Non-state Actors in Urban Governance of Ethiopia: Examining Non-state Actors' Powers and Roles in Local Development

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Abstract: The primary purpose of this paper is to investigate non-state actors (NSAs) powers and roles in local development in light of urban power theories. In this article, the researchers employed both primary and secondary data that were qualitative in nature. Secondary data produced from constitutions, proclamations, regulations, policy declarations, and journals, while primary data produced from interviews, focus groups and key informant interviews. In the context of urban power theories, this study investigates the impact of non-state actors' power on local development. The findings of this article reveal that, the government dominated decision-making about local development. The result of this research provided insight on the government's hegemony over NSAs' when it comes to collaborative development decisions. Insufficient NSAs' engagement in development decision-making would have impeded collaborative development in the case study ULGs'. NSAs' contribution to improving effective development management at the local level, as well as the production of resources for local development, would be impeded if true NSAs' engagement was not improved. As a result, the role of NSAs' engagement in bridging the ULGs' gap in local service supply was impeded. Inadequate NSAs' engagement in local development decision-making would increase the NSAs' predisposition to be a passive receiver of development benefits rather than owner of development. At the end the study shows that, to maximize the effectiveness of NSAs' engagement, the NSAs' must be fully included in the decision-making process addressing local development. Extending the involvement of NSAs' in development beyond the passive delivery of local public goods is essential. It is critical to link project-level action to a broader policy-making agenda, allowing the NSAs' to wrestle with and reverse a set of policy priorities.

Keywords: Urban Local Government, NSAs, State, Collaboration, Development

1. Introduction

Non-state actors' (NSAs) participation in policy formulation, collective decision-making, and public service delivery has become a fundamental component of governance in developing countries [9]. This reflects the growth of the concept of 'governance,' which is based on a more collaborative approach to policymaking involving all key parties. In most developing nations, economic and political liberalization processes have occurred in recent decades, altering the role of the state and allowing NSAs to engage in development [10]. Ethiopia's vast poverty and serious issues necessitate a larger role for NSAs'. As a result, many governments throughout the world are becoming more open, transparent and collaborative, inventive, and inclusive by including the NSAs' such as the public, the private sector and civil societies in creating and implementing solutions to society's concerns [20].

The international donor community [6] has recognized the values of participatory development and governance. It has attempted with varied degrees of success, to stimulate NSAs' participation. The recent donor refocus on poverty reduction emphasizes the importance of assisting in the promotion of a new political culture in emerging nations that gives genuine

possibilities for disadvantaged people to voice and defend their interests. The EU-African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) reflect this new cooperation paradigm and related preference for a multi-actor approach to policy formulation, collaborative decision-making, and public service delivery [12].

Until recently, policy formulation, decision-making and public service delivery sectors were dominated by the state actor in Ethiopia. NSAs' like communities, business community and NGOs, have had relatively limited opportunities to participate in decision-making and service delivery. State actor dominance in the policymaking and decision-making process, combined with NSAs' indifference, have produced in policies that lack broad public support in some circumstances. In recent years, however, the policy-making and decision-making arenas have gradually opened up to a diverse spectrum of NSAs, all of which can exert influence in a variety ways.

The major goal of this article is to determine the power and role of NSAs in the framework of urban power theories in order to meet common issues such as governance activities and public service delivery that cannot be addressed by urban local government alone. This article utilizes a variety of primary data collection instruments, including key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and personal observation, in addition to secondary data sources. Since the purpose of this article is to look at the power and role of NSAs in local development, the private sector and its organizations, as well as local communities and their organizations, are considered as NSAs or important stakeholders in the process.

The analysis follows an investigation by examining the power and role of NSAs' engagement in local development in light of urban power theories. At the end the study shows that, to maximize the effectiveness of NSAs' engagement, the NSAs' must be fully included in the decision-making process addressing local development. Extending the involvement of NSAs' in development beyond the passive delivery of local public goods is essential. It is critical to link project-level action to a broader policy-making agenda, allowing the NSAs' to wrestle with and reverse a set of policy priorities. Rather of being the primary provider and maker of development, the government's role must be limited to that of facilitator. Rather of dominating decision-making in the development process, officials of government and experts must serve as change agents. They are simply required to give technical advice and professional inputs.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

2.1. Urban Governance for Local Development

The concept of governance was incorporated into the development discourse as a strategy to promote development as a response to the failure of SAPs and neoliberal policies.

The concept was first introduced by the World Bank in order to ensure the implementation of neoliberal policies. The argument for governance was that the means by which state institutions operated were the most significant hindrance to efficient management of urban services [6]. There is no universally accepted definition of governance at this time. The UN-Habitat (2002), defined urban governance as "the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city" [22]. In this view, governance is a continuous process that allows for the accommodation of many interests and the implementation of cooperative action. It encompasses both official and informal arrangements, as well as the society's social capital [22].

The UNDP's second definition of urban governance is "the deployment of political, economic, and administrative power to address a societal issue" [21]. This broad concept encompasses the organizational structure and operations of the federal, regional, and municipal governments; parliament and courts; and the institutions, organizations, and individuals that make up civil society and the business sector [21].

The other definition is offered by Stoker as "governance, which can be broadly described as a preoccupation with governing, attaining collective action in the arena of public affairs, in conditions where it is not possible to rest on reliance to the authority of the state, and it involves working across boundaries within public sector or between the state actor and NSAs'" [18]. This is the most appropriate definition for this article. Governance entails governing not only between the state and non-state sectors, but also within the state sector.

As a result, the fundamental concept of urban governance defines the nature, quality and purpose of the totality of interactions that interconnect multiple institutional spheres in urban regions, including local, state, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. These connections are formalized/regularized as well as unstructured [22]. As a result these discussions, it is clear that the concept of urban governance acknowledges the changing role of government, recognizes the existence of other players behind government, and considers having more space for ideas and participation in local development decision making process. To this effect, governance makes it easier to comprehend how power pervades policy spaces, procedures, and practices, as well as the informal and formal institutional structures that contribute to a governance matrix.

The notion that governance is separate from the concept of government is something that most definitions of governance agree on. The notion of governance suggests that power is not restricted to formal authorities and institutions, but also includes NSAs' who have a right to engage in decision-making and the delivery of local development. Because decisions must be made based on complicated interactions between actors, the notion also implies that governance is a process rather than a simple frame of action [2]. The state's role in governance is to direct the organization of urban

services, to apply certain strategies to their management, and to supervise the services offered. Non-state actors, on the other hand, should be able to provide services and participate in decision-making processes.

A focus is also on creating collaborations with non-state actors so as to empower them and guarantee that they have equitable access to decision-making and development processes. One motivation for such collaborations is that they can empower marginalized people and increase their involvement, democratic participation and legitimacy [15]. Collaborations/partnerships have also been proposed as a strategy for incorporating non-state actors in governance processes, producing jobs for the poor urban community, and formalizing informal sector participation as a strategy for poverty reduction and development [5].

2.2. Theoretical Frameworks of Urban Power

2.2.1. Elite Theory

As per elite theorists, urban power was centralized and severely stratified [1]. The idea is based on a hierarchical view of society and is concerned with the power of dynamics between rulers and ruled [1]. To this end, elite theory shares a concept of power that can be characterized as a hierarchy and dominance orientation. From the perspective of urban governance, elitism believes that the local government relies on specialized tasks being performed according to formal rules and procedures within a well-defined hierarchy, concentrating power in the hands of a select few who hold commanding positions within society's leading bureaucracy.

Elite theory is presented and described more in the Ethiopian context in terms of decision making process, formulating policies or plans, and setting strategic goals. Mulugeta said in this regard as "The EPRDF rulling parties as well as the cabinets have a prerogative right on the policy making process' [14]. In other words, a dominant group, who has a power to shape and restrain decisions, shapes the urban policy and urban growth strategies. Adding to this, Merara argued that elite theory is especially more suitable to investigate the power distribution in countries, where the practices of democracy could be repressive and the presence of dominant party system like Ethiopia and other African countries [11]. This is because of the political influence is concentrated in the hands of dominant political parties and the urban governance system built upon the ethnic based political structure. This could result in the concentrate of power on a single dominant actor within the modes of governance system. Elite theory, therefore, is asserting that an individual or a group who have a dominating power in urban settings can imbalance the power equilibrium that configures both the state and non-state forces. Hence, the most important points here to note that, elite theory is suitable to examine the power concentration rather than distribution and enable to identify who is powerful and why. Thus, for elite theory the power struggle concerns power over (which is control and resistance). To this end, governance is about domination and subordination over other actors.

2.2.2. Urban Regime Theory

Defining an urban regime as an informal arrangement through which public bodies and NSAs' interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions [19]. For Stoker, governance is a problematic activity [18]. He put his justification as political fragmentation, social complexity and the division of resources between state and NSAs' make the capacity to act difficult to achieve in urban setting. Urban regime theory emphasizes how actors seek forms of cooperation with the purpose of getting things done, i.e. achieving a capacity to act in an attempt to resolve the problem of governing. Urban regime theory argues that conceptions of power that previously dominated urban governance research do not capture the character of urban governance as it operates in modern societies. Governance is not restricted to acts of domination by the elite and consent or resistance from the ruled; instead, governance is about achieving governing capacity, and power has to be created by bringing actors together for cooperation [19].

In contrast to the elitists theory that focused on the question of 'Who Governs?', Stone introduced a new understanding of power called the 'social-production model of power' [19]. It is based on the question of 'How', in a world of limited and dispersed authority, actors work together across institutional lines to produce a capacity to govern and to bring about publicly significant results". The study of urban government underwent a paradigm shift as a result of this new perspective on power. The new perspective sees the capability to govern as something that must be earned and regularly validated by publicly visible results, rather than something that can be assumed. Constant collaboration, dispute resolution, and adaptation to ever-changing conditions develop the capability to govern.

Despite the fact that elite theories overlook the interdependence of NSAs' and state actors in addressing social and economic challenges in terms of coordination and cooperation, the elite theory's work, in conjunction with regime theory, aids in the investigation of the actions of individuals or groups who have played a role in urban governance in general, and NSAs role in particular. This is because for the purpose of assembling the capacity to govern ULGs', urban regime theory gives conceptual frameworks based on criticism of elitist ideas that show how power can be split amongst formal and non-state actors.

3. Methodologies

3.1. Research Setting

The study's case was carefully chosen. The decision to live in an urban region rather than a rural area was based on the fact that urban areas are more tightly packed in a small space and require more sophisticated infrastructure and services than rural areas. Despite this, ULGs are unable to provide all critical infrastructure services due to capacity limits. Because of the demand-supply gap, NSAs stepped in to help ULGs. As a result, cities are the local administrative units where

NSA engagements have matured to the point where they can do significant research.

The case studies are based on real-life situations. ULGs and NSAs have a wide range of vocations and jobs. NSAs can also be found in the ULGs of Ambo, Finote Selam, and Butajira, where they participate in development projects. These circumstances allow for an examination of NSA's powers and roles in local development. The activities of NSAs participating in local development projects in metropolitan regions were another factor for selecting the case study ULGs. According to statistics from the states of Oromia and Amhara, as well as the SNNP Urban Development Bureau, the case study ULGs were rated as the best practices in involving non-state actors in local development activities among the urban centers in the several regional states. As a result, we opted to investigate NSAs' powers and roles in collaborative local development in the case study cities of Ambo, Finote Selam, and Butajira in order to draw lessons that may be applicable to other ULGs.

We conducted exploratory research in the case study ULGs to find particular local development activities that would allow us to delve deeper into the NSAs' power and role for local development. The exploratory study was conducted using interviews with ULG officials and key informant interviews with professionals. We opted to focus this article on cobblestone road construction, and electric service provision as a consequence of our preliminary research. According to the findings of the exploratory investigation, NSAs had a significant influence on the selected local development activities and made a strategic contribution to the growth of the case study ULGs.

3.2. Qualitative Research

The intricacy of real-world phenomena is recorded and investigated in qualitative research [4]. Qualitative research methods are used to investigate not only what, where, and when decisions are made, but also why and how decisions are made. Besides, qualitative research usually uses observation, focus groups, content analysis, historical comparison, and interviews to obtain data. These characteristics suggest that a qualitative research technique approach would be a good fit for this work, which aims to investigate NSAs' powers and roles in local development in the case study ULGs.

3.3. Sampling Size

In contrast to its quantitative counterpart, qualitative research usually has a small sample size. The sample size in qualitative research is decided by a point of data saturation. The participants from the NSAs and the governments were carefully selected. They include City Mayors, City Managers, City Councils, and City Cabinets. Apart from governmental actors, participants from the NSAs, such as CBOs, chambers of commerce, local communities, and urban consultants, are carefully selected. As a result, in this article, the purposive sampling approach aids in the selection of units from a population under examination that are assessed to meet the specific criterion of usefulness in the research. As a result, the researcher used the case study ULGs to conduct 24 interviews, 3 focus groups, and 12 key informant interviews.

3.4. Instruments for Data Collection

Investigation of urban governance activities in local development is a complicated process that requires collaboration between the state and NSAs in general. To handle this difficult dilemma, it is necessary to consider the perspectives of the state and NSAs as a whole. To this end, data was gathered from both the state and various NSAs.

Data collection is a set of interconnected activities aiming at acquiring useful information in order to answer the research question [4]. According to this author, a researcher should use approaches that are likely to elicit the data needed to get a better knowledge of the phenomenon in question, give multiple viewpoints on the topic, and make efficient use of data gathering time. Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview, and Document Analysis were some of the qualitative data collection strategies used in this study.

3.4.1. Interview

Interviews are a methodical means of talking to and listening to people, as well as a method of gathering data from persons through talks. Semi-structured and unstructured interview forms are popular in qualitative interviews. To this purpose, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to acquire information from the participants for this study. The researcher chose semi-structured interview over other interview types for this study because it combines the benefits of other interview types while also allowing for flexibility in conducting. At the same time, it allows you to focus on the main point of the discussion.

Telephone calls were used to facilitate the interviews in the case study ULGs. Following that, in all case study ULGs, the interview schedule took twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes, with the respondents at their preferred places, allowing them to freely engage. In the case study Urban Local Governments, the interview schedules were designed to assess the respondent's comprehension and knowledge of the urban governance system in local development.

3.4.2. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion, according to Onwuegbuzie et al, (2009)], is "one method of gathering qualitative data and is defined as an informal discussion among a group of people about a specific issue" [16]. The focus group is organized to explore a specific collection of issues, according to the same author, and this grouping is concentrated since the conversation involves some form of communal activity. For Hennink (2007), the primary goal of FGDs is "…..to describe and understand meaning and interpretation so as to get an understanding of a certain topic, and participants should come from a comparable social and cultural background and must have a similar experience" [8].

Focus group discussion was employed in qualitative research to collect deep qualitative data from non-state actors on the study's core topics. As a result, the researcher conducted focus groups to gather information on the nature and scope of non-state actors' participation, as well as institutional principles. Because of the heterogeneous nature of the non-state actors, each FGD in this study includes six to eight members with comparable characteristics. That is, the participants were chosen to reflect the diverse perspectives of non-state actors. The researcher included FGD participants who could articulate and evaluate the extent of non-state actors' participation in urban governance as well as institutional principles that encourage NSAs' participation.

The participants were chosen based on External Resource Mobilization Experts (ERMEs), Public Engagement Experts (PEEs), and community leaders' recommendations, as well as officials from the case study ULGs' suggestions. The goal of the FGD was explained to the participants before it began. The FGD was recorded using a digital tape recorder and notes by the researcher. The researcher conducted focus groups in chosen areas of sample *kebeles* based on references, which had relatively intense urban governance activities in general and non-state actor participation in particular.

3.4.3. Document Review

Document review is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher interprets documents to give them voice and significance in relation to an assessment issue. Documentary approaches concern the evaluation of documents that contain information about the topic the researcher wishes to investigate. The documentary approach is a method of classifying, investigating, interpreting, and identifying the limitations of physical sources, most typically written records [13].

A document, according to Bowen (2009), is "an artifact with an inscribed text as its major characteristic" [3]. Individuals and groups create documents in the course of their daily activities, aimed solely for their own immediate practical needs. They are prepared for a certain purpose, based on specific assumptions, and presented in a specific manner or style, and the researcher must be completely aware of the papers' origins, purpose, and intended audience [7].

Content analysis, qualitative descriptive analysis, and qualitative interpretive analysis are examples of documentary analysis. Content analysis is a strategy for analyzing a body of text that treats the elements of the body of text as empirical entities [4]. In order to examine documents in line with the research objective, qualitative interpretative analysis, which is the process of interpreting relevant parts of a phenomena, was used in this study.

The researchers used regional and federal constitutions, proclamations, rules, policy statements, census reports, ULGs profile magazine, and other ULGs publications for this work. Authenticity, credibility, and representativeness were used as quality control criteria for handling documentary materials.

3.4.4. Key Informant Interview

The researcher used a key informant interview with individuals who have specialized expertise about the topic the researcher desires to understand in this qualitative case study inquiry. The back-and-forth of these interviews can lead to the finding of information that would not have been exposed through other means. The researcher used key informant interviews at the beginning of the study to immerse herself in the situation in the study region and acquire an overall view of the problem area, as well as for in-depth data collecting towards the end. Mayors, managers, development experts, chamber of commerce officials, and development committees were interviewed as important informants.

3.5. Interpretation and Analysis of Data

Qualitative data analysis as per Simon (2011), is "working with data, organizing it, breaking it down into manageable bits, synthesizing it, seeking for patterns, discovering what is significant and what needs to be taught, and deciding what you will tell others." [17]. In qualitative research, data analysis is a continuous process that happens alongside data gathering, interpretation, and report writing [4]. The qualitative data collected through various methods was analyzed in depth in this article.

Thematic analysis was used to complete this research. There were five stages to this investigation. The information was first organized and readied for analysis. Depending on the source of information, this phase entailed transcribing interviews and focus group results, typing up field notes, or sorting and arranging the data into different types. The purpose of this phase was to become completely immersed in the information gathered. A theme framework was built in the second phase to discover major issues from data. Thirdly, the information was coded. Coding entailed segmenting sentences (paragraphs) into categories and identifying those categories with a term using text data acquired during data gathering. Furthermore, conceptual categories for the occurrences observed were established and tentatively labeled. The purpose is to construct descriptive, multi-dimensional categories that serve as a foundation for further investigation. Words, phrases, or events that appear to be related are grouped together. During the subsequent rounds of analysis, these categories were gradually adjusted and replaced. The fourth phase was to create a set of thematic diagrams that could be used to study and review the entire pattern throughout a set of data. The last phase was to map and analyze the significance of the data, which included looking for relationships, providing explanations, and emphasizing key features and concepts.

4. Non-state Actors Powers and Roles in Local Development

The role and influence of NSAs', particularly local communities and the private sector, in the decision-making process for local development will be discussed in this article in the framework of urban power theories. In local

development, the decision-making process is complicated and iterative. The decision-making process in local development, for example, has gone through several stages, including policy formulation and planning, needs identification, priority setting, monitoring, and evaluation. However, depending on the powers and responsibilities mentioned in the ULG proclamation or related laws, the engagement of each actor in each phase of decision-making may vary. As a result, in the context of urban governance theories, this article briefly examines NSAs' power in local development decision-making. These can be used to show the level of each actor's influence, as well as the interrelationships between NSAs' and state actor, on policymaking and planning, needs identification and prioritization, and monitoring and evaluation. Qualitative analysis was used to guide the discussion, which was based on governance theory.

4.1. Identification and Prioritization of Development Needs

According to the findings of a key informant interview with a manager at Kebele 01 in Finote Selam city administration suggested that, without the involvement of non-state actors the urban local government centrally identified development needs at the start of collaborative development. The above interview also revealed that this circumstance resulted in a clash between non-state actors and the local administration in the city. The disagreement arose because the indicated development needs did not correspond to the non-state actors' priorities. The failure of the urban local government to seek NSAs' input when identifying needs resulted in a loss of sense of ownership among the non-state actors as well as the destruction of local development results. To address the issue, the urban local government delegated the task of identifying development needs to the *kebele* level of government. The city administration still had to approve local development needs that were recognized at *kebele* level of administration.

The results of focus groups and interviews with government officials and key informants from Public Engagement Experts (PEEs) and External Resource Mobilization Experts (ERMEs) in the case study ULGs revealed that ULGs officials and NSAs held contrasting opinions on who identified local development needs in the ULGs. Experts and Officials from the ULGs indicated that non-state actors were directly involved in identifying development needs in the case study. The findings of focus groups revealed that the heads of each tier of the case study ULGs had identified development needs. Rather than involving NSAs in the case study ULGs', the researchers discovered through their observations during various meetings and throughout their endeavor to collect data that the development needs were identified by the state actor (ULGs' tiers).

Following the identification of development needs by ULG officials at various levels, non-state actors were notified at the yearly *kebele* meeting. The City Council was given the authority to approve budgets for specified development needs.

Because of the meeting's inconvenient location and a lack of faith in the ULGs' officials and experts, the majority of non-state actors did not attend. This finding suggests that the stage of development needs identification was when urban governance politics (the question of who identified needs, which involves a value difference between non-state actors and officials) were reflected.

The findings of focus groups from the public and private sectors and interviews with key informants of PEEs and ERMEs suggested that the NSAs' lack of trust in ULGs was due to a variety of issues. Failure to deliver on promises, ineptitude, delays, failure to notify on changes, and a lack of flexibility in a direction were all problems that contributed to NSAs' lack of faith in ULGs. The other aspect was corruption by officials and experts from the case study ULGs in regard to local development efforts. As a result, the majority of non-state actors declined the ULGs' invitation to attend an annual meeting to discuss the stated needs. As a result, this finding in the case study ULGs' suggests that the meeting was used as a platform for elites to exert control over the identification of development needs.

According to the results of interviews with government officials, the case study ULGs conducted annual meetings as a mechanism to consult non-state actors particularly the public and the private sectors. The results of the case study ULGs' focus groups revealed that the NSAs' concerns and ideas about local development needs were not taken into account by the case study ULGs' because the ultimate permission was vested in the respective ULGs' City Councils. The findings of the focus groups also revealed that non-state actors were only involved at this stage to provide publicity. Local development efforts were based on the will of bureaucrats and experts, and in most cases, *kebele* chiefs' suggestions were taken for granted rather than the NSAs' opinion. The findings of the key informant interviews support the findings that the case study ULGs did not properly consider non-state actors' perspectives on development needs identification. From this one can understand that, the NSAs' had no final input in determining what development needs to be identified. The findings suggest that the case study ULGs' identifying development needs in the guise of NSAs' engagement using its various machineries at various levels.

The availability of resources and the urgency of a certain activity determine how local development needs are prioritized. Non-state actors' involvement of beneficiaries in determining needs priorities is critical in bringing the NSAs' interests and essential requirements to the forefront. According to the results of focus groups and key informant interviews with Public Engagement Experts (PEEs) and External Resource Mobilization Experts (ERMEs), the ULGs made decisions about how to prioritize local development needs. The findings also revealed that after the *kebele* prioritized local development requirements, non-state actors were informed about the general yearly *kebele* meeting. According to the findings of a key informant interview with PEEs and ERMEs, *kebele* administration prioritized

development activities based on their strategic value for the ULGs' overall development. Non-state actors' meetings were also utilized to identify unfinished operations from the previous year and to prioritize those needs. According to the above findings, sector offices presented the plan to non-state actors for opinion at a yearly meeting after prioritizing needs. The tendency to use strategic importance for the construction of case study ULGs' ran counter to the non-heterogeneous state's nature. This undermined the partnership's primary goal of addressing diverse interests, particularly those of disadvantaged places in the ULGs. In other words, this circumstance outweighed the needs of a large number of NSAs in the name of the ULGs' overall development.

An interview with managers from ULGs in Ambo and Butajira confirmed the earlier conclusion that state actors (ULGs) dominated the local development decision-making process in defining local development needs and preferences. The study's findings also revealed that both ULGs' City Councils had the authority to make final decisions/approvals on local development needs for action involving non-state entities. Both Ambo and Butajira ULGs' councils, through their standing committees, conduct detailed evaluations in terms of prioritizing development needs, planning, and final evaluation of local development initiatives. This result shows that non-state actors lacked the power to make decisions about how to prioritize local development needs.

Applying urban power theory, this study shows that state actors (ULGs) controlled the power of local development decision-making in identifying development needs and determining preferences. As a result, the urban regime, which is dominated by state actors, has no final say in determining development needs and defining priorities. As a result of the aforementioned analysis, it is clear that the state actors (ULGs) in the case study have played a significant role in identifying and prioritizing local development needs. In other words, the case study ULGs' have more power in need identification and prioritization, but the NSAs as a whole were not involved in need identification and prioritization decision-making in local development.

4.2. Policy Making and Planning

Non-state actors should be expected to participate in policy formulation and implementation, starting with the production of ULG visions and ending with the implementation and evaluation of local development strategies, according to urban power theories. There are no defined locations where non-state actors can participate in policy design and execution. Non-state actors' involvement in policy making and execution does not begin at a certain point, whether in policy initiation or implementation; rather, it is a dynamic process that they engage in from the establishment of a vision for ULGs to its realization. In contrast to urban power theories, the results of interviews with ULGs' officials and key informants in the case study ULGs' revealed that state actors (ULGs') dominated the articulation of vision statements in the case study ULGs'.

The ULGs' vision statements, on the other hand

acknowledge NSAs' role and contribution. For example, the vision of Butajira is "after the next fifteen years, we strive to be a trend setting dynamic city administration by delivering quality services responsive to the demands and challenges of the community and our constitutional mandate". While the vision of Finote Selam is "demanding and working hard to having a new Finote Selam that is centre for knowledge and business development; suitable for living, working and entertainment and economically strong that allows the average citizen to earn a decent income."

The presence of a vision statement alone demonstrates ULGs' political commitment and desire for the development of the ULGs. It can, however, be accomplished and achieved if all stakeholders are involved in the visioning process. According to an interview with the Mayors of Ambo, Finote Selam, and Butajira ULGs, the ULGs' vision statement was created by city administrations with the help of experts and with less consultation with the NSAs. As a result, the case studies ULGs' have a limited comprehension of their individual ULGs' vision. Even the mayor of Finote Selam responded that the city's goal is to make Finote Selam a tourism destination, yet the vision statement says otherwise. This means that there would be less cooperation between NSAs' and the state actors in realizing the ULGs' visions.

Furthermore, the case study ULGs' vision statements would not serve as a basis for developing a short and long-term development strategy. The strong side of the urban local government, on the other hand, would be putting issues of governance and city development into their vision statement. In order to achieve the ULGs' vision, it is necessary to develop plans, strategies and policies in addition to articulating the ULGs' vision statements. All strategies and policies undertaken by ULGs affect the interests of various social groups in one way or another, either positively or negatively. As a result, the significance of non-state actors' participation in policy design and execution is undeniable.

Since 2006, Ethiopian ULGs have been implementing the national urban development policy, as well as numerous plans and policies relating to MSEs, urban infrastructure and services. The federal government, for example, originated and formulated the present urban development policy. The policy paper can substantiate this claim. The federal government, according to the policy, has created a document of urban development policy to achieve the intended objectives in terms of local development and good governance in Ethiopian cities. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing Construction (MoUDHC) has been tasked with implementing the policy on behalf of the regional states and the federal government, while the ULGs will be in charge of putting it in to practice.

The Urban Local Government Proclamation has given urban local governments the power to make their own policies and laws, but in practice, policy making and execution in the case study ULGs' would be hierarchical, with the power to making policies resting with the Federal or Regional government. In Ethiopia, the Federal government was in charge of initiating and formulating urban

development policies and long-term plans. To put it another way, the federal government has launched and created a variety of policies and initiatives, which are subsequently discussed at the state and local levels, as well as among other socioeconomic groups. The urban local governments would produce one to five year plans within the scope of the national plan based on the information gathered during the discussion and orientation with the officials of the ULGs. However, because the higher levels of government lacks the motivation and commitment to accommodate the demands of numerous interest groups, the policies and programs within their jurisdictions are implemented by the smallest units of government.

NSA participation is vital to resolve at least the when and how much questions of planning, despite the fact that the decision-making process in planning is very technical and requires experts. That is to say, non-state actors have a significant role in influencing local development planning by determining the implementation timetable and resource allocation. According to the findings of focus groups and key informant interviews with CPEs, state actors (ULGs) in the case study were in charge of organizing local development activities. ' In the case study ULGs, the office of infrastructure development worked on a draft plan without consulting non-state actors, which was then presented to them at the annual kebele conference. According to the findings of the focus groups, the goal was to engage non-state actors to help carry out the plan. This result entails that state actors (the ULGs) dominated the power of local development decision-making in planning.

In the case study urban local governments, on the issue of NSAs' engagement in planning the ULGs' officials have differing viewpoints. If we take for instance, one of Finote Selam city administration interviewees responded that all city plans enacted in the ULG were meant to solve urban problems identified by inhabitants during numerous conversations held in each Kebele. To put it another way, as residents, the NSAs express their views during various public talks, and the urban local government facilitates various discussions with the NSAs on urban issues. In reality, governments, particularly those at the highest levels, were unwilling and committed to accept and amend plans in response to suggestions made by various interest groups during the debates. The empirical investigation that corroborated by respondents of the case study ULGs' found no significant difference among Ambo, Finote Selam, and Butajira ULGs' willingness to embrace reforms and incorporate non-state actors' interests in local development plans.

In the case study ULGs', the NSAs were involved in the implementation of policies and plans as opposed to policy formulation and planning. For example, after a year of implementation, the urban local governments invited various social groups such as youth, elders, intellectuals, religious institutions, women's representatives, and public actors for a discussion on the Growth and Transformation Plan. When compared to their degrees of participation in the process of making plans and policies in the case study ULGs, non-state actors' involvement in enacting laws and policies appears to be greater. In this regard, the findings of an interview with key informants backed up the claim.

The city councils in the case study ULGs, on the other hand, invited representatives of non-state actors and guests to attend sessions arranged by the council's standing committees. For example, the council of Finote Selam city administration has asked citizens who have concerns about the council's agenda to attend meetings or hearings through the media. However, no large numbers of people showed up for any of the sessions. To this effect, the urban regimes controlled by the government and non-state actors were unable to influence the decision-making process that affects local development. In other words, in the case study, ULGs wield disproportionate authority in the decision-making process, and the magnitude of NSAs' influence over state actors violates the governance norm.

Using urban power theory, local development decision making process in policy making and planning was a kind of urban elites' domination. The capacity to develop policies and plans is concentrated in the hands of state actors, with institutional dynamics in relation to policy formulation put at federal government, while the task of implementing these policies would fall on the shoulders of ULGs' and NSAs'.

4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Participation of non-state actors at various phases of the local development decision-making process has the capacity to monitor and evaluate the progress of an initiative in two ways. To begin with, they can boost people's involvement and ownership in the development process, hence increasing system openness and accountability. Second, by directly interacting at various phases of the local development decision-making process, non-state actors can examine policy planning and implementation. As a result, NSAs can support the process and provide an opportunity for mutual evaluation in establishing and implementing development agendas, thanks to their capacities and knowledge in policy planning and execution.

As per the findings from key informant interviews with PEEs and focus groups in Butajira city revealed that the NSAs' lack of trust in monitoring stemmed from the fact that the monitoring was done via representation from committee members. The above findings of key informant interviews with PEEs and focus groups all agreed that the development committee in the city had stopped low quality cobblestone road and modified the construction. This means that at this development stage Butajira city took into account the NSAs' thoughts and complaints and implemented corrective actions. The preceding findings also revealed that the development committee's main issue was a lack of expert competence to monitor the execution of development initiatives. To completely identify the gap in implementation, the development committee lacked understanding of the development project under consideration. The findings of the focus groups revealed that the development committee was

unable to determine the quality of the material or stone utilized to prepare the cobblestone. They only look to see if the contractor has laid the cobblestones. The government does not always accept the NSAs' opinions on building qualities. To this effect, this analysis of the findings suggests that business community institutions like chamber of commerce and community organizations like development committee, which both functions outside of bureaucratic government structures are effective in increasing NSAs' engagement efficiency and effectiveness.

According to the findings of interviews with Kebele managers in Ambo and Finote Selam ULGs, the ULGs were an example of how NSAs' used their power using their power to monitor. The NSAs in both kebeles' kept a close eye on the development of cobblestone roads in their neighborhood. When citizens and the private sector noticed poor quality construction, the contractor was ordered to stop working and improve. The above findings also revealed if the contractor used low grade stone and improperly paved cobble stones, the contractor was barred from bidding on the ULGs' cobble stone works auctions as a result of non-state actors' actions. Non-state actors, for example, prevented low quality cobblestone construction from Adam Garage to Shell Motel road that passes through Finote Selam city in Kebele 01. As a result of the faulty construction, the cobblestone road had to be rebuilt three times. This research suggests that real NSAs' engagement increases NSAs' ownership of development outcomes.

Despite a higher level of engagement in monitoring, focus group discussions found that in some parts of the case study ULGs', monitoring was done by engineers and kebele heads. As a result, ULG's engineers were negotiating quality of construction with contractors working on cobblestone road construction. When non-state actors discovered poor quality and reported it to the ULGs, the case study ULGs failed to take non-state actors' remarks into account. Despite the fact that non-state actors have the authority to supervise the execution of local development activities, they have been ignored by the ULGs. This suggests that government experts have a tendency of controlling NSAs' power and ignoring their voices.

The involvement of NSAs' in evaluation phase of local development is critical to ensuring that activities are carried out to the highest possible standard and that the beneficiaries demands are met as well as ensuring that resources are used properly for the initiatives that are meant for local development. To this effect, the NSAs' ownership in development results increases. The lack of engagements in evaluation provides fertile ground for public money misappropriation. The findings of focus groups revealed that it was a premeditated move on the part of experts and government officials to kick back public funds in coordination with those hired to carry out local development projects. In addition to misuse of public funds, the FGDS findings revealed that this circumstance resulted in the generation of low-quality local development outcomes. Furthermore, this situation limited the NSAs' ability to

improve government openness. This outcome suggests that true NSAs' involvement cooperation improves government transparency, which, in turn promotes good governance.

The results of the focus groups in the case study ULGs show that there was limited NSA participation in the evaluation. Based on our observations during our field work, the researchers also believe that there was limited NSA participation in evaluation. The case study ULGs' mechanism for involving non-state actors in review and the yearly general public meeting did not allow for real NSA participation. On the yearly conference, the NSAs took part in a local development appraisal. In the case study ULGs', the NSAs were tasked in assessing prior performance of the development committees, chamber of commerce's, and development projects' financial performances.

In line with urban power theory, decision-making process in monitoring and evaluation was dominated by state actors. To this end, the capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation in the case study ULGs is concentrated in the hands of state actors, though the power of monitoring in local development is placed in the hands of NSAs in some kebeles in the case study ULGs.

To sum up, the empirical data in the case study ULGs' showed that elite groups with ethnic heritage and political affiliation ties to the state have prerogative rights in local development decision-making processes such as planning, need identification, policy formulation, and monitoring. The power of local development decision-making processes in planning, need identification, policy formulation, monitoring, and assessment constitutes the preferences of the state actor who controls the process in the case study ULGs. Simply put, the NSAs are the beneficiaries of faraway policymakers' and decision-makers' acts. Nonetheless, there are several instances in which the state actor enacts laws or policies that affect the interests of NSAs and ordinary residents. For example, the power elite dominated the policy or law making process in the land lease policy and the charities and societies laws. As a result, the state actor in the case study was more powerful than the NSAs. As a result, the elite model portrays the situation from various perspectives. From these perspectives, the elite model, rather than the urban regime theory, better reflects the urban governance system in the case study ULGs. To this end, the case study ULGs' urban governance system was unable to equally accommodate the NSAs and state preferences in the local development decision-making process.

5. Conclusion

In the case study ULGs', the government dominated decision-making about local development. The result of this research provided insight on the government's hegemony over NSAs' when it comes to participatory development decisions. Insufficient NSAs' engagement in development decision-making would have impeded collaborative development in the case study ULGs'. NSAs' contribution to improving effective development management at the local

level, as well as the production of resources for local development, would be impeded if true NSAs' engagement was not improved. As a result, the role of NSAs' engagement in bridging the ULGs' gap in local service supply was impeded. Inadequate NSAs' engagement in local development decision-making would increase the NSAs' predisposition to be a passive receiver of development benefits rather than owner of development.

NSAs' involvement in development activities are closely associated with top-down development models, in which NSAs' engagement is viewed as a requirement for obtaining local public service. Decentralization of governance as a mechanism for increasing NSAs' engagement would be hampered as a result of this condition. The case study ULGs' both needs and fears NSAs' involvement in local development. On the one hand, it requires NSAs' engagement to close a gap in service delivery. On the other hand, it was designed to keep NSAs' engagement to a minimum.

6. Recommendations

To maximize the effectiveness of NSAs' engagement, the NSAs' must be fully included in the decision-making process addressing local development. Extending the involvement of NSAs' in development beyond the passive delivery of local public goods is essential. It is critical to link project-level action to a broader policy-making agenda, allowing the NSAs' to wrestle with and reverse a set of policy priorities.

Rather of being the primary provider and maker of development, the government's role must be limited to that of facilitator. Rather of dominating decision-making in the development process, officials of government and experts must serve as change agents. They are simply required to give technical advice and professional inputs.

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