

PRECOLONIAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN, ETHIOPIA, EGYPT AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: A COMPARISON

Tyodzer Patrick PILLAH^{1*}, Terna C Jen², Anih Chinaza Benedicta³

^{*1-2-3} Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Veritas University Abuja

Corresponding Author Tyodzer Patrick PILLAH

Department of Public Administration

Faculty of Management Sciences

Veritas University Abuja

Email: pillahp@veritas.edu.ng

08036275160

Article History

Received: 29 / 06 / 2025

Accepted: 13 / 07 / 2025

Published: 15 / 07 / 2025

Abstract: This comparative study examines the role of local governments in three African federal states: Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, and Israel. While all operate within federal systems, the degree of autonomy afforded to local governments varies significantly. Through the analysis of primary and secondary public and official documents and review of related literature, the paper finds that the South African multi-tiered yet interdependent federal system, together with its emphasis on legislative, executive, and fiscal powers for municipalities, appears more conducive to local autonomy than Ethiopia and Egypt. The Ethiopian federal system, despite its emphasis on ethnic federalism, provides limited constitutional recognition and self-rule for local governments. While the Egyptian Constitution is a realist Constitution that recognizes and allocates executive and regulatory powers to local governments, their autonomy is constrained by significant state influence. Nevertheless, it is still more conducive than the Ethiopian case, where the autonomy of the local government is subservient to the discretion of the state. In conclusion, the South African model, while not without its challenges, may offer valuable insights for other countries seeking to enhance the role and effectiveness of local governance from the perspective of bottom-up federal governance, which is so vital to the deepening of the federal constitutional diversity down to the society. This connotes an area for further studies pointing to the accommodating imperatives of constitutionally empowering local governments in the Ethiopian federal constitutional dispensation, which still struggles with the quest for bringing regional ethnic minorities on board.

Keywords: Pre-colonial, local administrative system, south African, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, comparison.

How to Cite in APA format: PILLAH, T. P., Jen, T. C., Benedicta, A. C., (2025). PRECOLONIAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN, ETHIOPIA, EGYPT AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: A COMPARISON. *IRASS Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(7)96-133.

Introduction

Ethiopia, South Africa, and Egypt represent prominent examples of African states with federal constitutional systems. These systems share the common goals of acknowledging and accommodating ethnic diversity while striving to mitigate socio-economic inequalities. The Ethiopian federal arrangement explicitly prioritizes the rights of ethnic groups, officially recognized as Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (Article 39 of the FDRE Constitution, 2005). This recognition constitutes the fundamental rationale for the federal structure. The consent and equality of these groups, numbering 87 according to the 2008 Population and Census Commission, are deemed essential for the establishment and enduring stability of the Ethiopian polity. The Constitution of the FDRE asserts that the sovereignty of the state originates from the rights of these ethnic groups, emphasizing that the constitution itself embodies this inherent sovereignty (Ibid., Art. 8). Notably, Article 39 of the Constitution guarantees the right of ethnic groups to self-determination, including the right to secession.

The federal constitutional systems of Nigeria and South Africa also prioritize ethnic accommodation and equality. Nigeria's federal structure reflects efforts to mitigate historical ethnic and religious tensions inherited from colonialism, evident in the expansion of constituent units from three to thirty-six states, largely defined by ethno-linguistic identities (Watts, 2008). In contrast, South Africa's federalism emphasizes rectifying past social divisions and

injustices as a foundation for inclusive governance, as outlined in the Preamble to its 1996 Constitution. While both systems, like Ethiopia, acknowledge histories of inter-ethnic conflict and aspire to overcome them through principles of equality and consent, they diverge in their conceptualization of self-determination. While Ethiopia prioritizes the rights of ethnic groups as the primary driver of nation-building, South Africa adopts a more integrated and collective approach, emphasizing democratic order, good governance, and social cohesion as the fundamental pillars of national unity. Ethiopia's federal system, which grants significant autonomy to ethnically defined regions, reflects its commitment to ethnic self-determination as a cornerstone of its political structure (Abbink, 2011). In contrast, South Africa's post-apartheid constitution prioritizes non-racialism, equality, and inclusive governance, aiming to transcend historical divisions and foster a unified national identity (Habib, 2013).

Before 2019, the Ethiopian federation comprised nine constituent National Regional States and two chartered cities. However, as of August 2023, this number has increased to twelve.

The establishment of three new regions. In June 2010, the Sidama National Regional State was created from the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). Subsequently, in November 2021, the South West National Regional State was also carved out of the SNNPR. Finally, in

2023, the Central Ethiopian Regional State was formed from the SNNPR, with each new region encompassing five to six special Woredas (EPO, 2024). In contrast, Nigeria possesses thirty-six States and one Federal Capital Territory (Section 3 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria), while South Africa has nine Provinces (Section 103 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1999). All three countries feature multi-tiered governance systems with numerous local government structures. Ethiopia boasts 769 local governments (Yilmaz, Serdar, and Varsha, 2008, p. 4), while South Africa has 278 (Statistics South Africa, 2011, p. 11). However, the specific organisation and empowerment of these local governments vary significantly across the three countries.

A central focus of this study is to comparatively assess the extent to which these varying local government structures in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria are adequately empowered to achieve their objectives. To this end, the study is structured in a manner that first delineates the specific objectives for establishing local government in each country. This framework provides the necessary context for a comparative assessment of the adequacy of powers and responsibilities assigned to local governments in fulfilling their mandated roles.

To address the above study purpose, three relevant basic questions have to be dealt with in the selected multiethnic, pluralistic African federal states, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria, such as: why do local governments matter in the already decentralized federal setting? Where do the powers and responsibilities of local governments come from in the said African federations, as well as how well empowered are they in the federal allocation of jurisdictions? And lastly, what sorts of variations exist in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa, in terms of the local governments' scope of power and possible challenges they may face?

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

All over the world and especially in federal states, local governments have been a crucial mechanism for fostering grassroots development, bringing local people closer to the government, and accommodating heterogeneities. This is because, as a political unit, they deal with matters of governance, especially those which are local and hence, peculiar and central to the existence of a given population within a particular area of jurisdiction. Given this significance, local governments in Ethiopia, south African, Egypt and Israel from colonial era to independence and post-independence civilian democratic and military regimes have been of great importance and attention with numerous creation and reforms all to among others, achieve effective and efficient service delivery at different epochs of time in the political history of their countries.

The agitation and struggle for self-determination and preservation (autonomy) by the local government's authorities have been a historical phenomenon in these selected countries of discussion. This was, however, more pronounced during their various Local Government Reforms when they got stipulated constitutional powers and roles presumably as an autonomous political level of government.

Since then, local government authorities have been struggling to translate this autonomy into reality, and to effectively foster grassroots development, provide quality services and community projects, among others (Lawal, 2000). However, despite these strenuous efforts and struggle, local governments

have continued to face serious challenges ranging from those of their existence as a constitutionally autonomous entity, their being politically manipulated by the other levels of government, and their financial vulnerability and dependency on the states and the centre (Federal Government). These tendencies constitute a clog in the wheel of local government existence, administration, and sustainability. Hence, these result in spontaneous reactions in the form of continuous struggle and agitations for true local government autonomy by the major stakeholders in local government administration, their personnel, as well as the local populace in general.

Over time and circumstances, however, as the local governments and other stakeholders carry on their struggle for autonomy on one hand, the other levels of federalism or system of government, as adopted by the state governments (states and federal), devise new and manoeuvred ways of undermining the autonomy on the other. The struggle, therefore, intensifies for them to enjoy their full constitutional powers and functions. Political manipulation and interference, coupled with arbitrary control by the state government, have also intensified. Hence, Babatope et al. (2016: 78) argues that events over the years have shown that the local government, despite constitutional provisions aimed at realizing the autonomy have failed to galvanize the much-expected autonomy and instead, it has fuelled manipulated centralization of power and authority, thereby leaving local government at the whims and caprices of states and the central government. Consequently, these tendencies have a direct negative bearing upon the local governments' existence, operations, and sustainability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The Objectives of Local Government in Ethiopia, Egypt, Israel, and South Africa Federations:

The objectives of the approximately 786 local governments in Ethiopia since the 1995 federal system can be understood through the lens of the country's constitutional framework (Yilmaz, Serdar, and Vongobal, 2008, p.4). The Ethiopian Constitution, grounded in a covenantal model of ethnic consent, emphasizes the rights of ethnic groups as a cornerstone of the federal structure.

This emphasis implies that the formation of tiers of jurisdictions, including local governments, is intended to facilitate the pursuit of ethnic demands and foster spaces for meaningful political participation at the local level. Essentially, the creation of numerous local governments can be seen as an attempt to accommodate the diverse interests and aspirations of different ethnic groups within the Ethiopian federation.

The inherent connection between the far-reaching rights of ethnic groups and the establishment of local governments in Ethiopia reveals a crucial objective. The Constitution, particularly Article 39, enshrines the right to self-determination, encompassing self-governance and even the right to secession. However, despite this, only five of the twelve current states (Afar, Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Somali) are named after dominant ethnic groups. This raises the question of how ethnic groups not represented by their states can exercise their right to self-administration, as guaranteed by Article 50(1) of the Constitution. Local governments emerge as a potential mechanism to bridge this gap. By empowering local governments, the Ethiopian system aims to ensure that all ethnic groups, regardless of whether they have a namesake state, can meaningfully

participate in self-governance and exercise their right to self-administration.

The Ethiopian Constitution explicitly recognizes the significance of local governments in advancing self-governance and self-rule within the framework of shared rule. Chapter Five of the Constitution, dedicated to the division of powers between the federal and state governments, emphasizes the importance of empowering the lowest levels of administration to enhance citizen participation (Article 50(4)). Moreover, Article 88(1) of the Constitution, outlining the government's leading policy directives, mandates the establishment of democratic self-rule at all levels of government. These constitutional provisions underscore the critical role of local governments in fostering democratic participation and empowering citizens at the grassroots level.

In South Africa, the objectives of local government are deeply intertwined with the nation's complex history of apartheid and its ongoing struggle to overcome its legacy. They can be summarized in the following three points:

- **Reconciliation and Interracial Relations:** The apartheid era deeply fractured South African society, leaving a profound legacy of racial inequality and social division. Local governments play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and promoting harmonious relationships between different racial groups. This involves creating spaces for dialogue, addressing historical grievances, and promoting inclusivity in all aspects of local governance.
- **Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities:** Apartheid resulted in stark disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and basic services across racial lines. Black communities, particularly in rural areas, were systematically disadvantaged in terms of access to quality education, healthcare, housing, and economic opportunities.

In South Africa, local governments are tasked with addressing historical inequities through targeted interventions, such as: (1)improving service delivery: Ensuring equitable access to basic services like water, sanitation, electricity, and public transportation for all residents, regardless of race or socioeconomic background;

- **Promoting economic development:** Creating job opportunities, supporting local businesses, and reducing poverty through initiatives like skills development programs and infrastructure development; and
- **Addressing spatial inequalities:** Tackling the spatial legacies of apartheid, such as inadequate housing, underdeveloped infrastructure, and segregated communities. These efforts are guided by the principles of the White Paper on Local Government (1998), which emphasizes developmental local governance as a means to redress past injustices and promote inclusive growth (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Additionally, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) framework requires municipalities to align their strategies with national development goals, ensuring that local interventions are both context-specific and aligned with broader socio-economic objectives (Pie-terse, 2005). These initiatives reflect South Africa's commitment to transforming local governance into a tool for social justice and equitable development.

- **De-racialization and Equitable Resource Distribution:** As highlighted by Steytler (2005, p.186), a key objective of local government is to actively dismantle the spatial and social legacies of apartheid. This involves ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all residents, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

In essence, South African local governments are tasked with not only providing essential services but also actively contributing to the ongoing process of social and economic transformation. They play a crucial role in building a more just and equitable society by addressing the deep-seated legacies of apartheid and promoting social cohesion and inclusivity(SALGA, 2020).

Specifically, unlike the Constitution of the FDRE, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Section 152 (1)) outlines the main objectives of the local government. These main objectives are: (1) to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities; (2) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; (3) to promote social and economic development; (4) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and (5) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government.

The developmental nature of local government objectives in South Africa is firmly rooted in constitutional principles and policy frameworks. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Sections 153 and 154) explicitly mandates a developmental role for local government. This man-date is further elaborated in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, prepared by the Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development. This document emphasizes the need for "developmental local government," characterized by active community participation and a focus on sustainable development within a framework of cooperative governance (White Paper on Local Government, March 1998, Section B). This vision underscores the importance of local governments not only as service providers but also as catalysts for social and economic development, fostering community engagement and promoting sustainable growth within their respective jurisdictions.

SCOPE OF STUDY:

In essence, South African local governments are tasked with not only providing essential services but also actively contributing to the ongoing process of social and economic transformation. They play a crucial role in building a more just and equitable society by addressing the deep-seated legacies of apartheid and promoting social cohesion and inclusivity(SALGA, 2020).

Specifically, unlike the Constitution of the FDRE, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Section 152 (1)) outlines the main objectives of the local government. These main objectives are: (1) to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities; (2) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; (3) to promote social and economic development; (4) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and (5) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government.

The Scope of Local Government Authority Systems in Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, and Israel Federations

A critical determinant of local government status within a federal system is the extent of its constitutionally guaranteed authority. Local government autonomy hinges on the binding nature of its rights vis-à-vis other levels of government, reflecting the principle of constitutionalism. Consequently, understanding the scope of authorities and responsibilities vested in local governments in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria is crucial for accurately assessing their position within the broader framework of public administration.

In the Ethiopian federal system, the constitutional division of power between the Federal Government and the States (outlined in Articles 50-52 of the FDRE Constitution) places significant constraints on the authority of local governments. While the Constitution acknowledges the role of local governments in planning and implementing socio-economic policies (Yonatan Fessha and Zemelak Ayele, 2012), the specific powers and responsibilities of these entities remain largely undefined. This lack of clear constitutional provisions outlining the powers and responsibilities of local governments within each state creates significant ambiguity, hindering their effective functioning and limiting their ability to play a meaningful role in the governance process. Without specific constitutional provisions, it is challenging to determine the precise scope of local government authority and its unique contribution to policymaking, potentially leading to overlapping jurisdictions, limited autonomy, and a lack of accountability. Addressing these challenges requires a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to the constitutional framework governing local government in Ethiopia, including explicitly defining the powers and responsibilities of local governments in the constitutions of each state, establishing clear mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation, and empowering local governments with adequate resources and financial autonomy. Meeting these issues, Ethiopia has the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness of local governments as key drivers of good governance, improved service delivery, and increased citizen engagement.

In Ethiopia, local governments are established to accommodate the diverse interests and aspirations of different ethnic groups within the federal structure, as outlined in the country's constitution (Yilmaz, Serdar, and Vongobal, 2008, p.4). Some Ethiopian states have established special local governments, such as "Nationality Zones" and "Special Woredas," which are granted greater authority over socio-cultural matters compared to other local governments. This differentiated approach aims to protect the rights of ethnic minorities, particularly their rights to use, expand, and preserve their culture, history, and language – rights considered integral to their right to self-determination.

Concerning the South African local governments, they prioritize reconciliation, addressing socio-economic disparities, and promoting equitable resource distribution. These objectives reflect the nation's history of apartheid and the need to dismantle its legacy of racial inequality and social injustice. The South African Constitution and the 1998 White Paper on Local Government emphasize the importance of "developmental local government," fostering community participation and sustainable development (Steytler, 2005, p.186).

The current framework for local governance in Ethiopia faces significant challenges, primarily stemming from inadequate constitutional recognition and limited powers. While the

constitution pledges to uphold the right to self-determination, the current system, characterized by administrative decentralization of responsibilities, falls short of providing the necessary degree of autonomy for its realization. As Solomon Negussie (2006) argues, the existing administrative apparatus and level of autonomy are insufficient to enable local governments to meaningfully engage in policy-making, a crucial aspect for effectively addressing the political demands of ethnic groups. Furthermore, fiscal constraints severely limit local government autonomy. According to Garcia and Raj-kumar (2008), their financial authority is largely confined to administering and collecting land and property taxes on behalf of the states, with limited discretion in utilizing these revenues. These limitations hinder the ability of local governments to effectively govern and deliver services to their communities.

Thus, the effectiveness of Ethiopian local governments is significantly hindered by two fundamental limitations. Firstly, their constitutional status and division of powers remain ambiguous, leaving them largely dependent on the discretion of regional states. This lack of clarity can lead to jurisdictional conflicts, overlapping responsibilities, and ultimately, hinder their ability to effectively address local needs and priorities. Secondly, even within the existing framework, local governments face significant practical constraints in exercising their limited powers. Their authority is often circumscribed by higher levels of government, resulting in limited financial autonomy, inadequate resource allocation, and insufficient capacity to implement programs and services independently. These limitations severely hamper their ability to effectively respond to the diverse needs and aspirations of their communities. Strengthening local governance requires addressing these challenges through constitutional reforms that clearly define the powers and responsibilities of local governments, enhance their financial autonomy, and establish clear mechanisms for intergovernmental cooperation and coordination.

The South African Constitution (1996) recognizes local government as a distinct "sphere of government," granting it a higher degree of autonomy compared to local governments in Ethiopia and Nigeria. South African municipalities possess both legislative and executive powers, which can be broadly categorized into four categories.

Exclusive Powers: The constitution mentions those powers that are under the unilateral authority of the local government (Fifth Schedule, Part B). Steytler (2005, p.194) clusters them in the following manner that includes: (1) economic regulations (billboards, liquor sales, food sales, street trading, markets, abattoirs); (2) infrastructure (roads); (3) household services (waste removal); (4) social services (cemeteries); (5) public spaces (public places, cleansing, public nuisance, fences, amenities, street lighting, noise pollution, traffic and parking); (6) recreation (beaches and amusement facilities, sports facilities, parks); and (7) animals (care, pounds, impounding, licensing of dogs).

The South African Constitution (1996) establishes local government as a distinct "sphere of government" with significant autonomy. Municipal powers are protected from arbitrary reduction by ordinary statute (Ibid, 193). Furthermore, the intervention of higher spheres of government (national and provincial) is permissible only under specific and limited circumstances, such as national security, economic unity, and the maintenance of essential national standards (The Republic of South Africa Constitution, 1996, Section 44(2) (a-e)). This level of constitutional protection for local government autonomy contrasts

sharply with the Ethiopian system, in which the delegation of power to local governments from regional states lacks predictability and consistency, creating significant uncertainty and vulnerability.

The South African Constitution recognizes the fiscal autonomy of local governments by granting them exclusive jurisdiction over certain revenue streams, such as the power to impose rates on property and surcharges on fees for services provided by or on their behalf (Section 229(1)(a)). This constitutional provision provides a foundation for local government financial autonomy. In contrast, while the Ethiopian Constitution acknowledges the need for "adequate power" for local governments (Article 50(4)), it lacks specific provisions authorizing them to levy local taxes, such as "petty taxes." This absence of explicit authorization in the Ethiopian context potentially limits the fiscal autonomy of local governments and their capacity to generate revenue independently. This analysis underscores the significance of clear and comprehensive constitutional provisions regarding local government finance for ensuring the fiscal sustainability and operational effectiveness of local governments in both South Africa and Ethiopia.

Concurrent power: The South African Constitution (1996) establishes a framework for shared responsibilities between different spheres of government. Schedule Four, Part B, outlines the specific powers and functions shared between municipalities and other spheres of government. Notably, the Constitution limits the role of the national and provincial governments in these shared areas to setting minimum requirements and standards for municipal activities (Section 151(3 and 4)). This framework emphasizes the principle of subsidiarity, allowing municipalities significant autonomy in their decision-making processes. Moreover, the Constitution restricts the scope of national and provincial intervention in municipal affairs. Any national or provincial law that exceeds the limits of "regulation" by being unduly prescriptive is deemed invalid (Visser, 2009). This constitutional safeguard, along with the exclusive powers granted to municipalities, such as the ability to levy rates on property (Section 229(1)(a)), contributes significantly to the autonomy and effectiveness of local government in South Africa.

Delegated Powers and Responsibilities: The South African local government system also operates through a mechanism of delegated powers, where certain responsibilities are transferred from the national or provincial governments to municipalities. A key distinction from the Ethiopian and Nigerian contexts lies in the emphasis on consultation. South African legislation, such as the Municipal Systems Act (2000, Section 3), mandates that municipalities be involved in identifying the financial implications of any delegated powers. Furthermore, the consultation process is formalized, requiring relevant ministers to publish their decisions for public comment and consult with ministers responsible for local government, finance, and organized local government (Steytler, 2005, p.196). This consultative process ensures that municipalities have a voice in decisions that affect their responsibilities and resources.

Subsidiarity-based Elastic Powers: The South African Constitution grants municipalities the unique power to claim certain functions currently performed by the provincial government, provided they can demonstrate their capacity to effectively administer these functions (Section 156(4-5)). This provision reflects the principle of subsidiarity, suggesting that

powers should be exercised at the lowest level of government where they can be most effectively and efficiently administered. This concept draws parallels with the principle of the "necessary and proper" clause in the United States Constitution, which empowers the federal government to exercise powers beyond those explicitly enumerated, as long as these powers are necessary and proper for carrying out enumerated powers. The landmark Supreme Court case of *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) established this principle, emphasizing the importance of allowing the government to adapt and respond to evolving needs.

By allowing municipalities to assume additional responsibilities, the South African Constitution aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery while minimizing unnecessary intervention by higher levels of government. Manhood (cited in Assaju 2010, p.99) figuratively wrote, "too much concentration of political and economic power at one level would ultimately and inevitably lead to what he referred to as managerial constipation".

Therefore, the South African Constitution allows municipalities to expand their tax bases to address evolving economic realities. Section 229(1)(b) of the Constitution empowers municipalities to levy taxes, excluding Value-Added Tax (VAT), general taxes, and customs duties. This flexibility enables municipalities to adapt their revenue streams to meet the increasing demands associated with urbanization and industrialization. By broadening their tax bases, municipalities can generate the necessary resources to address complex urban challenges, such as infrastructure development, service delivery, and environmental management. This capacity for fiscal adaptation enhances the resilience of municipalities in coping with the changing economic landscape.

OPERATIONAL CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

Local government can be defined as the substructure upon which the superstructures of state and federal governments are erected. Yet, Bello Iman (in Akhakpe, 2011) defines local government as "that unit of administration with defined territory and powers as well as administrative authority with relative autonomy". According to the 1976 Local Government Reforms, local government could be defined as: Government at the local level exercised through a representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas and to ensure, through devolution of functions to their councils and through the active participation of the people and traditional institutions, but that local initiative and response to local needs and condition are maximized", (FRN, 1976).

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM:

The local administrative system refers to the structure and processes through which local communities are governed and managed. It involves the delegation of powers to local authorities to handle local affairs, often including the provision of services and the implementation of development projects. This system aims to bring governance closer to the people, fostering local participation and addressing specific community needs.

DEVELOPMENT:

Development refers to man's progressive qualitative and continued improvement of human labour (Chukwuemeka, 2013). Development is needed not only to enable citizens to have higher standards of living and material advancement, but to achieve socio-economic and political transformation as well as attain technological feats over the environment (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2003). Yet, development has been viewed as "multi-dimensional, referring to positive changes which affect the majority and which lie in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres of societal life. According to Rude Back (1997), development is about the people, beginning from the grassroots where the majority of Nigerians live. People can use their cultural values over a period of time to change their situation, whereby each new stage is better than the preceding one. Development involves a departure from the past to the new situation, which is reflected in the economic, social, educational, and political aspects of a nation.

PRECOLONIAL:

The pre-colonial era refers to the period in a region's history before it was colonized by a foreign power. For example, in the context of Nigeria, the pre-colonial era encompasses the time before British colonial rule, which began in the mid-19th century and ended with Nigeria's independence in 1960. This period is characterized by distinct political, social, and economic systems that existed before European influence.

Understanding the pre-colonial era is crucial for understanding the subsequent history of a region and the impact of colonialism. It helps to analyze the changes that occurred during the colonial period and the legacies that persist today. The pre-colonial era is also a period of rich history and cultural heritage, with unique traditions, artistic expressions, and social organizations that are still studied and appreciated.

COMPARISON:

Comparison is the act of examining two or more things to identify their similarities and differences. It involves analyzing the characteristics, qualities, or features of different items to understand how they relate to each other. This process can help in evaluating relative strengths and weaknesses, making informed decisions, and gaining a deeper understanding of the objects being compared.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION:****Local government:**

There is no consensus on conceptions and or definitions of local government, and the vast majority of such definitions/conceptions by scholars focus on perspectives, contexts, and reasons for their establishment (Aderogba, 2023).

According to the United Nations Organization (UNO) (1959), Local Government is a small division of government that is created, exists by constitutional provisions, and operates within a locality with specifically given powers on local issues and affairs within specific purposes and limitations. Local Governments are indispensable means and establishments of achieving national growth and development via the provision of certain and basic services as may be determined by the constitution, local interests

and needs, peculiarities and circumstances of such local areas (Ekeukwu & Umah, 2021).

For the Development Theorists, local government systems are based on local sentiments, attachments, interests, and values, and thus, they (local governments) provide political integration and national cohesion in heterogeneous states and societies to achieve overall national unity and cohesion. All levels of government, including local governments, have five (5) areas of general management, including human resource management, financial management, infrastructural and capital management, information and communication technology, and performance management (Schoeman & Chakwizira, 2023; Ingraham, 2007). Inequities and related challenges among the smaller units of governments in all nations, especially the large, developed, and heterogeneous ones, are persistent and recurring (Onofrei, Bostan, Cigu & Vatamanu, 2023).

Promoting and protecting the interest of the local inhabitants

Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) counsel local government administrations to respond promptly and adequately to the changing needs of their communities, decide their priorities, and articulate a better plan of action to implement such policies to a logical conclusion. Kunle (2005) links the ability of the local government system to the quality of its staff, which needs to be highly skilled with constant training and better equipment to work with.

For instance, Aransi (2017) advances the view that local government means different things to different people." (p.3). Despite the multiplicity of definitions, one of the most articulated definitions of local government in Nigeria is the one given by the 1976 Local Government Reform Guidelines. The guidelines view local government as the "government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific functions within the defined areas" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976). Olukotun (2019) avers that local government refers to 'public sector institutions at the lowest sub-national level of government, legally and constitutionally recognized, and mandated to carry out specific functions at the community level' (p.17).

According to Awa (1976), local government is a political authority that is intended to decentralize political power. Iyoha, Ubhehin, and Aiya (2005) view local government as the management of local affairs by the people of a specific locality.

Adamolekun (1983) defines local government as the bureaucracy that must perform the role of planning, coordinating, controlling, and directing the operation of local affairs. While the preceding conceptions of local government broadly specify local government as a political and administrative institution having appropriate governance structures for running the affairs of people at the grassroots, it is important to say that not all political structures for the provision of governmental services at the grassroots level can be regarded as local government. Local governments must have the political status and power to govern within a given area. As argued by Asaju (2010), "a local government must be a legal entity distinct from the state and federal governments and administered by democratically elected officials". (p.102) He argued further that local government must have specific powers to perform a range of functions assigned to it by law and enjoy substantial autonomy to perform an array of functions, plan, formulate and execute its policies, programmers,

projects and its own rules and regulations as deemed for its local needs.

Grassroots Development. There is a need to explain what is meant by grassroots development because it has been loosely defined in the literature. This has been rightly captured by Aroh (2002), who asserts that grassroots development has a deep foundation, making it challenging to give a one-size-fits-all kind of meaning. He avers that the term grassroots development symbolizes a set of guidelines to improve the well-being of the rural dwellers who usually have a vast population in society. Grassroots development is often conflated with community or rural development and is generally used as a framework to measure the impact of community growth and expansion. Viewed in this context, particular attention is paid to development indicators such as organizational capacity, the tradition of the community, living standard, civic and social setting, skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Despite the seeming ambiguity surrounding the meaning of grassroots development, this study relied on the definitions given by the World Bank, Gaventa and Lewis, and George Kennedy.

The World Bank (1975) views grassroots development in terms of the methods and strategies designed to promote the well-being of a specified group of people, particularly those in the local areas. The definition given by Gaventa and Lewis (1989) is not at variance with that of the World Bank. They perceive grassroots development as an alternative to the trickle-down approaches to local development in poor communities. George (1988) advances the view that grassroots development denotes the approaches and initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable communities to develop following their needs and values. Viewed in this sense, grassroots development focuses on mechanisms of development that deemphasize the trickle-down method or the top-bottom approach but emphasize a bottom-up approach to development, which stresses the participation of the local population in addressing local issues as well as promoting and protecting the interests of the local inhabitants.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Local government is one of man's oldest institutions. The earliest form of local government existed in the form of clan and village meetings. Democracy itself originated and developed along the lines of local government initiatives in the ancient Greek city-states (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2014). In precolonial times, the antecedent of local government was the native administration established by the colonial administration. It was meant to adapt to the purposes of local government structures already present in the institutions of the various ethnic groups. The idea was for these existing structures to develop into effective tools of government, ready for use (after pertinent modifications) by the colonialists. The Native Administration was charged with the collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, road construction and maintenance, and sanitary inspection, especially in township areas (Diejomaoh & Eboh, 2020).

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION AND COMPARATIVE COMPARISON OF SOME SELECTED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD SUCH AS: SOUTH AFRICAN, EGYPT, ETHIOPIA AND ISREAL PRECOLONIAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM.

- PRECOLONIAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA
- POPULATION (2011 Census): 51,770,560

- AREA (UN 2006): 1,221,037 sq km
- CAPITAL: Pretoria
- CURRENCY: Rand (ZAR)
- HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT: President Cyril Ramaphosa
- FORM OF GOVERNMENT: democratic republic
- PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: bicameral
- STATE STRUCTURE: unitary
- LANGUAGES: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu (official)
- NATIONAL ELECTIONS: last: 2014, turnout: 73.5%; next: 2019
- LOCAL ELECTIONS: last: 2016, turnout: 58.0%; next: 2021
- WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2016): 41.2%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE 2013/14: 8.8%

SOUTH AFRICA SUMMARY

South Africa is a democratic republic with three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local. Local government is enshrined within the constitution, which also outlines the various functions of and resource distributions between the spheres of government. Additionally, numerous Acts govern various aspects of local government activity. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs is responsible for supporting provinces and local government in fulfilling their constitutional and legal obligations. There are three types of municipalities: eight urban metropolitan municipalities and two tiers of rural and urban authorities, namely 44 first-tier district municipalities and 226 second-tier local municipalities. Following the 2016 election, 41.2% of councilors were women, and in the 2013/14 financial year, local government expenditure was 8.8% of total government expenditure. Government grants, followed by service charges, are the largest source of operating revenue for local authorities, whose responsibilities range from public health and utility provision to transportation and waste management. Partnerships are encouraged and promoted between municipalities and traditional councils.

Municipal ESI was developed in South Africa in the context of how government, and local government in particular, changed over time. This chapter thus traces the evolution of government in the country to provide context and an overview for the detailed analyses in later chapters. In this chapter, we look at the overall fortunes of local government during the three time periods selected for this book. We identify the prevailing national political dynamics for each period, together with how policy decisions were delegated to local government. We also assess the impact of these policy decisions on local government and the response to them. Throughout, we see how the consequences of decisions and actions taken at the higher level impacted local government.

GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO 1910

In South Africa, local government with an elected council goes back as far as 1836, but its forms evolved differently, depending on particular British and Dutch influences (Tsatsire et al., 2009). Local government was initially influenced by the Dutch 1 (1652 to 1795 and 1802 to 1806) and then by the British (1795 to 1802 and 1806 to 1910), both of whom left deep impressions on

the tradition and structure of local government. The former deeply impacted the system of rural and early town government, while the British influenced the development of urban municipal government, starting in the Cape Colony and spreading to Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal. Vosloo et al. (1974) identify three forms of government during this period – rural, town, and municipal. For our purposes, we limit our analysis to municipal.

The Anglicization of institutions properly began with the British re-occupation of the Cape Colony in 1806. The Cape Municipal Ordinance was passed in 1836, which set up local government for towns in the form of a board of commissioners elected by households for a period of three years. Rates were levied annually by a public assembly. The Ordinance was essentially a framework within which municipal regulations were drawn up for differing organizations and powers, to meet the needs of each municipality. This home-rule measure allowed each local community to frame its constitution according to its circumstances. The Ordinance was adopted by Natal (1847), and with minor variations, even by the two Boer Republics – Orange Free State (1856) and Transvaal (1877). Since it borrowed heavily from the British Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, it formed the basic framework for the subsequent introduction of typically British terms and practices such as mayor, town clerk, councilors, standing-committee systems, by-law powers, and the concept of a “municipal corporation”

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The formation of the Union brought together two colonial systems: the Dutch and British. To simplify matters and promote co-operation, it was decided to retain the existing system of local government, which would henceforth fall under provincial government. The central government would from time to time pass acts impacting local government, particularly regarding racial segregation, but ultimate control remained with the provincial government. To manage local government, each province would pass local government ordinances that provided directives regarding the powers and duties of local authorities. All provincial ordinances were subject to the approval of the central government. Bylaws were subject to the approval of the Provincial Administrator. Under this structure, the central government could control local government affairs without dealing with local government directly. The provincial government controlled how local government levied taxes, borrowed money, handled accounting procedures, and appointed key personnel. Capital projects had to report to the central Treasury.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – WLAS

To deliver on its election manifesto of separate development, which had to, in effect, be implemented at the local government level, the NP moved quickly to centralize the powers and functions of local government even further. Existing regulations were repealed and replaced with new legislation to separate the different cultural groups. This sidelined the few non-white councilors in the Cape Province.

A policy of preferential access to jobs for white Afrikaners was put in place. This resulted in a gradual deterioration in the capacities and skills of the civil service, as powers were given to increasingly incompetent and less-qualified personnel. At the time, Afrikaners were (significantly) less educated than their English-speaking white colleagues. The NP's policy of job reservation, therefore, successfully evicted English speakers, leading to a mass exodus of experienced and skilled people. This was reflected in the AMEU conference minutes during this time, which noted that experienced staff considered taking positions at municipalities in Southern Rhodesia (AMEU, 1950–1960).

In 1961, South Africa seceded from the British Commonwealth and issued a new Constitution that retained the existing levels of government. Control of local government remained under Provincial Administrations. Each local government had its ordinances. By the 1970s, the objectives and functions of a typical large municipality in South Africa could be grouped into four categories:

- Social objectives (preventative healthcare [such as inoculations and health awareness], garbage removal, parks, firefighting, etc.);
- Physical objectives (housing services, town planning, water and electricity);
- Financial objectives (revenue collection, budgets); and
- General objectives (training).

Minor differences between cities remained. For example, Johannesburg operated a municipal public-transport service, which is still in effect, whereas Cape Town always outsourced the function.

Notable omissions from the list of functions were education (primary, secondary, and tertiary), hospitals (including child welfare, healthcare for addicts, and care for the aged), and policing. Table 2.1 lists the non-municipal functions in 1977 and shows which level of government was responsible for them. This arrangement remained intact until the 1996 Constitution, which came into effect after the country's first democratic elections and is covered in greater detail in later sections.

Table 2.1: Non-Municipal Functions (1977)

Function	Responsibility
Primary and secondary education	Provincial government
Tertiary education (colleges and universities)	National government (Department of National Education)
Hospitals	Provincial government Note: Preventative healthcare, including inoculations, awareness, etc. was the responsibility of local government
Hospitals (welfare)	National government (Department of Social Welfare)

Policing	National government
Abattoirs	Provincial government
Non-white race groups	Matters dealt with exclusively by each respective national (homeland) government as per central policy

Source: Adapted from Hammond-Took (1977)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – BLAS

The Natives Urban Areas Act of 1923 allowed for segregated urban areas and required black advisory committees to advise WLAs responsible for administering black townships. The black advisory committees had no powers to act, and all decisions affecting the townships were made jointly by the township's WLA and the national Department of Native Affairs.

In 1971, the national government took the administration of the councils away from WLAs and gave it to the newly created Bantu Affairs Administration Boards, which black councils had the option of joining. Taxation and finance remained with WLAs, meaning that townships had very limited economic activity and thus little revenue to build infrastructure and provide services. The black community in the townships mobilized in protest, and the black civic organizations that had by now formed successfully convinced residents not to pay rent or service charges, making the townships financially unsustainable. Finally, the national government introduced BLAs (through the Black Local Authorities Act No. 102 of 1982). These were reported to their respective Provincial Administrators, with policy in the form of legislation coming from central government, and the principle of financial self-sufficiency applying.

The eventual formation of RSCs through the Regional Services Councils Act of 1985, to cross-subsidize infrastructural development in BLAs through levies imposed on commerce and industry in WLAs, and to coordinate the supply of services, meant that RSC levies could be used to fund 21 functions. These included bulk water and electricity supply, sewerage, roads, and the maintenance of infrastructure, services, and facilities. The tax rates charged were determined by the Minister of Finance, and each RSC needed to spend the proceeds on specific functions – prioritizing areas where the greatest need existed, i.e., black townships (Cameron, 1993; Heymans & Tötemeyer, 1988; Smith, 2002; Bekker & Jeffrey, 1989; Solomon, 1990).

As the Financial Mail put it: “Perhaps the most important result of this Act will be an effective redistribution of income, wealth, development and influence in a region from white to black, coloured and Indian communities, with the direct participation of these communities.”

Indeed, RSC revenue did provide funding for much-needed infrastructure in the areas where it was lacking most, and was effective in that over 80% of the annual budgets of the various RSCs were spent in black areas (Cameron, 1993, p.424). However, problems persisted. The inability of BLAs to generate meaningful revenue meant that a greater proportion of the funding had to be allocated to subsidizing BLA operations, or more accurately, to keep bailing them out, which reduced capital infrastructure spend. Regardless of these drawbacks, the RSC mechanism proved to be resilient, and levies used to fund local government were only eliminated in 2005.

A NEW CONSTITUTION, SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY (1993–1996)

By 1990, the NP had committed to democratic elections and the negotiation of a new constitution with all political parties. The Interim Constitution was then negotiated in 1992 and 1993 to support the transformation period needed to end apartheid, and provided the basis for the Final Constitution.

INTERIM CONSTITUTION

The NP insisted on constitutional power-sharing to protect minority rights, allowing for a Government of National Unity (GNU), wherein political parties gaining more than 20 seats in the National Assembly would receive Cabinet seats. The GNU was formed after the April 1994 national elections and would exist until the Final Constitution had been agreed upon. The Interim Constitution made provision for a three-tier system of national, provincial, and local government. Under it, there were now nine provinces instead of four.

In many ways, the NP's strategy to protect minority interests, and more specifically, its white electorate's interests, was manifested through maximum decentralization to local government. Realizing that it would lose the national elections, the NP recognized that winning local elections in existing and economically influential WLAs would result in a strong local government that could provide some checks and balances to a black-controlled government. Conversely, the ideology of the ANC called for a highly centralized approach, which it believed was a more effective form of administration and was seen as a mechanism more likely to ensure redistribution of wealth and the reversal of apartheid inequities.

FINAL CONSTITUTION

This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled. (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Chapter 1: Section 2).

The Final Constitution adopted the principle of co-operative government (Chapter 3: Section 40), where government consists of three spheres (national, provincial, and local) which are “distinctive, interdependent and interrelated”.

Section 156.1 gives local government the executive authority to administer services listed in Part B of Schedule 4 and Part B of Schedule 5, which include electricity and gas reticulation (Schedule 4, Part B). The net effect was that local government now has constitutionally guaranteed functions, with electricity reticulation[6] being one.

Although provision was made for inter-governmental grants from national to provincial and local government, the principle of self-financing for local government was maintained. Section 229 (“Municipal fiscal powers and functions”) thus allows municipalities to impose: “a. rates on property and surcharges on

fees for services provided by or on behalf of the municipality”; and, “b. if authorized by national legislation, other taxes, levies and duties appropriate to local government ...”.

But no municipality may impose income tax, VAT, general sales tax, or customs duty.

NEW BEGINNINGS? (1997–2019)

ESTABLISHING DEMOCRATIC AND DECENTRALISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Removing well-entrenched, decades-old structures was not seen as a straightforward task. Communities, services, and local government skills were clustered along racial lines. Transforming local government would require the demarcation of municipal boundaries to make them inclusive and representative, and in order to redistribute political power. Such a process would inevitably result in winners and losers, making it a highly emotional and contested issue.

RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RDP) AND GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT, AND REDISTRIBUTION (GEAR)

The RDP was adopted by the GNU after the 1994 elections to be implemented by civil society in addressing issues of social inequality and justice. The plan was structured to balance, on the one hand, the funding needed to pay for urgent and very necessary reconstruction and development, and on the other, the imperative of growing the economy to provide the financial resources needed to pay for the programmer.

Just two years later, the ANC introduced the GEAR initiative, whose stated objective was to build on, and not replace, the principles of the RDP (Manuel, 2006; Gelb, 2006, p.2). This viewpoint has, however, been hotly debated, with GEAR seen as having a far more centrist economic foundation and being yet another, further move away from the ANC’s left-of-centre ideology (Weeks, 1999, p.796). GEAR’s five-year programme targeted a GDP growth rate of 6% in its final year, with an average of 4.2% over this period (1996–2000) – the minimum rate needed to construct a competitive economy required to create 400,000 jobs per annum, address inequality, and extend service delivery. The economic policy of GEAR explicitly emphasized:

- Fiscal austerity;
- Deficit reduction;
- Pegging taxation and expenditure as fixed proportions of GDP;
- Cutting back on government consumption expenditure; and
- Keeping wage increases in check.

The state would henceforth play a stronger role in coordinating fiscal and budgetary policy. Over its five-year duration, GEAR would reform accounting practices, financial management, the budgetary process, and the intergovernmental fiscal system. Capital payments to municipalities were fused into the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (1996) and the equitable-share formula for local government, introduced in 1998, was to be used to fund the roll-out of services to indigent households. [7] At the time, changes to municipal finance under GEAR were introduced simultaneously with the drafting of the White Paper on Local Government (Powell, 2012; Weeks, 1999)

GREEN AND WHITE PAPERS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Introducing democracy to local government would require a complete overhaul of the existing system. This could not be achieved all at once, and certainly not in a fragmented and dysfunctional system. In order for negotiations to take place, stability had to be maintained, so it was essential that service provision continue. To this end, a five-stage process was envisioned:

- **Stage 1** would involve formulating the overall vision, goals and direction of key issues;
- **Stage 2** would require the relevant ministry to formulate green and white^[8] papers;
- **Stage 3** would necessitate that the Green Paper be debated in Parliament; and with consensus, a white paper would be issued by the ministry;
- **Stage 4** would involve the appropriate ministry formulating the law (bill) to achieve the White Paper policy objectives; the draft bill would then be reviewed by Parliament, the public and Cabinet; and only when the final bill was signed by the president, would it become law; and
- **Stage 5** would entail the implementation and/or subordinate legislation providing further detail; with all three spheres of government responsible for implementing government policy.

The Green Paper on Local Government was released in October 1997, and the White Paper just five months later, in March 1998, with the short timeframe between the two pointing to the envisioned approach being compromised. We now look at the two primary outcomes before assessing the White Paper itself.

Developmental Local Government

Four developmental outcomes were identified:

- The provision of household infrastructure and services;
- Creation of liveable integrated cities, towns and rural areas;
- Local economic development; and
- Community empowerment and distribution.

The first outcome dealt with the traditional functions of local government – service delivery – while the remaining three were new additions. The White Paper’s intention on services (Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 1998, p.27) is of primary relevance to this study and is therefore interrogated in more detail.

The Paper’s priority and starting point was the provision of basic services to those who had little or no access to them. The envisaged funding for these capital projects would come from grants from the consolidated municipal infrastructure programmer, cross-subsidization of existing services, and private-sector involvement. Operational costs would be financed from the equitable share of national revenue to which local government is entitled. To ensure sustainability, the level of investment would need to match the ability of the various communities to pay for these services.

Achieving the four developmental outcomes would require significant changes, and the White Paper identified three interrelated approaches to assist municipalities:

- Integrated development planning and budgeting;
- Performance management; and
- Working together with local citizens and partners.

The first tool, integrated development planning, is a mechanism for short-term, medium- and long-term planning. Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are incremental plans that recognize that not everything can be planned in year one and that circumstances change. They also provide a comprehensive framework for municipalities to identify and plan their developmental mandates. In addition, the White Paper unequivocally states that IDPs must be developed and managed internally so as to strengthen strategic planning, build organizational partnerships between management and labor, and enhance synergy between line functions.

The second tool, performance management, then seeks to ensure that the plans being implemented are having the desired impact and that resources are used efficiently. Both national (fixed) and local (relevant) key performance indicators are proposed, providing the national government with an assessment tool of how local government is performing.

The third and final tool, working with local citizens and partners, is a key tenet of decentralization, and here, four different levels of interaction with the electorate and stakeholders were identified:

- Political accountability (voters);
- Input into planning processes (citizens);
- Quality and affordable services (consumers); and
- Mobilizing resources and providing assistance (partners).

Co-operative Government

The White Paper reinforced local government's elevation to a sphere of government; no longer subordinate to, and a function of, national and provincial government. The Paper recognized the complex nature of government and the need to strike a balance between independence and co-operation. National policies from various ministries were summarized, the most relevant of which for this book was the one provided for the then-Department of Minerals and Energy (DME). The proposed transformation of the electricity industry was noted. More specifically, how this reform would impact municipal and Eskom reticulation activities was recognized:

- Eskom and MEUs were distributing to different parts of the same municipality;
- Municipalities were losing their licences, as they were not paying Eskom for their bulk electricity supply accounts;
- The envisaged Regional Electricity Distributors (REDs) would combine Eskom and municipal reticulation into autonomous structures; and
- The extent to which municipalities – especially larger ones – relied on electricity sales for revenue and cash flow was recognized, thereby acknowledging the established practice of cross-subsidizing non-viable

municipal services from “municipalities’ profits on electricity supply” (Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 1998, p.45).

To compensate for any potential loss of revenue from restructuring, the White Paper envisaged that “Municipalities will be allowed to levy a tax on the sale of electricity which should in aggregate improve their income from electricity” (Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 1998, p.45). Its summary then concluded that details of the proposed restructuring were still being discussed and that local government should participate to ensure its interests were represented.

ASSESSMENT OF THE WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The White Paper was keenly anticipated, but once most had examined it, they felt that although it was well written, it failed to recognize the magnitude of the task at hand. Importantly, it did not provide an adequately detailed policy framework for municipalities to adopt their most basic objective – service delivery. The biggest criticism was that the Paper failed to acknowledge the local government's state of crisis; and on that basis, it would be difficult to deliver on the proposed outcomes, let alone the provision of basic services to municipalities' inhabitants. And although the Paper raised and recognized many of the issues plaguing local government, the concluding statements to each showed little appreciation for the magnitude of the problem:

- On finance (p.17), it reckoned that “many municipalities are financially stable and healthy despite these problems”; and
- On administration (p.17), it conceded that “front-line workers remain de-skilled and disempowered”, but it failed to provide a solution other than that support and investment were required.

The fact that the Paper appeared to gloss over fundamental weaknesses in local government prompted strong words. Simkins (1998) published an article titled “Paper a Muddled Response to Critical Queries”, focusing on its financial aspects, articulating the failings, and concluding that an opportunity had been missed. Bernstein (1998, p.302) found the description of the state of local government finance “casual and inadequate”. Savage (2008, p.288) recognizes the failings of the paper and points to:

- A lack of available data at the time;
- The impossibility of fully anticipating the effects of the transformation programmer; and
- Policy debates reflecting “irresolvable tensions”.

On development, the policy messages were seen as “contradictory and lacking in substance” (Schmidt, 2008, p.22). Comparing his analyses of democratic decentralization programs in countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America, Manor (2001, p.8) states he has “never seen such a wildly unrealistic set of tasks imposed upon local authorities” as found in the White Paper. The most damning conclusion drawn was that the White Paper and comments by national ministers at the time “de-elevated” local government from a sphere to a tier, encouraging centralisation rather than decentralization of power and functions (Bernstein, 1998; Siddle, 2011; Schmidt, 2008; Manor, 2001).

PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SINCE 1998

Restructuring Local Government

The Municipal Demarcation Act (1998) and the Municipal Structures Act (1998) created a demarcation board to determine the boundaries of new municipalities (278 were created) and established structural, political, and functional institutions for municipalities. To meet the requirements of the 1996 Constitution, which called for “wall-to-wall” municipalities, three categories of municipalities were introduced based on single- and two-tier local government:

- Single-tier local government, with **Category A** municipalities (Metropolitan Municipalities) with exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in their area; and
- Two-tier local government, with **Category B** municipalities (Local Municipalities) and **Category C** municipalities (District Municipalities), where a Category C municipality shares jurisdiction with several Category B municipalities.

As early as 1998, local government policy and institutions demonstrated the friction of competing national objectives. While the Constitution and RDP mandated local government to undertake capital infrastructure spending for service delivery, intergovernmental fiscal policy would require compliance with GEAR targets, resulting in a reduction in spending and the centralization of policy with the NT.

By 1998, redistribution was deemed a national (not local) responsibility, and the withdrawal of the RSC levy was proposed (it was eventually abolished in 2005). This further limited the role local government could play. The equitable-share formula predicted that only 10% would be needed. The remaining 90% would be self-financed, which immediately meant that local government was underfunded, and although transfers were made to local government instead of the RSC levy, they were lower amounts. [9]

Finally, the Profession of Towns Clerk Act, Repeal Act (1996), for reasons of transformation, allowed politicians to appoint municipal managers. Previously, these officials had to be qualified professionals. This created an unregulated environment and compromised performance, as politicians took center stage. It manifested in a failure to recognize professional municipal officers. The lack of professional development, together with job insecurity, led to high turnover rates and low barriers to entry (Mashatisho, 2014, p.5). This view is shared by Mr M. Pomeroy, head of MEUs at the Johannesburg Municipality, who resigned in 1996 (he had joined in 1959), citing constant political interference. [10]

Recognizing the damage that the Act was causing, NT reversed it in 2007, but by this time, local government was being asked to do more with less, due to its declining skill base. Of seemingly even greater consequence was the loss of skills and structure that had been built up over many decades. In hindsight, a more orderly transformation process should have been considered.

Local Government under President Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008)

Under President Mbeki, the new government identified two priorities to complete the restructuring of local government. The

first was the establishment and induction of the newly formed municipalities by 2005. However, delays were immediate, and it was evident that the process had been grossly underestimated and would take much longer than expected. The second priority was the completion of new policy, legislation, and frameworks, which included:

- Free Basic Services (FBS): Pre-defined free quantities of water, electricity, sanitation and garbage-removal services for the indigent;
- The Municipal Systems Act (2000): Regulating planning, service delivery, performance monitoring and public participation;
- The Municipal Finance Management Act (2003): Financial management, accounting, supply-chain management, reporting and budgeting; and
- The Municipal Property Rates Act (2004): Property evaluations and taxing.

Re-elected in 2004, Mbeki's second term came with contradictions. On the one hand, the ANC extended its domination across all three spheres of government and took control of all nine provinces. According to the ANC, this represented an overwhelming expression of confidence in the party, specifically from the poor (Mbeki, n.d.). On the other hand, a tactic that the ANC had used so effectively during apartheid now began being applied to them. After a decade-long break, mass protest action (excluding industrial action) resumed and became a regular occurrence.

Recognizing that inequality was growing, Mbeki identified local government as a major role player in his corrective strategy. In this, the inter-governmental relations framework (2005) aimed to improve and promote relations between the three spheres of government by:

- Formalizing interaction and communication between national departments and local government;
- Executive mayors being given direct representation in provincial inter-governmental forums; and
- District and local executives accessing a direct forum to improve their communication and relations.

In this context, the successful bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup required major infrastructure projects – precisely what was needed to dent the country's stubbornly high official unemployment rate of over 20% by creating new jobs and opportunities. However, the national government overestimated local government's ability to deliver what was required, grossly miscalculating the effects that transformation and other issues had had on local government performance. A two-year intervention (2004–2006) was thus devised. Project Consolidate, and Siyenza Manje (2006–2009; meaning “We are doing it now”), became formalized programmers of national and provincial government oversight of local government performance. This was provided for and required by the Constitution, but it had until then not been exercised. As a result, 1,124 technical experts were sent to 268 municipalities by 2008 to support financial management, infrastructure planning, and training (Powell, 2012). Regrettably, these efforts amounted to little, and in his 2009/10 assessment, the auditor general stated: “despite an abundance of technical tools to support municipalities ... the results were only fractionally better than the previous year”.

After the two-year intervention of Project Consolidate, and after the initiation of Siyenza Manje, the Cabinet adopted the Five-Year Strategic Agenda (5YSA) in 2006. Following a review of the first five years, it was found that expectations for transition were too ambitious and that the mismatch between national policy objectives and local government's ability to implement them was widening. Three imperatives were identified:

- Local government would have to improve performance and accountability;
- A national capacity-building initiative was needed to improve skills; and
- All three spheres of government required improved policy co-ordination, monitoring and supervision.

Simultaneously, the populace had started losing patience, and protest actions had gathered momentum. Commonly referred to as "service delivery" protests, because their cause was the perceived lack of service delivery, they became seen as a common revolt against "uncaring, self-serving, and corrupt leaders of municipalities" (Alexander, 2010), and gained notoriety for their remarkable ability to quickly escalate into violence and the destruction of property. Underpinning all the protests was a growing frustration at the injustice of persistent inequality (Nleya, 2011; Reddy & Govender, 2013; Alexander, 2010).

In response, the final act of the Mbeki government was to initiate a review of the White Paper on Local Government and to draft a white paper for provincial government, with a discussion document being developed to discuss retaining, abolishing, or reforming the provincial system. The process was however, disrupted when Mbeki lost the ANC leadership in 2007 and resigned in 2008.

Local Government Under President Jacob Zuma (2009–2016)^[11]

President Zuma commenced immediately with a ministerial name change: the Ministry of Provincial and Local Government would henceforth be known as the Ministry of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). All existing programmers were put on hold, and the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTS) was introduced. It was based on an assessment of local government and found that the system as a whole "showed signs of distress" and was characterized by:

- Huge service-delivery backlogs;
- Increasingly violent service-delivery protests;
- A breakdown in council communication with and accountability to citizens;
- Political interference;
- Corruption;
- Fraud;
- Poor management;
- Factionalism in parties; and
- Depleted municipal capacity.

The LGTS required all municipalities to adopt turnaround strategies in the IDP, but as with previous attempts, the LGTS yielded poor results. An interim report by Deloitte (2012, p.4) noted, among other things, that:

- Funding for proposed interventions was limited;
- With limited capacity to undertake existing functions, how could it be possible to turn things around?;
- Interventions to date were "quick fixes" to achieve compliance, and not properly conceived long-term solutions; and
- Municipalities were suffering from transformation fatigue, with cynicism about yet another intervention.

Research conducted by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa)[12] in 2011 found that as many as 80% of respondents were dissatisfied with the municipal services they received (Reddy & Govender, 2013, p.86).

Zuma then secured a second term, and in his State of the Nation Address in 2014 reiterated the government's commitment to developmental local government, stating that despite achievements, "much still needs to be done". The new COGTA minister, Pravin Gordhan, previously minister of finance, seized upon the recently published National Development Plan (NDP) and launched the Back to Basics (B2B) campaign. Municipalities were rated "Top", "Middle", or "Bottom", with each category representing roughly one-third of municipalities.

The campaign identified characteristics of municipalities in each category and how Bottom and Middle municipalities could improve and stabilize. B2B is noteworthy for its simple, direct approach and its honesty in targeting the Middle and Bottom tiers. Gordhan was then moved back to his original post of finance minister in December 2015, and while the status and progress of B2B has appeared to fade from public consciousness, the electorate finally spoke at the 2016 municipal elections. Here, the ANC retained its overall majority nationally, but lost significant ground to the opposition parties overall. It also lost its majority in four (of eight) metropolitan councils:

- Nelson Mandela Bay, Johannesburg and Tshwane acquired opposition mayors under multi-party coalition agreements; and
- Ekurhuleni is run by the ANC under a coalition, as the party did not secure an outright majority.

Cape Town was retained by the Democratic Alliance (DA) opposition party.

As Brock (2016) put it: "Angry about corruption, unemployment and shoddy basic services, many ANC supporters have turned to the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) – making a switch that was unthinkable only a few years ago when the party was still seen as the political home of wealthy whites."

An opposition party takeover guarantees nothing, though, as many post-2016 events have proved, but closely-contested elections do however, serve to strengthen democracy and accountability – two primary ingredients of decentralization – with the next local government elections coming up in 2021.

Provincial government

Local government was established in 1909 when the four former colonies became provinces. Each was governed by a white-elected provincial council with limited legislative powers. The administrator of each province was appointed by the central government and presided over an executive committee

representing the majority party in the council. Provincial councils were abolished in 1986, and the executive committees, appointed by the president, became the administrative arms of the state in each province. By the late 1980s, a small number of Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians had been appointed to them.

In 1994 the four original provinces of South Africa (Cape of Good Hope, Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Natal) and the four former independent homelands (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei) were reorganized into nine provinces: Western Cape, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North-West, Free State, Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (now Gauteng), Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga), Northern (now Limpopo), and KwaZulu-Natal. The constitution provides for the election of provincial legislatures comprising 30 to 80 members elected to five-year terms through proportional representation. Each legislature elects a premier, who then appoints a provincial executive council of up to 10 members. The provincial legislatures have the authority to legislate in a range of matters specified in the constitution, including education, environment, health, housing, police, and transport, although complex provisions give the central government a degree of concurrent power. South Africa thus has a weak federal system.

Municipal government

Urban municipal government has developed unevenly in South Africa since the early 19th century. In the 20th century, intensified urban segregation was accompanied by the creation of councils that advised the administrators appointed by white governments to run Black, Coloured, and Asian “locations” and “townships.” In most rural areas, white governments tried to incorporate indigenous hereditary leaders (“chiefs”) of local communities as the front line for governing Blacks, although the Cape administration also set up a parallel system of appointed “headmen.”

Under the 1996 constitution, local government is predicated on a division of the entire country into municipalities. Executive and legislative authority is vested in municipal councils, some of which share authority with other municipalities. Chiefs remain important in rural governance. They generally work with appointed councils regarded by their supporters as traditional. Efforts by other Blacks to reform and democratize rural administration and reduce the power of chiefs have become some of the most violently contentious issues in post apartheid politics.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

South Africa is a democratic republic with a bicameral parliament. The national legislature consists of a 400-seat national assembly and a second 90-seat chamber known as the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The head of state and government is the president, who is indirectly elected by the national assembly for a period of five years, and is usually the leader of the largest represented party. The national assembly seats are allocated using a proportional representation system with closed lists of one national and nine provincial lists. Seats are first allocated according to the Droop quota. NCOP members are indirectly elected by each of the nine provincial legislatures. Following the 2014 national election, 42.0% (166/395) of elected representatives and 35.2% (19/54) of senators were women. The provincial legislatures vary in size from 30 to 80 members, depending on the population of the province. Provincial elections are also held under a list system of

proportional representation. The president appoints a cabinet drawn from members of the national assembly.

LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Constitutional provisions Local government is enshrined in Chapter 7 of the constitution, adopted in 1996. It is further supported by Chapter 3, entitled ‘The Principles of Cooperative Government’, and Chapter 13, which focuses on local government finance.

Main legislative texts

The main legislative text is:

- Organized Local Government Act 1997/42.2b (Act No. 52 of 1997). Other relevant acts include:
- Municipal Demarcation Act 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998)
- Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act 117 of 1998)
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)
- Disaster Management Act 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002)
- Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 2003 (Act No. 41 of 2003)
- Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 2003 (Act 56 of 2003)
- Municipal Property Rates Act 2004 (Act No. 6 of 2004)
- Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 2005 (Act 13 of 2005)
- Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act 2007 (Act 12 of 2007).

Proposed legislative changes No known proposed legislative changes.

The national urban policy is known as the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) and is coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). The IUDF seeks to foster a shared understanding across government and society about how best to manage urbanization and achieve the goals of economic development, job creation, and improved living conditions for urban residents.

STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government within the state of the republic has three spheres of government – national, provincial, and local – which are distinct but interrelated.

In 2008, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) became the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, known as COGTA. Currently has two departments under one minister.

Council types

The local sphere consists of three categories of municipality: single-tier metropolitan municipalities in urban areas and a two-tier system of district and local municipalities, covering both urban and rural areas, which share legislative and executive authority for their area.

Urban metropolitan

Municipalities are large single-tier council areas encompassing urban populations and often including a major city and surrounding towns. They perform all 38 functions as listed in the constitution.

District municipalities are the first-tier local authorities covering larger jurisdictions in both rural and urban areas. They work in partnership with the smaller second-tier authorities, known as local municipalities, within their jurisdiction.

Local municipalities are second-tier authorities within the district municipality jurisdiction, which provide a range of local functions. They are classified into four types depending how many local authority functions they perform: type four (containing large urban areas) average 24 functions, type three (small towns) average 20 functions, type two (rural with small towns) average 18 functions and type one (rural with no towns) average functions.

Traditional leaders

Traditional leaders are specifically accommodated in South Africa's system of governance of the constitution, as well as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) 2003, which entrenches traditional leadership in the governance of South Africa. The TLGFA provides for the establishment of three houses of traditional leaders: one each at the national, provincial, and local levels. It also specifically provides for a partnership between the institution of traditional leadership and municipalities. This particular provision must be read in conjunction with Section 81 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998, which provides for ex-officio participation of traditional leaders in municipal councils. It further obligates the national government and all provincial governments to promote partnerships between municipalities and traditional councils.

ELECTIONS

Recent local elections Voter turnout in the 2016 local government elections was 58.0%, continuing an upward trend from 57.6% in 2011, 48.4% in 2006 and 48.1% in 2000.^{42.4a} 4.2 Voting system There is a dual local government electoral system consisting of proportional elections based on party lists and ward elections for individual councilors. The division between proportional representatives and ward representatives is 50:50 for metropolitan and local councils.

Elected representatives

Any person who is entitled to vote for a municipal council can be elected as a councilor for a term of up to five years. There are three forms of executive that municipalities may adopt: the collective executive system (executive authority exercised through an executive committee), the mayoral executive system (executive authority exercised by an executive mayor assisted by a mayoral committee), and the plenary executive system (executive authority exercised by the whole council). Provincial legislation determines the types of municipalities for each of the three categories.

Women's representation

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 encourages political parties to field equal numbers of women and men as candidates. Following the 2016 local elections, women constituted 41.2% of councillors, up from 38.4% in 2011 and 40% in 2006, which were in turn a significant increase on the results of 2000 (29%) and 1995 (19%). This increase is due to the number of women councillors appointed via proportional representation via the party lists, which has increased from 43% in 2011 to 48% in 2016. Of elected ward representatives, women comprised 33% in both 2011 and 2016. Following the 2011 local elections, 41.4% of all mayors were women, including 42 executive mayors, 73 mayors, and 18 deputy mayors.

SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Legal requirement

The constitution places an obligation on local government to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government. Additionally, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 1998 sets clear guidelines for ward committees. Section 72 of the Act states that the objective of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government.

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000 binds local government to 'encourage the involvement of the local community and to consult the community about the level, quality, range and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality, either directly or through another service provider'. The establishment of ward committees as instruments of public participation is currently at 92% across the country.

Implementation

The most common structure established by municipalities to interact with the community (apart from ward committees) is the integrated development planning (IDP) forum. IDP forums are established. Distribution of councils and population Province Metropolitan (unitary) District (1st tier) Local (2nd tier) Traditional Population (2011 Census) Population (2011 est) % rural (2010) Western Cape 1 5 24 0 5,822,734 6,510,300 na Eastern Cape 2 6 37 37 6,562,052 6,498,700

- Northern Cape 0 5 27 27 1,145,861 1,214,000
- Free State 1 4 19 0 2,745,590 2,866,700
- KwaZulu-Natal 1 10 50 22 10,267,301 11,074,800
- North-West 0 4 19 19 3,509,952 3,856,200
- Gauteng 3 2 7 7 12,272,264 14,278,700
- Mpumalanga 0 3 18 18 4,039,938 4,444,200
- Limpopo 0 5 25 25 5,404,868 5,778,400
- Total 8 44 226 155 51,770,560 56,521,900 37.1%
- Source: COGTA communication with CLGF and 2011 Census and population estimates

ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

National local government association, The South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

It is recognized by the Organized Local Government Act 1997, and its role is enshrined in Section 63 of the Constitution. SALGA's key role is the effective representation of local government in the legislative processes of all spheres of government and intergovernmental processes. The 1997 Act allows organized local government to nominate up to ten part-time representatives to the National Council of Provinces and to further nominate two representatives to the Financial and Fiscal Commission, which advises the treasury on budgetary issues. 6.2 Other associations of local government. Nine provincial local government associations, which are chapters of SALGA, are also recognized by the Organized Local Government Act 1997.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Section 41 of the Constitution requires the three spheres of government to consult and inform one another on issues of common concern. Several executive intergovernmental instruments, most of which are non-statutory, have been developed at the national and provincial levels. These include:

- The Presidential Coordination Council (PCC): comprising the president, the minister of COGTA and provincial premiers, with SALGA by invitation
- The Local Government Budget Forum: national ministers, representatives from SALGA, and one representative from each of the provincial local government associations
- The Forum of South African Directors General (FOSAD): national and provincial directors general of all ministries. FOSAD is chaired by the presidency director general, and is organised much like a 'cabinet committee cluster'
- Intergovernmental forums, called MinMecs, based on national sector departments with overlapping competencies
- Premier coordinating forums: these exist within each provincial government and report both upwards to the PCC and downwards to all 46 mayoral forums
- Mayoral forums: also known as district intergovernmental relations forums, these provide a supportive mechanism for district municipalities to engage with intergovernmental issues. District mayors rationalize and coordinate local structures, ensure that there is a district-wide development vision informed by local IDPs, and monitor national and provincial sector commitments.

In addition, COGTA has developed an intergovernmental relations toolkit consisting of a number of educational and informational publications and a series of case studies. Informal intergovernmental relations forums have also been formed along sectoral lines, consisting of national ministers and provincial members of executive committees. SALGA represents where local government interests are involved.

MONITORING SYSTEMS

There are a number of state institutions to support constitutional democracy and provide independent scrutiny, including the public prosecutor and the auditor general. The public prosecutor has the power to investigate the conduct of public administration in any sphere of government and to take remedial action. The auditor general is required to audit and report on the accounts and financial management of all local authorities.

FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

Local government expenditure

The share of national revenues allocated to local government was 8.8% in 2012/13, up from 6.3% in 2006/07. In 2010/11, the local government's share of national revenues was 7.9%. This compares to a share of 48.5% for national departments and 43.6% for provinces. However, national transfers to local government have consistently grown faster than total government expenditure. Each sphere of government has the right to determine its budget and also the responsibility to comply with it. Municipalities are responsible for the remuneration of councillors and personnel. At an aggregate level, about 30% of the total municipal operating budget is spent on the remuneration of personnel.

The Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act 2007 regulates the exercise by municipalities of their power to impose surcharges or fees for services provided under Section 229(1)(a) of the constitution and provides for the authorization of taxes, levies and duties that municipalities may impose under Section 229(1) (b) of

the constitution. Section 229 of the Constitution provides that municipalities may impose rates on property and surcharges or fees for services provided by the municipality or on behalf of the municipality. It also provides that a municipality may impose other taxes, levies, and duties, if authorized by national legislation. Municipalities may charge for the services they provide in the form of service charges and administration fees.

Locally raised revenue Municipalities raise a large proportion of revenue from their sources, such as taxes and service charges. Service charges have tended to be the largest contributor to operating revenue, followed by government grants.

The 'local government equitable share' (LGES) formula and allocation were first.

Local authority staff

Each municipality recruits its staff and also has the power to discipline and dismiss. The only officers local authorities are required to have by law are a municipal manager who acts as head of the administration, a chief accounting officer, and a chief financial officer. Otherwise, each municipal authority is free to determine its staffing structure. To measure municipal performance, local government legislation mandates that municipalities put in place performance management systems. Such performance management systems are required to set key performance indicators and targets, along with mechanisms to monitor, review, and report on municipal performance.

The Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act binds the mayor of a municipality to ensure that the performance agreements of senior management are in line with sound financial management as prescribed in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act.

DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

Overview of local government service delivery responsibility The constitution assigns executive powers to local government for air pollution, building regulations, childcare facilities, electricity and gas networks, fire services, local tourism, municipal planning, municipal health, public transport and public works, storm water management, trading regulations, water, sewage and sanitation services, refuse removal, decisions about land use, and encouragement of the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government. About access to basic services and free basic services, the 2011 General Household Survey by Statistics South Africa shows the following percentages with access to a basket of basic services: water (89%), sanitation (87% and well within the timeframe of the Millennium Development Goals), electricity (83%) and refuse removal (61%). In the early 2000s, the government announced its intention to roll out free basic services to the poor.

All municipalities are expected to develop an indigent policy to determine who the beneficiaries of the program should be within their jurisdiction. To assist the process, COGTA has developed an Indigent Policy Framework and Indigent Policy Implementation Guidelines to ensure that municipalities develop credible indigent registers. The framework provides a foundation upon which municipalities can build their indigent policies in order to meet their responsibilities with respect to providing basic municipal services for all.

ICT use in service delivery No information is available and the role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Minister of Local Government's speech to the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in 2016 reaffirmed the Government of South Africa's commitment to localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure local governments are empowered with the functions and finance to promote human rights and plan for a sustainable future to meet human developmental needs through address service delivery backlogs and problems caused by a lack of resources.

PRECOLONIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN EGYPT

Capital: Cairo

Inhabitants: 80.335.036 (2007)

Area: 980,869 km²

Introduction

Egypt is situated in northeast Africa and borders the Mediterranean Sea to the north along 995 km, the Red Sea in the east along 1,941 km, Palestine and Israel in the northeast along 265 km, Libya in the west along 1,115 km, and Sudan in the south along 1,280 km. It is estimated that Egypt covers an area of 1.2 million km². Cairo (around 8 million inhabitants) is the capital of Egypt.

According to estimates from 2007, the total population of Egypt is 80,335,036.

In terms of its Constitution, since Egypt became a Republic in 1953, the country has had various Constitutions (1953, 1956, 1958, 1964) before the current Constitution was adopted in 1971. The 1971 Constitution was revised in 2005 to include a multi-party voting system for presidential election candidates, which is based on secret, universal, and direct suffrage (Art. 76, new). This is also currently being revised under a referendum (26 March 2007 referendum).

Local-level organization started in Egypt at the end of the 18th century under French occupation. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte decided to split the country into 16 sub-provinces. Under Muhammad Ali Pasha's reign in 1805, the country was split into 14 sub-provinces, which were further divided into various districts. In January 1883, Khedive Tawfiq adopted a basic law giving each sub-province an assembly elected for a 6-year period. Municipal councils were put in place for the first time following the creation of local authorities in Alexandria, which was given legal status on 5 January 1890. Local-level organization features in Articles 132 and 133 of the 1923 Constitution, which states that all councils (municipal and regional) must be elected.

Today, the country is organized into five levels. Art. 161 of the 1971 Constitution states that the Arab Republic of Egypt is divided into legally recognized administrative units. These are governorates, towns, and villages. The Constitution also provides for other legally recognized administrative units to be established where it is in the public interest.

Law No. 52 of 1975 on Local Administrative Structure states in Art. 1 that local administration structures are made up of governorates, districts, towns, urban subdivisions, and villages, which all have legal status. Local popular councils are elected at

all levels, but executive councils are appointed. Law No. 43 of 1979, which was amended, retains this local administrative structure.

Territorial Structure

Egypt has five territorial units: governorates, districts, towns, urban subdivisions, and villages. The 26 governorates are subdivided into districts, towns, and villages (217 towns, 4,617 villages), apart from the city of Luxor, which has its status.

Governorates are created and disbanded at the President of the Republic's decision. Governorates can be made up of one town only. Districts, towns, and urban subdivisions are set up, disbanded, and defined in area by the Prime Minister, following approval from the local popular council of the governorate. Name changes are also made in this way.

Villages are established, disbanded, defined by area, and given new names at the Governor's decision, following proposals from the local popular council of the district in question and the agreement of the governorate local council. The area of a local village authority can be composed of groups of neighboring villages.

Art. 4 A of the amended law relating to local administration gives the President of the Republic, following approval from the Council of Ministers and following proposals from the minister in charge of local administration, the opportunity to choose to give special status to certain towns which are particularly important to contribute to their development and improve their infrastructure. In this way, Presidential Decree No. 153 of 1989 grants the city of Luxor special status.

Local administration in Egypt, whatever its status (governorates, districts, towns, urban subdivisions, or villages), is made up of two important bodies:

- local executive councils
- local popular councils.

Local democracy

The Egyptian Constitution adopts elections as the method for appointing members of local popular councils. Art. 161 of the 1971 Constitution states that local popular councils are formed progressively on the level of administrative units using direct suffrage, and that at least half the members of the popular council must be from the working classes and peasant groups. Amended Law No. 43 of 1979 states that members of local popular councils are elected by universal, direct, and secret vote. The mandate is for 4 years. There has been an individual ballot since 1996, and the election is based on relative majority. The rate of participation in local elections is fairly low.

The Egyptian political party system is a multi-party system with 21 legally recognized parties. This multi-party system is, however, characterized by the predominance of the government party, the National Democratic Party, which widely dominates legislative and municipal elections. During the April 2002 elections, there were 49,522 seats available, and 59,708 candidates, 1,035 of whom were women, put themselves forward. The distribution of candidates from each party was as follows:

70% of the candidates belonging to the national party in power were the sole candidates in their constituencies, and the National Democratic Party gained 97% of the seats.

The poor turnout rate reflects the disaffection of voters and their lack of trust in the integrity and meaningfulness of the elections. Furthermore, these weaknesses at the level of local democracy are also illustrated by a two-year delay in local elections, which should have taken place on 15 April 2006. This delay was justified by the need to implement new legislation to strengthen decentralization and democracy, and to allow greater participation from the various political powers.

Recent revisions to the Constitution in 2005 and those underway (March 2007) aim to restore interest in local elections. The 2005 revision gave local elected officials the right to sponsor and support independent candidates during presidential elections. This is expected to increase interest and bring about greater competition during the next municipal elections.

Relations between central and local authorities

Local councils are subject to many checks carried out by central authorities, which have the last word in terms of managing local affairs. Local councils also come under the jurisdictional control of the People's Assembly.

On the other hand, the Governor has considerable trusteeship and powers of control over local councils within the governorate. Finally, the governorate popular council has control over the lower councils, according to the hierarchy established between local councils.

Parliamentary power: Parliament adopts laws setting out the allocations of local authorities. It also has control over councils and local authorities according to the following terms:

- Members of the People's Assembly have the right to attend popular council meetings, to participate in debates, ask questions, offer suggestions and request information without taking part in the voting process.
- Local authorities can only take out a loan or accept a new project that doesn't appear in the plan or the budget or requires financial backing once it has been approved by the People's Assembly.
- The minister in charge of local administration is required to present an annual report to the President of the People's Assembly on the activities and accomplishments of the local popular councils as part of the development plan and the budget of each governorate.
- Also, the Assembly can take the form of a commission in charge of evaluating the activities and accomplishments of each local unit.
- The People's Assembly must be informed of all decisions concerning the dissolution of a local popular council within two weeks of the decision to allow the Assembly to verify that the aforementioned decision conforms to the law.

Control of executive power

Central authorities have the responsibility and power to create and disband local authorities. The Egyptian legislature has established the principle for electing local councils. However, the possibility of nominating particular members has not been excluded.

The Governor, who is one of the most important personalities forming part of the local authorities, is appointed by the President of the Republic.

Art. 139 of the Law also states that the nomination and recruitment of General Secretaries, Deputy General Secretaries, Mayors, and heads of urban subdivisions, as well as changes and transfers within or between local authorities, are carried out upon decision of the Prime Minister, with the agreement of the Governors in question.

Part of this power also involves the right to declare the dissolution of local councils and appoint certain members to these councils. The decision to disband governorate popular councils, as well as other local authorities, is announced for reasons of general interest by the Council of Ministers, following proposals from the minister in charge of local administration. Moreover, the Prime Minister can replace local councils in carrying out their duties.

Finally, central authorities have control over the activities of local councils and authorities, particularly those relating to financial issues. The free transfer of movable and immovable assets or rental fees carried out by the governorate popular council for amounts of over 50,000 Egyptian pounds must be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Authorization from the Prime Minister is also required for all administration carried out by local district councils without charge in accordance with conditions established by law for amounts of 50,000 Egyptian pounds or less (Art. 42).

In addition, managing land to be used for construction owned by the State and local administrative structures must be approved by the Ministry for Agrarian Reform. Also, local authorities can only be involved in joint investment projects using foreign money following authorization from the relevant planning authorities, public investment bodies, and free zones (Art. 115). Finally, following approval from the local popular councils and high committees for regional planning, planned projects for governorates are presented to the Minister of Planning, who then coordinates them in line with the State's general plan in agreement with the minister in charge of local administration and any other ministers involved.

Authorization from the Council of Ministers is also required to establish, modify, or give exemption for any taxes by the governorate popular council (Art. 12, paragraph 7).

The Ministry of Finance and the State Audit Office manage the local authority accounts and budgets.

Decentralized power

Although central authorities normally exercise control over local councils, this power is sometimes taken on by certain decentralized structures. In this way, Law No. 60-124 grants governorate councils the power of control and supervision over other local councils.

In this respect, the Governor plays the pivotal role in this mechanism of control. In fact, for financial issues, the Governor's approval is required for any taxes that a local town council plans to implement. Moreover, Governors control local council budgets and close their accounts. They also have the power to oppose decisions made by local popular councils. The Presidents of local popular councils must present decisions to the Governor within fifteen days of adopting them.

Governorate local popular councils have extensive power over lower popular councils. In particular, this means that they can approve or oppose decisions made by these councils. Moreover,

the legislature has granted governorate local councils the power to stand in for local popular councils within the framework of the governorate, and for projects that councils are unable to carry out themselves.

District and town local popular councils exercise the same level of control over lower popular councils.

Local Responsibilities and Powers

According to the clauses of Art. 2 of Law No. 43 of 1979, which was amended by Law No. 50 of 1981, local administrative structures implement the creation and administration of all public services within their constituencies. As part of their responsibilities and powers, they also carry out all the responsibilities and powers attributed to ministers according to existing laws and regulations, except for national public services and those that have specific requirements, which are set out by the President of the Republic. Services that can be created and administered by the governorates and other local administrative structures are set out in a decree.

Governorates

Within this framework, governorate popular councils have two types of responsibilities and powers. Firstly, they exercise powers of control over the various services and activities at the local level. This power is not limited to the activities themselves, but also includes the stakeholders who implement the activities. The council can also ask the Governor at any time to provide it with all data relating to activities of other units and services which are carried out within the governorate's constituency. Also, the governorate's local popular councils have the power to supervise how plans aiming to generate development in the local community are carried out and to ensure that they are monitored. The governorate's local popular councils also have responsibility for:

- Adopting and ensuring the monitoring of social and economic development projects, as well as approving the annual budget plan and the governorate's project balance sheet. The council also approves projects relating to housing and construction, and proposes town and urban planning projects.
- Approving the creation of services of general interest for the governorate.
- Proposing the creation of free zones or companies using Arab and foreign capital, as well as developing joint projects with other governorates.
- Proposing the implementation of charges and local taxes that give the council the power to modify, terminate or exempt certain subjugated categories, following approval from ministers. As for the power granted to other local councils under Art. 13 of Law No. 79-43, which was amended under Law No. 81-40, governorate local popular councils retain the power to approve decisions made by other popular councils within the governorate.

The governorate popular council can also give advice on issues relating to the governorate, but this advice is basic and simple in nature.

Powers and responsibilities of other local popular councils

District local popular councils exercise control over the activities of local town and village councils within the district and can approve their decisions. They also have control over various local services covering more than one local unit within the district's framework. They are also responsible for:

- Approving the project plan and the district's projected annual budget and monitoring how they are carried out, as well as approving the project's balance sheet.
- Proposing the creation of various services of general interest in the district.
- Determining and approving general regulations relating to the use of the district's assets and how they are managed.
- Approving how the district's local public services are organized and improving the quality of their output.

Town councils exercise powers of control over urban subdivision councils and guarantee coordination of their activities. They also control local services within the framework of the town or city's constituency.

Urban subdivision popular councils have responsibilities and powers similar to those of town popular councils. In particular, they have control over local services.

Lastly, like the other popular councils, village popular councils exercise control over the various local services as part of the district's general policy. Moreover, the village's popular council proposes the project budget, approves the balance sheet, and develops the village's economic, social, and urban development plan and implements steps to combat illiteracy.

Financing for local authorities

General regulations of power and responsibility for local popular councils regarding financial issues.

The governorate's financial service develops the governorate's project budget, which includes the project budgets of local authorities within the governorate (new Art. 120 relating to local administration). The governor then submits the project to the governorate's popular council for discussion and adoption at least four months before the start of the budgetary year. Once it is approved by the local popular council, each governorate sends its budget to the minister in charge of local administration to be studied by the relevant Governor. It is then sent to the Ministries of Finance and of Planning with the Governor's comments.

In addition, the law relating to local administration has given regulatory powers responsibility for setting regulations related to determining the basis and base procedures for all local taxes, their review procedures, and ways of reducing these taxes. Regulations can make provisions for various ways of determining the baseline and methods to balance out taxes (Art. 125 of the Law). Relevant governmental bodies can also process tax returns relating to local authorities themselves, and then return them following agreement from the governorate's local popular council.

Local revenue and budgets

Sources of local income are divided as follows:

- Ongoing revenue is split into ongoing sovereignty revenue and ongoing local revenue.
- Ongoing sovereignty revenue includes charges and local taxes (tax for no developed land, tax for constructed buildings, tax on drinks sales, vehicle tax, a portion of the mutual income, a portion of the mutual fund, a portion of the VAT on the Suez canal). In the 2001–2002 budgetary year, the amount brought in by this income made up 1.67% of the State's general budgetary income.

- Ongoing income and ongoing local transfers: This type of income is different from the one above as it is collected by representatives of local authorities, even if it is sent back to the public treasury. In this case, it is then assigned to the general budget for local authorities. During the 2001–2002 budgetary year this income was 1,772.2 million pounds, which was 7.96% of the total national income in the general State budget.
- Capital income: This income is from transferring assets (deposit sales, sales of movable and immovable assets) and income transferred into capital (debts, investment allocations), as well as loans and credit facilities (external loans and credit facilities given to finance planned operations). During the 2001–2002 budgetary year, this type of income reached 1,845.1 million pounds, which is 12.7%.
- Aid from the central government: Due to the lack of revenue brought in by the means listed above, the largest amount of income for local authorities comes from the central government's allocation, which is part of the general budget for these groups. In the 2001–2002 budgetary years, this income was 16.6 billion pounds, which was 7.55% of all allocations appointed by the general budget that year. This allocation represents around 80% of all income for local authorities.

In Egypt, local expenditure covers four areas: salaries, ongoing expenditure, investments, and transfers of capital. During the 2001–2002 budgetary year, expenditure on salaries made up 63.12% of all local public expenditure. In other areas, however, expenditure decreased. The reason for this decrease is linked to the fact that operational expenses (credit required by local authorities to carry out their main activities and cover all their needs for supplies and services, purchasing for resale, and ongoing transfers) were nearly 19% of expenditure during the same budgetary year. Investment expenditure (launching new projects, carrying through on projects already underway, restoration and renovation work, and transferring capital) was 8.11%. The percentage of capital transfer expenditure was around 6%. Local expenditure did not go above 4.17% for all public expenditure during the 2001–2002 year.

Therefore, we have seen a weakening in the financial foundations of local authorities, whose own resources are very low. State allocation makes up more than 80% of the sources of income for local budgets. This translates to a total lack of financial autonomy for local authorities.

The following observations can therefore be made: There is no financial autonomy for local authorities. Even though the Law on Local Administration mentions charges, taxes, and loans as being resources for local authorities, it is the central government that implements these charges and taxes, sets the rate and baseline, and collects the money. It is the central government that also determines loan amounts and the loan source. Furthermore, there is no specialized credit institution that local authorities can turn to. In addition, the law imposes certain limits on donations and bequests to local authorities to the extent that they must be submitted to the central government for approval.

Local authorities do not have any real control over their budgets. Even though the law on local administration has given local authorities the power to prepare their budgets, this has not made their role any less formal or limited. The preparation of local budgets requires that various procedures be followed. They are

initially prepared by the local executive and then submitted to local councils, who cannot amend them. Projects are then passed to the central government (the Ministries of Finance and Planning, and then the Council of Ministers) before being submitted to Parliament.

In this way, the central government can make as many changes as it likes to local budgets. This explains the gap between the plans and needs of local authorities on the one hand, and local budgets on the other, especially since the role these authorities play in local planning is entirely formal and is limited to presenting the data and information necessary to prepare the development plans.

It is clear from the above that local authorities do not have truly autonomous budgets. Furthermore, local budgets do not contain all the credit that local authorities have requested to fulfil their needs and support the services they finance. This explains why certain projects are delayed, particularly due to delays in transferring the necessary funds from the central government. It is also why various transfers are carried out from ministerial budgets to governorates.

This situation certainly demonstrates both the central government's lack of trust in local authorities and its reticence to decentralize power further.

Local authorities do not have any real power to implement their budgets either. Since local authorities do not have any real control over the preparation of local budgets, they do not have what is required to implement them, as they lack the necessary flexibility to make changes to these budgets according to their situation and economic and social needs. It is also the case that local authorities cannot move from one article to the next in the budget without consulting the central government (the Ministries of Planning and Finance).

PRECOLONIAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF ETHIOPIA

Until recently, local government in Ethiopia was treated as a 'stepchild' of central and regional government. Although a strongly federal government has been in place since 1995, devolution of power has largely been limited to the regional level without any clear definition of the lower tiers of government.

That is gradually changing, however, following the introduction of the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), which has components of 'governance and decentralization as its building blocks'. The local government that since the days of the imperial regime served as field administrative agent, subordinated to the central government, is now emerging as an autonomous unit with a mandate of bringing government closer to the people, empowering communities and delivering the most needed services to the community thereby 'tackling poverty directly at the grassroots level'.

There is a growing global recognition of local government as an important level of government, both as an institution of democratic participation and basic service delivery. It is also used for accommodating ethno-linguistic minorities in countries with ethnically diverse populations. So much so that different regional and global institutions have adopted resolutions or charters calling on countries to empower local government. The African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, which was adopted in 2014, recognizes local governments as 'key cornerstones of any democratic

governance system'. The European Charter on Local Self-Government provides that 'local authorities are one of the main foundations of any democratic regime'. The European Charter further states that citizens' right to participation is 'most directly exercised' at the local level. For this reason, the international instruments mentioned above require the recognition of local government as a sphere or level of government.

However, local government in Ethiopia is far from being democratic. It is rather an instrument of control and oppression. This is so, among others, because of deficient institutional design. This paper begins with a brief description of local government in the political history of Ethiopia. It then discusses the constitutional status and institutional structure of local government. It finally explains how the deficient institutional structure rendered local government undemocratic.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL HISTORY

Local government institutions are as old as Ethiopia itself, if not older. Since its inception, Ethiopia has had a 'triple layer' of authorities with an Emperor at the center, provincial governors at the meso-level, and local authorities at the lowest level. Local government institutions were the closest and most important levels of government for the people since the central government had limited reach and influence on the lives of the people. The topography of the country, rugged with chains of mountains and valleys crisscrossed by numerous rivers, did not allow the central government to reach every part of the empire. The central government's reach outside its capital was further hindered by the lack of developed infrastructure, such as roads connecting different parts of the country.

A centralized system of government is, thus, a recent phenomenon in the political history of the country, which began in the second half of the 19th century. The limited influence of the central government over the peripheries of the country, coupled with the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people, allowed the emergence of various types of local government institutions. Local authorities constituted as such enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy from the central government, albeit shouldering the responsibility of collecting taxes and tributes and maintaining law and order within their jurisdiction for and in the name of the emperor.

Starting from the 1850s, a process of territorial expansion and centralization began in Ethiopia, and, as a result, a limited degree of centralization became possible in the early 20th century as the different parts of the country were connected with the capital city through roads, railways, and other communication systems. The road connectivity was enhanced after the five-year occupation of Italy, paving the way for even further centralization by Emperor Haile Selassie I, who regained his throne after the Italians were expelled in the early 1940s. The centralization process reached its zenith during the Derg, the military regime that overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie I and introduced socialism in the country.

Soon after the expulsion of the Italian occupying forces, a reform on local administration was introduced under Emperor Haile Selassie I to centralize power in the person of the Emperor. The reform involved redrawing provincial and local boundaries and centralizing the appointment of local authorities. Subsequently, among the first reforms the Derg introduced was also a reform of local authorities. It established urban dwellers associations (UDA)

in urban areas, which were structured at kebele (an institution that the Derg created for the first time), kefitegna (which is composed of several kebeles), zone (in Addis Ababa), and city level. In the rural areas, peasant associations were established at kebele, woreda (district), and awraja (province) levels. These local institutions played a crucial role in the implementation of the Derg's rural and urban land nationalization programs. They also provided basic services and availed certain basic goods, such as food and toiletries, for the people at an affordable price. However, they were later used to implement the Derg's infamous Red Terror operations and gradually turned into a very frightful apparatus of oppression and control. After a 17-year armed struggle, the Derg was finally overthrown by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in May 1991. The latter began a process of decentralization which culminated in the formation of a federal system, with a federal government at the center and states (regions) at the periphery.

ETHIOPIA AND ITS DECENTRALISED SYSTEM BEFORE 1855

Ethiopia's origin as a state goes back to the Axumite civilization, which arose in the northern part of the country around the 10th century BC. From the time of the Axumite civilization until the 1850s, decentralized rule was the dominant feature of the country's political system, which was manifested in the existence of triple authorities. An emperor served as a central authority, while regional/provincial and local nobles exercised autonomous power within their respective realms. Some scholars argue that the country's decentralization was characterized by the coexistence of double authorities, regional lords, and a central throne. However, there is evidence that local authorities were equally autonomous within their domain. Hence, it can be argued that, historically, Ethiopia was a decentralized country in which three levels of authority co-existed. As Gebru maintains, localities sometimes attained even more prominence than the regions. Teshale likewise notes that localities had great significance in Ethiopia at the time.

This decentralized rule was a result of the enormity of the country, its rugged and broken landscape, the economic and cultural diversity of its people, and the absence of modern means of communication. These factors hindered interactions "both across and within a region", making a centralized administration unattainable, and also leading to the creation of historical regional and local boundaries and identities. As a consequence, diverse and indigenous institutions of local governance developed in different parts of the country.

In northern Ethiopia – in the present-day Tigray and Amhara regions and the State of Eritrea – various indigenous institutions of local administration existed. The institutions included chiqashum (a village-level governor), melkenga or gult-gejzi (a district-level governor), and ras or negus (king) (a provincial governor). In some areas, the positions of local governorships were elective, but mostly they were hereditary, especially in northern Ethiopia.

The southern part of Ethiopia, as will be shown below, was incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire from the 1880s to the 1890s. In the southern part of the country, where there is a plethora of ethnic groups, various traditional institutions of local government existed. For instance, the Oromos – the largest ethnic group in the country – had the gada, which was an "egalitarian" and democratic social and political system. Other ethnic groups, such as the Kafa and the Wolayita, had their states with powerful

kings. To sum up, the system of decentralized governance that existed before 1855 had allowed for the development of numerous local governance institutions, which were in line with the traditions of the relevant community.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS APPARATUS OF CONTROL: FROM EMPEROR TEWODROS II TO EMPEROR MENILIK II

Decentralized rule continued to be the central attribute of Ethiopia's political system until 1855. The central government was so weak that it lost all control over the regional and local authorities during what is known in Ethiopia's history as the *zemene mesafint* (era of princes) which began in the second half of the 18th century and continued until 1855. In 1855, Emperor Tewodros II (1855-1868) began a process of centralization and territorial expansion with the declared goal of re-establishing a unified Ethiopia. Also, Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889), who became an important political figure after Tewodros, carried on with the centralization process. These two emperors, however, were unable to establish a centralized monarchical rule despite their desire to do so. Technological and economic factors, the impenetrability of the terrain, and an entrenched culture of regional and local consciousness would not allow that. On the other hand, the emperors used regional and local lords, whom they had brought under their authority through the process of expansion, to exercise control. The process of territorial expansion and using local authorities for the purpose of control reached its apex under Menelik II (1889-1913), who ascended to power after the death of Emperor Yohannes IV.

Menelik used both diplomatic persuasion and military coercion to expand his empire southward. In the regions where diplomacy worked, the "previous socio-political order" was left intact. The regional and local authorities of the states and kingdoms that peacefully submitted to Menelik were allowed to retain their respective kingdoms, while shouldering the responsibility to ensure security in their regions and the timely payment of tribute to the Emperor. As Teshale puts it, "[i]n these regions, intermediary rule was established, with the former notables linking Addis Ababa with the local population". Some of these local rulers, who were previously either Muslims or pagans, were converted, even if unwillingly, to Orthodox Christianity, the state religion until 1974. They were also required to learn Amharic, the language of the politically dominant ethnic group, the Amhara, and abandon their languages. Although the regional and local lords maintained their positions in their territories, in practice, they served as a means of control over their people on behalf of the central government. Menelik put under his direct administration the regions that resisted his expansionist move. This was the case, for instance, in Kafa, the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe region, the Sidama state, and the Emirate of Harer. The Emperor gave the governorship of these regions as a reward to his generals who led the war of conquest against the kingdoms and states, who in turn subdivided the conquered regions into different localities and appointed their subordinates as governors thereof. This militaristic administration of the conquered regions came later to be infamously known as the *neftegna* system.

The *Negus Negest* system was founded on the establishment of settlement sites and military garrisons by the Amhara and Tigray settlers who moved into the southern region following its incorporation into the Ethiopian empire. The settlers included soldiers, administrators, and priests. The system

suppressed any resistance against the Emperor and ensured the maintenance of order and "the smooth flow of tribute to the imperial treasury". In this fashion, the conquered regions were controlled by direct and indirect central government appointees from the village level to the regional level.

Often, the centrally appointed regional and local authorities needed help from the indigenous leaders. Language, cultural barriers, and restricted resources forced the central government to rely on the indigenous traditional leaders, who were given the title of *balabbat*, to control the people. As Abbink notes, the *balabbat* "were of lower rank, placed under the governor or district administrator and acted as liaison-men for their society". The main functions of a *balabbat* were to maintain security, assist the regional and local governors in collecting taxes and tributes, and mobilize the local people when their services were needed by the central government. They even assisted Menelik's land expropriation programme, in which he seized two-thirds of the lands in the regions. In return, *Balabat* had their lands spared from expropriation. As Markakis notes:

"The *balabbat* proved themselves indispensable as intermediaries between the northern governors and the southern masses. In return, they were accorded status and privileges and gradually emerged as a distinct group associated with the northern ruling group and emulating its dominant characteristics."

Also, the pastoral communities, especially the Somali and Afar ethnic groups, constantly moved in search of grazing land and water. This made the direct central control of these areas unachievable. Therefore, the central government relied on clan and tribal leaders of these communities to exert some control.

EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I (1930-1974)

Emperor Haile Selassie I, who reigned for over half a century, is best known for his use of formal constitutional and legal means to centralize power. For instance, in 1931, he issued the first written Constitution of the country, in which he formally stripped the regional and local lords of their traditional privileges. He took the most drastic formal measure of centralization in 1942 when he launched provincial and local administrative reform through the promulgation of Decree No 1/1942. It was declared that the reform was meant to modernize and standardize provincial and local administrations. Yet, the ulterior motive of this reform was to centralize powers. As part of the reform, the Emperor redrew provincial and local boundaries.

He also centralized the appointment of provincial and local administrators in his person. Provincial and local administrators were not only appointed by the Emperor but were also required to act as his agents. They were no longer governors per se. They exercised power for and on behalf of the Emperor. As Hess notes, "[a]ll provinces [were] ruled in the Emperor's name by governor-generals". The most important functions of provincial and local administrators, therefore, remained that of serving as an apparatus of control. They therefore maintained law and order and collected taxes for the centre. To maintain security, each provincial and local administrator was given a military force and a police force whose size was determined by the Emperor. The central government supervised the maintenance of security through the Security Department of the Ministry of Interior.

No representative institutions existed at the local level. In some of the cities and towns, elected municipal councils were established. Yet, one had to own immovable property to vote or

qualify to be elected to these councils. Moreover, a local official was not expected to engage in developmental activities unless he was self-motivated. Hence, before the 1974 Revolution, the great majority of Ethiopia's rural population did not receive any services either from the local administrative units or the various ministries of the central government. As Cohen and Koehn note:

“Several people used roads and the courts, but few could take advantage of education or health stations, and rarely did rural people see agricultural extension officers, much less a telephone or postal service. What touched the lives of rural people was the tax collector of the Ministry of Finance and the policemen of the Ministry of Interior.”

Moreover, the Balabat system was maintained in southern Ethiopia. As a result, the indigenous traditional leaders in southern Ethiopia continued to play an informal auxiliary role. The highest traditional authority was thus subordinated to the lowest level administrator of the central government, who, in most cases, was from among the settlers from the northern part of the country. The government was also involved in the selection of traditional rulers. Only rulers who were amenable to the central government were allowed to represent their people. The traditional rulers of communities continued to serve as instruments of control for the central government. Any attempt to promote the interests of the local people was met with reprisal.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES DURING THE DERG

Emperor Haile-Selassie was removed from the throne in 1974 by a committee of 120 military officers: the Derg. The Derg rapidly accepted the then-popular socialist ideological orientation and nationalized all rural and urban land and extra-urban houses. Along with the nationalization of urban and rural land, it established two local-level institutions: the Urban Dwellers' Association (UDA) and the Peasant Association (PA). These associations were established at kebele (sub-district), woreda (rural district) or kefitegna (urban district) and city or regional levels, the declared purpose for their establishment being to organize urban dwellers and peasants so that they could run their affairs, solve their problems and directly participate in political, economic and social activities. To that end, they were formally provided with significant developmental mandates, including building roads, markets, low-cost houses, schools, etc. Hence, it can be said that the UDAs and PAs had a promising beginning. As Andargachew notes: “[T]he establishment of UDAs and the granting to them of such powers and responsibilities was an admirable exercise of devolution of power quite consistent with the Derg's principle of „self-reliance“ which it reiterated in many of its policy pronouncements and which it enshrined in „Ethiopian Socialism“.” The UDAs and PAs had also registered considerable achievements in terms of service delivery. For instance, both the UDAs and PAs contributed immensely to combating illiteracy through the adult literacy campaigns, which halved the illiteracy rate, which was as high as 96 percent during the Haile Selassie regime.

The UDAs also ran public shops which provided necessities, including food items (sugar, salt, wheat, etc) and toiletries at very low prices. Significant progress was also recorded in the area of expanding access to health services and education.

However, all the advances mentioned above were lamentably short-lived. Soon after their formation, the two local institutions (UPAs and PAs) degenerated into apparatuses of repression and terror. The role of the UDAs and the PAs as a

means of terror and repression reached its climax when they became involved in the infamous and ghastly “Red Terror” operation through which the Derg set out to eliminate its political opponents through mass killings. Each UDA and PA had what was called a “public safety squad” and “peasant defense squad” respectively, commonly referred to as “revolutionary guards”. The revolutionary guards were established ostensibly to discharge “duties of ordinary police forces” at the local level. However, the revolutionary guards were effectively used by the Derg to eliminate its political opponents through the “Red Terror” operation. Those who were suspected of being members or sympathizers of the EPRP were especially targeted by the revolutionary squads and hunted down, tortured, and killed. In the process, more than 100,000 people, most of whom were educated, were ruthlessly murdered. As Bahru noted, “the best and the brightest perished in that process”. Many more were tortured and left to languish in the Derg's prisons. Members of the UDA and PA revolutionary squads were at the center of the action. The Derg's villagisation program was the other control-oriented project for which local officials were found handy. The villagisation program involved the resettlement of peasants into centralized villages. The programmer necessitated the forceful removal of peasants from their birthplaces to remote areas. The declared policy reason of the Derg for the villagisation program was to make service delivery to the peasants convenient. The true motive was, however, creating a convenient way of controlling the peasants. Once again, local officials were instrumental in the implementation of this program. As Clapham states: “During the height of the resettlement campaign, districts and in turn individual associations ... were assigned target numbers of people to be resettled, in some cases farmers would find themselves being rounded up at gunpoint by the local defense squad, and forcibly dispatched...” The involvement of UDAs and PAs in the forceful conscription of young people into the government's army was another control-oriented action. Derg was forcefully conscripting young Ethiopians for the war against the insurgents in the northern part of Ethiopia. The actual responsibility for conscription rested with the UDAs and the PAs. Each PA and UDA was required to conscript a certain number of men for the military within a given period. To meet their quota, members of the PA and UDA raided households in search of young men. They also carried out an operation known in the Amharic language as *affessa*, in which members of the UDAs and PAs went around in buses looking for young men. The sight of a young man being grabbed in the street and being forced into a bus to end up in a military camp was a daily occurrence during the Derg regime. Young boys were seen fleeing from members of the revolutionary squads to evade conscription. To save their children from conscription, many parents bribed members of the revolutionary squads or sent their young male children either abroad (those who could afford to do so) or to other parts of the country where the children were not known. Until the Derg was ousted from power, the revolutionary squads of the PAs and UDAs remained the most feared institutions of repression of the military government.

The Derg's tyrannical rule was brought to an end when nationalist insurgent groups led by the EPRDF took control of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, on 28 May 1991, after two decades of horrendous civil war. Shortly after controlling Addis Ababa, the EPRDF, with the other nationalist movements, convened “the Peaceful and Democratic Transitional Conference of Ethiopia”. The Conference adopted a “Transitional Period Charter” (TPC) that served as a constitution until the promulgation of the

1995 Constitution. The TPC recognized the right to self-determination of each ethnic group of the country. It also authorized each ethnic group to establish self-government starting from the woreda (district) level. By so doing, the TPC began the first phase of the decentralization process in the country. This phase of the decentralization process came to an end in 1995 when the current Constitution (hereinafter the 1995 Constitution) was promulgated, which introduced an ethnic-based federal system to Ethiopia. The second phase of decentralization, i.e., local decentralization, began only in 2001, even though the foundation for local decentralization was already laid in the 1995 Constitution. The 1995 Constitution provides for the establishment of two types of sub-regional government. Article 39(3) implicitly provides for the establishment of autonomous sub-regional territorial units, which are meant to accommodate intra-regional ethnic minorities. Also, article 50(4) of the Constitution prescribes to the regional states how to establish and adequately empower local government. What is envisaged under article 50(4) of the Constitution is a regular type of local government which was to be established on a wall-to-wall basis with the object of enhancing public participation. Thus, the sub-regional governments which are envisaged under article 39(3) and 50(4) Preamble of the Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia No 1/1991. The Ethiopian federal system is often referred to as “ethnic federalism” as its constituent units are largely ethnically defined regional states. The regional states are Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Hareri, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Somali, and Tigray; articles 46-49 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995). The establishment of subregional government, which is envisaged under Art 39(3), is based on the constitutional principle that recognizes the right to self-determination and self-government of each ethnic group. As this right is not necessarily to be exercised through the establishment of a regional government, the Constitution intends to accommodate regional ethnic minorities by providing them with territorial autonomy at the sub-regional level. Hence, this type of local government is intended to be established only where regional ethnic minorities are found and by their geographical settlement structure. Accordingly, five regional states have established special zones and special districts to provide territorial autonomy to the ethnic minorities that are found within their jurisdiction, which differ from each other both in object and structure. The focus of this paper, however, is limited to the type of local government which is considered under article 50(4). The second phase of decentralization began after a poverty reduction and development policy was adopted by the federal government in 2001. Decentralization was chosen as a key mechanism for the implementation of this policy. It was, thus, decided that woredas (rural districts) and city administrations would be authorized to exercise a certain measure of political, administrative, and financial powers. With a declared intention of implementing this policy, the regional states amended their constitutions one after the other starting from 2001. The regional states also enacted statutes to restructure their urban local governance system in line with the policy. Nonetheless, as it is argued here, an overall observation of the constitutional and legal framework regulating local government reveals that local government is not adequately institutionalized to exist as an autonomous level of government. Indeed, to the contrary, some explicit and implicit provisions in the regional constitutions and statutes render local government a subsidiary structure whose function is limited to implementing centrally adopted policies. Moreover, due to inadequate finance, not only is

the responsiveness of local government to local priorities stifled, but local authorities are also forced to resort to the age-old tradition of extracting contributions from local people in cash, in kind, and labour. Furthermore, as will be shown below, local government remains the institution that is used to keep political opponents at bay.

Local Government and its Institutional Organization

Under the Ethiopian federal dispensation, any level of government below the state level is considered local government. Currently, there are two types of local government in Ethiopia: ordinary or regular local government and ethnic local government. In the category of ordinary local government are woreda (district) and city administration. A woreda is established in rural areas, while a city administration is an urban local government. There are close to 900 woredas and a little over 100 city administrations in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, the two largest cities which are within the jurisdiction of the federal government, also fall within the category of city administration, despite having a special political and financial status.

The ethnic local government is established based on the foundational principle of the Ethiopian federal system – the right to self-determination of ethnic communities. Relatively large communities such as the Somali, Oromo, Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and, recently, the Sidama have a state which bears the name of the community. Other ethnic communities are found in a minority in one of the eleven states. The Southern Ethiopia Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) has over fifty ethnic communities, while Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz have five indigenous ethnic communities each. In the states where there are intra-state ethnic minorities, ethnic local governments have been established in the form of a liyu woreda (special district) or nationality zone. These local governments are established along ethnic lines and in principle, any one of them can secede from the state within which it is found to become an autonomous state and a member of the Ethiopian federation. The Sidama state was, for instance, a nationality zone within the SNNPR before it became a state in 2020. The kebele is the lowest administrative unit found both in rural woredas and cities.

Local Government in Tigray and Amhara Regions

As was indicated earlier, below the regional administration, woreda and kebele administrations are established in the two regions. Yet, a woreda is seen as an important local government unit while a kebele is simply an implementing agent of the woreda. A woreda is established on a geographical area in which 100,000 more people reside.

There are a number of towns and cities in the two regions. These urban centers, as will be discussed in some length below, have their councils. In addition, the ethnic minorities that reside in the Amhara region are entitled to their councils. Thus, as will be discussed below, the regional government has established ethnic based local units for the Oromo, Awi, and Himra ethnic groups, which are regarded as indigenous ethnic groups of the Amhara regional state. Those in the Tigray region, however, are only entitled to be represented in the regional and local governments.

Organs of woreda administration

As briefly indicated above, in the two regional states, the woreda administration has been established. The Woreda Administration (WA) in both regions has three principal organs.

These are the Woreda Council (WC), the Woreda Administrative Council (WAC), and the Woreda Court with first instance jurisdiction. The Woreda Court, even though it functions at woreda level, is not part of the woreda administration. Therefore, in this study, only the WC and WAC will be dealt with.

Woreda council

WC is the highest political organ at the woreda level in both the Amhara and Tigray regions. Members of the WC in both regions are directly elected by the residents of a woreda. Members of a WC serve for a five-year term. Members of the WC are accountable to the people who elected them.

A WC has a speaker and deputy speaker who convene and preside over its proceedings. A WC convenes once every three months. However, the speaker may call an extraordinary session anytime when the WC is not due to undertake its regular meeting. Under the Amhara regional state constitution, the speaker must call an extraordinary meeting if such a meeting is demanded either by the woreda chief administrator (CA) or by more than half of the members of the WC. However, in the Tigray region, only the members of the WC can request an extraordinary session.

Powers and functions of the woreda council

The constitutions of the two states provide that a woreda has the authority to plan and implement its own economic development and social services programs. It also must implement the policies and laws of the federal and state governments. Matters of social services and economic development, which are within the competencies of woredas, however, are not clearly defined in the regional constitutions.

A WC is a legislative branch of the WA. As part of its legislative power, WC has the authority to issue directives to ensure peace and security in the woreda. It is also authorized to approve the budget of the woreda. Upon recommendation by the WAC, it has the power to approve the sources of revenue that the WA can make use of from those sources that are not allocated and administered by the regional government. It can also impose other service charges. In addition, it has the power to examine and approve economic development, social service, and administrative working plans of the woreda, which are prepared by the WAC.

The Woreda executive council

A woreda executive council (WEC) is an executive body in a woreda. It comprises the CA, his deputy, and heads of the principal sectoral offices in the woreda. The CA is elected by the WC from among its members upon nomination by the political party with the majority of seats in the WC. The deputy chief administrator (DCA) and the other members of the WAC are nominated by the CA and appointed by the WC. Thus, the WAC is composed of both elected and appointed officials. The WAC is chaired and represented by the CA. Under the Amhara Regional Constitution, the WAC is accountable to the WC and the state administration. However, WACs, which are found in Nationality Areas, are not accountable to the regional administration. Under the Tigray State Constitution, WAC is accountable to the WC and to the CA.

The Powers and Functions of WEC

The WAC/WEC has the power and duty to enforce the policy, legislation, directives, plans, and programs of the federal and regional governments. It also has the power to coordinate and

supervise the different executive offices in the woreda. The WEC is, in addition, responsible for preparing the annual budget and submitting it for approval to the WC. Furthermore, it is responsible for the collection of rural land use fees, agricultural income taxes, and other revenues. It is also required to recommend additional sources of revenue other than those which are administered by the state governments and to seek the approval of the WC.

The WEC has the responsibility to prepare social services, economic development, and administrative plans for WC. Upon approval by the WC, it implements the plan. It maintains peace and security in the woreda. To that effect, it has the power to direct and supervise security and police organs in the woreda. It is also part of the responsibilities of a WEC to ensure the participation of the people in developmental activities. It also has a duty to protect natural resources and heritages in a woreda. In addition to the aforementioned duties and powers, the WEC may be given additional responsibilities by the regional governments and the WC.

Woreda chief administrator

The CA is the head of the WEC. As the head of WEC, therefore, the CA has special responsibility to coordinate and supervise the implementation of the social services and economic development programs of the woreda. It is also the responsibility of the CA to ensure the implementation of the policies, legislation, and directives of the national and regional governments. Furthermore, he is charged with coordinating the kebeles in the woreda and supervising the woreda police forces, which are part of the responsibilities of the CA. Additionally, the CA discharges other responsibilities that may be given to him/her by the President of the regional states and by the WC as well.

Kebele administration

Kebele administration is the lowest administrative unit in the Amhara and Tigray regional states. A kebele is a subdivision of a woreda in which approximately 10,000 people reside. Kebele administration comprises the kebele council, kebele administrative council, and social court. The kebele council is composed of elected representatives. According to the constitutions of the two regions, a kebele administration has sole authority over the social services and economic development of the kebele. However, matters of social services and economic development, which are within the competencies of the kebele, are not provided in the state constitutions of the two regions. The kebele administrative council is constituted by the chief administrator, who is elected by the kebele council from among its members, and other members.

The kebele administrative council is the lowest executive body in the hierarchy of the regional administration. Albeit at a lower level, KAC has similar tasks to the WAC.

Problems of Institutional Design of Local Government and their Implications

The 1995 Constitution barely mentions local government. It only makes a passing reference to it. Local government is, thus, within the exclusive competence of the states. The state constitutions establish woreda as the principal local government. They also provide for the establishment of city administrations and municipalities in urban areas. Partly due to the non-recognition of local government in the federal constitution, local government in Ethiopia suffers from various institutional defects that have grave implications for the political autonomy and democratic relevance

of local government units. In light of the preceding, aspects of problems of design and their implications are summed up hereunder.

- Local government's competencies are not clearly defined both under the federal and state constitutions;
- Local government has no clearly defined and sufficient source of internal revenue. It is almost entirely dependent on revenue transfers from the states which keeps it under the political thumb of the states;
- Local government has a compromised administrative autonomy which hindered it from recruiting and hiring skilled bureaucrats;
- Local elections are not treated as important as general elections. Six local elections have been held since the 1991 regime change and none of them were competitive;
- Opposition parties view local elections as unworthy of their effort and attention. They, thus, boycotted all the six local elections which have been held thus far;
- The seventh local election was supposed to be held in 2017, but has been postponed indefinitely without raising any constitutional or political controversy as it should.

The constitutional context

In a significant departure from the traditions of African states, Ethiopia has ventured on a bold experiment that has seen the marrying of federalism with ethnicity. Ethnicity constitutes one of the major features of the Constitution adopted in 1995 and the basis for the internal organisation of the federal state. The federal system was motivated by the need to accommodate ethnic diversity within a common political and economic community. Based on this constitutional principle, the Constitution establishes a two-tier federal government. Nine states that are largely demarcated along ethno-linguistic lines comprise the federal state of Ethiopia. The state governments, or regional states, as they are often referred to, are entrusted with original legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

Multi-layered local government characterizes the administration below regional government. To be precise, there are three levels of local government within each regional state. The lowest local government unit is 'kebele', followed by 'wereda'. In the hierarchy between the regions and the weredas are unelected, state-appointed administrative units called 'zones'. This makes Ethiopia a federal state with five levels of government. However, it is important to note that the federal constitution only refers to the federal and state levels of government. The lower levels of government are the creatures of either regional constitutions or statutory reforms.

The Constitution does not explicitly recognize local government, but there is no doubt that it envisages a system of local government. This is evident from article 54 of the Constitution, which states that the state government shall be established at the state and administrative levels as it finds necessary. It further states that "adequate power shall be granted to the lowest units of government to enable people to participate directly in the administration of such units". Two important points flow from this. First, local government is the responsibility of regional governments. The power to determine the authority and functions of any local government, such as a wereda or kebele administration, is a matter left to the regional states. The federal government enjoys no power in that regard. Second, however, the establishment of local government is not at the unfettered

discretion of state governments. As is clearly stated in the Constitution, the state governments must establish local governments that are autonomous and accountable to the local electorate.

The recent devolution of power to local government focuses on the wereda level, which has now become the most important level of local government..

Structure and composition

As local government is the responsibility of regional governments, the structure, power, and functions of wereda government are bound to vary from one region to another. A survey of the local government systems in each regional state does, however, indicate a common wereda government setup across the states.

Each wereda is composed of a unicameral deliberative body and an executive committee. The wereda council is a directly elected deliberative body that is headed by a wereda chairperson, who is elected by the council from among its members. Composed of part-time, unpaid members, the council convenes four times a year. The main function of this legislative body is to approve the budget and social and economic plans of the locality. The council also decides on the allocation of the intergovernmental transfers it receives from the regional government among the different sector programmes. As a body that exercises oversight function over the wereda executive, it has the authority to review the work progress of the different sectors and bureaus of the executive committee. The day-to-day administration of a wereda is performed by the executive committee. The committee is headed by a chairman who is elected by the wereda council and automatically becomes the chief administrator of the wereda. Composed of 11 to 13 elected members who are drawn from the wereda council, the committee is responsible for implementing decisions made by the council. The executive committee, which is answerable to the council, is organized into different sectors, with most members of the committee heading sector offices, such as education, health, agricultural and rural development, youth, and social affairs. The heads of each sector office are appointed by the chief administrator and approved by the council.

Powers and functions

The regional constitutions define the powers and functions of wereda governments. The revised constitution of the Oromia regional state entrusts wereda governments with the responsibility of planning, budgeting, and implementing public service delivery. Weredas are empowered to deliver basic services such as agricultural extension, primary education, primary health, water supply, and rural roads. In the Amhara regional state, a similar range of powers is devolved to the wereda government. This includes primary education service, basic health care service, agricultural extension services, veterinary service, land-use rights administration, water development, well construction and maintenance, local police service, and local road access.

Financing local government

Wereda governments are not entrusted with taxation powers. They do not have the power to mobilise and raise revenue themselves. Although decisions have been made to assign personal income tax from wereda employees and small traders, rental income from individuals, rural land use fees, agricultural income taxes, licenses, and fees from services rendered by wereda offices

to weredas, the practical realization has been limited. The regional governments have not been willing to share their revenue sources with wereda governments. As a result, all taxation powers remain with the regional governments, including property rates, which are the most common source of revenue for local government in many other countries.

The lack of own-source revenue has compelled the weredas to rely heavily on transfers from the regional governments. The major mechanism through which revenue is transferred to wereda governments is known as a block grant, which accounts for the lion's share of wereda budgets. Using a replica of the federal government revenue allocation formula, the regional government allocates the grants among Wereda governments. The most important element of the revenue allocation formula is population size (55%), followed by development index (25%), revenue sharing effort (15%), and poverty level index (10%). This particular intergovernmental transfer accounts for no less than 95% of wereda governments' revenue.

The fiscal dependence of wereda governments becomes more glaring when one notes that they do not have the autonomy to decide on the utilization of the grant they receive from the regional governments. Despite a legal framework that grants expenditure autonomy to wereda governments and thus presents block grants as unconditional transfers, directives from regional government, and even sometimes from zonal governments, often guide wereda councils in the allocation of the transfers to the different sectoral programs. This means local community needs and preferences are put on the back burner while regional and federal government priorities take precedence. The regional governments thus use the block grants in ways that advance expenditure in priority areas that are decided by them.

The financial autonomy of wereda governments is further weakened by the fact that they do not even receive financial support that matches their expenditure responsibilities. Their meagre amount from the state budget does not go beyond covering the salaries of state employees and public services. On average, 91% of weredas' annual budgets are earmarked for administrative and operational expenditures, with most of the budget going to salaries for teachers, health workers, and personnel working in wereda administrative offices. This means that these governments are left with little leeway for experimentation to design developmental projects that respond to the developmental needs of their constituents. They have, for example, little or no budget for undertaking capital projects and expanding public services. The financial dependence of wereda governments is also evident from the fact that they have little or no say in the amount of revenue transferred to them.

Another challenge has been the increasing assignment of functions and responsibilities to wereda governments without corresponding transfers of resources and capacity. Unfunded mandates have become major challenges to the wereda governments. The elected wereda councillors complain that mandates without the needed resources have created public mistrust and led to cynicism about the ability of local government to deliver on its promises.

Relations with other upper levels of government

The democratically constituted decision-making bodies of wereda governments are not accountable only to their local electorate. According to the envisaged relationship between the

regional government and the different tiers of local government, the wereda councils are accountable to the regional councils as well. The constitution of the Amhara regional state goes beyond that and states that wereda administrations are not only accountable to the regional government but are also a subordinate body of the regional government. It is not clear, however, if the subordination of wereda governments to regional government can meet the challenge of constitutionality in light of the constitutional requirement that autonomous units of government be established at lower levels of government.

Special zones and special weredas

A discussion of the Ethiopian local government would not be complete without a few words on the unique position that some zonal levels of government and weredas enjoy in some of the regional states as a result of the ethnic basis of the federal system.

In most regions, zonal administrations are administrative agents of the regional states, as they are unelected and state-appointed. They have neither councils nor executive administrations that can qualify them as 'self-governing authorities. Their role is often limited to providing administrative support in preparing budgets and assisting in the administration and governance of wereda governments. They sometimes exercise oversight power over the weredas.

The place of zonal administration is, however, radically different in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), which is situated in the southern part of Ethiopia, sharing borders with Kenya and Sudan. The SNNPR, unlike other regional states, is not ethnically defined as it is home to a dozen ethnic groups. In order to respond to the constitutional requirement of ensuring self-government and equitable representation of the different ethnic groups, the ethnically defined zonal administrations of the SNNPR are entrusted with a unique status. In contrast to their counterparts in other regional states, zonal administrations in the SNNPR are recognized by the regional constitution as an autonomous tier of local government with constitutionally mandated elected councils and executive administrations.

Another anomalous feature of the multi-layered local government is the establishment of special weredas in some of the regional states. Normally, weredas are part of a zone. To accommodate minorities within a regional state, however, a number of regional constitutions have amended their constitutions to provide for the establishment of ethnically defined special weredas that do not form part of zones. Functioning as autonomous entities, these ethnically defined special weredas provide those minorities with the territorial space that is necessary to manage their affairs. They are also vested with powers and functions that are relevant for the self-management of a community. They are entrusted with autonomous executive and legislative organs.

PRECOLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN ISREAL

Introduction:

Israel, officially the State of Israel, is a country in West Asia. It shares borders with Lebanon to the north, Syria to the north-east, Jordan to the east, Egypt to the south-west, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.

- **Capital:** Jerusalem
- **Continent:** Asia
- **Population:** 9.757 million (2023) World Bank

- **President:** Isaac Herzog
- **Official language:** Hebrew
- **Prime minister:** Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel is a unitary parliamentary democracy established in 1948 by the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. Israel has no formal written constitution but thirteen “Basic Laws” (and a temporary one) that were passed in 1957 to set up a legal framework. Israel has two levels of government, the central level and the local level. Local governments are governed by the British colonial Municipal Ordinances of 1934 and 1941, which are still in place.

Although having only one level of local government, this level is quite diverse. It is composed of different categories of local councils, mostly based on demographic size. In addition, local governments are further classified according to their population characteristics, socio-economic characteristics (clusters defined by the Central Bureau of Statistics), and fiscal wealth and budgetary performance characteristics. These classifications may have some impacts on public policies applied to municipalities according to their category, resulting in some kind of asymmetric decentralization.

The role that local governments play in the provision of public services in Israel is somewhat ambiguous, as it will be described below. Overall, compared to other OECD countries, Israeli local governments have few spending responsibilities. In addition, these have been declining as a share of GDP between 2004 and 2011, stabilized between 2012 and 2015, and increased since, still at a lower level than in 2004. Local expenditure is funded quite equally by tax revenue and grants and subsidies from the central government, which is quite uncommon in a centralized country, where, in general, local governments tend to rely more on grants and subsidies from the central government. Also quite uncommon, except in countries having strong Anglo-Saxon traditions, the property tax (Arnona) is the main component of local tax revenue, although there are large differences in the ability of local governments to raise revenue from this source. The Arnona also has several unique qualities that make it quite different from property taxes typically used by local governments throughout the world. By contrast, the system of grants and subsidies is mainly based on block and matching grants for education and social welfare, while equalization grants (general balancing grants and new equalization fund) remain limited.

As of late 1988, there were two levels of local government: the central government operated the upper or district level; citizens elected the lower and relatively autonomous municipal level officials. The system of district administration and local government was, for the most part, based on statutes first promulgated during the Ottoman era and perpetuated under the British Mandate for Palestine and under Yishuv policies. Since independence, it has been modified to deal with changing needs and to foster local self-rule. As of late 1988, local government institutions had limited powers, experienced financial difficulties, and depended to a great extent on national ministries; they were, nevertheless, important in the political framework.

Israel consisted of six administrative districts and fourteen sub-districts under, respectively, district commissioners and district officers. The minister of interior appointed these officials, who were responsible to him for implementing legislative and administrative matters. District officials drafted local government legislation, approved and controlled local tax rates and budgets,

reviewed and approved bylaws and ordinances passed by locally elected councils, approved local public works projects, and decided on grants and loans to local governments. In their activities, local officials were also accountable to the Office of the State Comptroller. Staff of other ministries might be placed by the Minister of Interior under the general supervision of district commissioners.

Israel's local self-government derived its authority from the bylaws and ordinances enacted by elected municipal, local, and regional councils and approved by the Minister of Interior. Up to and including the municipal elections of 1973, mayors and members of the municipal councils were elected by universal, secret, direct, and proportional balloting for party lists in the same manner as Knesset members. Council members, in turn, chose mayors and municipal council chairpersons. After 1978, mayoral candidates were elected directly by voters in a specific municipality, while members of municipal and local councils continued to be elected according to the performance of party lists and on the basis of proportional representation.

The population determined the size of municipal and local councils. Large urban areas were classified as municipalities and had municipal councils. Local councils were designated class "A" (larger) or class "B" (smaller), depending on the number of inhabitants in villages or settlements. Regional councils consisted of elected delegates from settlements according to their size. Such councils dealt mainly with the needs of cooperative settlements, including kibbutzim and moshavim. The extensive local government powers of the Minister of Interior included the authority to dissolve municipal councils; district commissioners had the same power over local councils.

Local authorities had responsibility for providing public services in areas such as education, health care, sanitation, water management, road maintenance, parks and recreation, and fire brigades. They also levied and collected local taxes, especially property taxes, and other fees. Given the paucity of locally raised tax revenues, most local authorities depended heavily on grants and loans from the national Treasury. The Ministry of Education and Culture, however, made most of the important decisions regarding education, such as budgets, curriculum, and the hiring, training, and licensing of teachers. Nationwide, in 1986, local authorities contributed approximately 50 percent to financing local budgets. In 1979, the figure was about 29 percent. Over the years, municipalities have relied on two other methods for raising funds: cities such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa used special municipal endowment funds, particularly for cultural purposes; and Project Renewal, a collaboration among local authorities, government ministries, and the Jewish Agency provided funds to rehabilitate deteriorated neighborhoods.

Local government employees came under the Local Authorities Order (Employment Service) of 1962. The statutes about the national Civil Service Commission did not cover them.

The Local Government Center, a voluntary association of major cities and local councils, was originally established in 1936 and reorganized in 1956. It represented the interests of local governing bodies vis-à-vis the central authorities, government ministries, and Knesset committees. It also represented local authorities in wage negotiations and signed relevant agreements together with the Histadrut and the government. The center organized conferences and advisory commissions to study

professional, budgetary, and managerial issues, and it participated in various national commissions.

Local governments structure in Israel

Israel is a unitary country. It is one of 10 OECD countries with only one level of subnational government. All other OECD countries have two or three levels, such as states, regions, counties, and municipalities. Its 257 local governments can be divided into four categories:

- 77 municipal councils (cities). These are urban jurisdictions with at least 20 000 inhabitants. 76% of the country's population (6.3 million residents) reside in municipal councils.
- 124 local councils. These jurisdictions have fewer than 20 000 inhabitants. 15% of the country's population (1.2 million residents) reside in local councils.
- 54 regional councils. Regional councils are responsible for governing a number of settlements spread across rural areas (mainly kibbutzim and moshavim). About 10% of Israel's population (750 000 residents) are governed by regional councils.
- 2 industrial local councils. These councils are composed entirely of industrial zones and thus have no residents.

Most local governments in Israel can be characterized as having a mostly Jewish or mostly Arab population. In 2016, 163 local governments were predominantly Jewish, and 85 were predominantly Arab. The remaining 7 local governments were either mixed or, in a few cases, mainly Druze or Christian (CBS, 2019).

In 2017, the population of local councils ranged from 1,200 residents in the smallest council to 901,300 in the largest council (Jerusalem). Displays the distribution of local governments by population size. The median sized local government has a population of 14 400 and half of Israel's local governments have populations between 10 000 and 50 000 based on 2016 data, the average Israeli local council had a population of 33 514, a figure that is 3.5 times higher than average local government population size in OECD countries.

Nine local councils in Israel (3.5% of the total) are very small, with populations of less than 2,000. In the majority of the 35 OECD member countries, the share of local governments with fewer than 2,000 residents is substantially higher. In 11 countries, more than 50% of local governments have populations below 2,000, and in four countries, over three-quarters of local governments are very small, with populations under 2,000 (OECD, 2018)

The relationship between the central and local governments in Israel

Israel is a unitary state. Traditionally, public services have been very centralized. Local authorities do have the responsibility for providing municipal services. However, the power and strategic authority given to them are not commensurate with this level of responsibility (Beeri, Uster, and Vigoda-Gadot Citation2019; Ben-Elia Citation2006; Blank Citation2006; Eshel and Hananel Citation2019; Gal-Arieli et al. Citation2017; Ivanyna and Shah Citation2014). This very basic trend results in systemic inequalities and a widening gap between local authorities (Ben-Bassat and Dahan Citation2018; Lasri Citation2012; Levi et

al. Citation2020; Mualam, Goldberg, and Salinger Citation2020; Tzfadia et al. Citation2020).

For example, the central government determines and approves local tax rates and discounts, municipal borders, local rules, local appointments, and annual budgets, leaving little room for localism, local autonomy, and democracy (Beeri and Yuval, 2013). In general, the fiscal dependency of Israeli local authorities makes the relationship between the central and local governments extremely politicized. In addition, each tends to blame the other for the mediocre performance of Israeli local authorities (Kimhi, 2011). When local authorities have budgetary problems, they appeal to the central government for help. The central government, particularly the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior, have traditionally taken a centralist and conservative view towards local authorities, both in routine times and during crises, sometimes even to the point of regarding the local economy as a threat to national economic stability (Beeri and Razin Citation2015; Blank Citation1994). Since the first decade of the 2000s, these ministries have become even stricter in how they deal with local financial crises (Beeri Citation2013; Reingewertz and Beeri Citation2018).

Lack of reform in the management of local government in Israel

One would expect that the ongoing situation would lead to managerial reform in Israeli local government. According to the theory of gradual institutional change (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010), reforms in local authorities might be regarded as incremental changes (Gardner Citation, 2017). However, unlike recent developments typical of Western and democratic nations (e.g., Ebinger, Kuhlmann, and Bogumil Citation2019), and reforms in other Israeli public areas (Cohen Citation2016), the Israeli central government has not adopted any substantial reform in local government and the management of local authorities (Beeri and Razin Citation2015; Ben-Bassat and Dahan 2009Citation2009; Ben-Elia Citation2007; Levi et al. Citation2020; Matzkin and Sadinsky-Levy Citation2012; Razin Citation2004; Razin and Lindsey Citation2017). This policy of non-reform can be defined as a political situation in which there are no significant reform initiatives (Jeffery Citation 2008; Rahat and Hazan Citation 2011). I maintain that in Israel, the forces that have pushed for stability have been more powerful and meaningful than distributional struggles. Furthermore, stability has not led to, in Streeck and Thelen's (Citation2005) terms, displacement – the replacement of existing rules, layering – attaching new rules to existing ones, drift – shifts in external conditions, or conversion – when rules are interpreted and enacted in new ways. There are seven watershed events indicative of this policy of non-reform that represent failed opportunities to initiate local structural reform in Israeli local government. Two of them are international trends – NPM and local governance – and five of them are local political events.

The first of these international trends is New Public Management. During the 1980s and 1990s, various reforms took place in public management worldwide that fall into the category of New Public Management reforms. In Israel, in contrast, despite the recommendations of the Kovarsky Committee in 1989 (Kovarsky Citation1989), no comprehensive reforms that resembled these in nature, scope or consensus were ever formally adopted, either for general public management or in the context of local government (Drew, Razin, and Andrews Citation2019;

Vigoda-Gadot and Mizrahi Citation2008). Instead, the work methods, routines, values, and practices typical of New Public Management permeated public management sporadically, voluntarily, and with a great deal of variance. This slow infiltration widened the existing gaps between local authorities. If in the past these gaps derived mainly from structural conditions such as land, location, size, and resources, today these gaps are widening due to other factors, including the managerial culture. While some local authorities can recruit leading professionals who utilize advanced management methods, other authorities lag, continuing to use political appointees instead of professionals (Cohen Citation 2016; Galnoor, Rosenbloom, and Yaroni Citation 1998; Lasri Citation 2012).

The second of these international trends is the shift from local government to local governance that has dominated Western nations since the early 2000s. These reforms were designed to support local autonomy and democracy, promote localism, and encourage local collaborations and co-processes, leading to the co-designing, co-production, co-developing, and co-implementing of local policies and local services (Osborne and Strokosch, 2013). In Israel, unfortunately, no such public discussions, professional development, or equivalent reforms took place. Instead, some local authorities, especially those populated by ethnic minorities (e.g., Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Bedouin), created a form that has been described as grey local governance (Tzfadia et al., Citation2020). In this form of governance, the boundaries between formal and informal governing are blurred. Furthermore, the fact that a small number of sound local authorities (defined as those that did not require a grant from the central government to balance their budgets and had no current debt) independently chose to adopt modern local governance practices has exacerbated the gaps between various local authorities (Beeri and Razin, Citation2015).

In addition to these global trends, five local political events indicate the missed opportunity to initiate local structural reform. The first political event is that since Israel was founded, several committees have been charged with examining amalgamation reforms for local authorities. Israel has a relatively large number of local authorities – 257 – that are populated by an average of 35,000 people. In 1998, the Shachar Committee recommended 100 mergers of these local authorities, but by 2003, only 12 had been implemented. Furthermore, four of these mergers were eventually dissolved. The resulting lack of trust in the local governments prompted senior government officials to abandon any hope of implementing this policy (Drew, Razin, and Andrews Citation2019; Reingewertz and Beeri Citation2018).

The second of these five local events was the attempt made in 2007 to replace the Mandate Municipalities Law, which was inherited from the British Mandate and expired in 1948, with the Municipalities' proposal (Bill) (Citation2007). This bill was supposed to regulate the status and legitimacy of local governments, including debts, the scope of their authority, budgetary sources, and relations with the central government. However, the bill was written in the spirit of neoliberalism, and treated local authorities as a business entity rather than a political entity embodying democratic values (Ben-Elia, Citation2009; Blank and Rosen-Zvi, Citation2009). There was no support for the bill. Hence, from a legal perspective, the status of the local government remained unclear (Rosen-Zvi Citation, 2017).

The third event, in 2014, was another attempt to clarify this status and narrow the gaps between the local authorities. It took the form of an amendment to the Municipalities Law that differentiated between sound local authorities and all other local authorities. Sound authorities were given more latitude in their local budgets and the ability to make legislative and organizational changes, as well as to participate in real estate transactions. However, to date, only 29 (11.2%) local authorities have met the criteria for soundness (Beeri and Razin Citation2015), and their soundness has not affected neighbouring municipalities (Beeri and Yuval Citation2013).

The fourth local attempt at reform occurred in 2016, when Shlomo Bohbot, the mayor of the northern border town of Ma'alot-Tarshiha, launched a bottom-up initiative by creating inter-municipal regional clusters. In response, the Interior and Treasury Ministries gave mayors the legal right to collaborate voluntarily in the form of regional clusters. To date, around half of the 257 local authorities in Israel have joined together to form 10 regional clusters. Despite this relative breakthrough, the regional clusters have several structural disadvantages. Only around one-fifth of the population, mainly those residing in peripheral areas of the country, lives in these clusters. Second, the clusters deal primarily with administrative efficiency and technical tasks. Only recently have the older and more established clusters begun promoting communal, economic, and environmental development (Abada, Shmueli, and Clot Citation2018; Lerer Citation2019). Third, the clusters are not democratically elected by the public, and they have no legal status as a regional governing body for planning the regional space. Thus, local leaders still worry about the irreversible loss of their authority and resources to the cluster and fear that these clusters will one day serve as a platform for amalgamations.

Finally, the fifth event, occurring in 2020, was the initiative of the Regional Governance Reform. It represents the broadest attempt to promote reform in the management of local and regional space through a fundamental change in the governmental structure in Israel. However, currently this reform is still in its infancy, with only a limited number of supporters. The initiative for this reform is in the hands of Mordechai Cohen, the Executive Director of the Interior Ministry, who recruited support from a professional advisory team for promoting regionalism in Israel, Footnote 1, the Interior Minister, the powerful Treasury Ministry, and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a leading NGO. The report to be issued by this team will adopt an overall systemic perspective that for the first time recognizes: a) the structural failures of local government, including administrative, economic and social failures (Beeri Citation2009; Reingewertz and Beeri Citation2018; Rosen-Zvi Citation2017); b) the over-centralization of the central government in comparison to other OECD countries (Beeri and Razin Citation2015; Dery Citation2002; Ivanyna and Shah Citation2014); and c) the serious and ongoing negative consequences of the existing social and economic structure for the quality of services and the environment, spatial inequalities and local democracy (Aharon-Gutman, Schaap, and Lederman Citation2018; Frenkel and Israel Citation2018; Yacobi and Tzfadia Citation2019; Yiftachel Citation2019). Hence, the committee's main recommendation for promoting regionalism is to create structural reforms in managing the local space that include a phased, cooperative, and differentiated transition to a multi-layered governmental structure comprising central, regional, and local governments. To do so, there must be top-down decentralization and a redivision of the responsibilities, authorities, and resources of

the government. In addition, the central government should adopt a vision of new regionalism, establish clusters and metropolises with governmental status, synchronize regional interfaces, and examine political representation on the regional level (Arlosoroff Citation, 2019). Nevertheless, the intention to implement this reform in regional government has already met with strong opposition from the heads of local authority associations (Federation of Local Authorities in Israel Citation2020).

Reasons for non-reform in managing the local space

There are various reasons for the lack of local government reform in Israel (Beeri and Razin Citation2015; Ben-Elia Citation2007; Razin Citation2017; Rosen-Zvi Citation2017). Indeed, in the case of the management of local space, the reasons are tied to international, structural, political, ideological, economic, and social factors on several levels: Israel as a nation, Israel as a state, and Israel as home to local authorities and communities.

First, Israel's status as a nation is shaped by the ongoing instability of its borders and its very existence, which have plagued it since the UN Declaration in 1948 that established it. Moreover, some international, political, and ideological forces are questioning the legitimacy of Israel, primarily in the context of its settlement policy. Consequently, unlike many Western nations, Israel has never reached the point where it can devote all of its energies and resources to the well-being of its citizens. Indeed, a major portion of its budget, which comes from taxpayers, as well as its human resources, are allocated to defense (Beeri, Uster, and Vigoda-Gadot Citation2019; Ivanyna and Shah Citation2014). Faced with these burdens, local taxpayers have less money and energy to invest in efforts to modernize and reform the management of local government. As a result, efforts to promote local democracy lag behind what is common in Western nations (Ben-Elia, 2006). Local authorities do exist, have responsibilities for municipal services, operate with varying levels of competence, and respond to growing expectations. Nevertheless, local government – as a concept, ideal and sub-national political entity – lacks the necessary power, authority, legitimacy, and resources that are required for meeting these responsibilities (Beeri and Razin Citation2015; Blank Citation2006; Eshel and Hananel Citation2019; Gal-Arieli et al. Citation2017).

Second, the local government map in Israel is unique in terms of its demographics, which also affects the lack of local reform. Although Israeli Arab minorities – Muslims, Druze, Christians and Bedouin – constitute about one-fifth of the population (21%), they are a decisive majority in one-third (32%) of the local authorities, primarily those located in peripheral areas of the country that often have fiscal problems (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) Citation2019). Arab local authorities are populated by an ethnic majority identified with the Palestinian nation, which has been engaged in a struggle with the Jewish majority for over 150 years (Ghanem Citation2001; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov Citation2019; Rouhana and Ghanem Citation1998; Smootha Citation1990). In the general elections, traditionally, most of the Arab population votes for the left-wing Arab parties (72% in 2019) that are not part of the ruling coalition (Rodnitzki Citation 2019). In many cases, the central government's lack of trust in the Arab politicians results in the exclusion of their mayors, council members, and local civil servants from local and regional planning and policymaking (Ghanem Citation1998; Ghanem and Mustafa Citation2009). Hence, the segregation in the local space has enabled the national struggle between Jews and Palestinians to

affect the relationship between the central and local governments (Beeri and Zaidan, 2020). One of the factors affecting the allocation of more authority into the hands of local government is that doing so would also entail transferring responsibilities, powers, and resources to Arab leaders and communities (Beeri, Aharon-Gutman, and Luzer, Citation2020; Brender Citation2005). A second factor is that local Arab leaderships have not fully adopted the basic principles of local democracy or good governance practices. In their communities, power is in the hands of traditional clan-affiliated forces, limiting the impact of any attempts at community involvement in local planning and decision-making (Ghanem and Mustafa, 2009). While Arab communities are not alone in the poor performance of their local governments (Dery Citation2002; Razin Citation2004), they do tend to perform less well than their Jewish counterparts (Beeri and Yuval Citation2012). Nevertheless, despite spatial inequality, concerns about the possible outcomes of decentralization and the delegation of authority have blocked structural reforms in the local space and preserved a very consolidated central government.

Third, the Israeli political system is politicized to a large extent, and many of its characteristics have made attempts at local reform more difficult. The central government has adopted a neoliberal policy that, by its very nature, weakens the political institutions below it and does not support competitive forces liable to threaten its hegemony (Yacobi and Tzfadia, 2019). Furthermore, the Israeli civil service has little coherence, institutional autonomy, or public support. The national labour union, the Histadrut, has weakened considerably. Hence, the civil service has been unable to function as a change agent for many years (Cohen Citation 2016; Galnoor, Rosenbloom, and Yaroni Citation 1998). Researchers have pointed to the replacement of experts and academics with political appointees as a factor explaining the lack of long-term planning and stagnation in Israeli political and administrative systems (Yacobi and Tzfadia, 2019). Together, these politicized conditions have reinforced a tradition of legal and procedural status quo that is based on consensual majorities. The absence of fundamental political and social structures also means that there are few windows of opportunity to exert pressure for reform. Given that veto players in the central government resist reform and the repeated disagreements over the content of such reform, maintaining the status quo and the ruling coalitions is the rational choice and in the interests of the large parties (Rahat and Hazan, 2011).

Another tactic the central government has used in dealing with local municipalities is the funding of government ministers' pet projects. Thus, these short-term benefits to the local authority have persuaded local leaders to prefer to remain separate rather than join forces. This situation makes it difficult for the local authorities to unite into one entity that can stand up to the central government and improve their status, demand local reform, or co-design local reform (Beeri Citation2009; Beeri and Navot Citation2013; Dery Citation2002).

Towards glocalization? The co-production of value and the coronavirus outbreak

There are two global trends related to local management that might affect the likelihood of reform in Israeli local government. However, they may have contradictory effects. The first trend is the co-production of value, which I maintain may postpone local reform. The second trend is the coronavirus outbreak, which may accelerate it.

The co-production of value

The concept of co-production was first introduced in the 1970s. It was designed to compensate for the weakening investment in public services by leveraging the resources and capacities of civil society (Ostrom and Ostrom, 1971). In cases where market value-driven reforms were initiated – outside Israel – citizens were expected to participate in producing public services and thus to share responsibility for the quality of the public services they used. On one hand, co-production has restored accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, at least to some extent, leading to the greater democratization of governance (Nabatchi, 2010). Nevertheless, these achievements were attenuated by excessive fragmentation and self-interested and community-focused motivations that replicated existing social inequalities (Alford Citation2014; Palumbo Citation2016; Park Citation2020; Van Eijk and Steen Citation2016).

There are several basic pre-conditions for co-production: citizens' participation, the involvement of and financing from government agents, and new governance structures, network-based collaborations, recognition, and government support (Cepiku and Giordano Citation2014; Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia Citation2017). However, local democracy in Israel is far from meeting these preconditions (Beerli and Razin, 2015). In other words, the implementation of co-production entails bi-directional dependency and the desire for reciprocal relations among national institutions, local institutions, and residents. This situation does not yet exist with regard to the relationship between Israel's central and local governments (Blank and Rosen-Zvi, 2009).

Recently, scholars have expanded the study of co-production to include the notions it attempts to create. Examples include 'public value,' 'value-co-production,' and 'value co-creation.' These terms indicate that the true value of public service – how people use the offered service and how it interacts with their own life experiences – is not only contained in the quality of the service but is also defined by and co-created with consumers (Osborne Citation2018; Osborne and Strokosch Citation2013; Vargo, Maglio, and Akaka Citation2008; Willmott Citation2010). As in the case of co-production, the fact that currently Israeli local democracy does not meet the preconditions described above will make it difficult for local managers and residents to engage in the co-production of value (Beerli and Razin Citation2015; Blank and Rosen-Zvi Citation2009).

The co-paradigm requires a significant amount of interaction between public-sector employees and service users (Dudau, Glennon, and Verschuere, 2019). In Israel, too, Beerli and Zaidan (Citation2020) and Rahat and Hazan (Citation2011) found that the initiation and success of local reforms are related to and depend on public support. However, the tradition of a centralized government has led local leaders to replicate this format in their local communities and their interactions with residents (Ghanem and Mustafa, 2009). The resulting shaky local partnerships, culture of segregation and non-participation in decision-making (Razin Citation 2004), combined with the lack of structural conditions needed for the co-production of value, have reduced the likelihood and feasibility of public and community support for local reform in Israel. The public is not involved in planning, designing, and executing local services or in broader areas such as regulation and reforms (Blank and Rosen-Zvi Citation2009; Galnoor, Rosenbloom, and Yaroni Citation1998).

Nevertheless, there is evidence that sporadic attempts to employ practices of value co-production have taken place in Israel. These attempts have moved from the bottom up, initiated by researchers, experts, entrepreneurs, managers, and politicians who have been inspired by other local authorities around the world (e.g., Frish Aviram, Cohen, and Beerli Citation2018; I-CORE Citation2020; ISPRA Citation2020; SID-Israel Citation2020). However, Dudau, Glennon, and Verschuere (Citation2019) noted that co-creation cannot be a magic remedy for illnesses that plague contemporary democracies—declining trust and public sector austerity. Modern public management, such as value co-production, requires network democracy and a participatory approach, organizational structures, societal cultures, political and managerial rationalities, and technical and economic conditions (Chaebo and Medeiros Citation2017; Ostrom Citation1996; Pestoff Citation2012; Ryan Citation2012). Given the lack of maturity and absence of regulations needed for constructive value co-production in Israel (Beerli and Razin Citation2015; Blank and Rosen-Zvi Citation2009), these sporadic attempts to co-produce value may have negative consequences such as value co-destruction and value co-contamination (Williams, Kang, and Johnson Citation2016). Alternatively, by Streeck and Thelen (Citation2005) and Mahoney and Thelen (Citation2010), I maintain that new regulations have not replaced existing ones or been attached to or shifted to existing ones or interpreted in a way that would indicate any reform in local authorities, gradual or otherwise. Supporting this contention is the fact that when Israel tried experiments such as regional clusters, they did not work well and did not inspire the trust needed to function effectively (Lerer Citation, 2019).

In other words, Israeli local government appears to be caught in a kind of catch-22. Residents and communities are not used to the co-creation of value in the form of local services and policies. Consequently, they do not see the value of a local managerial reform that promotes such co-production. In addition, the sporadic attempts that have occurred have had negative outcomes because the preconditions for their success were not in place. Therefore, residents, communities, and local politicians have rejected such reforms as unworkable.

The implications of the coronavirus outbreak for reforms in local Israeli government

As I noted earlier, the concept of the co-production of value might have negative consequences for reform in local Israeli authorities. In contrast, the coronavirus pandemic might be just the medicine needed to push such reforms. The coronavirus outbreak occurred just as Israel was dealing with a prolonged constitutional and electoral crisis (Maor, Sulitzeanu-Kenan, and Chinitz, Citation2020). The second wave of infections triggered a major loss of public trust in the central government's ability to manage the health, economic, and political crises. In response, Israeli mayors demanded more powers for dealing with the health and economic crisis (Kahana Citation 2020). These demands were followed by massive protests, as unemployment soared to 22% (Hendrix Citation 2020).

However, new national leaders and heroes are sometimes born during national crises (Boin, 'T Hart, and McConnell, 2009). In July 2020, Prof. Ronni Gamzu, the CEO of Tel Aviv's Sourasky Medical Centre 'Ichilov' (the second largest hospital in Israel) and the former CEO of the Ministry of Health of Israel, was appointed national commissioner for the fight against the coronavirus in

Israel. In his first press conference, Gamzu announced the adoption of the 'spotlight model' according to which local authorities would be classified as red, yellow, or green (Yasur Beit-Or Citation 2020). The novelty of this model is that such classifications would be made jointly with mayors. Thus, Gamzu rejected the premise that the central government and national regulators know everything in favour of the approach that municipal management should be carried out together with regional and local forces, not in a top-down manner, and that one size does not fit all local authorities. In doing so, he conveyed an important and rare public message that he believes in mayors and in the managerial principle of letting them lead (Beeri Citation 2020).

It is too early to determine whether this move will succeed and whether this approach will trickle down to other areas of local government. And one should remember that Gamzu's goal is not reforming local government in Israel. If indeed the attempt is successful, it will demonstrate that it does not necessarily take revolutionary steps to reshape the relationship between the central and local governments. Alternatively, following Streeck and Thelen (Citation2005) and Mahoney and Thelen (Citation2010) theory of gradual institutional change, the coronavirus outbreak may be an example of incremental drift and the conversion of rules. In such situations, dramatic shifts in external conditions, such as a sudden scarcity of resources, open up space for actors to interpret and implement existing rules in new ways that redistribute power. These changes, in turn, may inspire mutual trust and change the political and organizational culture into a partnership and collaboration, which are the cornerstones of local government reform. The last time a similar paradigm shift occurred in Israel was during the aftermath of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. That situation highlighted the problems in military, political, and societal management (Levy Citation 2008) and led to the establishment of regional clusters (Lerer Citation 2019). This time, the coronavirus crisis may lead to a new perspective and promote those seeking the reform of local government in Israel.

A COMPARATIVE COMPARISON OF SOUTH AFRICAN, EGYPT, ETHIOPIA AND ISREAL LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

SOUTH AFRICAN

South Africa's local administrative system is structured around municipalities, with three main types: metropolitan, district, and local municipalities. These municipalities are responsible for delivering various local services and fostering local economic development. The system operates within a three-sphere government structure, alongside national and provincial levels, all defined by the Constitution.

Three Spheres of Government:

The Constitution mandates a three-tiered system: national, provincial, and local.

Municipalities:

South Africa has 257 municipalities: 8 metropolitan, 44 district, and 205 local municipalities.

Metropolitan Municipalities:

These govern large urban areas.

District Municipalities:

These cover larger geographical areas and consist of several local municipalities.

Local Municipalities:

These are the most numerous and are responsible for specific local areas.

Elected Councils:

Each municipality has a council, elected every five years.

Mixed-Member Proportional Representation:

Councils for metropolitan and local municipalities are elected through a mixed-member proportional representation system.

Intergovernmental Relations:

The system emphasizes cooperative governance between different levels of government.

Service Delivery:

Municipalities are responsible for a range of local services, including public health, waste management, utilities, and transport.

Financial Powers:

Municipalities have revenue-raising powers and also receive grants from the national government.

Evolution of Local Government:

The current system has evolved from a racially segregated past, with a commitment to democratic values, social justice, and human rights enshrined in the Constitution.

Challenges:

Local government in South Africa faces challenges in meeting its developmental role effectively and efficiently.

EGYPT

Egypt's local administrative system is organized with a centralized structure, divided into governorates, districts, and villages, with a dual system that can be either two-tiered or three-tiered. At the top is the central government, followed by governorates, and then districts and villages. Each level has both representative councils and government-appointed executive bodies.

Central Government:

- The central government, led by the President and Prime Minister, exerts significant control over the local administration.
- The Ministry of Local Development plays a key role in coordinating governors and managing governorate budgets.

Governorates:

- Egypt is divided into 27 governorates, each with a capital city headed by a governor appointed by the President.
- Governors report to the Prime Minister, who leads the Council of Governors.
- Governorates can be further divided into districts (markaz) or cities and towns.

Districts (Markaz):

- Districts are administrative units within governorates, often consisting of multiple villages.
- They are sometimes referred to as "centers" or "counties".

Villages:

- Villages are the smallest administrative units in the system.
- They are typically rural areas with their own local councils.

Dual System:

- The local administration system operates under a dual structure, sometimes with two tiers (governorates and districts/villages) and sometimes with three (governorates, districts, and villages).
- The specific structure depends on the characteristics of the governorate.

Local Councils:

- Each administrative level has both representative councils (elected) and executive bodies (appointed).
- These councils play a role in local development, monitoring activities, and exercising oversight over executive authorities.
- They can propose, question, and even withdraw confidence from local unit heads.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's local administrative system comprises a multi-tiered structure with woredas and kebeles as the main units, implementing policies and programs from both regional and federal governments. These local authorities are responsible to their respective regional governments but also adhere to federal policies.

Woreda:

The woreda is the intermediate level between the kebele and the zone. It serves as a key unit for implementing government policies and programs at the grassroots level.

Kebele:

Kebeles are the smallest administrative units, acting as neighborhoods or villages and serving as the primary interface between the government and the local population.

Ethnic Local Governments:

In some instances, particularly with larger ethnic communities, special local governments like Nationality Zones or Special Woredas may be established.

City Administrations:

Urban areas, including major cities like Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, have city administrations as their local government units.

Structure:

Local governments typically follow a tripartite structure: an elected head of administration, a council with an executive committee, and sector bureaus.

Decentralization:

The system is designed to bring government closer to the people, enabling more localized decision-making.

Historical Context:

- Ethiopia's local administration has evolved, with a history of both centralized and decentralized systems.
- Historically, local authorities enjoyed a degree of autonomy, particularly in the collection of taxes and maintenance of order.
- The centralizing trend intensified in the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- The current federal system aims to balance regional and local autonomy with the overarching federal structure.

Challenges and Considerations:

- While the system is designed for decentralization, some studies suggest that local authorities still rely heavily on top-down decision-making.
- The constitution does not explicitly define the specific powers and functions of local governments, leaving room for interpretation by regional states.
- Effectiveness can be affected by the balance between regional and local autonomy and the extent to which local governments are empowered to implement policies and programs.

ISREAL:

Israel's local administrative system is structured around three main types of authorities: municipalities (cities), local councils, and regional councils. These authorities are responsible for providing public services and managing local affairs within their respective jurisdictions.

Here's a breakdown of each type:

Municipalities (Cities):

These are typically urban centers with populations exceeding 20,000 residents. They are managed by city councils, which are elected bodies responsible for a wide range of local services.

Local Councils:

These govern smaller towns and urban areas, with populations ranging from 2,000 to 20,000. Like municipalities, they are managed by elected councils.

Regional Councils:

These are responsible for a group of rural communities or villages located within a defined geographic area. Each community within the regional council elects a representative to the council.

Key Features of Israeli Local Administration:

Elected Councils:

All three types of local authorities have councils composed of members elected by the residents.

Direct Elections for Heads:

Since 1978, the heads of local authorities (mayors and chairpersons) have been elected directly by residents, enhancing accountability.

Strong Mayor-Council System:

All Israeli local governments operate under a system where the head of the authority is elected alongside council members.

Financial Independence and Reliance on Central Government:

Local authorities are funded through a combination of local taxes (property tax is a key source) and grants from the central government.

Service Provision:

Local authorities are responsible for delivering a range of public services, including education, healthcare, sanitation, road maintenance, and more.

Bylaws and Regulations:

Local councils have the power to enact bylaws to improve the quality of life for residents.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research paper adopted Development theory as its framework, as propounded by theorists like Lele (1975), Zamani (2000), Ola (1984), and Adamolekun (1983). The theories originated from developing countries in an attempt to position local government as a developmental agent. For example, in Nigeria, part of the 1976 local government reforms was to ensure development at the grassroots. The theory is criticized on the basis that, after many years, local areas in the developing countries remained underdeveloped. The theory is also biased because it is not concerned with the development of the people in the rural areas. As a result, the benefits and the purpose of establishing local government for the development of the people at the grassroots are defeated. These theories provided explanations on what local government ought to be to ensure the development of the local areas. However, local governments in developed countries serve the purpose of these theories because they are created by the local people themselves to develop their local areas. They are outcomes of concerted efforts of the people at the local level to have governments that can serve the interests of the local people. This cannot be said of developing countries, especially in Nigeria, where local government is created through the partitioning of local areas to serve the interests of the political or military elites that created them. Using such local governments as agents of development is impossible. The inconsistencies in local government creation in Nigeria from the colonial era to the present make it difficult for the adaptation of the various theories to explain how local government is operated in South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research design to examine the extent to which the Resource-Based View (RBV)

framework is endorsed in the four countries to improve accountability and transparency in service delivery and resource allocation in Local Government Authorities (LGAs). A case study approach was used, with the federal District Council as the study site. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, primary and secondary data, focus group discussions, and document reviews, which provided rich and in-depth information about the implementation of Strategic Management Practices (SMPs) and the challenges faced by the council in promoting accountability and transparency. The data analysis involved thematic analysis, which helped to identify patterns and themes in the data, including the key findings of poor implementation of SMPs, non-transparent and complicated SMP implementation process, and poor resource allocation.

SUMMARY

Israel's, South Africa's, Egypt's, and Ethiopia's local governments play an important role in the provision of public services. The central government has delegated to local governments the responsibility for providing elementary and secondary education and social welfare. In addition, local governments provide a range of other services, including sanitation, water and sewer, parks and recreation, and road maintenance.

Local governments are financed through a combination of revenue, primarily from the Arnona (the Israeli property tax) and grants from the central government. Over three-quarters of total government grants directly finance public education and welfare.

The Arnona accounts for a higher share of local tax revenue (around 81% compared to the OECD average of above 41%) and total local government revenue than in all other OECD countries except for Australia and New Zealand.

Unlike most countries that use property taxes, the Arnona is calculated on the basis of the size of property (in square meters) rather than its value, and levied on the users of both residential and non-residential property. Thus, local governments have very limited discretion over their Arnona rates, and annual rate increases are tied to inflation. Rates are generally higher for non-residential than residential property and vary substantially by type of non-residential property. Discounts are available for certain groups of households, such as low-income families, the elderly, or students who may have difficulty paying their Arnona charges.

CONCLUSION

Although data are limited, it appears that the Arnona is a regressive tax and that Arnona payments differ substantially among households in similar economic conditions. As the size (area) of housing units is not closely related to household income, many households with low and moderate incomes face high Arnona payments. Moreover, identically sized housing units in any given area may vary greatly in value, while all face identical Arnona liabilities. This different treatment of taxpayers may generate public opposition to the tax, especially if the Arnona becomes a more transparent tax.

The Arnona creates an incentive for local governments to discourage new housing development in favour of, in some cases, excessive non-residential development. The costs of providing public services to new residents often exceed the Arnona revenue associated with these new residents. In contrast, non-residential development tends to create fiscal surpluses. As a result, many

local governments may underinvest in new housing, while focusing on non-residential development, even under the risks of an oversupply and not economic viability.

Disparities in Arnona revenue generation across local governments play a prominent role in the disparities in the provision of local public services, especially education and social services. Arnona revenue per student is lowest for local governments with high shares of citizens with low socioeconomic clusters. This pattern contributes to lower per-pupil spending and poorer educational performance in those clusters. While social welfare needs are generally higher in communities with low socioeconomic status, available resources from the Arnona and government grants are often not sufficient to meet these needs.

Although government grants have reduced fiscal disparities among local governments, substantial differences remain in local governments' capacity to provide the public services for which they are responsible. The allocation of government transfers, especially Balance Grants, to local governments reduces the disparities in local governments' ability to finance public services. Nonetheless, significant disparities remain. They are due in part to the low magnitude of the transfers and deficiencies in the Balance Grant allocation formula.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains 13 policy recommendations. The first eight are designed to improve the existing system, while the last five provide a blueprint for a more fundamental reform of the system of local government finance in Israel.

Policy recommendations for improving the Arnona system

Reduce the large disparity between non-residential and residential Arnona rates by reducing non-residential rates. The government should reduce the ratio of non-residential rates to residential rates by mandating reductions in non-residential Arnona rates. As the reduction of Arnona rates will reduce the tax revenue available to local governments, this move would be only feasible if combined with other policies replacing the lost Arnona revenue.

- To help replacing Arnona revenue, local governments could develop alternative sources of revenue. Local governments should consider raising own-revenues through tourist taxes, parking taxes, taxes on ride-sharing services, and license taxes on various local activities.
- Reform the central government fiscal transfers in support of the major delegated functions - education and social welfare. Matching requirement attached to education and social services grants should be reconsidered.

Improve the Arnona by

- Standardizing the classification of types of property across the country;
- Establishing a uniform national system for measuring taxable area;
- Addressing the problems created by the current system of Arnona exemptions and discounts;
- allowing a limited degree of rate setting by local governments; and
- Assisting local governments in increasing their Arnona collection rates through the provision of training, technical assistance, and capital grants for the modernisation of local governments' computer systems. These policies should already improve the effectiveness,

fairness, and efficiency of the Arnona system prior to the undertaking of more substantial reforms.

Policy recommendations for a deeper reform of the Arnona system

Establish a value-based system of property taxation for all non-residential property. Both fairness and economic efficiency will be enhanced by converting the non-residential Arnona into a tax based on the market value of property. The transition to a value-based system will be relatively straightforward, in part because much of the data needed to calculate market values is already available in the form of information that businesses must use to comply with existing taxes.

Establish a value-based system of residential property taxation. The transition to a value-based property tax system will increase the vertical and horizontal equity of the Arnona. Recently developed methods for property assessment combined with new technologies will greatly reduce the costs involved in determining the value of residential property. Lessons gained from establishing a value-based non-residential Arnona will facilitate the establishment of a reformed residential Arnona.

REFERENCES

1. Ayele, Z. (2024). Local government in Ethiopia: still an apparatus of control?. *Law, Democracy and Development*, 15: 1-27
2. Government of South Africa www.gov.za 42.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm(2023)
3. Constitution of South Africa www.gov.za/documents/constitution/constitutionrepublic-south-africa-1996-1
4. Organised Local Government Act (2023) www.saflii.org/za/legis/num_act/olga1997265.pdf Integrated Urban Framework
5. South Africa 2011 Census www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=595 42.3b Population estimates 2016 www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022017.pdf
6. Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs website www.cogta.gov.za
7. Municipal Demarcation Board www.demarcation.org.za
8. Electoral Commission www.elections.org.za
9. Gender and 2016 South Africa – local elections <http://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/governance/advocacy/south-africa-genderand-elections> No reference for this section
10. South African Local Government Association www.salga.org.za 42.7 No reference for this section No reference for this section 42.9 Data provided by COGTA in communication to CLGF; see Section 9.1 above
11. Minister Van Rooyen at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Southern African Regional Conference www.cogta.gov.za/?p=789
12. UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
13. Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub
14. State of Local Government Report 2013 <http://ggln.org.za/1solgpublication-2014.pdf>
15. UNDP HDR South Africa country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ZAF> Local

government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2006–2013 2006/07 actual 2010/11 actual 2012/13 actual Total government expenditure www.clgf.org.uk/south_africa 223

BOOKS

1. Ayenew M “A (2023) rapid assessment of woreda decentralization in Ethiopia” in Taye A & Tegene G (eds) Decentralization in Ethiopia Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies
2. Beetham. (2023) “Theorising democracy and local governance” in King D & Stoker G (eds) Rethinking local democracy Basingstoke: MACMILLAN.
3. Bulliard P(2025) “Local government in Switzerland” in Steytler (ed) Role and place of local government in federal system Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press
4. Clapham C Haile Selassie’s government New York: Fredrick A Praeger (2019)
5. De Visser J (2023). Developmental local government: A case study of South Africa, Antwerpen-Oxford
6. Dowding K (2019) “Public choice and local governance” in King D & Stoker G (eds) Rethinking local democracy Basingstoke: MACMILLAN
7. World Bank Entering the 21st century world development report 1999/2000 New York: Oxford University Press (2020)
8. Assefa F. (2024) Federalism and the accommodation of diversity in ethiopia: a comparative Study 2 edition Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers.
9. Gebre Egziabher T (2023) “ Literature review of decentralization in Ethiopia” in Taye A & Tegene G (eds) Decentralization in Ethiopia Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.
10. Daniel G “Nation in perpetual transition: The politics of changes in administrative divisions and subdivisions in Ethiopia” in Marcus H G. (ed.) Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies Michigan State University 5-10 September 1994 the Red Sea Press Inc (2024)
11. Manor J (2021) The Political economy of democratic decentralization Washington DC: World Bank
12. Solomon N(2016) Fiscal federalism in the ethiopian ethnic based federal system Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publisher
13. Olowu D & Wunsch J ,(2024) Local governance in africa: the challenges of democratic decentralization London: LYNNE RIENNER
14. Stoker G (2019) “Introduction: Normative theories of local government and democracy” in King D & Stoker G (eds) Rethinking Local Democracy Basingstoke: MACMILLAN
15. Steytler N(2025) “Introduction” in Steytler N (ed) The Place and role of local government in a federal system Johannesburg: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
16. Articles
17. Adamolekun L “Decentralization Policies: Problems and Perspectives” (1021) 13(1) Asian Journal of Public Administration Von Braun & Grote U Does decentralization serve the poor? Center for Development Research (ZEF-Bonn) University of Bonn, Germany
- IMFconference on fiscal decentralization Washington D.C.: November (2000)
18. UNDP Decentralization: A sampling of Definitions working paper prepared in connection with the joint UNDP-Government of Germany evaluation of the UNDP role in decentralization and local governance (2019)
19. Assefa D “Fiscal Decentralization in Africa: A Review of Ethiopian Experience”, Fiscal Policy and Growth in Africa: Fiscal Federalism Decentralization and the Incidence of Taxation Economic Commission for Africa (2023)
20. Divas N The Challenges of Decentralisation International Development Department School of Public Policy University of Birmingham England, Global Forum on Fighting Corruption: Brasília (2025)
21. Fjeldsrad H Intergovernmental fiscal relations in developing countries A review of issues Chr. Michelsen, Institute Development Studies and Human Rights (2021)
22. Gebre-Ab B Ethnic and Religious Policies of FDR Ethiopia National Conference on Federalism Conflict and Peace Building, Ministry of Federal Affairs (2003)
23. Jinadu L A Explaining & managing ethnic conflict in africa: towards a cultural theory of democracy Claude Ake Memorial Papers No. 1 Department of Peace and Conflict Research Uppsala University & Nordic Africa Institute Uppsala Democracy, 2007
24. Katsiaouni O Decentralization and poverty reduction: does it work? Fifth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Mexico City (2003)
25. Kauzya J M Decentralization: Prospects for peace, democracy, and development Division for Public Administration and Development Management United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005)
26. Kidane M “Ethiopia’s Ethnic Based Federalism: 10 Years After” (2001) 29 (1) African Issues Ethnicity and Recent Democratic Experiment in Africa Mahakanjana C Decentralization local government and socio political conflict in Southern Thailand East- West Center Washington Working Paper (2006) Olowu O Decentralization policies and practices under structural adjustment and democratization in Africa Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper Number United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2001)
27. Rondinelli D & Nellis J. (2016) “Assessing Decentralization Policies: A Case for Cautious Optimism” 4(1) Development Policy Review
28. Strumpf K (2024) “Does Government Decentralization Increase Policy Innovation?” 4 Journal of Public Economic Theory
29. Teune H(2025) “Local government and democratic political development” 540 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science
30. Tranchant J P(2017) Decentralization and ethnic conflict: The role of empowerment CERDI-CNRS, Universit’e d’Auvergne, Munich Personal RePEc Archive, May
31. Treisman D Decentralization and quality of government Department of Political Science University of California Los Angeles (2002)

32. UNDP Draft report on global workshop on UNDP/MIT Decentralized Governance Research Project Amman (1998)
33. UNDP Factors to Consider in Designing Decentralized Governance Policies and Programmes to Achieve Sustainable People-Centred Development Management Development and Governance Division (1998)
34. UNDP Linking the national poverty reduction strategy to the MDGs: A Case Study of Ethiopia (2007) Young J "Regionalism and democracy in Ethiopia" (1998) 19(2) Third World Quarterly

5. Negarit Gazette of the Tigray Regional State: A Proclamation issued to approve the Revised Constitution of Tigray Regional State: Proclamation No 45 (2001)
6. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia (1995)
7. The Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1987
8. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)
9. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)

Documents

1. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) Ethiopia: Sustainable development and poverty reduction program (SDPRP) (2002)
2. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE): Ministry of Capacity Building, Public Sector Capacity Building Program District Level Program, Human resource Planning Survey in Selected Rural Woreda Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP Regional Government (2007)
3. World Bank, Ethiopia: Woreda Study Country Office in Ethiopia, Country Department 6 African Region (2001)
4. The Canadian International Development Agency (2005) Ethiopia Institutional Governance Review: Grassroots Empowerment Review of Progress and Prospects.

Web Sites

1. Brancati D Design over Conflict: Managing Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism through Decentralization http://people.hmdc.harvard.edu/~dbrancati/Brancati_introduction.pdf, (visited on 22nd July, 2008.) Brosio G Decentralization in African <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/brosio.pdf> (2002) (Visited on 22nd July, 2008).
2. Shah A Local revenues, issues in tax assignment World Bank Institute Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations and Local Financial Management Program. http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/128840/Shah%20Topic07_BN.pdf (Visited on 16 May 2008)
3. Siegle J & O'Mahony P Assessing the merits of decentralization as a conflict mitigation strategy http://www.dai.com/pdf/Decentralization_as_a_Conflict_Mitigation_Strategy.pdf (visited on 22 July 2008).
4. UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008, http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ETH.html, (visited on 31/08/2008)
5. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: The State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, <http://www.oromiagov.org/images/About%20Oromia.pdf> (visited on 7 October 2008)
6. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; The State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, <http://www.ethiobar.net/type/English/basinfo/infosnnp.htm#area> visited on (7 October 2008).
7. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: The State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, <http://www.ethiobar.net/type/English/basinfo/infosnnp.htm#population> (visited on 7 October 2008)

Laws

1. Debub Negarit Gazeta of Southern Nations Nationalities and peoples Regional State (SNNPR): The Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples National Regional State: Proclamation No 35 (2001)
2. Debub Negarit Gazeta of Southern Nations Nationalities and peoples Regional State (SNNPR): The revised cities proclamation: Proclamation No 103 (2006)
3. Magalata Oromia: A proclamation to amend Proclamation No 65 (2003) the urban local government of Oromia National Regional State No 116 (2006)
4. Magalata Oromia: The urban local government proclamation Proclamation No 65(2003) Magalata Oromia the Revised Constitution of the Oromia National Regional State: Proclamation No 46 (2001)