

# Exploring the Nature of the Ethiopian parliament system under three Consecutive Regimes: change and continuity

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**Abstract:** *This article attempted to explore the Nature, Changes, and Continuities of the Ethiopian parliament under three regimes. Accordingly, the author argues that there are changes and continuities in Ethiopian parliament making, executions, and responsibilities under three regimes. However, there are more or less similar objectives of the parliament of the country and continuities in terms of core values. The study used secondary sources from books, articles, publications published and unpublished from government and non-governmental organizations reports, and web sources, the data collected are qualitative, the research is based on qualitative data analysis techniques. The findings of the article show a national decision-maker or parliament will decide for a country based on free and relatively fair elections. Political parties, ethnic groups, and women's participation in Parliament were different in every regime. It has proved in the full and free exercise of the right to self-determination of the people and it has changed to people that have sovereign power of citizens of Ethiopia; Legislative initiative has changed into a house. Regardless of, change in orientation and style of parliament, internal and external issues linger as decisive elements of the parliament system under three regimes. It is understood that the nature of the parliament change when the constitution changes.*

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, parliament system, Emperor, Military, EPRDF Regime, Nature, Changes, and Continuities

## 1. Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the ancient states in the world and has never been colonized in Africa. It is the only country in the world where black people have won a victory over whites and the oldest and largest country which established the first parliament in Africa. Now, not to study the history of Ethiopia, whereas when Ethiopia followed a modern parliamentary system in its time and to study how the state of nature and continuity of parliament changed as governments or rulers changed and what were the external and internal factors for change. To that end, to substantiate the study it would be assessed as a matter of international parliamentary origin also.

Although Ethiopia is one of the oldest states in the world and is not one of the colonized African countries. However, the formation of the modern Ethiopian empire traced back to mid the 19th Century (Beken, 2007), which was facilitated by the demise of the era of a prince and the coming of Ras Kasa (Seifuddin, 1997), who traced his lineage to the house of David, King Solomon and succeeded in consolidating his rule over the Abyssinian core from which modern Ethiopia would flower. Ras Kasa sought the assistance of European states to modernize the country and defend the threat from Egypt and Turkey which were Muslim states. In the mid-19th century, the establishment of the new Ethiopian Empire started to be the start of the parliamentary structure and of modern Ethiopia.

Since the inception of the modern Ethiopian government, various rulers have emphasized the nature, change, and

continuity of the Ethiopian parliament. First Ethiopian Parliament Opened 3 November 1931. After Emperor Haile Selassie - the first constitution of the country was ratified in July 1931 (The Ethiopian Government, 1931). Since then, it has been set up as a parliamentary institution in the political institutions of Ethiopia, but practice varies across jurisdictions.

This study attempts to show the state of the nation's parliamentarians introduced by the three Ethiopian governments. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the nature, change, and continuity of the Ethiopian parliament system and to address this objective, three main research questions were proposed organized and the study was undertaken to address these research questions which include, what are the changes in the consecutive parliament system? Are there changes in the nature of the three parliamentary systems? Is there a continuity of the parliamentary system under the three regimes?

In terms of methodology, the study employed the qualitative research methodology and narrative research design was employed to achieve the objective of the study. Accordingly, the study used secondary data gathered from books, articles, published, and unpublished materials, as well as websites in the study area. And also obtained key details interviews with key stakeholders and related experts in research to validate the data. The data collected was qualitative and the study used qualitative data analysis techniques. Also, to extract the necessary information from the two data sources referred to above, the researcher's in-depth observation and record analysis were used as methods for data collection.

## 2. Conceptual framework

Parliaments are the indispensable institutions of representative democracies around the world. Whatever their country-specific rules, their role remains the same: to represent the people and ensure that public policy is informed by the citizens on whose lives they impact. Effective parliaments shape policies and laws which respond to the needs of citizens and support sustainable and equitable development. For parliaments to be truly representative, elections must be free and fair. Citizens must have access to information about parliamentary proceedings, legislation, and policy, and be able to engage in continual dialogue with parliamentarians.

Parliament is a complex institution. It functions at different levels and many actors influence what it does. Members of parliament, the Speaker and leadership, political parties and groups, Secretaries-General, clerks, and administration all play a part in shaping its work. No two parliaments are the same. They differ in form, role, and functioning. They are shaped by the history and culture of each individual country. Yet they all share the same ambition: to give people a voice in the management of public affairs.

In 2012 parliaments are more prevalent than ever before. 190 of 193 countries now have some form of functioning parliament, accounting for over 46,000 representatives. The existence of a parliament is not synonymous with democracy, but democracy cannot exist without a parliament. Although varying hugely in power, influence, and function, almost every political system now has some form of a representative assembly.

Parliaments provide a link between the concerns of the people and those that govern. The existence of a public forum to articulate citizens' concerns is a prerequisite for the legitimacy of government. A global opinion poll in 2008 found that 85 percent of people believed that the 'will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government' (World Public Opinion, 2009).

During the second half of the 20th century, the number of parliaments increased dramatically throughout the world. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 190 of 193 countries now have some form of functioning parliamentary institution, accounting for over 46,000 representatives (Power, 2012). However, in the Economist Intelligence Unit's most recent assessment, only around 45 percent of the world's countries qualify as 'full' or 'flawed' democracies, with another 20 percent described as 'hybrid' regimes (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011). In other words, the presence of a parliamentary institution is not synonymous with democracy and suggests that these parliaments vary in significance according to the political context. Yet their presence appears

to be essential to the idea of a state's legitimacy and its ability to represent the public interest. In all of these contexts, the institutions provide the link between the concerns of the populace and those that govern. Parliaments vary hugely in terms of their power, influence, and function, but the existence of a public forum to articulate those concerns appears to be a prerequisite for the legitimacy of government.

Today's parliaments have their roots in a variety of contexts, reflecting the tendency of all societies to create bodies to discuss, deliberate, and represent the interests of the people. Such gatherings can be found in every society, from the *majlis* throughout the Arab world to the panchayat in India. Across Africa, tribal gatherings took a variety of forms and roles, and, in Afghanistan, the *jirgas* were used to resolve conflict and act as a channel of wider communication. This desire to gather, talk and represent is reflected in the institutional names. Around a quarter of such bodies use the term 'parliament', deriving from the French *parler*, to speak, either as a generic designation for parliament or as the name of one of its chambers. Terminology indicating 'gathering' or 'assembly' is also prevalent, with over 40 percent of legislatures using variants such as congress, Diet (Japan), Knesset (Israel), *Skupstina* in several Balkan countries, or *Majlis* in many Arabic legislatures. In the Nordic tradition, *Riksdagen* (e.g., Finland, Sweden) can be translated as 'meeting of the realm' and Icelandic *Althingi*, Danish *Folketinget*, and the Norwegian *Storting* as 'people's gathering' or 'gathering of all'. A 2008 global poll emphasized the importance attached to representation as a governing worldwide principle, finding that 85 percent of people believed that the 'will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government' and 84 percent felt that government leaders should be elected by universal suffrage (World Public Opinion, 2009).

### The minorities' representation in a global perspective

There is wide variation in perceptions of how fairly ethnic, religious, or national minorities are represented in national legislatures, though overall views lean in the direction that minorities are not fairly represented.

According to the World Public Opinion study conducted on the minorities' and religious representation in 23 countries parliament<sup>1</sup> and asked how fairly "minorities, including ethnic, religious, or national minorities" are represented in the national legislature, eight nations had a plurality or majority saying that they are fairly represented. Ten nations said they are not fairly represented and five nations are evenly divided (World Public Opinion, 2009). On average, across all nations polled, 40 percent said minorities are represented fairly, while 47 percent said they are not. There were no significant differences on a worldwide basis by gender or age. Seven

<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Chile, Mexico, US, France, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iraq,

Israel, Turkey, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, China, India, Indonesia, Korea Rep. and Pakistan.

nations have a clear majority saying that they believe that minorities are not fairly represented. These include all of the Latin American countries polled— Argentina (69%), Mexico (67%), Chile (66%)—as well the Republic of Korea (86%), France (66%), and Kenya (61%). Five nations have a clear majority saying that minorities are fairly represented. These include China (80%), Nigeria (64%), Pakistan (60%), Azerbaijan (56%), and the US (56%). Other nations have divided views or have only pluralities or slight majorities taking a dominant view (World Public Opinion, 2009).

Generally, according to the study done by world public opinion (2008), there is wide variation in perceptions of how fairly minorities are represented in national legislatures, though overall views lean in the direction that minorities are not fairly represented (World Public Opinion, 2009).

### The women representation

The same research is done in the 23 countries by World Public Opinion (2009), though none of the nations polled have parity in gender representation in their national legislatures, and views are mixed on whether women are fairly represented. On average across all countries polled, a modest majority of men think women are fairly represented, but a plurality of women think they are not. Respondents were asked whether women as a group are “fairly represented” in the national legislature. In 12 nations a majority said that women are fairly represented as did a plurality in one more. In eight nations a majority said that they are not. These views had only a tenuous correlation with the actual proportion in the national legislature of each country. This may be due to a general lack of knowledge about the actual proportion of female representation. It may be that some people who say that women are fairly represented may be expressing a positive view of the growing representation of women in the legislature. Some people may also be expressing confidence that the legislature is sensitive to the rights and needs of women in their society. South Africa and Germany are both on the high end of women’s representation worldwide (South Africa: 45% lower chamber, 30% upper chamber; Germany: 32% lower chamber, 22% upper chamber), and both had majorities that thought women are fairly represented—64 percent of South Africans and 52 percent of Germans.

However the country with the third-highest level—Iraq at 22 percent—had one of the largest majorities (73%) saying that women are not fairly represented. At the same time, though the United States has a lower percentage of women in its Congress (17% lower house, 15% upper house), a large 61 percent of Americans said that women were fairly represented. In Asia, Pakistan and China are both countries where women’s parliamentary presence is above the world average of 18% (Pakistan: 23% lower, 17% upper; China: 21%). Overwhelming majorities (Pakistan 81%, China 72%) said that women were fairly represented. Pakistanis may also be referencing the fact that they have elevated a woman to the

position of Prime Minister (Benazir Bhutto) or the significant increase in women’s political participation at all levels in recent years. The Chinese may be taking into account their ideological commitment to women’s rights (Power, 2012).

According to the world public opinion “In Europe, both Poland (20% lower, 8% upper) and France (18% lower, 22% upper), have majorities who think their country falls short. In France, this was a striking 70 percent, while in Poland 51 percent felt this way. However modest majorities in Britain (55%, with 20% women in each house) and Germany (52%; see above) said that women were fairly represented. Of the eleven nations polled that have 17 percent or fewer women members, publics in six nations think women are not fairly represented, four think they are, and one is divided. In Chile, Turkey, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea majorities said women were not fairly represented. Pluralities in Russia and Ukraine had the same view. In the United States, Nigeria, India, and Azerbaijan, majorities thought women were fairly represented whereas Kenyans were divided” (world public opinion, 2009).

Generally, according to the study done by world public opinion (2008), though none of the nations polled have parity in gender representation in their national legislatures, views are mixed on whether women are fairly represented. On average, a modest majority of men think women are fairly represented, but a plurality of women think they are not.

### Variations by Gender

In two-thirds of the countries polled—16 out of 24— women were less likely than men to think women were fairly represented in the legislature. In only two countries were women more likely to think this than men. In another six countries, the differences between men’s and women’s views were insignificant. On average, across all nations polled, a majority of men (53%) said women are fairly represented, while a plurality of women said that women are not fairly represented (48% not fairly, 45% fairly). Thus on average, there is an 8 point gap between men and women on whether women are fairly represented. The biggest gap between men’s and women’s views was in Germany, where 65 percent of men, but only 38 percent of women, though women’s representation was fair—followed by Poland, where 50 percent of men but only 31 percent of women thought this. Thus the gap was 27 points in Germany and 19 points in Poland.

Other large gaps in views were found in Argentina, Chile, Ukraine, and Israel. In all these countries, a majority or plurality of women thought they were not fairly represented and the differences between men’s and women’s views were substantial (Power, 2012).

In France and Iraq countries men were more likely than women to think that women were not fairly represented. In

France, large majorities of both men and women think women lack fair representation, but this majority is 74 percent among men and 67 percent among women. In Iraq also, large majorities of both sexes think women lack fair representation, but this view is more pronounced among men. Women and men had near-identical views on the issue in six countries. In Mexico, Great Britain, India, and China, that women are fairly represented as the majority view, with no gender difference; in Turkey and Indonesia, that they are not fairly represented was the majority view, with no gender difference (world public opinion, 2009).

### Political Parties Opinion

According to the study of the world public opinion (2008), “in nearly every country, people perceive that their legislators have limited freedom to express views that differ from their political party. Respondents were asked how often members of the legislature “feel free to express views that differ from the official views of their own political party.” In 20 out of 23 nations a majority said that legislators feel free only sometimes or rarely. Among the participatory countries in the study, only one country (Chile) did a majority consider that legislators feel free most of the time. On average, more than two out of three said that legislators feel free to express divergent views only sometimes (37%) or rarely (29%), while 28 percent say most of the time. There were no significant differences on a worldwide basis by gender or age. Interestingly, there appears to be no meaningful overall difference between the assessments of publics in countries with proportional electoral systems, where candidates are elected from a party list, and those of countries with majoritarian systems, where candidates are elected to represent a specific constituency. Under each system, there is a range of responses from various countries, and when the averages between the two groups of publics are compared there is no significant difference”.

### Indigenous Peoples Representation

In several nations with significant indigenous populations, large majorities in all cases see these populations as not being fairly represented. Four nations that have significant indigenous populations were asked whether “indigenous peoples” are “fairly represented” in the national legislature. In all four cases, a large majority said they were not. Argentines had the largest majority (87%) saying indigenous people are not fairly represented (just 4% said they were). This was followed by Chile, where a large 73 percent said they were not (just 12% said they were). In the US a large 65 percent said that indigenous peoples are not fairly represented, but one in three said that they are fairly represented. In the US, well under 1 percent of the members of Congress are Native Americans. However, some holding the minority view may be expressing confidence that the interests of Native Americans are being well represented, as Native Americans have become

more effectively organized politically (world public opinion, 2009).

In Mexico, a similar 68 percent said that indigenous peoples are not well represented, while 27 percent said they are. Here too, some Mexicans holding the minority view may be expressing a belief that events such as the recent uprisings of indigenous peoples have led to greater recognition of their rights.

In several nations with significant indigenous populations, large majorities in all cases see these populations as not being fairly represented.

According to the study of the world public opinion (2008), South Africa is unique in that it has a majority group that has only recently gained political ascendancy. South Africans express substantial confidence that all various racial groups are well represented. Not surprisingly, an overwhelming 86 percent said that “black people” are now fairly represented in parliament. At the same time, a very large 68 percent said that “white people” are fairly represented. More modest majorities see other racial groups as fairly represented. Fifty-three percent said that “colored people” were fairly represented, while a similar number—51 percent—said that “Indian or Asian people” were fairly represented. Large majorities of all ethnic groups believe that black people are fairly represented in the South African Parliament. When looking at other ethnic groups, however, interesting differences are evident. Black people are the only group that thinks colored people and those of Asian and Indian descent are fairly represented; all other groups disagree. The only ethnic group who see white people as not fairly represented are white people themselves; all other groups think white people are fairly represented (world public opinion, 2009).

Majorities of black people (63%) believe colored people are being fairly represented while a plurality of white people (49%) and majorities of colored people (64%) and Asians (59%) think they are not. Similarly, black people (60%) believe that Indian and Asian people are fairly represented, while a plurality of white people (50%) and a majority of colored people (53%) and Asians (63%) do not. Finally, white people (65%) do not feel they are fairly represented, while a majority of black people (84%), colored people (58%), and Asians (57%) believe white people are fairly represented (world public opinion, 2008). Therefore from this conceptual framework of global perspectives the researcher explores the nature of the Ethiopian parliamentary system under different regimes.

### 3. The parliament under the Empire Regime Era/ 1930- 1974/

The people of Ethiopia have gone through three different parliaments in the history of their constitution. These are the Chambers of Emperor Haile Selassie, the National Assembly

of Derg, and the Federal Parliament of Ethiopia. These Ethiopian parliaments also assumed the role of the different powers and duties aligned with the governing regime policy.

Ethiopia has a long history of independent statehood, but a formal parliament as an institution was only established under Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 (The Government of Ethiopia, 1931). At the time, it was, indeed, not a representative body but a mere step forward for the formation of a monarchy and a central and modern government. There were no political parties and candidates for parliament were either largely drawn from the feudal aristocracy or selected for their support of the status quo. It was during this time that the first written constitution was passed to lend modernity to traditional kings whose legitimacy is largely derived from tradition and culture (Clapham, 1969; Perham, 1948).

According to the Government of Ethiopia (1931), the 1931 constitution established a bicameral system of parliament. The two Chambers were Yeheg Mewesegna (the Senate/upper house) and Yeheg Memriya (Chamber of Deputies/ lower house) and Each House had 56 members. The upper house was directly appointed by the Emperor by the noblemen and pertinent persons. Lower houses were elected but suffrage was limited to those who own sufficient quantities of land.

One of the natures that express the parliament of the empire time is that the functions of The Imperial Parliament were limited as the legislative body and the power of Parliament was minimal. The system was an absolute monarchy rather than a constitutional one. The power of the kingdom was passed from father to son according to Solomon's throne. The constitution also legitimized the emperor's full powers, including the appointment and expulsion of the government official, the administration of justice, the declaration of war, and the termination of the war, etc. for more see table two.

As mentioned above, the Government of Ethiopia (1931), the 1931 Constitution states that members of the senates were appointed among those who have long been ordained as monarchs by the emperor or ministers, judges, or military leaders. Article 32 of this Constitution is referred to as a temporary measure until the people can choose for themselves. The members of the Chambers are elected by the members of the council (Mekuanent) and the local chiefs (Shumoch).

However, the nature of these consultants could not pass political decisions because they were elected by the government to meet the formal structure of the people. They were only required to discuss and comment on issues raised by the government. They had no power to criticize and control the administration. In particular, the emperor's governments were not allowed to call and question ministers. As a result, the parliament was weak and failed to implement the modern parliamentary system.

The Constitution of 1931 was defined the nature of the parliament in Article 33-37 of the Constitution, a person appointed as a member of the senate, may not a representative of the lower house during that same Parliamentary Assembly, and the person elected as a member of the lower house cannot be a member of the same Parliament, become a member of the council of the senate. There is no rule in law if it is discussed in the sections and does not receive the emperor's confirmation (The Government of Ethiopia,1931).

Representatives of the Chamber of Deputies are required by law to accept and discuss ideas submitted by various departments. However, while the constitutional bodies have ideas that can benefit the government or the people, the law has the right to meet the Emperor through their president, and the Emperor will do his will. The two chambers have the right to independently speak both parts to the Emperor's Majesty in any matter of law or any matter. However, if the Emperor does not accept this view, the parties cannot reconsider the request at a parliamentary meeting. The two houses meet each year for six months. The king extends it once, if necessary (The Government of Ethiopia,1931).

Also, the houses of informal meetings can be held if necessary. It is the Emperor who arranges such a session. Opening and closing, as well as sessions and rests/ break time, will be the same for both councils/ houses. If the Council's performance is disbanded, the Senate will adjourn the meeting until the following day. If the emperor uses his right to demolish lower houses, he will arrange a new council within four months.

The Imperial Council conducts a form of law the standing instructions of the Senate and the lower house. In criminal cases, a member of the lower house cannot be legally prosecuted during a plenary session unless the decision is to postpone.

If the two parties come to different conclusions after considering an important issue, if the king presents/received a written statement of conflicting views, then, he can then scrutinize the causes of the dispute and bring the matter to a conclusion. The final agreement by choosing what seems best in the two different conclusions.

When it is not possible to resolve the ideas of the two councils, the Emperor has the right to decide whether to transfer the matter to one party or to transfer the matter to the other, in other words, the emperor had veto of power over any executives and enactments. And the emperor himself because let alone the citizens interpret the constitution itself was given from the emperor to the people. The other issue was first, the councils should not invite the ministers to consult their ministers without the permission of the Emperor. In the same way, ministers do not first aid in the meetings of the Houses without first granting the grants of permission and cannot participate in consultations.

The legislative initiative was the Emperor's sole object, but representatives/members of the lower house/ requested permission to investigate the suggested topics. Therefore, the Emperor's parliament cannot be considered democratically or representative because it was not an independent body and all members were appointed by the Emperor in favor of the Emperor (Perham, 1948).

Since the mid-1950s, the imperial government has taken several steps to modernize parliament and the Constitution. The 1955 Constitution as in 1931; Pre-preliminary international opinion was raised globally. Particularly where some of the neighboring countries of Africa are rapidly declining under the European colony and Ethiopia has been a relatively stable country for many years and Ethiopia was pushing for its international recognition of Eritrea. Such a view has been crucial since 1952 when it emerged as a more selective parliament and more modern governance (Berry, 1991).

A contributor to this initiative was that the amended 1955 constitution, of the 1931 Constitution was a slight improvement or little progress. In 1955, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a new constitution during the silver year of his kingship. The revised constitution introduced the maturity of all adults and extended the Emperor's authority over the church by granting the right to approve the election and archbishop. In addition to universal suffrage, he introduced the people to the lower house of parliament to elect their representatives. Deputies elected from electoral districts nearly to two hundred thousand inhabitants represented by one deputy. In addition, each town with a population exceeding thirty thousand inhabitants entitled to one deputy and an additional deputy for each fifty thousand inhabitants over thirty thousand. As a result, 125 representatives of the Deputies and 250 Senate members were designated (Government, 1955). With a more productive legislative and more open and decisive debate on the political, social, and economic issues, it seems that the parliament has evolved from a consultative to the law-making body of the imperial state. Standing committees have also been set up to investigate issues and provide a solution to parliament.

The bicameral Parliament did not play a role in establishing the 1955 constitution, which took into account the origins of the Emperor's religion and extended the central process. The Senate remained in power and was elected at least by the House of Representatives. However, the lack of census, the ignorance of the people, and the nobility of the people have ruled the country, and in 1957 the candidates who voted for the majority were academics. The House of Representatives sometimes did not have a rubber stamp when discussing the bills and suspicions of government ministers. However, the provisions in the Constitution that guarantee personal freedoms and liberties, including assembly, movement, and speech, as well as legal proceedings, are unrealistic.

However, the 1955 Constitution requires that members of the Deputy Council be elected by the people directly. This became a meeting of rural gult (landed aristocrats) and city offices/ urban feudo-bourgeoisies/. Therefore, resisting the absolute power and feudalism of the emperor as a system for the benefit of the people failed to be a strong political entity and forum. Generally, these measures have not made much difference in parliamentary work; and one of the oldest monarchies in the world was abolished by a violent movement by a military coup called Derg in 1974 (Clapham, 1968).

In other words, even though the revised Constitution prohibits and amended certain principles But It was not announced when the famous revolution broke out in February in 1974. Thus, on 12 September 1974, the emperor was removed from office. It was replaced by military power, by Derg junta. After Derg seized power, he dissolved parliament and declared the country a socialist country.

### **3.1. Political Parties, Ethnic Minorities, and Women's Participation in Parliament**

#### **3.1.1. The participation of political parties**

Since the system was a feudal and absolute monarchy, it did not allow for the organization of political parties, and thus, because it was explicitly constituted by the Constitution, The system was passed on as hereditary, not by-election. Even let the political party is allowed to exercise power over the whole of Ethiopia, subject to the Emperor. All Ethiopians who are subject to the State will be united with the State of Emperor. The Imperial Government will ensure the unity of the state, the country, and the Ethiopian government.

Also, the law of 1931 decreed that the emperor's honor would be permanently aligned with the genealogy of His Emperor Haile Selassie I. The lineage of King Sahle Selassie, lineage, is descended from the son of King Solomon of Jerusalem and the Ethiopian queen of Sheba (the government of Ethiopia, 1931). According to the law of the emperor, the throne and the crown of the emperor are passed on to the descendants of the emperor.

It is sanctified by the blood of the emperor, and of the anointing man (the emperor), whose glory is incorruptible and his power unbreakable. Therefore, in every culture and the present constitution, he is entitled to all glory for him. The law provides that a person who is brave enough to harm the emperor the monarch will be punished (The Government of Ethiopia, 1931).

Therefore, as noted above, there were no political parties, and parliamentary candidates were mainly taken to support the political campaign or the chosen status quo.

Especially for centuries, especially during the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia had ideologies based on whether the government between the Emperor, the Church, and the political parties was imaginary or unauthorized.

And in Even the 1955 emperor constitution was amended, Which (Bahru, 1991) has a 'charter of extremism' Universal tolerance and the right to organize did not create some rights

(Government, 1955) Besides, there are very few Republican ideologies among the few patriots after Haile Selassie's who fled to Italy during the Italian invasion. Until the time of the 1960 coup of power in the country to restrict the demands of the genealogy they wanted (Bahru, 1991; Merara, 2003). It should be noted here that the 1960 coup attempt marked a clear turning in the direction of the kings of the constitution. Looking back, it is not hard to imagine that the Emperor and his supporters failed to read the wall that would hinder the evolutionary pathway into liberalism in the country.

### 3.1.2. Ethnic Minorities right

Even though Ethiopia owns more than 80 multi-ethnic and linguistic communities, the system is royalty and feudal, so, the system is genetically passed from parent to son. It is not permissible for a great nation to be allowed to hold political power in parliament to give rights to minorities. Even the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia do not constitute and are deprived of their right to exercise a free and fair form of election. All Ethiopian indigenous peoples, explicitly enshrined in the Constitution, properties of the monarch will form part of the State of Ethiopia Empire. The Imperial Government will ensure the unification of the state, the country, and the Ethiopian government. Therefore generally all nations and nationalities were not participating in parliament politics of Ethiopia even though the chamber of duties (lower house) was, at least nominally elected.

### 3.1.3. Women participation in the parliament

As it is known, the royal and feudal system is essentially a patriarch ( a male-dominated ) field that does not allow women to go out into the open public square. It is also a system that deprives them of their economic benefit and strongly discourages them from engaging in politics.

Although the general opinion I mentioned above was a governed, in the days of the Emperor, a woman (one woman) was elected to the first parliamentary seat by a representative of the House Chamber of Deputies and also later two female parliamentarians voted in 1957. The number increased to 4 in the 1962 and 1973 elections (Meaza, 2009).

Beyond this, no system allowed them to exercise organized themselves and engaged in economic, political, and social affairs rights, so it cannot be taken for granted that women were involved in parliament.

To sum up, the parliament has at no time showed a role in the history of Ethiopia. The emperor enacted laws on the advice of ministers and foreign advisers, and the parliament rubber-stamped them.

## 4. Parliament under military /Derg/ regime from 1974- 1991

In September 1974, the military forces, known as the Derg (the Amharic word committee), were abolished and banned Emperor Haile Selassie from power and took power. Parliament dissolved in 1974. Under the regime of Derg

Colonel Mengistu, ruled the country at the time by the provisional government and the Labour Party. Derg is a short name for the Armed Forces Coordination Committee. Their members were Marxist military officers and were officers of hundreds of soldiers from various military units. When Derg assumed power on 12 November 1974, and ruled without the Constitution for 13 years, declaring itself as a temporary military government.

In 1987 the Derg created and introduced a new Constitution. There was no parliament worthy of the name under the military Derg. Typical of all dictatorships, the group ruled the country through a series of emergency decrees and proclamations. There was no law to define the role of parliament, and the separation of legislative-executive relations and the functioning of the policy-making process were all non-existent. Most legislative and executive functions were exercised by a self-appointed Standing Committee composed of military people and structured on a leftist command and rule model. Following the new constitution, the Derg promulgated a constitution that paved the way for an ostensibly civilian rule, and also created and introduced a new parliament, known then as the National Shengo (National Assembly), an extremely weak institution to rubberstamp the decisions of a ruling military clique (Meheret, 1997; Halliday, 1981). Under the Constitution Ethiopia (1987), the nature of the National Shengo is the governing body of government in the country, as part of the regime's Marxist-Leninist ideology. The Labor Party of Ethiopia nominated candidates from, mass organizations, military bodies, and others to the National Assembly which held one regular session a year. The Constitution also mentioned that the term of the National Shengo (National Assembly) was five years. In National Assembly, there were 835 members, elected from electoral districts were designated, each of their constituencies selected from selected districts was elected from an urban population of 15,000 and with a population of 75,000 for rural areas, as a tool for a dictatorship. The National Shengo also establishes a standing and ad hoc commission indispensable for its activities.

According to Kassahun National Council, it has 24 members of the council's state, which are governed by the head of state and secretary-general of the Labor Party in Ethiopia. And had seven commissions led by party leaders, and there were nine sections led by ministers who did not have a portfolio. They run the functions of the state council, so the National Assembly/Shengo/ (Kassahun, 2005).

Members of the National Shengo have the right to initiate legislation but regarding the interpretation of the constitution because of its nature of unicameral, there was no organ of interpretation except the National Shengo itself.

To change the military regime into civilian administration, the Derg organized the Workers' party of Ethiopia (WPE) and proclaimed the PDRE (People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) constitution on 12 September 1987. Derg implemented the Constitution in line with Marxist Leninist ideology. National Conference of the Year 12 September

1987; announced the establishment of the PDRE by Proclamation No. 2/1987 (Ethiopia, 1987).

The Government Council resolves the issues that are decided annually by the National Assembly. The National Assembly (National Shengo) has been formed by Members from 835 constituencies to serve temporarily for five years. Members of the Nation were representatives of the workers.

Following the provisions of the PDRE Constitution, The National Assembly conducts a meeting once a year and a permanent body (Council of State) holds the function of the House in the absence of the House (Ethiopia, 1987). The Derg government was a legislative unicameral body based on a socialist principle based on a party system.

In the Constitution of Ethiopia (1987), it was the National Assembly of Government was governing body. Its responsibilities include constitutional reform, foreign policy, defense, and security policies. Establish boundaries, status, and accountability of administrative regions, and approve economic plans.

The National Assembly was responsible for establishing a state council, The Council of Ministers, Ministers, Regional Committees, Commissions and Government Officials, the Supreme Court, the Attorney General's Office, the National Labor Relations Committee, Accountant General, and the Office of the Chief of Staff. The National Chamber also selected the President and Government House officials and approved the nomination of other senior officials.

Candidates for the national government were to be elected by the Ethiopian Labour Party (WPE), popular organizations, military units, and other legal organizations. Competition in the National Assembly had to be kept secret, and all individuals aged eighteen and over were eligible to vote. As noted above, the elected members serve five-year terms, and the body meets at regular meetings once a year. These meetings were usually public but occasionally held in the camera.

The Derg regime was marked by the Ethiopian Civil War that continued during the regime, with at least 1.4 million deaths. The regime was also in control in the mid-1980s when a catastrophic famine ravaged the country and brought it to the notice of the international community. In the late 1980s, the opposition rebel forces became more organized under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the change in leadership in the Soviet Union meant that the Derg would not get any financial or military support from any country in the Soviet bloc. In May 1991, following significant territorial gains in the country, EPRDF forces advanced on Addis Ababa. With no intervention from the Soviet Union, Mengistu fled the country to Zimbabwe on 21 May 1991; ending the Derg regime (Henze PB, 2000) see more table one.

In 1991, the *Derg* was overthrown and was replaced by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

(EPRDF), after served 4 years dissolved the National Shengo (National Assembly), and a coalition of ethnic-based organizations currently ruling the country (Harbeson, 1988).

#### **4.1. Political Parties, Ethnic Minorities, and Women's Participation in Parliament**

##### **4.1.1. Political Parties participation**

As said by Merera Ethiopia was entered the era of party politics by the end of the revolution in 1974, the government had abolished the monarchy. The positive development initiated by the political parties and the revolutionary crisis soon began to cover the political propagation and divisions that led to endless crises in the Ethiopian government and society (Merera, 2007).

In fact, in the mid-1960s, Emperor Haile Selassie developed a modern education in which he grew up and is now ready to be a part of the gravedigger of its Creator's/ birth. At that moment in time, radicals became socialist giants - Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Hoch Meh, and Che Guerrera, as activists created the famous Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM).

The opposite of the 1960s and 1970s was the call for a revolution in Ethiopian society; with the song 'Fano Tesemara Enda Hochi Minh and Che Guevara' followed by the leaders of the two armies that inspired the student. And Merera argues that it is in this kind of political circumstances that the first generation of Ethiopian political parties created and returned can be traced back to Ethiopia's historical mission (Merera, 2007).

February 1974 Revolution - Ethiopian military officials unwittingly join in the massacre. But the day's breeze moved swiftly and eventually led the revolution without any revolution that brought about the revolution. After retiring the emperor from power on 12 November 1974, it was a temporary military government and ruled the country for 13 years without a constitution and in the absence of the political parties involved.

Even if in 1987 the Derg created and introduced a new Constitution no political parties except WPE which was the ruling party involve alone. There was no parliament worthy of the name under the military Derg. For the sake of simulating Shengo was the highest body of government in the country, as part of the regime's Marxist-Leninist ideology with no participation of political party except workers' party Ethiopia (WPE). And it was also the Organs of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia. It was indicated in the constitution that in the people democratic republic of Ethiopian power belongs to the working people rather than the whole sovereignty of Ethiopian.

The constitution stated to ensure that 'Ethiopians are guaranteed freedom of speech, press and assembly, peaceful demonstration, and association in article 47/1 but the fact in the ground was different because it was all Candidates of the

National Shengo had to be nominated by regional branches of the workers' party of Ethiopia (WPE), mass societies, military units, and other associations recognized by law'. An organ of state, mass societies, other associations, officials thereof, and every individual shall observe socialist legitimacy. Therefore the system was not allowed any political parties to participate in the electoral system of the country except the ruling party which was the workers' party of Ethiopia.

#### 4.1.2. Ethnic minority participation

In Article 35/1, Ethiopians are equal before the law, regardless of nationality, sex, religion, occupation, social status, or whatever. The military regime of the Derg in 1975 came to power after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie. After being named by the first military committee of the Derg, it has pledged to bring political-economic modernization to Ethiopia, Particularly neglected minorities, especially during the emperor. However, a system of medieval supremacy has yet emerged in a country where a nationally dramatically out-of-court law has been declared. The Emperor's Proliferation in the nineteenth century, the expansion of the Amharic-speaking, Emperor's orthodox Christian highlands into the territories of the Southern Emperor was brought to include. Ethnic disputes were under the rule of the Emperor, but in the Derg regime, ethnic militias eventually are successful in overthrowing the central government of Ethiopia. These moments were uncertain, and it was unclear what the new Ethiopian face would look like and what national engagement was in the national shengo. Hundreds of political elites were fired.

From 1991 to 1995, the aggravation of 27 opposition parties, known as the Transitional Federal Government of Ethiopia, was compounded. First, to identify and develop different ethnicities of the principles of national federalism; and then, for the federalism of the nation, the 'nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia are implementing the federal constitution.

The uncertainty of these categories was not a disaster, but it did reflect the desire to name all ethnic groups regardless of themselves as 'nations', 'nationalities' or 'Peoples'' (Jan, 2016).

#### 4.1.3. Women participation in the parliament

In Article 36/1 of the Constitution, women, and men have equal rights and Article 36/2 also states that special support for women to participate, particularly in education, training, and employment, Equal to men on political, economic, social, and cultural issues (Ethiopia, 1987).

After the Ethiopian Revolution, women were somewhat successful in economic and political fields. The Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA), which claims to have over five million members, has been active in teaching women. It promotes the creation of women's organizations in factories, local associations, and civil service. Some women participated in local organizations

and farmers' associations and kebeles/counties. However, women's role was limited at the national level. For example, the year in 1984, the government chose to be a full member of the worker' Party Central Committee. In 1984, only six women were among the 2000 emissaries who attended the party inauguration (Berry & Thomas, 1991). Created in 1980, the revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association aims to improve the status of women. Women are weaker at higher levels of government. However, there are 46 female members in Sheng 835 (USDOS- US Department of the state, 1988).

### 5. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) Parliament

#### 5.1. Council of transitional governments of Ethiopia (1991-1994)

Subsequently the demise of the Derg government, EPRDF was established by the Transitional Council in 1991. From 1-5 July 1991 conference was held in Addis Ababa; the result of the Ethiopian peace and democratic transition was founded in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia, 1991). The Conference approved a charter headed by the House.

According to the charter during the transition, the House of Representatives consisted of more than 87 members of national freedom movements, other political organizations, and pertinent individuals.

The House of Peoples' Representatives shall elect the Chairperson, the Governor, the Executive, the Proclamation, and the implementation of the Law per the Charter. Also, the transitional government uses all legal and political responsibilities of the Ethiopian government until the new transitional government is given to the elected government under the new constitution (Ethiopia, 1991).

According to the charter, the council has 26 members, three of whom are women. The council served four years and its main function was to lay the foundation for a democratic government (Ethiopia, 1991). Accordingly, the FDRE Constitution was adopted on 9 December 1994. And was approved and took office on 21 August 1995, for the newly elected government (Parliament, 1995).

#### 5.2. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian parliament (1995 to date)

According to Article 53 of the FDRE Constitution, 'the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has two Federal Houses, House of Peoples' Representatives and House of Federation'.

Accordingly, these houses were established in August 1995. The constitution clearly states that Ethiopia should have a federal system and a parliamentary government (Parliament, 1995). And also the constitution indicated that member states of the Federation have equal rights and powers. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is composed of federal and state governments. Each level has its law-making, administrative, and judicial powers.

The House of Peoples' Representatives is the highest authority of the federal government, Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives will be selected from candidates in each constituency for five years, acting on general suffrage and secret, free and fair basis. Members of Parliament are sitting for a total of five years and have no other duties except to delegate and to be a legislator, whereas members of the federation are not permanent except for the offices of the three standing committee secretariats of the Federation. Member's parliaments should not exceed 550 on behalf of the number of nationalities and peoples. Of these, minority nations and peoples will have at least 20 seats (Parliament, 1995) see table two.

The Federation Council has 153 members; it is composed of designated members of regional governments that represent different ethnic or ethnic groups. Only formal constitutional issues and national or ethnic issues are concerned. The House of Representatives has 547 Members of the 547 constituencies who are held by the general suffrage and direct, free, and fair elections and are elected as the legislative body of the country.

The House of people's representative has powers and duties stated in the constitution and granted to it under Articles 55, Article 70(1), Article 79(4)(c), Article 82(2)(c), Article 101, Article 102, Article 103 and Article 104 of the Constitution includes; a) law-making; b) ratifying the federal government budget; c)over sighting and controlling governmental bodies and take steps where necessary; d)To establish and set up various committees of the House and other necessary structures; c) Ratification or appointment of government officials; f) Facilitating conditions for members to meet with members of their constituencies (Parliament, 1995).

The Council shall act under the following general principles: a) Directed by short-term and long-term plans; b) Creating a conducive environment for recording success; c) following the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation, and d) evaluating performance. The principle described in sub-article (2) of this Article shall apply to the conduct of the committee in a manner that is reasonably practicable.

According to (Parliament, 1995), article 54/4 members of parliament are accountable to the whole citizens, and article 55/17 & 18, the prime minister and his cabinets is oversight by the parliaments, Article 76/3 of the Constitution also states that the Council of Ministers is responsible for Parliament. In members of the parliament code of conduct and operation of the house of representatives regulation stated in article 4/1/c parliament can monitor government bodies and taking action where necessary, article 1681/A-D and article 169/1-10 also mentioned that parliament can take measures in monitoring and control the operational activities of the government (parliament, 2008).

Since formally Ethiopia has a cabinet form of government, both houses of parliament are dominated by the ruling party, which also leads the executive branch of government, raising questions about the efficacy of the checks and balances arrangement, particularly given the one-party monopoly of state and government. This means that the ruling party passes laws and policies without sufficient debate and often with unanimous consensus. No doubt that the absence of a viable opposition and the heavy-handed tactics of the ruling party have contributed to one-party rule and an absence of competitive governance and political process.

The House of Peoples' Representatives of the Federal Parliament is the premier organ of the Federal Government and is responsible for the Peoples of Ethiopia. The State Council (the Legislature of the State Government) is the highest organ of state authority and is responsible to the people of the state. In the frame of the newly established Federal constitution, the states have the power to draft, adopt, and amend the state constitutions. The Federal Constitution has defined the powers of the Federal Government and the States. Both organs respect the powers of each other. Currently, there are nine regional states and two municipalities in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 article 46/1 stated that the constitution allows the creation of states by individual nations, nationalities, and peoples based on settlement patterns, language, identity, and consent of people. States have the right to secede from the federation based on the procedures mentioned in the Constitution of the FDRE. The constitution mandates political and administrative decentralization in Ethiopia. States have legislative, executive, and judicial powers in their geographical contexts, such as economic, social, and development policies, strategies, and plans (Parliament, 1995).

The National Parliament is the two-tier (bicameral), the House of Peoples' Representatives (HOPR), and the Federation of the Federation (HOF). Housing meetings can be live, open to the public, and closed according to the agenda.

As mentioned in the Constitution, HOPR is the highest authority of the federal government and has the power of law in all matters entrusted to it by the federal government. Members are elected directly into constituencies based on a simple majority. One member represents one hundred thousand people in the constituency. The House of Federation is made up of representatives of nations, nationalities, and the people of Ethiopia. Each nation, nationality, and population represents by one member and for one million people per additional representative, and the members are elected by the regional council or directly by the people of the region.

As outlined in the Constitution, 'the Federation has the power to interpret the Constitution and has the authority to decide on

the issues of the constitutional rights of nations, nationalities, and peoples. It also strives to resolve conflicts or disagreements that may perhaps arise between states and determine the distribution of income to countries. The Federation conducts its session at a minimum of two sessions a year, with a five-year limit. The two houses hold joint meetings for a variety of issues: to start the annual parliamentary session to elect the President, begin the annual meeting of both houses and amend the constitution, and hear the presidential speech' (Parliament, 1995),

Constitutional review is performed by a political body of the house of federation unlike other countries in the world, except for this and the above-mentioned tasks, it has no power to veto power over the house of people's representatives and it has no legislative right to initiate laws.

Another nature of the parliament Article 56 of the Ethiopian constitution demands that the party or coalition, which has a large majority of seats in the parliament, will arrange the executive body. According to Article 25 of the Revised Ethiopian Electoral Law Proclamation No. 532/2007, a candidate who won more votes than any other candidate in the constituency is declared (Ethiopia, 2007). Both the constitution and the revised electoral law emphasize that the country follows the majority vote system, In each constituency, a seat is won by a candidate who receives a simple majority of votes in the district. Therefore, Ethiopia has adopted the 'first –past–the post'-election system: a candidate who gets the majority of votes in the electoral district is the winner.

Generally, the features and natures of the parliament are the formal functions of the Ethiopian parliament include representing the people in one of the most important institutions of government, scrutinizing the work of the executive, and take steps, as necessary, according to Article 55/19 of the Constitution, the Parliament establish and organize the various permanent committees and other necessary structures of the Council like ad hoc committees, Accordingly, HOPR has ten standing committees and HOF has three standing committees are doing their day-to-day operations of the House, especially every three months, scrutinized the executive's plans and implementation, facilitating conditions for members to meet with elected members in their respective constituencies (Parliament, 1995).

In addition to its law-making function, the HOPR approves general economic, social, and development policies and strategies as well as fiscal and monetary policy of the country; and approves and amends the federal budget, levies taxes, and duties on revenue sources reserved to the Federal Government. In fulfilling their representational duties, party rules stipulate that parliamentarians must interact with their constituencies at least twice a year so that they can consider voter concerns and preferences in the law and policymaking

process. These ritual functions, however, have been of little relevance in creating an effectively functioning parliamentary system of government and administration. As a result, the country has to go a long way before 'deep democracy' takes root (Appadurai, 2001).

### **5.3. Political Parties, Ethnic Minorities, and Women's Participation in Parliament**

#### **5.3.1. Political Parties participation**

Since coming into power in the 1990s, the EPRDF has completely committed itself to parliamentary democracy in relatively free and competitive elections (held in 1995, 2002, 2005, 2010, and 2015). Despite this, little or no headway has been achieved in instituting multi-party competitive politics because the ruling party has always been the dominant winner in all the elections, often with a landslide. Over the years, this has resulted in the entrenchment of one-party rule and the absence of any alternative opposition worthy of the name but in numbers, they are many more than 100 parties that are there. This undesirable outcome has led to a state of 'shallow democracy' and laid bare the fragility of multi-party competitive politics in Africa's second-largest country next to Nigeria.

Although Ethiopia has run five times during the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) government in its history, it has never had a 2005 election. It is worth mentioning a time when political parties in the country have gained a significant parliamentary seat, where they have fully secured seats in the capital, Addis Ababa, and won a total of 20 % seats in the country. Other than that, only the ruling party has taken control of our seats during the elections.

During the election, the EPRDF won 327 seats out of 547 seats. Opposition parties won 174 seats (12 in 2000), Coalition for Unity and Democracy won 109 seats (CUD). The United Ethiopia Democratic Front (UEDF) won 52. The rest of the election was taken by independents and other opponents, CUD won only about 20 percent of the vote (John, 2007).

In the 1995 election, the ruling party won 471 seats out of 547 seats. Opposition parties got 66 seats and independents 10 seats. In the 2002 election again the ruling party and its alliance won 481 from 547 seats. Opposition parties won 53 seats and gained Independents 13 seats in free elections (Ethiopia, 1995, 2000, and 2005). In the 2007 elections, most of the seats were occupied by the ruling party, one seat by one party, and one seat by an independent. The current parliamentary elections in 2010 were supreme and all the seats were won by the ruling party and the coalition.

Merara argues that there is no experience in party politics in our Ethiopian culture before our generation and that it has nothing to do with survival politics. Instead, what was prevalent in feudal Ethiopia was to be subdued to the victors

- not the wisdom of tolerance. If we have to use popular use in political science - the zero-sum game dominated by the *modus operandi* of the Ethiopian Political Module is political (Merara, 2003).

Political parties are a relatively small group of individuals. As a result, leaders can easily establish or eliminate political parties. To form or destroy small coalitions or to block decisions by political parties, and worse - parties are sometimes the private property of one or more individuals.

According to Merarra, the ruling party's systematic use of carrots and planks is another major problem in the country's political polarization. In the EPRDF, for example, how the main goal of the EPRDF is to remain in power at any cost, the country's modern policy business has come to recognize a new and 'Orwellian totalitarian regime'. The use of government oppressive weapons has been regarded as a starting point for the protection of a democratic constitutional system (Merara, 2003).

**5.3.2. Ethnic minority participation**

According to Article 25 of the Constitution, all humans are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law. In this regard, the law provides equal and effective protection for all, regardless of race, nationality, nationality or other social origins, color, sex, language, religion, political or other views, property, birth, or another Status. Article 39 states that every nation, nationality, and people have the right to self-government, including the right to form government institutions within the territory in which Ethiopia resides and the right to fair representation in regional and federal governments.

With exceptional to other previous regimes in federal democratic republic Ethiopia constitution in article 54 members of the House, based on population and special representation of minority Nationalities and Peoples, shall not exceed 550; of these, minority Nationalities and Peoples have at least 20 seats. Particulars are determined by law (Parliament, 1995).

The author as a Member of Parliament can be a witness. Unlike any other previous regimes in Ethiopia, they represent the national legislature and have their say on their rights and their vote, especially as the House of Representatives ensures that all nations are represented equally and also all Ethiopian nations, nationality are represented in the house of the federation.

**5.3.3. Representation of women in the parliament**

Articles 14 and 35 of the Ethiopian Constitution provide for equal rights of men and women. As a country with more than 50% female population, Ethiopia cannot afford to ignore the cause of women, and one of the ways of enhancing their status is fair representation in parliament and different levels of government.

In this regard, there has been some headway in recent years with a significant increase in the proportion of elected women representatives over the past twenty years in the federal legislature as well as in big regional councils. The increasing number of women MPs has been particularly evident during the past five elections conducted under the EPRDF. In the current parliament, there are 212 women members of parliaments (MPs) (38.76%) out of the 547-members assembly who work vigorously to have enough representation of women in chairing the seven permanent standing committees among ten standing committees, and duty speaker of the HOPR and one standing committee secretariat from three and speaker of the house of the federation and hence, actively participate in the debates to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in budgets allocations. While Ethiopia has attained relative success by encouraging women to serve as parliamentarians, however, it needs to be pointed out that the number of women in high government or executive leadership positions is far from desirable this is also substantiated by Meaza (Meaza, 2009).

Following this, women have participated in the political space. For instance, in 1995, out of 547 seats in the House of People's Representative 1.7% was occupied by women and the number of women in the House of People's Representative was 15 (Ethiopia, 1995,2000 &2005).

Since 2000, the numbers of women at federal, regional, city council, Woreda/district council, and *kebele*( county) administrative have been increasing. In 2000, in the Ethiopian House of People Representatives out of 547 seats, 42(7.68%) was held by women (Ethiopia, 1995,2000 &2005).

In 2005 out of 547 seats, the numbers of women in the House of People Representatives were 117, and 21.4% (Ethiopia, 1995,2000 &2005). In 2010 women held 152(27.8%) seats out of 547 seats in the House of People Representative and made up 10% to 13% of the cabinet ministers (Agenagn, 2020).In 2015 out of 547 seats, 212(38.8%) seats were held by women in the House of People Representatives (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2016) see more to table two.

No.	Name of parliament	Internal issues	External issues	Enabling for the continuity of the parliament system
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1	Emperor parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New constitution</li> <li>➤ Revised constitution</li> <li>➤ Monarchy and the feudal system</li> <li>➤ No free and fair election</li> <li>➤ forcefully (coup d'état)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognition of Eritrea</li> <li>➤ Declining of the colony in Africa</li> <li>➤ Italian occupation</li> </ul>	Objectives ✓ Lawmaking ✓ Oversight ✓ scrutinizing the officials with the permission of the emperor
2	Military /National shengo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No law to define the role of parliament</li> <li>➤ Internal push to create a new constitution</li> <li>➤ To change military regime to a civilian administration</li> <li>➤ Socialist orientated</li> <li>➤ Civil war , Revolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Change of the leadership in soviet union</li> <li>➤ declined in Marxist Leninist ideology</li> <li>➤ International community influence of USA</li> </ul>	Objectives ✓ Lawmaking ✓ Oversight
3	Federal parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New constitution;</li> <li>➤ Full and free exercise of our right to self-determination building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing our economic and social development;</li> <li>➤ Requires full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedoms and rights, to live together on the basis of equality and without any sexual, religious or cultural discrimination,</li> <li>➤ Free and fair election , peacefully (democratic election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Domination of liberalism</li> <li>➤ Human right issues become current issues</li> <li>➤ Globalization</li> <li>➤ influence of USA</li> <li>➤ influence of international organization</li> </ul>	Objectives ✓ Initiate law ✓ Lawmaking ✓ Oversight ✓ scrutinizing the officials ✓ Representation

**Table 1. Factors that contribute the change of parliament nature**

N o.	Name of the	Ter ms in	No. of the MPs	Level of Power and Duties	Electio n	Parliament type	Participation of different organizations
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parliament	year		Sovereignty of the people	Law-making Oversight	Initiate law	Interpretation of the constitution		Permanent/non-permanent	Check and balanced/ system of parliament	Political parties	Minorities	women	
1	Emperor parliament/Deputies	Four	56/and 125 accordingly the revised constitution	No / supreme power rests in the hands of the Emperor	Nominal, absolute monarchy, The house has no power to scrutinize the officials without permission of the emperor, law-making organ	Monarch / Emperor	On the hand of the monarch	Elected but suffrage was limited to the landed gentry, no free & fair election	Non-permanent, convened annually and sit twice a year	Bicameral has senate and Duties / lower house	No, because the system was an absolute monarchy	No	Partly from / 1-4
	Senate	Six	56/250 accordingly the revised constitution	No	law-making and veto of power over Deputies	No / vested to Emperor	No	Assigned by the monarchy/emperor	Non-permanent	Yes / upper house	No	No	No
2	Military parliament	Five	835	No / on the hand of WPE	Nominal/ vested to WPE, law-making organ	Worker's party of Ethiopia	National shengo	Elected by WPE, no free & fair election	Non-permanent meet once a year	Unicameral only Shengo	No, because the system was military & socialist oriented	No	REWA members /46
3	Federal parliament/HOPR	Five	547	Citizens have power /self-determination	has power to scrutinize the executive s/Vested to the nation, nationalit	Members of the parliament	No	Elected by the people, there is free & fair election	permanent	Bicameral has HOPR	Yes	Yes	Yes/ 212

H O P	y& people, law-making organ											
	Fiv e	153	Yes	Develop a budget division formula, issues related to nation & nationalities	No	House of the Federation	From regional state representing nations & nationalities	permane nt	Yes	No	Yes	Yes/ 33
				Non law making								

### 6. Conclusion

Change of regime in a given which takes place either peacefully (democratic election) or forcefully (coup d'état) and also revolutionary lead to change like the nature of parliament form and parliament system of given states though there are also continuities especially concerning the objective of parliament system. This study found that under the Emperor's regime the nature parliament system directly served only the monarch no citizen was participating in it rather all citizens belong to the emperor or monarch and involvement was limited. Emperor regime Ethiopian parliament rigid and reactive and the functions of the imperial parliament as a law-making body were limited and the parliament's power was limited. The members of the upper house were appointed directly by the monarch from noblemen and pertinent persons, while members of the lower house were elected but suffrage was limited to the landed gentry or suffice only for those who own land.

The Legislature's initiative the monarch's sole and imperial parliament cannot be considered democratic or representative because it was not a freely elected organ. But the overthrow of the monarchy brought not only a change in the regime but also an endless system of constitutional reforms, leading to a change in the Ethiopian regime under a 13-year transitional government with no parliament and constitution. After the new constitution, the National Assembly was established by the Ethiopian Workers' Party, only the governing body but an extremely weak institution to rubberstamp the decisions of a ruling military clique. Members who are not responsible to the people are loyal to the party. After the fall of the military government, a new constitution was implemented in collaboration with the Ethiopian people. And new parliament was formed with free and fair elections every five years. The house of the people's representatives is the highest organ of the federal government and the members are elected directly

from the electoral district by a plurality of the votes by the people. The house has the authority to initiate laws except for the two past regimes and by nature; it is a true legislative organ. Additionally, the findings of the study show that the collapse of the two regimes has changed from imperialism, totalitarianism to democracy and rule of law and that the right to self-determination of the people is fully exercised. Another finding of the study the source of authority or sovereignty was the fact that they were themselves the Emperor at the time and during the Derg regime it was only the workers' Party, whereas in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia it has Changed to the people that are all sovereign supremacy be vested in the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia.

Another finding concerns political parties and ethnic groups as well as women's participation in parliament. Thus, during the monarchy, the rule was a monarchy, and they were not all involved, but at least the women were allowed to enter the council under the revised constitution.

When we look at the Derg parliament (Shengo), the system is socialist and military, which does not allow the organization of the parties and recognizes the ethnicity of the constitution, despite political participation. But it does not allow them to do so; in terms of women's participation relatively from the rule of the king, it was better. When we come to the Parliament of Ethiopia federal democratic republic, in every way better representation of political parties, better representation of women, it has verified the patriarchal rights of the ethnicities and has appointed them a seat for them to express their participation in the Council and to identify the minorities. Emperor Regime parliament was bicameral and Ethiopia's federal democratic republic government Parliaments is bicameral whereas the military Shengo was unicameral.

Following the formation of a modern government in our country, the first constitution was enacted to withstand its

internal and external influence and to strengthen its legal basis with other countries. As well as the regimes changed, they changed their constitution based on the following political and social ideologies. As we know the responsibilities of the parliament emanated from the constitutions of the country.

As a result, the structure of the parliament has changed dramatically following the regime changes because the parliamentary functions have a characteristic of the constitution of the country, and it is understood that the behavior and nature of the parliament will also change when the constitution changes.

Furthermore, the finding of the study uncovered that the internal, regional, and global political system remains the determinants of Ethiopian parliament style, orientation, and approach both during Emperor, Military, and EPRDF regimes. Finally, the findings of the study show that though, the change Ethiopian regime from the Emperor, military to EPRDF brought a shift in parliament system approach that the members of the houses are responsible to the people, style, partners, and area of engagements, even though there is the change of the nature of the parliament in the regimes change the objectives of parliament system of the country are the more or less similar and there are continuities in terms of core values ( see table 1).

In general, even though the Ethiopian parliament is the first in Africa, according to its age, much of the job expected and reached the level of other countries exist at present but not, according to its age deserved and therefore, much needs to be done to institutionalize genuine democratic governance and effective parliamentary system. The study brought a sensitive issue, which is believed to be untouchable by most of the participants. I firmly believe that this is the primary success of the study, which I trust is a significant contribution triggering a revision of the current practice.

## 7. Abbreviations

CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Front
ESM	Ethiopian Student Movement
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HOF	House of Federation
HOPR	House of People's Representative
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MPs	Member of parliaments
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

REWA	Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association
UEDF	United Ethiopia Democratic Front
UK	United Kingdom
WPE	Workers' party of Ethiopia

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