

The Impact of Electoral System on Political Representation in Diversified Society: An appraisal of National Elections of Ethiopia

Eyob Amedie (Lecturer)

Faculty of Law, St. Mary's University College, P.O.Box 18490, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Abstract

Since 1991, Ethiopia has conducted political elections using plurality electoral system which is known as 'first- past-the post' system. The candidate or the party which gets the highest number of votes in each electoral district is declared a winner. In many literatures, the system is considered weak in promoting representation as most of the votes are discarded. This thesis tried to assess the impact of plurality electoral system on the representation of various ethnic and linguistic groups in the political sphere. It tried to answer why the ruling party repeatedly won national elections, why electoral reform is becoming a measure issue in newly emerged democracies and democratic countries and it tried to answer the link between the tendency of hegemony and electoral system. To answer these questions the research has employed various methods, from exhaustive reading of various literature up to conducting of interviews and data analysis to evaluate the impact of plurality system in political representation of diversified society such as Ethiopia. Finally, the research has concluded the plurality electoral system is not recommended in a country like Ethiopia where more than 80 ethnic and linguistic groups are living. In one hand, federalism is introduced to answer one of the popular questions linked with representation in Ethiopia and in the other hand implementing political election with exclusionary system i.e. plurality electoral systems are paradox. This research pointed out that, as the system excludes minorities from the political landscape, it cannot easily meet the representation of diversity interests. The finding of this research ascertain that plurality electoral system favors the incumbent government to win every election, had other electoral system been employed the outcome would be different. The need to reform the electoral system is undisputable to enhance representation of heterogeneous society, for minority representation, for conflict management, for alternative policy and to regulate the tendency of hegemony.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Election is one of the foundations of a free and democratic society. It is the primary way that the public exerts control over government and influences public policy decisions. In the modern world, elections have become a political culture of the existing and emerging democracies. The supposed goal is to have people express their will. It is also an internationally recognized human right issue, in which any state of the world whether unitary or federal, has to conduct a democratic election to hold a political power.

As Alan Renwick (2010:1) explains it:

Elections lie at the very heart of modern democracy. They are typically the occasions when citizens become most directly engaged in the political process; they determine the identity of those who will govern, often for four or five years; and they significantly influence how that governing power can be exercised.

In history, there have been ways of government changes through undemocratic means such as civil war, coup, riots and revolution. Power may also pass by hereditary means through kinship with no electoral means. However, any of them never goes with the modern concept of democratic representation and the outcome is usually bloodshed, destruction of property and political unrest. Similarly, others use an election only for the sake of attracting international attention as if they are democrats and misleading citizens through the conduct of pseudo election (false election).

When we see the Ethiopian political elections, there is no regime in the history of Ethiopia which came to power through election. The most recent regimes of Haile Selassie I, Derg and that of the EPRDF emerged as a main force not by democratic election but through sabotage, coup and bloodiest war

respectively. However, after each one has controlled the political power and secured its dominance, it set up national electoral offices under its own auspices (Tafesse Olike & Aklilu Abraham, 2007:39).

Parliamentary election has begun since the period of Emperor Haile Selassie I and was tried during the military regime, however in both cases the elections were not multiparty system (Merer,a 2011: 151& Kassahun et al., 2007: 125,126).

Election during Haile Selassie's regime, pursuant to the 1931 Constitution, the senators were fully appointed while Members of the House of Deputies were partly elected. The Emperor had been the "fountain of law", whatever way the proposed bill was voted by the two houses, it could not become a Law without the approval of His Majesty. The 1955 Revised Constitution did not bring any significant changes to its predecessor. According to this Constitution property ownership and 2000 Birr deposit had been a precondition in order to be a candidate to the House of Deputy. This entails that only those economically in a better position were eligible to join the House of deputy (Constitutions, 1931, 1955 & Yacob Arsano, 2007:156).

Although direct elections were introduced, all the consecutive five elections, conducted from 1957 -1973, never actually meant to establish a people's rule. The elected members were empowered neither in making Laws nor had a mandate in questioning legitimacy of the regime and the Emperor. The last say was vested in the Emperor. Moreover, the "representatives" in both houses had served as a mere bridge between the Emperor and the people (Yacob Arsano, 2007:156). After centuries of monarchical and autocratic rule in Ethiopia, the military regime removed the last Emperor by a coup in 1974. At this time, multiple of popular questions were raised, of which, the major one

had been, the demand, for self-determination by ethnic based liberation front and those that struggled for the abolishment of autocratic and totalitarian regime. However, the absence of an organized civilian opposition movement by this time, paved the way for the military junta hijacking the revolution. The unitary system and Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was formed with the Marxist Leninist socialist ideology. Election is at this time was simply endorsing pre determined single party i.e. Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) the only party that had been recognized at this time (FDRE Constitution, 1987; Merera, 2011:28, 30).

After nearly two decades of ruthless and cruel political leadership, ethnically organized rebels had toppled the Derg from power by a military means. Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which is a coalition of four groups, took power in 1991. The fall of the military regime hoped to be a promising time to solve the country's century old conflict while the newly introduced federal system was seen as a response to the demand of diversified society i.e. more than 80 ethnic groups (Population Census Commission 2008). Even if multi party system was introduced for the first time in the country's political history, all the transitional period as well as the post transitional period elections had a ground for controversies.

The direction of Ethiopian politics, as apparent from the constitution, is promoting plural democracy in its federal arrangement (FDRE Constitution 1995: Art. 54(2), Proclamation No. 532/2007). Opposition groups and some scholars have repeatedly challenged this Plurality electoral system, as it is not effective in a diversified society like Ethiopia. For instance, the 1992 election for the establishment of Transitional Government at regional and district level and the 1994 election for electing the members of the Constituent Assembly,

which later ratified the 1994 Constitution had been rejected and condemned by the opposition groups and international and local observers for the incumbent EPRDF violating the rules of election and oppressing opposition groups (Yakob Arsano, 2007:169-171, Norwegian Observers Report, 1992).

The next major elections, for House of Representatives as well as for the National/Regional States Governments, were held after the FDRE Constitution ratified by the Constituent Assembly in May 1995. This incident marked by the closing of the transitional period and the beginning of the new chapter for the future political and economic direction of Ethiopia. In this connection, two opposing views were reflected, the proponents argue that it is the landmark for future democratic Ethiopia while others argue that the constitution was carefully designed to ensure the dominance of the TPLF led - front (Merera, 2011:80).

The next elections that were conducted in 2000, 2005 and 2010 supported the above argument that a single party i.e. EPRDF repeatedly took the majority in the Lower House to form the government and controlled the political power. EPRDF has been condemned for its intrigues and pressures during the election periods. Election in Ethiopia has become the cause for mass arrest, unrest, bloodshed, hostility, etc. At the end of every election, the opposition groups have rejected its outcome by invoking the election processes have not been in line with national as well as international standards. They accused the incumbent government for election fraud, ballot stuffing, gerrymandering, threatening and arresting opposition parties members and their supporters etc. Moreover, many of the local and international observers condemned repeatedly that the election had been short of international standards (EU-EOM, 2005, 2010 and Carter Center, 2005).

The 2005 parliamentary elections were the most competitive elections that Ethiopia has ever experienced. Though the pre election time had been promising, during and after the election time everything was marred. The human rights situation rapidly deteriorated in the post-election day when the police killed dozens of citizens and thousands were arrested. Complex comments had been given on the election process and its outcome by various local and international observers. The majority of the international observers report declared, the 2005 national election in spite of the positive pre election development, national electoral process did not fulfill Ethiopia's obligation to ensure political rights and freedoms necessary for genuinely democratic elections (EU-EOM, 2005, AU- AOM, 2005, Carter Center, 2005).

The 2010 national election was not as competitive as that of the 2005 national election. Similar to the previous national elections, most of the opposition parties rejected the process and the outcome of the election. On the other hand, international observers mainly European Union and African Union gave opposite comments both on the process and on outcome of the 2010 national election. The African Union observers report backing the elections were free and fair except with some irregularities, however European Union observers report blamed the election for lack of transparency and lack of a level playing field for political parties and the overall electoral process fell short of international standards and that the ruling party's presence was unrivalled by opposition parties, especially in rural areas; the freedoms of assembly, expression and movement were not consistently respected to the detriment of opposition parties (AU-AOM, 2010; EU-EOM 2010).

As it is discussed above, the national elections that were conducted under the three regimes of Ethiopia were marred by problems related to political

representation. In my study, I want to focus on the impact of electoral system on political representation in a country like Ethiopia where more than 80 ethnic groups live.

Statement of the Problem

Though a federal system introduced in the 1994 Constitution of Ethiopia that allows a devolving power to the “Nation, Nationalities and Peoples” and has guaranteed citizens to participate at the federal level through democratically elected representatives, practically it has not yet been implemented. The transitional period as well as the post - transitional period elections that were held in every five years interval ended up in intimidation, unrest, arrest, bloodshed, hostility, etc. The absence of a political culture of respecting voters’ wish on one hand and the tendency of hegemony of the incumbent government on the other hand has aggravated the problem. Consequently, the opposition groups go on accusing the existing electoral system for not representative, the Election Board for its partiality to the ruling government and the incumbent government for not paving the way for “free and fair election” as well as representation. Opposition political parties have been strongly opposing the working plurality electoral system as it does not give a chance to convert most of the votes into seats. They argued with this system most of the votes of the electorates are discarded, the decision making power of people can be hampered and the principle of a federalism that recognizes unity in diversity is affected. To answer these problems the research focused on the following three questions.

Research Questions

Ethiopia is a country in which more than 80 ethnic and linguistic groups live. Currently, there is a federal arrangement set up with a central government, nine regional states and two administrative cities. The main question to be

raised in this regard is whether the existing electoral system in place serves better the democratization of the Ethiopian State. Moreover specifically, the key questions this research hopes to answer are:

1. How the EPRDF repeatedly won the last four national elections, particularly the landslide victory of 2010, which has guaranteed its hegemony? Is it because of answering the demand of citizens or the existing electoral system that has favored it?
2. Why the demand for reforming the electoral system is becoming an issue these days in both developed and emerging democracies? Why the call for replacing the plurality electoral system by either proportional or mixed electoral systems is growing? Is it because of the majority/ plurality voting system is becoming less democratic than the other two broad electoral systems?
3. Why and how an electoral system influences the political culture of peaceful transfer of power and conflict management role?

To answer the above questions the following research methodology and data collection methods are employed.

Research Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, the research employed qualitative research method. In the qualitative method, an interview was conducted and the interview carried on to gather information about the impact of electoral system on political representation in diversified society like Ethiopia and to collect the information whether the existing electoral system needs reform or not. Objective data of National Electoral Board of Ethiopia is used to analyze and interpret the effect of electoral system in political representation, Documents such as compilations and literatures are assessed to answer why

courtiers reforming their electoral system recently and why the demand of electoral system reform is becoming a major issue these days'. To analyze the impact of plurality electoral system in political representation of diversity interests in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa national election of 2010 has been taken as a sample. The sample selection is purposive, Addis Ababa is selected because it is the place where major parties are contested, the election district is somehow average, it is a cosmopolitan area where heterogeneous societies live and it overarches various ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural and ideological groups. After analyzing the 2010 national election of Addis Ababa using various election methods, to prove or disprove whether the plurality electoral system helps the incumbent government to win all national elections undertaken so far. Based on the above premise the research comes to a certain conclusion about the impact of plurality electoral system in the national level.

Data Collection Methods

The methods for gathering data to meet the objective of the study are face to face interview, statistical data and document analysis. The primary source employed in the research is interview and the interview relies on in-depth interviews. To gather the relevant information, semi-structured questions are prepared as a guide to interview. The respondents are selected purposively; the key informants are incumbent government officials, National Electoral Board officials and members of opposition parties.

LITERATURE

What is Election and Electoral System

Different scholars see election as the core part of democracy. They argue that election is one of the fundamental characteristics of a democratic society by which citizens are allowed to elect their representatives periodically. Some argue that it is equally important as that of constitutional design (Pippa Norris,

1997). Election is therefore can be taken as a means by which people delegate someone to exercise a certain policy that brings political and socio economic advantages to the general public and to the citizens within a certain State (Diamond Larry & Plattner Mark, 2006).

In the national election, among the different policy options, the one, which obtains the will of the people, will be implemented until the next election comes. The very merit of election is, therefore, whenever what was promised by the incumbent government be at odds from what has been actually existed on the ground, citizens may deprive the delegation of the government by depriving votes at the time of the next election. Election also could not be conducted in a vacuum. There should be an electoral system (voting system) that makes election meaningful. Among many factors, that shape the democracy around the world, electoral system design is an attracting branch to be discussed.

Voting system is a crucial part of the democratic election as it determines who is elected, what kind of policies is passed, and who is benefited or suffered from those policies. Therefore, the decision to use one kind of voting system rather than another has far-reaching political consequences as it influences the outcome of an election. Voting system also matters greatly on who wins an election. One of the major disputes among incumbent governments, opposition groups and their supporter is the type of voting procedure set up in a country. It is mainly because different methods of voting can produce different winners (Alan 2010, Norris 1997. In the introductory part of his book “Behind the Ballot Box”, Douglas J. Amy (2000: xvii) says:

... Among other things, voting systems help to determine which officials are elected to run our governments, the variety of parties that voters have to choose from at the polls, how many citizens will turn out to vote, which citizens will or will not be represented in our legislatures, and whether the majority will rule. Ultimately, the choice of voting system has a profound effect not only on the process of elections, but also on the degree to which a political system is fair, representative, and democratic.

The rules that govern elections, therefore, matter too, for they can have a major impact upon the outcomes.

The Need for Electoral Systems

Without an electoral law and established institutions, a state cannot be democratic. As election is a democratic expression of a state, there should be an electoral or a voting system that enable citizens to come to the political power or delegate others into the political power. Electoral system is not a mere conducting of elections periodically, it is rather beyond that and it includes “the way the ballot structured, how people cast vote, how votes are counted, and finally how the winners are decided” (Ibid:1).

Primarily voting system determines who is elected and eventually it is important to determine what type of policies are passed, who runs the government, who benefits or suffers from the outcome. If a good electoral system is available in a State, it will enhance people’s confidence to be represented in the government, voters’ turnout increases, various policy options are provided to the public to select out of it and it has a direct impact on the economic growth and the overall development of a state. Therefore, a type of electoral system exercised in a state is one of the speculations that whether a state’s direction is to democracy and development or not (Diamond & Plattner 2006). Some people argue that choosing an electoral system that fits to a particular state is not an easy task. To find the best voting systems, it needs a closer look into the political, social, cultural and economic conditions

of a state (Douglas, 2000: xvii). This line of argument is not escaped from critics, as some others argue that “choosing of a good voting system is not a brain surgery or one has not to be a trained psephologist i.e. a scholar of electoral system” (Ibid). What is needed to find the best electoral system is devotion and commitment to bring about democratic representation.

The Legal Framework of Election

The right to vote and the right to be elected are human rights (HRs) issues reflected in different international and national instruments. The very foundation of HRs issues is Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR of 1948). This declaration under article 21 states: “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representative.”

The above issue is elaborated in (UDHR of 1948, article 21(2 &3)) as:

the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will, shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

In the same manner, United Nations Charter (UN- Charter, 1945) imposes obligation on all members of the UN, to ascertain the human rights and fundamental freedoms be freely exercised by the citizens of their own without entrenchment. This issue is elaborated in (UN Charter, 1945) in the section purpose and principle as:

International co-operation requires in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Another international instrument, which binds all members of UNs, which ratified it, is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966). Article 25 (sub a & b) of the covenant guarantees the need for election. ICCPR (1966:25) states that:

For election as for every citizens without unreasonable restrictions to have the right and the opportunity take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The right to vote and to be elected shall be made at genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal, equal suffrage and held by secret ballot to guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors. This right shall be exercised without any of the distinction based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, natural or social origin, property, birth or other status.

African Charter on Human and People's rights, European Union and almost all countries of the world in their legal instruments include about the need for genuine periodic free and fair election for democracy and democratization process (EU-Convention, 1953; AU-HRC, 1986). Ethiopia has introduced a federal system since 1995. Art. 1 of the Ethiopian Constitution asserted that Ethiopia is a Federal country. Chapter III, Articles 13 through 43, of the constitution are about Human Rights issues including the right to vote and to be elected. This Chapter imposes an obligation on various groups, it stated under (FDRE Constitution, 1995: Art.13) as:

All federal and state legislative, executive and judicial organs at all levels shall have the responsibility and duty to respect and enforce the provisions of this Chapter. In addition, the interpretation of this Chapter shall not be contravened to the principle of the Universal Deceleration of Human Rights and other international instruments adopted by Ethiopia.

The right to vote and the right to be elected as human rights issues are enshrined in the FDRE Constitution Article 38. The provision expresses:

Every Ethiopian national, without any discrimination based on colour, race, nation, nationality, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion

or other statues has the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely chosen representatives...

Furthermore, to hold any office at any level of government, all the necessary requirements for election, such as universal and equal suffrage, and the conducting of it in the secret ballot are guaranteed in the constitution (FDRE Constitution, Article 38(1)(c)). An independent National Election Board established in order to conduct, in an impartial manner, free and fair election in Federal and State constituencies. The members of the board are appointed by HPRs upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister (FDRE Constitution, Article 102). There are other laws, regulations and directives enacted to implement election and electoral system in Ethiopia. Among these legal instruments is the current Amended Electoral Law. It includes very important provisions of democratic election such as the establishment of an electoral institution to conduct free, fair and peaceful election in impartial manner on the basis of equal suffrage and secret ballot system (Electoral Law Proclamation No. 532/2007). Both the Constitution and the amended Electoral Law stated that, out of the various election rules, Ethiopia has adopted plurality electoral system in which each members of the House of Representatives to hold the federal legislation should win the largest vote in an electoral district where a candidate contending (FDRE Constitution, 1995 & Proclamation No. 532/2007).

The FDRE Constitution stated about the electoral system as: “Members of the House shall be elected from candidates in each electoral district by a plurality of the votes cast ...” (FDRE Constitution, Art. 54 (2)). In the same manner, the current Electoral Law stated: “A candidate who received more votes than other candidates within a constituency shall be declared the winner.” (FDRE Constitution Article 54(2) Proclamation No. 532/2007, Art. 25). The plurality

electoral system is a constitutional provision that declared first –past- the -post polling style is used to elect representatives in the federal Lower House. The electoral law also elaborates the constitution provision as the candidate who gets the largest vote in each election district is declared a winner (Ibid).

Types of Electoral Systems

In the world, the electoral system used to choose national legislature is plentiful and diverse. The bases of their variations are district magnitude i.e. the number of seats awarded per district to the legislature, electoral threshold i.e., the minimum percentage of the vote necessary for a party to gain representation in the legislature, and how the votes are translated into seats, how voters are divided into subgroups i.e. constituencies etc, (Ezrow Lowerance, 2010:8).

There are different types of Electoral systems and they are categorized in different ways. From the study of some scholars, electoral systems can be classified into four broad groups; these are plurality/majority system; proportional representation system, mixed system and others (Diamond & Plattner, 2006:17-21). The seminal work of other scholars classified electoral system into four formulas based on how votes are counted to allocate seats. These formulas are: Majoritarian formulas including (Plurality, Second Ballot, and Alternative Voting (AV) systems); Semi-proportional systems (such as the Single Transferable Vote, the Cumulative Vote, and the Limited Vote), Proportional representation (including open and closed party lists using largest remainders and highest averages formula); and mixed systems (such as the Additional member system that combines Majoritarian systems with Proportional System) (Noris, 1997:299).

Majority/ Plurality Electoral System

This is the first category of electoral system by which candidates are elected on the basis of plurality or majority of votes. It is usually held in a single member district i.e. only one candidate wins in a district (Diamond & Plattner, 2006:17-21). Plurality system is the most prevalent system for legislative elections in the parliamentary democracies, which is known by the winner-takes-all or in more formal parlance, the single-member district voting system. The two basic attributes of this system are votes cast in single-member districts in which only one member of the legislature is elected and the winner is determined by who gets the largest votes or the plurality of the votes in each electoral district and even if they have not secured a majority of all the votes casted (Renwick, 2010:3).

The plurality system, which is known as ‘first past the post,’ is used for election for Lower House in the United kingdom, Canada, India, United States Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and many commonwealth States (Noris 1997). Two Round System (TRS) is another type of election in single member district. The system is also known as second ballot or run-off system by which if any of a candidate not receives absolute majority in the first round; then those two candidates who receive the most votes than others shall contest in second round and the one who receives a majority vote wins the election. In this system, there is a possibility of three candidates pass to the second round and the winner is the one who receives the most votes without considering the rule of majority (Diamond & Plattner, 2006:17-21).

This system is used in 15 of 25 countries with direct presidential election such as Austria, Colombia and Russia, Mali and Ukraine, France. Egypt and Somalia also currently used this method in their presidential election. The aim

of runoff elections is to consolidate support behind the victor and to encourage broad cross-party coalition building and alliances in the final stages of the campaign (Renwick, 2010:3). Alternative vote (AV): is another type of election system exercised in mono member district (Diamond & Plattner, 2006:17-21). In this voting system to win, candidates need an absolute majority of votes. Where no one gets over 50 percent after first preferences are counted, then the candidate at the bottom of the pile with the lowest share of the vote is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed amongst the other candidates. This distribution of votes and elimination of candidates continues until one of the candidates achieves absolute majority. Examples of countries that are using this system are Australia House of Representative and Ireland for presidential elections (Renwick, 2010:3). Blocked Vote (BV): is another method in multimember district by which electors give votes for many candidates equivalent to the number of seat earmarked for a particular district and the candidates who receives the highest total, wins the election. It is plurality system in multimember districts. For example the system was used by Thailand and Philippines before they reformed their electoral system (Ibid: 17, 20). Party Blocked Vote (PBV): electors give votes for many parties equivalent to the number of seat earmarked for a particular district, unlike BV, electors' vote for a party list rather than individual. For, example the system was used by Djibouti, Chad, Cameroon and Singapore (Ibid).

Proportional Representation (PR)

It is the main rival to the single-member plurality system. There are many different forms of proportional representation, but all have two things in common: in different from plurality system it is conducted in multimember districts and seats are distributed according to the proportion of the votes won by particular parties or political groups. In this system, the seats available are

divided between parties in proportion to the number of votes they win. In Western Europe, 21 of 28 countries use proportional representation, purely or mixed with other systems and this includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland (Renwick: 3).

Proportional Representation focuses on the inclusion of minority voices. This system focuses on how votes are converted into seat. Party List may be Closed PL or Open PL. In Closed PL, voters can only select the party, and the ranking of candidates determined by the political party. South Africa, Israel, Germany, Portugal, Belgium and Spain are used this system. PL may be national like Israel or be regional like Belgium. In Open PL, voters can only preference to particular candidates within the list not the party. The system is used, for example, by Italy, Norway, Sweden, Finland and The Netherlands, Latvia, Brazil (Ibid: 303).

The electoral formulas in PR are many but the major are the highest average method and largest remainder method. In the highest average method; the number of votes for each party to be divided successively by a series of divisors, and seats are allocated to parties that secure the highest resulting quotient, up to the total number of seats available. The most widely used is the *d'Hondt* formula, using divisors (such as 1,2,3, etc.). The "pure" *Sainte-Lague* method divides the votes with odd numbers (1,3,5,7 etc.). The "modified" *Sainte-Lague* replaces the first divisor by 1.4 but is otherwise identical to the pure version and the other method i.e. the largest remainder method, a minimum quota is calculated in a number of ways. One of the methods is Hare quota in which the total number of valid votes in each constituency is divided by the total number of seats to be allocated. Each party who gets votes, at least

a quota, will get one seat and the number of seats increases in proportion to the votes casted to it (Renwick: 303). Single Transferable Vote (STV): it is another form of preferential voting system however, unlike Alternative Voting system in Majoritarian democracy it is conducted in multimember district. In this system parties put forward as many as candidates as they think could win usually four or five representatives in each district (Noris: 303 and Diamond & Plattener: 20).

The feature of this system is instead of voting for one person, voters rank each candidate in their order of choice. The quota of votes required for victory is pre determined i.e. the total number of votes is counted and then this total is divided by the number of seats in the constituency to produce a quota and any candidate who receives at least that amount immediately wins a seat. When the first preferences are counted and if no candidates reach the quota, then the person with the least votes is eliminated, and their votes redistributed according to second preferences. The least successful candidates weeded out and their votes are redistributed. On the same way extra votes from successful candidates that are above the quota are also redistributed until the remaining seats are filled, this process continues until all seats are filled (Ibid).

Mixed proportional system:

This is a hybrid electoral system, which is neither purely plural nor proportional, but it combines both systems. This system in general is called Additional Member System; it may combine the positive attributes of both plurality/majority and PR system (Larry and Marc, 2006: 3). The features of this category is, one group elected under a plurality/majority system, the other under a PR system. The elections for the two groups of members can be linked to produce a relatively proportional result and it is called Mixed-Member

Proportional (MMP) or conducting of it independently of each other that is called Parallel System (PS) (Diamond and Plattner 20, 21). The MMP system is clarified by giving example in Reynolds, Reilly & Ellis (2005) as:

Under MMP system, the PR seats are awarded to compensate for any disproportionality produced by the district seat result. For example, if one party wins 10 percent of the vote nationally but no district seats, then it will be awarded enough seats from PR list to bring its representation up to 10 percent of the seats in the legislature. Voters may get two separate choices; as in Germany and New Zealand. Alternatively, voters may make only one choice, with the party totals being derived from the total for the individual district candidates.

This system was originally invented in West Germany right after World War II. Though, since then, it has been adopted in several other countries, it is still one of the least used PR systems. Recently the system is adopted by Italy, New Zealand, and Russia. It has begun to garner a great deal of attention by electoral designers. In part, this growing attention is a result of MMP's unique claim to be a "compromise" between the two main rival systems. In the 1990s New Zealand abandoned its traditional single-member plurality system for MMP and Hungary also adopted this approach. Most recently, the newly formed parliaments of Scotland and Wales used this system for their first elections⁶.

One variation of the mixed-member system is called "parallel voting." It uses the same double ballot, but it differs in that the party list seats are simply divided proportionately among the parties then added to the district winners, with no attempt to ensure proportional representation for parties in the legislature (*Ibid*). For example Japan changed its electoral system from Single None Transferable vote (SNTV) to Parallel system to abandon the dominance of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). According to Alan Renwick (2005):

The political attributes of MMP has a number of advantages over plurality-majority voting. It produces more accurate representation of

⁶ See, <http://www.ntholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/beginning/PRsystems.htm>

parties in legislatures as well as it ensures that each local district has a representative. It gives voters more choices of parties at the polls, increases voter turnout, and wastes far fewer votes. This form of PR also reduces the creation of manufactured majorities. In addition, it assures fair representation for third parties, racial minorities, and women. On the other hand, gerrymandering is possible in the single-member districts used by this system.

Other Electoral System

The last category is other electoral systems, these include: the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV), the Limited Vote (LV), Cumulative Vote (CV), etc. In translating votes into seats, these systems tend to have effects somewhere between those of the plurality/ majority and PR systems i.e. Semi proportional (Diamond & Plattner: 20, 21). In CV, citizens are given as many votes as representatives, finally votes are cumulated in a single candidate; such a system was employed in Britain in nineteenth century. LV is similar with CV but the difference is in the latter voters are given fewer votes than the number of candidates to be elected; this system has been used in the election of Spanish Senate. SNTV used in Japan until 1994 by which electors cast a single vote in a multimember district (Noris Year: 302-303). The table below shows the major electoral systems in the world. The first three are in majoritarian democracies and the last three are proportional system and the hybrid of it.

Table 1: Major Electoral Systems in the World

	Africa	America	Asia	Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Oceania	Middle East	Total
FPTP	15	17	5	0	1	7	2	47
BV	1	3	2	0	3	2	4	15
TRS	8	3	6	1	1	1	2	22
List PR	16	19	3	13	15	0	4	70
MMP	1	3	0	2	2	1	0	9
Parallel	4	0	8	7	1	1	0	21

Source: *Ibid*: 300

Advantages and Drawbacks of different Electoral Systems.

Electoral laws are considered as generator of political stability. The type of electoral system implemented in state, matters for the stability of various Ethnic, linguistic, religious and political groups to live peacefully within a polity. The type of electoral system is a sensitive issue especially in diversified societies within a nation. The way constituencies are created and seats are awarded should carefully to include various interest groups within the states, regions and localities. The electoral boundaries needs revision usually according to population changes of a census as it dramatically affects the results. However, if the electoral districts are manipulated for political gain i.e. mal-apportionment and gerrymandering it affects the outcome of any election and become the cause for many election conflicts (Diamond & Plattner, 2006). The best electoral law and electoral systems can be judged by the degree of its representativeness and its ability to satisfy the largest group of the societies within a particular state. Despite the difficulty of concluding one voting system

is better than the other one, different scholars are elaborating the cons and the pros of various electoral systems.

Proportional representation advocates base their arguments on democratic fundamentalism. They argue that each vote should have equal weight and they express the other rival system as “The distortion of the voters' preferences by single member constituency systems is no more to be justified than the use of false scales by a butcher” (Cairns C. Alan, 1968:55). Proponents of PR strongly argue that the best electoral system is that can convert votes into seats. Duverger, tried to explain it in few words in his contribution of Duverger’s law as “the (vote) rich gets (seat) richer” (Grofman *et al.*, 2009:3). Some others argue that, in a system employing plurality voting, smaller parties will receive smaller shares of seats than their national votes shares, while larger parties benefited by receiving larger proportion of the seats than their shares of the votes (Ezrow, 2010:8).

This line of argument is countered by the opponents of proportional representation with the assertion that executive stability is possible only in plurality electoral system rather than in proportional representation. They advocate plurality system for government responsiveness and political stability. There are views either pros or against the established electoral systems, Diamond & Plattner (2006:75-76) explained it as:

Proportionalists value minority representation not just for its democratic quality but also for its ability to maintain unity and peace in divided societies. Similarly, proponents of plurality favor one-party cabinets not just because of their democratic accountability but also because of the firm leadership and effective policymaking that they allegedly provide.

Advocates of PR, like Arend Lijphart, argue that PR favors the representation of minority and pressure groups. PR is associated with multiparty systems, coalition governments and strong legislature with equal

Executive-Legislation power relation that tries to limit, divide, separate and share power (Ibid).

The argument in favor of PR continued by Arend Lijphart in Diamond & Plattener (2006), according to him the factors that influenced in Continental Europe to adopt PR is to avoid the threat to national unity and stability that arise from misrepresentation of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. The other factor is the dynamic of democratization process arises from pressure both from the new working parties in order to gain access in the legislature and the old established parties to protect their position (Ibid:76). Parliamentary and PR are the best problem solving methods in the society with the problem of deep ethnic cleavages. They can bring peaceful coexistence among the contending ethnic groups, as it is best for inclusion of representatives of ethnic groups in the decision-making process. (Ibid: 81). Generally, the parliamentary–PR systems almost invariably post the best records, particularly with respect to representation, protection of minority interests, voter participation, and control of unemployment (Ibid).

Another advantage of PR system in the implementation of a policy as mentioned in Diamond & Plattener (2006:3) as:

In the short run, one-party cabinets or presidents may well be able to formulate economic policy with greater ease and speed. In the long run, however, policies supported by a broad consensus are more likely to be successfully carried out and to remain on course than policies imposed by a “strong” government against the wishes of important interest groups.

Guy Lardeyret has strongly opposed the view of Arend Lijphart who advocates PR and defends plurality system. For him plurality system is the most stable and efficient electoral system. In his article in Diamond & Plattener (2006: 87), explain it as:

When the government rests on a homogeneous majority, it remains in power for the duration of its mandated term (stability); can apply its program (efficiency); and is likely, should it falter, to lose power to a strong and united opposition (alternation). By contrast, the coalition governments so common in PR systems often cannot survive serious disagreement over particular measures (instability); need inordinate amounts of time to build new coalitions (executive vacancy); and when they fall apart, call new elections that generally return the same people (non alternation).

The contention that PR favors the representation of “minorities” is true, however dividing the electorate into well-organized pressure groups such as religious, ethnic, a professional or an ideological faction exacerbate the conflicts in the society as it strength polarized groups (Ibid: 88). The proponents of plurality system condemn PR for the latter gives seats for minority groups which swing in demand of coalition to attain majority in the parliament. The worst scenario of PR is a tendency to give extremist party a chance to participate in government. The proponents of Plurality system give as an example for this line of argument in Diamond & Plattner (2006 87) as:

a party may eliminate its coalition partners by an internal coup, as Mussolini’s Fascists did in Italy in the 1920s and without PR, the Communists and the Nazis would probably not have been able to storm onto the German political scene as they did in the 1930s.

Unlike PR, plurality elections force the parties to coalesce before the balloting occurs, however in PR parties forms a coalition in order to attain majority after the balloting occurs. The Parties in plurality systems tend to be moderate because most votes are to be gained among the undecided voters of the center, for example, France has changed regimes 20 times in two centuries until the parliamentary fourth republic gives way to the presidential fifth republic under Charles de Gaulle. (Ibid: 89).

Another advantage of Plurality system is once the homogenous majority exists in the parliament, no need of separate election for executive branch of government, the head of the majority party can do the job that is why the west

minister model has been working smoothly for more than 300 years. (Ibid: 89). Some others explain plurality from governability and stability angle. This line of argument supported by (Matthew Flinders, 2010:145) as:

The disproportionality of FPTP is not accidental, but is based on a normative desire to deliver an executive with a majority of legislative seats. Democratic criteria—such as proportionality or fairness—are therefore traded down in favor of ‘governability’ criteria—stability, clear majorities, and dominance in a direct reflection of majoritarian philosophy.

According to Duverger's approach, plurality system creates Polarization in which percentages of seats won by the smaller parties are usually be less than their percentages of the total poll (under-representation) and that the reverse will be true for the larger parties (over-representation). PR system on the other hand creates depolarization in which the representation of minor parties increases (Grumm John, 1958:358-359).

In relation to cost effectiveness, List PR is the cheapest and the easiest electoral system to administer and the constituent may be in national List PR or use the preexisting province boundary. Israel and Netherlands use PR system in single national boundaries. Belgium uses its provinces as a bounder for PR election system to be effected where as in plurality system the district magnitude is many and needs regular redistricting to avoid gerrymandering (Noris, 1997).

Electoral System Reforms.

Electoral reform is both designing electoral system for newly emerging democracies and changing the working electoral system in pre-established democracies. Electoral reform means a change in electoral systems to improve how public desires are expressed in election results. That can include reforms of voting system, vote-counting procedure, rules about political parties,

election laws etc (Renwick 2010: 2). Giannetti Daniela & Grofman Bernard (2011:33) explains it as:

Electoral reform was seen as institutional means of changing the system of political representation to promote alternation of parties in power, increasing transparency and efficiency in government and reduce the opportunities and incentives for corruption.

There is a hot debate among scholars concerning which electoral system is best by invoking the pros and cons of each electoral system based on various factors. Some states choose electoral system on the ground of its effectiveness, responsiveness, accountability, governability and stability while others select it from the angle of fairness considering the interest of minority groups, inclusion of social groups, voters turnout and the capacity of that system on converting of votes into the legislative seats (see pp 19-23, supra note: 37).

In nutshell the whole debate relies on governability and power sharing. This is to mean that whether strong accountable government is more important than the inclusion of minority voices and vice versa. The former view is proposed by those who support majoritarian system whereas the latter is by PR system advocators (Norris, 1997:304). There is no consensus about the feature of best electoral system, Donald Horowitz (2006) argue that the consequences of adopting a particular electoral system are not always straightforward, immediate, and predictable. Every electoral system has biases and warns that in choosing electoral system designers as well as broader public make conscious choices between competing values and imperatives. He set six goals for electoral system but he claimed that some of them are mutually compatible. The goals are proportionality of seat into vote, accountability to constituents, durable government, and victory of Condorcet winner; inter ethnic and interreligious conciliation and minority office holding. For

example, fairness in distribution of seats in proportional representation affects the accountability of elected. (Diamond & Plattner, 2006:3-8).

Arend Lijphart (2006) does not agree with the above view, he warns that any electoral system that does not ensure the fair and full representation of each group risks the group's alienation and rejection of the system, thus he strongly favors PR of Power sharing, The best electoral system, he insists, is a fully proportional one, either PR or the German style mixed-member proportional system, using closed or nearly closed party lists; this encourages the formation of strong, coherent parties. For him the beauty of PR is that in addition to producing proportionality and minority representation, religious, or even non communal groups elect in equal and evenhanded fashion.

Some theorists recommended a particular electoral system is best for all countries of the world, others warn that the challenge of appropriate design very much depends on the particular country context. Some countries rush to electoral reform but the outcome might not be as aspired. For example, Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) in Japan and Christian Democrat (DC) remain dominant directly or indirectly for significant time after reform (Giannetti & Grofman, 2010).

Italy replaced List Proportional Representation into MMP system and Japan replaced the NSTV into Parallel system. In both countries, corruption and public dissatisfaction were the cause for the reform. But still 15 years after the reform LDP is continued as dominant party under the umbrella of other parties' as coalition until the vagarious victory of Democrat party of Japan (DPJ) Even in Italy the dominate DC party abolished, after the 1993 electoral reforms, some lower- to middle-level political figures from the politics of Italy

of the late 1980s were eventually able to win reelection as candidates of new parties. This is what is called “old wine” returned in “new bottles.” The reform, however, in both states provides a platform for party competition, in Italy the reform is abolishing the dominate party and In Japan the competition of two parties replaced 38 years predominance of LDP (Ibid).

In the modern era representation is the hallmark of democracy and electoral rules structure on how representation works and effectively governments perform. The cause for the demand of electoral reforms are many some of the most common are single party or a coalition of party dominancy, misrepresentation, under representation, exclusionary effect of minorities, wastage of electorates votes, disproportionate election results, demand of policy options, corruption and public dissatisfaction. The electoral system besides its role in supporting democracy, equally it might be an instrument to exclude others to come to power. According to Reynolds *et al* (2005:5):

A political institutions shape the rule of the game under which democracy is practiced, and it is often argued that the easiest political institution to manipulate, for good or for bad, is the electoral system. The electoral system can be manipulated to determine who is elected and which party gain power. Many aspects of a country's political framework are often specified in the constitution and can thus be difficult to amend electoral system often only involves new legislation.

The electoral systems have also direct impact in the outcome, had different electoral systems been employed, the outcomes of political election might have been varied than the actual results. Alan Renwick (2010:1) gives some supportive evidence as follows:

George W. Bush might not have been elected to the American presidency in 2000 and similarly, Tony Blair might never have secured a majority of the seats in the British House of Commons had another electoral rules employed. Had less proportional rules been used, Italy might not have been quite so plagued by 'revolving door' governments for the last sixty years. Conversely, had proportional representation not been chosen, as part of the interim constitution of 1993, South Africa might not have

achieved such remarkable democratic stability after its hard-fought transition from white-only rule.

The electoral system can also have an impact on the relation of a country with the outside world. In the January 2006 Palestinian elections, the electoral system used gave Hamas 70 percent of the seats and hence threw the Palestinian–Israeli relations into turmoil. Yet Hamas received only about 45 percent of the list votes, as against about 41 percent for the more moderate Fatah. The translation of votes into seats by different electoral system can also lead to drastically different outcome mere 36.3 percent of the total vote would not have made Salvador Allende president of Chile in 1970, and Chile's history could have taken a very different course (Taagepera, 2007).

The Issue of Reform and Representation

The need for changing electoral system is one of the most important contemporary issues, particularly since 1990s. This period was an explosion of innovation and reform in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the former Soviet Union began actively in reforming their political and electoral systems and looking for options and experiences from others (Reynolds *et al.* 2005: III). Recently, significant challenges to government legitimacy fuelled the issue of electoral reform. The issue of electoral reform has become the subject of serious debate in different countries of the world. For example, Britain with all the parties, except the Conservatives, favoring alternative systems to first-past-the-post for different levels of government. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government held a referendum on introducing AV for the Commons on 5 May 2011. After almost a century and a half the first-past-the-post electoral system used in New Zealand switched to a mixed-member system (MMS) (Norris, 1997:298). Even in the most stable democratic country like USA, the issue of reform is prevalent. Various

municipalities in the United States have begun to adopt instant runoff voting (Amy Douglas, 2000:3).

Canada managed a continuous debate and referendum at the provincial level in order to shift from plurality electoral systems to another form of voting system. The Canadian province of British Columbia held two unsuccessful referendums, in 2005 and 2009, to adopt an STV system, another Canadian province; Ontario held a referendum on October 10, 2007 to adopt a Mixed Member Proportional system which was defeated later. South Africa, after the fall of apartheid introduced PR system in order to accommodate the interest of various groups. This shows persistence demand of electoral reforms in both existing as well as emerging democracies (Reynolds *et al.*, 2005:7, 62 &100).

The question of reform has a direct link with representation. If there is no political power rotation in a polity through democratic means or a political power is held by the same party repeatedly following each election, then the ruling government is likely growing into authoritarian by scarifying the need of democratic representation of citizens.

Electoral system reform for conflict management.

Electoral system is not only for constitute governing body but also as a tool for conflict management. Some systems are inclusive and the party policy platform would become less divisive and exclusionary, and more unifying and inclusive. Electoral system incentives might make parties less ethnically, religiously, linguistically or ideologically exclusive. As noted in Reynolds the electoral systems that are manufactured and exclusionary by character are the causes for conflict. According to Reynolds *et al.* (2005: 6):

If the electoral system is not considered fair and if the political frame work does not allow the opposition to feel that they have a chance to win next

time round, loser may feel compelled to work outside the system, non democratic, confrontationalist and even violent tactics.

One of the main features of electoral system is its power of representativeness. It is taken as the criteria for designing the electoral system of any country of the world. Being representative of the electoral system is more crucial in the place where diversified societies live together and where federalism is introduced as a means for conflict management. Representation is many types as much as possible it should address the interest of every citizen in individual capacity or as group. The electoral system as far as possible should be neutral towards all candidates and parties. In fact, if there is uneven playing field in the electoral game then the political order is weak and the instability is imminent. Different countries of the world reformed their working electoral system and some others are on the way to reform it for different reasons such when it is believed that the electoral system is exclusionary, the outcome is misrepresentation and underrepresentation, when it weakens the opposition parties and becomes manufactured electoral system that guarantees the dominance of a single party (Ibid: 11).

The Italian referendum in 1993, which led to change to a mixed member proportional system, was to stop the instability of government marked the beginning of a series of significant changes in electoral systems all over the world. Since then, twenty six countries have followed Italy's example and had gone through reform processes that have altered their election system completely (Reynolds *et al.*, 2005: 23). As Reilly Benjamin, (2006) noted, the centripetal strategy either to AV or STV for conflict management assumes that there is sufficient moderate sentiment for cross ethnic voting. The case of Northern Ireland, the 30 years conflict between Catholic and Protestant is cool down. This system assisted the most divided society of Papua New Guinea's, its experience markedly more

successful. The same system applied in Australia and Fiji to look option from other groups (Diamond & Plattner, 2006: 37).

The dramatic example is the case of Lesotho's national election in 1998, in which the Lesotho Congress for Democracy won every seat in the legislature with only 60 % of the vote under FPTP system. The public unrest that followed, culminating in a request for military intervention in the country by the South African Development Community which demonstrated that such results were not merely unfair but also dangerous. The electoral system was subsequently changed to MMP system. Since then the chance of representation to different groups enhance and conflicts are minimize. (Reynolds *et al*: 11-12). Practically most countries which reformed their electoral system switched to PR or the hybrid of it (Reynolds *et al* : 24).

The main actors in electoral reform are politicians and citizens, these includes elected officeholders, those seeking office, party activists, interest group leaders, electoral reform activists, and ordinary citizens. The motives of these groups to electoral reform are power interest and values. Usually the power interest is related to maximizing the power where as reform for value sake is for the wider good. Renwick, Alan (2010: 29) conceptualized power seeking as :

The pursuit of office and the pursuit of policy influence. Pure office-seekers strive to win or retain office as an end in itself or for the perks it affords; pure policy-seekers pursue the maximum leverage over public policy outcomes ... actors may pursue office either as an end in itself or as a means to their policy goals.

On the other hand some scholars argue that 'politicians sometimes make choices primarily on the basis of their views about what is good, just or efficient' and others added that parties sometimes do the right and the

democratic thing and opt for institution serving the national good i.e. for value rather than for power seeking (Renwick 2010:37). Alan Renwick summarizes values consideration of reforms from the perspective of democracy, stability, governance, policy outcomes, constituency service, Practicability or simplicity etc. According to Renwick (2010:37; 39) if value is the base for a reform, it considers, among others things,

Fair distribution of seats, avoidance of anomalous results, fair distribution of power and representation of society, voter choice, accountability of governments, accountability of individual politicians, encouraging effective political Parties, checks and balances, simplicity, avoidance of inter-group conflicts, efficient decision-making, effective scrutiny of decisions, avoidance of corruption, avoidance of money politics, economic policy objectives, quality of constituency service and administrative simplicity as the base for reforms.

The Ethiopian Electoral System and Its Impact on Representation

Ethiopia is the second largest country in Africa in terms of population size. It is a place where heterogeneous societies live together, which are differences in culture, language and ethnic compositions. According to Population and Housing Census data of 2007, the total number of population was 73,918,505. Data obtained from the 2007 census are also classified under six categories of religious affiliation i, e. 43.5 percent of the total population was Orthodox Christian and 33.9 percent was Muslim. Protestant and traditional religious group followers accounted for 18.6 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. One of the machineries of democracy to keep the diversity of a mosaic society and to build one economic community is conducting of periodic, free and fair elections. Election is becoming, this day, the uncompromised trend in almost all countries of the world. Election in Ethiopia has been conducted since the Imperial period of Haile Selassie I to date. The election experience of the past two regimes are seen in chapter one (See pp 2-4).

Federalism in Ethiopia and Elections under the EPRDF Regime

Federalism in Ethiopia

After nearly two decades of ruthless and cruel political leadership, ethnically organized rebels had toppled the *Derg* from power by a military means. Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which is a coalition of four groups, took power in 1991. The fall of the military regime hoped to be a promising time to solve the country's century old conflict. The newly introduced federal system was seen as a response to the demand of more than 80 ethnic groups.

The 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia promulgated and the country's political system to be federal in which power is to be divided between the Central Government and Regional States. The country was remapped into a federal government, nine states and two administrative cities. The constitution defines that each state is empowered to decide on its own internal affairs without the interference of the others. And each Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' that exist in every state form the House of Federations at the federal level. The HOFs is the Upper House but has no legislative power and its main power is umpiring the constitution (FDRE Constitution Article 52 (2) (a) & Article 61).

Federalism was introduced to Ethiopia in order to answer the national questions of ethnic communities and to diffuse ethnic regional tensions. With the ambition of creating a renewed 'revolutionary democratic' state, more rights are accorded to neglected minorities and language groups. According to the constitution power was decentralized in the aim of creating ethno-linguistically-based federation instead of an enforced unitary state. Federalism is also introduced, intentionally, to respond the political tension that may led to the disintegration of the country into pieces. The national

question of self determination up to secession was the demand of ethno national groups (Abbink, 2006: 389; Alem Habtu, 2010: 22).

A mere federal arrangement may not resolve the problems of a country and it does not by itself give guarantee for democracy, However, institutionally it is more conducive to devolve power closer to the society at a grass root level to pave the way for national unity. Federalism is a solution if implemented as a value and for common good of all citizens. The democratic institutions should also be firmly built to implement federalism and to enjoy the fruit, if not it becomes a problem than a solution. Merera Gudina in (Abbink, 2006) also stated that “The inability of the competing elites to reach national consensus on democratic composition is a major threat to the integrity of Ethiopian States”

Election under the EPRDF Regime

Though the EPRDF fought the military regime and came to power through the barrel of the gun, multi party election began during the EPRDF period in Ethiopia. Currently, there are many registered parties compete for political power based on the Plurality electoral system. Since a multi party system introduced in Ethiopia and the right to association provided by the constitution, a dozen of single and coalition parties have been formed. Currently, there are more than 70 political parties are registered by NEBE.

The Impact of Electoral System in Political Representation

Electoral System in Ethiopia

The plurality electoral system (or, First- Past –The- Post) electoral system has been used since the TG of Ethiopia. The 1995 FDRE Constitution states that this system is used to elect members of HPRs. The election Law of the county also strengthen that a candidate either representing a party or contest in an

individual capacities, if wins, the largest vote in a constituency is to be declared a winner and hold a seat in HPRs. This system is rooted in the West Minister and exercised by many countries of the world for the election of legislatures. Federalism as the country's political system and plurality system as election rule were introduced at the same time in the 1995 FDRE Constitution. One of the main features of Federalism is giving autonomous power to states to administer their localities without federal intervention and to share power in the central government by way of representation.

The two Chambered parliaments, i.e. the HPRs and HoFs, are the federal Houses. The way the members elected for the two houses are different. For HOFs, each Nation and Nationality is represented by one member and one additional representative for every one million population. So far, there is no election conducted to elect members of HoFs, even though the constitution allows direct election by the people (Article 61(3) of FDRE constitution).

The members of HPRs are elected in the plurality system. The country is mapped into 547 districts by considering as much as possible the population settlement in an average of 100,000 people in each constituency. The constitution states special representation of minority Nationalities and Peoples' shall not be less than 20 seats and the constitution limits the total numbers of federal seats do not exceed 550. The district is Single Member District (SMD) while in each districted that the maximum number of contenders are twelve and the one who gets the largest vote in each district is declared a winner (FDRE Constitution Art.54(3)).

The Impact of Plurality System on the 2010 National Elections

The 2010 Elections is for the elections of House of People's Representatives and State Councils conducted in of 547 constituencies. There were around

43,500 polling stations throughout the Country. Seventy - nine political organizations registered to run in these elections and have been provided with legal certificates by the Ethiopian National Electoral Board. Among these political organizations, 23 of them where operate at the National level, while the remaining 56 organization were functioning in the regional states (National Electoral Board Ethiopian , 2010).

Table 2: Summary of the National election result of 2010.

No.	Winner Party	Results Obtained
1	The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)	499 (Incumbent party)
2	The Somali People's Democratic Party (SPDP)	24 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
3	The Benishnagul Gumuz Peoples' Democratic Party (BGPDP)	9 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
4	The Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP)	8 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
5	The Gambella People's Unity Democratic Movement (GPUDM)	3 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
6	The Harari National League (HNL)	1 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
7	The Argoba People Democratic Organization (APDO)	1 (Party Allied to the incumbent party)
8	The Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (EFDUF) (<i>Medrek</i>)	1 (Opposition party Coalition)
9	Independent	1 (Private contender)
Total number of seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives		547

Source: Summary of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia. June 21, 2011

Except relatively significant seat won by the opposition parties in the 2005 national election all elections in Ethiopia favored the incumbent government. Particularly the 2010 national election conferred the ruling party and its allies 99.6% of the federal legislative seat. Here a question to be raised, What is the

secret behind for repeated win of the incumbent government and its party in the past four national elections carried out in Ethiopia at the national level and if the electoral system used other than the plurality system, could the result be the same? In order to answer this question, the Addis Ababa National election result in the 2010 is taken as a sample. Addis Ababa has 23 constituencies (districts) which have been designated for election purpose.

Table 3: The 2010 Summary of the national election of Addis Ababa City.

	Zone	Woreda	Party/Candidate						EFD
			EPRDF	EFDUF	EDUP	AEUP	CUD	AEDP	
1	One	3	19,647	10043	1140	322	402		55
2	One	5	14,941*	10074	600	327	357	327	37
3	One	4	12,753*	10085	746	315	281	220	
4	One	6	12,278	12282*	458	241	334	241	28
5	Four	12/13	29,867	21590*	2135	1569	727	233	83
6	Four	1/9	23,168	15126	1028	1112	345	125	52
7	Four	11	19,721	17050	1404	431	614	417	96
8	Four	16	18,473	12520	1349	668	451	297	47
9	Four	15	14,242*	9128	887	575	309	212	30
10	Five	8	23,130	14904	1517	361	627	361	68
11	Five	2/14	23,059	13327	1150	89	535	89	59
12	Five	25	21,231	18909*	1204	347	676	347	139
13	Five	10	17,193*	13455	1060		472		39
14	Five	7	16,431*	12508	613	418	414	418	39
15	Three	19	43,156	26664*	4144	1386	1546	887	125
16	Three	17	39,931	24943*	3656	1459		157	79
17	Three	28	39,664	23862*	4183	2192	1386	1134	139
18	Three	18	13,789*	9175	1131	238	250	201	37
19	Six	26/27	34,906	16440	3150	1337	1353	1028	96
20	Two	24	54,569	42555*	3485	693	402	693	150
21	Two	21/22	27,806	14755	1735	578	357	578	64
22	Two	23	26,453	19438*	1753	545	281	545	94
23	Two	20	18,570	11542	1258	427	334	304	46
Total			564598	380375	39786	15640	12453	8814	1602

Source: National Electoral Board of Ethiopia [Accessed from: www.ethioelection.org]

As indicated in the table above EPRDF won 22 of the 23 legislative seats (i.e. 95.7% seats) allocated for Addis Ababa region by obtaining only 49.38 % of the total votes casted in Addis Ababa (The total turn out to the city was 1,143,246). The plurality electoral system favored the ruling party to win the landslide victory against the other candidates' disproportionate to the votes casted in favor of it. This rule allows a party or a candidate who gets the largest vote in each election district to win the legislative seat in the Lower House of the parliament. If we see the above table, the votes casted for EPRDF in some constituency were lesser than EFDUF. As the rule allows only the competition within each constituency, the highest vote in another voting district does not affect the result. If the total result is arranged on descending order from, the top to bottom, EFDUF (*Medrek*) has the top result in six constituencies than the vote casted in favor of EPRDF. The figures marked by green asterisk in the above table showed the top votes casted to EFDUF if the outcome ranked in descending order from highest to lowest (See Table above).

If electoral system was PR, the outcome would have been completely different from the above outcome. Using PR system if Addis Ababa is taken as one multimember district, the EFDUF would have won 8 of the 23 seats. It means the chance to win the legislative seat increases from 4.3 % in the plurality system to 33.2 % in the PR system. Conversely, EPRDF result dramatically reduced from 95.7 % to 49.38 % i.e. from 22 to 11 legislative seats. From parties which competed in Addis Ababa, the winner parties based on the above formula, would have been five parties, these are: EPRDF=11, EFDUF= 8 , EDUP= 1, AEUP=1, CUD=1, AEDP=1.

The above analysis suggests that, if other electoral systems such as either Proportional system or any hybrid of the two systems i.e. Mixed Proportional System is employed, the total outcome of the 2010 national legislative seats distribution at the federal level would have been different from the result mentioned above. Further more the data has described that plurality system highly favored EPRDF, by obtaining less than absolute majority took the entire legislative seats except one that is left to EFDUF.

If the proportional system employed during the 2010 national elections, out of the total 30,181,686 votes casted at the national level, votes casted for EPRDF would be 14,903,716.54 (49.38 %) this means from the total 547 legislative seats EPRDF would have won only 270 of the federal legislative seats, the rest 277 seats are shared among opposition parties and parties allied to the ruling party. It is possible to guess that the parties which were allied to EPRDF won 36 seats could have also got lesser number of seats in PR. Had it PR or other democratic electoral system employed in the national elections in Ethiopia, there might be a chance of alternative parties come to power and pluralism and multiparty system promoted smoothly. The tendency of hegemony and the road to single party dominancy restricted. Different policy options provided at large, Furthermore election will become a culture of the society and the behavior of the contenders improved in accepting election outcome and passing the power in civilized manner to the winner party or candidate.

In the Mixed Member Proportional system that promotes both geographical representation and party list system, the 2010 national election would have been different from the election result with plurality system because at least half of the parliament seats would have been filled in the party list system.

Even if we assess the 2010 national election in other majoritarian electoral system, for example, TRS, EPRDF could not win majority in the first round because the total national vote casted to it is less than 50%, it would have forced for the second runoff. According to the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) officials there is a campaign in the world that each vote to have a value, however, they argue that they do not believe that the electoral system existing in Ethiopia affect the democratic process of representation. NEBE officials thinking that the proportional system or mixed electoral system in principle may provide some additional votes to opposition parties, however beyond that opposition parties should work hard to obtain people's confidence (Interview with NEBE official, March 2012).

On the other hand, according to the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) official, plurality system is one of a democratic election system, however in a country like Ethiopia where diversified societies live; it is too weak to accommodate the interest of different ethno- cultural groups. At the national level, the aggregate result of ruling party and opposition parties' difference is insignificant, but the plurality electoral system restricts the competition within each district, thus the election system undoubtedly has favored EPRDF. The official of EDP believes, though electoral system has impact on the converting of votes into seats, it is not the major issue but it can be one. All political parties are working in order to win the election not only to have seats in the parliament but to the extent of forming a government and rule the country. On the other hand, most of the votes are wasted in the existing plurality system; this shows that 40-50 percent of the votes of population are thrown to the trash (Interview with EDP official, April 2012).

From the above it can also be observed that, as the result of using the plurality electoral system, the majority votes casted are wasted. Out of the total, turnout, in Addis Ababa for the federal Lower House, the votes for EPRDF and EFDUF were 552,300 and 12282 votes respectively, this entails from the total votes casted in Addis Ababa, the illegible votes were 564,582 i.e. 49.38% votes that means the rest 578,664 votes equivalent to 50.62% of the votes in Addis Ababa were wasted. However, in the proportional system as mentioned above, the votes which makes eligible the five parties to get a legislative seat would be 1,012,832 votes that is equivalent to 88.6 % of the total turnout in Addis Ababa, thus the wasted votes would be only 11.4% in PR system. If we take the figure in national level from the total vote casted in the national level i.e. 30,181,686, the illegible votes were 14,903,716 (49.38%) and the rest 15,277,970 (50.6) votes were valueless.

According to the view of the Ministry of Federal affairs official, plurality system is better in emerging democratic countries like Ethiopia while proportional system is best in developed countries where the societies are more advanced. The official of this Ministry thinks that when the consciousness of the Ethiopian society becomes more advanced in the future than today and when we will be enabling to create one advanced economic community the demand for reform of electoral system may be inevitable. He claims Ethiopia is benefiting from the existing electoral system as the ruling party works with different ethnic based parties by consensus. The system also helps the ruling party to implement its policy by cooperating with these ethnic based parties for the overall growth of the country (Interview with Ministry of Federal Affairs official, April 2012).

The ruling party officials also repeatedly supported the plurality system. In choosing the plurality system, policy makers in Ethiopia also have tend to argue in terms of political stability, Ato Dawit Yohannes, one of the brains behind the FDRE Constitution and later the Speaker of the House of HPRs once rationalized the appropriateness of plurality electoral formula in his interview with an observer from the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights (quoted in Tronvoll and Aadland (1995:13)) as follows:

We debated a proportional system, but in the state that Ethiopia is today, we need a strong government which can handle enormous problems facing us in an effective manner. If we had chosen a proportional system, we would have got a weak government and unnecessary problems. We therefore decided on a constituency, majority based system as preferable. (Tafesse and Aklilu, 2007:102).

EPRDF Executive Committee member and Communication Affairs Minister, Ato Bereket Simon recently published a book with the title “The Tell of Two Elections”, (Translation of the title from Amharic to English is by me) repeated Ato Dawit Yohannes’s stand. Ato Bereket stated in his book that electoral system reform from plurality to proportional system has been raised in formal written way, for the first time, by EDP, however EPRDF was willing to negotiate with all other issues except the reform of the electoral system. He has argued EPRDF never denied the proportional system as well as the mixed systems are democratic electoral systems; however, EPRDF believes that the better electoral system is plurality system. He claimed during the 2005 election period, EPRDF also rejected the demand for reform of electoral system initiated by EUDF. However, negotiated and reached an agreement in all issues except the question of reform from plurality system to proportional system. (Bereket Siemon, 2011: 58, 60). (Note that the book is written in Amharic and I translated this idea myself).

Many ruling party officials back the first past the post electoral system in which only a highest vote is sufficient to win in a constituency. This system creates a clear winner who can form a government; the system also creates a stable and efficient government, in contrast, proportional system needs compromise among parties, according to EPRDF leaders it is very difficult to reach consensus because of the “low culture of compromise” in Ethiopia among political parties which have contradictory views and visions (Abraha Kahsay 2008). The EPRDF have been paving the way to become a dominant party since the transitional period. In this regard, Merera Gudina (2007:129) backs this view and he noted that both the Charter and the TGE became the sole instruments of the EPRDF in its project of reordering the Ethiopian state and society in a manner that enable to affecting its agenda of consolidating power.

The Official of the Ministry of Federal Affairs does not agree with this line of conclusion. The official said the existence of a dominant party, helps Ethiopian democracy to move to a better stage than the period of any past regimes. According to him had it not been for one party policy implemented, it is very difficult to see a developing Ethiopia at this moment. He argues EPRDF as a party proposes its policy and cooperate with others in a consociational manner to implement the policy. Furthermore he has noted that, the system helps the party to sustain itself for a longer period and enable it execute its short and long-term plans. The official further argues that “now we are seeing one of the objectives of the constitution i.e. creation of one economic community are beginning to meet its goal, for example infrastructures like interstate roads, electric power, clean water, health centers etc are becoming closer to every locality. It is exciting to hear a Somalia

ethnic groups is proud of being an Ethiopian” (Interview with Ministry of Federal Affairs official, April 2012).

According to Giovanni Sartori dominant party and a hegemonic party are different. In his view, a dominant party is relatively justifiable as it allows other opposition parties to participate in elections. On the other hand, in a hegemonic party, the electoral system is well designed in favor of the ruling party. A hegemonic party allows opposition parties to participate in the election but the electoral system is designed in favor of the hegemonic party and it is ‘electorate authoritarianism’. According to Giovanni Sartori, hegemonic party is the last stage of dominant party; such a party does not allow opposition parties to come close to power. But, if the democratic instruments are discouraging the opposition parties, they are compelled to use other means to come to power. Consequently, Violence driven forces have emerged as opposition parties are pushed out of the election process and the democracy is in danger (Feteh News Paper, February 7//2012).

According to an opposition party member, a dominant party means, the party is backed by majority of the people and if others work hard and the electoral environment is conducive, opposition party may get the will of the electorate. However, when the ruling party completely becomes a hegemonic party, it can make whatever laws easily that can pave the road to its plan of hegemony (Interview with EDP official, April 2012).

In the aftermath of the 2005 election, the whole strategy of the ruling party was to reduce the political space for both the opposition parties and civil society organizations. In order to meet the hegemonic strategy the ruling party enacted several controversial laws such as Mass Media Law, Anti terrorism Law, Charities Registration and Regulation Law and the new guide

line that ascertain the hegemonic position of EPRDF which clearly stated that ‘Revolutionary democracy’ as ideology and EPRDF as a ruling party should be protected by all means necessary (Merera Gudina, 2011:162, 176).

The demand for reform of the existing electoral system in Ethiopia has been raised by opposition parties’ at different times. The electoral system that has been used in Ethiopia strategically designed to favor the ruling party and the ruling party officials in different occasions resisted any reform of the electoral system. As indicated above, for example, Ato Dawit Yohannes’s interview with the Norwegian Observer Institute of Human Rights 15 years ago is repeated by Ato Berket Siemon in the latter’s book, “The Tell of Two Elections”, This entails the stand of the ruling party is not the subject of negotiation regarding the issue of reform of the electoral system.

Many opposition parties have raised, among other key issues, the issue of reform of the electoral law. For instance, the EFDUF tried to exert political and diplomatic pressure on EPRDF to negotiate on the issues of electoral landscape, and later it refused to sign the parties Code of Conduct unless these substantive issues would be included in the package (Merera Gudina, 2011:177). Any choice of electoral reform has a wide range of administrative consequences, for example, the drawing of boundary in a single district system is time consuming and expensive process in relatively small constituencies. This is not a one- off task; bounders have to be adjusted regularly to consider population changes. FPTP, AV and TRS systems produce the administrative headaches. However, when multimember districts are used no need to revise boundaries usually the boundaries are provinces, in List PR system is the cheapest and easiest to administer because they use a single national constituency or use pre existing provinces or states boundaries. On the same manner voters registration and by election is simple and cheapest

in PR system as the voters are registered within each constituency and during by election no need to conduct new election simply fill it by the next candidate second large vote. In the design and production of ballot paper , voter's education, number of polling day and counting FPTP system is easiest, for the cost analysis and other administrative issues of electoral system (Reynolds, 2005: 153-155).

CONCLUSION

In order to answer the impact of plurality electoral system that has been implemented for the representation of diversified groups in the federal level in Ethiopia, this research has raised three basic questions. The input to answer the research questions enshrined in Chapter one are interview, data and document analysis that have been assessed, discussed and interpreted through chapter two and three. The major findings of the research are:

1. The existing electoral system favored the ruling party as the system considers a party or an independent candidate who obtains the highest vote within a constituency is declared a winner. In the 2010 national election EPRDF won 499 seats alone and 545 together with its allied parties while only two legislative seats were occupied by others that is one EFDUF member and one by independent contender. As the national election result of 2010 assessed using other formulas such as List PR and Mixed system, the landslide victory of EPRDF would be changed.

2. Another issue raised in the research is the demand of reform in order to enhance representation. Ethiopia is the land of heterogeneous peoples' with divergent interests. The diversity is expressed in many ways i.e. ethnic, language, religion, ideology, etc. Federalism was introduced with the intention of every state to administer its locality independently (Self rule), and to decide together with other states on common affairs at the federal level (Shared-rule).

However, the plurality electoral system limits the chance of various interest groups to be represented at the federal level particularly in the Lower House i.e. the highest authority of the federal government. Even if ‘Nation, Nationalities and Peoples’ are represented at the federal level in the House of Federations, the second chamber, it has no direct role in the law making activities. In the assessment, It is realized that plurality system is not representative in divided societies like Ethiopia. The system left many voters without representatives in the legislative House. This entails the chance of minorities and other interest groups to be represented in the federal Lower House are narrowed. The interviews with different stake holders ascertain that there is no doubt other electoral system relatively better in the converting of votes into legislative seats. EPRDF officials insist for the continuation of plurality system for government stability to resolve the problems of the country. Opposition parties argue that they demand reform because plurality system has a disproportional outcome however the ruling party has not willing to negotiate on the issue of reform. Different scholars argue that in the country where the society is highly divided, PR or any of the hybrids of it is the best for representation. And the document analysis disclosed that plurality system is expensive in making boundaries of electoral districts and administration. Some criticize PR for the risk of fragmentation and weak from point of governability. However, as long as federalism is introduced as a political system, the institutions and the legal frame works have to support to achieve its ultimate goal of representation of diversity interests in the federal level for the common affairs. So that Plurality system affects representation as it causes disproportional outcome. Finally the research finds that Plurality system is a democratic electoral system used by many countries of the world however, its disproportional outcome currently calling for reform to the more inclusive and participatory type of electoral systems. From the finding of this research all

the reform took place so far is from plurality to PR or some kind of hybrid systems. Even in the developed countries where plurality system is taken as a culture, the plea to change the plurality electoral system is growing.

3. EPRDF repeatedly won the transitional period as well as all four national elections. All elections were not peaceful. The elections claimed the life of many people, many were imprisoned, it is the time for frustration, intimidation, intense hostility, unrest, etc. Despite opposition groups rejecting the results of the elections, EPRDF has stayed in power from 1991 to date. The only strong challenge was exerted during the 2005 elections which had shaken the ruling party however; suddenly everything was changed into nightmare. Following the 2005 national elections, the ruling party in one hand set a development plan and mobilizing many and on the other hand it enacted several controversial laws that risk the democracy and the democratization process. For many, it is the rise of a *de facto* single party in the country. This assessment ascertains that the plurality voting system is also equally contributing to the behavior of the incumbent government as it made the latter to make a paradigm shift from a dominant party to a hegemonic party. Furthermore, the hegemonic character of EPRDF was revealed in the document which explicitly stated that ‘revolutionary democracy’ as an ideology of the EPRDF and it should be protected by all means necessary. The Laws are enacted without considerable debts and the laws enacted since 2005 elections such as Anti terrorism Law, Mass Media Law, Charities and Societies Law etc are criticized by many as it may frustrate citizens to exercise their rights freely. The 2010 national elections are the extension of one party rule, the alarm of eroding pluralism and multiparty system and truly implication of hegemony. From documents that are assessed in the research, in history the problem of repeated win of the same single party is resolved by changing the electoral system for example the case of Japan, New Zealand,

Germany, Lesotho, Italy, South Africa etc are changing their electoral system that guarantees the smooth transfer of power and dramatically minimizing if not fully resolved their internal conflicts and by reforming the chance of representation of many interested groups enhanced.

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