Multi-ethnic Party Coalition and Nation-building in Ethiopia

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Abstract- The major aim of this paper is to investigate the Multi-ethnic party Coalition and Nation building in Ethiopia. The paper also examines factors that hindered to build sustain multi-ethnic party coalition and it is role for nation building in Ethiopia. It employed case study research design and qualitative methodological approach. Accordingly, empirical data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The finding of the study illustrates that the Ethiopian political parties have been attempted to formed multi-ethnic party coalition that able for nation building but they fragmented soon. The study identifies factors that hindered to build sustain multi-ethnic coalition and the multi-ethnic party coalition highly contributed for nation building. Accordingly, political history, lack of internal party democracy, political polarization among and between political parties, ideological difference, size of party coalition and ruling party intervention. In addition to that the multi-ethnic party coalition helped as bridge to national dialogue to tackle the disagreement on the nation building. The study suggests that reducing the number of parties in the coalition, democratizing internal party structure, and the political party should form alliance with the political parties have similar political ideology. In addition, the study addresses that political parties should constructively resolve their major differences and reach authentic consensus and forming national party will contribute for the success of party coalition. The parties have to have manifestos of the affiliate political parties merged to form a common manifesto for the coalition.

Index Terms- Multi-ethnic coalition, Coalition, Nation-building

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of political parties in Ethiopia can be traced back to 1960s and it is related with international and national factors. The emergence of political parties in Ethiopia linked with the process of nation building that was started by Emperor Tewodros. The modern Ethiopian empire started by Tewodros, after he killed and his project was failed Emperor Menilik started consolidated emiral, Menilik engaged in war of conquest, incorporating various Nation (Oromos, Sidama, Wolayata, Gurage, and Somali)(Keller J.Edwond,2006). The war of expansion and conquest led to the birth of multi-ethnic empire state under Amhara hegemony land appropriation from the indigenous peoples, political domination, cultural marginalization and economic exploitation of the subjected groups (Yishak, 2008).

The birth of multi-ethnic empire was contributed for the emergence of multi-ethnic political force during the Empire Haile Selassie. In addition to this the war of expansion, marginalization and political subjugation that was declared by Emperor Menilik led to fragmentation among political force. The political fragmentation happened because of different factors, one the pro-Ethiopians argued there were no political, economic subjugation and cultural marginalization that was based on ethnicity. The marginalization and subjugation declared on All Ethiopians. Hence, this problem only addressed by establishing National parties. This argument were advocated by National parties both the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Party (EPRP), and the ALL Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM)(Yishak,2008). Another political force was Ethno nationalist. The ethno-nationalists claim that the Ethiopian state is an exclusionist one and the oppressed and marginalized groups need to have the right to self-determination to the extent of secession. This argument were represented by The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), The Tigray People Liberation Front(TPLF) and the Eritrea People Liberation Front(EPLF)were the prominent political force those who denied the argument of National Political Force(Yishak,2008). The disagreement among the Ethiopian political forces that was started during Imperial regimes has been continuous up to today. Even though, different political parties they were try to negotiate and work together at different time. However, the agreement of these political parties remained elusive. The inability of working together of the Ethnic politicalparties led to Ethnic chaos in the country. The transforming country into democracy remained day dream for Ethiopia. It is hindered for answered historically question of Nation, Nationalities and people of Ethiopia. Thus, the overall focus of the study is to the challenges to build ethnic coalition and Nation building among Ethiopian political parties and the role of multi-ethnic coalition in the Nation building in the experience of African National Congress (South Africa) and Mauritius Labor Party (Mauritius).

Ethiopia is highly divided society. In this highly divided society different ethnically divided political parties has been established since 1965s. When the political parties divided along ethnic line, it is encouraging divided societies that become threat for national unity. Since 1971 different political parties attempt to
make party coalition that helps to narrow their dis agreement. The multi-ethnic party coalitions strongly help to reduce the difference among highly divided societies. For instance, the African National Congress and Mauritius labor party coalition is good experience how the multi-ethnic party coalition contributes to reduce the tension among ethnic political parties as well as contribute for nation-building.

The Ethiopian political parties have been formed multi-ethnic coalition to reach on national consensus but still it is remain elusive (Merera, 2016). For instance, the coalition of the CUD, the Coalition of Ethiopia Democratic Force (COEDF) and Medrek these multi-ethnic coalitions fragmented with short period of time. Due to the fragmentation among Ethiopian among political parties, the establishment of a strong political party’s coalition that could contribute in transforming the state into democratization and Nation building remains an ideal scenario (Merera, 2015:5). However, no major attempts have been made to examine multi-ethnic party coalition and it is role in nation building. In this regard, the multi-ethnic party coalition and it role in nation building needs empirical studies to examine the cause that hinder to establish strong multi-ethnic coalition and it role in nation building. With regard to this, most of the existing literature was emphasized on the status of political parties before 2010. Along this, their area of emphasis is on assessing the overall status of opposition parties in Ethiopia and the reason that hindered them either to win sufficient seats in the parliament or replace the incumbent party (Arrivol, 2005; Gudeta, 2014; Lidetu, 2010; Merera, 2015; Solomon, 2014; Wondwosen, 2009). Among these studies, the study of Solomon (2014) for instance, revealed that Ethiopian opposition parties have been divided among those who are willing to collaborate with and recognize certain achievements made by the ruling party and those who are not willing to recognize the ruling party achievement and block the ruling party policies (Solomon, 2014:443). Thus, on the one hand there is no comprehensive study on the on multi-ethnic coalition and role of nation building in the Ethiopian political history and on the other hand, the existing literature on the aforesaid issue has overlooked the challenges to establish strong multi-ethnic party coalition and Nation building. Hence, this study seeks to examine the challenges to establish sustain multi-ethnic coalition and it role in nation building.

Hence, this paper attempts to examine the factors that hindered to build sustain multi-ethnic party coalition and it role for nation-building. Accordingly, the paper intended to answer two basic research questions. The first questions, what are the fundamental problems to build sustain multi-ethnic coalition in Ethiopia? And the second question what are the roles of multi-ethnic coalition in the nation building in Ethiopia?

To achieve the above objectives of the research, the case study is a structure of research which focuses on investigating groups, event, institution, or culture (Deribsa, 2017). Stake (1995) argued that case studies, in which the researcher explores in depth a program, events, and activities a process, one or more individuals. Hence, the case study research design is an appropriate paper design that helps to investigate why unable to build sustain multi-ethnic party coalition and it is role for nation-building. Basically, “qualitative research is interpretive in the sense that it attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people attribute and draws conclusion through interpreting the data gathered from various sources” (Kothari, 2004:178). Another reason is that it doesn’t focus on numerical information (Creswell, 1998). Hence, an approach of writing in which analysis and reflection are interwoven was applied (Bridges, 2002).

To gather data for the study, the researcher will use both secondary and primary sources. The semi-structured interviews are used to gather data from representative of political parties and scholars. Accordingly, data collected from the Oromo Democratic Party (current Oromia Prosperity party), Medrek, and Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) from the members of party coalition. In addition to that data collected from the scholars. The parties are selected purposively because of to get accurate data from the relevant bodies. The data collected through both primary and secondary ways analyze by David Easton’s input–output analysis model was used to explain the demand people need from the opposition political parties and how can make multi-ethnic coalition to narrowed the threat of national unity, and how multi-ethnic coalition contributed for nation-building in Ethiopian context. Finally, the collected data were analyzed by the content and thematic data analysis.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES CONSIDERATION

As regards the politics of party coalition and fragmentation there have been divergent views. Some argues size of party coalition, ethnic politics in the coalition, political culture, and other factors. Another argues policy difference in the coalition is the major challenges factor to build strong and sustainable party coalition. There are contending theories in this regard. For the purpose of this study driven office theory and policy oriented theory have been discussed pertaining to party coalition and factors lead to fragmentation. The driven office theory helps to explain the main arguments of this in the connections to why opposition political parties build party coalition. In addition it helps to address the research questions of the thesis, i.e. what are the fundamental problems to build sustain multi-ethnic coalition in Ethiopia? What are the roles of multi-ethnic coalition in the nation building in the experience of South Africa and Mauritius? This theories helps to explain how political coalition successful and save political party coalitions from fragmentations, because the Ethiopian opposition political parties made political coalition but they fragmented soon. Hence, these two theories help to address the research question.

The office driven theory is based on the assumption that the main goal of political parties is to access political power (Riker, 1962). To build sustain party coalition fragmentation should minimize the numbers of political parties in the coalition, because it is easier for the smaller groups of parties to reach consensus (Kadima, 2006:62). Hence, the central argument of this theory by minimizing a number of political parties in the coalition can save political parties from fragmentation.

Another theory is called the policy oriented theory. The assumption on which the policy oriented theories are based is the party coalitions are justified by policy goals. Robert Axelrod (1970) suggests that office-driven coalitions pursue the maximization of their benefits while minimizing the coalition’s bargaining costs by forming only those winning coalitions that contain ideologically adjacent parties, hence the hypothesis of minimal connected winning coalitions. Abram DeSwaan (1973)
argues that political parties will form the minimal winning coalition with the smallest ideological range, which positions the hypothesis of ideologically compact winning coalitions (De Swan, 1973:33). Concurring with Warwick (1994) argues that ideologically diverse governments tend not to survive because of the greater policy compromises that coalition members have to make (Warwick, 1994:124). They need to share elements of ideological similarity or what Robert Axelrod stated - successful coalition should consist of parties that are spatially connected, i.e., ideologically similar. The empirical evidence available on comparative literature on coalition politics stands to support policy based theories, not merely for the sake of compatibility of coalition formation, but also far more importantly, for coalition. (Kadima,2006:10). Hence, the ideological diverse in the government encourage to fragmentation of political parties, while having similar political ideology or small ideological difference in the political party coalitions easy to reach on the consensus as well as helps to achieve their ultimate goal(Kadima,2006:8).

III. CHALLENGES OF MULTI-ETHNIC PARTY COALITION IN ETHIOPIA

The rises of political parties in different state have different reasons based on the political situation of that state. But in most of the world countries the rise of political parties is the result of political subjugation and economic exploitation. For instance, the rise of political parties in African countries is the result of political subjugation and economic exploitation by colonial power, because when the right of peoples’ undermined by others, they want to fight for their own right by organizing themselves. In the case of Ethiopia, the emergence of opposition political parties was different from other African countries because, Ethiopia was not colonized. However, the same as other African political parties the emergence of opposition political parties was the result of political subjugation and economic exploitation, but it was within the countries not by colonialist like as other African countries. The emergence of opposition political parties in Ethiopia was related with the economic and political subjugation that existed during imperial regimes. In mid-1960s the expansion of modern education contributed for the founding the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) in the 1965(Merera, 2017). For the first time two political parties were born from the Ethiopian Student Movement (MEISON created in 1986 and EPRP created in 1970). Unfortunately, in Ethiopian political history, the division of political parties in the country pioneered by MEISON and EPRP (Merera, 2016, Keflew, 2019). The divergence of MEISON and EPRP led to civil war and both of them crashed in the hand of Military government (in Amharic ‘Derg’).

Merera (2016) the current divergence of Ethiopian political parties has been started during the reign of the Menilik regime. The political divergence that began by Imperial Menilik contributed for the born of ethno-nationalism and pro-nationalism in Ethiopian politics (Merera, 2016). The attempt of Menilik to nation build in the name of assimilation policy highly contributed for the emergence of Ethno-nationalism and those who denied the argument of ethno-nationalism political force established pro-Ethiopiansim. Now the birth of ethno-nationalism and pro-Ethiopiansim become the key challenges of nation building in Ethiopia (Lidatu, 2020, Merera, 2017).

The contemporary of nation building goes back to Berlin conference 1884-1885. It was set in stone the present geopolitical map of the African continent. Furthermore, put foundation for political fragmentation, and ethnic politics (Anderbhan, 2011). In the same way, the Berlin Conference, contributed for the birth ethno-nationalism with the philosophy of established independent state, for instance Eritrea nationalism separated from Ethiopia in 1993, Tigray Liberation Front (changed the philosophy of independent Tigray Republic in 1975), and Ogden Liberation Front and Oromo Liberation Front currently change their previous stand. At this time, all most all Ethno-nationalism political parties do not accept the philosophy of establish independent new nation state but strongly they believe the right of self-administration under the federal system in the principle of self-rule and shared rule. The same as they want to establish the country that able to accommodate all equally under the umbrella federal system. However, the Ethiopian political divergence reach peak and have been challenge the Unity of the Country (Merera, 2021; Lidetu, 2020; Awlo, 2021). Many scholars argued that to save country from fragmentation all political force should be cooperate and come on the table (Merera, 2021, Lidetu, 2021, Awlo, 2021).

Denis(2010) argued that multi-ethnic coalition is a device of nation-building and helped as bridge to cross national dialogue among and between ethnic political parties. In Ethiopia at different time this experience has been attempted but they soon failed. For the purpose of this study the paper only analyze the case of two selected multi-ethnic political parties in Ethiopia.

Since, the emergences of political parties’ emerged, party coalition have been formed at different time but they have been failed soon. According to primary and secondary data show that the multi-ethnic party coalition are fragmented because of internal and external factors.

A). Internal Factors: From the internal factors that led party coalition to fragmentation is an intra-coalition democracy. Hermenegildo (2018) argued that Internal functioning of political parties should be democratized. However, the culture of intra-democracy among Ethiopian political parties is weak, which has negatively affected political coalition.

An interview conducted for this paper, argued that Ethiopian political parties have not been the culture to debate by idea rather than blindly criticized another. The practices of internal democracy within the leading party are a chief determinant for the existence of democratic space within the coalitions. The centralized leadership by the president UEDF strongly influenced the internal democracy of the coalition UEDF. Key decisions were taken by the President of UEDF without prior consultation with the rest of the members of the coalition. This occurred in 2005, when the leader of UEDF decided not to take up his seat in parliament as a sign of protest against the alleged electoral irregularities.

However, this decision by the opposition leader was not supported and followed through by all members of the coalition, as some proceeded with attending parliamentary sessions. These differences in approach were considered to be signs of a lack of political cohesion inside these coalitions. Additionally, other members of the coalition argued that a lack of democratic culture and space to openly discuss issues contributed to a failure to build unity and cohesion. Complaints included the imposing of candidates, a lack of criteria for appointments to key organs, and
constant in-fighting for leadership. In short, a lack of internal coalition democracy as well as inter-coalition engagements is considered to be factors that prevented the formation of effective coalitions, able to contest elections.

Another, internal factors the size of party coalition, a large number of Ethiopian political parties have been formed pre-election coalition to win majority seat. For instance, the Ethiopian political parties named UEDF were formed with 12 political parties and they soon collapsed. According to The office driven theory is based on the assumption that the main goal of political parties is to access political power (Riker, 1962). To build sustain party coalition fragmentation should minimize the numbers of political parties in the coalition, because it is easier for the smaller groups of parties to reach consensus (Kadima, 2006:62). Hence, the central argument of this theory by minimizing a number of political parties in the coalition can save political parties from fragmentation.

**Ethnic political polarization:** Ethiopia prides itself on being a multi-ethnic, linguistically rich and culturally diverse nation. However, the Ethiopian political process has been impacting by ethnicity since the Imperial Menelik (1889-1913) and Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) when some group marginalized by the other ethnic group (Kifle, 2007:12). This is directly or indirectly has been effect the current Ethiopian political parties. Because from the beginning the birth of Ethiopian political parties related with the political subjugation and economic exploitation that was based on the ethnic groups (Markakis, 1991). Like Ethiopian, some of other African political parties has been affected by the ethnic and party coalition lead to fragmentation due to the antagonism of ethnic existed in the state. For instance, the NARC political parties of Kenya was effect (Kadima,2006:179). The NARC was divided into FORD-Asil and FORD-Kenya. In the case of FORD, the splinter into FORD-A and FORD-K was to a large extent a reflection a clash of ambitions between party leader that was fed and motivated by ethnic interests (Tsuda, 2007:32).

In Ethiopia case, there are more than 90 political parties those are legally registered by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). According to the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, more than 79 percent of Ethiopian opposition political parties formed on ethnic line or regional political parties and the remaining are country wide parties. The ethnic party is primarily concerned with just one ethnic group. The establishment of Ethiopian opposition parties along ethnic line encouraged to divide and discouraged the establishment of national political parties in Ethiopia (Wondwosen, 2009:62). The regional political parties reflect the interest of specific ethnic groups from where they came while the national parties reflect the interest of the Ethiopians (Merera, 2015).

**Political history:** The current Ethiopian political system is related with the political history of the country. The modern state of Ethiopia was created by Abyssinia or Christian highland rulers largely through Christianization, ‘the twin process of political subjugation and economic exploitation’ of the 19th and early 20th century. The political subjugation and economic exploitation was based on along ethnic and religion line (Merera, 2003:74). For instance, orthodox Christian was considered as supreme and state religion, while Islam followers were considered as a second citizen. During Menelik conquest, there had existed independent identity groups in the part of modern Ethiopian (Bahru, 1991:123).

These parts includes today’s regional state of Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, SNNPR, part of Oromia, Southern part of Somali, most part of Afar, and East part of Ethiopia (Kifle, 2007). Today most of these area have been affected by insurgenacies and nationalister armed fronts (OLF, ONLF, SALF) and non-nationalist movement also affected by this idea. Around 1960s Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) had raised different question on the right of nation and nationalities to self-determination including secession which had became driver of revolutionary force in the student circle and nationalist movement (Merera, 2004:33; Vaughan, 1994:12).

The Menelik conquest, assimilation, political subjugation and economic exploitation of nation and nationalities encouraged to divided regarding on the national question among political groups. This division led to birth of Ethiopian Nationalist (ethnic based movement) and pan-Ethiopians (class based movement) political groups (Merea, 2003). For instance, the Eritrea people Liberation Front (EPLF), Oromo liberation Front (OLF), Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF), and Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP), and All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (Meison) among others (ibid).

The Current Ethiopian political situation has been affected by the political history of the country. The past political subjugation and economic exploitation encouraged the political parties established on the ethnic line rather than national. Another political history of the country reveals the culture of taking political powers either through gun or hereditary than through election. Clapham (2004) argues that political history in which no government has assumed power through election but always by forces (Clapham, 2004:12). Lidetu Ayalew (2009) also argued that the main challenges to establish the strong opposition political party coalition in Ethiopia is political history. The country introduced multi-party system which is a new phenomenon in the Ethiopian political land scape and thus at odds with the political culture and history of the country. For Long period of time Ethiopian was under no party system and one party system under Military government (Derg) and ruled by dominant party system (Clapham, 2004:10).

In another way, the political history of the country shows that the ruling body comes from the specific area and paradoxically becomes oppressor of the other ethnic groups. For instance, most of the time Amhara was considered as oppressor and other group as oppressed one. This has created political grievance among people that is why a number of opposition political parties was established along the ethnic line (Wondwosen, 2009:57). The national party compete to run the election, can’t win majority seats because they didn’t get seats in the majority of Ethiopian regional instance, when AEUP and OFC run for national election the AEUP didn’t elected in the Oromia region.

Another, the political history also discouraged the political party-partnership and vulnerable to fragmentation. According to
Merera (2015) Ethiopian opposition political parties has paradox dream, because political parties that are led by Amhara elite they want to establish geographic federalism and the party led by Oromo elite has the problem to work together (Merera, 2015:15).

The party fragmentation and absence of partnership of Ethiopian political parties is thus an inherited legacy of the previous political parties. In Ethiopian political history, an opposition political party has not been built strong political parties Coalition or political party partnership among them. For example the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (popularly known as MEISON), as of 1968 and the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP) as of 1972 had no Partnership, even one blame the other and lead to bloodshed among them (Merera, 2009). The absence of credible cooperation or coalition among these political parties enables the military government to took the power in 1975. The problem of All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (in Amharic MEISON) and Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary party (EPRP) has been contentious in Ethiopian opposition politics( Merera, 2015:15-19)

External factors: Ruling Intervention. In interviews, key anonymous informants as well as representative from the Ethiopian Democratic Party explained that, while the constitution contains a vigorous article of political rights which guarantees the right to assembly and the right to organize at any level and in any form, the right to strike in accordance with the law, and the right to express one’s opposition, the ruling party has not always respected this constitutional arrangements (Wondwosen, 2009; Merera, 2015). The legal system has not been strong enough to enforce this right and respect for political and democratic rights. And hence, in the ruling party of the regime, the right of criticism and opposition as a legitimate and necessary element in the political process has becoming increasingly irrelevant for the incumbent. Opposition to the ruling party’s policies and deeds has not been desired after all. Rather, it has been encouraged, and tolerance of those political parties created by it and those was deliberately formed to divide oppositions (Wondwosen, 2009:61).

The most importantly, they stressed that the regime in power still has difficulty accepting the basic premises of democracy- the existence of political pluralism or multi-party politics and political tolerance in its political culture. In essence, what this suggests is that while the regime in power embraced multiparty politics half-heartedly and never considered that the opposition had legitimate right to take part in the contemporary politics of the country (Gudeta, 2014). This is because, in the political culture of the regime in power, political pluralism, and accommodation of different ideas has no root (Gudeta, 2014). Not only, in Ethiopian case, the NARC in Kenya, also challenged by Kenya ruling party KANU and play critical role to fragmentation of the NARC by using different strategies such as propaganda campaign on the party leaders (Kadima, 2006). According to him, the ruling party KANU sponsored the registration of opposition parties lead to further fragmentation (ibid).

According to key informants and the secondary literature the party fragmentation and challenge to established party coalition is the intervention of the ruling party is the essential one (Merera, 2015; Wondwosen, 2009; Gudeta, 2014). For the fragmentation of CUD, and UEDF coalition the ruling party was play the great role and the Coalition for Somali Democratic Force also withdrew from Medrek due to the intervention of ruling parties. The UDJ not only withdrew from Medrek but also refused to coordinate with the forum for democratic dialogue in Ethiopia (Lyons, 2016:3-5)

The Role of Multi-ethnic Party Coalition in Nation Building

The modern state of Ethiopia began to emerge at a time when the Westphalia model of state organization widespread throughout the world (Edmond, 2005). The most nation states were created by the model of Westphalia agreement, for instance France. The four successor (Tewodros, Yohannes, Menilik II and Haile Selassie) Ethiopian imperial attempt to build Ethiopia in the Westphalia model but it failed. The Nation building project started by four imperial, currently become the root cause of political divergence among and between Ethiopian political forces. Merera (2016) argued that the current Ethiopian political dilemma started by Imperial Menilik II. For him, the territorial expasion led Menilik to ward Oromo, Somalia, and south region as well as the dis agreement of Menilik with Yohannes led to the birth of Ethnic nationalism and pro-Ethiopianism political force in Ethiopia.

The political history of the country, cause for the birth of Ethno-nationalism and pro-ethiopianism (Merera, 2016). The Ethno-nationalism got victory over pro-ethiopianism in Ethiopian politics in 1991. In 1995 the FDRE constitution gave recognition by establishing ethnic federalism by the principle of shared and self-rule. Since, the EPRDF took power the of dozen of opposition political parties have been established along ethnic line (Wondwesen, 2009). Wondwesen (2009) argued that EPRDF established ethnic federalism for divided rule. Many scholars (Merera, 20016; Lidetu, 2020; Wondwesen, 2009) argues that the political divergence among and between Ethiopian political parties have been challenge the Unity of the country. According to Merera (2016) address this problem all political parties should come and working to gather.

In heterogeneous society, the political parties working together to foster nation building and address the debate regarding on the nation building. According to Sinclair (2006) nation building cannot built alone. It need wide people cooperation and build common political will. Many countries to narrowed their political divergence among political elite, they use multi-ethnic party coalition. Danish and Mauritius is a good model by forming multi-ethnic coalition able build common political will in their countries (Denis, 2011).

"It can be argued that coalitions have contributed to nation-building in a multietnic society like Mauritius. " (Denis, 2011).
To minimize and control ethnic polarization the nature government has heavily regulated political parties. The formation of Government of National Unity has also been a “forced” mechanism for ethnic accommodation. Increasingly electoral alliances, parliamentary coalitions and coalition governments have been voluntary mechanism for ethnic accommodation and nation-building. Coalitions are not only a vote seeking, office seeking and policy seeking strategy. They are also a device which
ensures the rapprochement of political parties and communities in ethnically divided societies. It can therefore be argued that coalitions have contributed to nation-building in multiethnic society like Mauritius.

The way forward

In conclusion, in heterogenous there are different politically, economically and socially aspiration that could led to political divergence among political parties’ leaders or elites. Those political divergences have been challenge the unity of Ethiopia. The longevity and effectiveness of a coalition depend on the ability of the party coalition leaders to maintain permanent dialogue and address differences through dialogue. Such approach is likely to help as bridge to tackle that emanated from political history, protect them from the intervention of ruling party, manage or minimize ethnic political polarization creating political space that accommodate all ethnic groups. Mechanisms, structures and procedures to deal with conflicts within the coalition can be instituted and agreed upon by all the affiliated parties in order to help ensure that the coalition is functional and effective.

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