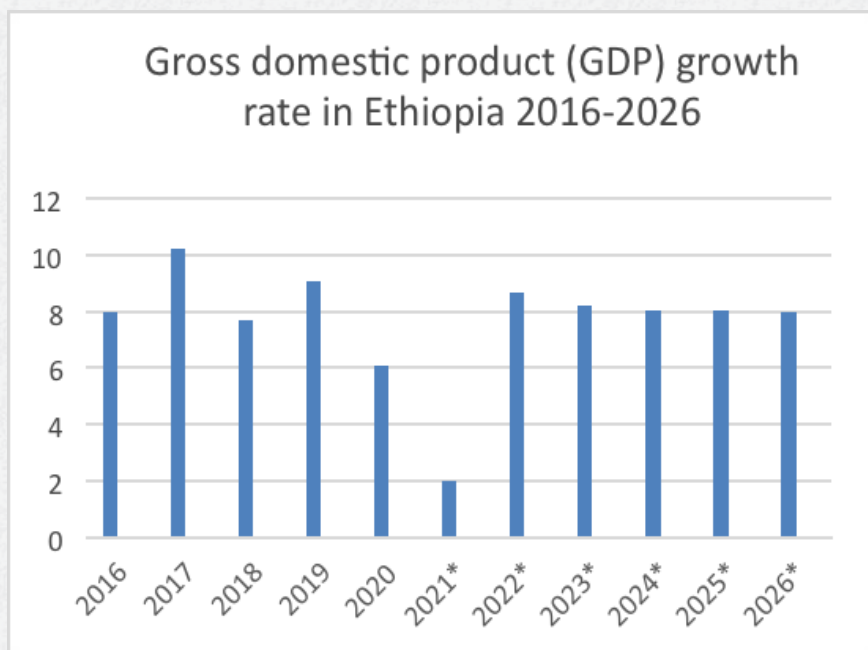
1. Introduction

This paper will address economic policy issues during political transformation in Ethiopia, with a focus on the current reforms, while taking stock of the past regime's results. The background briefly describes the status of Ethiopia's economy, its population growth and poverty level. The chapters that follow will analyze the past regime's economic model and the new reforms under Prime Minister Abiy. The challenges affecting implementation will be discussed, followed by recommendations.

2. Background

Ethiopia's average GDP growth had reached 10 percent a year in 2017, which is high compared to Africa's average of 5.4 percent (Figure 1). It, however, slightly decelerated in 2018 with a GDP growth of 7.7 percent, and up again in 2019 to 8.4 percent. As expected, it decelerated in 2020 to 6.1 percent, and it is estimated that it will drop to 2 percent in 2021 and then pick up again in 2022 (Figure 1). The main drivers of growth are industry; mostly construction, and services followed by manufacturing and agriculture.[346] For the most part, demand-side growth can be explained by public investment as well as private consumption. The government has set as a target to reach the lower-middle-income status by 2025, which would require structural economic transformation.

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346 World Bank Group. 2019. Country Private Sector. "Creating Markets in Ethiopia: Sustaining Progress Towards Industrialization". Spring World Bank and IMF meetings. p1. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/a45b39ca-1b48-4f18-829a-7282a2e0991b/201905-Ethiopia-CPSD.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mHlwn9k.

Figure 1: Ethiopia GDP per capita growth (annual %)

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate in Ethiopia 2016-2026

Source: IMF, April 2021

Ethiopia's population was estimated at 109 million in 2019, making it the second-most populous country in Africa, growing at 2.5 per cent per annum (Figure 2). Its youth represents 70 per cent of the total population under the age of 30 and 45 per cent below the age of 15 (Figure 3). The population growth risks threatening the economic and social advantages acquired in the last two decades, including damage to the environment.[347]

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347 Human Development Report (2019)

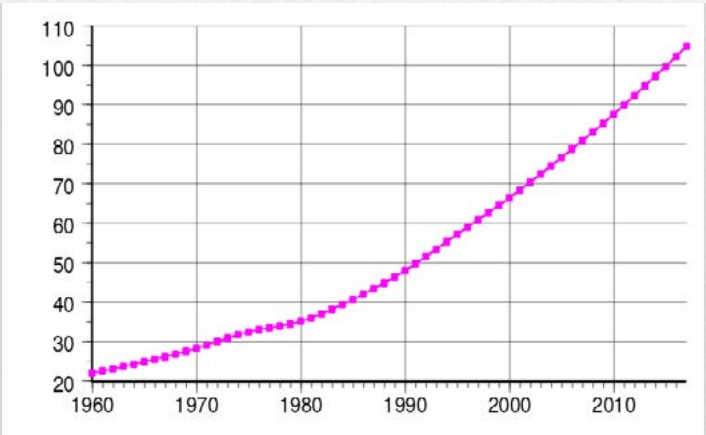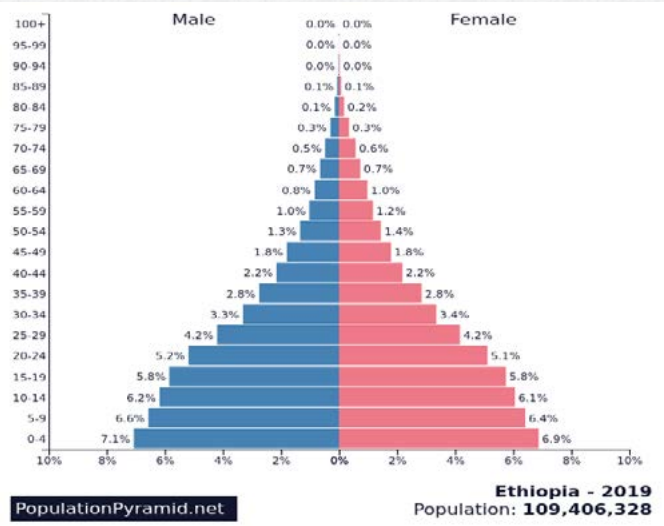*Figure 2: Ethiopia's population growth 1960-2019*


Figure 3: Ethiopia's population pyramid 2019

Source https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethiopia_population.svgSource:
Population Pyramid. Net[348]

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348 https://www.populationpyramid.net/ethiopia/2019/

Higher economic growth brought with it positive trends in poverty reduction in both urban and rural areas. Populations living below the national poverty line decreased from 29.6 in 2010 to 23.5% in 2015 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ethiopia- Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of the population)
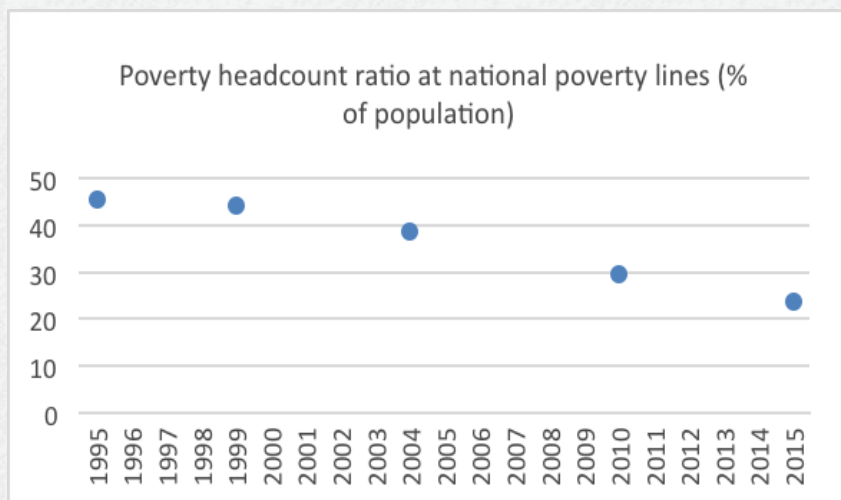
Source: Author from Data from World Development Indicators 2021.

As these figures suggest, while growth has been strong and steady with poverty declining, Ethiopia's HDI value for 2019 is 0.485— which puts the country in the low human development category—positioning it at 173 out of 189 countries and territories. Ethiopia remains the 17th least developed country.[349] Moreover, the demographic dynamics suggest that this blueprint may leave tens of millions in rural poverty and not stimulate industrialization that can spur economic transformation.

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349 UNDP. 2020. "The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene". *Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report*. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/ETH.pdf

3. Past developmental state model and its outcome

This chapter examines the past regime's developmental state model and its Growth and Transformation plans.

3.1. The nature of the past developmental model

Since 1991 under former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and especially after 2006, the Ethiopian economy can be described as a 'developmental state'. It was inspired by the Asian tigers and China, especially, the industrial parks and the special economic zones.[350] The elaboration of the Growth and Transformation plan was a nationwide plan controlled by the state that would lead and transform the economy. The plan directly connected growth, through exports, social development, nation-building, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[351]. With high growth in 2006, policy priorities focused on accelerating GDP growth, with tremendous efforts to boost public investment and increase agricultural output. Spending was substantially funded by new borrowing and enhanced revenue, and focused mostly on capital expenditures and pro-poor initiatives, through infrastructure and investment in the social sector.[352] In addition to the focus on GDP growth, interventionist policies were in place in the financial sector (low-cost funding and credit programs for priority initiatives) and the industrial sector (rise of specific sectors and industries). Moreover, government ownership of land, lack of capital account, and state engagement in productive activities reinforce the developmental state. One area where this approach was less visible was in agriculture, where there were no subsidies offered to agriculturalists and no control over their prices. Trade policies were also comparatively liberal (low tariffs and no infant industry protection).

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350 Jay, S. 2019. "The New Scramble for Ethiopia", Jacobin, 2 June. p3. https://www.jacobinmag. com/2019/06/ethiopia-abiy-ahmed-meles-zenawi

351 International Crisis Group. 2019. "Managing Ethiopia's Unsettled Transition". Report 269. Africa. p.8. 21 February https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/269-managing-ethiopias-unsettled-transition'

352 Cepheus Research and Analytics. 2019a. "Macroeconomic Handbook". p4. 19 January. https://cepheuscapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Macroeconomic-Handbook-2019.pdf.

3.2. The drivers of the Growth and Transformation Plans

The two Growth and Transformation Plans (2010-2015 and 2015-2020) were elaborated to change the economy from agriculture to manufacturing, with the development of infrastructure, including hydroelectric power. Loans were contracted from foreign countries, especially, China. Land was leased, in particular, to Gulf countries and some private companies in order to acquire hard currency. While a double-digit growth was experienced for a decade, the manufacturing sector's contribution to the economy remained low (4 to 5 per cent of GDP); the labour force continued to be unskilled, and despite the enormous investment in infrastructure, lack of power hampered the whole country. Overall, despite the changes in some parts of the country, Ethiopia was still dominated by agriculture.[353]

As the double-digit growth was mostly driven by large-scale investments acquired through loans, the balance of payments worsened and foreign currency reserves reached a low level, becoming a great concern for the private sector.

Moreover, the constant devaluation of the Birr geared towards promoting exports was accompanied by high inflation and a decline in real wages. Further, the wealth was accumulated within a small group of individuals associated with the ruling party and the military-controlled corporations.[354]This situation, compounded with the perception that corruption was rampant at the highest level, led to popular resistance of this state-led, foreign-funded economic transformation. While the economy needed to create at least 2 million jobs per year to meet the demand of the job market, unemployment and low pay contributed to life being hard for average Ethiopians. The fact that economic growth did not create enough jobs fuelled popular unrest.[355] In summary, the results of the two decades of the developmental state were mixed.

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353 ICG (2018)
354 Jay (2019)
355 ICG (2018)

4. Economic reforms under the new government of PM Abiy

In this chapter, the reforms under the new PM Abiy Ahmed will be analysed in terms of their structural and sectoral nature.

4.1. Analysis of structural reforms under the "Home-grown economic reform agenda"

In PM Abiy's '*A Home-grown reform Agenda: A Pathway to Prosperity*' unveiled in September 2019, present its rationale articulated around three (3) main elements:

(i) leveraging the achievements of the previous regime on infrastructure and human capital towards "high-quality growth";

(ii) addressing macroeconomic imbalances and structural impediments towards new opportunities; and

(iii) improving policy towards a modern financial system as well as more efficient and transparent institutional frameworks.[356]

It acknowledges past successes (economic growth, improvement in health and basic services) and their drivers such as public investment, mobilization of domestic savings and credits, as well as borrowing and low-cost financing. It then highlights the lack of structural transformation despite rapid growth, which has to do with low productivity growth, constrained by "structural and institutional bottlenecks". It continues to describe impediments in specific priority sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and information and communication technologies (ICT).

It recognizes that rising external debt led to debt distress and that the increased government expenditures have limited the private sector's access to finance, which in turn might have led to high inflation. As of March 2019, the total outstanding debt growth of Ethiopia stood

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[356] Prime Minister's Office (2019).

at \$26.9 billion, of which a large share was owed by state-owned enterprises. In outlining the reform agenda, it is envisaged to address the above-mentioned challenges through a set of measures.

Responses to the new reform agenda were mixed. It is lauded as "very ambitious but doable" as it required for Ethiopia to grow from USD865 to USD2,219 per capita and that there should be caution that if Ethiopia continues with the current debt accumulation, it will be in debt distress, and the country will not be able to attract private investment, as it would not be creditworthy.[357]

Validation Workshop on Economy policy

There was also criticism that the reform agenda was not "homegrown" since an evidence-based background study was not undertaken to enable sound policy-making and setting of appropriate priorities. Moreover, consultations were not undertaken with the major stakeholders or experts.[358] For others such as Geda (2019), the main issues of sectoral imbalances were not addressed and the structural problems identified in the 'homegrown' agenda and the recommended policies are to "perfect an existing market that does not have structural problems".[359]

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357 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). 2019. "Ethiopia unveils 'blueprint' to drive economic growth". p1. 9 September. https://www.uneca.org/stories/ethiopia-unveils-%E2%80%98blueprint%E2%80%99-drive-economic-growth.

358 Gelan, A. 2019, "Ethiopia's 'Homegrown Economic Reform: An Afterthought". p2. 12 October. Addis Fortune. https://addisfortune.news/ethiopias-homegrown-economic-reform-an-afterthought/

359 Geda A. 2019. "Ethiopia's Homegrown Reform: Wrong Diagnosis may make it a Wish List". p2. 21 September. Addis Fortune. https://addisfortune.com/ethiopias-homegrown-reform-wrong-diagnosis-may-make-it-a-wish-list/

Like many countries, the COVID-19 pandemic harmed the Ethiopian economy. Its economy grew by 6.1 percent in 2020, down from 8.4 percent in 2019. The services and industry sectors led growth, while the communications, hospitality, and transport sectors were hard hit due to the measures taken to counter the pandemic. While progress was made on tax revenue which increased by 16 percent, delays in the implementation of tax reforms led to a decline in the tax-to-GDP ratio from 10 percent in 2019 to 9.2 percent in 2020. Fiscal consolidation as included in the homegrown agenda is on track as total public spending stayed stable. However, inflation increased to 20.6 percent in 2020, considerably exceeding the 8 percent target, due to supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic, and an expansionary monetary policy. Indeed, in November 2020, the exchange rate was devalued by 8 percent to 35 birr per USD. Imports declined by 8.1 percent while income from exports increased by 12 percent in 2020, thanks to exports of gold, flowers, coffee, and khat. Due mostly to a decrease in the revenue from Ethiopian Airlines, exports in the service sector declined (by around 6 percent). FDI declined significantly by 20 percent to 2.2 percent of GDP, as well as remittances, which declined to 5.3 percent from 10 percent. It is also expected that the poverty reduction targets as well employment will not be met, as COVID-19 related job losses are estimated at 2.5 million[360].

On the unemployment issue, the Job Creation Commission (JCC) entrusted with the task of job creation endeavors at the regional and federal level public institutions, as well as the private sector and other non-governmental entities, has made significant progress in achieving its goal to create 3 million jobs between 2019 and 2020 through various initiatives such as the industrial parks, and creating space for innovation and fostering entrepreneurial paths. For instance, the JCC, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, has launched a 5-year project called 'Enabling Ethiopia', to spur job creation through "creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, cultivating the necessary human capital, adopting pro-job macro policies, and supporting inclusive innovations"[361].

360 African Economic Outlook (AEO). 2021. "From Debt Resolution to Growth: The Road Ahead for Africa", March. Available from https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2021

361 MasterCard Foundation. 2020. "FDRE Jobs Creation Commission launches Enabling Ethiopia,

On the financing aspects, Ethiopia was one of the beneficiaries of the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). In line with the homegrown reform agenda, it is attempting to contain the debt burden, through fiscal consolidation, increasing the public finance pool, a suspension of non-concessional borrowing, and debt restructuring. More reforms are needed in finance and investment to increase the efficiency of public expenditures. In the medium term, the speed of economic recovery will depend on the impact of COVID-19, and other external shocks such as civil conflict and climate change. A projection on a fall to 2% of the real GDP growth is expected in 2021, then a recovery to 8% in 2022, due to an uptake of activities in industry and services. The use of open-market operations could progressively decrease inflation. There is also the risk of lower FDI due to loss of investor confidence related to civil conflicts, and the decrease in growth in other parts of the world.[362]
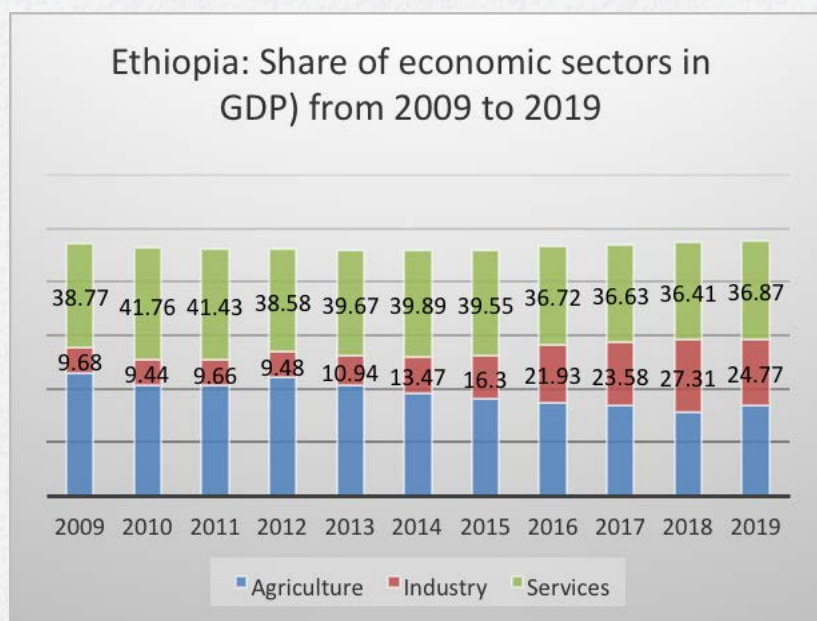
4.2. **Sectoral reforms and privatizations**

While agriculture used to be the mainstay of Ethiopia's economy and its main engine, the service sector is currently expanding. In 2019, the share of agriculture in Ethiopia's gross domestic product was 33.88 percent, industry contributed approximately 24.77 percent and the services sector contributed about 36.87 percent (Figure 5). Agriculture's share in GDP fell by more than 25 percent from 2005 to 2018, and services' share increased by 27 percent in the same period. Industry's growth was fueled by the construction and infrastructure industries; roads, railways, dams, industrial parks, and homes, accounting for half of the growth. Services include communication and transport services, hotel and restaurant businesses, as well as wholesale and retail trading.

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a 5-year job opportunities project, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation". 22 June. https://mastercardfdn.org/fdre-jobs-creation-commission-launches-enabling-ethiopia-a-5-year-job-opportunities-project-in-partnership-with-the-mastercard-foundation/

362   African Economic Outlook (AEO). 2021. "From Debt Resolution to Growth: The Road Ahead for Africa", March. Available from https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2021

Figure 5: Share of economic sectors in the GDP in Ethiopia 2019

Source: World Bank, October 2020. https://www.statista.com/statistics/455149/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-ethiopia/

The partial and full privatization of state-owned enterprises such as the Aviation, Telecom, Electric, Industrial Parks, Railway, Sugar factories and a few others announced by PM Abiy in June 2018 generated mixed responses. While it was received well by businesses, development partners and investors, other segments of the population were sceptical.

The government's rationale for privatizing is to increase growth, create jobs, and boost exports. Partial privatization was justified by the necessity to have infrastructure and address the debt issue. Indeed, the government cannot continue to inject borrowed funds to State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). From the public, the main objection was related to Ethiopian Airlines as there was no rationale for its partial privatization.[363]

363 Gebretsadik (2018)

There was also a concern that the privatizations were rushed, that they would undermine Ethiopia's "sovereignty" as these sectors were considered "strategic assets".[364]Even from the business community, concerns were raised about the timeframe, the lack of expertise, the sequencing of the privatizations, and the development of the financial sector. These sectoral reforms face structural constraints in their path to sustainable development and poverty reduction, including the lack of "enablers to allow markets to flourish", such as a solid banking sector, capital markets, regulatory capacity, and a 'foreign exchange regime'. This is compounded by the lack of political consensus or agreement among the various ethnic groups about wealth redistribution, control of the process, and the beneficiaries.[365] Privatization is a complex issue that needs to be tackled through various lenses. If the SOEs are financially viable, privatization should not be a priority, which would be the case for Ethiopian Airlines, except perhaps outsourcing some services to the private sector. Rushing to deregulate particularly banking and finance sectors is not recommended as it has not worked in countries such as Chile and Mexico in the 1990s. The progressive and cautious approach that Ethiopia is adopting is thus appropriate. It is nevertheless important that while focusing on privatizing large SOEs such as the telecom, the focus should be on providing support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to create jobs, be competitive, and structurally transform the economy. In addition, an adequate regulatory framework along with a competent and independent regulatory authority are necessary preconditions. [366]

On 22 May 2021, the Ethiopian government, through the Ethiopian Communications Authority (ECA), awarded a telecoms license to a consortium comprising of Safaricom, Vodafone, Vodacom, Sumitomo Corporation, and the CDC Group, which won a bid offering $850 million. As stated by the Ethiopian government, the move will create jobs for 1.5 million citizens and activate over $8 billion in domestic investment, which is the highest FDI accruing to Ethiopia according to Prime Minister Abiy.[367]

364 Berhanu (2019)
365 Faleg (2019)
366 Kedir, A. and Bedasso, B. 2020. "Privatisation for Sustainable Growth in Ethiopia: A Review". *International Growth Center (IGC)*. November. 19064-ETH-1. https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Kedir-November-2020-Final-Report.pdf.
367 Getachew, A. 2021. "Global consortium wins Ethiopia's telecom license for $850M". Anadolu

With regards to the privatization of state-owned sugar factories, the government is in the process of hiring a consultancy firm that will oversee the transaction. The nine sugar estates covered are: Welkayit, Tendaho, Kesem, Omo Kuraz I, II and III, Arjo-Dedesa, and Tana-Belese I and II. As of May 2021, two international consultants, PwC and Ernst & Young have submitted their expression of interest to be hired as transaction advisors to oversee the process.[368]

Overall, the homegrown reform agenda was given a three years' timeframe to be implemented and the COVID-19 pandemic occurred six months after the reform was declared, derailing its roll-out.
In general, it seems that there was an underestimation of the background work that needed to be undertaken before the launch of the reform agenda; a low level of public engagement and consultations; as well a lack of platforms to engage the private sector. While COVID-19 had an obvious negative impact, it however enabled a quicker roll-out of certain elements in the reform agenda, in particular those that have to do with adaptation to the digital economy and technology, such as digital (mobile) payment.

5. Possible obstacles and challenges during reform implementation

In this chapter, the possible obstacles and challenges that may arise in the effort to implement the reforms will be analyzed outside of the impact of the COVD-19 pandemic, which was discussed in previous sections. These include the continued conflicts; the absence of a compelling vision; deficiencies in human capital and lack of knowledge base; as well as underdeveloped financial institutions and markets hindering a vibrant private sector.

Agency (AA). 21 May. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/global-consortium-wins-ethiopias-telecom-license-for-850m/2251286.

368 Food Africa Business News. 2021. "Leading international consultants PwC, Ernst & Young raise bid to oversee privatization of Ethiopia's sugar factories". 12 May. https://www.foodbusinessafrica.com/leading-international-consultants-pwc-ernst-young-bid-to-oversee-privatization-of-ethiopias-sugar-factories/

5.1. **Impact of continued conflict on the economic reforms**

Since November 2020, Ethiopia is embroiled in a conflict in the Tigray region, which started as a military operation by the federal government to impose law enforcement in the Tigray region led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The prolongation of conflict presents an additional barrier to an economy heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Ethiopia's Ministry of Trade and Industry estimates, the closure of factories and mining sites in Tigray since early November is costing the Ethiopian economy around $20 million per month.[369] In addition, Ethiopia's finance minister estimates that the direct costs of reconstruction, especially damaged infrastructure could amount to around $1bn (about 1 percent of GDP). Schools, universities, and hospitals have been looted or destroyed, as have farms and factories. The long-term effects are difficult to estimate but are progressively becoming very costly. Before the conflict, one-third of Ethiopia's sesame exports worth around $350m a year came from Tigray, a tenth of total exports. However, farmers have been displaced and harvests abandoned.

In April 2021, the government is indicating a 21 percent rise in exports, largely thanks to a huge surge in earnings from gold. The government insists that the economy will grow by 8.5 percent in 2021. The IMF however estimates growth will be closer to 2%.[370] The government seems to believe that the impact will only be in the Tigray region, which accounts for 10 percent of the national economy. However, it needs to take into consideration the longer-term impact of a protracted conflict. The major issue is inflation, which was 18 percent before the conflict, and is above 20 percent in April. Foreign exchange is also very scarce.[371]

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369 Smith, E. 2021. "Ethiopia's 'simmering civil war' threatens to erode economic recovery prospects". *CNBC*. 12 March. https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/12/ethiopias-simmering-civil-war-threatens-to-erode-economic-recovery-prospects.html.

370 The Economist. 2021. "The war in Tigray is taking a frightful human toll". 15 April. https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2021/04/15/the-war-in-tigray-is-taking-a-frightful-human-toll.

371 Ibid.

5.2. Absence of a compelling economic vision

While PM Abiy has attempted to rally people around the notion of "Medemer" (coming together/ synergy), a compelling vision, especially on the economic path, does not exist. While he has embraced the private sector more prominently, he has not articulated a compelling economic vision, with a clear strategic direction.

Another important factor is that the vision has to be owned by Ethiopians and not perceived as being "imposed" by external actors. As an example, the success of Asian countries such as China, India, and S. Korea, hinges on the fact that they owned their economic visions.[372]

5.3. Deficiencies in human capital and lack of knowledge base

The success of the developmental model in East Asia centred on the existence of skilled bureaucrats and professionals that were able to execute large-scale projects led by the State. In Ethiopia, skilled and professional civil service was not the norm as assignments were based on ethnic political affiliation and not on merit, skills or professionalism.[373]In Ethiopia, as is the case in many African countries, think tanks are non-existent, underfunded or marginalized. The same can be indicated about research centres or universities with alternative narratives or ideas. PM Abiy has appealed to harness the Diaspora's knowledge base, which will hopefully bear fruit soon.

5.4. Underdeveloped financial institutions and markets hindering a vibrant private sector

Ethiopia lacks a conducive environment that allows markets to flourish, such as solid banking sector, capital markets, and regulatory capacity thus preventing entrepreneurs' access to credit and thwarting the private sector from becoming the engine of growth and employment. Private-sector use of domestic banks to finance operations is limited and foreign participation in the financial sector

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372 Biru (2019)
373   Lashitew (2019)

is not permitted. Moreover, the chronic shortage of foreign currency to import capital goods has constrained the private sector.

Ethiopia is ranked 159 among 190 economies in the ease of doing business in 2020.[374] The major barriers to businesses are the regulatory framework, the numerous licenses, and the countless competence certification requirements. In addition, import tariffs are high, and a cumbersome and costly import and export procedure hampers trading firms. Moreover, Ethiopia is one of the least connected, with an internet penetration in Ethiopia that stood at 20.6% in January 2021.[375]

6. Recommendations for implementing the reforms

This chapter will attempt to provide recommendations and a set of measures to address the challenges outlined in the previous chapter.

6.1. End conflict and internal strife

There is an urgency to end the conflict in Tigray and the various killings in other regions that destabilize the country. The upcoming elections could be a springboard to provide legitimacy to the elected leader and a renewed hope for a solution to end the conflict that not only has human, humanitarian, and material toll, but also a huge economic impact. The elected government should strive to bring more order, transparency, and accountability to implementing its economic agenda, with clear timelines, and consensus on common desirable outcomes.

6.2. A compelling vision based on a mixed policy

Though PM Abiy coined a rallying motto of "Medemer", his economic vision is not clearly spelled out. The government the one that will be elected-needs to articulate a compelling long-term economic vision that considers a policy mix where the state and the private sector collaborate.

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374 World Bank (2019)

375 Kemp, S. 2021. "Digital 2021: Ethiopia". Data Portal. 11 February. https://datareportal.com/
       reports/digital-2021-ethiopia.

As markets do not yet function properly, if the government adopts a laissez-faire economic policy, the 'invisible hand' will not automatically adjust the market distortions. The state has an important role in supplementing private investment and in identifying competitive economic sectors.[376] Inclusive prosperity requires state interventions to guarantee decent jobs, skills upgrading, and fair pay.

The vision will need to have strategies, roadmaps with clear timelines, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation plans. It should also clearly emphasize inter-ministerial collaboration, as well as collaboration with major stakeholders and partners. A theory of change should be elaborated to define the interventions that lead to the transformation that the vision aspires to, including an understanding of assumptions and risks.[377] It is important to develop a shared vision of the national development strategy, which includes the private sector.

6.3. Focus on human development: invest in quality education, productive skills, research and knowledge based, infrastructure, gender equality

To address the issue of civil service that lacks competence, it is recommended that specialized competitive entry exams be given. Entry exams for civil servants are common in Asian developmental states and Europe. Moreover, the provision of more training and learning opportunities for staff should be a primary consideration. At the implementation level, the policy direction ought to be towards improving the production and productive capacity, developing

human capital by mobilizing resources efficiently and strengthening the knowledge base. A great focus should be on human development, improving the quality of education, providing basic infrastructure, and promoting gender equality.

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376 Lashitew (2019)

377 O'Flynn (2012) defines ToC as a high-level analysis of how transformation transpires through a series of interventions towards the change. It also includes a tool to evaluate the impact and to examine both the means and the "assumptions on how change happens"

6.4. Create dynamic financial institutions and markets to encourage a vibrant private sector

Among the reasons why many were sceptical about privatization are the underdeveloped financial institutions such as banks and the non-existence of a capital market that would facilitate the process. Ethiopia is emerging from a system that has created a great deal of mutual scepticism between the public and private sectors. In implementing a strategy that delivers a broader base for job creation, the government and the private sector will need to work together to identify critical priorities, define a system to notify and overcome institutional failures in government that limits investment, and cooperate to resolve constraints in specific sectors.

Conclusion

PM Abiy's ambition to structurally transform the Ethiopian economy will need to have a compelling home-grown economic vision, based on a mixed policy whereby the state and the private sector cooperate. From that vision, policies and strategies can clearly be articulated in terms of appeasing the polarized ethnic politics, focus on productive sectors to provide decent jobs for the youth, continue investing in education, skills and knowledge base across the board, and create dynamic financial institutions and markets that encourage a vibrant private sector. The focus should not only be on the economic and financial side but also the human development and inclusiveness aspects. If these issues are addressed, Ethiopia will be able to attract the much-needed investment, will create jobs and will achieve the economic transformation to become a middle-income country.

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Has a rich and extensive background in academia, diplomacy, consultancy and advocacy. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts from Swarthmore College in economics and philosophy. He graduated with distinction and was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. He received his Masters and Doctorate from the Department of Politics at Princeton University. He taught at Williams College and Rutgers University for over ten years, where he lectured in a wide variety of fields, including the history of political theory, democratic theory, international relations, philosophy and methodology of the social sciences, and nineteenth Century German philosophy. Upon returning to Ethiopia in 1993, he served as a senior advisor to the President of Addis Ababa University and later joined the University as academic staff and became its Vice-President in charge of university reform. In diplomatic realm, he became Ethiopia's Ambassador

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- Organizing conferences and forums for informative exchange of views and debate on social, political and economic issues concerning the Horn of Africa
- Undertaking research on critical socio-economic and political issues in the sub-region
- Publishing and dissemination to policy makers and citizens at large research findings on vital socio-economic and political issues

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