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Public Administration Developments in Ethiopia Under Three Different Regimes

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This paper aims to summarise and analyse the development of the public administration system in Ethiopia under three different regimes: those of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Derg, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Public service and public administration in modern terms date back only to the 20th century in Ethiopia. Initially, the government was unitary and centralised; later, the EPRDF introduced a federal state structure. These structural changes brought

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the nationality question to the forefront. The different government and administrative systems are characterized by weak and strong political, economic, and social achievements. Among these is a lack of good governance, human rights violations, weak institutional capacities, a low level of citizen participation, and an (in)appropriate public administration system. Therefore, to mitigate these problems, institutional reforms, effective and efficient use of modern technologies, and inter-institutional cooperation play essential roles in improving the public administration system.

Keywords: *public administration, reform, public sector, institutional reform, Ethiopia*

1. Introduction

Ethiopia's government, state structure, and public administration have undergone several significant changes in the 20th century. The period of nearly a century can be divided into three large units, according to the form of government and changes to constitutional foundations. Each political arrangement has introduced significant transformations into the country's administration, which have sometimes been in line with international theoretical and practical trends. As development is still underway, the analysis of the topic is definitely relevant.

Public administration has changed dramatically over the past century, especially in advanced economies and many parts of the developing world. Globalisation and the pluralisation of service provision are the driving forces behind these changes. Governments' policy problems are becoming increasingly complex, wicked, and global, rather than simple, linear, and national in focus. However, the prevailing paradigms whereby public sector reform is designed and implemented are relatively static and do not fully encompass the significance or implications of these more comprehensive changes. While public sector reforms in the developing world are influenced by policy experiments and organisational practices originating in OECD countries, they operate within the traditional public administration paradigm (Robinson, 2015, pp. 5–10). Most of these focus on the transition from old public administration to New Public Management (NPM) in the 1980s and 1990s. Since 2000 there has been a discerni-

ble trend toward an emerging model variously termed the *new public service*, the *new public* or *good governance*, or the *post-New Public Management* (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Dunleavy, Margetts & Tinkler, 2006; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011; Osborne, 2006; 2010).

Although the modernisation of public service delivery lay at the centre of the reform of public bureaucracies, governance in Africa, including Ethiopia, is typified by expansion, patronage, and authoritarian rule (Mengesha & Common, 2007). Therefore, the origins of the 20th century Ethiopian state lie in a feudal monarchical system stretching back almost 3,000 years (Munro-Hay, 1991, p. 28). In the Middle Ages, King Lalibela (1181–1221) developed the country with the concept of new capital and the construction of his 11 monolithic churches (Pankhurst & Pankhurst, 2006). The medieval Christian Ethiopian Empire (also known as Abyssinia, 1270–1974) disintegrated into small feudal kingdoms (Budge, 2014, p. 7). It is worth noting that the Oromo have employed an indigenous democratic system of governance, called Gadaa, since long before the 16th century (Duressa, 2018). In the 19th century, there were some modernisation initiatives. Tewodros II (1855–1868) unified the empire and introduced public administrative reforms. Later, Emperor Menelik II (1889–1913) consolidated the unified state, defeating Italian attempts to bring it under colonial rule. Emperor Haile Selassie, who ruled from 1930 to 1974, continued the modernisation of the empire's institutions begun by Menelik. A written constitution was first enacted in 1931, creating a parliament and senate, but the emperor's powers remained absolute (Constitution of 1931). From 1936 to 1941, the Italian army stayed and controlled Ethiopia. During this period, the government was in exile, and Haile Selassie fled to Britain, unsuccessfully seeking intervention by the League of Nations, which Ethiopia had joined in 1923. In 1941 he was reinstated as emperor. Eritrea was placed under British administration after becoming an Italian colony in 1891. Under the auspices of the United Nations, it was granted federal status within Ethiopia in 1952, pursuant to UN Resolution 390 A 1952.

Generally, the beginning of modern public administration in Ethiopia dates back to the early 20th century, when the Haile Selassie regime formed a few ministries. The Emperor aimed to establish an effective public administration and civil service by restructuring imperial institutions (Chanie, 2001). Since then, public administration in Ethiopia has undoubtedly undergone many transformations. Traditionally, public administration in Ethiopia is analysed as part of three Ethiopian regimes: the imperial regime (1930–1974), the Derg regime (1974–1991), and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime

(1991–2019), which had both overlapping and unique features (Debela et al., 2020, pp. 21–34). During the imperial regime, the country was administered as a unitary feudal state, during the Derg government it functioned as a unitary socialist state, and presently, the EPRDF government runs the country as a federal parliamentary republic (Mitiku & Hondeghem, 2020). In conclusion, this research aims to analyse the development of the public administration system in Ethiopia over three different regimes. Because the studies conducted in this area were not sufficient, especially during the three regimes, there are no well-analysed or organised studies available.

The research mainly follows the traditional methodology of the legal and administrative history approach. This viewpoint states that history is an evolutionary process of development that organically connects the past with the present. The concept is rooted in the 19th century with Savigny, Langdell, Wharton, and Tiedeman (Rabban, 2012). Although there are different legal and administrative history approaches (e.g. internal, external, interpretation of the legal text at its time etc.), this paper focuses on changes in legal institutions and legal rules – or, more broadly, legal doctrine (Ibbetson, 2012). The research focuses on the most significant historical and political events of the given eras, drawing attention to the main problems and reviewing them critically. Beyond that, the other primary method is text analysis to examine and interpret the content of the relevant legal and non-legal primary, legislative (especially the four constitutions), and secondary sources, particularly peer-reviewed articles, government documents (like the 1991 Transitional Charter), reports by international organisations, and books. Unfortunately, relevant sources from that time in the Ethiopian language are not available in many cases, nor is archival research possible. The various types of employed documents could provide a broader spectrum to understand the changes. To organise these pieces of information, the historical comparison classifies each period by the main characteristics of its form of government, structure, ideology, separation of powers, and public administration.

2. Regime of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–1974)

Emperor Haile Selassie reigned from 1930 to 1974. This period was primarily concerned with preserving Emperor Menelik II's legacies. Therefore, Christianity remained significant and Ethiopia was designated as a Christian nation (Talbot, 1966, pp. 64–66). Similarly, the Emperor contin-

ued the administrative modernisation started by Menelik II. Haile Selassie adopted Ethiopia's first Japanese-style constitution in 1931 (Clapham, 2009). Among other modern institutions, the Emperor promulgated a constitution that enshrined his prerogative to delegate authority to an appointed and indirectly elected bicameral parliament. However, the constitution drafting process did not incorporate democratic principles and values, i.e., it was not participative due to the monarchical administrative system. Moreover, before the Italian occupation he embarked on many reform initiatives. However, this was interrupted while the country was under Italian occupation (1936–1941), a colonisation attempt that forced the Emperor into exile (Marcus, 2002; Mitiku & Hondegem, 2020).

2.1. Reforms and Attempts

In 1941, Haile Selassie continued with his ambitious reforms. The following are among the prominent administrative reform measures introduced during his reign: he defined the powers and duties of a few ministries (1943), established the Imperial Institute of Public Administration (1952), and later the Central Personnel Agency (CPA, 1961) and entrusted it with maintaining a standardised public service, governed by uniform rules and principles (Chanie, 2001). The CPA was given the power to classify jobs, recruit public servants, establish pay scales, and issue regulations necessary to establish a homogeneous public service (Aberham & Desta, 2012).

The modernisation of public administration was accompanied by the recognition of some human rights. Certain rights included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), like civil and political rights, were incorporated into the revised Constitution of 1955; however, they were severely qualified and little protected in practice (Amnesty International, 1978, p. 5). According to the provisions of the revised Constitution, the emperor was granted the following powers: he is head of state and government; oversees justice through *Zufan Chilot* (Crown Court); proposes laws; approves all laws; appoints/dismisses ministers, judges, and members of chambers; dismisses the houses of Parliament; acts as commander in chief of the National Army; and appoints bishops (Vibhute, 2015). These concentrated functions show that Haile Selassie's government was authoritarian; there was no separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. Therefore, in reality, there were no adequate checks and balances in the system. Moreover, the power of the

emperor was sanctified by the church and hence in the people's minds. Civil acts institutionalised it. All political power and state sovereignty rested with the emperor; even appointments to higher church sinecures required the emperor's approval. He concentrated all legislative, executive, military, and judicial power and policymaking in his hands (Sherr, 1990). Due to the reasons mentioned earlier, constitutional reform did not significantly change the country's public administration system and other political aspects.

Besides, the Emperor was held in great esteem for his achievements in international diplomacy. He also played an essential role in forming the Organisation of African Unity (1963–2002), now called the African Union, which has its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Officially Ethiopia was non-aligned in its international relations, but the United States of America provided most of its military and economic assistance.

Almost all attempts at modernisation were based on copying foreign development models (as was the case under the reign of Menelik II) (Clapham, 2009). The revised Constitution of 1955 reflected the adoption of the British model of constitutional monarchy. Similarly, the CPA mainly adopted the personnel management system of the USA (Gebrekidan, 2011, p. 9). These developments imply that attempts to modernise the country's public administration did not have a strong indigenous basis. Moreover, the regime's civil service reform successes were undermined by a shortage of a competent workforce, limited stakeholder participation, and defiance of civil service principles (Solomon, 2013; Mitiku & Hondeghe, 2020). Formal social protection began in Ethiopia in 1963 with the establishment of a civil servant pension scheme, which acted as a pension for government employees, namely public servants, members of the military, and police force personnel. (Dejene & Cochrane, 2019b).

2.2. Problems and Criticism

Unfortunately, from 1948 to 1974, during the Haile Selassie regime, the following human rights violations were recorded in Ethiopia: arrests and unfair trials of political opponents, harsh imprisonment conditions, use of torture, use of the death penalty in both criminal and political cases, some politically motivated "disappearances" and killings, and killings of civilians in areas of armed conflict, particularly in Eritrea (Amnesty International, 1978, p. 5). Other results of institutional or public administration failures should be noted: an inadequate transparency mechanism, lack of due pro-

cess, and a lack of proactive commitment to social equity. Political loyalty became more important than meritocracy and there was a comprehensive practice of compromising rules and regulations and prioritising group interest at the expense of public interest.

These human rights violations and other issues were indicators of a lack of good governance and an inappropriate public administration system during this regime. If there is no appropriate governance structure and checks and balances of power, this might lead to human rights violations. The failure to reform the feudal land tenure system, the slow pace of economic growth, and a lack of civil and political rights fuelled a growing discontent with the regime. When the region's central status was revoked in 1962, the Eritrean Liberation Front began an armed struggle for Eritrean autonomy. Eritrea's democratic institutions were dismantled, including a multi-party electoral structure, a well-developed trade union movement, and an independent press. There were several armed rebellions against the government in other parts of the Empire and an attempted military coup d'état in 1960, as well as increasing radical resistance from the student movement. The student movement started in the mid-1960s, urging reforms and voicing criticism, e.g. marching in the city's streets under the slogan "Land to the tiller" (Lemma, 1979). Walleigne Mekonnen Kassa, a prominent student and militant activist, drew attention to the nationality question. In his famous article, *On the question of nationalities in Ethiopia* (1969), he stated that Ethiopia was not really one nation; it was made up of a dozen nationalities (like the Oromo, Tigray, Amhara, Gurage, Sidama, Wellamo-Wolayta, Adere-Harari and Somali nations) with their languages, ways of dressing, history, social organisation, and territorial entity (Mekonnen, 1969). The student movement should support these nations and nationalities in their struggle for self-determination, as long as they are committed to socialism (Wagaw, 1980).

Finally, the severe famine of 1971–1974 was the last straw that eventually brought down Haile Selassie's government. The government's delay in admitting the severity of the famine and implementing relief measures exacerbated the effects of severe drought in Ethiopia. As a result, the 1971–1974 drought and famine claimed the lives of over 200,000 people (Kumar, 1991, p. 178). In 1974, Haile Selassie's government was overthrown and a military regime took over. To handle this critical situation, in 1971 a National Emergency Relief Committee was created in Addis Ababa, which later became the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. However, it was only after the revolution (1974) that this agency was vested with broad powers (Gebre-Medhin & Vahlquist, 1976).

3. Derg Regime (1974–1991)

In February 1974, massive protests resulted in months of strikes, anti-government demonstrations, and a gradual military takeover. On 12 September 1974, the Provisional Military Administrative Council, also known as the Derg (or Dergue, meaning *committee*), took complete control of power. This military junta ruled Ethiopia and Eritrea as a provisional government for over 10 years, from 1974 to 1987. The Constitution of Ethiopia was adopted in 1987, declaring a unitary form of government, and the military leadership formally civilianised the administration. However, the Derg stayed in power until 1991 (Belay & Belay, 2019).

The Derg regime declared Ethiopia a socialist state. A programme for a National Democratic Revolution was announced in early 1976, aiming to abolish feudalism and imperialism and to create a People's Democratic Republic. The Derg government strengthened relations with the USSR and obtained extensive military assistance from the Soviet Union and other socialist states, particularly Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Germany. Nevertheless, Ethiopia maintained diplomatic and economic relations with the United States of America and members of the European Community.

From 1976 to 1978, Derg's primary aim was to counter political opposition centred in the capital (Addis Ababa) and to fight armed opposition forces in Eritrea, the Ogaden region, and several other territories. In early 1978, severe defeat was inflicted on the Western Somali Liberation Front and Somali army units fighting in the Ogaden (Amnesty International, 1978 p. 5). Much of Eritrea was held by armed movements fighting for the region's independence; Ethiopian forces took the main towns. As a result of these armed conflicts and political tensions, an estimated 500,000 or more refugees fled to neighbouring countries. There were large numbers of displaced persons inside Ethiopia as well.

3.1. Institutional and Administrative Reforms

The government adopted the Marxist-Leninist ideology and declared socialism to be at the core of its political-economic policies. Given this, the regime embraced the maximalist view of the state (Adejumobi, 2007, p. 120). Although the regime pledged separation of state and religion, a Christian demarcation of the state remained. Furthermore, as was the case under earlier regimes, Amharic remained the state's only working

language, as stated in the Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1987.

By the end of the 1970s, a board outline of the socialist economy was in place as measures were carried out to nationalise all rural and urban land and form associations of peasants and urban-dwellers (*kebeles*: villages, neighbourhoods), which functioned as local-level administrative units. Land, medium and large private businesses, larger buildings and houses were nationalised without compensation given to the owners.

During this period, several profound changes in the superstructure ensued, namely reorganisation of state power, critical fiscal institutions, industrial and commercial enterprises; excessive housing in cities; nationalisation of land, abolishment of the institution of the monarchy and titles; the institution of radical agrarian reform and creation of local-level urban residents' and peasants' associations; adoption of the law on labour, and money reform (Sherr, 1990). However, the reforms were not implemented properly because of powerful resistance from wealthy groups and others.

The territorial division and classification changes strengthened the monarchy's administrative centralisation policy under the unitary state, establishing unparalleled state ownership and influence over the modern economy. The country's 15 regions were restructured into 25 administrative regions and five autonomous regions (Aseb, Dire Dawa, Eritrea, Ogaden, and Tigray). Imitating the nomenclature systems of socialist states, the regime established parallel government networks and party bodies down to the level of the *kebele* or peasant association, and all were controlled by the functionaries of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia. The Derg also established a long-lasting 25-cadre system of party control over the state bureaucracy's economic-financial, military, and administrative sectors (Abegaz, 2001).

The Derg regime was also known for expanding the state apparatus, restructuring the cabinet, and amending the salary scale of the civil service (Chanie, 2001). Associated with these expansion actions, the number of civil servants increased from 101,147 under the previous regime to 216,058 when the regime left office (Mitiku & Hondeghe, 2020). Despite the changes, there were no significant amendments to the legal framework of the nation's civil service. Therefore, the civil service was mainly run by orders and decrees issued during the Haile Selassie regime. Furthermore, in his time politicians distrusted career civil servants, which led to them being replaced by political patrons at almost all government levels, thereby downplaying professionalism in personnel management.

Likewise, a parallel political structure was introduced and used to pass civil service decisions. Such measures, however, led to a deterioration of performance, encouraging administrative misconduct (Solomon, 2013).

The military regime's vision of state-led industrialisation included an overzealous villagisation campaign (to facilitate political control and delivery of social services), an ambitious but poorly planned resettlement programme directed at the drought-vulnerable population, and an import substitution programme for essential industrial goods (Abegaz, 2001). Nevertheless, briefly distracted by the shocking 1984–1985 national famine (when GDP contracted by 13.2%), the Derg consolidated its power in the second half of the decade. It adopted a Ten-Year Perspective Economic Plan (1985–1994), with an unrealistic expectation of receiving foreign aid to finance over half of the planned investment. The plan provided a more consistent framework for medium-term and annual plans than the previous disparate-projects approach (Griffin, 1992, pp. 6–14.). The economy rebounded briefly but spectacularly at 9.3% and 13.8% in 1986 and 1987 respectively (World Bank, 1987, p. 86). Likewise, to its credit, the government expanded elementary and secondary education and rural health clinics. As a result, the ambitious literacy campaign and health system improvement initiative were awarded a UNESCO prize.

3.2. Problems and Criticism

In the waning days of war socialism, events heightened the natural degree of crisis, leading to policy reforms. Financing a vast army was too much for the weak domestic economic base to support, especially because the Soviet Union faced a deep recession after 1988. Secondly, the idea of socialism was widely reviled both globally and domestically. Finally, the economic effects of the campaigns of villagisation, resettlement, and producer cooperatives proved devastating for an already poor population.

The regime also gradually established a socialist party, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, with military officers and the upper echelon of the civil service at its core. Ethiopia finally joined the "people's democracies" of the Soviet Bloc in 1987, with the declaration of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia under a constitution ratified by a national referendum that same year.

The Derg and its supporters believed that Ethiopia's problems stemmed from a history of economic exploitation, which was most clearly expressed in the alienation of land in large areas of Ethiopia by members of the

feudal society. Once this process was reversed, the central contradictions of Ethiopian statehood would be removed by nationalising the land and vesting control over it in peasants' associations drawn from the local population. It would be possible for people liberated from exploitation to build a united Ethiopia under a socialist and nationalist government under EPRDF (Clapham, 2009).

Close to the end of this period, the following notable measures were taken by the Derg regime: property and land was nationalised, inheritable use rights were granted, membership in producer cooperatives became voluntary (which led to their spontaneous dismantling of cooperators). In the economy, many prices were deregulated and stringent restrictions on private trade were lifted unwillingly. The liberalisation of the grain market (the most important market in Ethiopia) paved the way for a steady integration of inter-regional markets. Even though these public reforms were introduced, this was not effective and fruitful enough due to the government's bureaucratic rigidity and other constraints. The formula devised by Mengistu Haile Mariam's military junta seemed to provide a solution to the inconsistencies that had led inexorably to the defeat of its imperialist predecessor at the outset in the mid-1970s. According to a report by the World Bank, the EPRDF inherited a weak public administration and poorly functioning state agencies (World Bank, 2013).

4. Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (1991–2019)

The overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991 marked the end of the unitary era in Ethiopian political history and brought the nationality question to the forefront again. The change, which coincided with the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the USSR, brought the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front to power. The unitary bureaucratic structure, including the National Army, was dismantled and replaced by the EPRDF and a new National Army composed of the former rebel fighters. The years prior to adopting the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 1995 were dominated by nationalist movements (Belay & Belay, 2019). According to the Transitional Charter of Ethiopia (1991), the transitional government exercised all legal and political responsibility for the governance of Ethiopia until it handed over its power to a popularly elected government, based on a new constitution. The Constitution intro-

duced the separation of powers, parliamentary democracy, and the rule of law and stipulated that the head of the state, the Prime Minister, the Vice-Chairperson, and the Secretary of the Council of Representatives shall be from different nations and nationalities.

Thanks to the student movement of the mid-1960s and Walleligne Mekonnen, the Preamble to the Constitution states that, “We the Nations, Nationalities, and People of Ethiopia: Strongly committed, in the full and free exercise of our right to self-determination...” and Art. 39/1. states that “Every Nation, Nationality, and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession.” As a consequence of these principles, the Oromo, Konso, and Gedeo people of southern Ethiopia still use the Gadaa governance system, which UNESCO has listed as an intangible cultural heritage since 2016. The system regulates the community’s political, economic, social, and religious activities, dealing with conflict resolution, reparation, and protecting women’s rights (UNESCO, 2022).

Starting in 1991, three primary reform processes were adopted by the EPRDF: federal decentralisation of the formerly socialist state, market liberalisation of a command economy, and democratisation under a multi-party system. These reform attempts have advanced to varying degrees and had some notable successes, but they have also encountered major challenges (World Bank, 2012). A series of politico-administrative reform waves can be identified: regionalisation, federalisation, local decentralisation, and the *democratic developmental state* doctrine. The first wave occurred during the transitional period (1991–1995), which established 14 regional governments and entrusted the responsibility for public services to regional governments (Debela, 2020, pp. 21–34; Peterson, 2015). Furthermore, the 1995 Constitution established the federal government as having nine regional states and two city administrations, with the country officially continuing to embrace the tenets of the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine (Mengesha & Common, 2007).

The regime restructured the state into the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and vigorously redefined citizenship, politics, and identity on ethnic grounds. This remake was accompanied by very high hopes for a more prosperous and peaceful future after decades of poverty, hunger, and oppression. The absence of a consensus regarding ethnic federalism resulted from contradictions that date back to the formation of the modern state in the 19th century and have become virulent since 1991. Ethnically defined politics decentralised rather than mitigated inter-eth-

nic relations; government-propagated democratisation was inhibited by the ruling party's unwillingness to share power; rapid economic growth and increasing urbanisation were accompanied by growing inequality and social tensions. Following the 2005 elections, general frustration exploded with the government's relapse into authoritarianism (International Crisis Group, 2009).

A phased approach to federal decentralisation has been adopted, with a transfer of powers from the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to the regional states (1991–1995), followed by the decentralisation of service delivery first to *woredas* (districts) and, for some aspects, down to *kebeles* (villages) (2001 to the present). *Kebele* councils were made larger and the *kebele* administration was put in place as the focal point for service delivery and to handle people's complaints. The capacity and institutions built at decentralised levels have improved access to basic services and decision-making bodies. Serious efforts have been made to reform the tax system (including policy revision, structural review, adoption of ICT, and taxpayer education), resulting in a fivefold tax collection increase from 2005 to 2012. The legal and policy frameworks and operational systems of urban centres have also been reformed, and capacities strengthened (World Bank, 2012).

After the death of Ato Meles Zenawi (Prime Minister 1991–2012), the GoE embarked on the constitutional process of transition to a new government. The incoming Prime Minister and the Government reconfirmed their commitment to political stability, held national elections in 2015 (as previously planned), and continued to implement the Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I) and other key strategies and policies. Ethiopia has made impressive progress in decentralising authority and service delivery to regional and local governments over the past decades.

The legislative and regulatory framework has undergone significant strengthening in recent years by the overhauling of old acts and enactment of improved proclamations in civil service, decentralisation, tax (income and turnover tax, value added tax), finance (public finance proclamation, procurement, cash management directives), ICT, city proclamations and urban policies, asset registration and disclosure, and criminal laws as well as laws that determine the powers and responsibilities of the three branches of government. The GoE has also embarked on efforts to increase the transparency and accountability of its mining-derived financial flows, which are being analysed, discussed, and made publicly available under the World Bank-supported Ethiopian Revenue Transparency Initi-

ative and Ethiopian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Nevertheless, Ethiopia can improve its business environment and other reform initiatives (still) further.

The public sector reforms can be assessed by Business Process Reengineering (BPR), the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), the establishment of the Change Army, and the Citizens' Charter.

4.1. Business Process Reengineering (BPR)

The following steps can be used to categorise Ethiopia's bureaucratic reform process in the period 1991–1995. The first reform phase took place in three interconnected areas: economic reform – from central planning to the market economy; political reform – federalism, and power and fiscal decentralisation; constitutional reform – enacting the Ethiopian Constitution. As far as economic reform is concerned, the market economy supplanted the traditional model of central planning. One of the most important constitutional changes was the introduction of federalism and power, administrative and fiscal decentralisation. A revised constitution was adopted to reflect the new state structure in political reform (Mezgobo, 2012).

The federal government decided to introduce BPR across all government agencies, to achieve significant change and establish the rapidly expanding civil service on a new footing. From a comparative perspective, BPR is part of a wave of New Public Management-inspired reforms (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; World Bank, 2019). Typically, BPR is regarded as the end of the NPM initiatives pursued by countries interested in importing private sector practices into the civil service and reducing the distinctions between the two, such as New Zealand, Australia, and the UK (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011, p. 116). Ethiopia proved to be one of the most prominent adopters of BPR as a critical approach to civil service reforms. Given its diverse applications globally, there is no comprehensive assessment of how successfully BPR reforms have fared in the public or private sector. From 60% to 80% of BPR efforts fail to achieve their goals, but it should be noted that BPR can be a valuable and much-needed tool for public administrations (Jurisch et al., 2012). BPR is explicitly based on the ideas of Michael Hammer, a US management theorist originally from the field of computer science (Aseffa, 2009). It was intended to transform the business diamond of civil service organisations radically and fundamentally, which includes processes, jobs and structure, attitudes, management and

measurement systems, and values and beliefs. The BPR initiated by the Ethiopian federal government identified four stages to the change process (PURI): planning, understanding, redesigning, and implementation.

Given the starting point in Ethiopia, where the civil service was overly hierarchical and input-based, aspiring to implement BPR was a sweeping decision, seeking to achieve significant change and establish the rapidly expanding public sector on a new footing. Overall, top leaders across different levels of government and sectors have had positive feedback regarding the implementation and effects of reform tools on civil service organisations, with only a few concerns. Indeed, the BPR reform tool changed the “hard” elements of organisations such as their strategy, structures, and system. Although organisation heads agree that BPR improved workplace attitudes and teamwork, the results concerning the “soft” elements like shared values, staffing/skills, incentives, and flexibility seem to be less tangible. BPR implementation was constrained due to rushed planning, lack of inter-linkage with other reform tools, and weak monitoring. Reasons for the failure of BPR implementation were ineffective re-engineering, lack of proper training and education, lack of resources, failure to bring harmony and integration to crucial components, ineffective redesign, and resistance to change.

4.2. Balanced Scorecard (BSC)

Building on earlier efforts to establish strategic planning norms and an employee results-oriented performance appraisal system, the federal government introduced the BSC in 2008 (World Bank, 2019). The BSC is used as a planning/target setting, change management, and communication tool and is also considered an opportunity to embed strategic management principles into strategic plans. The BSC incorporates the higher-level goals identified by the country’s Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and tries to operationalise these goals through a cascading process of setting targets and disaggregating them by specific units and roles. As part of this process, public organisations incorporated BSC measures within strategic sector plans.

Later, the civil service’s Individual Employee Performance Management and Measurement Directive was incorporated into the BSC. The management of individual performance is now being addressed through a system of individual performance agreements linked to team and organisational targets derived from the four dimensions of the BSC. These include fi-

nance, learning and growth, client/customer satisfaction, and processes (time, volume, frequency).

The first set of annual performance agreements for individuals was signed in July 2012. Currently, 60% of the score is allocated towards achieving the agreed-upon specific tasks and goals, whereas 40% is dedicated to attitude or behavioural aspects. Thus, the BSC seeks to create direct links between employee performance and the organisation's strategy towards its clients/citizens, budget/stewardship, internal processes, and learning and growth (Gelan, 2020). Both employee and organisation performance reviews are carried out twice a year, in December and June. Despite having a considerably altered emphasis on planning and performance evaluation, the implemented BSC system was perceived as worthwhile (Bobe, Mihret & Obo, 2017). The communication and cascading next to a lack of top management commitment impede the implementation of BSC; it is necessary for the regional administrative council or cabinet body and top management members at their respective bureaus to take corrective measures before the new system (BSC) becomes sluggish (Gurie, 2019).

4.3. Change Army and the Establishment of Public Wings

The Change Army aims to mobilise communities and organise their contributions to support its development goals. Following its pilot in rural areas, since 2012 the Change Army has been streamlined into the civil service to bring about national consensus by involving the party, state, and citizens in its three wings: the Party Wing, State Wing, and Public Wing (World Bank, 2019).

The Party Wing is concerned with building a national consensus regarding the country's development strategy and the civil service is a key player in this discourse. It provides orientation programmes to enable civil service members to fully grasp and effectively execute government policies and strategies.

The State Wing (civil service) consists of five levels: individual civil servants, model civil servants, lower-level leadership, middle-level leadership, and top leadership. At the lowest level, up to five members are grouped based on their work processes and led by a model civil servant, who conducts daily/weekly peer reviews and evaluates the group's performance. This is expected to create a mechanism to coach junior staff and improve attitudes by putting peer pressure on civil servants. The outcomes of these weekly discussions are presented to the lower-level leadership. The high-

est level, the council, consists of top managers and directors and meets at least once monthly. The council also meets once a month with all staff members to discuss performance reports and resolve internal issues, and quarterly with the Public Wing.

The Public Wing is a platform that consists of clients, youth associations, women, professionals, cooperatives, private sector representatives, and others identified as relevant by government ministries, agencies, and bureaux. The members meet with the State Wing (typically represented by a minister) on a quarterly basis to discuss strategic plans, implementation, and objectives. The members feel that their potential is not always fully harnessed, and their capacity to be effective partners to the government is constrained by the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009, which restricts professional associations in terms of financing. Contributions from association members are minimal, and they are not allowed to accept more than 10% of their budget from foreign organisations. They have had to return money from non-member sources due to this restriction. When capacitated, there is a potential role for professional associations in re-licensing and continuous professional development issues, as experiences have shown in other countries (World Bank, 2012). The main obstacles or challenges to Change Army implementation were a lack of good leadership style and employee resistance (Eyasu & Ferede, 2019).

4.4. Citizens' Charter

The Citizens' Charter enables government institutions to enter agreements with the public on the roles and responsibilities of providers and service users, the way public services should be delivered, and the modalities whereby complaints will be resolved. The idea of accountability to citizens is a relatively new concept in the Ethiopian civil service, and there was no established system whereby this could be strengthened. The Citizens' Charter was launched in 2012 with the intention to enable civil servants to serve the community in an improved and better manner (Nigussa, 2014).

Organisations first embraced the basic principles of the Citizens' Charter as part of the BPR process. All civil service institutions were encouraged to establish service standards in consultation with clients. Many organisations started to publicise these standards prominently on noticeboards at the entrances of public offices. However, there was no systematic monitoring of the organisation's actual performance against these standards.

These deficiencies led to significant variance downward from the standards set under BPR in 2007–2008. The government is now trying to reinstitute the service delivery standards under BPR by means of a formalised Citizens' Charter.

The Citizens' Charter, where it is implemented, is published and disseminated to users using different mechanisms, including noticeboards posted where services are provided (World Bank, 2019). Although it is a federal country, Ethiopia's public sector reform focused on subnational levels of government. These governments were enabled to adopt national policies, determine their priorities, and sequence implementation despite gaps in empowerment to make policy decisions. They can tailor the implementation to local needs and increase the programme's success (Habib & Abera, 2016). This strengthened the powers and duties of the regional states, *woredas* (districts), and municipality governments, which improved accountability and service delivery. It also aligned closely with Ethiopia's public financial management, intergovernmental transfers, and planning system (World Bank, 2013).

4.5. Evaluation and Critique

Despite all the successes mentioned above, public sector reforms during this regime failed for different reasons like lack of proper modelling and ineffective design of goals; poor communication; inefficient and unmotivated employees; lack of commitment, particularly on part of top management; poor structures; and inappropriate working systems and poor organisation readiness for change. Furthermore, since the EPRDF took power, it has pushed for different development programmes that have included significant economic growth and poverty reduction, particularly after 2001, and various significant projects to accelerate economic development in the country. Despite economic development during the EPDRF, several good governance problems arose, such as human rights violations, rampant corruption, and weak and inadequate institutional capacities. Unfortunately, the existence of a weak political system and low levels of citizen participation in various development and policy decision-making processes at different levels of government are still challenges to be solved.

Following the 2010 election, the EPRDF declared itself the dominant party. The ruling party has controlled power since 1991 (for five consecutive elections), and except for the third term, when the opposition had

171 seats, it enjoyed a control of power of over 95%. It is also difficult to ignore the various election irregularities noted by several international observers. The political context after the 2005 election crisis is even more worrisome. In the 2015 elections, not a single seat went to the opposition (Fishea, 2019).

In 2018, a shift from developmental state to developmental democracy appeared to be underway with the changing of decision-making and economic policies, establishment of fair power structures, conflict resolution mechanisms, effective and legitimate institutions, and a supportive regional environment (Dejene & Cochrane, 2019a). According to the agenda, the country will achieve the “leaving no one behind” principle as part of social protection development by 2030 (Dejene & Cochrane, 2019b). According to Clapham (2018, p.1151): “Ethiopia provides one of the clearest examples of a ‘developmental state’ in Africa”.

Unequal distribution of political power and resources, violations of human and democratic rights, rampant corruption, the dominance of a single-party system, and other factors have contributed to the rise of resistance and widespread movements and street protests calling for an end to the EPRDF government. At the end of 2019, the EPRDF was dissolved, and as its successor, three constituent parties (Amhara Democratic Party, Oromo Democratic Party, and the Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement) were merged into the Prosperity Party by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. (Five other parties were also involved in this merger.) The Prosperity Party is committed to strengthening and applying the federal system, which recognises the diversity and contributions of all Ethiopians. The new ruling party, Prosperity Party (PP), has its origins in the umbrella organisation of the EPRDF, covering a broad spectrum of interests and parties in 10 regional states. The reform forced the resignation of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, the ruling party in the Tigray Region, and as a result, the EPRDF split into PP and TPLF (Ayenew, 2021).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

With profound systemic revolutions until 1991, the nation had undergone a century of rising state centralisation. The unitary state paradigm was maintained and became increasingly forced under Emperor Haile Selassie’s reign, with extreme centralism and abuse of state power (political and

unfair arrests, trials, torture, disappearances, the death penalty in both criminal and political cases, killings of civilians in areas of armed conflict, and institutional or administrative failures of economic, social and political areas). Unfortunately, after 1974, both individual and group rights were severely constrained during the Derg regime. Close to the end of the Derg period (the late 1980s), some notable measures were taken regarding nationalised property or land: inheritable use rights were granted, and membership in producer cooperatives became voluntary. Liberalisation of the economic sector resulted in the deregulation of many prices, stringent restrictions on private trade were lifted unwillingly, and with the country's grain market Ethiopia was integrated into inter-regional markets.

Nevertheless, these public reforms did not prove effective or fruitful enough due to the government's bureaucratic rigidity, weak institutional structure, and other constraints. Following the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991 and the transitional period, the EPRDF formulated the current Ethiopian Constitution in 1995, which established a federal system of government based on ethnolinguistic considerations and the devolution of power to regional states, as well as local governments in different phases since 2001. The following table summarises the main characteristics of Ethiopia's government and public administration development from 1930 to 2019.

Table 1: *The three regimes and their characteristics in Ethiopia 1930–2019*

Regime	Emperor Haile Selassie	Derg regime	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
Period	1930–1974	1974–1991	1991–2019
Form of government	Monarchy	Military junta	Republic
Structure	Unitary state	Unitary state	Federal state
Ideology	Feudalism	Socialism	Parliamentary democracy
Separation of powers	No, concentrated authoritarian	No, concentrated military	Yes, separated with checks and balances
Public administration	Monarchical administrative system, centralisation	Weak public administration and poorly functioning state agencies, centralisation	Western influences in public administration, decentralisation

Source: Authors.

The public sector reforms under the EPRDF can be assessed by means of BPR, the BSC, the establishment of the Change Army, and the Citizens' Charter. In 2018, there was a shift from the developmental state to developmental democracy (changing decision-making and economic policies, and establishing fair power structures, conflict resolution mechanisms, effective and legitimate institutions, and a supportive regional environment). In 2019, the EPRDF was dissolved and transformed into the Prosperity Party by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. The reform forced the resignation of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the ruling party in the Tigray Region, and as a result, the EPRDF split into PP and TPLF. Finally, the country is undoubtedly changing, and important and unprecedented developments, including the development of civil society organisations, the creation of influential opposition political parties, and freedom of the media, have taken place in recent years. To improve and effectively develop public administration systems, the following are required: institutional reforms, inter-institutional cooperation and coordination, and effective and efficient use of modern technology. Ethiopia is a large, diverse, and complex country with dynamic politics and a unique history of a political culture reflecting a strong hierarchy and social stratification.

A more significant issue confronting Ethiopia is that it has become far too complex and diverse. Society is controlled without mastery of political skills, dialogue, bargaining, and simultaneous acknowledgment of other sources of authority required to establish a workable synthesis of the various elements. Despite the government's immediate capacity to preserve power through force, there is no sustainable and long-term governance alternative. These structural changes have brought the nationality question to the forefront. The different government and administrative systems feature different weak or strong political, economic, and social achievements, such as a lack of good governance, human rights violations, weak institutional capacities, a low level of citizen participation, and an (in)appropriate public administration system. Whether these can promote changes in habits of governance that are needed to manage diversity remains uncertain. Therefore, to mitigate these problems, institutional reforms, effective and efficient use of modern technologies, and inter-institutional cooperation play essential roles in improving the public administration system. Ethiopia has not only been influenced by the OECD but has also developed its own policies and practices; this dual effect can be felt in different policies, such as decision-making and economic policies, and the establishment of fair power structures, conflict

resolution mechanisms, effective and legitimate institutions, and a supportive regional environment or social protection.

The study spans and analyses the bustling and varied era of Ethiopia's state and government system over nearly a century. The historical comparison classifies each period by the main characteristics of its form of government, structure, ideology, separation of powers, and public administration. Of course, not all details can be covered in this scope. However, the most significant historical and political events provide sufficient background to understand government action and administrative reform processes. One of the critical limitations of the study is that the relevant sources in the Ethiopian language are not available in many cases, nor is archival research possible. Later, it may be worthwhile to process the original protocols, notes, etc., which will be available after the encryption period. Finally, further studies are needed, especially those that will address the reform process of the Ethiopian public administration in the period following 2019 by using a more comprehensive methodology.

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA UNDER THREE DIFFERENT REGIMES

Summary

The paper summarises and analyses the development of the public administration system in Ethiopia under three different regimes. The research mainly follows the traditional legal and administrative history approach methodology, focusing on the most significant historical, political, and legislative events (e.g. adoptions of constitutions) of the given eras, drawing attention to the main problems and reviewing them critically. Under Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–1974), Ethiopia was a centralised unitary state in the form of a feudal authoritarian monarchy. During the Derg regime (1974–1991), it remained a centralised unitary state, but with the concept of socialism, the military junta concentrated the power in their hands. The different government and administrative systems are characterized by weak and strong political, economic, and social achievements. Among these is a lack of good governance, human rights violations, weak institutional capacities, low citizen participation, and an (in)appropriate public administration system. These brought the nationality question to the forefront. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF, 1991–2019) established a decentralised federation, whereby parliamentary democracy guarantees a separation of powers with checks and balances and acknowledges the rights and self-determination of different ethnicities. In 2019 the EPRDF was dissolved and transformed into the Prosperity Party (PP). The reform forced the resignation of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the ruling party in the Tigray Region, and as a result, the EPRDF split into PP and TPLF. Meanwhile, public administration transformed from a monarchial administrative system into a weak public administration with poorly functioning state agencies; finally, the present system works under western influences. To mitigate these problems, institutional reforms, effective and efficient use of modern technologies, and inter-institutional cooperation play essential roles in improving the public administration system.

Keywords: public administration, reform, public sector, institutional reform, Ethiopia

RAZVOJ JAVNE UPRAVE U ETIOPIJI U TRI RAZLIČITA REŽIMA

Sažetak

Rad analizira i sažima razvoj sustava javne uprave u Etiopiji u tri različita politička režima. Istraživanje uglavnom slijedi tradicionalni, pravni i upravni, povijesni metodološki pristup, fokusirajući se na najvažnije povijesne, političke i pravne događaje (npr. donošenje ustava) u pojedinim razdobljima i kritički usmjeravajući pozornost na najvažnije probleme. Za vladavine cara Hailela Selasija (1930. – 1974.) Etiopija je bila centralizirana unitarna država u formi autoritarne feudalne monarhije. Za vrijeme režima Derg (1974. – 1991.) zadržano je unitarno centralističko uređenje, ali u socijalističkom sustavu u kojemu je vojna hunta koncentrirala moć u svojim rukama. Različite vlade i upravne sustave karakteriziraju slaba i jaka, politička, ekonomska i društvena postignuća. Među njima se ističu: nedostatak dobrog upravljanja, kršenje ljudskih prava, niska razina građanske participacije i (ne)prikladan sustav javne uprave. Sve navedeno u prvi je plan dovelo nacionalno pitanje. Etiopski narodni revolucionarni demokratski front (ENRDF, 1991. – 2019.) uspostavio je decentraliziranu federaciju u kojoj demokratski parlamentarni režim jamči diobu vlasti s kočnicama i ravnotežama te priznaje pravo na samoodređenje različitim etničkim skupinama. U 2019. godini ENRDF je raspušten i preoblikovan u Stranku napretka (SN). To je izazvalo podjelu u vladajućoj stranci koja se rascijepila na Stranku napretka i Tigrajski narodni oslobodilački front, vodeću političku opciju u regiji Tigraju. U međuvremenu, javna uprava transformirana je iz monarhijskoga upravnog sustava u slabu javnu upravu koja se sastoji od nefunkcionalnih državnih agencija. Trenutačni upravni sustav pod utjecajem je zapadnih ideja. Da bi se dugotrajni problemi javne uprave u Etiopiji ublažili i riješili, potrebno je provesti duboku institucijsku reformu koja ponajprije podrazumijeva učinkovito i djelotvorno korištenje modernih tehnologija te međuinstitucijsku suradnju.

Ključne riječi: javna uprava, reforma, javni sektor, institucijska reforma, Etiopija

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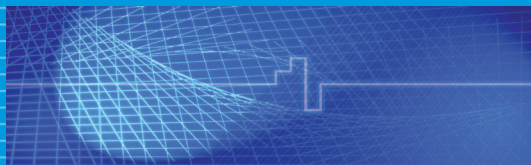
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