

The Making of Ethiopia's House of Peoples Representatives

Many scholars and observers have asked and continue to ask why Ethiopia's political situation is what it has been and what it is at this moment with uncertain future. Some scholars suggest that it is in a malfunctioning political state.

Many questions can be asked. How much is a country affected by its leadership? What are the yardsticks of the capability of its leadership? How much do academic qualification and age of the leadership matter? What about the composition of the peoples that inhabit the country that was formed through force?

In its column of this month, Voice Finfinne looks at the composition of members of Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives. This report emphasizes on the data of the representatives from Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states, which comprise over 70 percent of Ethiopia's population and representatives of 178, 138 and 38, respectively for these states. The comparison is made in terms of the composition of the representatives of the individual state relative to the other two states. Data for the representatives of the remaining states is left out in the interest of space.

Based on the Central Intelligence Agency's world fact book, the composition of Ethiopia's population is as follows: Oromo 40%, Amhara and Tigre 32%, and the remaining 28% are other nations and nationalities. According to the 1994 Ethiopian government census, the population of the states of Amhara and Tigray are 13,834,297 and 3,136,267, respectively. Based on these numbers, the breakdown of the Amhara and Tigre peoples in Ethiopia is approximately 26% and 6%, in that order. The above numbers translate to what is shown in Figure 1.

As the saying goes, pictures speak more than thousand words, and one can leave up to the readers to make their observations and judgments about the making of Ethiopia's government. The source of the information used to draw most of the graphs is Ethiopia's parliament website at <http://www.ethiopar.net/>.

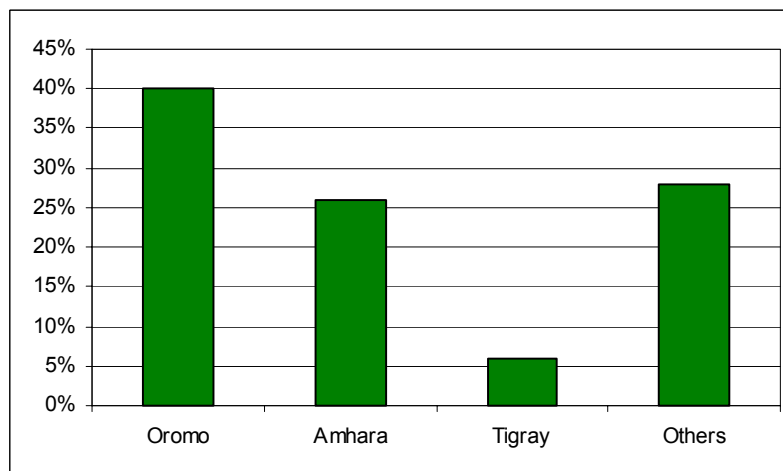


Figure 1. Composition of Ethiopia's population

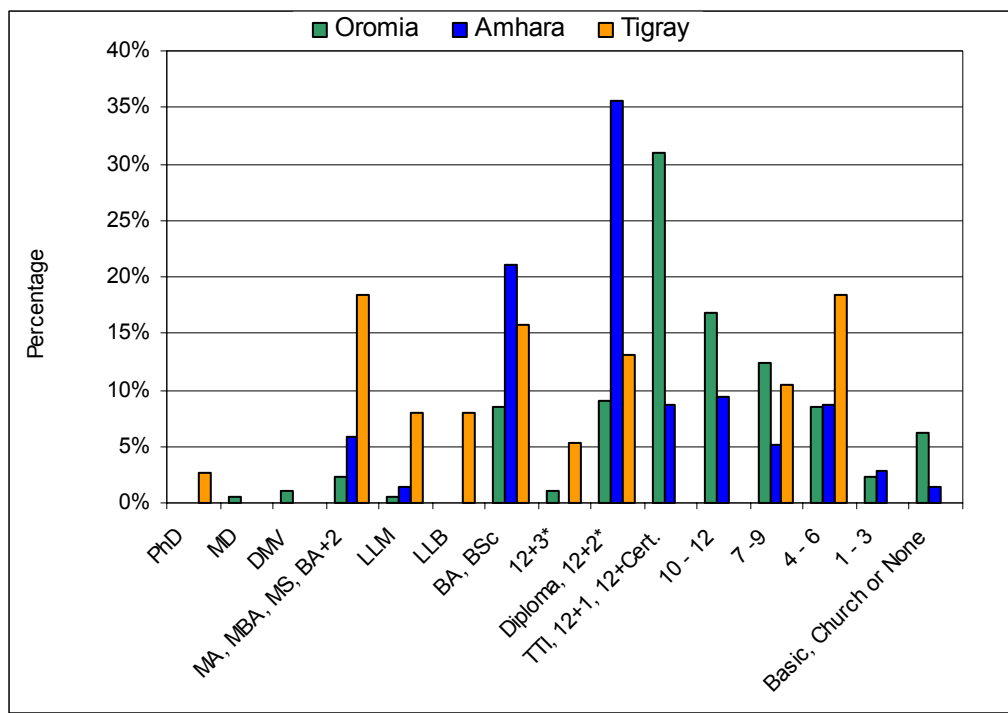


Figure 2. Academic qualification of Ethiopia’s House of Peoples’ Representatives reflecting representatives of Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states. Those with MA or equivalent for Tigray State constitute one of the largest percentages whereas in the case of Oromia, the largest proportion is the TTI and equivalent classification.

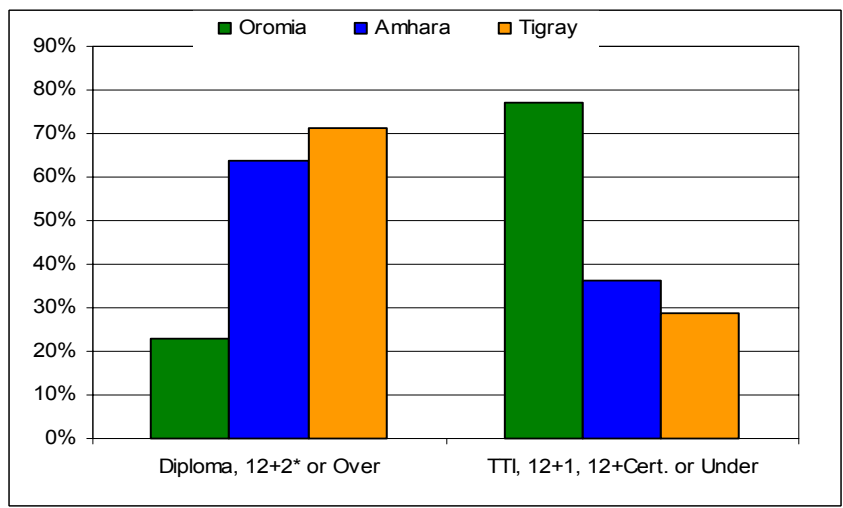


Figure 3. Academic qualification of Ethiopia’s peoples representatives reflecting representatives of Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states when broken down into Above TTI (Teachers Training Institute) and TTI and Under ranges. Readers may note that most, if not all, of the students who train at Teacher’s Training Institutes in Ethiopia are those who were not successful to enter college after taking the 12th grade matriculation examination.

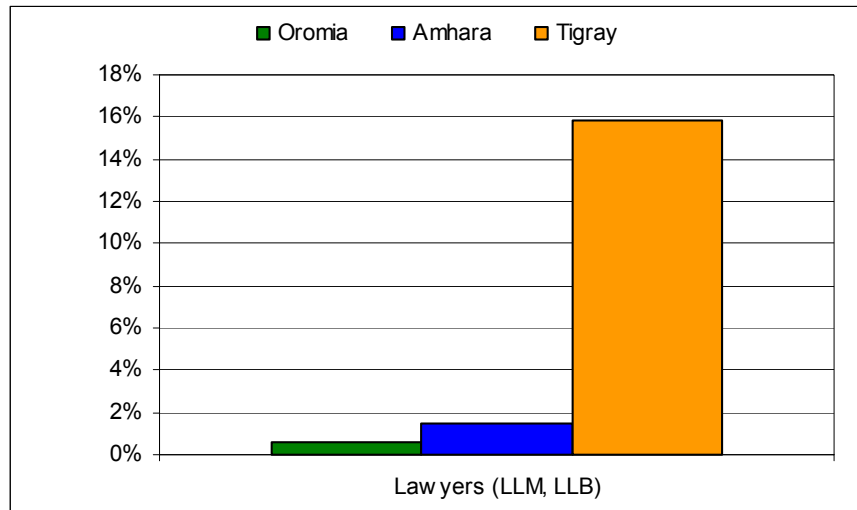


Figure 4. Composition of lawyers (with LLM and LLB degrees) of the representatives of Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states.

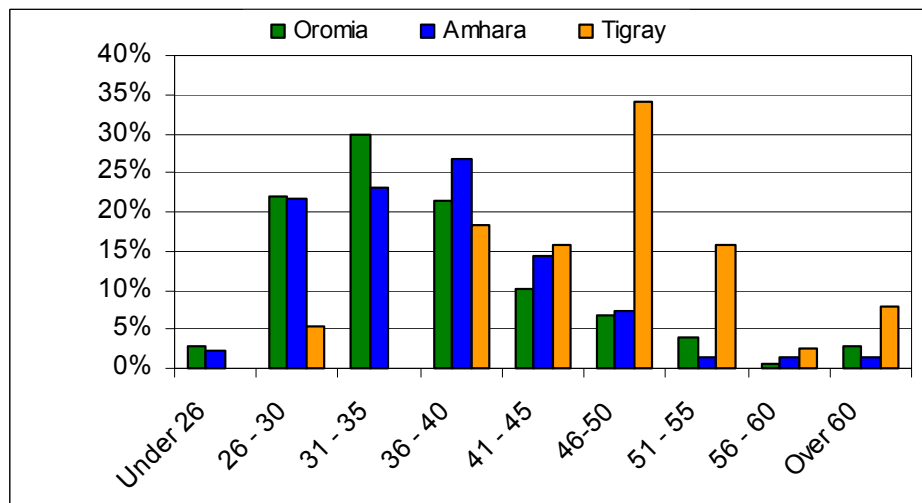


Figure 5. Age distribution of the composition of the representatives of Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states. The largest proportions of Oromia’s representatives are in the 31 – 35 age range followed by those in the 26 – 30 age range. For Tigray, the largest percentage is in the 46 – 50 age range.

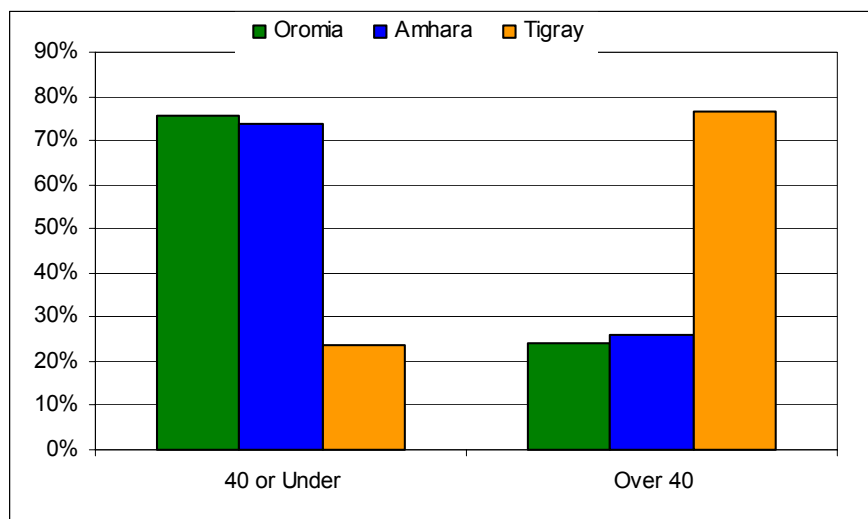


Figure 6. Age group of Ethiopia’s peoples representatives reflecting the composition of the representatives of Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states when broken down into 40 and Under and Over 40 year old age ranges.

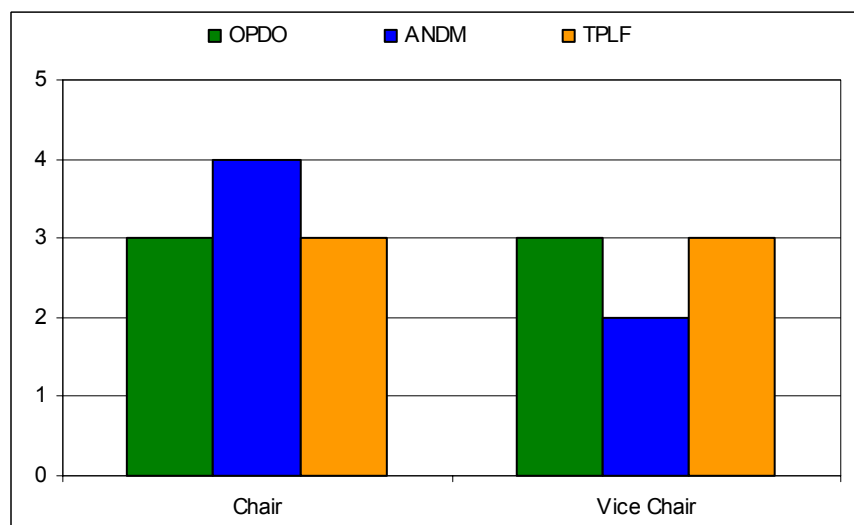


Figure 7. Number of committee chairpersons and vice chairpersons of Ethiopia’s House of Peoples’ Representatives Standing Committees reflecting elected representatives from Oromia, Amhara and Tigray states. There were a total of twelve standing committees at the time of reference.

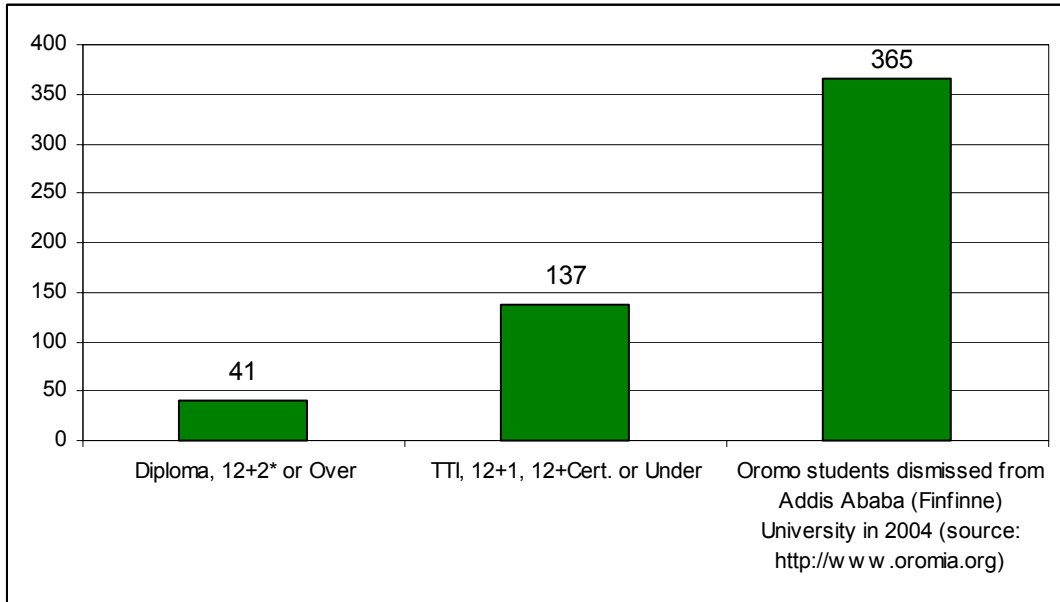


Figure 8. Comparison of Oromia State's members of Ethiopia's House of Peoples Representatives academic qualification with the total number of Oromo students dismissed from Addis Ababa (Finfinne) University in 2004.

Before concluding, we may note that the Ethiopian government is run by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) core leadership headed by Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.