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Engineering the Developmental State Path: The new role of management control systems in a knowledge-intensive public organization

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KEY WORDS

governance and leadership model, historical institutionalism, individualized autocracy, knowledge-intensive public organizations, social control

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how a democratic developmental state ideology in a developing country establishes and institutionalizes a neoliberal, corporate-style governance model that produces social control under the guise of enhancing efficiency, accountability, and democracy. We gather data from multiple sources spanning 1991-2018 to trace how the temporal implementation of management control tools at one of Ethiopia's largest and oldest universities delivered exogenous politico-ideological demands by undermining its collective decision-making organs. Using historical institutionalism, a theory that posits institutions change through gradual endogenous processes and exogenous punctuations, facilitated by the choices of willful actors at critical junctures, we explain how social control mechanisms influence long-term governance outcomes. We find that a series of New Public Management reforms facilitated institutional (re)production and reactive sequences, creating a 'locked-in' trajectory of social control through 'individualized autocracy'. The subjects of social control were actors deemed threats to the ideology, namely academics within a knowledge-intensive public organization. The social control was exercised through the design and implementation of temporally interspersed public-sector reforms that employed modern management control systems within New Public Management. We find that public-sector reforms in universities, contrary to their stated goal of enhancing productivity and democratic participation, foster autocracy among politically connected individuals who seek to perpetuate the state's structural ideological dominance over academia. Our study contributes to KIPO governance by examining changes in management control in developing countries and their role in social control in non-neoliberal contexts. By placing macro-level ideological developments at the center of its analysis, our historical approach complements micro-level approaches to the study of control systems.

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1. Introduction

'Control of the enterprise within society is not a separate issue from control of the society itself.' (Puxty and Chua in Chua et al., 1989, p. 137)

This paper seeks to understand the recondite subject of design and use of management control systems (MCSs) in 'knowledge-intensive public organizations (KIPOs)[4]' (Grossi, Kallio, Sargiacomo & Skoog, 2020a). KIPOs—particularly universities—are pressured to adopt sophisticated Management Control Systems (MCS) to ensure "accountability" and "efficiency" (Blaschke, Frost & Hattke, 2014; Boitier & Rivière, 2016). University autonomy – how universities should be governed and financed – has been a major research agenda when expectations of government and other stakeholders fundamentally changed. Following the ascendance of New Public Management (NPM) reforms at the end of the 20th century (Ghorbani & Blankesteijn, 2025). KIPOs have acquired unique characteristics of 'goal ambiguity, and multiplicity or institutional complexity' (Parker, 2011; Gerdin, 2020; Grossi, Dobija & Strzelczyk, 2020b) as a result of NPM reforms, raising increasing concerns about 'academic freedom and autonomy' (Broadbent & Laughlin, 2002). As an integral part of the university control system, governance is essential to creating reputable, stronger, higher-quality, and more competitive universities (Goraks et al., 2022).

Studies of university governance are dominated by evidence drawn primarily from cases in Western contexts. These studies express concerns about the increasing influence of private-sector corporate values in public universities, stemming from reforms commonly termed 'New Public Management' (Hood 1991, 1995). According to these studies, the reforms replaced previously dominant knowledge-centered academic values of collegial leadership and governance model with 'corporatist managerialism' models, resulting in a culture of 'accountingization' (Walker, 2016), 'economization, and marketization (Górska et al., 2022), which can undermine scholarship (Parker & Jerry, 1995; Carnegie & Tuck, 2010). However, this literature is often criticized for adopting mainstream research approaches that rely on functionalist frameworks to explain the design and use of MCSs, treating them as solutions developed by internal actors, namely top management, to address control problems across all levels of the organizational structure. In other words, organizations need MCSs to create stability around neoliberal ideals of efficiency and democracy. In addition, most MCS research of occidental origin focuses on analyzing the design and use of MCS at a single point in time, using cross-sectional data. Such cross-sectional analysis disregards the role of historical relationships among actors involved in the control dynamics and thus does not yield a complete understanding of changes in MCS practices in Public Sector Organizations (PSOs) (Martin, 2020). Moreover, research in Western countries, by assuming that organizational contexts are given, disregards the identities of the actors involved in MCS design. Drawing on various theories, critical research has provided useful insights into how KIPOs are affected by the 'silo approach' to public university governance and has highlighted the tensions between academic (collegial) and managerial (chief executive) leadership models in public universities (Carnegie & Tuck, 2010). Despite the methodological plurality they introduced, critical-interpretive research approaches exhibit interesting cases in Western contexts.

Despite unique MCS issues that warrant careful investigation, developing countries are underrepresented in prominent accounting research. Studies in developing countries found that, although public-sector reforms were sound on paper, they were designed and implemented not through broader participation by the university community but through a top-down push by state actors (Bobe, Mihret & Obo, 2017). As a result, most of these reforms failed to deliver the intended policy changes (Asgedom & Hagos, 2015). Macro-level contexts in developing countries, such as state ideology, impinge on the micro-level governance structures of KIPOs, inhibiting their ability to function in accordance with their 'wished-for' purposes, eventually explaining why governance systems fail to deliver neoliberal promises.

However, we lack sufficient understanding of how MCSs facilitate the transformation from a collegial leadership model to a chief executive model to achieve ideological control in a non-neoliberal developing country context (Cooper & Sherer, 1984; Hiebl, 2018; Wickramasinghe & Alsaid, 2018; Grossi et al., 2020). Leadership that operates individually as a chief executive subject to the state's ideological demands can hinder governance systems (Asgedom & Tadelle, 2015). In

[4] Knowledge-intensive public organizations (KIPOs)' is a collective term for organizations that provide publicly owned services, such as education, healthcare, transport, and social services, because the delivery of such services, more than any other input, requires 'the knowledge embodied in their employees. Human capital is the dominant asset for KIPOs (Alvesson, 2004; Grossi et al., 2020a).

addition, while governance systems in universities are essential, they alone do not guarantee success. We have attempted to respond to the long-standing calls for the new roles of accounting in the uncharted territories of developing countries (Miller, 1998; Wickramasinghe et al., 2021), where states, rather than markets, play a significant role in constituting the social lives of citizens within the public sector and beyond. It does so by taking a case study of a large university with a previous history of participating in a regime change that implemented governance reform as a result of protracted conflict between its academics (staff and students) and a state with revolutionary democracy and democratic developmental state ideologies. By analyzing data from 1991 -2018, we offered a historical-institutionalist explanation of how the process of de-institutionalizing an existing ideal-type collegial model of university governance and institutionalizing a new corporate-style governance model in 2003 created a long-term outcome of social control through 'individualized autocracy'. Social control was achieved through an ideologically motivated design of multiple elements of management control that compromise their neoliberal technicalities.

To answer the question "how has state ideology utilized MCSs to establish a path-dependent trajectory of 'social control' within a university?", we examine the period 1991-2018 to trace how the temporal implementation of management control tools at one of Ethiopia's largest and oldest universities delivered exogenous politico-ideological demands – dominance over academia. We identify the January 2003 transition of the university presidency as a critical juncture that followed the antecedent conditions of the 2001 internal party conflict and the emergence of the 'democratic developmental state'—the ruling party's guiding economic philosophy, which aligned with the preexisting ethnic-based revolutionary democracy political ideology. Using Mahoney's (2001) and Thelen and Mahoney's (2010) version of historical institutionalism (hereinafter HI), we explain how a series of NPM reforms involving different management control tools facilitated institutional reproduction and reactive sequences, creating a 'locked-in' long-term governance outcome of 'individualized autocracy'. The institutionalized social control replaced the long-standing practice of group-based decision-making.

The government of Ethiopia implemented several education-sector reforms that demanded greater accountability without corresponding autonomy (Asgedom & Tadelle, 2015; Kenaw, 2003). In this paper, by identifying the reforms that contained design and implementation of MCSs, we argue that under the guise of 'enhancing efficiency and accountability', the "Democratic Developmental State" ideology repurposed MCS technical tools to establish a path-dependent trajectory of autocracy – a key pillar of sustaining the ideology. Through the engagement of multiple MSCs over an extended period, a path-dependent trajectory of 'individualized autocracy' within Addis Ababa University (AAU) was established by implementing the chief executive university management model in a way that fit the ideological need to control academics (staff and students of AAU). By examining the 'new' role of MCS in institutionalizing 'individualized autocracy', our study contributes to accounting research in the rapidly emerging field of KIPOs (Grossi et al., 2020). The new institutional order delivers exogenous politico-ideological demands that buttress the dominant state ideology of a university in Ethiopia, a developing country with a unique cultural, social, and historical context. By examining the 'new' role of MCS in institutionalizing 'individualized autocracy', our study contributes to accounting research in the rapidly emerging field of KIPOs (Grossi et al., 2020a).

As Asgedom and Tadelle (2015) point out, leadership that operates individually as a chief executive and is subject to the state's ideological demands can hinder governance systems. Using process tracing, we examine how state-level ideological demands are institutionalized. Our results show that public-sector reforms in KIPOs, contrary to their stated goal of enhancing efficiency, foster autocracy among politically connected individuals who seek to perpetuate the state's structural ideological dominance over academia. Our study addresses the underrepresentation of researchers on MCS design and use among public-sector accounting in developing countries. Our analysis shows that what the extant literature has understood as 'the unintended consequences' of neoliberal NPM reforms in developing countries with technical control objectives may produce 'intended benefits of social control' for the contending non-neoliberal political ideology. We extended theory by contributing to the study of management control change in KIPOs by explaining the institutionalization of the chief executive model of leadership and governance. We have also contributed to social control theory by showing that outcomes such as confusion, mistrust, and insecurity among organizational members, which are considered NPM failures in the mainstream MCS literature, are desired outcomes for sustaining the developmental state ideology.

Our empirical evidence, from a KIPO in a developing country with a history of critical involvement in a political process that led to regime change, demonstrates how MCSs facilitated the shift from a traditional collegial

leadership approach to a corporate chief executive leadership model. There is a large corpus of literature on higher education development in Ethiopia that recognizes the co-constitutive nature of the power relations between the state and the academic community. This literature, concentrating on big themes of higher education policy, practice and development, has generated a detailed account of the contribution of the academia (staff and students) in bringing change in the national political-economic life of the Ethiopian society, the impact of responses by states of different ideological positions on academic freedom, organizational development, governance and autonomy of HEIs, and higher education quality (Trudeau, 1968; Wagaw, 1990; Balsvik, 2009, 2017; Saint, 2004; Asgedom, 2005, 2007; Yimam, 2008; Assefa, 2008; Gebru, Hondeghem, & De Wit, 2025). Most of this literature primarily focuses on hard forms of power and their impact on critical academic values such as quality and autonomy. A notable exception is Bobe et al. (2017). In their paper, they offered a processual explanation of BSC design and implementation at a KIPO in the Ethiopian health sector, in response to the developmental state's demands, drawing on actor-network theory. We still lack studies that examine how economic-rational technologies, such as accounting, were used silently as soft instruments of state power over academics. It is this critical research gap that our paper additionally addresses.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents our theorization of the (de)institutionalization of leadership models, grounded in historical institutionalism. Section 3 describes the context, data, and analytical methods. Section 4 presents empirical evidence on the (de)institutionalization of the (old) new governance models and discusses the main findings. Section 6 concludes by outlining directions for future research.

2. KIPO governance: A historical institutionalism perspective

Society is in a continuous process of transformation. 'Why, when, and how' it transforms are key questions that elicit alternative theoretical explanations across disciplines. One powerful explanation for understanding social change is historical institutionalism within institutional theory (Stefes, in Merkel, Kollmorgen & Wagener, 2019). Interpretive-critical accounting research is dominated by institutional theory. Among the three powerful branches of the theory, rational choice and sociological institutionalism were extensively used (Scapens, 2006; Lounsbury, 2008; Moll, Burns, Major, 2018). Only a few historical accounting studies used HI as an analytical lens (Alawattage & Alsaid, 2018; Mohamad-Yusof & Wickramasainghe, 2018; Wins & Kofinas, 2019).

Historical studies are an important source of understanding of the roles of accounting in organizations and society (Napier, 2006; Richardson, 2008; Hopper, Lassou, & Soobaroyen, 2017; van Helden & Uddin, 2016; Hopper et al., 2009). States, in general, and those in developing countries, in particular, employ sophisticated approaches to control the economy, society, and politics (Win & Kofinas, 2021). An extensive review of accounting in developing countries, van Helden and Uddin (2016), revealed that the existing literature of accounting in developing countries fails to make a meaningful connection between macro-level (e.g., state, cultural, and political institutions), meso-level (e.g., institutional field), and micro-level (e.g., organizational and individual) practice of accounting (Alawattage & Alsaid, 2018). HI offers a powerful theoretical explanation of the deinstitutionalization of old institutions and their replacement by new ones through the path-dependent process of institutionalization (Mahoney, 2000, 2001; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

2.1. Foundations of Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalism (HI), as a strand of institutional theory, explains the origins, change, and roles of institutions such as MCSs. Developed within the traditions of political science and sociology, HI is a powerful analytical lens that has gained popularity in recent years. It is effective in studies examining how temporal processes and events shape the origins and transformations of institutions governing political, social, and economic relations (Fioretos, Falleti, & Sheingate, 2016). This version of institutionalism emerged from ongoing dialogue with other versions of institutional theory. With a dedicated focus on explaining important real-world events, HI conducts empirical investigations into how institutional structures profoundly shape the available strategic choices, actors' preferences, and outcomes of socioeconomic and political processes (Steinmo, 2008). It emphasizes path dependence: actors' choices and decisions that constitute current institutionalized practices are shaped by processes of institutionalization rooted in the past. Under HI approach, institutional change is initiated by actors in an ongoing evolutionary process that takes significant time since options that result in fundamental institutional change are 'continually constrained by the guidance actors derive from prevailing institutions and the significant influence of past experience on their mental models in a path dependent manner' (North, 1990; Steinmo, 2008; Beyer, 2024). Despite its growing popularity across disciplines, the concept of path dependence has multiple definitions and interpretations that often lead to ambiguity. However, the central tenet that unites users of the concept is their recognition that 'history matters' (see Beyer, 2024, for a

detailed comparison of alternative meanings and interpretations).

Historical institutionalism and the role of actors: Turning its attention to temporal phenomena, HI takes political economic history as a series of punctuated changes followed by high levels of institutional stability with theories of incremental change to explain the sources of the existing complex and overlapping social, economic, or political structures governing human actions (Fioretos, Falleti, & Sheingate, 2016). Unlike sociological institutionalism and rational choice economics[5]HI, which views human beings as norm-abiding rule followers and self-interested rational actors, respectively, stands between them, positing human beings as both norm-abiding rule followers and self-interested rational actors. Historical institutionalists, while holding that any significant socioeconomic or political outcome is best understood as a product of both rule-following and interest-maximizing actions by the actors involved, do not regard humans as simple rule-followers or as purely strategic actors who use rules to maximize their interests. Steinmo (2008: p. 126) asserts that, basing her/himself on historical evidence, a historical institutionalist wants to know why a certain choice was made and/or why a certain outcome occurred, and which is the more important (self-interested, altruistic/collective or simply habitual) behavior in resulting in the long-term outcome (Steinmo, 2008).

Historical institutionalism and Power: As an analytical lens, has certain advantages over other versions of institutional theory and over other grand theories such as Marxist, functionalist, and systems-theory approaches. First, 'it considers intermediate-level institutions, such as party systems and the structure of economic interest groups like unions, that mediate between the behavior of individual actors and national political outcomes' (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: p11). According to Thelen and Steinmo (1992), the focus on intermediate-level institutions that mediate the effects of macro-level socioeconomic structures (such as class) also provides greater analytical leverage for addressing cross-country variation. Second, it has carved out an important theoretical niche in the middle range that can help us integrate an understanding of general patterns in political history with an explanation of the contingent nature of political and economic development, particularly the roles of political agency, conflict, and choice in shaping that development. Third, unlike its other prominent institutional theory-related counterpart frameworks that pushed the issue of power to the margins, HI is well-positioned to make core contributions to our understanding of political power (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Pierson, 2016).

Admitting that HI, unlike the grand Marxist and system based theories, lacks universal toolkit and universally applicable concepts on which more deductive theories are based, Thelen and Steinmo (1992: p12) argues that 'rather than deducing hypotheses on the basis of global assumptions and prior to the analysis, historical institutionalists generally develop their hypotheses more inductively, in the course of interpreting the empirical material itself'. Therefore, research committed to this tradition tends to move up from single institutions to broader contexts (Pierson & Skocpol, 2002)

Through the HI approach, virtually all types of institutions can be studied, regardless of their size or position at the local, national, and international levels (Fioretos, Falleti, & Sheingate, 2016).

Historicity in Historical Institutionalism: Steinmo (2008: p. 128) argues that in HI, 'history is not a chain of independent events'. Rather, it is an important variable in a particular context that can and often do shape one another, creating historical events in an interdependent manner. Historical institutionalists are 'explicitly interested in these interactive effects on the interdependence of multiple causal variables'. Pierson and Skocpol (2002) deepen this understanding further by saying:

> *"Historical institutionalists take history seriously -- as something much more than instances located in the past. To understand an interesting outcome or set of arrangements usually means to analyze processes over a substantial stretch of years, maybe even many decades or centuries. Scholars working in this tradition have developed compelling methodological and theoretical justifications for historically-grounded investigations—by which they mean not just looking at the past, but looking at processes over time."*

According to Steinmo (2008), HI analyzes history from three vantage points. First, historical context uniquely and directly determines the decisions and the events that follow them. Second, actors' behavior, attitudes, and strategic choices occur within particular social, political, economic, and even cultural contexts, and actors or agents can learn from their experience participating in events unfolding in historical contexts. Therefore, HI deepens understanding of both the historical moment and the actors within the context, thereby explaining the temporal events it explores. Third, current expectations are also shaped by history, leading actors to behave and decide in particular ways.

2.2. Path Dependence and Critical Junctures

[5] See, Hall (2010) for an extended comparison of versions of institutional theory.

The process by which institutional configurations transition from fluid periods of change to rigid, self-reinforcing trajectories is best understood through Mahoney's (2001) five-stage framework of institutionalization (See Figure 1). Central to this framework is the concept of path dependence, in which early events in a sequence have disproportionate effects on final outcomes. The first stage involves the antecedent conditions, which represent the socio-political landscape and institutional arrangements existing prior to a shift. While these conditions do not determine the outcome, they define the range of possibilities available to actors before the system reaches a point of instability (Mahoney, 2001).

Mahoney (2001) extends the concept of path dependence to explain why institutions tend to remain stable. He describes this as a historical process where chance events trigger institutional patterns that have predictable effects (Mahoney, 2000). He differentiates between self-reinforcing sequences, in which an institutional pattern yields increasing returns, thereby making change more difficult, and reactive sequences, in which events are connected through a chain of causally related reactions (Mahoney, 2000). In this framework, change is often seen as occurring during critical junctures—short periods of contingency where actors make decisions that "lock in" a specific trajectory, followed by long phases of path-dependent stability (Gerschewski, 2020). Figure-1 below illustrates these sequential temporal events.

The second stage is the critical juncture, a pivotal "window of opportunity" characterized by high contingency. During this phase, structural constraints are temporarily relaxed, allowing the agency of key actors to become decisive (Mahoney, 2001; Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007). In the context of public organizations, a critical juncture represents the moment a specific governance logic is selected over competing alternatives. This selection leads to the third stage, structural persistence, where the newly chosen institutional pattern begins to solidify. At this point, the immediate volatility of the juncture subsides, and the new administrative or political arrangements—such as the centralization of executive power—begin to operate as the new status quo.

The transition from a mere change to a locked-in trajectory occurs in the fourth stage: the increasing-returns, or self-reinforcing, phase. Following Mahoney's (2001) logic, once an institution is established, it generates positive feedback loops that reward action; as its original political or economic justifications fade, it thereby "locks in" its path-dependent trajectory for operating within the new system while increasing the costs of exit or resistance. In KIPOs, this is often facilitated through MCSs that align professional advancement with ideological conformity. Finally, the process culminates in an institutional legacy, a stable and enduring outcome that resists change. This legacy persists even if the institution's original political or economic justifications fade, thereby "locking in" its path-dependent trajectory (Mahoney, 2001).

By examining the locus of institutional transformation, Mahoney & Thelen (2010: p. 16) identified four modal types of institutional change: displacement, layering, drift, and conversion. Understanding these different types of institutional change, in addition to the roles that institutional supporters and challengers typically play within each, is useful for explaining why and how one type rather than another typically occurs. The four types of institutional change are: displacement (occurs when the change includes the removal of existing rules and the introduction of new ones), layering (when actors introduce new rules on top of or alongside existing ones), drift (happens when the changed impact of existing rules due to shifts in the environment), and conversion (an institution changes when the changed enactment of existing rules is due to their strategic redeployment). Out of these four types of gradual institutional change, we are interested in layering, since the governance system of AAU has not completely changed

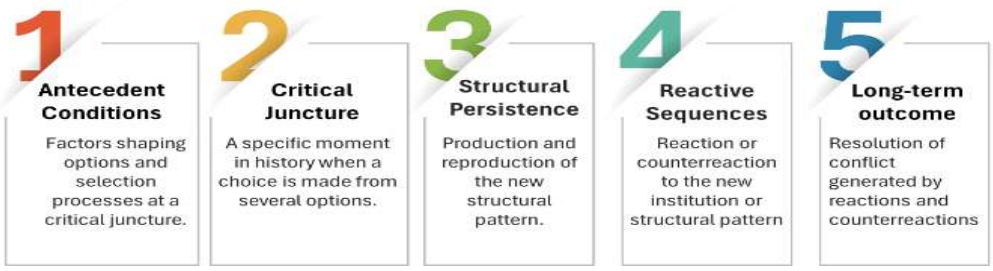

Figure 1: Path-dependent explanation of institutional change. Adapted from Mahoney, J. (2001).

HI has attracted scholars from disciplines beyond political science because it attends to the broader historical and institutional context in explaining institutional changes. To address its criticisms, Mahoney and Thelen (2010) revised Mahoney's (2001) version of HI. They added concepts such as layering, a core concept in the 2010 revision of the framework, which refers to the addition of new rules or structures to existing institutions without eliminating them entirely (van der Heijden, 2011). This process usually happens in political contexts with strong veto powers, where reformers can't simply abolish old institutions, so they instead "layer" new elements on top or next to them to shift the institution's overall direction (Carey et al., 2017). Over time, these new layers interact with the original system in complex ways, eventually leading to major changes as they displace or reshape the old functions (van de Bovenkamp et al., 2016).

Since HI draws on the emphasis on historical processes tied to increasing returns, timing, and sequencing—concepts that succinctly describe the governance changes in our case organization, we combined the institutionalization model in Mahoney (2001) with the endogenous explanation of institutional arrangements in Mahoney and Thelen (2010) to interpret the empirical data in the analysis section. The next section outlines the detailed methodology we employed.

3. Methodology

Using a longitudinal qualitative research approach, we conducted a historical analysis to trace the transformation of a large KIPO of historical significance in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University, into its strange present. Historical institutionalism is useful for exploring how historical processes led to a strange present. We used a path-dependent approach within historical institutionalism as a process-tracing method to examine the transformation of the governance and decision-making mechanisms of a large KIPO of historical significance in Ethiopia. The university's governance-related data are collected from diverse sources to identify internal and external actors and understand their relative power positions. Through triangulation of data from multiple sources, we examined how actors advance their interests by changing old institutional rules with new ones at critical junctures. We then show how the new ideological rules institutionalize and shape the university's management control system over an extended period.

Our principal data sources were retrospective interviews, organizational archives, and other publicly available online resources. A total of 24 retrospective interviews were conducted with an average duration of 2 hours. They were made with individuals who had played an active role in the subject under study while serving in various posts within the university's organizational hierarchy (Glick, Huber, Miller, Doty & Sutcliffe, 1990; Huber & Power, 1985; Miller, Cardinal & Glick, 1997). The composition of the interviewees ranges from individuals who served higher-level university leadership positions (among them were presidents and vice presidents and directors), members of institutional change *ad hoc* committees for various internal and external change initiatives, middle level managers (academic and administrative officers), lower-level managers (deans and department heads) and current active and retired senior academic staff of the university. Our interviews with retired senior staff, in addition to extending the data span to earlier years of the university's history, were instrumental in enabling a critical, unbiased reflection on key events.

Historical primary data were archival records, both internal and external. The internal archival documents include university-level strategic plans, university charters, senate legislation, and internal administrative policies and procedures. The internal archival data were collected from the departmental and central university archives, as well as the repositories of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES). External archival documents include proclamations and regulations issued by parliament, government policy, strategy, and regulatory documents, country-level strategic plan documents, guidance documents, and circulars issued by government ministries for implementation of specific MCS tools, EPRDF party ideological interpretation documents, and documents issued by higher government officials to guide annual discussions with academia. In addition to organizational-level archives, other publicly available online resources, including archived interviews with key state and organizational actors, televised panel discussions, parliamentary debates, and news coverage of events affecting the university, were accessed. Documents in Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia) were first translated into English using Google Translate and then proofread by the first author, with the 3rd author checking the translations for final use in the analysis.

Our study covered the period 1991–2018 and was divided into two periods, using the January 2003 appointment of a state-appointed management team as the critical juncture *(See Table 1 in the annexes section)*. The critical juncture marked the beginning of an individualized autocracy. Large-scale qualitative data generated from diverse sources were interpreted using one of the most powerful iterations of institutional theory—historical institutionalism. Data gathered from the two periods were sorted to analyze the shift in university management from a

collegial to a chief-executive corporate model. We have also adopted Carnegie and Tuck's (2010) ABC model of public university governance to explain the implications of the ideological shift on the university governance model. Through recollections and rereading transcripts from retrospective interviews, and triangulation of archival data from multiple sources, we developed the initial narrative in line with HI. The initial historically informed narrative was refined through emersed reflections on historical patterns and the triangulation of findings from multiple sources. The next section provides a detailed account of the empirical data from diverse sources, followed by a discussion of the results.

Our analysis used James Mahoney's (2001) version of HI, as adjusted by Mahoney & Thelen (2010), to interpret data from multiple sources covering the period 1991–20018. We broadly classified the study period into two periods, using the December 2002 resignation of the elected senior university leadership and middle-level managers, and the January 2003 appointment of a state-appointed management team, as the critical juncture that divides two identified decision-making approaches. The identified date coincides with the introduction of 'democratic developmental state' as EPRDF's political-economic ideology in the wake of the 2001 split of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the dominant power group in EPRDF's coalition of ethnic based political parties, that resulted from the internal power struggle among prominent leaders following the Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998 -2000. The way the then-prime minister and chairman of the EPRDF, Meles Zenawi, addressed the conflict and redressed its consequences through successive political and economic reforms led to a shift in the management of public enterprises in subsequent decades.

The next section provides a detailed account of the empirical data from diverse sources, followed by a discussion of the results.

4. Analysis and discussion

As discussed in Section 2, within the historical institutionalism school of thought, while institutions are considered structures that constrain actors, they are also created and changed by the choices and conflicts of actors who have agency. This dual nature—where actors are both shaped by history and shapers of it—is a core tenet of historical institutionalist analysis (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992). In Section 3, we discussed the methodology adopted to gather and analyze the empirical data. In this section, we examine the university's micro-level design and use of management control in relation to the macro-level ideological transformation.

In this section, we present empirical data from multiple sources and analyze them using HI's analytical toolbox (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992). We begin by briefly discussing the political and economic ideological transformations of EPRDF and how it has developed its ideological refinements through a long process of contradictions. We then present and analyze our empirical data using the HI framework of path-dependent institutional (re)production, which identifies the antecedent conditions, the critical juncture that affected the alternative leadership and governance choice menu, and the structural persistence of the chief executive model reinforced by the implementation of MCS tools. The section concludes by summarizing key findings and explaining the long-term outcomes of social control through the new chief executive model of university governance.

4.1. The ideological transformation of EPRDF (1991-2018) and their implication to MCS

Marking the end of the Cold War and preoccupied with addressing internal political and economic issues, countries in the Eastern bloc disengaged from the multilateral support of their former global allies. Autocratic African states began to crumble as Eastern Socialist influence in Africa waned (Deng, Kostner & Young, 1991). Western superpowers filled the void by providing multilateral assistance to opposition groups, which led these groups to assume state power on the condition that they facilitate their country's transition to neoliberal democracy. Similarly, the Ethiopian socialist military dictatorship, the Derg regime, succumbed to internal and external challenges and ended its rule in Mid-1991. Formed under the dominance of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) conducted a successful armed struggle and eventually assumed power, ruling the country for 27 years.

Historians have identified two distinct phases of the EPRDF's regime, separated by its political-ideological transformations. This is mainly done using the TPLF leadership crisis of 2001 as a reference point. Before the 2001 TPLF leadership crisis, the EPRDF adhered to revolutionary democracy as its dominant ideology, without a clear explanation of its identity. Figure 2 illustrates the major political incidents and the key evolution from 1991 to 2018. It highlights the main events in the EPRDF's ideological shift during this period, emphasizing those relevant to this study. In addition, we summarized all the critical historical events related to AAU that occurred between 1991 and 2018 in Table 1 in the Annex.

4.1.1. EPRDF The Revolutionary Democracy (1991-2001):

One shared trend that NPM left behind in developing countries is the sustained importing of Western private-sector managerial practices and ideologies into the public sector (Alawattage, Wickramasinghe, and Uddin 2017). While failures are attributed to a lack of state capacity (Harun et al., 2019), cultural and social issues, patronage politics, and political corruptions (Alawattage, Wickramasinghe, & Uddin, 2017; Ax & Greve, 2016; Tsamenyi & Uddin, 2005; Adhikari, Kuruppu, Ouda, Grossi & Ambalangodage, 2021), localization in the implementation of initiatives was recommended for enhancing the success of NPM packages (Peterson, 2011).

In the 1980s and 90s, most of the African continent became ideologically depolarized and subjected to surgical reforms by the West's 'powerful mercantile blocks' under the popular NPM reform package known as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). These political and economic conditions were considered the legacies of their colonial and Socialist backgrounds and were therefore deemed replaceable. SAP reforms were promised to redress precarious conditions through packages of political and economic reforms; the hope was that economic policy measures would be justified by popular participation that engaged elite groups and opposition parties.

EPRDF starts with liberal reforms under the broad umbrella of revolutionary democracy ideological thinking that helped the reemergence of the privates sector and later it adopted developmental state ideology which promotes state's ownership of critical economic sectors that are not attractive to the privates sector (such as huge infrastructure development projects with long years of payback periods) at the same time promoting the role of private sector in the economy. The structural adjustment programs that were tested and failed in developing many countries in Africa and elsewhere were superfluous to Ethiopia. As Cheru (1994) notes, while market-based solutions are essential in the Ethiopian context, markets must be created before they can be liberalized. Moreover, the failures of NPM in developing countries (especially in Africa) reduced the confidence of the WB and UNECA in urging the Transition Government of Ethiopia to pursue further liberalization policies (Abebe Zegeye & Siegfried, 1994).

In 1996, Ethiopia implemented SAP as part of the 5-year Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP), with support from international partners.

> *A new era of change in Africa, political and economic alike, is only just beginning. Manyfold are both the opportunities and dangers. The end of oppression and autocracy and the strengthening of basic human rights are laudable achievements in themselves. So is the accountability of politics, the participation of the populace, and transparency in economic and political decision-making. But these are only the seeds of an indigenous democratic society on a path to economic recovery. We can only hope that the seeds will grow (Deng, Kostner & Young, 1991, p. 215).*

This excerpt from a volume of compiled case studies and African countries' experiences published under the title of 'Democratization and Structural Adjustment in Africa in the 1990s' (edited by Deng, Kostner & Young, 1991), lays the context in which Ethiopia finds itself after the end of the Socialist Derg regime in May of 1991. These reforms also contributed to the situation at the critical juncture, coupled with early adverse experiences between the university and the Ethiopian government, as discussed in subsection 4.2 that follows.

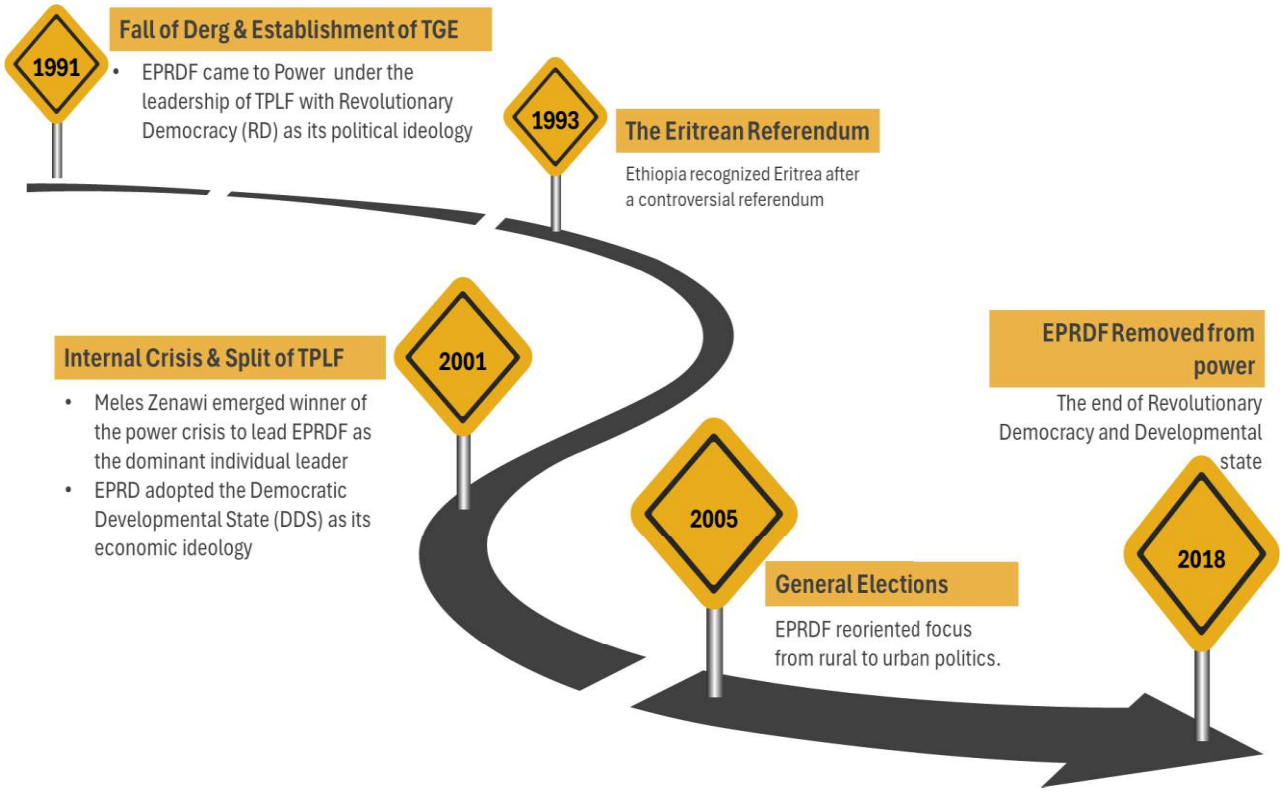

Figure 1: Ideological transformations of EPRDF over the period from 19991 – 2018

4.1.2. The 2001 Internal Political Crisis in TPLF and Emergence of Developmental State Ideology

After 10 years in power, a political crisis erupted within the TPLF (the dominant party in the EPRDF). The crisis was precipitated by a struggle over the state's ideological direction and control of party resources (Tadesse & Young, 2003; Milkias, 2003). A majority of TPLF senior members, outraged by the party's political decisions, particularly during the Ethio-Eritrean war, claimed that the party faced a leadership crisis and therefore needed a fundamental reformation. Meles successfully framed his opponents as "*Bonapartists*" and corrupt elites hindering democratic renewal (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003). After several weeks of heated debate, Meles Zenawi, the incumbent leader, emerged as the winner. He detained and charged his challengers as corrupt officials. In the aftermath of the 2001 post-TPLF leadership crisis, following the detention of defecting members on corruption charges, the party convened a critical internal self-evaluation meeting titled '*critical evaluation and deep reformation*', driven by the socialist idea of *'criticism and self-criticism'*. The aim was to evaluate the party's 10-year performance, from the top (central committee members) to the bottom (individual party members), to assess the situation and propose corrective measures for the upcoming periods (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003).

Prior to the 2001 split, the leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) followed collective leadership, in which the Central Committee (CC) served as the supreme political authority, to which even the chairman (the Prime Minister) was subordinate. This leadership was rooted in the Marxist-Leninist tradition of democratic centralism (Bobe et al., 2017). The party structure ensured that the Chairman operated merely as *primus inter pares ("first among equals")* rather than an autocrat (Young, 1997; Milkias, 2003). Decision-making in this era was characterized by exhaustive deliberation and the institutionalized practice of *gimgema (criticism and self-criticism),* which was designed to forge consensus and ensure that the "*front's*" *collective ideology*—Revolutionary Democracy—always superseded individual executive power (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003). After settling the consequences of the 2001 internal crisis and making a '*deep reformation'* Meles Zenawi became the uncontested leader of the Party until his death in 2012 (Tadesse, 2012).

To address the ideological crisis and redress Ethiopia's developmental challenges in the face of the global economy, Meles adapted an economic ideology suited to the country's circumstances – "Democratic Developmental State". The Ethiopian government's

economic policies were crafted through careful adaptation of the industrial development process of the *'Asian Tigers'* in East Asia, particularly South Korea, in the 1960s. The developmental state economic philosophy centered on balancing development and control. The argument was that the state's direct investment in critical economic sectors would promote faster, more sustainable economic development (EPRDF, 2011). This was achieved through effective management of capital generated by the divestment of ownership control in public enterprises, particularly those identified as profitable strategic assets, such as the banking, telecommunications, and aviation industries. and by financing large infrastructure projects with capital generated from strategic sectors, while simultaneously creating a fertile ground for the private sector to thrive, and empowering peasants economically through effective regulatory and policy measures. Such an approach prevented market failure by not leaving the economy completely to private-sector actors (Tadesse, 2012).

Hence, rejecting neoliberalism as a *"dead-end"* for Ethiopia and Africa, he reshapes new development policies and strategic directions in accordance with the *'Democratic Developmental State'* ideology (Meles, 2006, 2012). Contrary to neoliberal thinking, the EPRDF's ideology of revolutionary democracy and developmental state calls for a strong state role in the developmental discourse, as a catalyst for development, while cultivating the role of the private sector (Bach, 2012; Feyissa, 2011). As a result, the state has become the largest investor in the economy and the dominant employer of the labor force (Krishnan, 2009). Leveraging its ideological ambidexterity, the EPRDF was committed to remaining in power for a long period through political mobilization of the public through various means (Aalen & Tronvoll, 2008; Nunzio, 2014) and by aligning its interests with global political interests (Feyissa, 2011).

In this subsection, we sought to provide the internal and external context under which the university's 2003 transition from a collegial to a chief executive governance model happened. In the next subsection, we will present a historical-institutionalist explanation of the governance model change that creates a long-term outcome of social control over academics.

4.1.3. The 2005 National General Election

In the 2005 general election, despite the underestimation stemming from the absence of organized opposition parties even 1 year before the election date, the EPRDF vowed to hold free and fair elections. Taking advantage of the favorable pre-election environment, the opposition parties mobilized a significant portion of the general public, particularly the urban population, against the EPRDF, securing a considerable number of parliamentary seats and surprising observers. Although it officially claimed that it had won a majority of seats in a free and fair election, internally, the EPRDF admitted the opposition's unexpected success, which shocked the ruling party's leadership, ordinary members and supporters (Addis Ra'ey, August 2006 year 1, Issue 1, No. 2, p. 102). Therefore, during its lengthy evaluative meetings, it identified several causes of the opposition wing's unexpected success and the ruling party's apparent failures.

The situation was consistent with predictions from earlier studies. For example, Deng, Kostner & Young, 1991. P. 215) argued that:

> *[i]t is clear from the internal pressures for democratization doubtless come in the first instance from the educated and urban sectors of society; there is an undoubted danger that the immediate benefits of political opening may accrue disproportionately to these segments of society. Rural majorities will likely evaluate political reform by its capacity to alleviate the vice of impoverishment. The excitement -even exhilaration of the national conference and its "big bang" approach of instant and total democratization may not be the only or best pathway to liberalization. For it to be sustainable, it will need to win the acceptance of civil society as a whole. Depending on circumstances, small but continuous steps in this direction may be more productive in the long run (Deng, Kostner & Young, 1991. P. 215).*

Among these factors based on assessment finding of interest to this study is the party's argument that *'it was not the strength of the opposition forces that attracted the voters, it was rather the weakness of EPRDF as a party being unable to address the visible problems in the rural and urban areas despite knowing way before the election year that they will be the source of public resentment and eventually become election agenda.'* The party underlined that the public has given a *'protest vote'* against EPRDF, not a *'support vote for the opposition parties.'* What is most interesting is that, after the evaluative meetings, the party becomes determined to rectify this by regaining public support through recruiting additional members from each dissenting group in the society and addressing their concerns step by step. A dramatic explanation of the situation is published in Addis Ra'ey [6] as follows:

> *Resistance to our party was more pronounced in urban areas than in rural areas. Our party's recent focus on rural development has been perceived by the urban population, particularly youth, as neglect of urban society.*

[6] Adis Raey, a bi-monthly magazine, is one of EPRDF's propaganda tools, serving as an ideological and theoretical dissemination channel. Its anonymous contributors are prominent EPRDF leaders.

Frustrated by rampant unemployment, the urban population assumed that the party lacked a tangible political program for urban areas, as it was preoccupied with rural development. Opposition parties, though few in number and limited in capacity, capitalized on our party's weakness to expand their support base in urban areas. Unemployed urban youth were particularly susceptible to the activism of these opposition parties, hoping that their situation would change with opposition party leadership.

4.1.4. The 2005 Post-election Crisis (2005-2010)

Following the shock of the 2005 general election, the EPRDF focused on the political mobilization of various sections of society. To put the extent of the party's ideology's spread and influence into perspective, it is important to compare EPRDF members in the pre- and post-2005 elections. During the 2005 election, EPRDF members were estimated at approximately 700,000 (EPRDF in Brief, 2014). The ruling party coordinated its efforts by mobilizing existing members to recruit millions of new members from peasants, students, teachers, professionals, and young scholars. These new members, according to the party, are targeted for their exemplary hard work and ethical character as individuals with such qualities can shape and influence public opinion'(ibid). But, by July 2008, the number of EPRDF members skyrocketed to 4.5 million following the coordinated works after the national election 2005 (Addis Ra'ey, July 2008 edition year 2, V2 p10-11 & P29).

Recognizing that building a solid political system is only possible with knowledgeable and organized [party] members, the party must organize all members. Because of the hard work in the past few years, we are able to achieve an incredible success by recruiting a total of 4.5 million members that are organized in 18,263 'Primary political organizations' and 238,380 'ideological study cells', and targeted continuous formations are being given to them using appropriate mediums to strengthen their knowledge and leadership skills. ...

The following years until the 2010 general election, the party redirected its strategy to strengthening the quality of its broader member base while working on entering urban areas that are evaluated to be unpenetrated (Addis Ra'ey, July 2008 Issue-1, V2 p28-29)

Due to strong work in recent years, encouraging results from mass recruitment of party members were achieved in urban structures, such as ... educational institutions, and government civil service structures. However, beyond numbers, active participation in organizational affairs and a pioneering role in influencing other actors within the organizational circles were not adequate despite repeated capacity-building efforts. This is primarily due to members' capacity. Therefore, our primary focus in the next two years will be building the capacity of emerging leaders and strengthening continuous formation to ordinary members, broadening our party's strong existence in academic organizations, while continuing our efforts of recruiting new members and emerging leaders in urban political sites where our presence as a party is minimal.

In 2014, a decade after the 2005 election, the EPRDF reported that its membership had reached 6.5 million (EPRDF, 2014). This significant growth was primarily achieved by recruiting civil servants in public organizations as party members through various incentives, including preferential access to public services and promotion to key positions. Through the creative use of both hard and soft forms of power, the EPRDF maintained absolute dominance in the political and economic spheres until its disintegration in 2018, precipitated by public upheaval orchestrated by its own members.

4.1.5. Economic Transformation Plans (2010 - 2018)

By incarcerating all major contenders, the EPRDF secured landslide victories in the 2010 and 2015 elections. In the two successive elections conducted in 2010 and 2015, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia officially declared that the ruling party won 99.6% and 100% of the parliamentary seats, respectively. The post-election conflicts of the infamous 2005 Ethiopian parliamentary elections, in which the opposition parties won nearly a third of the 547 parliamentary seats according to official statistics (even though opposition parties claimed majority victory), have changed the political, economic, and social dynamism of the country (Bach, 2012; Hagmann & Abbink, 2011; Harun et al., 2019). EPRDF initiated two Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP I and II), marking a shift to a 'Developmental State' model. GTP I aimed to sustain double-digit GDP growth, moving beyond poverty alleviation to structural transformation. The plan focused on seven pillars of infrastructural developments agricultural modernization, industrialization, and large-scale infrastructure investments, including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), supported by domestic resources and a state-led growth model (IMF, 2011; Ministry of Finance, 2010).

Building on its predecessor, the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II, 2015–2019) aimed to shift Ethiopia's economy from an agriculture-based to an industry-driven model. The primary goal was to achieve lower-middle-income status by 2025 while developing a Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE). GTP II focused heavily on developing industrial parks and improve export competitiveness. Although the economy grew strongly, the period also exposed structural issues, including rising external debt, inflation, and the limits of state-led financing. To the education sector, this period is often viewed as an example of "hegemonic developmentalism," where management systems and public sector reforms—including higher education expansion to regional states—were used to align new and old universities with the state's

developmental goals (National Planning Commission, 2016; World Bank, 2020).

Despite the TPLF/EPRDF-led government's claim to popular support, the wave of protests in two of the largest (by population and area) national regional states (first in Oromia and later in the Amhara Regional State) spread throughout the country, prompting the Prime Minister to step down in 2018. This event was followed by interparty power struggles among the EPRDF's constituent members to select a successor, culminating in the OPDO's nomination of Abiy Ahmed, who assumed office. Following a public uprising, the EPRDF dissolved itself and formed a unity with affiliate parties governing regional states to establish the Prosperity Party (PP) in November 2019, relegating the TPLF to a regional political actor. The next section analyzes the data in light of the institutionalization mechanisms discussed in Section 2.

4.2. Path-dependent explanation of the governance model change

In Table 4 in the Annex, we periodized the critical historical events between 1991 and 2018 into two periods, marking the 2003 leadership change in AAU as the reference. In the discussions that follow, we present the macro-political events and their implications for the micro-level exercise of the chief executive governance system at Addis Ababa University in line with Mahoney (2001).

4.2.1. The Antecedent condition

The antecedent condition that led to the governance model change from the collegial to the chief executive mode is deeply intertwined with the historical relationship between the university and the Ministry of Education of the EPRDF government, as discussed in subsection 4.1 above. Although the immediate cause of the change in governance model was the resignation of Addis Ababa University's top leadership at the end of 2002, it resulted from a series of events that began long before 2002. In this section, we explained those historically interspersed events in connection with the antecedent condition – the resignation of the university in December 2002. Two notable events during 1991-2002 directly contributed to the antecedent condition. These were the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1991 and the civil service reforms of 1996 -2000. Both events are critical in shaping the choice menu at the 2003 critical juncture in July 1991. We described both historical events in the subsequent subsections in a way that provides perspective on the strained relationship between the EPRDF regime and the university community.

The 'Big Bang' of the state -university conflict: How it all started!

It all started when AAU students mocked the rebels with derogatory propaganda from the Derg regime, using theatres and songs. The next incident occurred a few months before the EPRDF took control of the capital and declared the abolition of the Derg Regime. Inspired by President Mengistu Haile Mariam, the military government conscripted able-bodied university staff and students into military camps to fight the then-rebels. In the post-1991 period, EPRDF members made comments and critiques about this situation on multiple occasions during meetings with the University's staff and leadership, as the civil war ended before the university staff and students had completed their training. When the EPRDF assumed control of state power in May 1991, most students left the country via the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. This created additional tension between the EPRDF and the University community. Participant 2, who was among the 42 professors dismissed in 1993, recalls a conversation he had with a high-ranking EPRDF official during the official's visit to the University, which he believes was the potential cause for his unjustified dismissal, as follows:

> *EPRDF officials visited the University to facilitate the election of staff members to participate in the consultation meeting on the transitional process, representing the academic communities throughout the country as a single stakeholder in the political process. One of the officials, who had been a student at the HSIU, approached me and said, 'It is such a pity that you turned a University that once produced intellectuals like Walelign [one of the prominent leaders of the student movement] into a conscription site for the dictators.' I replied, 'Although I do not support the Derg regime for its brutal actions against its own citizens, I would much prefer it to your administration because of its clear and undisputed commitment to the territorial integrity of the country, which I do not believe you and your colleagues share.' The official became angry and left."*

The formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE)

In a televised panel discussion after the conference that established the TGE, involving the newly emergent President of TGE – Meles Zenawi and members of the Independent Committee for Peaceful Democratic Transition, namely Professor Andreas Eshetie (then a professor at a US university who later became the president of AAU), Professor Mesfin (former staff of AAU and independent researcher), and Dr. Mekonnen Bishaw (then-active staff of AAU). While appreciating the conference's contribution to laying the groundwork for a democratic transition, the AAU elite expressed concerns about the EPRDF's efforts to establish a transitional government within a nationalist framework, as this could lead to Eritrea's secession in an illegitimate manner. They argued that, in some instances, the conference's agenda appeared

artificially organized, with an outcome predetermined by dominant interest groups (in this case, the TPLF and its Eritrean counterparts)'*who acted in the name of the people without any legal representation from their constituencies,*' according to Participant 16.

The last participant asks a critical question: why was Addis Ababa University invited to attend the conference? In his response, Meles, then-president of the TGE, interestingly answers, saying "*the university was invited not for its past contribution in the political struggle of the Ethiopian people, but rather to represent a particular set of views dominant within the academic community that is 'chauvinism*[7]*'."* Therefore, from the outset, the staff and students of AAU were labeled as threats to the new ethnic based federal system that, according to EPRDF, ensures the rights of nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia.

A review of archival documents revealed consistent narratives regarding the EPRDF's views on the education system in general and, in particular, higher education, which, by default, was the AAU. For example, the first education policy of the TGE, in its introduction, underscores that the problems of higher education are "*significant*" and that the level of issues of relevance and quality is "*worrying*". In higher education, the policy claims, *"neither the production of mature problem-solving scholars nor the expected results of research and development for the benefit of the public and the development of the country have been highlighted*". (TGE: Education and Training Policy, 1994). Additionally, it complains that the higher education sector it has inherited from the Derg regime is '*undemocratic'* (Education Policy and its Implementation, 2002). The teachers' and students' associations were organized in participatory manners. Participant 12 described the scene, saying:

> *... after nearly two years in power, the TGE administration announced that peaceful demonstrations are permitted and that political parties can freely organize themselves. In particular, within the university, staff and students were told that they were free to establish their own governments. Thus, teachers reinstated the 'university teachers' association,' and students reestablished their student union and elected their representatives democratically without the influence of either the university management or the government, which was not the case during the Derg regime.*

As in the old days, the staff and students became critical of the intentions and outcomes of the 1991 'national conference', claiming that it advanced the hidden agendas of the new political actors (TPLF and EPLF) that emerged as the victors of the decades of civil war. The academics' concerns were that the conference would facilitate Eritrea's secession without the Ethiopian people's democratic due participation, and this would lead to the country's disintegration into smaller units representing nationalities.

The 1995 state – university crisis

After the conference, staff and students continued efforts to alter the expected outcomes, but these efforts ended in tragedy 2 years later, when AAU students marched through the capital to protest the 1993 Eritrean referendum. Their attempt to hold demonstrations during the visit of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali resulted in the deaths and injuries of students. In remembrance of the day, one of the research participants, Participant 1, who was serving in AAU leadership, said, *"... on the day of the demonstration, I received a call from the Prime Minister's office warning that students were gathering in large numbers. When we [the management members] attempted to enter the campus, security stopped us at the gate as students began marching off campus. The incident caused harm inflicted by the security forces. Even if we had the backing of the staff, our relationship with the government was blown."*

In the following few months, the staff and the management were held responsible for organizing the student disturbances, and 42 professors were fired from the university without due process, including the elected president. Interestingly, the minister of education, in a radio interview with a journalist, justified the action taken by the government to resolve the unrest using the management control system – performance management.

> *It is a known fact that we do not have a tenure system of employment at the University. Throughout the institution's history, we have had a contractual employment system. This system requires that individual professors' contracts be renewed periodically based on performance. Merely being senior staff—serving 20, 30, or so years—does not guarantee permanent employment. Even under a tenure system, employment is not taken for granted; tenure is offered only after a rigorous performance evaluation. Although a tenure policy was established in principle from the beginning of Ethiopia's university system, it was not implemented by the Derg regime. Therefore, we implemented the University's existing policy of contractual employment and reviewed the contracts of all academic employees. The criteria centered on one question: 'Is the academic staff member fit to teach?' The 42 professors were dismissed for being deemed unfit to teach at the University. We fired only the poor-performing staff.*

[7] In the later interpretation of the term in the EPRDF political program, 'chauvinism' is identified as 'individuals or groups that work to bring the Amhara-dominated older political systems (socialist and imperial-type regimes) back to life from their graveyards to perpetuate their individual interests in the name of the Amhara people through the restoration of the dominance of the Amhara over other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia' (The Struggle to Build a Democratic Developmental State and its Challenges, 2014).

In sharp contrast to the Minister's claim, an anonymous Email to various University stakeholders in 1993 explains the situation by linking the act to the historical animosity between the state and the University.

> *Addis Ababa University once more takes the brunt of the government's wrath. Last Friday, April 9, 1993, the Ethiopian government dismissed 42 senior professors and lecture[r]s from the university. The university, which was closed after a bloody massacre in early this year …, was reopened only two weeks ago. Among the fired professors are all the full professors of the medical school, two top surgeons of the nation, the top brass of the law school and the crème of the faculty of technology. Most of the professors had protested the killing of … students and had requested the government to form an enquiry into the killings. The dismissal was effective from last Friday and the remaining faculty of the university, both tenured and untenured, were told to reapply for their jobs for a 2-year contract. This is perhaps the only place in the whole globe where tenured professors and associate professors are reduced to signing a 2-year contract.*

Participant 24, a direct witness to the event, claims that the dismissed staff members were those who made comments during an all-staff session convened by senior government officials in the presence of the university leadership. The meeting aimed to discuss general issues regarding social, political, and economic progress under the new regime and to discuss solutions to the crisis the university was facing following the students' clash with government security forces:

> *I was in the meeting room, which led to the dismissal of 42 staff members. They raised critical comments on the country's economic and political progress since the regime change and the academic freedom issues that continued in the new regime, including the presence of armed security personnel on the university campus. Most of the dismissed staff members were those who had commented during the meeting; they were dismissed selectively for expressing their honest opinions rather than their performance.*

With a comment that supports the anonymous email and Participant 24's opinion, Participant 9 shared the same idea by providing experiential examples of the event's consequences, saying:

> *I heard the media interview in which the then-Minister of Education made an unfounded claim of 'poor performance'. I was the head of a department that lost multiple staff members [number omitted for anonymity]. We invested more than a decade in their training in Western countries on priority areas, despite government pressure to send students to Eastern Bloc countries, which was justified on the premise that they would obtain specializations in relevant areas as part of the university's graduate program expansion plan. The dismissal of my staff members returned us to our original situation 10 years ago.*

The *'hopes, aspirations, and motivations'* emerged in the organizational and national environments following nearly 2 decades of extensive socialist rule, which stunted the university's development. As Participant 18 recalled the situation compared with the first few months of the fall of the imperial regime in 1974,

> *In the first 2 years, some staff within each department were highly motivated to transform the university and contribute to the nation. Then came the dismissal of 42 colleagues, the re-establishment of the University, and the renewal of academic staff contracts to effect these changes. All the initial hopes, aspirations, and motivations vanished, only to return to the former mood.*

Otherwise, most of them were outstanding and respected scholars in their respective areas.

As these data show, the regime began using MCS elements at the outset of its reign. The performance management system was not used in technical terms; it was used as a justification for the use of hard forms of power – firing staff without due process, and it was used to poor staff performance as a reason for the brutal action.

The Civil Service Reforms of 1996 – 2000

Another incident that aggravated the already poor relationship between the university and the state was the government's civil service reform, which had overlapping demands for change with the university leadership's internal management reforms. During that period, AAU, under a new president who replaced the detained former president, was conducting an internal program review across all disciplines offered at the university. The idea, as Participant 3 explains, was 'to use the program review results for designing a 5-year strategic plan.' The program review report clearly expressed this as follows:

> *In an effort to prepare its strategic plan, Addis Ababa University has undertaken an assessment of its various components since early 1997. Reviewing the academic programs of the University at the Department/Faculty/Institute level was one of the various undertakings considered during this time. Other studies consisted of administrative organization and policies and procedures, student affairs, senate legislation and funding (AAU, Review of Programs, 1999)*

Participant 5 added saying, *'academic programs are the core function which directs the three responsibility areas of the university; research, teaching, and community service.'* The revision was part of an agreed plan between the government and the new leadership, which assumed responsibility from the '*temporary leadership arrangement*' following the 1993 crisis. '*The review was started as part of the vision of the new leadership to help the university grow to serve society,'* added Participant 3. '*We started the review with the review of the Ministry of Education as it required a lot of resources*, ' recalls Participant 17. '*Some of the reforms, despite being relevant to the university, were overambitiously designed without considering the actual capacity of the university*,' Participant 7 added.

Recalling the situation, several interviewees reported pressure from the Ministry. '*As we were in the middle of the program review, urgent demands from the Ministry of Education for the implementation of CSRP in the university,'* said Participant 20. *'As a technical team of the program review, we have reviewed the contents of the CSRP and found that most of its contents are not in line with our requirements, and those related to us were already covered in the program review; they have an overlapping nature, an example of which is graduate program expansion,'* added Participant 23. '*We, therefore, advised the leadership to push back the demanding requests from the ministry until we finish our internal review,'* continued Participant 23. *'When we presented our university's stand on the reforms at the national platform program officers' meeting of all universities, it came as a shock to the Minister. She considered it a political defiance of the Ministry's request,"* Participant 4 has similar observations, saying, "*at the meeting of university presidents and vice presidents, she [the Minister of Education] accused AAU of being a bad example and an impediment to government development plans,*" (Participant 6).

After the completion of the program review in 1999, implementation began in 2000. In addition to the program review, an administrative overhaul was underway to prepare the groundwork for a comprehensive strategic plan. Reflecting on how the university sought to lead the industry by example, Participant 24 said, '*The leadership noticed that the university's internal systems at the time were very bureaucratic and slow, so it needed a surgical solution rather than a quick fix.*' The university management sought a '*sustainable solution*' under the guidance of the planning office, in consultation with the Vice President for Business and Development Participant 24. Similarly,

In 2000, academic and administrative reforms continued under the new president, elected through staff participation, with the aim of developing the strategic plan. Despite the end of the CSRP by then, the disagreement between the university management and the Ministry. Participant 11 recalled the situation as an *'uphill battle'*, *'in spite of our relentless effort to reform the university and lead it in the right direction, we couldn't change the image of the political leadership. Convincing them to support our internally-generated reform programs became difficult. We faced an uphill battle! (Participant 11).'* In the presence of numerous unresolved controversies among the actors at the University and the responsible government ministry, the development and implementation of the strategic plan were not possible. Participant 10 supports this by saying '*most of the management's effort was wasted on dealing with the constant influence of the Ministry of Education, rather than becoming a strategic support; it became our main roadblock'*. Participant 21 said, *'We were even considered as a bad influence on other universities'.* Participant 1 added a similar comment that resonates with Participant 22, saying, '*The Minister took our reasonable rejection personally because she was evaluated at the Council of Ministers for failing to execute the government's directions. Once, she even defended herself in a parliamentary debate by arguing that the failure to meet the targets of the graduate program expansion plan was due to AAU's resistance to accepting policy advice from the Ministry, unlike other universities in the country.'* Such sustained resistance from the university was considered intolerable danger to the party's ideology.

As discussed above, despite consensus that the university needed fundamental change, there was substantial disagreement about how this change should occur. While the state framed the problem through a political-ideological lens, holding the identity and attitudes of the university's staff to blame, the university management viewed it purely from a technical perspective. CSRPs, rather than finding solutions to the existing problems, exacerbated the situation to make the university-state relationship worse. The disagreements continued after the CSRP implementation. This indicates that the disagreements and misperceptions continued growing until it reached its climax at the end of 2002. In 2002, these conflicts culminated in the resignation of the university leadership, which was then replaced by pro-government leadership. These events are discussed next.

Primary antecedent condition leading to the change in governance model

In the post-2001TPLF internal power crisis, Meles Zenawi and his loyalists emerged as the victors. The few years that followed were marked by the grand reforms that restructured the Ethiopian state and economy, laying the groundwork for a profound economic revival. As part of these reforms, it has been asserted that the new development approach recognizes that individual leaders' commitment to the state ideology is key to the success of the economic and political reforms. The developmental state and revolutionary democracy informed reforms required public-sector leaders to accept Ethiopia's constitution and the developmental state ideology. Consequently, all leaders and employees of public-sector organizations, guided by the EPRDF cadres, were required to conduct personal evaluations as part of the national ideological reformation process.

In July 2002, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi requested a three-day discussion forum for all academic

staff. The agenda was to discuss the country's past achievements under revolutionary democracy and its future directions, as articulated in the new economic ideology of the democratic developmental state. The meeting began slowly and in a tense environment, as the PM characterized the university's establishment as "*rotten*" and accused the staff of a "*rent-seeking attitude*." He also called for a fundamental overhaul of the entire university system, with a proper developmental attitude. As the meeting progressed, the intellectual debates intensified, and open discussions were held among state representatives and the university community. According to Participant 3, "*to the surprise of everyone, including the PM, the discussions covered sensitive topics with a high academic tone. What was called for 3 days continued for 3 consecutive weeks, covering interesting topics led by the PM, with critical discussions from the academics."*

Months later, the MoE developed a plan to conduct the party evaluation among staff and students. According to one member of the then management, *'the Minister of Education said that the evaluations are part of an 'open appraisal process' will be conducted across all public organizations. All other universities are conducting it, thus ordered that AAU must also implement it.*' Participant 2 indicated that '*when the Ministry sends us the guidelines, the management copies and distributes them to all departments of the University and requests written feedback on their relevance before their implementation. Except for a few departments, the community unanimously advised the management to reject the call.'* Participant 6 recalled that:

> *'the management of AAU announced that it will not implement such politically motivated student evaluations, first at the National University Presidents' Forum, and later to the AAU Board. The Ministers of Capacity Building and Education convened an all-staff meeting to persuade staff of the importance of the evaluations, but staff boycotted the meeting, and management members resigned from their posts. Several other middle- and lower-level managers joined the management team and resigned from their respective responsibilities. About a month later, the Prime Minister appointed a new management team to replace the vacant positions.'*

From the historical institutionalist perspective outlined above, we can see that critical decisions were made on group platforms, with participation from the collective decision-making organs, such as the board and the senate. This model, although not responsive to the state's aggressive demands, was helpful to the academic community in preserving its integrity and pursuing knowledge freely. The academic freedom drive was interpreted as an intentional challenge to the government's policies. State-level actors wanted to change the situation by changing both the leadership and the governance models under which the university should be managed.

4.2.2. The critical Juncture: The 2002 performance management reform crisis

As discussed above, based on its ideological evaluation, EPRDF regarded the higher education sector it had inherited from the Derg regime as '*undemocratic'* (Education Policy and its Implementation, 2002), "*dominated by the 'parochialist' and chauvinist forces"* (Addis Ra'ey, August 2006 year 1, Issue 1, No. 2 p102), thus argue it needed significant reformation. Therefore, the party identified it as one of its control cites to ensure the sustainability of its power and ideology. The entire leadership team and a significant number of faculty deans resigned from their positions following a heated debate and resistance to implementing the *''deep reformation"* state agenda. In January 2003, the Prime Minister appointed a new leadership team to spearhead AAU's institutional transformation in line with the state's development agenda. Therefore, we considered the first 10 years, from 1991 to 2002, during which the AAU leadership was primarily elected or appointed by the university community, as a traditional collegial leadership model, a legacy of the organization that had been in place since its establishment in 1950.

With its leadership appointed by the government, the university adopted a leadership model that replaces the traditional collective leadership model and relies on the President's strong individual personality and alignment with the ruling government's ideological direction. This new governance model was compatible with the Ethiopian version of the democratic developmental state, which was both intimidating—characterized by severity and a strong resolve to suppress organized political opposition and dissent—and suffocating, as it constrained political space for democratic development (Tadesse, 2012).

4.2.3. Structural Persistence: Autocratization of public sector organizations as a form of social control

Having emerged victorious from the TPLF's internal party crisis, Meles Zenawi became the most influential and controversial political figure in Ethiopia for over 2 decades (Tadesse, 2012). Studying his accession to power and tenure, from the TPLF to the EPRDF, elucidates how he seeks to advance development through an autocratic leadership style that depends on the leader's personal strength. This makes a clear connection with the autocratization of university governance systems in Ethiopia, which was not an isolated administrative incident attributable to the personal traits of a particular university's leader but was deeply embedded in the broader

transformation of the EPRDF-led Ethiopian state. As Tadesse (2012) wrote PM Meles Zenawi,*" worked hard to sustain the political system he helped create. This is crucial in understanding the ... impact on the nature of political power in Ethiopia [a]nd equally important, to understand what this says about the character of the Ethiopian state."*

The '*controlling*' aspect of the democratic developmental state warrants attention here. The major assumption is that for the idea of 'democratic developmental state to gain its momentum and effectively deliver its promises, two essential and interrelated requirements must be fulfilled. First, to achieve faster results, as aspired to in the revolutionary democratic political direction, the democratic developmental state political-economic approach must be a dominant and widely accepted perspective among a large section of society. For a thought to be dominant, its basic principles must be accepted and understood by a significant majority of Ethiopian society. To be accepted by large segments of society, recruitment, reorientation, mobilization, and engagement of development forces from every section of the public must be undertaken. The 'vanguard party' must recruit knowledgeable and committed party members, among others, from public enterprises' strategic capital sources (Addis Ra'ey, 2008).

Second, recruiting and mobilizing a large mass toward a developmental path requires a stable government that coordinates these complex and time-consuming processes over the long term. For the developmental state to follow the modeled developmental trajectories observed in East Asian economies. On the contrary, he exercised political influence over opposition parties and other aspects of society. Meles remained steadfast in his belief that Ethiopia would move forward under the strong hand of the vanguard party through interrelated acts of shifting the national mood by mobilization of dedicated party members that dominate every aspect of the society and at the same time, with the aggressive marginalization of opposition forces, organized or unorganized, that become an obstacle to the development path (Addis Ra'ey, 2006). With this logic, AAU, as explained above, was a subject of social reengineering under the Developmental State rhetoric. This is because the university was identified, academics in AAU are described as "dominated by the 'parochialist', 'chauvinist' and 'religious extremist' forces " (Addis Ra'ey, August 2006, Year 1, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 102).

By inviting members of the academic diaspora, the president seeks to change the institutional rules governing AAU. As Participant 16 put it, "*We used to call the new administration 'diaspora gangs' because they come from Europe and the US, and the salary of most of them was not paid by the university. They were obsessed with the university management systems they knew in Western contexts, and wanted to change existing systems of administration overnight."* Subsequently, these individuals serving in leadership positions were empowered to implement the development plan authoritatively. Participant 7 said, *"These people around the president were simply introducing what they think is best practice from the country they used to teach. They were autonomous to say and do what they want under the framework set by the government, as long as they are able to deinstitutionalize the 'chauvinist' and 'parochialist' attitude among academic staff."* Participant 13 said, "*The 'diaspora gangs' were introducing bizarre ideas like 'grade F should not be given to students' that were a real threat to higher education. They present as if we (the academia) want to see the failure of our students."* Participant 9 added, "*The primary focus of the university leadership becomes ensuring a peaceful teaching and learning process at any cost.*" These reflections from participants across different faculties of the university indicate a significant shift in the strategic priorities of university management at all levels toward student-centeredness.

The new governance model begins with leadership that fully accepts the EPRDF's development philosophy. Despite the resignation of the former management, open appraisals were conducted between staff and students on all campuses. Participant 17 said that "*Under the guise of democratizing higher education, students were empowered in an unproductive way, as if the staff and students were foes rather than co-creators of knowledge."* Participant 5 also said, "*The students were selected based on their active participation in politics and empowered to question political questions rather than academic questions. In return they will be rewarded with the opportunity to be enrolled in the graduate programs*" In complement to this, Participant 4 said, "*The management's interpretations of simple teaching-learning issues arising from the natural process of interactions between staff and students at the department level were from the view of keeping students happy rather than resolving the technical matter of the issue technically.*"

While characterization of the new management as *'diaspora gang'* also reflects the lack of acceptance of the academic community of the new leadership team, it also indicates the top-down dictation of how the university should be run by individuals who have no technical and subject-specific knowledge of the issues. The individualized decisions show a major shift in the decision-making process away from collective decision-making. The new management team's insistence on the academic community

to 'change the system overnight' as well as treating staff and students as 'service providers and customers' rather than as 'co-creators of knowledge' aligns with the radical democratization and development demands of EPRDF's political and economic ideologies of Revolutionary Democracy and Democratic Developmental State with absolute control of the economic actors attitudes and actions.

Party loyalty is required for leaders to become pioneers in their respective fields. 2 respondents (Participants 2 and 7), drawing on their experiences within and outside AAU, reported that candidates competing for presidential or vice-presidential positions were privately asked to join the party. In most cases, if these candidates declined the request, they would be eliminated from the competition. From this, we can conclude that senior university officials were secretly asked to join the EPRDF. Initially, the party membership was not explicitly mentioned. However, when the higher education proclamation was revised in 2009, what had previously been implicitly assumed and secretly required became a legal requirement for selecting top leadership positions. According to Art. 52/4 of the 2009 Higher Education Proclamation:

> *The candidate president and vice president of a public institution shall have, among others, commendable academic leadership and managerial ability as well as demonstrable commitment to institutional change and development, and to the Constitution and government policies. Later, this practice is extended to the lower academic and administrative positions based on the directive from the Ministry of Education, the election of all posts within*

This indicates that informal practices were formalized as legal requirements after 2009. The legal reforms were intended to systematically suppress the academic community's fierce opposition to major national political decisions made by the ruling party. Additionally, the promulgations systematically reinforced the ruling party's politico-ideological grip on the academic community. Eventually, these legal reforms consolidated power around the president as chief executive.

According to Participant 12, *"In addition to leadership levels, party membership was the primary requirement for obtaining employment in any civil service organization."* Complementing this, Participant 18 noted that, *"universities other than AAU were building their human resource capacity primarily through the assignment and allocation of top-scoring graduates from universities nationwide. This made it easier for the EPRDF to infiltrate their student members through staff allocations into the university system."*

In AAU's case, given the large number of staff employed over the institution's long history, it couldn't influence its members' presence. For invited diaspora members and EPRDF members seeking to join the university, a home base was required to establish an institutional relationship with AAU. Departments rejected such requests on the basis of the Senate Legislation and the university's HR manuals, despite having a support letter from the Ministry of Education and the President.

According to Participant 12, *"party membership was made the main requirement to get a job in civil service organizations."* Complementing this, Participant 18 said that *"universities other than AAU were building their human resource capacities mainly from assignment and allocation of top-scoring graduating students from universities across the country. This made it easier for the EPRDF to infiltrate their student members through staff allocations into the university system."*

As for AAU, a similar strategy was ineffective because the staff was relatively stable. According to Participant 5:

> *Higher officials from the Ministry of Education and the University's President issued orders to hire members of the EPRDF who had earned master's and PhDs without proper undergraduate training. In what appeared to be a coordinated effort, the staff evaluated the recommended applicants' credentials and rejected most of them. The departments, through their respective deans' offices, issued rejection letters along with minutes that clearly outlined the basis for the decisions, citing relevant Senate legislation and HR policy articles.*

Participant 12 expressed his concern by saying that "in the presence of strong existing departments of the Public Administration, the Political Science department, and the School of Law, new institutes that concentrate on the overlapping issues of peace, security, governance, and constitution were established." Participant 5 in support of Participant 12's idea continues,

> *When the hiring recommendations from the MoE and the President were rejected by the academic units, and the officials realized they could not succeed through intimidation or formal means, they devised an alternative strategy: establishing new research institutes and cultural centers to admit staff loyal to government policies—entities the staff called 'Moonlight Houses.' By establishing these new structures, they captured the system, creating a shortcut to the Senate to influence academic and administrative decisions in their favor. You see, the old academic units have gatekeepers who know the institution's history and legacy, and they use this knowledge to protect it from undue political pressure.*

The above data clearly shows the EPRDF's aggressive interest in subjugating the AAU. However, the influence of the ideology was not confrontational, as it had been before 2003. *'This was due to two reasons,'* according to Participant 2, '*the first is that the new president, both by*

his intellectual capacity and political capital, was higher than the people at the Ministry. The second was that 'the ideological changes were largely conducted in subtle ways through party members throughout the structure of the university.' Based on Mahoney and Thelen (2010), the new leadership, consistent with the theorization of layering, employed a gradual layering process over an extended period rather than a sudden change in the governance system, after learning that the ambitious change desired at the outset had failed. With a patient approach, the management was building a coalition by creating new institutions that would have senate representation in support of the new management and governance model.

According to the Ministry of Education's 2006 institutional change plan, circulated to all universities, the first-generation universities were initially resistant to change. The reform document notes the strategic challenge posed by resistance to reforms from older universities. The document, in its assessment of the strategic challenge of the past years and interventions made, explains that by 2006 the government overcome the challenge by changing 'the culture of resistance' and for this it particularly mentions the case of Addis Ababa University as an example and attributes the change to 'the government's strategic decision to change the leadership.'

> *Many of the existing universities in Ethiopia have changed their previous culture of blindly resisting reforms. Today, they have gone beyond compliance by embracing change and growth and have prepared strategic plans to address the demands of the Civil Service Reform Program. This is because measures have been implemented to fundamentally reform the leadership of older universities, thereby creating a conducive environment for institutional change. It should be noted that even the oldest university in our country, which was laggard when it comes to the issue of institutional change, has made fundamental change.... These special transformation programs, as well as implemented change processes, have implications for modeling industry-wide success of institutional change.*

It can be inferred from the above quote that the new chief executive model of university leadership was implemented in a coordinated manner, with the ideological aim of creating an ideologically submissive university that accepts any government reform initiatives without questioning their actual relevance. In addition, similar to Mahoney and Thelen's *"gradual institutional change approach",* the new chief executive model of university leadership was layered side by side with the old collegial model of governance model

4.2.4. Reactive Sequence: The impact of the Election on Control Systems of AAU:

The reactive sequence the new governance system faced occurred during the 2005 general elections and the post-election crisis that followed, as shown in subsections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4. The election crisis was followed by the EPRDF's absolute dominance across all aspects of Ethiopian society. Politically, to address issues the election process brought to light, the ruling party developed strategies to increase its presence and influence in the public sector, particularly in education. To compensate for the observed weakness, the ruling party infiltrates external party members in key organizational sites, including universities. The following data from Adis Ra'ey show how the party infiltrates its members into public-sector organizations to control civil servants (Adis Ra'ey, July 2008, Year 2, Issue 2, p. 102).

> *According to last year's audit report, the main cost categories were mainly for salary for party members who are permanently assigned in various government institutions, capacity building trainings, printing of magazines and instructional materials utilized for the formation of new and existing party members, fixed asset purchase, and for political activities in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities.*

As shown above, the assessment of EPRDF regarding the national education system and particularly that of the higher education sector it has inherited is that '**undemocratic'** (Education Policy and its Implementation, 2002), *"dominated by the 'parochialist' and chauvinist forces"* (Addis Ra'ey, August 2006 year 1, Issue 1, No. 2 p102) *(see also similar identifications in the previous section).* To counter challenges to its political power, the EPRDF was determined to regain control of all politically significant institutions, including AAU.

Similar to the political arena, having successfully crushed several staff and student resistance movements and with loyal leadership, the EPRDF adopted a soft approach to exercising power over the university during this period. Figure 3 below shows the sequential MCS reforms undertaken in this period and the types of MCS introduced through them.

The Ministry of Education undertook several public-sector reforms under the guidance of the Ministry of Capacity Building. The reforms were implemented in stages, targeting distinct challenges sequentially. The reforms appeared to be a continuation of the Civil Service Reform Programs of the 1990s. Subsequently, the development of a 5-year strategic plan, Business Process Reengineering (BPR), the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), and 'quality circles' in Total Quality Management (TQM) were implemented as part of a higher education reform program. All of these reforms were technically guided by the Ethiopian Management Institute, a state-owned management consultancy institute. Later, Kaizen reforms were implemented via the Ethiopian Kaizen Institute to improve asset utilization and document management in the public sector. In addition to such generic reform

projects/programs, sector-specific reforms were also implemented.

The 2007 Strategic Plan

In 2007, the university began developing its first strategic plan, in which the strengths of the chief executive model of university governance were discussed at length. The strategic planning movement was expected to change the traditional long-term planning approach that was widespread across the Ethiopian Public sector. The university formed a multidisciplinary ad hoc committee to develop its first strategic plan after the 1996 effort proved futile. One of the committee members, Participant 9, recalled the approach the committee followed as follows:

> *We used a bottom-up approach to formulate the university strategy, assuming that each college and academic unit is unique. We argued that academic units are irreplaceable authorities in their respective fields, capable of guiding research and practice. The president gave us full authority to pursue our approach. When the university was visited by experts from the International Association of Universities (IAU), the president invited the committee members to present the strategy formulation approach. Our bottom-up strategy formulation approach received much appreciation from participants, as most of them followed a top-down approach. They stated that they would prefer to do it the other way around if they were to formulate one. The president recognized the committee's work and was committed to supporting it. He began to believe in the internal staff's capacity to effect organizational change. He gave us encouragement we continued on working with the full support of the university president.*

Participant 9 continues saying:

> *The plan was that, after thorough scanning of the internal and external environments and the identification of feasible strategic interventions by the area experts, we would refine the issues into 5 main categories and develop an enabling organizational structure to support effective implementation of the formulated strategy. After completing 6 rounds of environmental scanning, SWOT analysis, and identification of strategic interventions, we learned via the media that AAU had completed its strategic planning phase. The president, in the presence of the Prime Minister, was launching it for implementation. We have withdrawn from the committee immediately. Later, we learned that another parallel committee was working on the university's strategic interventions and structure, which allocated critical positions based on ethnic diversity. We realized that we had been deceived by political forces operating undercover. We thought the state cared about the university. When we were assigned to the steering committee, we took the role seriously and did our best to meet the deliverables. When I reflect back, I realized that in accepting the change ideas, we trusted the state too much without giving any heed that the reforms would entail hidden political agendas.*

From these quotes, it is clear that the reforms were a symbolic adoption of the party's reform agenda rather than a technical effort to achieve organizational change and development. Additionally, it is noted that while the national reform program follows a top-down planning approach through the Ethiopian Management Institute, the AAU strategic planning approach, on the contrary, was bottom-up and aligned with the collegial governance model.

Business Process Reengineering (BPR)

The strategic planning reform was followed by BPR in 2008, which aimed to improve the efficiency of public service delivery. Following the initial application to certain public services, it spread across public-sector organizations without exception. "*The problem with our BSC plan was that,"* said Participant 5, who involved in the BPR Implementation committee, "*instead of focusing our reengineering on administrative services, we focused on the academic wing.*" Participant 15 accords with this by saying "*the academic wing is governed by the universal principles of philosophy of knowledge, thus has a long-standing culture of maintaining academic quality, which cannot be remedied by implementing private-sector management principles like BPR.*" Participant 15 continues arguing that:

> *Although the three interrelated mandates of the University are research, teaching, and community services, academia's prime concern is the creation of knowledge through research. Knowledge has its own gatekeepers who ensure academic rigor within communities meets an acceptable standard. The conduct of research is not constrained by organizational structures; it is governed by well-established universal mechanisms of peer-reviewed academic publishing. The management tools implemented in the community should have addressed the administrative hurdles we faced in carrying out our primary duties of knowledge creation and dissemination, rather than putting undue pressure on us.*

"*The BPR process falls under the hands of the EPRDF Cadres*", says Participant 14. In the explaining the process Participant 14 said that:

> *I was a direct witness to the events at the time, as I was a technical advisor to the then-president. I questioned the tool's relevance to a university setting and asked the president to consider its implementation. He argued that declining the reform would be considered political resistance. However, during implementation, he warned me that the reform should not affect administrative employees. When the higher officials and the party people pressure him to hire the cadres, he tells us to create a position accommodate those requests. The BPR, rather than downsizing the workforce to an acceptable level, created an unnecessarily large structure at the apex of the organization, with no meaningful implications for the lower levels, where the university's fundamental mission activities take place.*

Similarly, '*During the BPR implementation phase,*' Participant 3 said:

> *'There was a university-wide administrative staff reshuffling. Taking this as an opportunity, we were ordered to hire cadres whose mission was political rather than technical. They lacked even the basic administrative procedures for the posts they were responsible for: they*

were tasked with politically mobilizing and organizing staff and students within their respective ethnic backgrounds. The problem was that, as party members, the cadres were proud of their political cover and sought to steer the staff and run the show, much as they had in the other civil service organizations they had come from. They do not understand AAU's organizational culture. They even dared to convince you to join the party. When you refuse their offer, they regard you as an opponent and therefore a threat to the party. They try to intimidate you. The management team was composed of principled individuals who were not afraid to confront unreasonable demands. In addition, we had the president's cover, and we didn't face any serious issues. Otherwise, the party members were very dangerous.

Participant 22 said, "*To your surprise*,' said Participant 8, '*we [the university administration at the beginning of 2000'] were the ones who started BPR-based reform in the country. We were the first to conceptualize and introduce it, before it became popular in the Ethiopian public sector in the mid-2000s. As a member of the first BPR committee, I have given the full documents of the full documents containing the studies conduction in each critical support service areas. No one was interested in looking into it. It was frustrating to see that the resource invested in coming up with the intervention was just wasted.'* Participant 22 said *'It took EPRDF 5 years for the management to realize the need for the BPR. This is because it came from the political cadre this time. They designed and implemented it as part of the public sector modernization program. The management that sidelined the efficiently undertaken BPR study report started everything afresh to introduce it to us as 'a new animal.'*

The above quotes illustrate how the reengineering resulted in a heavier, rather than a leaner, operating system than was expected. The university president's insistence on maintaining the existing structure reflects the layering of new, politically informed governance rules over the existing ones.

Balanced Scorecard (BSC)

The BSC aims to integrate planning and execution across the public sector (Bobe et al., 2017). BSC was applied in AAU in 2012/3. Unlike the 2007 strategic plan, the 2013 plan was produced by an ad hoc strategic planning committee. After the university completed the planning, two problems arose during implementation. The first was the top-down approach it followed; it made it very difficult to cascade strategic initiatives to departments and individuals, since most of the university's resources are managed centrally. In addition, despite the committee's work, the Civil Service Commission required that the performance evaluation conform to the generic format proposed by its experts. Our document review revealed that 60% of the evaluation score was derived from subjective measurement of the individual's attitude and behavior. These evaluations were still another layering mechanism that state-affiliated actors used to make staff and students feel threatened.

Quality circles in Total Quality Management (TQM)

What follows is the 'development army', a contextually modified version of the concept of 'quality circles' in Total Quality Management (TQM), designed to drive continuous improvement in public services. EPRDF scans its environment using its ideological core values of ethnic and religious freedom and similarly narrates its challenges from the point of view of ethnic and religious extremism. The following quote is from two documents circulated for discussion at the annual forum with prominent EPRDF officials.

"Although we have achieved various remarkable successes in various fields since the formulation and implementation of the [post-2001] reform line, we have not passed this phase of our struggle without facing unique challenges. The most prominent challenges in this regard are the dangers of 'chauvinism/arrogance', narrow-mindedness, and extremism that spreads under the guise of religion. (The struggle of the Ethiopian people and our renaissance, 2014).

The primary purpose of these structures was to establish party cells within each public organization. Although management attempted to customize it with academic language as a peer group, the structure was rejected by all academic staff. The reform had no meaningful impact.

Other reforms:

During the second half of the EPRDF's reign, additional change measures were implemented at the university. These included closing the oldest research institutes and creating a government-owned research institute by reassigning the same staff and research funds.

Participant 22 explained, '*They [EPRDF] aimed to dismantle the university gradually by establishing parallel structures outside it, making it purposeless and ultimately disappearing. For example, the university's research institute was shut down, and an identical one was created under a government Ministry.'* Similarly, Participant 11 recounted, *'The university had an Institute of Geophysics, Space Science and Astronomy founded in 1957. Instead of investing in the existing institute, the EPRDF's official [name omitted] established a new Geophysical Observatory in 2013 at Entoto at a considerable expense.'*

A senior professor from the College of Health Sciences shared a related story: '*In a joint meeting with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, a Minister said, 'You medical doctors, you want to dominate everywhere. We will soon make you irrelevant.' As a result,*

they invested in duplicate facilities at second-generation universities." After the launch of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), developments emerged in the university-state relationship. As a staff member from the Faculty of Technology stated,

> *"EPRDF was obsessed with technological development to support the economic development agendas in the GTP. They gave higher policy priority to engineering and the sciences to support large-scale projects and to equip industrial parks for development. Therefore, the party sought to address the country's technological challenges, and the Faculty of Technology at Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAU) was granted selective autonomy, administered by German and Korean nationals with financial support from their respective Development Cooperation Agencies. Departing from the university's usual rules, this faculty began operating independently under the protection of the government ministry, establishing its own credit transfer system based on the German model. However, this autonomous arrangement produced no significant results, and everything reverted to the original state."*

From these, we can infer that the modern New Public Management ideas, such as BPR, were invoked to justify the removal of individuals labeled as part of the old institution or as opponents of the party system under the EPRDF.

The following section discusses the implications of the long-term outcomes of social control exercised by MCS tools over staff and students.

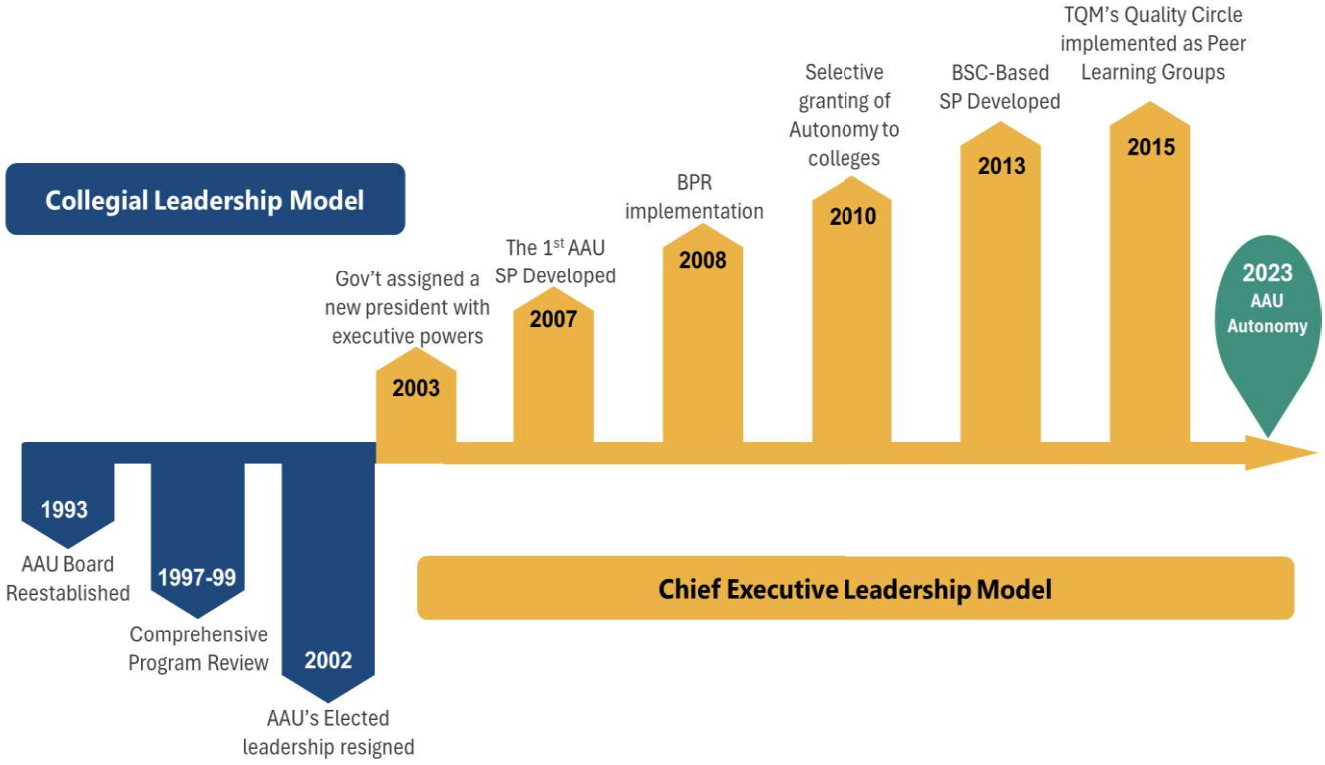

Figure 2: A range of MCS tool implemented during the period 1991 - 2018

4.2.5. The Long-term Outcome: Social control of academic communities

Social control in AAU has been achieved, among other things, by first convincing the community that the new corporate leadership model is a beneficial alternative during the strategic planning process. Second, drawing on the concept of 'radical change through obliteration of taken-for-granted but inefficient structures process' in BPR, state-affiliated actors created suitable administrative and academic positions for EPRD members who could not join through the formal recruitment process. After the structures were created, EPRDF members were infiltrated into the university system to take positions in the formal structure. Third, the content of the BSC-based performance evaluation was distorted to align with ideological narratives of developmental state and revolutionary democracy. Finally, the fourth social control mechanism was developed with the implementation of TQM's quality circles. Modified to be called '*peer learning groups'*, the academic and administrative staff, as well as university students, were organized into ideologically motivated groups to discuss the state's political ideology rather than their work and academic performance.

The intention was to ensure the hegemony of developmental state rhetoric by creating a situation at KIPO in which it is the single, uncontested political ideology

directing all organizational members toward development and democracy. By interfering with the vanguard party's ideological workings in the governmental bureaucracy, a system that is expected to theoretically be a neutral servant of the people, the new governance model and the subsequent MCS created a reality distorted towards the dominant state ideology. The following comments by participants, as well as the university's 2012 annual report, present a clear picture of the consequences of the reforms. A former senior director of an institute, who served during this period, reflected on her experience in AAU during a local radio program as follows:

> *Since returning to the country after many years abroad to support higher education, the issue of educational quality has been a top priority. It was top of the agenda because we [the University and government] were already convinced that the quality of our student graduates does not meet the industry demands. The reformers, however, beyond recognizing the problem, were unclear about what 'quality' in the education sector means and how to achieve it. However, in my experience in AAU, the management of the University has attempted to address the issue through accepting political interventions from the government that propagates the implementation of ridiculous business ideas imported from corporate America and elsewhere abroad, such as BPR and BSC from the US, 1-5 groups [change army] and Kaizen from east Asia, and Deliverology from the United Kingdom.*

The 2012 internal annual report, prepared by AAU's management, clearly reflects the situation before 2012, as it claims,

> *... from discussions with the university community held at various times, we realized that the previous top management of the university was non-participatory and did not follow a clear plan. The university's top management did not delegate tasks to departments with accountability based on a plan. In general, there was no annual plan that the university community discussed and agreed on. It was evident that when reports were requested by government bodies at different times, unplanned tasks were consolidated and sent by a single department. Department heads, teachers, and support staff never held discussions on the plan and its implementation.*

The report additionally reports that:

> *'the University Council, the Managing Council, and other committees were not properly organized in accordance with the new Higher Education Proclamation. It was observed that minutes were not properly taken during Senate and other meetings, making it impossible to monitor the implementation of decisions made at each meeting. Because decisions that should have been reached by consensus were made separately by each direction and department, monitoring and implementation were not coordinated, leading to complaints due to the lack of a clear procedure. There was no instance in which the President delegated his authority to decide on financial and property matters to the Vice Presidents and relevant officials in a clear and lawful manner. Therefore, it was observed that various departments had unlimited authority to make decisions regarding the university's finances and property without delegation.'*

Participant 11 concluded by saying that

> *There was a series of reform movements. However, their implementation did not consider the pros and cons; instead, they actively sought tools based on the tools' ability to justify their disruptive actions. Their intention was to disrupt the system. For example, previously, we maintained senior academic staff on the grounds that they possess extensive experience in specific areas of specialization, and that, since their skill set cannot be easily replaced, we recommended reemployment even after their retirement age until the succession plan takes hold. When these people criticize government policies, they are labeled as chauvinist or parochialist and are identified as having a weakness; they are dismissed through contract termination. Their approach was shrewd and Machiavellian.*

Participant 11 finished by saying that "*Interesting to me is the fact that these people were not alien to the university; it was the people who live with us who worked against the establishment. It was our own people who collaborated with external bodies to close research institutes and redirected the funds to other institutions.*"

This evidence indicates that, despite a series of MCS reforms undertaken, under the developmental state ideology, the tools implemented at the university did not yield the anticipated results. This is because the MCS tools were used to deinstitutionalize leadership and governance models that grant power to actors deemed threatening to the dominant state ideology. Simultaneously, the MCS tools were used to create a leadership and governance model that produces and reproduces the ideological demands for the social control of actors considered threats to the ideology. This has created confusion, mistrust, and insecurity among the organizational members.

Our review of the literature on leadership model change in other countries shows that NPM failures are a trade-off of the strategic transition; the administrative outcomes of a corporate, managerial-based leadership model have suppressed academic scholarship (Parker & Jary, 1995; Carnegie & Tuck, 2010). However, in our case study, the designers are found to actively seek the weaknesses of neoliberal NPM tools in order to capitalize on them to justify the desired outcomes within another political-ideological frame. We argue that these outcomes are not unintended consequences of MCS design and use, as in prior research, but rather intended political outcomes aligned with the developmental state and revolutionary democracy ideologies.

4.3. Summary of key findings

Using the HI's 5-phase institutionalization process, we presented how the ideological content of *'Democratic Developmental State'* was embedded in the MCS tools and produced political rather than technical outcomes that are

contradictory to their neoliberal origins. One of the problems of liberalization in post socialist political economic reforms in developing countries is their tendency to symbolic adoption of reform ideas without in an effort to gain political legitimacy from the public and sponsoring external national and international bodies which accounts for their eventual demise (Wins & Kofinas, 2021; Hopper et al., 2017; Tsamenyi et al., 2010; Wickramasinghe & Hopper, 2005; Uddin & Hopper, 2003).

By using Mahoney (2001) and Mahoney and Thelen (2010), we explained the change in the governance system of AAU. Understanding these different types of institutional change. Our empirical data gathered from multiple sources were subjected to a rigorous, history-informed institutional analysis. We found that the reform packages involving MCSs were designed and implemented at different times to align with the dominant political frame's ideological pillars, which enable social control within a fortified KIPO. The new leadership and governance model gradually introduced state ideology into the fortified university and its members through the implementation of MCSs. In our case study, we have demonstrated that, among the four types of institutional change processes (displacement, layering, drift, and conversion), layering, as defined by Mahoney and Thelen (2010), best captures institutional change in AAU. Layering is the process by which new rules are attached to existing ones, thereby changing how the original rules structure behavior. As Participant 9 notes below:

> *"To put it in a raw, the inner organization they [the party] created overlaps a structure that effectively works, disregarding the university system and sometimes in parallel with the formal structure. As vulgar as it was, this was how they were leading the University."*

The process of layering in AAU is such that the (new) chief executive model occurred when institutional challengers, actors who introduce institutional change by enacting new rules, lack the capacity to alter the original rules under the collegial governance model. Similar to the theory's explanation, the new management does not change the governance rules all at once. They instead work within the existing system by adding new rules on top of or alongside old ones. Under layering, while the staff of AAU, as defenders of the status quo, may be able to preserve the original university governance rules, they cannot prevent amendments and modifications from the Ministry of Education. Each new element of management control seeks to address specific aspects of small change, yet these small changes accumulate into social control, in which AAU staff and students fall under the constant gaze of the state, leading to a large change over the long run. Layering does not introduce wholly new institutions or rules, but rather involves amendments, revisions, or additions to existing ones (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). The 'individualized' model was not a sufficient condition for the raw of the state's ideological philosophy to enter the university; it was supported by a unique repertoire of individual management control tools, implemented at different times, which masked the ideological intentions of state-affiliated designers. This was achieved through an evolutionary process of layering informal party structure with formal governance mechanisms (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

Controllers are agents responsible for the design and use of MCS within an organization. Appreciating the complex and challenging environment within which controllers operate, Jonsson (2009) reminds us that "[w]e need to pay attention to the details (even if the Devil is in there)!" to understand the unintended consequences of MCS reforms in KIPOs. 'Step-wise decentralization' (first to the regional level and then to the district (woreda) level) and 'big push' approach (comprehensive and integrated PSRs that were geared to meet the Developmental State agenda) were the 'centerpieces' of Ethiopia's localization strategy that are misconstrued as positive progress by the government of Ethiopia (Peterson, 2011; World Bank 2013).

While the EPRDF, as patron of the NPM-based PSRs, had a 'latecomer advantage' in evaluating what worked best and what went wrong by modeling other (developing) countries' experiences, it was still committed to implementing PSRs with proven failure records elsewhere during its long tenure. Our closer look at the control dynamics in a KIPO operating under a non-liberal ideological context showed that MCSs were designed to produce ideological outcomes for state-level actors outside the organization's space, with AAU management implementing them incrementally.

In answering the question that 'is it possible to locate calculative techniques and those who practice them within the narrower definitional refinements of social control, Walker (2016) reviewed several accounting and social control literatures and claimed that accounting is potentially a non-coercive form of social control meaning that accounting can represent an organized response to the need to identify and deal with a troublesome group. Accounting, Walker (2016) contends, 'may be conceived of and consciously employed as a technique of social control. It may be formal (required by law, or involving third-party intervention) or informal, latent, or soft-edged.' He said that:

> *"The performance of accounting in arenas of everyday life, such as the home and workplace, can be understood as 'informal' social control, through the cultivation of group pressures on the individual to conform to norms of proficiency, organizational and familial goals*

and values. As a form of inscription accounting may be a component of a program of downward social control imposed by the powerful. It may be utilized as an administrative device deployed as part of an 'active' program of social control (as in areas of social policy), either on its own or as part of a suite of technologies and processes."

After triangulating states' discursive expressions, ideological and political resources, and policy documents, this study shows that various modern management control systems (MCS) tools were adapted for use in all public universities in Ethiopia, particularly AAU. The MCS tools implemented at AAU, rather than fostering academic excellence, operational efficiency, and accountability, serve as state-imposed restraints that create conditions under which actors (individuals and groups) within the university, i.e., staff and students, exhibit compliant behavior toward the state's ideology. Therefore, based on the findings in the previous section regarding the Ethiopian government's ideological characteristics, we argue that the adoption and use of several PSRs were not merely to attain public-sector efficiency or secure legitimacy from its Western allies. They had rather been used for subtle political ends of exercising social control of the ideology's main 'enemies of the vanguard party's ideology' – its staff and students. That is, the MCS tools effectively enable the penetration of state ideology into a fortified organizational field that had a past history of active participation in political regime change – Addis Ababa University- and control of its subjects – the staff and students. In that we have shown through empirical evidence that "the control of the enterprise within society is not a separate issue from control of the society itself." (Puxty and Chua in Chua et al., 1989, p. 137). Figure 4 below summarizes the institutionalization of social control achieved by the MCS reforms.

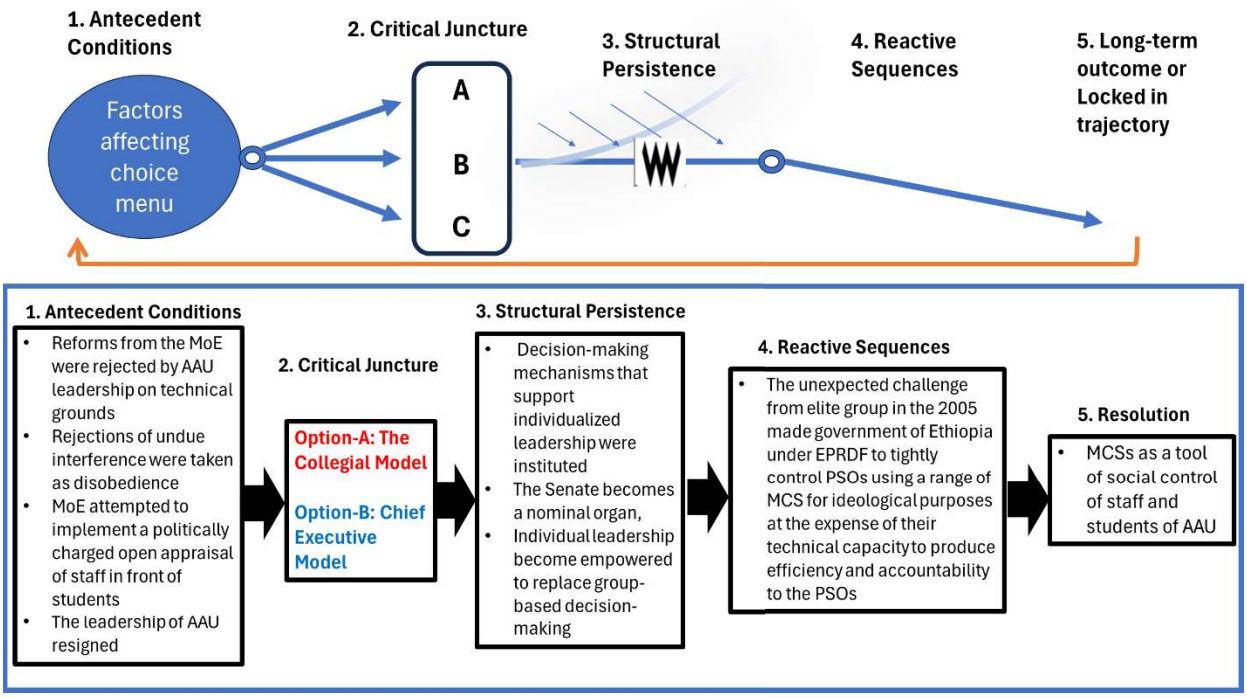

Figure 3: Institutional (re)production of social control under chief executive model of governance

5. Conclusion and implications

Addis Ababa University is one of the oldest modern public institutions and has played a critical role in shaping the country's socioeconomic and political life. The university was at odds with states pursuing different ideologies for most of its life. Our study focuses solely on the period under the EPRDF, during which its leadership model shifted from the traditional collegial model to a chief executive model of leadership and governance. Based on the historical institutionalist theoretical lens (Mahoney, 2001; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010), we divided the period into two, using the major leadership change at the end of 2002 as the dividing point.

Our aim was to explain how a series of NPM reforms, employing different management control tools, facilitated the institutional reproduction of the chief executive governance models an ideologically supported mode of leadership and governance in a non-neoliberal developing-country context. The state preferred this model not for effective university management, but for establishing ideologically informed social control through 'individualized autocracy.' Using Mahoney's (2001) and

Thelen & Mahoney's (2010) versions of HI. The study broadly contributes to the much-needed body of NPM-informed management control research in developing-country settings, where historical power dynamics between the state and academics in a highly contested KIPO persist. Specifically, the current study contributes to theory in three ways. First, drawing on another useful iteration of institutional theory, HI, we contributed to the MCS change literature with a theoretical explanation of KIPOs' transition from the academic (collegial) leadership model to the managerial (chief executive) leadership model, influenced by a dominant state ideology. We argued that such a transition is not a one-time event; rather, it unfolds through a complex institutionalization process that mobilizes multiple MCS tools to serve the dominant state ideology of the Democratic Developmental State. Using the powerful analytical toolbox of HI, our findings suggest that the micro-level chief executive model of leadership and governance at Addis Ababa University was institutionalized in a way that strengthens individualized autocracy through a path-dependent evolutionary process, driven by exogenous punctuation from macro-level state-level ideological changes whose mechanisms are internally enabled by multiple MCS tools.

Second, we contribute to the social control agenda (Walker, 2016) by showing that the state achieved control over academia by embedding its ideological content into a range of MCSs. In doing so, we provided fresh evidence to the longstanding idea that controlling organizations within society is, in effect, controlling society itself (Puxty & Chua, in Chua, Lowe, & Puxty, eds., 1989). Third, various aspects of control within an organization—such as coercion, compliance, and cooperation—are examined in the context of developments in social institutions, including state ideology. We have contributed to the NPM literature by explaining how encounters between accounting and non-neoliberal state ideologies at the margins enable accounting to develop 'other' repertoires, transforming it from a technical-rational control tool into an instrument of social control, becoming what it was not. Macro-level state actors in the public sector of developing countries use MCSs to achieve non-neoliberal political objectives, but they fail on the ground of achieving the desired neoliberal ideals of 'organizational change, employee empowerment, and the efficiency or value for money of public services' (Miller, 1998: p. 607). Our study offers a global view of how management accounting and control systems in KIPOs are shaped and applied amid political and ideological shifts that are often overlooked in mainstream research as mere organizational context. By centering macro-level developments in its analysis, this approach complements micro-level studies of control systems (Macintosh, 1995).

Our study is limited to understanding the role of MCS design and use to support the dominant non-neoliberal state ideology. Future research needs to examine how a corporate form of leadership and governance framework affects the accountability of KIPOs in developing countries. Because the analytical toolbox employed conceptualizes institutional change as a gradual process, we are unable to examine the impact of another key public-sector reform milestone in Ethiopia's higher education history, namely the 2023 grant of autonomy to Addis Ababa University. Future studies focusing on the Ethiopian context may also examine the 2023 autonomy project and its potential to alter prevailing institutions and achieve the desired outcomes.

Declaration

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Author's contribution

Conceptualization: Author 1, 2, 3
Data curation: Author 1, 2, 3
Formal analysis: Author 1, 2, 3
Investigation: Author 1, 2, 3
Methodology: Author 1, 2, 3
Project administration: Author 1, 2, 3
Supervision: Author 2, 3
Validation: Author 1, 2, 3
Writing – initial draft: Author 1
Writing – Author 1, 2, 3

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Annexes

Table 1: List of Research Participants and Duration of Interviews

Ser. No	Participant Code	Role in the University	Duration of Interview
1	Participant-1	Top Leadership	3.08:20
2	Participant-2	Top Leadership	1.35:09
3	Participant-3	Top Leadership	1.51:25
4	Participant-4	Top Leadership	3.01:00
5	Participant-5	Top Leadership	1.51:26
6	Participant-6	Top Leadership	2.5:09
7	Participant-7	Top Leadership	4.25:18
8	Participant-8	Middle level manager	5.55:49
9	Participant-9	Middle level manager	2.15:40
10	Participant-10	Middle level manager	2.05:52
11	Participant-11	Middle level manager	1.31:32
12	Participant-12	Middle level manager	4.41:23
13	Participant-13	Middle level manager	0.59:04
14	Participant-14	Middle level manager	1.10:35
15	Participant-15	Middle level manager	2.00:35
16	Participant-16	Middle level manager	0.21:37
17	Participant-17	Middle level manager	0.23:38
18	Participant-18	Middle level manager	0.45:37
19	Participant-19	PSR Implementation Steering Committee member in AAU	0.31:40
20	Participant-20	PSR Implementation Steering Committee member in AAU	1.01:41
21	Participant-21	PSR Implementation Steering Committee member in AAU	1.02:00
22	Participant-22	Senior Staff of AAU	0.55:23
23	Participant-23	Senior Staff of AAU	0.24:05
24	Participant-24	Senior Staff of AAU	0.15:46

Table 2: List of key events in the history of Addis Ababa University between 1991 and 2018

Ser. No	Key historical events and their brief description
1.	**March 1990 —** Following President Mengistu Haile Mariam's announcement of a "Mixed Economy" policy, university students were mobilized to stage demonstrations in support of the reforms and to denounce rebel groups, whom they accused of "treason" and referred to using derogatory vocabulary of the Derg regime, such as "bandits". The students marched to the Sudanese and Libyan embassies to protest alleged foreign support for the insurgent forces.
2.	**May 1991 —** Following the EPRDF's entry into Addis Ababa, tensions immediately rose on campus as students staged protests against the new Transitional Government, questioning its legitimacy and policies.
3.	**July 1 - 5, 1991 —** The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) is established by the Peaceful and Democratic Transitional Conference of Ethiopia with the adoption of the Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia.
4.	**June 1992 —** In response to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) withdrawing from the Transitional Government, a significant number of students left the university to join opposition encampments. During the subsequent crackdown, thousands of perceived opposition supporters—including many university students—were detained in military-style "rehabilitation" camps like Blate and Tolay, causing severe disruptions to the academic calendar.
5.	**January 1993 —** Security forces violently dispersed university students protesting the upcoming referendum on Eritrean independence, resulting in at least one student's death and numerous injuries. This event was a precursor to the dismissal of 42 university staff later that year.
6.	**April 1993 —** The university summarily dismissed 42 senior professors and lecturers (including the university president) who had signed a letter protesting the government's violent crackdown on the student demonstrations in January.
7.	**March 1997 —** Students at Addis Ababa University staged a demonstration to protest the discriminatory land redistribution policy implemented in the Amhara region (specifically targeting Gojjam and Gondar). The students argued the policy was politically motivated to dispossess farmers labeled as "feudal remnants" or "bureaucrats."
8.	**April 2001 —** Federal police raided the main campus following student demands for academic freedom and the removal of police from university grounds, resulting in the death of over 40 students and civilians, the indefinite closure of the university, and the flight of hundreds of students to Kenya. While graduating seniors and medical students were recalled earlier to complete their terms, the remainder of the student body was effectively suspended for the rest of the academic year, forcing them to forfeit one year of study.
9.	**July 2002 —** Prime Minister Meles Zenawi conducted a mandatory three-week televised "Capacity Building" forum for all academic staff. He characterized the university establishment as "rotten" and accused the organization of rent-seeking.
10.	**December 2002 —** Top administrators at AAU and at least five professors resigned after complaining that the government was using performance evaluations to interfere with university autonomy. The government had yet to promulgate a university charter granting the university autonomy despite repeated promises to do so since coming to power in 1991.
11.	**January 2004 —** The university administration summarily dismissed over 300 Oromo students following protests against the federal government's decision to move the administrative capital of the Oromia Regional State from Addis Ababa to Adama.
12.	**June 2005 —** Following the disputed national elections, Federal Police stormed the main campus (Sidist Kilo) to suppress student protests against alleged vote-rigging. Security forces beat students in their dormitories and arrested hundreds, detaining them at the Sendafa Police Training College, where they were subjected to harsh punitive drills and head-shaving.
13.	**May 2010 —** Weeks before the general election, clashes broke out at the main campus (Sidist Kilo) between student supporters of the ruling party and the opposition coalition (Medrek) following a heated televised election debate. Federal Police intervened to quell the disturbance, which resulted in injuries to students and heightened political tension on campus.
14.	**August 2023 —** The Council of Ministers approved a new regulation granting Addis Ababa University full autonomous status, making it the first public university to be legally separated from direct Ministry of Education administrative control.

Table 3: Presidents of AAU and Their Office Tenure

Ser. No	Name of President	Academic Background/Specialization	Tenure
1.	Dr. Lucien Matte	Canadian Jesuit (Catholic Priest)	(Sep 1952 – Jun 1962)
2.	Dej. Kassa Wolde Mariam	Business Administration	(Jul 1962 – Mar 1969)
3.	Dr. Aklilu Habtie	Education	(Apr 1969 – May 1974)
4.	Dr. Taye Gulilat	Economics	(Aug 1974 – Feb 1977)
5.	Dr. Duri Mohammed	Economics	(Mar 1977 – Mar 1985) (Feb 1993 – Nov 1995)
6.	Dr. Abiy Kifle	Mathematics	(Mar 1985 – Jun 1991)
7.	Prof. Alemayehu Tefera	Technology	(Mar 1992 – Feb 1993)
8.	Prof. Mogessie Ashenafi	Sciences	(Dec 1995 – May 2000)
9.	Prof. Eshetu Wencheko	Sciences	(Jun 2001 – Dec 2002)
10.	Prof. Andreas Eshete	Philosophy	(Jan 2003 – Mar 2011)
11.	Prof. Admasu Tsegaye	Biology	(Apr 2011 – Nov 2017)
12.	Prof. Tassew Woldehanna	Economics	(Feb 2018 – Aug 2023)
13.	Dr. Samuel Kifle	Business/Commerce/Accounting	(Sept 2023 – Present

Adapted from AAU website at aau.edu.et

Table 3: *Periodization of key historical events based on historical institutionalist theorization.* ***Source****: Authors' own compilation (continued from the previous page)* Source: Authors' own compilation

The Fall of the Derg regime		* In the last few months before the fall of Addis Ababa into rebel hands, staff and students of AAU entered military training camps to combat secessionist rebels on the battlefield.
Formation of Transitional Government of Ethiopia	1991	* AAU's staff participated in the "Peace and Democracy Conference" organized by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, representing the educated elite * Former and active memebers of AAU were guaging the public opinion on the throughout the conference
Declaration of the Erittean Independence after referendum	1993	* The reinstitutionalization of free and democratically elected student governments in AAU * The reinstitutionalization of the University Teachers' Association * Election of a new president for AAU with a free and fair participation of staff *Students protested the referendum and marched to the streets of Addis Ababa and clashed with Security forces of the TGE *The leadership of Addis Ababa University were removed from their post on the grounds of 'poor performance' and becoming 'not fit to the system' * 42 AAU staff members, including the president, were summarily dismissed from the university. Some of them were detained for years.
The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	1997	The comprehensive program review conducted to be used as input to formulation of 1st strategic plan of the university.
Split of TPLF, the dominat coalition of EPRDF into 2 factions	2001	

Source*: Authors' own compilation (to be continued on the next page)*

Emergence of the Developmental State as EPRDF's Economic Ideological phylosophy		* Students marched on the streets of Addis Ababa demanding academic freedom of Higher Education institutions under the influence of former staff of AAU.
EPRDF decided to relocate the seat of the National Regional State of Oromia from Addis Ababa to Adama	2002	* The 3-week televised discussion of AAU staff with the Prime Minister *The government introduced an ideologically informed individual performance evaluation system. * The leadership team of AAU resigned, refusing to implement the reform imposed by Ministry of Education
The 2003 Higher Education Proclamation	2003	* EPRDF-affiliated and personal friend of the prime minister appointed as president of the Univeristy * The Senate, the ultimate decision-making organ of the university, was relegated to an advisory role * The role of, the president, as an individual leader, on implementing party ideologies is emphasised.
National General Election of 2005	2005	* AAU Affiliated personal figures Emerged as dominant the leaders of the main opposition parties
EPRDF reformed its policies to give more attention to urban development. Public sector organizations become targets of social control	2007	*AAU Conducted University-wide Strategic Planning Process in which it discussed the benefits of the Chief Executive Model University Administration
The 2009 Higher Education Proclamation	2008-2010	* BPR-informed restructurings and student-centered services, * The organizational structure of AAU was extended, *Autonomyautonomy was granted to AAU colleges selectively, and critical research institutes were closed
The Ministry of Education heralded Higher education reforms		
The period of leadership crisis in EPRDF after the death of PM Meles Zenawi	2012-2013	* BSC-based strategic planning and conceptualization of the student as a ' customer.' *Performance evaluation scores of academic staff and administrative staff become ideologically informed.
	2015	*Establishment of the Development Army/Change Army within AAU to create the 1-5 political cell structures of the ruling party
EPRDF Removed from power	2018	
The Charter of Addis Ababa University	2023	* AAU became "Chartered University"+I10

***Source**: Authors' own compilation*