# Prosperity Party and the New Emerging Political Thinking on Ethnic Identity and Nation Building in Ethiopia

By:

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## 1. Introduction

Political party[2] plays pivotal role in social and economic transform of the given country and nationality. Parties are central in the functioning of representative democracy. Parties make democracy function by serving as intermediaries between the electorate and the state power (Gebremeskel Hailu and Teguadda Alebachew, 2019). According to Michael Chege(2007) political parties[3] are crucial actors in bringing together diverse interests, recruiting and presenting candidates and developing competing policy proposals that give people with a choice.

The nature and system of the political party formulation affect its effectiveness in accelerating economic and social transformation. Modern and scientific ways of political party formation contributed for effective self-administration and national unity. This was not the situation in most of Sub-Sharan African countries. The colonial legacy in most of African countries has hindered the effectiveness of the political party formation in realizing peace and stability in the continent.

In Ethiopia also for the first time[4] the political party was established after the failure of the Monarchy government. Since early 1970s different national and regional ethnic political parties were formed to realize their political and economic goals. The first legal act which guaranteed Ethiopian citizens the right to take part in political activities and to organize political parties was issued by the 1991 Transitional Charter of the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE)(Gudeta Kebede  and Alemu Kassa ,2014). The delay in starting and practicing the political parties in the country strongly affected the development and modernization of

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[2] Political parties are associations of individual citizens, which are formed on the basis of voluntary membership and program, who are interested to occupy state power through election to realize recommendations for resolving outstanding problems (ibid).

[3] Political party plays several functions in a society. To mention but a few, it provides alternative policy platforms, ideological directions and re-defining government agendas. PP serves as a "vital link between the state and the civil society, between the institution of government and the groups and interests that operate within the society" (Heywood, 2002).

[4] Ethiopia, which was not colonized but was under the rule of absolute feudal monarchies, since its modern statehood, had no the culture of party politics until the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), the only party in town at that time, was legally established in 1989, by the socialist military regime of the Derg(Solomon Gebreyohans,2014)

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politics. During the last three decades, the number of political parties[5] who got license from National Election Board (NEB) has reached more than hundred.

There is great different in political thinking on nation building and nationality across the major political parties and regimes. Monarchy government focus only on nation building than ethnic identity right, EPRDF emphasis on the national oppression thesis and OLF stress on colonization of nation. Such deep and diverse political differences between political parties and regimes has hindered the effective contribution of ethnic identity and nation building in peace and stability.

Recently the ruling party[6], Ethiopia People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF[7]) has decided to change its organizational structure and political thinking by changing the Collusion[8] Front to national one party[9]. This decision has been made after the executive and central committee of the Front agreed to conduct deep political and economic reform/renewal due to an increase in public grievance[10] and deteriorated of good governance. The country has experienced political transformation since EPRDF forces captured Addis Ababa in 1991, but many things stay the same (International crisis Group, 2009). The failure in the ruling party were ineffective ethnic identity federalism, lack of broad-based democracy, absence reliable nation building and inclusive economic development were the major motives of the replacement of the EPRDF[11] by the new Prosperity Party.

The main purpose of this article was to explain the new emerging political thinking of Prosperity Party on ethnic identity politics and nation building in Ethiopia. The article consists of six sections. The first section is introduction, the second section explain the concepts of ethnic identity, ethnic politics and nation building. The third section illustrates the theoretical and practical views on the ethnic identity and nation building. The fourth section presents the partial political thinking of EPRDF's on ethnic identity and nation building. The fifth section identity and explains the major new thinking of the Prosperity Party on ethnic identity and nation building in Ethiopia. The last section is summary.

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[5] Ethiopia's political parties can be classified into three types: parties comprising the ruling party, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF); ethnically defined parties affiliated with the EPRDF; and opposition political parties, which are either national or ethnically defined parties.

[6] The EPRDF was created in 1989 as a union between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), both long-time allies in the fight against the Derg regime

[7] The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a four party coalition, has been ruling since 1991.

[8] The four constituent parties of EPRDF emanated from the rebel groups that toppled the Derg regime in 1991. These parties represent different regional and ethnic groups, a reflection of the ethnic federal system installed by the EPRDF itself.

[9] This party reform was the broad part of national reform that include security and economic reforms undertaken during the last years.

[10] For three years(between 2015 and 2018), protesters across Ethiopia have been demanding political and economic changes and voicing their frustrations with government policies

[11] According to Melaku Habtwold(2019) Reforming EPRDF essentially has two key objectives: the first is to reinvigorate it through centrist policies and programs that will meet the rising demand of the public. The second goal is to bring together all members of EPRDF and the affiliated ruling parties into a single national entity.

## 2. Concepts of Ethnic Identity, Ethnic Politics and Nation Building

There is the misconception in understanding the concepts and relationship between ethnic identity and nation building. Ethnic identity is just like any other set of identity dimensions that based on particular ethnic groups[12]. The ethnic identity of the group of people identified based on language, culture and other common characteristics. Ethnicity[13] as a basis for identity is a social rather than a physiological (Paul Collier,2002). It perceived as the set of "personal points of reference" on which people rely to navigate the social world that they inhabit.

Ethnicity conceptualized primarily as a self-locating[14] device in the social world, a kind of social radar that facilitates successful navigation of interpersonal relationships. It includes all kinds of collectivities that conceive themselves as a people apart, as a distinct community or society from the one that controls the central apparatus of a state. There are several symbols of ethnicity, which include language, ancestral links, religion, race, culture, territory, custom and common history. The general concepts of ethnic identity are similarity of particular group of people based on different social or other indicators. The central argument of is that it is useful to treat notion of identity[15] as the set of points of personal references on which people rely to navigate the social world they inhabit (Henry E. Hale,2016)

Ethnic politics refer to the political system that established based on the interest of particular ethnic. It is a decision that promotes democracy based on the particular ethnic problems or challenges. Ethnic politics[16] reinforced by ethnic democracy to solve particular ethnic challenges. Ethnic democracy is a political system that combines a structured ethnic dominance with democratic, political and civil rights for all. Both the dominant ethnic group and the minority ethnic groups have citizenship and are able to fully take part in the political process. That mean ethnic politics cannot reject the citizenship of its ethnic in the sovereign country.

A nation is a stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, history, ethnicity, or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. Nation-building is constructed or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. Nation-building aims at the unification of the people

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[12] An 'ethnic group' is supposed to be a cultural category, of which there are said to be certain continuing behaviors that are passed on from generation to generation and that are not normally linked in theory to state boundaries

[13] This concept of the ethnic identity was emerged in Africa after the 1960s post-colonial period of nation building.

[14] The history of human society has shown that human beings have always identified themselves with a particular group, class or clan. A sense of belonging to such a particular collectivity has always been indicated by some interests of social, economic, cultural, political or religious nature

[15] Since identity is defined by a person's relationship to the social world and represents a self-positioning within it, it is inherently situational. One crucial implication is that identity itself changes as a person's environment changes because environmental change forces a reevaluation of the person's relationship to that environment, at least on a minimal level.

[16] Few politicians talk about their ethnic problem but could not promote ethnic democracy that solves its problem in consensual democracy.

within the state so that it remains politically stable and practical in the long run. In the nation building process the major priority is to strength the national sovereignty that protects the nation from the abuse of external forces. The fundamental goal of nation building[17] is to create the collective ethnic identity. The nation buildings will strength the sovereignty and international recognition or acceptance of the country.

3. **Theoretical Review on Ethnic Identity and Nation Building**

It is actually vital to understand the relationship between ethnic identity and nation building during the last few decades. Today, most of the conflict in the political transition country is related to ethnic conflict. Power struggles among and within the various ethnic nationalities creates deep hostility, hatred and resentment that will eventually result to violence and war in the system (Samuel Osaretin ,2016). Currently, around 95% of wars are civil wars, the large majority of which are considered ethnic conflicts[18], although what exactly constitutes an ethnic conflict is open too much dispute (John and Bernadette, 2016). Ethnic conflict[19] is still considered one of the greatest threats to international security in the world today. As a result, many scholars have been considering ethnic identity politics as a barrier for democratic development.

Solomon Gebreyohans (2014) argues that Ethiopia should give special attention to depoliticizing ethnicity sooner than later, including by reopening its constitution for discussion and revisiting its electoral and political parties' laws. The chauvinist elites' classes adhere to the principle of "Itiopiawinnet" (Ethiopianness) which kills identity based on nationality (Jean-Nicolas Bach, 2014). According to this argument, recognizing ethnic identity encourage civil war[20] and fragmentation of the national unity. The unitary nationalist perceives themselves as civilized, rational and above and beyond identity politics which they contrast with the tribalist, emotional and narrow-minded ethnic nationalism (Goitom Gebreluel, 2019). These political thinking wants to build democracy by the cost of ethnic identity. Traditionally, political scientists did not attach much importance to the ethnic aspects of political mobilization. Not that ethnic politics were entirely discounted; but scholars often assumed that the politics of ethnic solidarity would be disappearing with the ongoing development of modernization and the spread of liberal-democratic values (Kymlicka, 2000).

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[17] Actually, there is the debate on few groups who want to build nation building with single or pure ethnic identity without considering the multicultural or linguistic of the given country. ðÑ

[18] Even though violent ethnic conflicts often look like highly unorganized and spontaneous outbursts of popular anger, in reality they always involve a certain degree of planning, organizational effort and strategic deliberation.

[19] Among developing countries, Africa is more ethnically diverse than other regions and it has the highest incidence of civil war, a phenomenon often interpreted as the post-colonial re-emergence of ancestral ethnic hatreds(Paul Collier,2002)

[20] According to Rebecca Tong(2009) The "us against them" mentality may be accurate, but it is insufficient in explaining occurrences of ethnic violence. In multicultural and multi linguistic sate or world ethnicity can be the direct sources of violence and war. The major problem is misunderstanding the broad purpose of ethnicity and its constitution in democracy and nation building in the country.

Against the above arguments, the ethnic[21] group becomes an ideal cohesive group unit and an effective tool for social mobilization[22]. Ethnic diversity is often seen as being detrimental to ethnic peace and national unity, particularly if ethnicity is the basis for political mobilization (Anaid lesken, 2014). Social scientists broadly agree that ethnicity is among the most important factors in politics, playing a role in everything from civil wars to economic development (Henry E. Hale ,2002). During the last century, the world has been experiencing three[23] waves of nationalist movements. Strong ethnic identity[24] would be the base for democracy and nation building. There are extremely diverse[25] societies (India, Papua New Guinea) that rate as successful democratizers. According to Mark R. Beissinger(2002) there are even cases where the lack of strongly felt ethnic identities turns out to have been harmful to the building of democracy. Democracy usually must start from recognizing group identity (ethnic identity). Democratic ethnic identity[26]politics, improve culturalization of different ethnic to consolidate reliable peace and economic development with strong nation building[27].

The third wave[28] of democracy included the importance and relevance of ethnic identity in the democratic process and nation building. As the third wave democracy spread to Asia, the Soviet bloc, and Africa—all regions with societies far more ethnoculturally fragmented than Southern Europe and Latin America— ethnic or communal issues came to the fore (Mark R. Beissinger,2002). This wave of democracy also raised the issue of "stateness[29]" as a necessary prerequisite for successful democratization. Historically, the initial stages of state building were accomplished mostly through expansionist conquests or reactions to such efforts (Kidane Mengisteab, 2007).

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[21] Most of the world's countries today are multi-ethnic, due to thousands of years of migration

[22] The new states of the developing world have often yet to go through this process: people identify more strongly with their kin group, ethnic group, or religious group, than with the nation (Paul Collier,2002).

[23] There were three waves of nationalist movement in the world: 1. The first wave took place at the end of World War I, 2 The second wave arose in the mid-twentieth century following World War II and 3. The collapse of the USSR started the third nationalist wave of the 20th century.

[24] Ethnic diversity may affect democratization's chances indirectly, by interacting with and influencing other factors such as economic growth, governmental performance, the strength or weakness of civil society, instability and large-scale violence, or institutional design.

[25] There are societies with one or a few major ethnocultural cleavages (including Israel, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Taiwan, and Turkey) that have produced relatively stable democratic politics.

[26]ethnic feelings are focused on ending foreign rule rather than fighting with other ethnic groups closer to home.

[27] According to Samuel Osaretin (2016) poverty of leadership in terms of forging national integration among the multiple ethnic nationalities in Nigeria is the major cause of ethnic politics and violence.

[28] The prevailing view among political scientists has long been that ethnic diversity and strong ethnic nationalisms are barriers to stable democracy. Recent evidence from the "third wave" of global democratization, however, suggests that this need not always be so, and indeed that ethnic nationalism can, under the right conditions, work for rather than against democracy's rise and consolidation.

[29] As some countries undergoing political opening saw the rise of separatist nationalisms, with state breakup or even ethnic warfare ensuing in a few cases

Ethnic politics is the working together of all ethnicities to create a strong sovereign country to transform the nation. The ethnic politics that focus on polarizing the historical ethnic difference affect the future nation building and democratic transition process. The earlier period state formation was not considering the ethnic identity of the nations. Recently ethnicity[30] is at the center of politics in divided societies. So, it is relevant to answer ethnic identity question with maximum social and economic benefits. The extreme politicization[31] of ethnicity without certain limit can affect the nation building. Today argument is nation building can be achieved with the effective self-administration of ethnic identity[32].

Both modern nationalism and modern democracy[33] share a kinship with the principles of popular sovereignty and self-determination. This new thinking uses both the ethnic identity and nation building to consolidate deliberate democracy and economic transformation. Building positive relationship between different ethnic identity and culturalization of ethnicity would be the sources of strong nation building. It is likely that the interaction between the state and identity groups and among identity groups would be more susceptible to conflict in countries where state building and consolidation of national citizenship are less developed, inter-identity relations are unequal and the state is perceived to be partial in its relations with identity groups(Kidane Mengisteab,2007). Creating pure ethnicity or exclusionary characteristics of ethnic identity politics are both harmful. Everyone must learn the lesson from this theoretical review on ethnic politics and nation building to speed up our current political reform[34].

### 4. EPRDF's Partial Political Thinking: Ethnicity and nation building

EPRDF established in 1989 to remove the military government from power. Many scholars or writer argues that the EPRDF[35] thinking and the formation was highly influenced by TPLF (Tigray People Liberation Front). The political thinking of the Front was based on the group or collective right that focus on the identity politics or ethnic politics. It gives more priority for the ethnicity right to mobilize the people and at the same time to exercise self-administration through revolutionary democracy.

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[30] This combination of ethnic diversity and ethnic conflict during democratic transition often portends the formation of ethnic political parties around particularistic and chauvinistic group identity

[31] Many argue that the exclusionist character of ethnic nationalism makes it a weak basis on which to build a democratic society, and that only a self-consciously civic nationalism is ultimately compatible with democratic development (Mark R. Beissinger,2002)

[32] Recent studies suggest that it is not ethnicity per se but the role of ethnicity in the political process

[33] We need democratic value in ethnic identity politics to prevent ethnic war and violence.

[34] As the world becomes more interconnected and ethnic groups face one another more often, in order to ensure peace, nations must learn how to cultivate societies of civic trust across ethnic lines (Rebecca Tong,2009).

[35] One method the EPRDF used to broaden its ethnic representation was to establish "friendly" coalition parties, drawing representation from each ethnic group.

The ethnic based seven regional state and two special administrations were formed, since the approval of the federal constitution[36] in 1995. It was the courageous move state structure of highly centralized system toward highly ethnic[37] based decentralization. The fundamental idea of the ruling party (EPRDF) was ethnic identity can be used simply as a means of the mass political mobilization. At the same time, it serves as a tool of devaluation of political and administrative power to the local people. The ruling party in the last three decades has given more emphasizes for ethnic identity[38] which aggravate ethnic related conflict throughout the country.

When ethnic federalism was put in place, it gave voice and legitimacy to deep feelings of oppression and subjugation of many Ethiopians (Olivia Woldemikael, 2019). Even many argue that the ethnic based federalism implemented in the country does not have the complete theoretical and practical analysis. Eminent thinkers from across the globe had gathered to discuss Ethiopia's predicament in the 1990s, but mapping a country's future is not the work of theorists and purists (Alemayehu Weldemariam, 2019).

The ethnic based self-administration without clear political boundary and practical democracy further escalate the unrest and ethnic related attack. According to Jon Harald, Sande Lie, Berouk Mesfin (2018) there are great discrepancies between the formal order of the political system and its realization of ethnic regionalism and processes of decentralization[39]. The EPRDF not use any alternative measure to mitigate the negative implications[40] of ethnic identity politics.

The ERDF's argument was "melting pot theory" which says in the long term the economic development[41] would neutralizes the ethnic conflict[42]. The ruling party has been successful in economic growth but not able to address the new emerging ethnic questions such as cultural freedom, administrative autonomy and inclusive economic development. The Front has worked day and night on ethnic identity recognition without practical democracy and social empowerment. Only recognizing ethnic identity could not accomplish economic and political transformation without effective and creative deliberative democracy. The vanguard[43] political

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[36] There is a nicely worded Federal Constitution in Ethiopia, but the government has difficulty in adhering to it

[37] The revolt in Bale and Eretria contributed to a larger attention to ethnicity in Ethiopia.

[38] More importantly, ethnic subdivision has no natural end point, as revealed by Ethiopia's neighbours, South Sudan and Somalia(Olivia Woldemikael, 2019)

[39] The EPRDF's conception of ethnicity did not always match the multi-ethnic makeup of many cities and areas. The Southern region, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and Harar are inhabited by multiple ethnic groups. Tigray, Amhara, Oromo and Somali states are dominated by one ethnic group but host others (International Crisis Group,2009).

[40] There is also reason to think that greater ethnic diversity is associated with poorer governmental performance and reduced provision of public goods, both or either of which could work to undermine a regime, whether democratic or not.

[41] Ethiopia's experience with its revolutionary democracy and developmental state has produced impressive economic results, but critical concerns remain with regard to democracy, the political space and human rights

[42] An ethnic conflict only occurs when a critical number of people have made the calculated decision to pursue their goals with violent means (Wolff, 2007).

[43] The EPRDF's version of a revolutionary democracy is founded on the idea that a vanguard party should rule on the basis of representing the people, knowing their concerns and needs, and engaging these based on the party's own overarching ideology

approach (central political thinking) not in line with the idea of modern and dynamic self-administration which speed up the ethnic identity empowerment.

Moreover, the ruling party gave more emphasis for ethnic identity[44] than state or nation building. Ethnic federalism is inherently flawed as it drags most political and economic debates down to the level of ethnicity. Ethiopia deserves a better political system beyond ethnic politics (Melaku Habtwold, 2019). Further there were no clear ethnic conflict prevention and control method at the national or regional level. The existing constitutional mechanisms and the federal government's conflict management have proven insufficient to resolve competing ethnic self-determination[45] (International Crisis Group,2009). According to the International Crisis Group (2009) the EPRDF's policy is a deliberate ploy to undermine national identity[46], pride and self-esteem flowing from the exceptional history and continuity of the Abyssinian empire and Ethiopian state.

Such political thought of EPRDF impaired the creation of collective identity that would enhance unity and harmony across the nation and nationalities[47]. The implementation of partial political thinking has encouraged many people to look for their ethnic identity than common national identity. "Ithiopiyawinet" was given second class identity[48]. Today even Including the higher professional and universities students stress on their ethnic identity (their ethnic root) than working on common and collective national identity. The ignorance of the ruling party on nation building strongly harmed the effectiveness of local administration and federalism political structure in implementing government development policy during the last three decades.

There were three major missing parts in relation to ethnic[49] identity and nation building in Ethiopia. The first was ethnic identity recognition without ethnic empowerment. Secondly it gave more priority for ethnic identity than collective national identity or nation building. Thirdly the attention was given more for economic development than political freedom and democracy. These indicate that three were partial political thinking of the ruling party. Critics said that the ethnic identity politics without nation building and practical democracy was a deliberate action of the ruling party to establish or create minority[50] rule political system in the country[51].

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[44] Following the demise of the Derg in 1991, ethno-nationalists conquered the center. What accounted for their rise was the failure of the centralization project, which was bent on bloody cultural homogenization. The failure to incorporate the periphery into the center had exacerbated a sense of alienation from society

[45] The 2004 referendum cited above allocated some 500 kebelles to Oromiya and 100 to Somali, but the border is not yet fully demarcated.

[46] The constitutional granting of self-determination to ethnic groups as a deliberate step backward from the nation building process.

[47] The combination of ethnic territorial units and ethnic parties…cumulates cleavages and can have a disastrous effect on national unity and political stability(Alemayehu Weldemariam,2019)

[48] The attribution of sovereignty to nation, nationalities and people means the constitution is a product of consensus among ethnic group inhibiting the Ethiopian state. This indirectly implies that every Ethiopia should first identify herself with one of the ethnic groups in the country before she claims the Ethiopian nationality (Semahagn Gashu Abebe,2012 )

[49] Ethnicity all of a sudden become the predominant explanation of many of the things that went wrong in the society (Hizkias,2010).

[50] Many describe ethnic federalism as a malicious TPLF tactic to plant divisions among ethnic groups so as to facilitate rule by the Tigrayan minority. The allegation that the TPLF manipulates ethnic identities and conflicts to stay in power is made by most opposition supporters (International Crisis Group,2009)

Under the EPRDF rule, Ethiopia made impressive gains in healthcare, education, and the eradication of extreme poverty. But the constitutional promise of one political and economic community had been undercut by a lack of democratization (Melaku Habtewold, 2019)

## 5. The New Emerging Thinking of Prosperity Party: Ethnicity and Nation Building

The past decades political success and failure has given a good opportunity for the new Prosperity Party (PP)[52] to design and develop new problems solving approaches on Ethiopia's ethnic politics and nation building. Such political thinking was designed and developed with appropriate[53] preparation in answering the deep rooted ethnic related conflict and at the same time building strong sovereign and legitimate national state. The new property party congenital from the EPRDF which has more experiences in changing the economic and political landscape of the country.

But the changes during the last thirty years were not transformational in terms of ethnic identity and nation building. The new party has developed the new political thinking to address the major challenges the nation has been facing regarding ethnic identity politics and nation building[54]. The Prosperity Party nether left nor right wing to address our existed problems. It will use balanced view or innovative thought that realize the meaningful ethnic based self-administration with nation building.

The Table 1 below summarize the major new thinking of the Prosperity Party regarding ethnic identity and nation building as compared to EPRDF. The first major shift was the consideration given for nation building. The new party decided to balances both the ethnic identity politics with collective identity at national level. During the last three decades the national integration was fade up due to the extreme pollicization of ethnic identity. Most of the time the ethnic political elites want to solve their economic and social problems by damaging the nation building/state building.

The Prosperity Party focus on ethnic reintegration[55] to create the collective identity[56] to build strong nation that resolve the question of ethnic identity. National integration involves primarily the wielding of disparate social,

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[51] Looking back, it was only three years ago that Ethiopia was on the brink of a precipice. Unequal distribution of wealth, lack of freedom, widespread unemployment, corruption and self-enrichment on a grand scale were rampant.

[52] Of the four parties that comprised the EPRDF, only the TPLF has refused to join the new PP. Already the governing parties representing 5 regions, which were not members of the EPRDF, but were recognized as allies of the EPRDF have joined the PP in preparation for May 2020 elections. They are: 1) Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP); 2) Benishangul-Gumuz Democratic Party (BDP); 3) Somali Democratic Party (SDP); 4) Gambela People's Democratic Movement (GPDM); and 5) Harari National League (HNL).

[53] Clientnast or group based political approach not solving the problem and also not modernize our political culture to transform the nation

[54] Dissolving the reigning EPRDF and fashioning a new national party, or what some refer to as a Pan-Ethiopian party, is a courageous and daring move, essential for Ethiopia's future (Lawrence Freeman,2020)

[55] The nature of identity relations, in turn, is likely to impact the nature of the state. The more identity politics are characterised by state-identity or inter-identity hostilities, the more difficult it will become for the state to provide public goods and services effectively or to establish itself as a neutral promoter of broad social interests((Kidane Mengisteab,2007).

economic, political religious ethnic and geographical element into a single nation-state. Nation building refers to a process, strategy and method of constructing a national identity and a sense of shared consciousness and national consensus among disparate groups using the power of the state (Nathaniel Danjibo1 Kelvin Ashindorbe,2018). The new emerging argument is the ethnic identity politics would be more effective with a strong nation building[57]. The nation building[58] will modernize economic, political and social system that can consolidate the right of the ethnic identity throughout the country. So, the Prosperity Party will exert more efforts on nation building unlike EPRDF's period which was overlooked in the last three decades.

The second major shift of the Prosperity Party is the ethnic identity politics should be based on issues or idea than ethnic similarity. Any idea that has an innovative or transformative power can be applied across all region or location to improve or modernize our people life. The new party work beyond the recognition of the particular ethnic identity[59]. The party focus improving problem solving capacity of nation and nationalities than politicizing ethnicity. Its emphasis will be in providing the universal need of our people by encouraging effective and efficient resources utilization. So, idea matter than particular ethnic group ideology. It promotes and encourage breakthrough idea that advance people life than focusing on short term political ideology. The party believe that there is adequate local and international knowledge that address any ethnic identity and nation building issues or questions.

The third new thinking of the prosperity party is, it uses identity politics as a means for the social and economic empowerment. The final goal or demand of people is to improve their life quality. The recognition of ethnic identity could not change the ethnic life quality. The new party works on empowering ethnic identify through deliberative democracy that enhance policy implementation and efficient utilization of resources.

The fourth new political thinking of the prosperity party is democratization of the ethnic politics. Certain democratic value must be respected under the ethnic identity politics. The major elements of democratic values are the rule of law, equality of people and freedom of the people. In the prosperity party ethnic identity politics must satisfy the minimum requirement of democratic principles. Politicizing ethnic problem cannot give us road

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[56] There are many places to start to develop collective identity. Ethiopia is rich in history and culture: it is the only African nation never to be colonised, possesses unique scripts and literature, indigenous practices of democracy, and a long tradition of religious pluralism. These could be the building blocks for a shared story or value.

[57] In the last thirty-year ethiopiawinet was second class identity as compared to ethnic identity. Many top leaderships of EPRDF said that ethiopiawenet is the right not an obligation. According to prosperity party we cannot separate ethiopianwinet from ethnic identity, both are first class identity in the country.

[58] It is not necessary for ethnic groups to give up their identities and loyalties in order to be incorporated into the state-nations of developing countries.

[59] Due to institutionalization of ethnicity, social relations have become more and more ethnic oriented, the bias and prejudice of people to other ethnic groups is increasing and clear tensions are emerging for controlling of political power and economic resources among the elites of different ethnic group (Semahagn Gashu Abebe,2012) ).

and drinking water rather understanding the ethnic problem systematically by using highly level consultation and discussion to bring social change. The new Prosperity Party promote the civil or liberal ethnic nationalism which relay on rational thinking that promote strong multicultural society.  The new party will change the hostile ethnic relation to ethnic co-operation by encouraging democratic nationalism.

**Table 1: The political thinking of Prosperity and EPRDF on ethnicity and nation building**.

| S.N | The new prosperity's political thinking | Previous EPRDF's political thinking |
|-----|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ethnic identity politics to consolidate collective identity or nation building[60] | Ethnic identity politics for more autonomous administration without collective identity |
| 2 | Ethnic Identity politics based on idea or issues | Ethnic identity politics based on ethnic differenced or historical events |
| 3 | Ethnic identity as a source of social and economic transformation | Ethnic identity politics to exercise self-administration or ethnic recognition |
| 4 | Democratization of ethnicity than politicization of ethnicity | Pollicization of ethnicity than democratization of ethnicity |
| 5 | Encourage multiparty and pluralistic political system for national unity | Encourage dominance or vanguard political power than multiparty democracy |
| 6 | National political party for political consensuses and ethnic reintegration | Regional political party with out clear national political orders or nation building |
| 7 | Pragmatic political system on ethnic identity and nation building | Clientelism political system on ethnic identity and nation building |

The fifth new shift in the Prosperity Party is the establishment of the multi-party[61] or pluralistic political system in the country. Despite its democratic rhetoric, EPRDF's regime is unwilling to share power or to accept criticism as normal (International Crisis Group,2009). According to the Prosperity Party, idea difference would be used as a means to transform the country and build national unity. The new party opens the political space[62] to encourage different opinion to speed up political transformation. Limited number of political parties working on common and shared value will facilitates national unity, economic development and democracy.  After new reform more than twenty opposition political party were enter the country to join the peaceful process of

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[60] Nation building is essentially a process of unification. It involves the creation or discovery of communalities and imagining a shared destiny.

[61] This formation of prosperity party opens up a possibility to move away from the EPRDF's history of ethnic patronage and exclusion (Olivia Woldemikael, 2019).

[62] Political space refers to the ecosystem within which political parties operate, and the freedom that organizations, groups and individuals have to participate in the democratic process(National Democratic Institute,2014)

political reform. Today there is no active opposition[63] parties in abroad or in the country that fight to remove the reformist government.

The other breakthrough of the Prosperity Party is the establishment of one[64] national political party than the Collision Front (EPRDF[65]). Ethnic identity-based politics need well organized and effective thinking to address people diverse need. The regional based ethnic identity political parties were changed to national level identity-based political party. The national level prosperity party has strong will[66] to create ethnic cooperation and harmonization[67] by building stable and centralistic political system. Political idea must be cross boundary to speed up political and economic modernization. These can be achieved through one political party than client oriented regional and local political parties. The established one national political party will create positive relation between different ethnic identities and regional states.

The other new political thinking of Prosperity Party is the pragmatic political approaches that based on the nature and extent of the problems. All local and national problems must be solved by detail investigation and consensus building approach. The rule of law or majority-based principle cannot solve all the problem in effective and efficient ways. So, Prosperity Party try to solve the ethnic and nation building challenges based on the particular context and nature. Such knowledge-based or pragmatics approach transform our political system from cartel or clientelism to egalitarian political system. In addition to these, the new Prosperity Party came up with different new world class ideas that address our people basic need in the short time. The party relay on new global thinking and at the same time lean from past three-decade political experiences in the country.

6. **Summary**

Political party is the choice many modern people to get quality decision to realize fast economic and social development. Countries with dynamic and vibrant political parties enjoyed not only economic growth but achieved social and economic justices. Ethiopia failed to get appropriate and dynamic political party that address local and regional social, economic and political challenges. The EPRDF that managed to remove the

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[63] More than ten liberation front joined the peaceful political reform program. The major one include Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD), Sidama Liberation Front (SLF), Ethiopian People's Patriotic Liberation Front (EPPLF), Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF), Afar Liberation Front (ALF) and Gambella Liberation Front (GLF)

[64] "If a broad-based, ideological party exists which appeals across ethnic lines, then ethnic territorial lines can be tolerated." (Alemayehu Weldemariam,2019)

[65] EPRDF has established its own client parties at regional level that are directly and indirectly controlled and managed by party power house at the center. Largely, the party apparatus at regional constituency since their existence is highly dependent on the will of party officials at the centers rather than having some form political legitimacy from their respective constituency((Semahagn Gashu Abebe,2012)

[66] Political will refers simply to the motivations of various stakeholders, including political leaders, activists, and groups, which influence their behavior in one way or another. Political will may be shaped by a multitude of factors

[67] According to Hailie E. (2012) Since EPRDF controlled the power throne in 1991, there are extreme conflicts among different Ethnic groups. EPRDF has been using boldly ethnicity to stay on power by creating conflicts among ethnic groups and to manipulate, to oppress, persecute, revenge, and disappearance of people who stand against the EPRDF propaganda

military government before thirty years has failed to keep its promise in addressing the question of ethnic identity and nation building. Rather the Front worked hard to maintain its political power and ideology in the name of ethnic self-administration and federalism.

Recently the Front has decided to change its organizational structure and political thinking to implement the national wide political and economic reforms. The Front changed its organization structure and name from Collusion to national prosperity party. The party developed its new political thinking. The major shift in the new political thinking were ethnic identity politics with nation building, focusing on issues than only identity politics, multiparty political system than dominance political party, pragmatic politics than ideological tied politics and democratizing of ethnicity than politicizing ethnicity. Such new political thinking would consolidate nation building, practical federalism and inclusive economic development. Understanding such universal and local based political thinking will transform the nation as a whole and ethnic identities challenges in particular. It is the blessing time for our people to get the new political party that works for people universal need than its pre-determined political ideology.

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