The Impacts of the Developmental State Model on Democratic Federalism in Ethiopia: A Retrospective Study

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Abstract

Ethiopia's experiment with the developmental state model (DSM) has been widely contested on the grounds of its viability within the country's "democratic" federal system. This study examines the impact of the DSM on democratic federalism in Ethiopia, specifically on multiparty democracy and multilevel development governance. The study employs a retrospective research design combined with a qualitative research approach. Research participants were purposively selected. Data were collected using key interviews, focus group discussions, and document review. The findings show that Ethiopia's experiment with the DSM has been characterised largely by centralised and authoritarian governance of development, especially after 2005 national election when the government began taking measures to establish developmentalism as a hegemonic ideology. The measures include the enactment of various restrictive laws (on press and media, the electoral system, civil society, and anti-terrorism). The result was de facto one-party rule that contributed not only to shrinking democratic space but also to undermining multilevel development governance. The state's top-down, exclusionary and coercive approach to development governance was evident, for instance, in the Integrated Master Plan for Addis Ababa City and the surrounding areas of the Oromia region, as well as in large-scale farming and industrial parks development projects which encroached on the prerogatives of regional states. Consequently, Ethiopia's experiment with the DSM has significantly undermined both multiparty democracy and the federal system.

Key Words: *Developmental state, Development, Democratic federalism, Multiparty, Ethiopia*

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1. Introduction

The developmental state model (DSM) has been implemented in many countries across the globe, although the model's status as a distinct developmental path and its compatibility with democratic governance has been widely contested issue among scholars and policy-makers (Mkandawire, 2001; Leftwich, 2005). Two main arguments are espoused: the "incompatibility thesis" and the "compatibility thesis" of the model with democracy and pluralism. Indeed, many studies of the nature of the DSM have linked it to "authoritarianism". As a considerable number of scholars who studied the experiences of the East Asian developmental states (DSs) have argued (Leftwich, 2005), the model tends to promote a governance system which is "hegemonic, centrist and interventionist" and whose priority is to realise economic development above everything else, even democracy (Prado et al., 2016).

However, even though dominant scholarly views on the DSM associate it with authoritarianism, there is a counterargument, albeit less dominant. There are some that opposes such an association and argues for the possibility of building a democratic developmental state model (DDSM) (Mkandawire, 2010). According to proponents of this view, who argue that there indeed are 21st century DDSMs, authoritarianism is an exogenous, rather than endogenous, feature of the DSM and the model can thus be democratic.

But as several studies of successful East Asian developmental states such as South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, the prototypes of the DSM, have found, the DSM is antithetical to a democratic and decentralised governance system, which weighs in favour of the "incompatibility thesis".[1] Hence, the application of the DSM in a federal political system associated, at least in theory, with a decentralised state structure, a democratic governance system, subnational autonomy, and political pluralism raises serious questions about the compatibility of the former with the latter. The Ethiopian developmental state model (EDSM should thus be viewed within the broader context of these ongoing debates, as well as of the country's constitutional federal political system,

[1] See for example: Chang (2002); Johnson (1999); Kim (1999); Evans (1995).

which provides for decentralised and democratic governance of development.

Following the Ethiopian government's official adoption of the DSM as a viable path to realise rapid economic growth and industrialisation, the model has served until recently (2018, a year of major political change) as the driving ideological framework for the country's political economy (Meles Zenawi Foundation, 2017). However, the DSM's implementation under the leadership of the now-defunct Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF) has been a subject of debate in academic and policy circles.[2] The debates relate to, among other things, the question of whether the DSM harmoniously co-exists with the constitutionally decentralised and democratic federal system of Ethiopia.

On the one hand, proponents of the EDSM argue that the model was essentially grounded in federal and democratic governance. They maintain that the democratic DSM implemented by the EPRDF delivered tangible results, as seen in the country's double-digit economic growth and the legitimation of its top leadership in successive national elections (Bereket, 2011). On the other hand, others argue that the application of the DSM under the EPRDF's leadership was characterised by and large by "development authoritarianism" that significantly undermined democratic federalism, in particular regional autonomy, multiparty democracy, freedom of the press, and freedom for civil society organisations (CSOs) (Lefort, 2013).

It is true that a well-functioning federal democracy is essential for the meaningful exercise of both self-rule and shared rule in a federal political system (Elazar, 1995). The essence of federal democracy lies in a constitutionally entrenched division of state power that confers autonomy to regional states and affords political pluralism, as manifested, for example, in multiparty democracy (Elazar, 1995). The absence of a federal democracy in a given federation, therefore, may affect the feasibility, viability and desirability of a federal polity, as was the case in defunct federations such as Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union (Watts, 2002).

[2] For more on the application of the DSM in Ethiopia, see Kefale (2011); Clapham (2006 & 2017); Creswell (2003); De Waal (2018); De Waal (2012); Gebremariam (2018); Lefort (2012); Alemayehu (2009).

Studies have explored the EPRDF's conception and execution of the EDSM and the latter's interplay with the country's federal system.[3] These studies can generally be placed into two broad categories. The first comprises studies that support the "incompatibility thesis", and the second, those that support the "compatibility thesis". Indeed, even within these broad categories, the studies vary in terms of their focus of investigation and approach of enquiry as well as final outcomes.

In terms of their focus of investigation, studies that support the "incompatibility thesis" typically address at least one of four major themes: 1) the challenges and desirability of building a DSM; 2) the relationship between the DSM and democracy; 3) the relationship between an ethnic-based federal arrangement and the DSM; and 4) the pitfalls of applying the DSM in certain policy areas. Generally, most of the studies that support the "incompatibility thesis" share the argument that the practice of the DSM in Ethiopia by the EPRDF has undermined the country's federal system.[4]

These studies, however, fall short of providing a comprehensive explanation of the EDSM's interplay with, and impact on, on Ethiopia's federal system. They are also scanty and not sufficiently empirically rigorous in their analysis of specific policy areas and institutions. Specifically, the studies have two major limitations. First, they do not adequately explore how the DSM in and of itself (i.e. independently of other factors such as the EPRDF's ideology of "revolutionary democracy", the nature of political culture in the country, and the design of the Constitution with respect to the vertical division power between tiers of government) is actually linked to the tendency towards centralisation. Secondly, the studies appear to succumb to the myopic argument that because the DSM has worked well in East Asian countries within a context of unitary state structures and centralised systems of governance, it would not work in countries with a decentralised governance system, such as Ethiopia.

Similar is the case with studies that generally appear to support the "compatibility thesis" and the possibility of building a DDSM,

[3] Ibid.

[4] See Clapham (2006 & 2017); Batch (2011); Mesay (2011); Asnake (2011a); Fantini (2013); Abbink (2017); Semahegn (2014); Lefort (2015).

and which, in fact, argue that the EDSM has been executed harmoniously with the country's federal system.[5] These studies also fall far short of critically examining and adequately explaining how the model's authoritarian tendency and the EPRDF's hegemonic rule under the EDSM have actually played out in the country's federal system, particularly when it comes to running a democratic and decentralised development governance system. That is, they do not specifically indicate how the implementation of the model – which is often associated with a largely authoritarian and centrist governance approach – could actually be reconciled with the core values and institutions of a genuine federal political system, such as democratic governance, subnational policy autonomy, policy innovation, and accountable and responsive governance.

Against this backdrop, this article aims to re-assess the impact of the practice of the DSM on democratic federalism in Ethiopia. In doing so, the specific objectives of this study are twofold. First, it points out the impact of the EDSM on multiparty electoral democracy in Ethiopia; and secondly, it pinpoints the impact of the EDSM on the country's constitutional multilevel development governance system, which guarantees autonomy for regional states to make and execute their own regional development policies, as outlined under the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).[6]

2. Methodology

This article assesses Ethiopia's experiment with the DSM vis-à-vis its impacts on democratic federalism from late 2002 until April 2018 (a critical juncture that saw key political changes, namely the demise of EPRDF). The study uses a retrospective research design that looks back at Ethiopia's experiment with the DSM to examine the latter's interaction with and impact on the norms and institutions of democratic federalism enshrined in the FDRE Constitution. This study employs mainly qualitative procedures for collecting and analysing data from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include policy documents, strate-

[5] See, for example, Berket, 2011; Alem, 2013; Arkebe, 2015.

[6] The FDRE Constitution provides for a decentralised and democratic governance of development underpinned by the core values and principles of a federal democracy and a constitutionally delineated vertical division of power between tiers of government. See Articles 1; 8; 9; 10; 12; 13; 39(1), (2) and (3); 41; 43; 50(2), (3), (4) and (8); 88; 89; 90; and 92 of the FDRE Constitution.

gic plans, and legislation. In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with opposition party figures as well as senior government officials and technical experts who occupied various posts at the federal and regional state level under the EPRDF-led government.

In selecting samples, the study relied on purposive sampling techniques, and due consideration was given to ensure that the selection of participants was fairly representative of the different socio-economic development levels of regional states across Ethiopia. Hence, there is proportional representation of regional states from the category of so-called "developed" regions, which have a relatively better standing in terms of their level of infrastructure development and wield a considerable degree of political influence in decision-making processes at the federal level, and regional states among the so-called "developing" or "emerging" regions, which are found mainly in the lowland parts of the country and have a relatively poorer basis of socio-economic and infrastructure development. Accordingly, a total of five regional states were identified and selected as participants in this study: the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) and the Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State (BGNRS), from the emerging regions; and the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS), the Oromia National Regional State (ONRS), and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), from the developed regions.

This article is arranged in two main parts. The first part comprises sections that provide the rationale and broader context for the study. This includes an introduction, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework of, and normative discourses on, the DSM in general. The second part deals with Ethiopia's experiment with the DSM and empirical findings regarding the impact of the EDSM on democratic federalism in Ethiopia, specifically on multiparty democracy and MLDG, under the EPRDF. This part concludes the article by presenting the main findings of the study.

3. The DSM: Theoretical and conceptual framework

After studying the role of Japan's[7] Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in the Japanese economy and the subsequent emulation of this policy by neighbouring states such as South Korea, Johnson identified the DSM as a distinct alternative development path to such conventional models of development as liberalism, socialism, and the welfare state (Chang, 2002). Johnson argues that the secret behind Japan's remarkable developmental success was what he called a "planned rational state" or developmental state: the DSM exists where there is a "planned rational state" whose orientation is developmental and which prioritises industrial development policy (Johnson, 1999).

In contrast to the neoclassical narrative that downplays the role of a big state on the grounds of its inefficiency in resource allocation, in the DSM, as its proponents argue, the state "governs" or regulates the market rather than letting market forces set the price of wages and goods and services. In the DSM, state intervention to address market inefficiencies is believed to create economies of scale, particularly in transitional Third World economies dominated by the primary sectors of the economy (Kim, 1999). This is one of the main attributes of the DSM as an alternative means to create capabilities to pave the way for rapid industrialisation. Furthermore, citing as an example the developmental state in post-war Japan (later emulated by South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Honk Kong in the 1970s and early 1990s), Johnson argues that markets do not exist in isolation but arise as a result of deliberate action in the state and politics (Evans, 1995).

It is widely argued by many scholars that the DSM draws on aspects of all of the conventional paradigms or models of economic development; as a result, it is often seen as a mid-way point between socialism and market-led liberalism (Leftwich, 1995; Woo-Cumings, 1999; Ghani et al., 2005). While experiences with the DSM differ from one country to another, one can point out certain core elements that are shared by all of the countries that have adopted it.

[7] Johnson (1982) coined the term "the developmental state".

3.1 Features and core elements of the DSM

First and foremost, the DSM emphasises the importance of active state intervention in managing, governing and regulating the economy. The state plays an active role in regulating the market, building essential public infrastructure, redistributing resources as well as producing and providing goods and services which the private sector is unwilling or unable to provide (Leftwich, 1995, p. 400–402). The DSM specifically allows for a state-led capitalism within liberal economic principles. This in turn requires the "developmental" state to have at least two essential attributes: the state must have the capacity to control a vast majority of its territory, and it must possess a set of core capacities that enable it to design and deliver various development policies (Ghani, 2005). This is one of the main reasons for considering the DSM as an alternative path to bringing about rapid economic growth and structural transformation towards industrialisation in transitional economies with huge market inefficiencies, such as Ethiopia.

Secondly, nationalism and a national vision lie at the heart of the DSM. This is so because it is not sufficient for the DSM to only have development-oriented goals and policies; it also needs to be capable of effecting national mobilisation towards these goals. National mobilisation is crucial for gaining consensus on developmental projects and enabling the state to mobilise or rally broad sections of the populace for their execution (Woo-Cumings, 1999). This means people from the apex of power all the way down to farmers in villages need to align themselves with, and sing to the tune of, the "development agenda" set by the leadership at the top (Woo-Cummings, 1999).

Thirdly, embedded autonomy is another key tenet of the DSM. "Embedded autonomy" refers to the nature of the relationship that should exist between a strong interventionist state and other social agents, such as influential private businesses, landlords and the like (Evans, 2005). According to Evans, under the DSM, the state is believed to be autonomous as long as it has a rationalised bureaucracy characterised by meritocracy and long-term career prospects – traits that make civil servants more professional and detached from the influence of powerful rent-seeking groups. It is this "autonomy", according to Evans, which gives a state the

ability to define and pursue its strategic developmental goals; the "embeddedness" of this "autonomy" is created by forming alliances with key social groups that enable the state to achieve its developmental goals.

As the experience of successful East Asian developmental states shows, it is also essential that, under the DSM, there are pilot agencies responsible for policy planning, coordinating and overseeing implementation (Chang & Evans, 2005). For instance, during its experience with the DSM between the 1960s and the 1980s, South Korea had a powerful pilot agency known as the Economic Planning Board (EPB), with the responsibility not only to undertake policy and strategy planning but also control the allocation of budget. The primary role of the EPB was coordinating the activities of other key players in the economy, including the then Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which was in charge of formulating and implementing sectoral policies as well as all overseeing banks and state-owned enterprises. The same holds true of Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan (Chang & Evans, 2005).

Meanwhile, another important institutional factor for the DSM relates to the party system. Under the DSM, the party system plays a crucial role in defining the appropriate ideological orientation, institutions and policies to be adopted; the success of the DSM is often linked, among other things, to the party system in that the latter is the main driver of the ideology of developmentalism and its translation into institutions and practices (Bogaards, 2013).[8] In developing states, party politics are usually associated with ei-

[8] Based on the number of parties and the level of democratic competition, party systems can be categorised as one-party, two-party, and multiparty systems. A one-party system is an autocratic or dictatorial power where only a single party is constitutionally entitled to rule a state and all forms of political opposition are banned by law. Cuba, North Korea and China are examples of one-party systems. In a two-party system, the political arena is, of course, dominated by just two parties – other parties might exist but they have little or no political significance. A multiparty system represents broader political constituencies and integrates society into the democratic process; it forms the basis for a stable political coalitions and governments, particularly in situations of great uncertainty about electoral outcomes and political matters generally. See Bogaards (2013).

ther a dominant-party or a hegemonic-party system (Woo-Cumings, 1999, p. 9).[9] The DSM often tends to embrace party politics that expedite developmental policy-making and enforcement with little or no procedural hurdles (Woo-Cummings, 1999). Under the DSM, therefore, a dominant, if not hegemonic, party system is viewed as apposite for expedited collective action that facilitates centralised rent creation and distribution (Booth, 2012). The importance of a hegemonic party under the DSM is underlined by Leftwich (1998, p. 400):

> In the DSM, without a dominant-party political rule, developmental elites would be divided or paralysed and relative state autonomy would have been impossible, and the bargaining demands of special interests would have come to predominate and the bureaucratic continuity and capacity may be compromised in a way that would be unlikely to serve national developmental goal/national development goals.

The defining features of the DSM include an authoritarian, politically and economically strong interventionist central government, with embedded autonomy that shields it from being captured by the private sector, secures productive relations with the latter, and enables grand national mobilisation. The dominant party system under the DSM, as seen above, is a hegemonic party system, and the main justification is to entrench hegemonic developmentalist ideology as an essential driver to realise the developmental objectives of the model. Hence, it seems a centralised development governance system under hegemonic-party rule is the defining feature of the DSM attributed to "development authoritarianism".

4. Applying the DSM in in Ethiopia: An overview

After the political transition in Ethiopia in the early 1990s, the federalisation of the state and the relative stability of the country set the stage for the adoption of the DSM. This is often characterised as one of the milestones marking the fourth major stage in

[9] According to Woo-Cumings (1999, p. 5), a dominant-party system, otherwise known as a hegemonic-party system, is in one in which the incumbent is dominant to such an extent that its victory at elections is a mere formality. In these systems, incumbents face a very limited degree of competitive electoral challenge.

the political trajectory of the post-1991 Ethiopian state (Abbink, 2011a). In fact, the political and socio-economic context and exact motives that led to the adoption of the DSM are still widely debated issues. The EPRDF-led government saw the DSM as an apt alternative path for tackling poverty and bringing about rapid economic growth via rectifying pervasive market inefficiencies (Zenawi, 2006). This in turn called for a strongly activist state that would play a key role in the economy, as opposed to the small and passive state advocated by market-led economic principles (Bereket, 2011). Moreover, such an activist state was in line with the growing interest among many African countries, particularly since the late 1990s, in adopting an alternative path to development to what they saw as the failed neoliberal model (Teshome, 2012).

More specifically, Meles Zenawi, the then Prime Minister of Ethiopia, argued that the DSM held great promise for Africa after the neoliberal economic reforms prescribed by the so-called Bretton Woods Institutions – the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – failed to bring about the desired changes. Invoking the prototype DSMs of East Asian countries, Zenawi argued that the neoliberal model's insistence on reducing the role of the state in the economy to that of a "night watchman" was inappropriate in the case of Ethiopia. Instead, he argued that the market inefficiencies in the country required just the opposite, that is, a developmental state that accords a strong role to the state in directing, leading and regulating the economy (Zenawi, 2011). For Zenawi and other proponents of the model it was only the DSM that would clear the way for the ball of development to roll in the right direction (EPRDF, 2006 & 2010). This, according to the EPRDF, entailed a "new beginning" in favour of a state-led capitalism (Meles Zenawi Foundation, 2017).

By contrast, those who are critical of the EDSM argue that it was just another ploy by the EPRDF to retain its grip on power and unrivalled dominance in the country's political landscape (Bach, 2011; Mesay, 2011; Fantini, 2013). Their position, in other words, is that the adoption of the DSM in Ethiopia was primarily meant as a scheme for political ends (that is, ensuring political domination by the EPRDF), rather than a genuine attempt to address market inefficiencies or to implement state-driven capitalism in the country (Mesay, 2011; Ayenachew, 2014).

In this vein, some scholars ascribe neo-patrimonial characteristics to the EDSM and make reference to "developmental patrimonialism" (Paulos, 2007). Here, the view is that patrimonial elements in the Ethiopian state manifested themselves in the continued prominence of individuals associated with the TPLF's armed struggle against the Derg as well as in the emergence of a technocratic class (Paulos, 2007). Others see the EPRDF's adoption of the DSM in 21st century Ethiopia simply as a continuation of the broader modernisation or development project pursued by successive Ethiopian regimes, a trend reflective of the "politics of emulation" (Clapham, 2006).

Leaving aside these debates, since the early 2000s the Ethiopian government has taken different policy measures in line with the ideals of the DSM. Applying the DSM in Ethiopia has encompassed a broad range of political, economic and social capacity-building efforts and reforms, as clearly outlined in various national policy and strategy documents issued by the Ethiopian government. A principal such policy tool, one designed to serve as the overarching policy framework for the country's development, is the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialisation (ADLI) policy or strategy, which is accompanied by sub-sector strategies and plans meant to translate it into action.[10]

As clearly recorded in various party and government documents (EPRDF, 2005; EPRDF, 2006; EPRDF, 2010), the EPRDF's DSM draws largely on the experiences of the so-called Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) of East Asia, such as South Korea and Taiwan, which proclaimed adherence to hegemonic developmentalism under their respective DSMs (EPRDF, 2010; Altenburg, 2010). In this regard, for example, the Ethiopian government enlisted Japanese and South Korean experts to advise it on its industrial policy (Altenburg, 2010). Moreover, its policies and strategic plans, such as ADLI, the FDRE Industrial Development Policy (IDS), GTP I, and GTP II, exhibit parallels with the East Asian development states in such policy hallmarks as an initial focus on boosting agricultural productivity to accumulate capital; increasing supply of input for agro-industries; providing incentives for

[10] These include the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP); the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP 2005 –2010); and two five-year strategic development plans, the Growth and Transformation Plan I – 2010–2015 (GTP I 2010–2015) and the Growth and Transformation Plan II – 2015–2020 (GTP II 2015-20).

export-oriented industries or manufacturers; and implementing "carrot-and-stick" policies for enterprises (Altenburg, 2010). As Abbink (2011a) notes, ADLI, IDS, GTP I, and GTP II, along with other party documents, are strong indications that the adoption of the DSM in Ethiopia marked the fourth phase in reforming and shaping the post-1991 Ethiopian state.

Overall, it is thus safe to argue that the experiment with the DSM in Ethiopia is an important milestone in the country's trajectory of developmental governance, one involving an attempt by the government to advance a "developmentalist state" orientation and elevate a developmental agenda above anything else (Abebe, 2018).

4.1 Core features and drivers of the EDSM

As pointed out earlier, the objective of the DSM's adoption in Ethiopia is to tackle chronic, rampant poverty and bring about structural transformation from a mainly agrarian economy to manufacturing-led industrialisation. This, according to the EPRDF, could be achieved through an active state that assumes the primary role in managing or regulating the economy and the governance of development. To that end, the EPRDF-led government devised two key strategies: (i) restructuring a rent-seeking political economy into a competitive and productive one through selective state intervention in the economy; and (ii) building hegemonic developmentalism to realise the first strategy (Fantini, 2013). This is based on the core tenets of the DSM discussed above, where it is underscored that the role of the state is not limited to a policy level but encompasses guiding, dictating and regulating development activities and ensuring that different actors' efforts are aligned with the state's objectives.

Thus, the developmental state that the party sought to build had at least three key features (EPRDF, 2010). These are: (i) a firm conviction that development must be considered and treated as an existential question; (ii) political and economic independence of the state from the influence of the economic elite; and (iii) ensuring that developmentalism is a hegemonic ideology. According to the EPRDF, by embracing these guiding principles, the EDSM would eventually help to extricate the country from poverty, with the goal of attaining a middle-income economy by 2020–2023. Consequently, undertaking development and structural trans-

formation is considered not only an economic objective, but also – perhaps primarily – a political one (Altenburg, 2010). This, as some argue, is an indication of the EPRDF's motive and intent: staying in power by gaining legitimacy not so much via the ballot box but principally via developmental success (Bach, 2011).

4.2 The ideology of "revolutionary democracy" and the EDSM

As mentioned, one of the drivers of the DSM is the assumption that in transitional economies the principles of a liberal political-economic model do not work unless a certain level of initial economic growth is attained. Hence, democracy is generally viewed as a secondary issue to be considered after a degree of economic growth has been achieved (Huntington, 1987). Conversely, ensuring the primacy of developmental hegemonism often becomes the main agenda of an activist development state. Under the DSM, therefore, the role of politics in general, and that of a developmentally-oriented hegemonic party in particular, is viewed as crucial for success in designing and enforcing development policies and strategies, as was the case with East Asian countries such South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore, particularly in the early 1970s and late 1980s (Leftwich, 2008).

In a similar vein, the need to build a dominant developmentally-oriented party system was viewed as essential to ensure the hegemonic status of the DSM ideology (Leftwich, 2001). In its endeavour to build the developmental state in Ethiopia, the EPRDF widely used party politics as well as various development policies underpinned by the ethos of developmentalism (Fantini, 2013). In this regard, one of the defining features of the EDSM has been the EPRDF's ambition to turn itself into a dominant or hegemonic developmental party within the country's political landscape, with a view to staying in power long enough to achieve its developmental aspirations (Bereket, 2011). This is clearly emphasised in one of its political documents: "The Developmental State Model needs a developmentally-oriented dominant party that would stay in power until and up to its developmentalist mission is achieved when the core elements of developmental objectives are realised" (EPRDF, 2010, p. 45). The institutionalisation of developmental politics as the chief driver of developmentalism, as such, was meant not only to allow effective development pol-

icy-making and execution, but also to ensure a continuous and sustainable implementation of such policies until, and up to, the realisation of structural transformation in the country (EPRDF, 2006).

Consequently, as some have argued, the application of the DSM in Ethiopia saw the EPRDF take measures aimed at turning itself into a dominant party (Bach, 2011; Fantini, 2013; Lefort, 2013). Its project of building a dominant-party system, however, was carried out in the context of its own conception of democracy, class struggle, and above all, the "question of nationalities", as a result of which it blended the DSM with its long-held ideology of "revolutionary democracy" (Bach, 2011). The EPRDF itself often proclaimed that this was its unflinching political creed (Meles Zenawi Foundation, 2017). This obviously affects experimentation with the DSM. It is along this line of argument that the EPRDF conceived its party programme, dubbed "revolutionary democracy". Anchored on the principle of "democratic centralism", it was to serve as an ideological basis to dictate all affairs of governance, including the development policies and strategies designed and implemented by the EPRDF in the course of entrenching the DSM (Fantini, 2013). Lefort (2012, p. 461) succinctly describes the impact of the EPRDF's revolutionary-democracy thinking in this regard:

> For Meles, a "strong state" was not solely a state with extensive powers and very wide scope of action but also a state whose actions are dictated by the dominant party, because "development is a political process first". Although the party initially led the state, the former quickly swallowed up the latter. Ethiopia lives under a "monolithic party-state system" governed by a so-called "Revolutionary Democracy".

Indeed, this can be gleaned from major party and government policy documents issued in 2002 – such as the Democracy and Development, Rural Development and Transformation Policy/Strategy (entailing reforms to civil service, education, and the justice sector) – which reflect the tenets of both revolutionary democracy and developmentalism. As some scholars argue, by blending the ethos and institutions of the DSM and revolutionary democracy, the EPRDF sought to project itself as a vanguard

party and obtain legitimacy from its developmental success in implementing the DSM (Abbnik, 2011b). In short, in its effort to institutionalise the DSM, the EPRDF at the same time attempted to project itself as the omniscient and omnipresent propeller of the country's political economy (Lefort, 2012).

5. Impact of the DSM on democratic federalism in Ethiopia

5.1 Impact on multiparty democracy

Various scholars argue that the adverse consequences of the practice of the EDSM by the EPRDF began to make themselves felt in the country's political space and democratisation process following the much-contested 2005 general elections. According to these scholars, this period was a watershed moment that saw a marked intensification in developmentalist discourse as the DSM started to take root at a practical level. The post-2005-election period is thus often depicted as the climax of the EPRDF's hegemonic rule, but unfortunately it is also marks an apparent regression in political pluralism in general and multiparty democracy in particular (Abbink, 2011b). This was a result of the EPRDF's relentless work after 2005 in making the DSM a hegemonic ideology and the EPRDF the only apposite party to carry the burden of transforming the country's political economy, one which would thus need to remain in power for the next four or five decades (Lefort, 2012). Indeed, empirical evidence from various sources and participants in this study supports this claim. claim. For instance, one of the key informants said:

> The EPRDF pursued development authoritarianism in its ambition to stay in power indefinitely, but tried to decoy the public as if its nearly 100 per cent electoral victory in the 2010 general elections and its successfully winning 100 per cent of the votes in the 2015 general elections was the prize that it had got from the public as a recognition of its success in bringing about development and democracy in the country. Nevertheless, its domination was not the result of a democratic process, but rather the result of a totalitarian

> state and party that meticulously worked to restrict the political space and eventually create a political environment for the EPRDF with no real opposition that could challenge its dominance.[11]

Such a practice of a dominant-party politics by the EPRDF under the guise of pursuing a DSM in Ethiopia has been widely criticised for undermining political pluralism, as the party's hegemonic developmental discourse and practice adamantly adhered to exclusionary politics and policies. As another key informant put it:

> The intention and the practice on the ground had been to keep an iron grip on political power where the EPRDF has long been controlling the political space and all of the state apparatus. The EPRDF, especially following the historic 2005 elections, had been unleashing widespread smear campaigns against the political opposition, independent media, civil society and the like, using such humiliating labels as "enemies of [the] developmental path", "agents of neoliberalism", "anti-peace elements", and, in the worst cases, branding them as terrorists, which makes them a legitimate target of the party's clampdown measures taken in the name of development.[12]

What is often mentioned in this regard are the measures taken subsequent to the 2005 national elections, specifically the enactment of infamous laws that significantly weakened opposition parties and effectively crippled their activities and those of civil society organisations and the media. These and similar measures by the EPRDF enabled it to tighten its grip on power so as to fulfil its developmental vision. The measures resulted in the closure of democratic political space and the EPRDF's assuming total control of the country's legislative bodies both at federal and regional-state level. This becomes evident when one looks at the results of the national elections held since the adoption of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the apparent regression in multiparty democracy that followed, particularly during the 2005 and the 2010 elections (see the table below).

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[11] Interview with Negaso Gidada, former President of the Republic and member of the HoPR during the 3rd Parliamentary Season, 19 March 2018, Addis Ababa.

[12] Interview with an opposition party member and former member of the HoPR during the 3rd Parliamentary Season, 5 November 2018, Addis Ababa.

Table 11: Results of national elections in Ethiopia since 1995-2015

No.	National elections held	Federal parliamentary seats won by the EPRDF and its affiliates (out of 547)		Federal parliamentary seats won by opposition parties and independent candidates (out of 547)	
		No. of seats	%	No. of seats	%
1	1995 elections	483	88.2%	54	11.8%
2	2000 elections	518	95%	28	5%
3	2005 elections	372	68%	172	31%
4	2010 elections	545	99.6%	1	0.4%
5	2015 elections	538	100%	0	0%

Source: Author's compilation from reports by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

As can be seen in the table above, the adoption of the DSM in Ethiopia has led to a regression in the country's electoral democracy, with a reversal taking place in the trend of progressive increase in representation of opposition parties in Parliament witnessed during the first three national elections prior to 2010 and culminating in literally no opposition representation at all in the 2015 elections. Such a situation is consistent with the prevailing view in the literature on the DSM that the state under the DSM has to be undemocratic in order to stay in power for long enough to be able to achieve its developmental agenda.[13]

In spite of this regression in electoral democracy and political pluralism in a supposedly multiparty system, some see the matter otherwise. Various scholars maintain that the mere fact that all of these national elections were held periodically is in itself a sign of a well-functioning democratic process and a testament to the EPRDF's commitment to democracy and development. In this regard, one key informant stated the following:

> [The party] had been able to win the hearts and minds of the rural majority [which] led to its victory in the last four general elections held in the country. And its long-standing political dominance and stay in power in the country is a result of changes in the political culture in the country where it is getting into a new

[13] See, for example, Evans (1995); Johnson (1999); Kim (1999); Chang (2002).

> era where we have one dominant party – the EPRDF – which played the game according to [the game's] rules, [rules that] paved the way for its [victoriousness] within the context of a multiparty setting as outlined under the [FDRE] Constitution.[14]

For those who are of the view that the DSM is compatible with a democratic system, the EPRDF's practice under the EDSM is seen as similar to the experience of countries like Japan and South Africa, where a dominant-party system exists within a democratic milieu. Such commentators thus try to justify their claims by equating the EPRDF with the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the National Democratic Party (NDP) in Japan, which would imply that the EPRDF had been obtaining the popular mandate to rule the country through democratic elections in a competitive multiparty context where state power follows rules of the game that accord with principles and institutions set forth under the 1995 FDRE Constitution. Such a view, however, is fiercely opposed by the EPRDF's critics, who see the party's conception and implementation of the DSM in general and its conduct of dominant-party politics in particular as a cover-up for iron-fisted, authoritarian rule (Mesay, 2011; Lefort, 2012). According to these critics, the EPRDF's politics falls within the ambit not of a dominant-party system but of an authoritarian, hegemonic-party system – one where the outcomes of elections are a foregone conclusion and there is a lack of strong opposition parties.

The EPRDF stated as a justification for adopting the DSM in Ethiopia the need to address the chronic poverty in the country through an accelerated economic growth that could be achieved via the active involvement and intervention of the state in the economy, as envisioned in the model. To this end, it attempted to make the DSM a hegemonic ideology and to put in place a multiparty system conceived within this model and in which political parties that are in a position to better advance the ideology and deliver its developmental goals would compete for public office. Any other political parties that did not subscribe to the ideology of a development state, regardless of their support base and elec-

[14] Interview with the head of the Institute of Policy Studies, March 2018, Addis Ababa.

toral success, automatically would be rejected and tainted with such labels as "enemies of change", "neoliberals", "terrorists", and the like.

Moreover, the EPRDF held the firm conviction that such parties must be defeated by all means necessary, as evidenced by its draconian laws and subsequent repressive measures, including forcing many contenders for power out of the country or putting them behind bars – actions which were akin to state-sanctioned terrorism.[15] In fact, this was officially admitted by the government when the reformist prime minister Abiy Ahmed, in his second appearance in Parliament, responded to questions from parliamentarians about security and law-enforcement issues by remarking that "the government itself has been committing acts of terrorism when it tortured, abducted, forcefully disappeared, and unlawfully detained many political dissidents and other persons under its custody" (Ahmed, 2018).

Generally, the measures above contributed significantly to the EPRDF's complete domination of the country's political landscape. This was clearly evidenced by the regression in the country's electoral democracy as well as in the intra-party democracy within the EPRDF itself, especially following the 2001 split in the TPLF, which was exacerbated in the aftermath of the 2005 national elections when the party fell under the one-man dictatorship of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. This in turn led to a deterioration of democracy within the country.

As part of the effort to bring about rapid economic growth and structural transformation in the country and attain a middle-income economy by 2020, the EPRDF's party apparatus engaged the branches of the federal and regional-state governmental machinery to such an extent that it was hardly possible to distinguish the party from the state. While some observers view such an overwhelming merger of party and state as undesirable, others maintain that it was essential if the EPRDF were to achieve the developmental objectives of the Ethiopian government, particularly in the face of what it saw as an alarming surge of rent-seeking private actors combined with severe bottlenecks

[15] This was particularly evident in the pardon and release of many political prisoners, such as Andargachew Tsige, former Deputy Chairman of Ginbot 7 Rebel Movement; Eskinder Negga, a prominent dissident journalist; Bekele Gerba and Merera Gudina, top party officials of the Oromo Federalist Congress; and Asaminew Tsige, a former army general.

and deficiencies in the capacity of the state bureaucracy (Arkebe, 2015, pp. 75–77). In this regard, Arkebe (2015) argued that, in the light of a weak bureaucracy and the limitations of reforms introduced within the civil service, the EPRDF's active intervention in the political economy filled such gaps, which in his view contributed significantly to the achievements that Ethiopia's industrial policies have brought for the country.

Overall, the EPRDF's attempt to establish itself as a dominant party championing the ideals and institutions of the DSM brought about major changes in the country's political landscape. Under the EDSM, the EPRDF sought to project itself as a hegemonic developmental party, and in so doing acted against the values and principles of the FDRE Constitution.[16] Let us now turn to see the impact that the experiment with the DSM made on multilevel development governance as enshrined in the FDRE Constitution.

5.2 Impact on democratic multilevel development governance

Democratic multilevel development governance is embedded within the FDRE Constitution, which prescribes that development governance has to carried out in transparent, accountable, participatory and responsive ways.[17] Specifically, Chapter 10 of the FDRE Constitution provides for the respective tiers of government in the federation and sets out, in Article 85, the objectives and governing principles for the formulation and execution of policies on social, economic and environmental matters. The question is how the authoritarianism that characterised the EPRDF's developmentalism affected democratic multilevel development governance in Ethiopia.

Some criticisms of the EDSM were directed at the manner in which various development policies and projects were formulated and executed, while others raised concerns about economic efficiency and sustainability, environmental feasibility, and fair distribution and equitable benefit-sharing at national, regional and local levels. Leaving aside the criticisms about economic efficiency and feasibility (as important as these question are), the

[16] Interview with the head of the Press Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister, 10 March 2018, Addis Ababa.
[17] For example, see Articles 12, 52(1)(a) and 52(2)(c), 43(2), and 89(6) of the FDRE Constitution.

criticisms raised against such projects based on other grounds are related to the guiding rules, principles and values of the federal political system of Ethiopia, which guarantees a democratic and decentralised development governance system at all levels in the country. This is specifically reflected in terms of such important considerations and virtues of a federal arrangement as the regional states' policy autonomy, as well as the core values and principles of a federal democracy that promotes, among other things, responsive, participatory and accountable governance.

The approach to development governance under the EPRDF's "developmental hegemonism" was characterised largely by the federal government's extremely centralised and authoritarian policy-making and execution practices. This was reaffirmed by participants in the FGDs, specifically those who were members of the HoPR and regional councils, who said it was a grave disciplinary offence to challenge policies already endorsed by the party's executive committee. This, as most of the FGD participants noted, was due to the unwritten rule that members may raise questions only on issues of implementation rather than on the policies themselves. According to one participant from the HoPR, "challenging the party's policies would be tantamount to challenging the party itself … it could result in one being subjected to criticism [ሂስ] and self-criticism [ግለ-ሂስ], and even sometimes disciplinary measures for those who persisted in their stand".[18] Similarly, an informant from the ONRS observed as follows:

> The EPRDF created conditions in which, far from being able to exercise their policy-making and implementation autonomy as clearly provided in the FDRE Constitution, regional states were not permitted to have a say about policies developed at the centre. Instead, once a policy was endorsed by the party, it simply rolled down to regions, where regional officials had to enforce it, with little to no opportunity available to them to challenge it.[19]

The informant mentioned, as an example, the case of the Integrated Addis Ababa-Oromia Master Plan, which affected surrounding areas of the ONRS. Some of the participants said that the EPRDF's

[18] Interview with a member of the HoPR and Chairperson of the Trade and Industry Affairs Standing Committee on Addis Ababa, 14 July 2019, Addis Ababa.
[19] Interview with members of ONRS State Council, 18 February 2019, Addis Ababa.

tight party control intensified, especially following the much-disputed 2005 national elections, with top-down intervention justified on the basis of an urgent need to serve the national interest. This deprived the platform of entertaining diverse views and critical voices that could have helped to ensure better ownership of the government's development projects by the public.[20] The EPRDF's exclusionary approach to development policy planning and execution, as one informant described it, "hindered the building of a common national development agenda".[21]

The EPRDF seems to have been attempting to apply the DSM on the basis of its age-old Leninist belief in a vanguard party guided by the "I know for you" logic – all of which contributed to the apparent lack of ownership among the public of the policies made by the central government, not to mention the disfranchisement of the grassroots and the erosion of the accountability of regional and local administrations to the general public. For example, the Large Scale Commercial Farming LSCF projects, which are based on geographical differentiation, are often mentioned as an illustration of the EPRDF-led government's elitist and exclusionary approach to developmental policy planning and execution. These projects were oftentimes designed and executed with little or no prior consultation with the concerned bodies, be they regional and local administrators, or the general public that would be affected by the projects.[22]

Indeed, some research participants criticised the government's choice of lowland areas for LSCF projects, saying it evinced an intrusive and exclusionary approach.[23] In turn, the government sought to justify its actions by pointing out the need to exploit the comparative advantages of these lowlands, given their combination of sparse population density and vast expanses of land with flat topography that makes it particularly suitable for irrigated mechanised farming.[24] The government's preferred policy approach here has been to promote the leasing of land to foreign

[20] Interview with an official at ONRS Plan and Development Commission, 5 December 2019, Addis Ababa.
[21] Interview with a member of the HoPR, 14 July 2019, Addis Ababa.
[22] Interview with a member of BGNRS State Council and a former official at the GPNRS Agriculture and Natural Resource Bureau, 5 December 2019, Addis Ababa.
[23] Interview with the former President of the GPNRS and an official at the GPNRS Agriculture and Natural Resource Bureau, 14 October 2019, Addis Ababa.
[24] Interview with a former official at the Ministry of Agriculture, 9 July 2019, Addis Ababa.

and domestic investors. This approach, as one informant from the GPNRS commented, constitutes:

> [a] double-standard approach between the highland areas and the lowland areas. People in the lowland areas, such as the GPNRS, have been at the periphery of the power relations with rulers at the centre in Ethiopia since the 19th century. And the EPRDF has simply maintained this historically lopsided centre-periphery political relationship, where the centre dominates the peripheries and dictates to them to execute development plans formulated by the centre with little or no consultation.[25]

In a similar vein, a key informant from the BGNRS noted that there has been a hierarchical relationship between the centre, led by the EPRDF, and the peripheries, led by affiliated parties.[26] There is no doubt that, as far as developmental policy-making and execution is concerned, the EPRDF dominated the entire process in an apparent violation of what is enshrined in the FDRE Constitution, be it the sovereignty of nations, nationalities and peoples or the regional states' autonomy to make and execute their own policies without undue influence by the federal government. The practice, moreover, has been that the central government's development plans result in a dispossession of resources from the peripheries for mega-development projects such as industrial parks, hydroelectric dams and LSCFs. In most of these projects, deals were made with domestic and foreign companies without the involvement or consent of the respective regional state governments and local residents, particularly so in lowland areas such as the GPNRS and BGNRS.[27]

Indeed, most of the federal government's land-intensive projects such as LSCFs were located in the lowland areas of the country, mainly in the BGPRS and GPNR (Fana, 2016). The developmental approach followed by the federal government in the execution of such mega-projects has led to the acquisition of vast tracts of land

[25] Interview with a former official at the GPNRS Agriculture and Natural Resources Bureau, 19 October 2019, Addis Ababa.
[26] Interview with an official at the GPNRS Office of the Chief-Administrator, 19 October 2019, Addis Ababa.
[27] Interview with a former official at the GPNRS Agriculture and Natural Resource Bureau and member of the central Committee of the then ruling party of the BGNRS, 19 October 2019, Addis Ababa.

by foreign investors. The exclusionary policy-making and execution that characterised the developmentalism of the EPRDF-led central government thus not only undermined the autonomy of regional states in the lowland areas but also displaced local peoples and ethnic groups from lands they have inhabited for generations.

Similarly, in the case of IPD projects, informants from the respective IPD agencies of the ANRS and the ONRS underscored that the federal government often obligated the regional states to provide land for the development of industrial parks in their respective regions by the federal government, parks which were designed with little or no consultation.[28] The absence of regional-state participation in the planning and execution of development projects such as LSCFs and IPDs, as an informant from the ONRS Planning Commission explained,

> closes up avenues that could create democratic and non-authoritarian social, political, and economic relations between and among the federal government and regional states, eventually ensuring that peoples' right to development and their freedoms and democratic rights are not undermined in the name of developmentalism as pursued by the EPRDF under the helm of the DSM.[29]

Similarly, as informants from the SNNPR noted, the absence of participation by regional states in policy and project design at the federal level denied them platforms which are important, inter alia, for expressing regional interests and priorities in the exercise of the rights to self-determination, self-rule and shared governance enshrined in the FDRE Constitution.[30]

The lack of participation and engagement of stakeholders and citizens often resulted in severe criticism and grievances which, according to some observers, led the EPRDF to dig its own grave,

[28] Interview with an official at the ANRS Industrial Parks Development Corporation and an official at the ONRS Industrial Park Development Cooperation, 19 July 2019, Addis Ababa.
[29] Interview with an official at the ONRS Plan and Development Commission, 7 November 2018, Addis Ababa.
[30] Interview with an official at the SNNPR Council, 18 April 2019, Hawassa.

as seen in the case of the Integrated Addis Ababa-Oromia Master Plan (IAOMP).[31] This has been mentioned as a typical case that shows the ramifications of the EDSM's authoritarian developmentalism.[32] The IAOMP was widely castigated by observers for being carried out in an authoritarian manner, as manifested, among other things, in the top-down, exclusionary and coercive formulation and implementation of development policies with no, or little, consultation with and consent from concerned stakeholders such as the ONRS, local administrators and farmers.[33] Degefa (2019, pp. 1–2) describes the practice as follows:

> The plan is imposed "from above" as has always been, while a real development plan needs a free and informed consent of the affected people and includes measures to avoid or minimise any possible destruction to local communities. The designers of the Master Plan refuse to recognise examples from other parts of the world concerning legitimate development and ignore Oromo protests of unprecedented scale that has already led to hundreds of innocent victims. Such patterns are clear indicators of the designers' intent to destroy the Oromo identity in the area under the guise of the "Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan".

These sentiments were confirmed by an informant from the ONRS, who explained the process of planning and (attempted) execution of the IOAMP as follows:

> The problem with this Master Plan is both in its content and manner of enforcement. When I say "content", I mean the federal government does not have the power to make detailed plans such as the IAOMP and oblige regional states and local governments to enforce [them]. The fact on the ground was that in the case of the Master Plan, the administration in the ONRS was pressured by the EPRDF's officials at the party's higher echelon to enforce the IAOMP, which [was] prepared from the very beginning with little

[31] The IAOMP, the tenth subnational integrated plan, was designed to be implemented from 2014 to 2037. The aim of the Master Plan, as stated in the original document, is "to developmentally link Oromia special zones and the City of Addis Ababa to improve the quality of life of citizens as well as contribute to the economic growth and development of the nation" (AACPO, 2017).

[32] Interview with an official at the ONRS Urban Development Bureau, 5 December 2019, Addis Ababa.

[33] Interview with a member of the ONRS Council, 7 November 2018, Addis Ababa.

> consultation and consent from the region, which, as seen later, erupted in fierce disagreements between the EPRDF leadership and the OPDO [Oromo People's Democratic Organisation].[34]

What the IAOMP illustrates is that plans are often prepared with little or no consultation with the stakeholders concerned, be they regional or local officials or people at the grassroots.[35] Most of the informants from the ONRS stated that the IAOMP was prepared by a few elites, with little consultation, coordination and cooperation between officials of the ONRS and Addis Ababa from the inception of the plan up to the stage where it was to be implemented.[36] The IAOMP was formulated within small circles, mainly by EPRDF "big men" on its executive committee and a few confidante-technocrats. One informant from the ONRS planning and development commission said that "if you want a textbook example of centralised governance by the EPRDF that disregarded the federal system in general, and regional state autonomy in particular, it's the Addis Ababa-Oromia Special Zone Integrated Master Plan".[37]

Indeed, the IAOMP is mentioned by a considerable number of scholars as a watershed moment that marks the pinnacle and decline of the centrist, top-down and exclusionary approach to development governance of the EPRDF. The announcement of the Master Plan triggered massive public protests across the ONRS, which eventually led to the disintegration of the EPRDF's democratic centralism and the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegne in April 2018.

Under the Ethiopian federal arrangement, the federal government's mandate on development policies generally relates to setting policy directions, standards, frameworks, and the like.[38]

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[34] Interview with a former official at the ONRS Finance and Economic Development Bureau, 18 February 2019, Addis Ababa.

[35] Interview with an official at the ONRS Urban Development Bureau, 5 December 2019, Addis Ababa.

[36] Interview with a member of the ONRS Council, 7 November 2019, Addis Ababa.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Multilevel development governance is entrenched under Articles 51(2) and 52(2)(c) of the FDRE Constitution. For example, the first three provisions of Article 51(1)–(3) stipulate that the federal government formulates the overall policies and strategies of the country with respect to economic, social and development matters (Article 51(2)) and sets national standards on science, health and education. In its list of regional-state powers, the Constitution provides under Article 52(2)(c) that (regional) states have the power to formulate and execute economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans of the state.

However, as the inventory made of core federal development policies under the EDSM revealed, the federal government has been making detailed development policies in clear transgression of its constitutional mandate in regard to not encroaching on the competences of regional states. For example, the GTPs (GTP I and GTP II) designed by the federal government, beyond setting national development objectives and pillars for industrialisation, specify detailed plans on a range of areas and sectors.[39] In fact, both GTP I and GTP II are highly specific in their content and scope, to the extent of specifying how many people would be trained and deployed in the construction of cobblestone roads. More importantly, the focus areas and sectors clearly indicated in both GTPs, including basic primary education, health and hygiene services and regional security issues, are those, which, under Article 52 of the FDRE Constitution, fall within the jurisdiction of the regional states.

As already seen, the essence of multilevel developmental governance in the Ethiopian federation is characterised by the establishment of regional states that are constitutionally entitled to govern their affairs of development by making and executing their own policies (FDRE Constitution, Article 52(2)). One of the purposes of such a constitutional arrangement is to pave the way for, among other things, responsive and innovative development policies that promote local solutions for local problems. Contrary to this, and propelled by the ethos of hegemonic developmentalism, the EPRDF-led federal government had largely been cascading its policies downwards to regional states, often through the party channel, in a manner that positioned the centre as the de facto authoritative power that dictates the vital political and economic operations of each of the regional states.

A survey was made to see whether regional states' policies and plans are a copy of those of the federal government, as is often argued by some (Lefort, 2012; Bach, 2011; Fantini, 2013). The survey examined the GTPs of the five regional states: the ANRS; BGNRS; GNRS; ONRS; and SNPPR. Indeed, what was found was a replication of the federal government's policies in all of the regional states' GTPs. This was clearly apparent in their sectoral development policies and strategic plans. For example, the fed-

[39] For detailed information, see the National Planning Commission's report in 2016 on the performance of GTP I and its plan for GTP II (MoFED, 2020).

eral government's vision in the GTP I has been replicated in the five states' respective GTP I documents, all of which declare that their vision is "to become a region where democratic rule, good governance and social justice reigns, upon the involvement and free will of the region's peoples … ". In the case of the objective of GTP I, the GTP I documents of the regional states[40] have simply copy-pasted four of the objectives of the federal government:

> (1) maintain at least an average real GDP growth rate of 11% and meet the Millennium Development Goals; (2) expand and ensure the qualities of education and health services, thereby achieving the MDGs in the social sectors; (3) establish favourable conditions for sustainable state building through the creation of a stable democratic and developmental state; (4) ensure growth sustainability by realising all the above objectives within a stable macroeconomic framework (MoFED, 2010, p. 7).

All of the regions copied (as can be seen from their GTP I documents which outline the pillars of their GTP I) the seven strategic pillars of the federal GTP I, which are:

> (1) sustaining faster and equitable economic growth; (2) maintaining the place of agriculture as a major source of economic growth; (3) creating favourable conditions for the industry sector to play a key role in the economy; (4) enhancing access and quality of infrastructure development; (5) enhancing expansion and quality of social development; (6) building capacity and enhancing good governance; and (7) promoting women's and youths' empowerment and equitable benefit.[41]

One finds exactly the same pillars in the GTP I and GTP II documents of the respective regional states. The same is true of their sectoral development plans. For example, all of the five regional states surveyed in this study planned to achieve 11 per cent annual economic growth, as stated in their respective regional economic sector development plans, a figure which is exactly the

[40] See the objectives of the ANRS (GTP I, p. 4), BGNRS (GTPI, pp. 4–5), GNRS (GTPI, p. 6), ONRS (GTP I, p. 5), and SNPPR (GTP I, p. 4).
[41] Ibid.

same as the federal government's growth forecast. One also notices a stark similarity in the priorities set by the five regional states in their respective Social Sector Development Plan, Capacity-Building and Good Governance, and Cross-Cutting Sectors Development Plans. These, again, are the same as that of the federal government.

Nonetheless, there are some attempts to contextualise the objectives of the federal GTPs to the realities of the respective regional states. For example, in the case of the BGNRS and GPNRS, the objectives stated in their respective GTP I documents include strengthening the "villagisation" programme in order to increase the productivity of the agriculture sector in these two regions.[42]

6. Conclusion

This article examined the impact of the DSM on Ethiopia's federal system, doing so in the light of the Constitution's framework on the vertical division of policy-making, execution and administration powers between the federal government and regional state governments. It showed how the core ideological and institutional drivers of the EDSM – a dominant-party system and a hegemonic, centralised, top-down approach to policy formulation and execution – significantly undermined the democratic multilevel system of development governance provided under the FDRE Constitution.

Contrary to the FDRE Constitution – which guarantees democratic multilevel governance of development underpinned by the core values and institutions of a federal democracy, including a transparent, accountable and participatory approach to the formulation and execution of policies, plans and projects – this study found that, under the EDSM, the EPRDF-led government had been pursuing "development authoritarianism" in which the formulation and execution of development policies and plans was carried out in an authoritarian, highly centralised, top-down and non-participatory manner.

As a result, under the EDSM, the relationship between the federal government and regional states was largely hierarchical, with the former, via a highly centralised and tightly controlled party

[42] See respectively the objectives of the BGNRS and GPNRS GTP I.

structure, dictating policy practices to regional states. This is at odds with the tenets of the Ethiopian federal system, which guarantees regional states the autonomy to design and execute their own social and economic development policies. Moreover, due to the EPRDF's "hegemonic developmentalism", values and benefits envisaged under the federal system were compromised, among them being policy innovation and competition, locally tailored policies, popular participation, transparency and accountability.

Generally, the practice of the DSM in Ethiopia under the leadership of the EPRDF undermined the essence of a democratic system of multilevel development governance anchored on the values and principles of a federal democracy and a vertical division of power between tiers of government, as outlined in the 1995 FDRE Constitution. The result has been a regression in multiparty democracy and an infringement of regional states' autonomy to formulate and implement their own local development policies and plans.

Consequently, the EPRDF's mode of execution of the DSM in Ethiopia made its own contribution to the frequent civil unrest and public protests that the country witnessed from 2015 onwards and which culminated in a reshuffle of the top political leadership within the EPRDF as well as the government. Moreover, there has since been a series of political developments that have triggered profound changes in the political arena, in particular a shift towards a liberal political-economic model and a waning of the DSM and the EPDRF's long-held "revolutionary democracy" ideology. In the process, the EPRDF has even been dismantled and rebranded as a new party, the Prosperity Party, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

On taking office in March 2018, the Prime Minister announced major reforms across the political, economic and social frontiers of the country that were previously considered off-limits by the EPRDF. Importantly, he began his premiership by criticising the DSM as an outdated political-economic ideology (Ahmed, 2018). It is thus hoped that this article will serve as a background source for researchers interested in considering what the fate of the DSM in Ethiopia will be going forward.

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