Full Length Research

Challenges and Prospects of Democratization Process in Ethiopia

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In 1995 the FDRE constitution institutionalized multi-party democracy and since then Ethiopia held five consecutive national elections which tested the journey of Ethiopian democratization process. The central objective of this paper is to explore democratization process in Ethiopia by focusing on the challenges and prospects of post 1991 situations. To this end qualitative methodology was employed to gather data from secondary sources. For this purpose journal Articles, official documents, constitution and other legal documents and policies were used. Based upon the data the study revealed that the post 1991 FDRE Constitution espouse new democracy friendly laws and orders which contain detail lists of human rights, introduction of multi-party politics and commencement of democratic institutions which are amicable development for democratization process in the country. However, there are problems in implementing these opportunities on the grounds. Among others, the 2005 election aftermath political and legal measures (CSO Law, Press Law and Anti-Terrorism Law), authoritative nature of Ethiopian politics, weakness of actors in democratization process, Political polarization among political parties, weakness of democratic institutions and corruption are the major challenges to the realization of democratization process in Ethiopia. Hence, the study implies the need for reforming the 2005 election aftermath politico- legal measures on the one hand and strengthens actors in democratization process and democratic institutions on the other hand.

Keywords: Democratization, Democratic institutions, actors of democratization, multi-party politics, Political Parties, Political polarization

Cite this article as: Hailu S (2018). Challenges and Prospects of Democratization Process in Ethiopia. Int. J. Polit. Sci. Develop. 6(1) 27-38

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is one of the ancient states of the world. The Ethiopian state had been established thousand years ago as an ancient civilization. Like any other ancient state and/ or civilization, there were contractions and expansions of its territory at different times. But, the formation of modern Ethiopian state in European style is a 19th century process; begin by Tewodros II in 1950s (Merera, 2011). In the historical continuum that informs the making of modern Ethiopia, the second half of the 19th century was shaped by the wars of incorporation and state formation on unequal terms. Whereas, the class and national struggles intended to end the asymmetrical relations have shaped the second half of the 20th century, which scholars call as remaking of Ethiopia (Keller, 2005).

In other words while the wars of the 19th century were for the making of modern Ethiopia, state formation, the struggles of the 20th century were for the reversal of the

same historical process that created the multi-ethnic polity of Ethiopia , nation building (Merera, 2006). To be more specific, the class struggle and national/ethnic struggles of the 1960s and 1970s that precipitated the revolution of 1974, the various struggles that led to the change of regime in 1991 and the ongoing struggles for self-rule and democracy are part of the remaking of Ethiopia (Merara, 2004).

The class and national struggles for the remaking of Ethiopia since the creation of modern Ethiopian state resulted in the introduction of democracy friendly constitution since 1991 (from 1991 to 1994 TFG Charter and since 1994 FDRE Constitution), although some scholars like Merera condemn the post 1991 transformation as partial by lamenting it as the victory of ethnic movement over multi-ethnic political force (Merera, 2011). Hence, the focus of this study is to examine the prospects and challenges of democratization process in Ethiopia. It explores and assesses the prospects of democratization process in Ethiopia and challenges ahead of implementing prospects of democratization process since 1991. Methodologically, this study is based upon qualitative approach. It is an investigation of the direction and contents of the democratization initiatives in Ethiopia.

It has reviewed the prospects of democratization in Ethiopia and challenges facing during implementation of the host of policy initiatives in Ethiopia since 1991 based on secondary sources of data. Hence, secondary sources of data gathered from books, journal articles, official documents, legal documents, government and non-government reports, and professional commentaries and to some extent media outlets were used.

Theoretical Backgrounds: Democratization

Notwithstanding the fact that democracy is one of the most commonly used terms in political science, it is a concept that defies a clear cut definition and application. There is no one fit model of democracy that is universally valid. The concepts and practices of democracy vary from region to region and from country to country (Zakaria, 1997). But there are common frameworks in all concepts of democracy which are applicable in all areas irrespective of models, geographical, historical, cultural and economic differences

In the same vein democratization is a process which is vary from country to country depending up on models of democracy on the one hand and existing political, economic and social reality on the other hand. In Africa democratization process began following the end of the Cold War, which Fukuyuma dubbed as "end of history", in which what initially seemed to have ended the era of authoritarianism in Africa, when the continent's most brutal dictators were removed from power. These waves

of attempts at democratization have created a condition where democracy can be studied both in theory and practice in Africa (Merera, 2004).

Following this situation many scholars tried to analyses the waves of democratization in Africa. In this regard, Bangura (1991), in a serious attempt to analyses the problem of the African democratization around 1990s, has identified three interlinked process in the African democratization drives. They are; demilitarization of social and political life, the liberalization of civil society and the democratization of the rules governing political and economic competition. According to him, they involve assuring the supremacy and regulation of civilian governmental authority; the democratization of a state apparatus and the relative freedom of civil organizations and the capacity to democratically manage conflicts in civil and political society and economic practice (Bangura, 1991).

In the same vein to Bangura, Bratton and Van de Walle in their book entitled as 'Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transformation in Comparative perspective' tried to distinguish between political liberalization and democratization in order to clarify about democratization. To be clear they described political liberalization as follow;

Political liberalization entails the reform of authoritarian regimes. It comes to pass when public authorities relax control on the political activities of citizens. Often described as a political opening, political liberalization involves official recognition of basic civil liberties. In such openings, government restores previously repudiated freedoms of movement, speech and associations to individuals and groups in the society. Examples of political liberalization include the release of political prisoners, the lifting of government censorship and the re-legalization of banned political parties (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 159).

Turning to democratization the two scholars describe democratization as the end result of genuine and mature political liberalization. To be more specific they describe democratization as follow;

Democratization involves the construction of participatory and competitive political institutions. The process of democratization begins with political challenges to authoritarian regime, advances through the political struggles over liberalization and requires the installation of freely elected government. It concludes only when democratic rules become firmly institutionalized as well as valued by political actors at large (*Ibid*).

According to the two scholars, a transition to democracy can be said to have occurred only when competitive election is installed freely and fairly, a matrix of civil liberties are respected, and the results of the election are accepted by all contesting parties. In their distinction of political liberalization and democratization

continuum, they emphasize that political liberalization commonly occurs without democratization but not vice versa. Democratization is theoretically and practically impossible without political liberalization because democratic institutions can flourish only in the context of civil liberty.

Generally, democratization is a process through which institutional infrastructures such as the parliament, an independent judiciary, electoral institutions and police, and independent media useful to the construction of democratic polity is established. Moreover, it requires the codification and promotion of civil liberties, the institutionalization of the rules of law, and the beginning to practice of the process of constitutionalism. (Samarasinghe, 1994).

Democratization involves the creation and expansion of political space for multiple actors to interact, negotiate, compete and seek self-realization with set of permissible rules. It is not a uni-linear process but one that is relative, incremental and multicolored. It is not one start event but a continuous process through which democracy is involved (Nordlund and Salih, 2007). Thus, democratization has various dimensions, trajectory and distinctions. But the end goal is the same, to establish a democratic order. Although, the concept of democracy and democratization is debatable and subject to states existing socio-political and economic reality, this study uses the common concepts of democratization in general and FDRE constitution in particular as a frame work or parameters to explore the challenges and prospects of democratization process in Ethiopia.

Pre-1991 Nation Building process in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a long history of statehood with the ancient civilization of Axumite Empire. However, the borders of the present day Ethiopia were mainly demarcated by the end of 19th Century. The process of modern centralized state formation project in Ethiopia began by Emperor Tewodros II in the 1850s and the demarcation of the current shape of the country completed by Menelik II in the 1900s (Keller, 2005).

The nation building strategies employed by many of the Ethiopian rulers were mainly concerning with centralizing state power, conquering and expanding territory which eventually gave the present day Ethiopia and its current geographic and demographic shape. Except short term Lij Iyasus rule all pre-1991 Ethiopian governments follow homogenous nation building strategies. Especially the territorial expansion of Menelik II towards the south, East and West transferred the relatively homogenous Abyssinian Empire into a mosaic of different ethno-linguistic groups and diversified cultures (Merera, 2006). Menelik II completed the first stage of state formation in Ethiopia. The second stage of state formation (Nation

building) left for his descendant, Lij Iyasu.

Lij Iyasu was different from his predecessors both in his domestic and international political outlooks. His domestic policy was relatively liberal, accommodative policy vis-à-vis the different religious, ethnic and language groups that prevail in the country. He pursued politics of reconciliation of various diversities. His idea was very revolutionary. He introduced a modern police in Ethiopia and changes many traditional and old government systems. For example, he changed the old Asrat system, quaragn system and lebashay and replaced them by modern system, but his regime was too short to judge the realization of his accommodative national policy(Shimelis.K, 2015).

Unlike Lij Iyasu who depends upon accommodative nation building, Haile Silassie wanted to cultivate nationalism through establishing one state, one national religion and one official language as well as making this language a medium of instruction in schools. But, Haile Silassie was the most modernizing emperor in Ethiopia. During his time the first written constitution was drawn in 1931 following partly the older Japanese model which the imperial regime in Ethiopia seemed to perceive as a safer entry to start modernizing the country (Mohammed, 2010).

At the same time, measures were taken to introduce modern education in which some significant progress was made before the occupation. Unfortunately, the Italian administration halted the Ethiopian initiatives. The end of the Italian occupation in 1941, therefore, signified the beginning of a new era in which foundations were laid down for the considerable portion of the achievements that the country could depend virtually until very recently. These were evident in the spheres of education, urbanization and related social and economic sectors. In the political spheres, there were more or less similar developments that demanded a more speedy progress towards reform (Shimelis.K, 2015).

The effort of the Emperor to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia and the introduction of the revised constitution of 1955 were expected to create a more conducive environment towards a gradual democratization in the country. But the Emperor's isolation of patriots and other politico-legal measures had born subsequent events including palace plots and conspiracies and the aborted coup of 1960, which demand reforms in the country at the time. Thus, the imperial government's control on democratization process gradually bore the 1974 revolution (Young, 1998).

The military government, Derg took over power in September 1974 and during the first two years after the end of imperial rule; the derg proclaimed Ethiopia a new socialist state with national progressive unity as its goal. To answer the Ethiopian students request of "Land to the tiller", introduced the land reform policy which nationalized all private and public lands as well as

distributed farm land for the farmers. The regime also introduced the policy of equality of languages and at least nine local languages included in the country's educational curriculum (Merera, 2006 and Keller, 2005).

But, the Derg was not willing enough to share power with its political opponents who were largely left oriented civilians political groups and the political reform the regime attempted were not more than paper value. In other words, the progress towards ideological solidarity was not accompanied by political reconciliation.

Post 1991 Democratization process in Ethiopia

With the demise of the Derg government and the apparent end of the Civil War that ravaged the country for over two decades, the call for "peace, democracy and the rule of law" is every once hope both at home and abroad. Accordingly, on July 1, 1991, peace and democracy conference was convened in order to establish a 'legitimate, broad based' transitional government that can prepare the country for a smooth democratic transformation as agreed at the American brokered London peace conference (Merera, 2004). The July conference resulted in the adoption of a transitional period charter to function as an interim Constitution. Pursuant to the Charter, a Council of Representative was set up to govern the nation until a permanent government could be elected (Vaughan, 1994).

The new Charter provided some legal ground for democratization in Ethiopia. It contained beneficial provisions for the country's quest for democracy. To cite some, it stipulated the new regime's commitment to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) especially the freedom of consciences, expression, association, and assembly, the right to engage in unrestricted political activity and to organize political parties which are hitherto institutionalized in Ethiopia. The Charter also contained the provision that promised to address the historical grievances of the hitherto marginalized ethnic groups (Transitional Period Charter, 1991).

Pursuant to this promise the Transitional Period Charter (TPC) legalized the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination. According to the charter, each nations, nationalities and peoples have among others the right to preserve its identity and have it respected, administer its own affairs and exercise its rights to self-determination of independence, when the concerned nation/nationalities and people is convinced that the rights promulgated in the Charter are denied, abridged or abrogated (Transitional Period Charter, Article, 2; a, b, &c, 1991). This provision later on canonized as Article 39 in well elaborated form in the national Constitution of 1994.

Since then different views are raised on the democratization process in Ethiopia. When talking about democratization process in Ethiopia after one quarter, there are three different views; the first view is mainly from government and pro-government scholars who view democratization process in Ethiopia as amicable with minor challenges. The second group is opposition and other scholars who are pessimistic to democratization process in Ethiopia viewing the process as aborted attempt (Gudeta, 2013 and Sileshi, 2011). The third and relatively few in numbers are scholars who view the process as still going on but highly challenged.

The argument of this paper is also belong to the third groups viewing democratization process in Ethiopia as the process at most highly challenged, at worst on the verge of reverse. Therefore, the aim of this paper is exploring the challenges of democratization process in Ethiopia focusing on politico-legal and institutional frameworks.

Prospects of democratization process in Ethiopia since 1991
I. Introduction of Multi-party Politics

The year 1991 was the turning point in history of multi-party politics in Ethiopia. After many years of centralized rule, the country has started to legalize multi-party system by attempting to modernize Ethiopian multi-ethnic society within the ethnic based government system and multiparty democracy (Merara, 2003). Following the down fall of the Derg regime on May, 28, 1991, the EPRDF has opened the country for multiparty democracy by declaring that, every political group inside and outside the country is invited to come to the July conference which was held in Addis Ababa, although, some scholars argued that some political parties are systematically excluded from attending the conference (Vaughan, 1994 and Merera, 2011). The July conference comes to found the Transitional government by establishing the Transitional Period Charter as the supreme law of the transitional period.

This Charter which later becomes the base for the Constitution of 1994 has assumed multiparty politics in Ethiopia by declaring every Ethiopian has the right to engage in unrestricted political activities and to organize political party for the purpose of achieving political power through peaceful means (TPC, 1991; Article, 1). Pursuant to the Transitional Period Charter the 1994 Constitution permanently legalized multiparty system in Ethiopia. To further strength the protection of constitutionally promulgated multiparty system has been given form and subsistence by the enactment of the political party registration proclamation No.46/1993. The proclamation asserts that citizens can form and join any political organizations. This marked the emergence of new political parties to the scene by granting legal personality

to operate in the country (Engedayuh, 1993). So the introduction of multiparty politics after the 1991, open the political space in the country allowing opposition parties to be organized and competes for political powers. Thus, one of the most important development/prospect in the post 1991 Ethiopian politics is the introduction of multi-party politics.

II.   Introduction of Decentralization

In the past, Ethiopia had made some preliminary attempts at decentralization. One of the earliest attempts was order No.43/1966 which establish local self-administration at Awaraja or sub-province level. Though this indicates an interest, was rejected by the then members of parliament of the time. During the Derg period, Peasant Association and Urban Dwellers Associations were established as the lowest forms of local administration. The officials, although, elected by the people, were mainly serving the government and were acting as defenders (Tegegne, 1998).

Since the incumbent government took power in 1991, it has taken significant steps to introduce elements of democratic accountability. It has also embarked on a process of decentralization that seeks to recognize the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of people living within Ethiopia's borders and embodied this in the 1995 FDRE Constitution (FDRE Constitution, Article 39 and 55, 1995). The decentralization drive in Ethiopia has proceeded into two phases. The first wave of decentralization (1991-2001) was centered on creating and empowering national/regional governments and hence was termed as mid-level decentralization. During this period national/regional state governments were established with changes in local and central government system. The national/regional governments were entrusted with the legislative, executive and judicial powers in respective of all matters with in their areas of jurisdiction (Tegegne, 1998).

Although, the first wave of decentralization has registered significant achievement in local governance and regional self-rule, it was not capable of bringing genuine self-rule particularly at lower levels of administration where governance and decentralization matter most. This circumstance prompted the central government to take an initiative to further devolve powers and responsibilities to the Woredas in 2001 (*Ibid*). This initiative was achieved through the district level decentralization Program (DLDP) and Urban Management Program (UMP). By doing so it enhances/institutionalize participation of local people in democratic activities (Shimelis.K, 2015). In this way the introduction of decentralization in post 1991 Ethiopia pave the way for the realization of democratization process at grass root level in Ethiopia.

III. Building Democratic and Human rights Institutions

The other development in the post-1991 Ethiopia politics was/is the establishment of significant political institution such as human rights institution (that is, human rights commission and Ombudsman institution)   and election board, and the introduction of a democratic reform. The immediate democratic institution established by Transitional Government of Ethiopia was National Electoral Commission in 1992. The Transitional Government National Electoral Commission established by proclamation No.11/1992. In February the same year the commission conducted the election for transitional administration committee members at Woreda and Kebele levels. In May, it conducted elections for national, regional and Woreda councils (NEBE, 2015).

After completion of its missions the National Electoral Commission was replaced by the National Election Board of Ethiopia in 1992. The National Election Board of Ethiopia was established by proclamation No.64/1992 with the objective of among other, ensuring the establishment of government elected through free, fair and impartial elections held in accordance to the Constitution. The establishing proclamation informs that the board is an independent and autonomous organ for conducting elections having its own legal personality (NEBE, 2015). Thus, the establishment of like this institution is the first and foremost important ingredient for democratization process. The other commendable measure of post 1991 in Ethiopia government is an explicit commitment to ensure protection of human rights within the new federal political structures. As far as FDRE Constitution-human rights nexus is concerned one-third of the Constitution covers matters related to human rights. Basic rights of citizens entrenched in the constitution include, among others, the right to life, property and privacy as well as safeguard against inhumane treatment of persons held in custody, including security of those convicted to serve certain prison terms (FDRE, 1995).

The Constitution also does stress citizens' right to honour and reputation, liberty, equality and movement irrespective of ethnic, religious and racial differences. These rights are very interesting safeguards in the context where several nationality groups or communities are also entitled to certain collective cultural and social rights. It is also very interesting remedies to past injustices and prospects for democratization process (*Ibid*). In the same way, there are explicit constitutional provisions that recognize the rights of people to enjoy political rights such as the right to vote and be elected, freedom of association and press (FDRE Constitution, Article 31 and 38). Apart from the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals the FDRE Constitution provides a number of rights otherwise known as group rights. Among these the famous and debatable Article 39 of the

Constitution carries a number of fairly detailed rights. These include the right to speak, to write and develop one's own languages; the right to express, to develop and to promote its own culture and to present its history.

Furthermore, the different nationality groups are entitled to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and the equitable representation in state and federal government. The FDRE Constitution also provides the social and economic rights to Ethiopian citizens (Article 41 and 43). One of such right is the right to participate in national development and in particular to be consulted with respect to policies and projects affecting their community. At last, the most important human rights provision under FDRE Constitution is it provides that the interpretation of all these rights is in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as well as it declared all international and regional human rights conventions which Ethiopia ratified as integral part of the FDRE Constitution.

Also the FDRE Constitution does require that appropriate institutional mechanism should be in place as a means for implementing human right laws of the country. To this end, the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) is constitutionally obliged to establish National Human Rights Commission and Institution of Ombudsman with primary function of investigating human rights violation and maladministration respectively. Although, with some delay the HPR established both institutions in 2000 conferring on them to take various measures necessary for human rights protection, promotion of democracy and good governance in the country.

The establishing proclamation of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) states that the commission is established primarily for the enforcement of human rights as are enshrined in the FDRE constitution. It is designed to act as one of the organs in enforcing rights and freedoms of Ethiopian, with one of the primary functions being 'to advocate and promote respect for and an understanding of human rights and other beings to advocate the public regarding the nature and contents of such rights'. The commission is also entrusted with the task of investigating cases of violation of human rights enshrined in the constitution, in its own initiatives or upon complaint submitted to it. The commission can also engage in activities aimed at awareness creation and educating people on human rights   (Shimellis.H, 2015).

In similar vein, Ethiopia has expanded the human rights regime by providing for the establishment of the institution of Ombudsman. As it is set out in the establishing legislation of Ethiopian Institution of Ombudsman (EIO) which was passed by the parliamentary proclamation No 211/2000; the basic

function of the Ombudsman is 'to protect citizens against administrative injustice and bureaucratic oppression and to provide citizens with accessible avenue for complaint when such injustices and oppression occurs' (FDRE Negarit Gazet, 2000). Meaning, making government organs a duty bound to respect and enforce human rights as are enshrined in FDRE Constitution or any others legislations. The institution can investigate action taken by ministry or department of government or any members of such ministry or departments. In general, this institution is much important especially in redressing human rights violation at work place. Hence, the establishment of election board, human rights commission and institution of Ombudsman are step forward for democratization process in Ethiopia, meaning prospect of democratization process.

Challenges to Democratization process in Ethiopia Since 1991

By 1991 the EPRDF promised for Ethiopian people in the word of Merera triple: durable peace, democratization and ensuring economic development. Pursuant to these promise different political, legal and institutional measures were/are taken by the government, which discussed as prospects in the above consecutive sections. But after twenty five years of democratization journey, the discussion on the Ethiopian peace and saving the country from dis-integration become an agenda. Therefore, there are different challenges/problems which hider the democratization process at best and resort the process to the verge of reverse at worst. In the following sections discussion was held on the politico-legal, institutional and practical challenges of democratization process in Ethiopia.

History of undemocratic political cultures (the force of inertia)

The first and foremost challenge to Ethiopia on its path to democracy is its authoritarian traditions. Since recently, constitutionalism and the rule of laws are alien concepts to Ethiopian politics for a long time. When for several thousand years, the sources of law has been external to the Ethiopian people, such a radical concept as self-governance is understandably difficult to fully comprehend (Alemante, 1992). In the same vein, Tronvoll and Vaughan characterized the dominant socio-political culture in Ethiopia as historically been vertically stratified and rigidly hierarchical. They conclude that the process of socialization in Ethiopia beginning from birth teach Ethiopians that people are not equal. Newly born children instilled with the understanding of the roles and status of which assigned to different individuals making them as either marginalized or privileged usually on the

basis of ethnicity, clan, class, wealth, gender and age (Tronvoll and Vaughan, 2003).

In the same vein Yeshtila and et al (2016) explain in their study dedicated to state-society relations in rural Ethiopia post 1991 that the local people still believe that the power of the state is inviolable and inalienable. This show that the old perception of 'ruler is elect of God' still prevails. The local people praise the state as the provider of life, peace and order and rarely question the power of local authorities. They seem to be loyal and fearful of state power. This shows that, although there is the introduction of democracy friendly laws and practices of democratic elections, the local people do not still relief from the hangover of feudal legacy and subsequent suppressions by successive regime. This is in turn the main challenge of democratization process in Ethiopia because of it is impossible to realize democratization process without the active and heartfelt participation of mass people.

The other force of inertia in Ethiopian politics is the spillover effect of 1960s Ethiopian students' movement political polarization. The bitter ideological differences and violent infighting between the students' movements and the Derg shaped many of Ethiopia's current intellectuals and leaders. Therefore, ideological and personal splits within secretively organized parties and rebel groups have spillover effect to today's attempt of Ethiopian democratization (Alemante, 1992). Therefore, the long lasting undemocratic government system in Ethiopia was not seen only as historical facts but also serves as a potential source of a force of inertia to challenge the upcoming realization of constitutionally promulgated democracy.

The 2005 Election and Aftermath Politico-Legal Measures

The 2005 national election was sharply contested and offered Ethiopian citizens a democratic choice for the first time in the long history of Ethiopia. The EPRDF government took the initiative to negotiate with the opposition and level playing field and agreed to a number of important electoral reforms that created conditions for a more open and genuinely competitive process. The early negotiations between parties were also a step forward for the democratization process in Ethiopia. While the pre-election and Election Day process were generally commendable, the post election period was disappointing. The period following May 15 was marked by highly charged political tensions. Several days of protests and electoral violence's, delay in vote tabulation, a large number of electoral dispute resolution process (Carter Center, 2005).

Following the post election political unrest the government took two measures simultaneously: on the one hand the government declared state of emergency to hand over demonstration begun in Addis Ababa which humiliated much life of civilians. On the other hand the government continued in introducing new subsidiary laws which condemned as repressive laws by many commentators, they call the situation rule by law (Merera, 2011).

Thus, many scholars criticize the post 2005 elections legislations of EPRDF as the tool of rule by law which violates constitutional rights of citizens, save the previous minor criticism. Following the initial announcement of the results of the 2005 elections, which revealed that the opposition had won all but one of the seats in the Addis Ababa city council and several seats in the federal parliament, the outgoing parliament quickly enacted several laws which had the effect of making it difficult for the opposition to implement freely its policies and programmes. The laws particularly stripped the city administration of its control over financial resources and the security apparatus. Most of the revenue sources for the city administration were moved to the federal government and the city police force was brought directly under federal control (Abebe, 2012).

Furthermore, in reaction to the significant in road made by the opposition forces to the federal parliament, the outgoing federal parliament amended the law that regulated its operation which requires 20 out of 547 members of federal parliament to register an agendum for discussion to an absolute majority to even propose an agendum for discussion by parliament. Thus, this new parliamentary rule effectively excluded the opposition from meaningfully participating in the parliament even if they had taken their seats and undermined the possibility even of discussing controversial issues (Abebe, 2012 and Merera, 2010).

However, among the post 2005 Ethiopian legislations, the freedom of mass media and access to information proclamation, charities and society's proclamation and anti-terrorism proclamation are the most controversial and ever debatable laws in Ethiopia. The freedom of mass media and access to information proclamation, charities and societies proclamation and anti-terrorism law are considered as the legal framework silencing journalists, civil society organization and political dissents in Ethiopia respectively. These in turn impair the democratization process begin in Ethiopia (Shimellis.H, 2015).

Weakness of actors in democratization process

The realization of democratization process in one country depends upon the strength of actors in democratization process like political parties, media and civil society. Hereunder an attempt was done to explore the status of these actors in Ethiopian democratization process.

Political Parties

Among others the major actors in democratization process political parties, mass media and civil society are taken as example to analysis in this sub-section of the paper. The strength and weakness of these actors have direct impacts on the strengthening of democracy in one country. When we see in the African context the weakness of these actors led to the weakness of democratization process (Chege, 2007). For the purpose of this sub-section focus is given to political parties.

Theoretically speaking, in situations where inter-party relations between ruling party and opposition parties are cordial, this creates an environment conducive to effective functioning of parliaments and the deepening of multi-party democracy. Nevertheless, in Ethiopia, interparty relations tend to be marked by mutual suspicion. The country's political organizations are still seeing each other antagonistically and as 'blood enemies' rather than as responsible political actors and worthy partners in nation building who have equal rights to govern the country without encumbrance from anybody or any organizations (Gudeta and Alemu, 2014). There is lack of principle of loyal opposition among political parties in Ethiopia.

To see in detail, many opposition political parties in Ethiopia are facing both external and internal challenges which are the source of their weakness. Externally, the implicit and explicit challenges a rise from ruling political party or government. Sarah Vaughan suggested that the operation of the political system in which part of the country is almost impossible for opposition political parties to use the democratic institutions to effectively challenge the dominance of the ruling party. Many reports show that a range of tactics commonly disadvantages the opposition prior to and during election are practiced in woredas specially to weaken the opposition. These have included systematic closure of opposition offices, harassment, arrest and systematic suspension of candidates (Vaughan, 2004). Furthermore, Merera (2011) explains that the major cause for weakness of opposition political parties in Ethiopia is the divide and rule policy of the incumbent government.

On the other way, the degree of the roles' opposition political parties played in democratization process is determined by the degree of institutionalization of political parties with respect to organization, discipline, internal democracy and cohesion. To be more specific, the higher level of opposition party institutionalization, the more positive contribution to democratization becomes stronger (Gudeta and Alemu, 2014).

However, many opposition political parties in Ethiopia are established around individual personality, without organizational structures. Some parties are even founded and funded by either one individuals party entrepreneurs or a handful of party elites. Such parties usually rely on the charismatic appeal of single individuals, lack structures extending beyond the national executive and have a highly centralized decision making process. These kinds of parties face split whenever another rising star challenges the founder of the party. This is one of the reasons for the presence of many fragmented political parties in Ethiopia at present, save the opposition argument of it is the result of EPRDF divide and rule policy (Chege, 2007).

The other chronic problem of opposition political parties in Ethiopia is their failure to forward distinct national wide policy alternatives to the voters. Some of them are either weak in terms of developing a comprehensive policy vision and having nationwide agenda or disseminating their agendas and programs to the people. Specially, political parties which are led by single individual leader (personalized party) usually do not offer alternative policies to the voters rather emphasize the ability of the opposition party leaders to run the government better than the incumbent party and government leaders (Gudeta and Alemu, 2014). Meaning opposition political parties in Ethiopia focus on showing the fault of the government and telling the people as the run the government better than the ruling political parties without telling the different national policies and strategies they have. In support of this view Tronvoll and Vaughan in their work on Ethiopia entitled as 'the culture of power in contemporary Ethiopian political power' concluded that although, opposition parties always complained government intimidation and harassment, they are weak, lack clear program and enjoy only limited support in the rural areas (Tronvoll and Vaughan, 2003). Hence, currently the existing opposition political parties are too weak to forward alternative policies and program in the country which in turn become another challenging factor of democratization process in Ethiopia.

The other political party related problem in Ethiopian democratization process is political polarization among Ethiopian elites in general and political parties in particular. The history of party formation in Ethiopia is associated with Ethiopian students' movement (ESM) and engulf of socialism to Ethiopia. The positive development in ESM which bring the history of party formation in Ethiopia and dismantlement of old feudal regime soon began to be overshadowed by political polarization and fragmentation that precipitated an endless polarization in the Ethiopian state.

Hiwot Tefera, one of the 1960s Ethiopian students offspring explains in her book entitled as 'Tower in the sky' as the founder of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP), Birhanemeskal Reda and Getachew Maru were killed because of proposing a medium ground for Ethiopian politics, proposing agenda of dialogues with others. In support of this argument Dr. Merera explains that the 1960s Ethiopian political polarization is based on becoming who is the left of left (more socialist than

others) irrespective of national interests (Merera, 2006).

Thus, the 1960s and 1970s, Ethiopian political parties experienced thousands of Ethiopians deceased due to political party polarization, save other problems like red terrorism. Indeed, neither the downfall of the rule of the military junta nor the ascendancy of neo-liberalism with the disintegration of the socialist ideology has ended the effect of political party's polarization of the 1960s in Ethiopia rather it continued in Ethiopian politics as a challenge of democratization process taking other dimensions.

As Merera (2006), explains the main cause of Ethiopian political polarization at early stage was to become the left of left while the contemporary polarization is caused by an attempt of democratization without national consensus among political parties. Currently, as many studies show, Ethiopian political parties have no internal party democracy and interparty relations.

In the current Ethiopia's body politics, democratic principles like political pluralism, accommodation of different ideas and peaceful coexistence of competing forces have no roots. Rather the country's national politics is characterized by hostility and mutual destruction which Tronvoll and Vaughan described as 'hierarchical, exclusionary and polarized socio-political cultures' (Tronvoll and Vaughan, 2003). Furthermore, the pattern of Ethiopian interparty relations is characterized as 'interparty relations can be explained largely by the political polarization and fragmentation between and among Ethiopian political parties' (Merera, 2007).

Also there is problem of national consensus among political parties in Ethiopia. In democracy, political parties are a loyal opposition to each other's and have common national symbols upon which they are not debating. But in Ethiopia one party see others as natural enemy and judged each others as dangerous to the viable existence of the Ethiopian state. There is a general belief that political parties of every kind considers itself as the only panacea for existing and prevailing social, cultural, economic and political problems. There is lack of consensus among political parties on national issues like constitution, national flag, national army and police and national election board even there is disagreement among some political parties on Ethiopian territorial integrity. Hence, weakness of political parties to forward alternative policies accompanied with political polarization retard Ethiopian democratization process.

Civil Society

There is no conscience among scholars concerning the origin of civil society organization in the world. But, there is an agreement among scholars on the important roles civil society organizations played in overthrowing repressive regimes and in the transition from dictatorship

to democratic rules in eastern and central Europe by mobilizing popular participation, debate, campaign and demonstration. Also in the third wave of democratization much emphasis has been placed on the need for civil society in the form of a complex of organizations, outside the state but nonetheless impinging to a significant degree on public life, as a means to ensure the development of habit of peaceful participation on public affairs on the part of the population, while at the same time placing constraints on the arbitrary exercise of power by the government (Wondwosen, 2009).

In Africa, civil society organizations played decisive roles during decolonization process and in the early years of independence, African leaders and civil society works hand in hand. Gradually, the new African rulers started to distance themselves from civil society and started to rule their peoples in similar way the white colonial power do. In Ethiopia, although, the beginning of traditional civil society going back to Axumite civilization, modern civil society started in Ethiopia in 1930. As Kassahun (cited in Wondwosen, 2009) revealed, despite the presence of many civil societies in Ethiopia, their contribution to democratization has been insignificant. The civil society for the first time played a decisive role in the country's democratization process by actively participating in the 2005 parliamentary election. But, the active participation of civil society in the 2005 election, however, resulted in serous conflicts between civil society and political society in Ethiopia resulting in the introduction of 2009 charities and societies organization law.

Although, having a clear legal framework guiding the function of NGOs in one country is the corner stone of promotion and protection of human rights and well functioning of the organizations, the 2009 Ethiopian CSO law has silenced civil society working on democracy, human rights, good governance and conflict resolution.

The country's leading human rights organizations have lost almost all of their incomes because of the funding restrictions. Further, these organizations have been subject to enforced changes of mandate, programme activities, or the name of their organizations. Even development organizations have had to revise their approaches and change their activities because of the restriction of human rights and democracy work. The law has created significant discretionary powers for the government to interfere in the running of human rights organizations which is affecting the activities conducted by organizations, fund raising opportunities, membership recruitment, retention which is also endangering the security of victims of human rights violations (Article, 85 of CSO law). In this way the infant civil society began to play roles in Ethiopian democratization process silenced.

Media

Media plays prominent roles in people lives. It is sources

of information, education, communication, entertainment, enjoyment, advertisement and marketing promotion. Although, media has wide meanings and roles, in this study the focuses was on broadcasting and printing media's in terms of their roles in serving as sources of information, education and communication concerning democratization process. Hence, media is the oxygen of democracy. Pursuant to this reality, Article 19 of the UDHR states that "everyone has the rights to freedom of opinion and expression: these rights include freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (Ross, 2010). In the same vein, the FDRE Constitution lays out the legal rights of citizens to hold opinions, thought and free expression under Article 29. This Article protects freedom of expression without interference including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kind regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any media of once choice. (FDRE Constitution, Article 29).   Furthermore, the Constitution takes all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia to be an integral part of the law of the land, which give assurance for Ethiopian peoples to exercise the rights provided under international human rights treaties adopted by Ethiopia (Tsegaye, 2004). These are legal prospects of media to contribute for the realization of democratization process in Ethiopia.

Despite the guaranteeing on freedom of expression and access to information as inalienable human rights and necessary ingredient of democratization process, both the private and public media in Ethiopia is unable to discharge their duties as expected. Also the government of Ethiopia has been criticized for compromising these rights. Subsidiary laws on the mass media and freedom of information has been criticized as limiting the function of the private media through forcing them to have self-censorship (Arriola, 2011).

The 2008, Freedom of Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation is criticized, among other things for discouraging especially the private media from engaging actively in several topics including criticism on officials, through its provisions on defamation, excessive fine and registration system (Ross, 2010).

Following this polarization prevails in Ethiopia media and the flourished media starts to decline in numbers. Both the private and public media in Ethiopia are become weak in loudly and impartially exposing immediate, timely and important information to the public. Rather, gradually the polarization increase and implicitly private media means become opposing government while public media means disseminating the good side of the government. In this way the promised development of media following the promulgation of freedom of expression and press under article 29 of the FDRE constitution, fail to contribute for the realization of democratization process

in Ethiopia as expected. Hence, the weakness of media, which is the oxygen of democracy, is become another challenge of democratization process in Ethiopia.

Corruption

Corruption has been described "as the abuse of public office for private gain". This includes any gains-financial, in status and it could be gain by an individuals or groups, or those linked with such an individual or group. Corruption impedes state's stability to use its available resources to progressively achieve the full realization of democratization process because national resources are instead diverted into the pockets of public officials or development aid is misused, mismanaged or misappropriated. Corruption promotes wrong choices and competition does not keep down prices rather the competition is about the size of bribe. Corruption increases distortion of policy and resource allocation inefficiency (Gudeta, 2013).

Corruption exists in both democratic and non-democratic states. But it develops into an automatic by product of the latter system and the chances for corrupt practices to be exposed, protested against and punished become diminished under it. Therefore, democratic governance is a necessary requirement to fight corruption. In other way, corruption undermines the rule of law, democratic governance, accountability and sustainable development. It breaches the contract between citizens and public officials and this has grave consequences for successful democratic government (Robert, 2012). In the contemporary Ethiopia, corruption flourishes as the newly established democratic institutions are weak and the rule of law are not rigorously observed. Comprehensively the main causes of corruption in Ethiopia are poor governance, low level of democratic culture, low level of citizens' participation, low institutional control, poverty and inequality, harmful cultural practices and weak financial management which in turn become an impediment to democratization process in Ethiopia (Gudeta, 2013).

Corruption continued to be perceived as a pervasive problem endangering Ethiopian democratization process. Ethiopia's score on transparency international's 2010 corruption perception index was 2.7 on a 10 scale placing it 116 out of 178 countries measured (Transparency International, 2011). In 2008, Transparency's international Ethiopia chapter conducted a survey in Addis Ababa to gather information on citizens' confidence in public institutions as well as their perception of public institutions effectiveness in combating corruption. Fifty five percents of respondents claimed that corruption had worsened over the previous two years and they believe of its improvement in the next two years. Respondents paid the highest bribes, on average, for the transactions

involving drivers' licenses, property registration, judicial and tax records (Arriola, 2010). On the other way corruption is the enemy of democracy and development. Corruption undermines the growth of sound economic base which is the hallmark of the substance of democratic culture. It is the effective way of obliterating transparence and accountability which in turn led to the flourishing of bad governance. Hence, the rampant corruption flourished today in Ethiopia is another impediment to democratization process in the country.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the change of regime in 1991 Ethiopia has been undergoing a political transformation that is hoped to fundamentally transform the Ethiopian state and society. The key elements in the political transformation are political pluralism and a decentralization of power based on ethnic-linguistic criterion. As such the twin objectives of the Ethiopian politics were permanently guaranteed by inculcating in 1995 FDRE Constitution.

The adoption of UDHR as integral part of the FDRE Constitution is a promising step on the road to democracy. The affirmation of these rights, in a country whose immediate past has been characterized by the grossest abuses, is historic and should beat the heart. Similarly the constitution's affirmation of the rights of Ethnic groups to self-determination like right to develop their languages and cultures is an appropriate response to the ethnic question that has challenging the Ethiopian state for long on the one hand, and it is a soft ground for the democratization process on the other hand. Furthermore, the official recognition of multi-party politics, decentralization of power and establishment of different human rights and democracy institutions like independent National Election Board is another step forward and smooth ground for the realization of democratization process in Ethiopia.

Notwithstanding to these positive developments, the infant democracy is challenged by many problems. Among others, the force of inertia (undemocratic political culture), authoritarian nature of Ethiopian politics, the political polarization of 1960s students' spillover effect and the post 2005 election politico-legal measures have been challenging the journey of democratization process in Ethiopia.

The other challenge is weakness of political parties. Currently opposition political parties in Ethiopia are too weak to bring alternative policies which challenge ruling political parties and strengthen democratization process. The undemocratic political culture and weakness of opposition political parties accompanied by weakness of Media, Civil society, political polarization and corruption are the main challenges of democratization process in Ethiopia. Hence, the study implies that there is the need

to reform the post 2005 election politico-legal measures on the one hand and strengthen actors in democratization process like political parties, civil society, media and democratic institutions on the other hand.

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