Developmental State and Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia: Is Leadership the Missing Link?

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ABSTRACT

The ethnic federalization of the post-1991 Ethiopia and the subsequent adoption of developmental state paradigm are the two most important pillars for the country's political and economic restructuring. An interventionist developmental state model is opted for against the dominant narrative of the non-interventionist neo-liberal approach as the right path to conquer poverty: a source of national humiliation. On the other hand, ethnically federated Ethiopia is considered as an antidote to the historical pervasive mismanagement of the ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity of the polity. The presence of these seemingly paradoxical state models in Ethiopia makes it a captivating case study for analysis. Ethiopia's experiment of pursuing a developmental state in a decentralized form of governance not only deviates from the prevalent pattern but also is perceived to be inherently incompatible due to the competing approaches that characterize the two systems. This article argues that the way in which the developmental state is being practiced in Ethiopia is eroding the values and the very purposes of ethnic federalism. Its centralized, elitist and authoritarian nature, which are the hallmark of the Ethiopian developmental state, defeats the positive strides that ethnic federalism aspires to achieve, thereby causing discontent and disenfranchisement among a swathe of the society. The article posits that the developmental state can and should be reinvented in a manner that goes in harmony with the ideals of ethnic federalism. The notion of process-based leadership remains one way of reinventing the Ethiopian developmental state model.

Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the oldest states in Africa whose history dates to the Axumite civilization in the first millennium BC. A country that was once at the apogee of world civilization during this period has now become one of the poorest nations in the world. Many people best remember the country for the Live Aid concert organized in response to the horrific famine which occurred in the 1980s. Despite remarkable changes since then, the poverty level remains deep and broad where close to 30 percent of the population

continues to live below the poverty line.[1] Ethiopia's per capita income is one of the lowest in the world even when compared to the regional average.[2] Its economy is also largely dependent on traditional and rain fed agriculture which accounts for more than 40 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Ethiopia is also described as a mosaic of people for its ethnic and cultural diversity. This is particularly true following the state formation process in late 19th century that incorporated various ethnic groups into the Ethiopian polity. This process has made Ethiopia a multi-nation polity of more than 80 different ethnic groups. However, due to an inability to properly manage and accommodate such diversity, Ethiopia has been in a state of tension and political turmoil for most of the 20th century. Contestation over the state and struggle for the re-making of Ethiopia in a way that truly reflects its constituents dominate the historical trajectory of the 20th century. The ruling party - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) - was in fact born out of the struggle for the remaking of Ethiopia.

When EPRDF took control of state power in 1991, it inherited a country ravaged by war and at the same time had to grapple with the age-old 'national question'. Hence, addressing the issue of poverty and socio-economic and political questions of different ethnic groups remained a key priority of the government. Despite the fact that most post-colonial African societies experienced the same challenges, the approaches that Ethiopia has adopted to tackle these challenges are peculiar and deviate from the general pattern in Africa.

Whilst most African countries were pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions to adopt the pro-market and non-interventionist neo-liberal paradigm as the right approach for economic growth, Meles Zenawi, the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia who was considered as 'chief economic theoretician' of his party, rejected the neo-liberal approach claiming that it was a incapable of bringing about an African renaissance.[3] He instead advocated for a more interventionist developmental state (hereinafter referred to as DS) model that drew heavily from East Asia as an alternative policy for Africa generally and Ethiopia in particular. The country has registered startling economic growth since the adoption of the DS. The economy has registered an average 10 percent growth for over a decade, making the country one of the few African states that achieved great strides

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[1] 'Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Poverty Assessment' (2015), Report No: ACS12005, (World Bank Group), p.XV

[2] *Ibid*

[3] Zenawi, Meles (ND), 'African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings'

towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Subsequently, Ethiopia has become a 'success story' and 'donor darling'.

With respect to the issue of accommodating ethnic and cultural diversity, the country also adopted a novel and unique approach. Most African states pursued the nation-state model by placing priority on creating national identity as opposed to ethnic identity.[4] Since ethnicity is perceived to be a challenge to the state formation process, its public expression is largely denied though it still remains the main organizing force.[5] Ethiopia, on the other hand, followed a different path by recognizing ethnicity as the formal political element and defining feature of the political system since 1991.[6] The state is also restructured in accordance with ethnic federalism where power is decentralized to regional states, formed along an ethno-lingual basis.

What makes the Ethiopian case more interesting and particularly worthy of study is its attempt to experiment with DS in the context of a federal structure. This is a very rare trial, if not unprecedented, as DS - which is often considered *sue generis* of East Asia - is largely implemented in a unitary and centralized political system. Such bold steps in experimenting with new paradigms other than the dominant narratives should not only be encouraged but also well studied to draw lessons and build alternative policies tamed to the realities of Africa. In this regard, both Thandika Mkandawire and Meles Zenawi appealed for experimental new approaches and creating more political space for policy experiment in Africa.[7]

It should be stressed here that experiments sometimes go wrong and governments can make mistakes in the process. The history of DS in Asian countries clearly tells us that it is an outcome of many years of trial and error, emulation and context-specific innovations.[8] The experiment of DS in a federated Ethiopia has brought fast economic growth and remarkable progress in poverty reduction. On the flip side, it has also caused discontents among the wider public. Mass protests that roiled the country, mainly Oromia and Amhara regional states, from 2014 to 2018 are a case in point.

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[4] Habtu, Alem (2003), 'Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia: Background, Present Conditions and Future Prospects', *International Conference on African Development Archives,* Paper 57, pp. 4-5

[5] *Ibid*

[6] Abbink, Jon (2011), 'Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 597

[7] Mkandawire, Thandika (2010), *From Maladjusted States to Democratic Developmental State in Africa*, (Cape Town: HSRC Press), p. 78; Meles (ND), 'African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings'

[8] Mkandawiri (2010), p. 78

One of the issues which surfaced following these mass protests and the political crisis that ensued is the nature of the Ethiopian DS model and its interaction with the hard-won federal system. It is argued that the centralized and authoritarian nature of the Ethiopian DS has caused setbacks for the federal form of government. Cristopher Clapham, a renowned professor in the politics of Ethiopia and the Horn, captures the contradiction in the following words:

> 'The Ethiopian federal system was introduced as a response to the very distinctive and discriminatory historical legacy of Ethiopian statehood. And it was replaced by a new one, which was once again centralized under the hands of a central government reviving the very problems that the structure of the federalism had been designed to resolve in the first place'.[9]

Given the current political developments in the country, a study on the Ethiopian DS model vis-à-vis ethnic based federalism is both timely and topical. This article explores the interaction between the Ethiopian DS model and the federal arrangement by situating the discourse into the scholarship of leadership. It proceeds in six parts including this introduction. The second part sets the stage by contextualizing the main themes of the article: DS, ethnic federalism and process-based leadership. The third part on the other hand deals with DS and ethnic federalism within the Ethiopian context. It navigates the historical backdrops that informed the ruling party's resort to the DS and ethnic federalism paradigms. It further analyses the disconnects associated with the nature of the Ethiopian DS model. The fourth part projects a DS that underpins process-based leadership while the fifth part interrogates the Addis Ababa integrated Master Plan to substantiate the discussions in the preceding parts. The final part concludes this article, arguing that a Developmental State that undergirds the ideals of Process Based Leadership would mediate the tension between the competing approaches of the DS model and ethnic federalism.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

Developmental State

The term DS and its conceptualization was perhaps pioneered by Chalmers Johnson with his monumental book 'MITI and the Japanese Miracle'.

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[9] Quoted in Alebachew, Habtamu (2013), 'The Developmental State and Federalism in Ethiopia: Critique of Professor Clapham'

Johnson suggested that a state that aspires to economic achievement like Japan must be above all a developmental state that prioritizes and commits itself to development.[10] In his attempt to draw lessons from the 'Japanese miracle', he identified four features that characterise what he called 'Japanese developmental state'. These are: small and competent elite bureaucrats; an autonomous bureaucracy; state intervention in the economy without affecting the rules of competition; and pilot organization such as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in Japan.[11] He further argued that Japanese DS should be primarily understood as political, since political and nationalist objectives such as the desire to protect and promote itself in a hostile world are the impetus for DS.[12]

Peter Evans on his part introduced the idea of 'embedded autonomy' while characterizing DS. He argues that DS has to keep its autonomy to avoid capture by rent-seeking groups in the society; and, at the same time, should be embedded within the society not to risk excessive detachment.[13] He further asserts that bureaucracy, built based on meritocracy and a high sense of commitment and professionalism, will render the apparatus 'autonomous from different interest groups. The bureaucracy, nonetheless, is not insulated from the society, but is tied to the society to garner the required support for its policies.[14]

Adrian Leftwich also identified some of the distinctive elements of a 'classical DS model'. According to him, regimes repressive in nature, determined developmental elites, relative autonomy of the state and its elites, and powerful, competent and insulated institutions are some of the elements that the DS often features.[15] He further asserts that the DS politicians should 'have concentrated sufficient power, autonomy, capacity and legitimacy at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage the achievement of explicit development objectives'.[16] Most of the East Asian

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[10] Johnson, Chalmers (1982), *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 306
[11] Johnson (1982), pp. 315-318
[12] Leftwich, Andrian (1995), 'Bringing politics back in: Towards a model of the developmental state', *the journal of development studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 404
[13] Evans, Peter (1995), *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), p. 12
[14] *Ibid*. Industrial elites were considered as key partners in bringing industrial transformation.
[15] Leftwich, Adrian (1995), 'Bringing politics back in: Towards a model of the developmental state', *the Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 404-406
[16] Leftwich, A. (2001), *States of Development: On the Primacy of Politics in Development*, (Cambridge: Polity Press)

model exhibited such features where there was considerable concentration of political, military and ideological power in the hands of the state.[17]

With the growing interest on DS in the global south, there is a move to redefine the East Asian 20th century DS in light of the 21st century context and development theory. Accordingly, some scholars have endeavoured to carve out a DS workable to the 21st century.[18] The central argument of the new streams of thinking is that the 20th century DS model should be replaced by a new DS model that is more grounded on a bottom-up approach and defined by synergistic state-society relations. According to Evans, the 20th century DS model maintains close ties with the industrial elites while leaving the broader citizenry at the periphery.[19] The state-society relationship is narrowly constructed around the political elites, technocrats and the industrial elites. In other words, the relations are reduced to elite partnerships. Edidgheji agrees with this reflection, stating that the main limitation of DS remains that state-society relations are limited to government-business relations.[20] Furthermore, civil societies which play critical roles in tying state and society together are subject to attack. The new model of DS, which Evans describes as '21st century Developmental State' or 'democratic developmental state' as other scholars dub it, challenges this approach. To the contrary, a synergistic state-society relation - where its projects, national goals or public policy are results of negotiation and renegotiations through broad based deliberative mechanisms - is the core element of the new model. Thus, as the 20th century model was predominantly elite centred, the 21st century DS model seeks to reconstruct a broader connection between the political leadership and the larger public. In the same vein, White in his notion of 'inclusive embeddedness' suggests that the social basis of DS should go beyond a narrow band of elites and include a broader section of the society.[21]

This article builds on and seeks to situate the discourse on what Evans calls '21st century developmental state model' and its central element of synergistic state-society relations into leadership scholarship. Interestingly, the conceptual discussion over the '20th century' and '21st century' DS model in political economy - at least some of its aspects - fits

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[17] *Ibid*

[18] These include: Peter Evans (in search of the 21st century developmental state), Omano Edidgheji (Constructing developmental state in South Africa), and Gordon White & Mark Robinson (the Democratic Developmental State)

[19] Evans (2008), p. 7

[20] Edigheji, Omano (2005), 'A Democratic Developmental State in Africa?', *Centre for Policy Studies*, Research Report 105

[21] White, Gordon (1998), 'Building a democratic developmental state: Social democracy in the developing world', *Democratization*, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 14

well with the leader-centric and process-based leadership discourse in leadership literatures. The 20th century DS model resonates a leader centric leadership as it is mainly an elite coalition (political leaders-technocrats-industrial elites' partnership). On the contrary, the ideals of 21st century DS model jibe nicely with the process-based leadership approach: both place state-society relations at the centre of the equation.

Ethnic Federalism

Daniel Elazar, one of the leading scholars of federalism, conceives federalism as a system born out of the need of people and polities to 'unite for common purposes yet remain separate to preserve their respective integrity'.[22] Elazar further characterizes federalism as a 'contractual non-centralization' where powers are structurally dispersed among many centres whose legitimate authority is constitutionally guaranteed.[23] Widespread and entrenched diffusion of power are therefore the defining features of democratic federalism.[24] Within this noncentralized system, it aspires to achieve political integration through the combination of seemingly contradictory ideas of 'self-rule' and 'shared rule';[25] that is, the sub-national units reserve the right to govern themselves and at the same time acknowledge the authority of the central government to act on their behalf on certain matters.[26] In a federal structure, there are at least two governmental units: the federal and the regional. Both these units exercise certain powers vested in them pursuant to the constitution.

Federalism has also been considered as a promising alternative to accommodating ethnic diversity though some still opine it as detrimental to the unity of a state by intensifying already existing ethnic cleavages.[27] For instance, Alemante G. Selassie contends that the diffusion of power in a federal system permits the subunits to maintain its normative disagreements - such as those over values and culture - without having to exit the polity.[28] Moreover, different ethnic groups have different demands that complicate the politics in a multi-ethnic society. Some demand more representation in state institutions, while other questions may relate to the

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[22] Elazar, Daniel Judah (1987), *Exploring Federalism*, (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama press), p. 33
[23] *Ibid*, p. 34
[24] *Ibid*
[25] *Ibid*, p. 84
[26] Keller, Edmond J. (2002), 'Ethnic Federalism, Fiscal Reform, Development and Democracy in Ethiopia', *African journal of Political Science*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 24
[27] Fessha, Yonatan (2010), *Ethnic Diversity and Federalism: Constitution Making in South Africa and Ethiopia*, (London & New York: Routledge), p. 28
[28] G. Selassie, Alemante (2003), 'Ethnic Federalism: Its Promise and Pitfalls for Africa', *the Yale Journal of International Law*, Vol. 28, No. 51, p. 58

recognition of their identities, cultures and languages. Others may also go to the extent of claiming a separate nation-state. In such contexts where interests are at odds to each other, Watts suggests that federalism would offer help in reconciling these interests.[29] In the same vein, Ghai notes that the federal approach is worthwhile in maintaining unity by conceding claims of self-rule by different ethnic groups.[30] Donald Horowitz also reflected that federalism would mitigate the tension in a deeply divided society by 'proliferating the points of power'; that is, power will be scattered to institutions both at the centre and subnational unit. This will allow subnational units to exercise power and authority on the affairs of their people.[31] It is therefore against this backdrop that countries such as Ethiopia adopted ethnic federalism as an approach to deal with the multi-ethnic related intricacies.

It is apparent that ethnic federalism suggests a heterogeneous society and a non-centralized power structure. Here lies the major contradiction with the DS model. Given the urgency of their development goals (namely structural transformation in a short span of time) and the need to devise a cohesive, focused set of goals; mobilize and allocate resources for investment that are in line with national goals; and execute policies expediently across the nation with little or no procedural hurdles, DS models are predominantly a centralized and interventionist system. In this regard, both Lefort and Clapham - two long-time observers of Ethiopia - observe intrinsic incompatibility between Ethiopia's DS model and ethnic based federal system.[32] Habtamu Alebachew, while summarizing Clapham's argument, states that the two arrangements ostensibly follow diverging courses: one as centralizing process and the other decentralizing process, with little or no common point of convergence.[33]

This issue, though intriguing, has received little attention from DS literatures. Across the discourse on Ethiopia, the topic is ignored except as a side note with a general remark on the 'inherent incompatibility' between the two.[34] The few literatures available so far dwell on how the ideals of

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[29] Watts (1999), cited in Fessha (2010), p. 28

[30] Ghai, Y. (2002), cited in Samuel (2011), 'Impact of Ethnic Federalism in Building Developmental State in Ethiopia', Research Paper, (International Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands), p. 12

[31] Horowitz (1985) cited in Keller, Edmond J. (2003), 'Ethnic Federalism and Democratization in Ethiopia', *In Horn of Africa*, Vol. XXI, p. 33

[32] Lefort, René (2013), 'the Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi: A Response to Alex de Waal', *African Affairs*, Vol. 112, No. 448, pp. 460-470; Clapham, Christopher (2017), 'The Ethiopian developmental state', *Third World Quarterly',* pp. 1-15

[33] Alebachew (2013)

[34] See, for example, Lefort (2013), p. 463; Fantini, Emanuele (2013), Developmental state, economic transformation and social diversification in Ethiopia, ISPI Analysis, No. 163, p. 1

ethnic federalism are affecting the functioning of the DS model but sidestepped the implication of DS on the hard-won federal system. For instance, Samuel Bonda studied the impact of ethnic federalism on the DS and concluded that some aspects of ethnic federalism such as ethno-lingual criteria for recruitment have posed negative impact to the success of DS.[35] Similarly, Beresa Jebena argues that ethnic federalism and its ethnically affiliated bureaucracy impede the success of DS in Ethiopia.[36]

No serious effort has been made to: investigate the way DS is pursued in Ethiopia; how that impacted the long-standing quest for self-rule of various ethnic groups in the country; and how the two systems can function in harmony. It is at this juncture that the concept of process-based leadership comes in as one of the frameworks to redefine DS to attune with the tenets of ethnic federalism.

Process-based leadership (PBL)

Despite a plethora of academic literature on leadership, the attempt to define it has triggered much more differences than consensus. As Stogdill rightly noted, 'there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it'.[37] Scholars have conceptualized leadership in variety of ways. According to Keith Grint, there are four perspectives of leadership:

i. Leadership as position
ii. Leadership as person
iii. Leadership as result; and
iv. Leadership as process (referred in this paper as process-based leadership).[38]

Funmi Olonisakin points out that the first two approaches remain popular in dealing with leadership.[39] Leadership as position presupposes occupying vertical position, usually formal, so that the resource that this position

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[35] Bonda, Samuel (2011), 'Impact of Ethnic Federalism in Building Developmental State of Ethiopia', master's thesis, International Institute of Social Studies, the Netherlands
[36] Jebena, Beresa (2015), 'Ethnic Federalism and Democratic Developmental State in Ethiopia: Some Points of Contradiction', *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 7, pp. 291-300
[37] Cited in Northouse, Peter G. 7th edn. (2016), *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, (California: Sage Publications), p. 2
[38] Grint, Keith (2010), *Leadership: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: oxford University Press), p. 4
[39] Olonisakin, Funmi (2015), 'Re-Conceptualizing Leadership for Effective Peace-making and Human Security in Africa', *Strategic Review for South Africa*, Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 129

places at their disposal will enable them to lead.[40] However, such conception of leadership has its own limitation since the position and its resultant resource imbalance do not necessarily guarantee obedience from followers. Moreover, it fails to recognize the fact that leadership largely follows a horizontal approach where exchange of influence may happen between those who have no formal authority.[41]

Leadership as person focuses on leaders and their personality, role, behaviour, influence and guidance.[42] This approach resonates with trait theory which was influential until the mid-20th century. According to this approach, leaders possess a set of traits which make them different from non-leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke, for instance, argue that 'effective leaders are actually distinct types of people in several key aspects'.[43] Several studies in the early 20th century were conducted to identify those traits possessed by what is called 'great leaders'. The acceptance of this approach began to wane particularly after the publication of Stogdill's comprehensive survey of literatures on the trait approach. He concluded that traits alone are not sufficient enough for an individual to emerge or be effective as a leader; rather, the traits must be found relevant in the situation a person is operating in.[44] Though this approach seems to be the most popular in conceptualizing leadership, it is also arguably the most criticized. One of its limitations remains that it fails to recognize the critical role of followers and the context in conceptualizing leadership. As Albert Murphy argued, leadership does not reside in the person, rather it is an interplay between the leader, followers and the context.[45] Thus, scholars not only find this approach less helpful in explaining the complex social realities but also misleading. In this regard, Olonisakin posits that applying a leader-centric approach to peace-making efforts, and other social problems by extension, is 'faulty at best or destructive at worst'.[46]

The third approach in conceptualizing leadership is the result-based approach. In this case, result is the defining element of leadership. Indeed, result is necessary in the conception of leadership. Nonetheless, the process is as important as the result. For instance, scholars maintain that a result achieved by coercion cannot be considered as leadership since it removes

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[40] Grint (2010), p. 4
[41] Grint (2010), pp. 5-6
[42] Pierce, John L. and Newstrom, John W., 6th edn.(2011), *Leaders and the Leadership Process: Readings, Self-Assessment and Applications*, (New York: McGraw-Hill), p. 3
[43] Cited in Northouse (2016), p. 20
[44] Northouse (2010), p. 20
[45] Murphy, Albert (1941), 'A Study of Leadership Process', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 6, No. 5, p. 674
[46] Oloniskain (2015), p. 129

the motivational aspect of leadership.[47] Olonisakin also argues that the process through which the outcomes are achieved are equally important to the result.[48] Again, result-based leadership does not properly define leadership.

In the 21st century, the conceptualization of leadership seemed to shift from the popular leader-centric approach towards process-based. For instance, Northouse defined leadership as 'a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'.[49] He further conceives leadership as an interactive event between the leader and the follower, not a one-way relationship.[50] In other words, it is a dynamic relationship and exchange of influence between the leader and followers. Albert Murphy also emphasizes the importance of the situation instead of the traits of leaders in defining leadership. He suggests that situations in which people find themselves create critical needs, and the nature of these needs determine the type of leadership and the leader.

Most importantly, as Olonisakin aptly reflects, 'process-based leadership is underlined by mutuality – "the sense of common purpose" - between leaders and the people they lead'.[51] The element of 'common goals' in Northouse's definition of leadership also stresses the concept of mutuality where leaders and followers forge shared purpose. The element of mutuality, Northouse maintains, gives leadership ethical overtones for it enables leaders to work together with followers achieving certain common goals.[52] PBL also pays heed to the process in which results are achieved. Consequently, scholars find PBL more fitting to the analysis of social phenomenon and offering a better explanation of the fluid and complex nature of such phenomenon. PBL is also a better alternative to respond to situations faced by society by mediating competing demands and bridging state-society disconnect.[53]

This article therefore intends to bring these virtues of PBL into the DS model. The main thrust of the article is that since the element of mutuality and two-way relation between leaders and followers are at the heart of PBL, a DS model that underpins these notions will not only be responsive to the needs of society but also suits the essence of ethnic federalism.

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[47] Grint (2010), p. 10
[48] Olonisakin (2015), p. 131
[49] Northouse (2016), p. 6
[50] *Ibid*
[51] Olonisakin (2015), p. 132
[52] Northouse (2016), p. 6
[53] Olonisakin (2015), p. 130

Developmental state and ethnic federalism in the Ethiopian context

Exploring the rationales of ethnic federalism

It is imperative to make the state formation process a starting point while discussing the genesis of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia. It was in the second half of the 19th century that Ethiopia got its present shape, through territorial expansion to the south, east and west, through the combination of 'diplomatic persuasion and brute force'.[54] The territorial expansion completely changed the geography, demography and most importantly ethnic composition of the Ethiopian empire. Within a short span of time (1875-1898), the empire incorporated several ethnic groups that are ethnically and culturally diverse.[55] Once the state formation process was completed, the nation building venture ensued through centralization and assimilation. New forms of political control replaced the traditional self-governing mechanisms in the newly incorporated southern territories.[56] As John Young observed, there was little room to integrate the different ethnic groups beyond the incorporation of few elites who accepted the northern assimilation.[57]

The centralization and assimilation process were pursued with much more vigour in the post-1941 period under the Emperor Haile Selassie regime, entrenching national inequality among different ethnic groups. This was, however, with its own attendant consequences. It unleashed inter alia, a social movement that came to be known as 'the student movement' in the 1960s and 70s. The students, who were hard-line Marxists, read the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions of the country through a Marxist-Leninist ideological frame. They rallied around what was perceived to be the two most important sources of injustice during the imperial regime: class and national oppression.[58] The regime was not responsive enough to the growing demands of the students and the wider marginalized segments of the society. The military junta, Derg, subsequently seized power in 1974.

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[54] Zewde, Bahru (2014), *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: the Ethiopian Student Movement c.1960-1974*, (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press), p. 188
[55] Zewde (2014), p. 188; Gudina, Merera (2007), 'Ethnicity, Democratisation and Decentralization in Ethiopia: The Case of Oromia', *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 86
[56] Gudina (2007), pp. 86-87
[57] Young, John (1996), 'Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 23, No. 70, p. 533
[58] Markakis (1987) cited in Gudina (2007), p. 89

The Derg began the project of dismantling the imperial regime bases and restructuring the state in accordance with socialist ideology. Though it is true that the land reform proclamation and measures taken towards the equal recognition of identity and culture of ethnic groups was one major shift,[59] there was no serious departure from previous regimes in addressing the broader national question. The quest for more autonomy and democratic expression was responded to with more centralization and unprecedented levels of repression. In this relation, Lovise Aalen observes that the Derg's policy towards ethnic groups was tolerant with its cultural expression but suppressive of its political expression.[60] Young similarly concludes that the military junta did not have any intention to decentralize power and allow meaningful mass participation in the government.[61] Centralization was entrenched more than ever. As a result, the regime began to face ethnic-based liberation fronts everywhere. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was one of such fronts that mushroomed in the 1970s.

TPLF was formed in 1975, according to some scholars, with a conviction that the making of the modern Ethiopian state had been a process of domination by the Amhara ruling elite against the rest of Ethiopia's ethnic groups.[62] The struggle capitalized on the 'national question' to mobilise the people against the military junta, a tactic inspired by the Stalinist theory of nationalities where ethnicity, as opposed to class struggle, was considered to be the natural and efficient way of mobilizing the rural people.[63] The TPLF later transformed itself into a multi-ethnic coalition representing the four core ethnic groups in Ethiopia and called itself the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). It finally succeeded in toppling the military regime and took over control of state power in 1991.

EPRDF organized a conference forthwith in July 1991. A transitional charter, one of the outcomes of the conference, gave its official blessing to ethnic federalism in reconfiguring the state structure. A new constitution was also ratified in 1994 and entered into force in 1995. The constitution established a federal republic that is structured into nine regional states,

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[59] Bulcha (1997), p. 53
[60] Aalen, Lovise (2006), 'Ethnic Federalism and Self-Determination for Nationalities in Semi-Authoritarian State: The Case of Ethiopia', *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 13, p. 246
[61] Young (1996), p. 534
[62] Kinfe (1994) cited in Balcha, Berhanu (2007), *Restructuring State and Society: Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia*, (SPIRIT PhD Series; No. 8), p. 62
[63] Vaughan, Sarah (2003), 'Ethnicity and Power in Ethiopia', (PhD dissertation, the University of Edinburgh), p. 170

each organized on an ethno-lingual basis.[64] It defined the respective powers of the federal and regional governments, pronouncing that they shall respect each other's power.[65] Article 39 of the constitution recognizes the right of ethnic groups - nation, nationalities and peoples as they are rather referred under the constitution - to self-determination including the right to secession. The right to full measures of self-government, the right to speak, write and develop their language, and to promote and preserve their culture are also constitutionally guaranteed rights of every nation, nationality and people of Ethiopia. The constitution not only recognizes the right to self-government of ethnic groups but also ensures 'equitable representation in state and federal governments'.[66] In sum, it is apparent that the ideals of ethnic federalism - among other things: regional autonomy; devolution of power; and cultural and language pluralism - are well incorporated into the constitution, so much so that the current ruling party has done well on paper in fundamentally addressing the historical national questions. However, the commitment towards the full implementation of those principles enshrined in the constitution is something that has to be scrutinized.

Merera Gudina best captures the apparent contradiction between the theory and practice of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia when he summarises the policy-making process as 'decentralization on paper and centralization in practice'.[67] This opinion is, in fact, widely shared among many scholars who studied the Ethiopian federal arrangement. For instance, Kalkidan Kassaye reflects that the remaking of Ethiopia through the ideals of ethnic federalism has become near to unitary federation rather than devolutionary.[68] Jon Abbink similarly observes that despite the nominal decentralization of power, the federal arrangement has become more centralized than any previous system and has developed a top-down rule that neglects local initiatives and autonomy.[69] Concomitant with the centralization process is the growing authoritarian features of governance. The 2001 party split within TPLF and the 2005 election are turning points for the regime to slide back to a centralized authoritarian. This left all tiers

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[64] Art. 1 cum art. 47 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995)

[65] *Ibid*, art. 50(8)

[66] *Ibid*, art. 39(3)

[67] Gudina (2007), p. 97

[68] Kassaye, Kalkidan (2010), 'Non-federal Features of the Ethiopian Ethnic-based Federal Experiment', Paper presented at the 22nd Session of the Summer University Programme at the Fribourg Institute of Federalism, Fribourg, p. 8

[69] Abbink, Jon (2011), 'Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 596

of governance - be it national or regional, executive or legislative - as mere transmission belt for the decisions made at the central level.[70]

What is more striking is the fact that these fateful events are also considered the turning points for the developmental state paradigm to take shape in the country. This might thus lend some support to the argument that the ideals of DS are at odds with the ideals of ethnic federalism.

Developmental State in Ethiopia

The genesis of developmental state

Clapham observes Ethiopia's subscription to the DS model as a continuum of 'the politics of emulation'.[71] There is a long history in modern Ethiopia where its rulers had endeavoured to draw lessons from the experience of other countries.[72] With respect to the DS, Gedion Jalata, for instance, traced the first attempt to adopt a DS model as far back as the Imperial regime in the 1920s.[73] During this time, Imperial delegates were sent to Japan to emulate the late 19th century Japanese success. However, the more serious attempt to emulate the DS model was made with the advent of the incumbent EPRDF ruling party. This seems uncontested though the exact time where the country officially embraced the DS model and the rationale behind adopting such model are subject to controversy.[74]

While some trace grains of DS in the 1995 FDRE constitution, others argue that it began to enter into the political mantra of the regime around the turn of the new millennium.[75] However, most people agree that the 2001 and, most significantly, the 2005 political crises in the country are considered watershed episodes for the emergence of DS in Ethiopia.[76] In this respect, Fana Gebresenbet succinctly posits that 'Ethiopia's developmentalism is born out of the 2001 split in the ruling party and entrenched after the 2005

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[70] For similar conclusion see Gudina (2007); Aalen (2006); Lefort, Rene (2016b), 'The Ethiopian Crisis: Things Fall Apart: Will the Centre Hold?', Open Democracy; G/tensae, Tsadkan (2016), 'a Road Map to Resolving Ethiopia's Political Crisis', Horn Affairs

[71] Clapham, Christopher (2006), 'Ethiopian Development: The Politics of Emulation', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, p. 109

[72] *Ibid*

[73] Jalata, Gedion (2015), 'An African Developmental State: Ethiopia's Emergent Experience', p. 19

[74] Woldegiyorgis, Ayenachew A.(ND), 'The Ethiopian Developmental State and its Challenges'

[75] *Ibid*

[76] See for example, Clapham (2017); Jalata (2015), Kebede, Mesay(2011), 'The Fallacy of TPLF's Developmental State', *Ethiopian Review*; and Lefort, Rine (2012), 'Free Market Economy, 'Developmental State', and Party-State Hegemony in Ethiopia: the Case of the Model 'Farmers'', *Modern African Studies*, Vol. 0, No. 4

elections'.[77] So, what happened in 2001 and 2005, and how did these events facilitate the adoption of DS?

TPLF faced a major political tremor when an internal split occurred within the party in 2001. The Ethiopian-Eritrean war (1998-2000) preluded the split as the late Premier Meles was accused of 'softness' towards Eritrean invasion. In fact, the tension between factions even preceded the war. Meles was highly constrained to exercise power by his comrades because of the party's tradition of 'democratic centralism' and 'collective leadership' in its decision-making process, not to mention the looming ideological differences on development strategies. According to Paulos Milkias, Meles felt he was losing his grip on power and as a result, he contemplated to 'bury his enemies before they buried him'.[78] The schism was exacerbated with the outbreak of the war, in which Meles and his camp finally emerged as victor by purging all their nemeses. It was following this event that the framing of poverty as an existential threat began to emerge and the developmental character of the party became clearer.[79] The removal of his rivals coupled with the shift in the international mainstream thinking towards a capable state to lead development cleared the decks for Meles to experiment with DS.[80]

With respect to the 2005 election, many scholars agree on its significant impact in shaping the present political landscape. There were unprecedented levels of campaign and political debates that engendered enthusiasm and hope among voters resulting in large turnouts on the voting date. Following the official release of the election results, the opposition parties amassed 174 seats among the 547 seats of the parliament.[81] Nonetheless, the result was contested by the opposition groups who claimed vote rigging had occurred by the ruling party. The party was shocked to the core with the election result as it was apparent that the party faced legitimacy crises not only in towns but also the countryside, the party's stronghold. The loss of significant votes sent a vivid message about the looming dangers to the very survival of the ruling party. Sweeping political measures then followed.

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[77] Gebresenbet, Fana (2014), 'Securitisation of development in Ethiopia: the discourse and politics of developmentalism', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 41, No. S1, p.S70

[78] Milkias, Paulos (2001), 'Ethiopia, The TPLF and Roots of the 2001 Political Tremor', *International Conference on African Development Archives,* Paper 4, p. 3

[79] Gebresenbet (2014), p.S66

[80] de Waal, Alex (2012), 'The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi' African Affairs, Vol. 112, No. 446, p. 152

[81] Gilkes, Patrick (2014), *Elections and Politics in Ethiopia*, 2005-2010, (London: Hurst & Company), p. 313

The party solidified its conviction that fast-economic growth whose benefit is broadly shared is a matter of life and death. The emphasis on delivering fast economic growth can be easily captured from the metaphoric argument of Meles. He argued that the government is like a person who is running to save himself from an avalanche coming at a high speed. The person can survive the avalanche if he can first locate the refuge, then figure out the short cut that takes him to the refuge and finally run with a speed that outpaces the avalanche.[82] DS is then considered the pathway to deliver fast economic growth outpacing the perceived danger. This occurred alongside a clear democratic reversal with the enacting of infamous laws to restrict the activities of political parties, civil societies and the media. In doing so, the ruling party consolidated its grip on power for the coming decade.

Against this backdrop, two explanations are forwarded for the adoption of DS in Ethiopia. The first is economic. This narrative emanates from the conviction that since the neo-liberal approach of a free market economy is considered as a 'dead end' to the developmental aspiration of African states in general and Ethiopia in particular, DS is conceived to be an alternative approach. Meles, in his chapter in a scholarly collection edited by Akbar Norman et al, rejects neoliberal's reduction of the role of state in the economy as 'night-watchman'. He contends that it is only the DS paradigm that clears the way for the ball of development to roll. He conceived development primarily as a political process. As such, he argued, a conducive political environment is a *sin qua non* to launch an accelerated development; and it is only through the characteristics of DS which one can create such an environment in developing countries where patron-client networks and rent-seeking activities are pervasive.[83] Scholars such as Alex de Waal and Tim Kelsall also buy the economic explanation.[84]

On the contrary, many others believe that the real motive behind adopting the DS paradigm is political expediency rather than genuine economic factors. In this regard, as Woldegiyorgis summarises this view, the ulterior motive behind DS is the desire to stay in power long-term by establishing a party hegemony in the country.[85] In the same vein, Mesay Kebede posits that DS is opted as the correct strategy to ensure the dominance of the ruling party while allowing nominal political pluralism.[86] He further argues that the fact that the DS model is usually associated with authoritarian

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[82] Bereket Simon (2011) cited in Gebresenbet (2014), p. S70
[83] Zenawi, Meles (2011), *States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Developmental State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) p. 170
[84] See de Waal (2012); and Kelsall, Tim (2013), *Business, Politics, and The State in Africa: Challenges the Orthodoxies on Growth and Transformation* (London: Zed Books)
[85] Woldegiyorgis (ND)
[86] Kebede (2011)

states has made it preferable to the neoliberal approach.[87] However, the two views should not be seen as mutually exclusive. In fact, both the economic and political factors were at play in informing the party's decision to adopt the DS paradigm. Meles's interest in DS predated the 2005 election crisis and this was evident from his master's thesis on the topic. In the same vein, the swift democratic reversal measures that accompanied the rhetoric of DS also tells of the ruling party's intention to stay long in power.

Understanding the Ethiopian Developmental State and its Discontents

Scholars agree that the Ethiopian DS model is heavily drawn from the East Asian models with China, South Korea and Taiwan being the most important benchmarks.[88] Despite this, the Ethiopian model is also shaped by its own contexts. In what follows, the article discusses the features that characterize the Ethiopian DS model and the discontents associated with it, particularly its setbacks on the functioning of ethnic federalism.

a. Centralized model

The first feature of the Ethiopian DS model which becomes a source of discontent is its centralized nature. Ethiopia's DS model is highly associated with a centralized system of governance. Here comes the major contradiction of the Ethiopian system: a centralized developmental model is at odds with the federal framework where power is decentralized to the lowest local unit. The centralized and top-down approach in decision-making is further entrenched by the party's long-held ideological principle of 'democratic centralism'.

The ideology of democratic centralism has its root in Marxism-Leninism. It tries to combine 'democracy with strict hierarchical methods of execution of party decisions' where free discussion within the top leadership of the party is the primary means of consensus building and decision-making.[89] All other cadres and state machinery should remain subservient to the decisions made at the centre.

The executive committee, whose 36 members are equally divided among the four-member parties of the ruling coalition, remains the central

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[87] *Ibid*

[88] de Waal (2012), p. 154; Jalata (2015), p. 21; Clapham (2017), p. 5

[89] Berhe, Aregawi (2008), 'A Political History of Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (1975-1991): Revolt, Ideology and Mobilization in Ethiopia' (PhD diss., African Studies Centre, Leiden), p. 310

decision-making body of EPRDF. Key decisions are therefore made by this body and are then transmitted to the rank and file members of the party across all layers of governance - federal or regional - for strict implementation. Consequently, regional and local governments are virtually hamstrung by the centralized and top-down approach of the party and remain subordinated to the central authorities. The relapse of a centralized state structure has intensified the hitherto ethnic marginalization and economic exploitation.

The last decade has witnessed the growing intervention of the federal executive on matters regarded as inherently regional and even local. A case in point is the large-scale land deals for foreign and domestic investors. Empirical studies on the area suggest that the central government allocated large tracts of land to investors under the guise of facilitating investment in clear disregard of the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of regional states.[90] Furthermore, the federal government designated a federal agency with a mandate to transfer and manage large scale lands in a blatant encroachment on the regional jurisdiction.[91] The allocation of huge tracts of land - in some cases to the extent of 300,000 hectares - without adequate consultation with regional, local government and communities engendered disenfranchisement and agitation. Violence and attacks against farm companies were witnessed in the Gambella regional states where the practice of large-scale land acquisition is pervasive.[92] It was also one of the main rallying issues for the Oromo protest which began in 2014. This was evident from the placards of the protesters: 'Oromia is not for sale', 'stop the land grab'! Moreover, foreign-owned companies were primary targets of protesters across Oromia and Amhara as they were perceived to accumulate wealth backed by the central government at the expense of the local community.

b. Elitist Developmental State

The second feature of Ethiopia's DS is its elitist nature, a defining feature of the classical DS model. According to Leftwich, the model is built around 'developmental elites' who comprise small groups of senior politicians and bureaucrats with critical roles and authority in the making of developmental policy.[93] They work closely together with the top executive

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[90] Rahmato, Dessalegn (2011), *Land to Investors: Large-Scale Land Transfers in Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies), p. 10; see also Keeley, James et al (2014), *Large-scale land deals in Ethiopia: Scale, trends, features and outcomes to date* (London: IDRC), p. 1

[91] *Ibid*

[92] Desalegn (2011), p. 37

[93] Leftwich (1995), p. 406

figure who often embodies a charismatic or heroic leadership style. State-society relations in this model are also narrowly constructed around political elites, technocrats and industrial elites while the broader citizenry is kept at the periphery of this relationship.[94] The Ethiopian model, as drawn from the East Asian prototype of DS, deeply reflects characteristics of the classical model. A few elites at the centre are entrusted with the task of decision making on behalf of the larger public.

It is also captivating to see how some of the ideals of DS model work in tandem with the Marxist-Leninist oriented ideologies of the ruling party. One can pinpoint the convergence of the elitist approach of the model with the party's 'revolutionary democracy' doctrine. This doctrine is grounded on Lenin's conviction that 'the enlightened elites' should lead the unconscious masses to a social revolution.[95] EPRDF's venture to marry the DS model with the notion of 'revolutionary democracy' can be captured from the party's document stating that: the mass is 'backward, uneducated, and unorganized' and hence would easily fall into 'the nets of rent seekers'.[96] Based on this premise, the logical conclusion is that the mass should be 'mobilized, organized and coordinated' by the 'omniscient' vanguard political leaders towards the desired goal.[97] Accordingly, as Emanuele Fantini correctly pointed, the ruling elite has assumed the role of interpreting the needs and aspirations of the masses and transforming the country from an agrarian society into a modern industrial society.[98]

The repercussion of the above assumption is destruction of synergistic state-society relations since it fails to underscore the critical role of society in the symbiotic relationship between the two. As such, the elitist vanguard system expounds a vision that neither connects the state and society nor builds institutional channels and regulatory frameworks for public participation.[99] In the absence of strong state-society relations, the political leaders cannot forge mutuality with the people they govern, inevitably leading to misunderstanding and tension. Public policies and projects, which are supposed to be the outcomes of negotiation and re-negotiation between the state and society, merely reflect the needs and priorities of the

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[94] Evans (2008), p. 7

[95] Lallement cited in Bach, Jean-Nicolas (2011), 'Abyotawi democracy: neither revolutionary nor democratic, a critical review of EPRDF's conception of revolutionary democracy in post-1991 Ethiopia, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. , No. 4, p. 641

[96] Mesay Kebede quoted in Lefort (2013), p. 461

[97] *Ibid*.

[98] Fantini, Emanuele (2013), Developmental state, economic transformation and social diversification in Ethiopia, ISPI Analysis, No. 163, p. 4

[99] Tegegn, Melakou (2009), Structure and Conjunctural constraints on the emergence of civil society/ Democracy in Ethiopia, 1995-2005, (University of South Africa, Pretoria), p. 16

people as speciously understood and framed by the elites. Consequently, even well-intentioned projects may eventually lead to political unrest. The diverging narratives of the Master Plan that set off the Oromo protest is a good example in this respect.

c. Authoritarian model

Another aspect of the Ethiopian DS model is its authoritarianism. The classic Asian prototype of the DS is often associated with an authoritarian nature of governance. Scholars also arguably view the autocratic nature as an enabling factor for the spectacular performance of DS in East Asia.[100] As mentioned before, one explanation is that the state must ease itself from the procedural hurdles of democracy to deliver fast economic growth. The other explanation is that governments need to stay in power for a longer period so as to ensure continuity of policy that would transform the country. Meles Zenawi, the architect of Ethiopian DS, in his draft manuscript 'African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings' summarised the latter explanation as follows while presenting these arguments of others:

> 'Developmental policy is unlikely to transform a poor country into a developed one within the time frame of the typical election cycle. There has to be continuity of policy if there is to be sustained and accelerated economic growth. In a democratic polity uncertainty about the continuity of policy is unavoidable. More damagingly for development, politicians will be unable to think beyond the next election etc. It is argued therefore that the developmental state will have to be undemocratic in order to stay in power long enough to carry out successful development'.[101]

In theory, Meles himself seemed to advocate a democratic DS as a viable project for an ethnically diverse continent of Africa. However, the praxis contrasts sharply with his theoretical conviction. The road towards DS in the aftermath of the 2005 contentious election was accompanied by a regression of democracy and a reversion to a complete authoritarianism. Since then, opposition parties have been weakened and the infamous laws were issued that successfully hamstrung the activities of civil societies and the free press. The result of such strict control and purge of political parties, civil society and media is the emergence of EPRDF as a dominant party controlling all levers of political power from national to the lowest local unit. This was evident in the 2010 and 2015 election results where the

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[100] Leftwich (1995)
[101] Zenawi (ND), 'African Development'

EPRDF and its affiliates amassed 99.6 percent and 100 percent of votes, respectively. This has pushed the country to the edge of total closure of political space for any dissenting voice. It appears clear for any observer of Ethiopian politics that social unrest has been brewing given the stifling political climate that the brute execution of the DS unleashed.

Projecting a Developmental State model that underpins Process-Based Leadership

It is evident from the preceding discussions that the aspiration of the people is not limited to economic progress. In the Ethiopian context, the 'national questions' such as autonomy are as important as the economic needs of the society. Political leaders are expected to walk a tight rope in addressing the different aspirations of the society without upsetting one aspiration while pursuing the other. One of the things the recent protest alludes to is how the policy pursued to respond to the economic aspiration of the people has undermined ethnic groups' aspiration for self-determination. Or, to use a medical metaphor, medicine taken to treat one malady has actually worsened the other malady. This is perhaps because of the miscalculation of the government that economic achievements would win them legitimacy if the public began to see the fruits of its economic success. However, protesters have proved this wrong by expressing their rages even against the very fruits of the development. Therefore, it is a moment for the current government to pose and rethink the design and implementation of DS that complement the values and purposes of ethnic federalism instead of absorbing it. This requires redesigning DS for it to operate harmoniously with the country's federal arrangement. The article proposes underpinning process-based leadership (PBL) as one way of reinventing DS. A PBL oriented DS will enhance the smooth co-existence of DS vis-à-vis ethnic federalism, and mitigate other discontents stemming from the nature of the DS model. The article will engage below how this can be achieved.

Firstly, PBL underlines the importance of leadership anchored on process in which results are achieved. It shifts the focus from the 'result' to the 'process'. Accordingly, it helps political leaders to assess their success not only based on the results they accomplished but also impels them to question how those results are achieved. How did the government achieve that growth? Was there a common consensus between the government and the people? Was there a fair distribution of the fruits of the economic growth? Who benefited and at whose expense? As noted above, for instance, results achieved through coercive or non-inclusive means do not bring about sustainable outcomes; rather, they are a recipe for crises. These issues are particularly important in the Ethiopian context - past and present

- where marginalization, alienation and exploitation predominate the political landscape. Accordingly, the PBL perspective compels political leaders to work on building trust and common understanding with the respective ethnic groups they are engaging with and aligning them towards shared goals. Until the point where regional self-governing units feel the developmental policy as their own and take a step for its prosperity, it is not possible to mobilize the whole nation towards its effectiveness. For instance, if the federal government initiates a national grand project intended to be implemented across different ethnic groups, no matter how political leaders are convinced about its positive outcome to the respective groups, the process of building a common consensus should precede the launch of the project. This will not only create a conducive platform to build trust and legitimacy of the government but also boosts the sense of ownership among the different groups - a complement to ethnic federalism that aspires to empower the nation, nationalities and peoples of the country.

Secondly, PBL conceives leadership as a two-way relationship between leaders and followers. It defies a top-down approach in favour of leadership as an exchange of influence between leaders and followers. As PBL shifts the focus from leaders to followers and their needs in a particular situation, a PBL oriented DS will likewise invert the top-down approach into a bottom-up approach. In other words, a PBL oriented DS will be people centred as opposed to elite/political leaders centred. The assumption that a few political leaders at the centre are omniscient and know better about the needs of society is a fundamentally flawed assumption from the perspective of PBL. The people should be considered as equal partners; and their ideas and suggestions should deeply shape the decisions of political leaders. In this regard, PBL seems to resonate with grass roots democracy that tend to shift decision-making power to the lowest unit. The people below should be able to participate from the initiation to the implementation stage of developmental policies and projects. They should come from the lowest level and develop progressively to the higher level of government. The logic behind this argument is that developmental projects or policies are supposed to be defined from the perspective of the intended beneficiaries: the people. Extending this argument to the federal-regional layers of government, regional governments/local administrations are in a better position to reflect the demands and priorities of their respective units. In this way, it is possible to adjust DS to work with federalism and remedy the limitations that it exhibited thus far.

Third, PBL emphasises the importance of mutuality - the sense of common purpose - between leaders and the people they lead.[102] It plays a critical role in forging a common goal by mediating different group aspirations in a society and connecting them with the state from which it is largely alienated.[103] It has been recurrently mentioned that the various ethnic groups in Ethiopia have feelings of marginalization and it is hardly possible to say that the country's developmental vision are outcomes of negotiations and cumulations of the diverse ethnic groups. This disrupts the delicate role played by federalism in uniting the nation for common purpose while preserving their autonomy. The elitist top-down DS neither respects regional autonomy nor creates a national unity. Mutuality which is at the heart of PBL oriented DS will support the role of federalism by forging a common vision among the multi-ethnic groups.

In what follows, the article will endeavour to substantiate the above argument taking the Addis Ababa integrated Master Plan, which triggered the Oromo protest, as a case study.

The Case of Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan

Background to the Master Plan

In 2012, the city administration established a project office (Addis Ababa City Planning Project Office) with a mandate to prepare a ten-year Master Plan for the city. Meanwhile, the mandate of the office was modified to prepare a metropolitan Master Plan which, in effect, extends the jurisdiction of the office to include the surrounding towns and villages of the Oromia regional state. As this came to involve the territories that belong to another regional state, it was found expedient to establish a supervisory body composed of senior political leaders from the Oromia region. The name of the project office was accordingly changed in a manner that reflects a joint project between Addis Ababa and the surrounding Oromia Special Zone.

The office eventually unveiled 'a readymade metropolitan plan' at the capital of the Oromia regional state, Adama.[104] In the subsequent sensitization programs held at the town, officials - mainly the low and middle level officials - from the Oromia began to air their concerns about the Master Plan. The situation quickly evolved into tension between the government and the ethnic Oromo when a protest erupted at Ambo University, which is located in Oromia region, in April 2014. The

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[102] Olonisakin (2015), p. 132
[103] *Ibid*
[104] Haddis, Ezana (2014), 'How Not to Make a Master Plan', *Addis Standard*

government managed to contain the situation before it got wider attention. However, in November 2015, another wave of protests sparked across the Oromia region denouncing the Master Plan and other grievances that have been smouldering beneath the surface for a long period. The resilient protest was able to shake the ruling party to the core, eventually forcing the government to rescind the Master Plan as well as make a whirlwind of political reforms.

There are arguments and counter-arguments regarding the Master Plan and its implication on the surrounding ethnic populace. The government's side of the story is that the fast industrialization and urbanization happening in Addis Ababa and the surrounding localities have necessitated a harmonized project to meet the ever-growing demands of the populace.[105] The government claims that the community would benefit from the infrastructural projects and service provisions that the Master Plan envisioned to implement. On the other side, critics considered the project not less than an attempt to incorporate the towns of Oromia region into Addis Ababa and thus viewed it as encroachment on the territory of the Oromia regional state. The plan is perceived as territorial expansion of the capital city into the Oromia regional state.[106]

These diverging views on the Master Plan are in fact the epitome of the deep suspicion between the state and society stemming from historical injustices and procedural flaws in the making of the plan.

The Procedural flaws of the Master Plan

Ezana Haddis, who teaches urban planning at the Ethiopian Civil Service University, made a valid point when he asserts that 'the preparation of the master plan gave… political inclusiveness zero chance'.[107] He identified five fundamental flaws in the making of the Master Plan which can be boiled down to the non-inclusiveness of the project office that prepared the plan and the sheer absence of any meaningful consultation with local communities and administrations.[108] Given the fact that the original intent

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[105] 'The Master Plan Saga', the *Reporter*
[106] Kassim, Awol (2016), 'The 'Ethiopian Rising' narrative the Oromo Protest'; Regassa, Tsegaye (2014), 'Ethiopia: Why Resist the Master Plan? A Constitutional Legal Exploration'; and Regassa, Asebe(ND), 'Why do the Oromo resist the Master Plan?'
[107] 'How Not to Make a Master Plan' (2014)
[108] The five fundamental flaws identified by Ezana Haddis are: a technocratic process, failure to secure the legitimacy for joint planning Between Addis Ababa and Oromia, close door planning process, the composition of the planning office as only less than 10 planners are from Oromia among close to 80 technical staff, and finally the unyielding stance of the ruling party in accommodating the reservations of individuals and groups on the Master Plan.

of the plan was for Addis Ababa, it was not then surprising that the team of experts for the task were mainly from the city. However, the composition of the team failed to change substantially when the project itself changed into a joint master plan to include the surrounding Oromia zone. On this point, Haddis observes that only a few experts, less than 10 out of 80 total staff, were added to the team - a number which hardly reflects the equal involvement of the Oromia region.[109] A similar criticism is also forwarded by Milkessa Midega who contends that there should have been genuine coordination between Addis Ababa and Oromia regional state instead of a seemingly secretly constituted office in Addis.[110]

In relation to public consultation and participation, many scholars agree that the resistance to and mistrust of the project is mainly due to the top-down approach, with its exclusionary and secretive planning process. For example, Asebe Regassa points out that one cannot but expect fierce resistance in a situation where the interested and affected are not involved at all in the planning process and do not know the benefit, impact and implication of its implementation.[111] A more nuanced analysis of the procedural flaws is perhaps offered by Haddis in his piece that appeared on *Addis Standard*, which was a monthly private English magazine published in Ethiopia. He rightly noted that the Master Plan followed a more technocratic approach than a political process in the sense that since the plan would eventually have political implications. It should have been a negotiated instrument among different political actors, stakeholders and the citizenry.[112] Instead the plan was single-handedly prepared by a few technocrats in Addis Ababa.

The case of the Master Plan is a microcosm of the pervasive serious flaws in the design and preparation of developmental projects in Ethiopia. It is a top-down approach where policies or projects are rarely the outcomes of consultation and negotiations with the wider public in general or the interested and affected communities in particular. Such an approach is not only at odds with the very essence of federalism but also turns state-society relations from bad to worse. Consequently, developmental projects which are supposed to address the developmental challenges of the society are ending up becoming sources of discontents. Thus, the point here is what would a PBL oriented DS model have done to the Master Plan and by extension other developmental projects?

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[109] *Ibid*
[110] Midega, Milkessa (2015), 'Oromia-Addis Master Plan: An Agenda Not Like EPRDF', *Horn Affairs*
[111] Regassa (ND)
[112] Haddis (2014)

If deftly applied, a PBL oriented DS model would reverse the top-down approach and accentuate a more bottom-up approach. Accordingly, the starting point for the Master Plan would have been to hold discussions with the local communities and administration of both Addis Ababa and the Oromia special zone in order to identify the needs and interests of these communities. There would be negotiations with the local communities, political leaders at various levels and other stakeholders to cumulate and forge a common interest and to articulate shared needs. The Master Plan would have then been the outcome of such negotiations. Even if following these steps is an arduous task and time-consuming, it is worth the effort considering the benefits it would bring about at different levels. First, such a process respects the autonomy of ethnic groups and their ownership of their matters, therefore resultant developmental projects will not affect the principles of ethnic federalism. Second, it builds mutuality between political leaders and the people they lead which in turn contributes in bridging the state-society disconnect. Third, it increases voluntary compliance from the community. The implementation of developmental projects ultimately rests on the people. As such, public support is critical to the success of the project. Suffice to mention the fate of the Master Plan in which the government was forced to roll back the plan after deadly protest. Ultimately, a Master Plan following the PBL approach would have addressed the developmental challenges of the people rather than becoming source of violence.

Conclusion

The political crisis precipitated by the Master Plan has above all made it clear that the developmental path in Ethiopia has to be revisited. It otherwise risks locking the country into a vicious cycle of violence and political turmoil. The main thrust of this article is not to out rightly rescind the DS paradigm in its entirety. DS has proved its potential in delivering startling economic growth; at the same time, it has also caused discontents among a large section of society. Political leaders can tailor DS in a way that its benefits can be furthered while its adversities mitigated. In this regard, a developmental state that undergirds the ideals of process-based leadership will bridge the state-society disconnect broadly and mitigate the setbacks on ethnic federalism more specifically.

PBL oriented DS: replaces the top-down with a bottom-up approach in its decision-making process; accentuates mutuality between the leaders and the people they lead; heeds attention to public participation and consultation; and most importantly, it sensitises the DS to the unique needs and priorities of different groups in the society. However, it should be underscored that underpinning DS with PBL is by no means the only way

forward nor does it make the DS an omnipotent solution to the multi-layered problems of Ethiopia. It is one among the many routes in revisiting the Ethiopian DS model and should be accompanied with broader political reforms. More research and academic discourse aimed at suggesting practical steps in rooting PBL oriented DS in the existing political structure are also required.

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