

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Effects of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity on state- and nation-building processes in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzed the equitable allocation of infrastructure across regional states in Ethiopia. In general, in the past years, there has been a good start in the infrastructure sector in Ethiopia. However, the governance and equity system of infrastructure in Ethiopia is not flexible, not technology-oriented, not fair, and not easily solved. The results of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) showed that there is a lack of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity, which has negatively impacted the state- and nation-building processes in Ethiopia. According to the interviewees, so long as the unmet demand for infrastructure exists, it remains a key restraint on doing business in most Ethiopian regional states. This is due to the lack of integrated frameworks, as there are coordination failures (lack of proper government intervention, including a lack of proper understanding and implementation of the constitution and the federal system). In Ethiopia, to reduce these bottlenecks arising from the lack of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity and their effects on nation-building, first of all, the government has to critically hear the people, deeply assess the problems, and come to the point and then discuss the problems and the way forward with the society at large.

Keywords: *nation-building process (NBP); institutional capacity (IC); infrastructure governance (IG); infrastructure equity (IE); federalism; Ethiopian regional states; Ethiopia*

1. Introduction

The paper examined the equitable allocation of infrastructure across regional states in Ethiopia. From the analysis, four groups of factors emerged as key challenges in moving towards equitable public infrastructure allocation, which are institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity and their effects on state- and nation-building processes. Therefore, interviewees and focus groups participants were mainly asked to explain how/why the factors of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity on the nation-building process occurred, and how to address them to improve the equitable allocation of funded infrastructure development in Ethiopia.

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In general, there has been, in the past years, a good start in the infrastructure sector in Ethiopia. However, the governance and equity system of infrastructure in Ethiopia is not flexible, not technology-oriented, not fair, and not easily solved. There is a deep-rooted intervention of politics on each activity in the infrastructure sector and it is difficult to alienate professional freedom from these interventions. The higher officials of the then-ruling party Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democracy Front (EPRDF) routinely considered each institution as if it is their second office for their own interest, not for the public or government interest. Moreover, the lack of capacity, governance, and equity is due to unmanaged interventions of politics in appointments, selections, and implementations. Besides that, corruption is a critical problem for infrastructure development. The federal government's structure is the main problem to having a united and improved modern infrastructure system in Ethiopia, and this is because the government is structured with one nation (language), which results in self-centered views (regional thinking, which is narrow thinking). In other words, regional thinking would lead to upheaval and state failure.

In Ethiopia, to reduce the bottlenecks arising from the lack of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity and their effects on nation-building, first of all, the government has to critically hear the people, deeply assess the problems, and come to the point and then discuss the problems and the way forward with the society at large and with all the concerned bodies, elites, etc. The other point is that the relationship between the federal government and regional government is limited and the know-how on addressing the above-mentioned problems is very low. This paves the way for the lack of quality, equality, and equity. The contribution of the paper is by developing comprehensive determining factors for equity in infrastructure and nation-building concepts. Secondly, the paper focused on delivering a portion of methodological improvement to the factually difficult question of how to evaluate infrastructure inequity and its wider impact on nation-building across regional states in Ethiopia. And hence, the paper has theoretical and methodological contributions with broader impacts.

The conceptual comprehensive framework, the methodology used in the study, and the analysis of the major variables from the empirical evidence including policy implications and the way forward are presented below.

2. Equitable infrastructure allocation in Ethiopian context: Conceptual/empirical framework

It is pertinent to study the equitable allocation of infrastructure investment and institution quality in the context of Ethiopia's economic growth path. This is consistent with the literature on development of policy-making and the role of government institutions (Todaro and Smith, 2021). This also means that the links between infrastructure investment and economic growth could be influenced by institutional quality (Okoh and Ebi, 2013). Nevertheless, insufficient attention has been typically paid to the development of the necessary institutions to operate and maintain infrastructures in Ethiopia (Rammelt, 2018).

The federal government of Ethiopia is structured practically vertical. Consequently, one of the weaknesses of the institutional structure is the lack of horizontal coordination (Treuhaft, 2016). Thus, it has been stated that the hindrance to attaining a better state of affairs is not a matter of knowledge of opportunities, technological opportunities, resources, or preferences, but only

of cooperation and coordination (Hoff, 2000). This requires capabilities that emphasize inter-relationships, interdependencies, and a holistic rather than a hierarchical approach (Hoff, 2000). Besides that, the lack of policy cooperation and coordination can pose high risks of infrastructure inequity. This is consistent with the literature, which noted the need for an intentional focus on eliminating inequities and barriers and making accountable and catalytic investments to lagging regions (Treuhaft, 2016).

More importantly, at the national planning level, the lack of horizontal coordination in infrastructure development is reflected in the lack of inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination. Given the interdependencies and linkages between infrastructure and other sectors as well as the economy as a whole (Hoff, 2000), infrastructure planning for economic development and the nation-building process involves various sectors, such as construction and infrastructure service technology. The national development planning in Ethiopia is mostly a top-down process led by the executive body (the prime minister) and coordinated by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) National Planning Commission (NPC). However, there is no central system of horizontal coordination between ministries and between regional governments, which makes it difficult for any individual government department to collaborate across institutions. In the absence of such a system, the NPC's coordinating function is largely limited to monitoring separate, sometimes contradictory, policy agendas adopted by the sectors and regions (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2016). This means that the lack of political consensus goes together with the lack of high-powered government institutions in providing an effective mechanism for implementing national infrastructure plans equitably (Oyedele, 2012; Dang and Pheng, 2015).

Consequently, inequitable infrastructure development has a negative effect on nation-building, which discourages everyone's participation and the benefits from the nation's economic transformation (Treuhaft, 2016). This is also directly related to the maxims by the rural population of Ethiopia, such as "The road is our bloodline!" (Kisandid, 2015, as cited by Rammelt, 2018, p. 6). Thus, equity concerns the delivery of infrastructure resources and is unavoidably related to ideas of fairness and social justice (Bejaković and Meinardus, 2011). In other words, a fair allocation of resources must be one that "all 'prospective members of society' would agree on, before they recognized which position they would occupy" (World Bank, 2005, p. 77).

The lack of institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity has been hypothesized as the root construct affecting the nation-building process in Ethiopia. Specifically, a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis and tests of significance conducted by Desalegn and Solomon (2021) indicated that the insufficient nation-building process resulted in the lack of rule of law, lack of democratic/public accountability, lack of shared national identity, and lack of inclusive growth and sustainability. These issues are connected to state-building, which has tangible concepts, such as building organizations, systems, etc., whereas nation-building in a multi-national society has intangible concepts, such as improving political participation, the abstract process of developing a shared sense of identity (unity in diversity), etc. (Dinnen, 2006). As mentioned above, the goal of nation-building is to form the shared ability to realize public provision results and to follow a shared vision of the future (Bourgon, 2010; Hundara, 2016), which are needed to build strong institutional capacity and infrastructure governance in Ethiopia. This is reflected in the literature, which articulated productive capacity as the gathering of human capital and institutions that enables inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Ethiopia (Shiferaw,

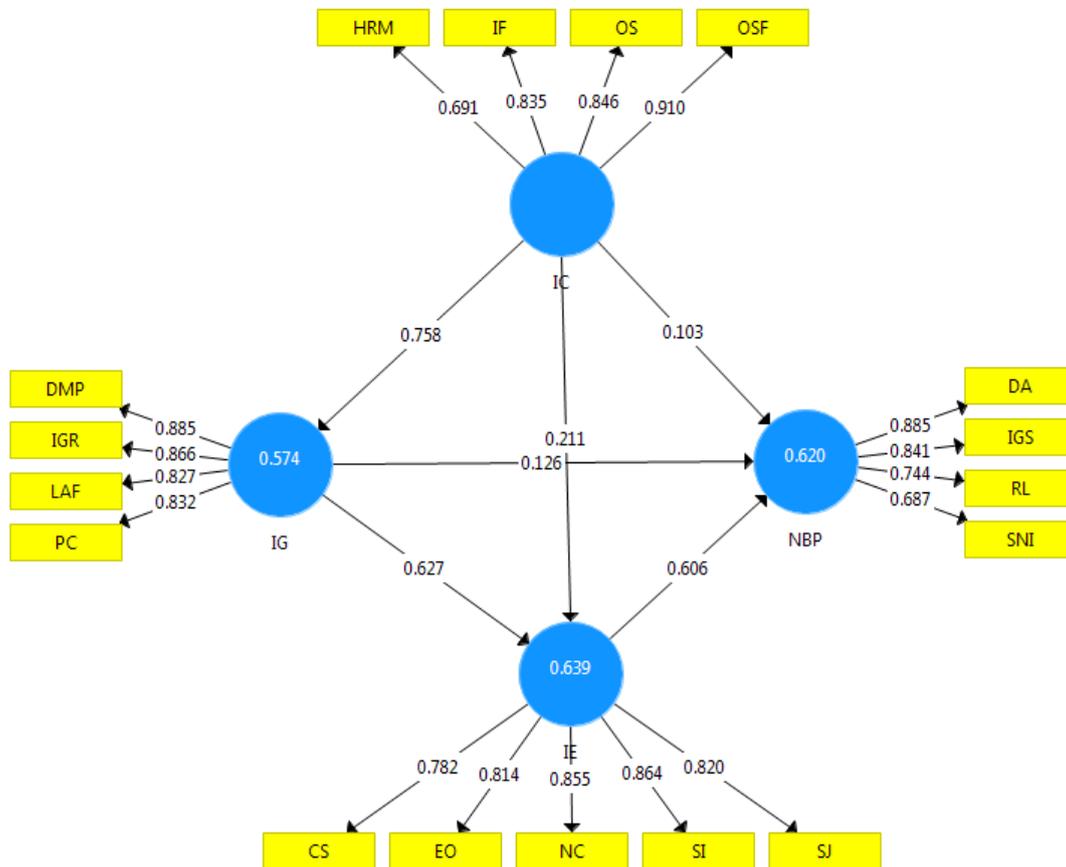
2017). Also, it is stated that “federalism has rightly the potential to address all identity, diversity and governance-related problems the highly centralized and undemocratic systems unfold” (Hundara, 2016, p. 4).

A review of the literature indicated that there is gradually a consensus that economic development is a multidimensional process that includes interactions between different goals of development and therefore would need systematically designed policies and strategies (Rammelt, 2018; Ashenafi, 2017). Specifically, infrastructure equity issues are complex and multifaceted. That is why there is no single pathway for infrastructure equity that all countries can pursue. In the long term, the infrastructure equity process requires changes in policies to account for new emerging factors and trends. The literature has demonstrated that focusing on one single factor alone cannot guarantee success in the infrastructure equity process. Additionally, infrastructure equity is a complex process that involves the interrelationships of different construct variables. One cannot risk overlooking these relationships, as they lie at the center of the development process in general and infrastructure equity in particular.

Furthermore, conceptual frameworks and models are developed based on theories. Economics is mainly concerned with the explanation and prediction of an observed phenomenon, which is based on the use of theories. The dictionary meaning of theory is a set of properly argued ideas intended to explain facts/events in terms of a set of basic rules and assumptions; for example, the theory of firms assumes profit maximization and the theory of consumers assumes utility maximization (Sarantakos, 1993). With the application of statistical tools and econometric techniques, models can be constructed from economic theories. Hence, a model is a formal framework for representing the basic features of a complex system from a few central relationships (Sarantakos, 1993). This focuses on causal interrelationships, which is establishing a causal description to develop theories (Sarantakos, 1993). It is a basic representation of real circumstances that is realized by a set of meaningful and reliable assumptions. In making assumptions, one has to make sure that the assumptions are consistent and retain as much realism as possible. They should also attain a reasonable degree of generality.

Therefore, theories are composed of concepts linked by interrelationships. In order to test a theory, one needs to compare the predictions it makes with measurements from the social world. This is more difficult than it seems because concepts cannot be measured directly. In general, in order to test theories, there must be a way of measuring each concept; that is, for each, there must be an indicator. An indicator is a method of measurement that aims to measure the concept accurately. An earlier study by Desalegn and Solomon (2021) tested the hypotheses of institutional capacity and infrastructure governance, as the study needed independent and dependent variables for both concepts. The study’s four constructs and 17 indicators are summarized in **Figure 1** as a diagram that is also a theory as a diagram. Hence, quantitatively, this conceptual/empirical framework showed that the lack of institutional capacity (indirect), infrastructure governance (indirect), and equity (direct) have negative impacts on state- and nation-building processes. Nevertheless, this present paper mainly focused on the qualitative aspects of these three variables on state- and nation-building processes across regional states in Ethiopia.¹

¹ Ethiopian Constitution, 1995, Article 47-1. Member states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia are the following: 1) Tigray, 2) Afar, 3) Amhara, 4) Oromia, 5) Somali, 6) Benshangul/Gumuz, 7) Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, 8) Gambela Peoples, and 9) Harari People.



Legend:

- **IC = Institutional Capacity**, which includes Human Resource Management (HRM), Organizational Structure (OS), Organizational Systems and Frameworks (OSF), and Infrastructure Funding (IF)
- **IG = Infrastructure Governance** comprises indicators such as Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), Decision-Making Procedures (DMP), Land Acquisition Framework (LAF), and Political Commitment (PC)
- **IE = Infrastructure Equity** embraces factors such as Equal Opportunity (EO), Social Justice (SJ), National Competitiveness (NC), Spatial Intervention (SI), and Citizen Satisfaction (CS)
- **NBP = Nation-Building Process** includes Rule of Law (RL), Democratic Accountability (DA), Shared National Identity (SNI), and Inclusive Growth and Sustainability (IGS)

Figure 1. Conceptual/empirical framework/model depicting the interrelationships between Institutional Capacity, Infrastructure Governance, Infrastructure Equity, and Nation-Building Process in Ethiopia. Adopted from Desalegn and Solomon (2021).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection methods

3.1.1 In-depth interviews

Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach that tries to study phenomena in their natural settings (Sarantakos, 1993; Creswell, 1998; Rubin, 2006). It seeks to understand, as completely as possible, the phenomena under study, which in this case is the very complex issue of infrastructure equity as related to the nation-building process (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014). This qualitative research method involved the use of in-depth interviews, document reviews, and FGDs in order

to understand and explain the equitability of infrastructure development in Ethiopia. In-depth interviews are one of the main methods of data collection used in qualitative research (Sarantakos, 1993; Creswell, 1998; Rubin, 2006; Brounéus, 2011). Thus, the success of the interview depends, to a large extent, on the personal and professional qualities of the interviewer (Sarantakos, 1993; Ritchie et al., 2014; Rubin and Rubin, 2011). For qualitative data, the study employed the purposive and sometimes the snowball sampling techniques (Sarantakos, 1993; Creswell, 1998) to identify participants with unique perspectives or those who could offer in-depth insights to explain the results' variances. A structured interview was employed in the study, which had a clear purpose and contained open-ended questions. See Appendix A for the interview questions.

In-depth interviews were conducted to examine how to resolve issues found in the survey. Therefore, the population of interest for in-depth interviews were key higher officials, planners, policy-makers, and key players from non-governmental sectors. Subsequently, whenever appropriate, respondents were asked how the use of institutional capacity and infrastructure governance impact infrastructure equity and nation-building, and how these should be resolved. The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed to help recall the narrative responses for the review and discussion thereafter. Original tape recordings were kept for checking original meanings and contexts whenever necessary.

Determining a sample size for interviews is difficult. Creswell (1998) suggested a sample size of 5 to 25. By referring to researchers' experiences, Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016) indicated that a purposive sample of 6 to 10 participants with diverse experiences might, therefore, provide sufficient information power. However, there are no specific rules to be followed for qualitative inquiry. Since in-depth interviews in this study mostly involved describing with depth and in detail the current challenges of equity in infrastructure development in Ethiopia and the responses from the respondents' experiences, the nearest to the maximum sample size that the research targeted was 23. 10 purposely selected individuals from federal institutions were identified for in-depth interviews. There were also 13 individuals purposely selected from four institutions (regional president office, road, electricity, and telecommunications) from four regional governments (Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and Benshangul/Gumuz), for a total of 23 individuals. Of these 23 individuals, 18 (8 from federal institutions and 10 from regional governments) were interviewed. See Appendix B Table B1 for the profiles of in-depth interviews' participants.

Thus, the key interviewees were selected based on their previous and current positions and longtime experience in each sector suitable to the subject matter. The researchers requested the key interviewees to informally discuss the subject matter of the study with the aim to gather detailed data relevant for this study. All interviewees were asked the same open-ended question to determine the practice and challenges of infrastructure equity with an emphasis on the principles as per the law of the land, the roles of key actors or policy-makers in practice, and the participation and approaches in the infrastructure decision-making process. They were also asked to explain possible factors that have both positive and negative impacts on the effects of infrastructure equity on the nation-building process (Kaso et al., 2018). Moreover, as the plan was to digitally record the interviews, it was appropriate to ask for permission to do so. If the interviewees felt comfortable with this, it was useful in parallel to take notes of details and observations that helped to remember specific passages when the researchers later listened to the interviews for transcribing. If the interviewees did not feel comfortable with recording, taking good notes was all the more important (Brounéus, 2011).

3.1.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

In addition, in-depth interviews, some relevant FGDs, and document analyses were involved. Three obvious factors that affect the ability to plan focus groups are ethical concerns, budget issues, and time constraints (Rubin, 2016; Brounéus, 2011; Morgan, 1997). Combining both practical and substantive considerations helped to clarify the basis for the rule-of-thumb size of the group, which was specified at a range of 6 to 10 (Morgan, 1997). The FGDs involved individuals from eight cities in four regional states in Ethiopia. See Appendix B Table B2 for the profiles of focus group's participants.

3.2. Data quality assurance

To address credibility, the study followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of the data that were collected from the interviews. According to Lincoln and Guba, trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The following techniques were used by this study to ensure credibility: prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks, and thick description. To ensure transferability, thick description was used. To ensure dependability, inquiry audits were used, and to ensure conformability, triangulation was used to decrease the influence of investigators' bias in this qualitative research. Moreover, the study also chose to focus on validity strategies that are frequently used by qualitative researchers: prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer review/debriefing, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, thick description, external audits, etc. (Creswell, 1998). Reliability can be enhanced, as the study obtained detailed field notes by employing good-quality tapes for recording and by transcribing the tapes (Rubin, 2006; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). In addition to this, the study considered the criteria for trustworthiness across research paradigms and designs, which were social validity, adequacy of data, and adequacy of interpretation (Morrow, 2005; Sousa, 2014). Therefore, the study used these criteria to ensure qualitative data quality.

3.3. Data analysis methods

3.3.1 Thematic analysis (TA)

Qualitative data are analyzed using thematic analysis, quotes, codes, and themes (Rubin and Rubin, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). These are used to investigate classifications and existing themes (patterns) that link to the data (Alhojailan, 2012). While sorting and naming themes require some level of interpretation, the interpretation is kept to a minimum. A researcher's own feelings and thoughts about the themes or what the themes signify are largely irrelevant to the TA (Rubin and Rubin, 2011; Alhojailan, 2012).

Moreover, thematic analysis is appropriate for situations such as data interpretation, inductive approaches, analysis of different steps of data, and coding and categorizing (Alhojailan, 2012). Principally, public intent data, such as public infrastructure, have great potential for designing, executing, and evaluating public programs, policies, and strategies. Because public intent data are a precondition for a government's many purposes, government agencies are key producers of these data by means of censuses, organizational data collection, and more. Citizens, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and worldwide organizations are involved in the production of public intent data using surveys, different platforms, and other

resources (Sachs et al., 2021). These types of data can lead to better lives through three key ways: improving policy-making and service-delivery, prioritizing scarce resources and targeting them to reach disadvantaged populations and areas, and holding the government accountable and enabling individuals to make better selections through more information and knowledge (Sachs et al., 2021).

4. Data descriptions

Interviews and FGDs were conducted from August 2019 to November 2019. 23 higher officials, who hold key positions in organizations and are involved in planning and executing national infrastructure development plans, were contacted. However, only 18 (8 from federal institutions and 10 from regional governments) of them agreed to be interviewed. For the FGDs, it was practically possible to have three to six participants in each focus group due to their different personal reasons. As the FGDs' results were more or less similar to those of individual interviews, one group in each regional state was adequate for saturation. Then, FGDs were conducted in four cities out of eight (one city in each of four regional states, which were Adama in Oromia, Bahir Dar in Amhara, Mekelle in Tigray, and Assosa in Benshangul/Gumuz. Basically, the city administration offices were the center of the focus group. In addition, it included the representatives from the road, telecommunications, and electricity institutions and advisors, planners, and experts from the administration offices. Some of the participants were also representatives from their city council.

5. Examining institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and equity, and their effects on nation-building process

5.1. Institutional capacity of the government in the infrastructure sector in Ethiopia

All interviewees (18) agreed that institutional capacity, infrastructure governance, and infrastructure equity have a great impact on the nation-building process in Ethiopia. They believed that institutional capacity is the base for the nation-building process in any country. It has been stated that infrastructure cannot be fulfilled without a strong institutional capacity (African Development Bank Group, 2011). Besides that, investments in human capital have become more and more important, as the nature of infrastructure development has evolved in response to rapid technological change (World Bank Group, 2018). Moreover, TR1 suggested that the major criteria to measure institutional capacity is its institutional policies and systems. This is because institutions have emerged as sets of rules, structures, systems and policies, and common frameworks for managing key actors' processes and for enforcing binding agreements (Cunningham and Kwakkell, 2009).

TR1 and C2 (11%) believed that, in the previous three decades, the institutions in the infrastructure sector contributed a great role in the nation-building process. However, 89% of the interviewees described that institutional capacity had been wrongly implemented in the last 27 years, as there was interference by politicians in every institution for their personal interests. The majority of the interviewees added that the law was "violated and hijacked" by illegal political leadership by giving priority to their regional state or political party directions. For example, there were budget allocation disparities by the Ethiopian Road Authority in the 2017/18 budget year. From the total budget of 19.2 billion, 2.5 billion (13%) for South, 9.3 billion (48%) for Tigray, 3.5 billion (18%)

for Oromia and South, 1.7 billion (8%) for Oromia, 1.6 billion (8%) for Amhara, and 992 million (5%) for Drie Dawa were allocated for this budget year (Ethiopian Road Authority, 2018). Thus, there is a gap between the principle and practice of policy formulation in the infrastructure sector in Ethiopia, in which a few government officials on the top were the key actors. Thus, the process is a less consultative and is more an exclusive and top-down process (Kaso et al., 2018).

Moreover, FG6 added that it is hypothetically believed that infrastructure plays a positive role in the nation-building process. This is consistent with the goal of nation-building, which is to form the collective capacity to attain public results and to follow a shared vision of the future (Dinnen, 2006; Bourgon, 2010). According to BR2, as “nation-building is psychological thinking,” previously, periphery regions such as Benshangul/Gumuz felt “neglected in the county’s infrastructure development effort.” Gradually, as connections increased, they started to believe that the federal government has a concern for them. Thus, this is crucial for sustainable growth and inclusive development, and good infrastructure has an impact on growth directly and indirectly (Okoh and Ebi, 2013; Rauniyar and Kanbur, 2010; African Development Bank Group, 2011).

89% of the participants believed that the institutions are not led by professionals and rather are led by political appointees based on political loyalty. Hence, the results of collaborations are varied, not always easy to grip, often lacking clear measures for evaluating them, and give rise to disagreements (Koppenjan, 2008). BR1 and TR2 (11%) also stated that politicized infrastructural planning and decision-making processes affect the institutional capacity of the sector in Ethiopia. Moreover, the lack of commitment of political leaders and government bureaucrats to national goals, as opposed to personal interests, could make infrastructure planning and decision-making politicized rather than rationalized (Oyedele, 2012; Dang and Pheng, 2015). Thus, the institutionalization of participation in the planning of public infrastructure delivery and strengthening democratic institutions is crucial in Ethiopia (Terefe, 2014).

In addition, powerful groups can create pressure to affect planning to serve their own vested interests (Dang and Pheng, 2015). Therefore, the government should deliver a framework to ensure the good performance of various actors in carrying out fundamental policies (Kaso et al., 2018). Furthermore, planning and policy-making for infrastructure are multi-actor processes, and the fostering of an innovative institutional capacity that coordinates efforts and resources is considered one of the determinants of infrastructure development (Okoh and Ebi, 2013; Dang and Pheng, 2015). The focus group’s result on institutional capacity was similar to that of the interviews. And hence, all focus group participants believed that, generally, institutional capacity in the infrastructure sector has a great impact on the nation-building process. From the above discussion, one can conclude that there should be a high level of emphasis on institution-building. The researchers also believe that institutional independence and professional ethics have to be the areas of focus, as individual (personal) power has more strength than the institutions in the Ethiopian decision-making process in the infrastructure sector.

5.2. Infrastructure governance in Ethiopia

All interviewees believed that there is a lack of infrastructure governance in Ethiopia, which is very essential for national consensus and nation-building processes in the country. They emphasized that the role of governance in contributing to bringing about trust in state-society relations is very weak. They also stated that civil society is not strong in the sector. However, according to

TR1, in the last 27 years, the following three basic criteria were used for the allocation of basic infrastructures, especially roads, in Ethiopia: connecting Addis Ababa to neighboring countries and ports, connecting regions to regions, and linking unconnected areas to densely populated ones. Thus, TR1 believed that, as infrastructures were allocated based on these criteria, there are great improvements in infrastructure governance. This is unlike the opinions of other interviewees.

Based on the above clarifications, the lack of infrastructure governance can have a significantly negative impact on the returns to infrastructure investment, and ignoring governance weaknesses can significantly dampen the economic returns to infrastructure projects in developing countries (African Development Bank Group, 2011). Besides that, the nearly exclusive focus of infrastructure delivery in the hands of the public sector, especially in less developed countries such as Ethiopia, has led to failures in the supply of these facilities (Okoh and Ebi, 2013). Above and beyond, corruption has been a roadblock to institutional accountability and governance in Ethiopia (World Bank Group, 2016). This shows that corruption has a great effect on infrastructure governance in the country, which is the result of the lack of transparent and accountable governance. Furthermore, the state could fail because politicians, bureaucrats, and donor agencies often pursue their own objectives (Sawada, 2015) rather than national goals. This shows that there must be a stronger framework so that all agencies have to have a shared commitment to the betterment of the system (network) of infrastructure (Bowditch and Noble, 2017).

Moreover, all interviewees believed that there are no adequate trust-building measures carried out between the federal government and regional states with respect to infrastructure development in Ethiopia. It was also mentioned that there is a weak political commitment and willingness on the part of the top leadership and high-level decision-makers in infrastructure governance. In fact, every interviewee commented that there is no integration between road, electricity, and Ethio telecom in Ethiopia. Thus, poor infrastructure integration raises the cost of doing business, erodes competitiveness, and limits access to markets, both domestic and foreign (African Development Bank Group, 2011). Furthermore, the Ethiopian Constitution provides little guidance on managing the federal-state relations relative to the roles and tasks of each government (Fiseha, 2009). There are not many studies on how the relationship between the federal government and the states should be managed on a sector-by-sector basis (Fiseha, 2009). According to Fiseha (2009), one could carefully state that intergovernmental relations (IGRs) in Ethiopia are in the early phase. Subsequently, the federation needs formal institutions and principles of IGRs to handle such problems amicably, including transparent and accountable budget allocations (Mengie, 2016).

TR1 revealed that there were sayings such as “you are hurt by others” or “us-them”. It has been identified that political considerations and weak management capabilities can also lead to soft but pervasive “forms of populism”, where households and firms do not pay bills, starving public utilities of revenue (African Development Bank Group, 2011). It has been also suggested that institutional performance matters when explaining the source of citizens’ trust. The level of skepticism towards institutions in Ethiopia is driven more by “the gap between the perception of citizens’ expectations and the actual performance of public institutions” (Asfaw, 2019, p. 37). Actually, it has been generally stated that the regional distribution of infrastructure investment is deeply affected by political inquiries, while the impacts of reallocation and efficiency differ from one investigation to the next (Albalate et al., 2012). Thus, political interferences and unconventional fund allocation in infrastructure development out of the criteria need political solutions.

Furthermore, all interviewees established that land acquisition/right-of-way is one of the main obstacles to infrastructure development in Ethiopia. This is also intensified by populist politicians. This is because investment in infrastructures, such as road, airport, and hydropower development for public purposes, is very significant for the development of the country and needs a vast quantity of land (Kochendörfer-Lucius and Pleskovic, 2006; Ghimire et al., 2017). This obstacle is the result of a lack of effective bureaucracy in settling land-acquisition claims and disputes in infrastructure development. There is also a lack of effective land-acquisition compensation and monitoring system in Ethiopia (Fiseha, 2009; Afesha, 2015). Besides that, low infrastructure availability in Africa impacts the development of many countries on the continent (African Development Bank Group, 2011). Thus, factors explaining the low infrastructure delivery in Africa (weak legal and institutional frameworks, weaknesses in infrastructure planning and project preparation, governance and corruption, and infrastructure deficits) are not exceptional to Ethiopia (African Development Bank Group, 2011). This is also consistent with the literature that institutions are used by political authorities in the exercise of management of resources for equitable infrastructure development (Okoh and Ebi, 2013) due to political, government, administrative, and market failures in Ethiopia. In relation to this, the focus group's result on infrastructure governance was similar to that of the interviews. All focus group participants believed that there is an infrastructure governance problem in Ethiopia. They also mentioned that the legal frameworks are not properly implemented in this country.

Therefore, political failures (when individual or sectional interests are allowable to overtake public interest due to effective lobbying on the part of those interests), government failures (the reasons why a public sector intervention fails to lead to an overall improvement), and administrative failings (the interests of public servants not coinciding with the public interest, for example, public servants being concerned with perceptions of their own significance) are the main coordination failures in the infrastructure sector (Hoff, 2000; Dang and Pheng, 2015; Cooper and John, 1988; Glavan, 2007; Jones, 2009). As a final point, one can conclude from the above that the major problem lies in the "unlimited power" of individuals, especially the political elites, who break the laws without fear of accountability. From this perspective, it is plausible to argue that civil society is an advantage for infrastructure governance by creating and energizing popular participation, consultation, inclusion, and accountability. When stakeholder-led infrastructure is a reality, the country is more likely to be better served by infrastructure solutions that are scaled, feasible, and timely (Bowditch and Noble, 2017).

5.3. Infrastructure equity in Ethiopia

TR1 and TR2 (11%) argued that there is no deliberate policy problem in Ethiopia. Also, they mentioned that there is no such infrastructure equity problem in Ethiopia. In contrast to this, OR1, OR2, and AR3 (17%) argued that there is no equity in the infrastructure sector across the regions in Ethiopia. This is not only from region to region but also there is no equitable distribution in infrastructure from zone to zone and from Woreda (district) to Woreda. Moreover, AR1 mentioned that the public believes that there is no equitable distribution of infrastructure in the country. Due to this inequitable distribution of infrastructure, there is dissatisfaction and complaints by the community and the society at large. For example, there is no equal access/opportunity in road infrastructure between Amhara and Tigray. In the Amhara region, there are zones that are not connected with each other, for example, the North Gonder and Wag Hemra zones, let alone Woreda

(district) to Woreda and Kebele to Kebele. In contrast, in the Tigray region, there is no Woreda that is not connected to each other. This relates to a document review, which was assessed under the supervision of the FDRE House of Federation that stated that there are numerous complaints by the regional states and the public at large about road infrastructure inequity. It also stated that the issue of road infrastructure equity needs further investigation (Ethiopian Road Authority, 2018).

FG6 argued that a road map has been prepared for infrastructure development for the last 20 and more years in Ethiopia. There were even standards and criteria for infrastructure distribution. But the problem is that there is no implementation according to the road map, standard, and criteria, such that there is an unbalanced distribution of infrastructure development in effect. This is the result of the lack of spatial intervention/planning and proper implementation. The main cause of this is that there is an illegal intervention of autocratic political officials. As a result of this, there is no common understanding, trust, empathy, and love for each other among the political elites (due to extractive institutions or narrow elites) across the country. Infrastructure inequity studies between 2006 and 2016, for example, showed that the increase in road density was concentrated in some regions, especially Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa, as well as in Oromia in the center and in Tigray in the north of the country. However, remote and economically lagging regions, such as the Benshangul/Gumuz and Somali and Amhara regions, saw lesser increases in road density (Kanth and Geiger, 2017). See Appendix C Figure C1 for the large-scale road network expansion (2000–2016) (Moneke, 2020) across regional states in Ethiopia. Hence, “by perceiving infrastructures as potentially having unequally distributed catalytic effects, we should be able to better grasp their role in upholding—and perhaps in addressing—poverty and inequality in Ethiopia” (Rammelt, 2018, p.12).

In relation to this, the authorities' understanding of infrastructure stakeholders is limited because they do not regularly examine the stakeholders' valuation of the infrastructure sector (Hietbrink et al., 2012). This is against the Ethiopian constitution Article 89(1) which states that the government “shall have the duty to formulate policies which ensure that all Ethiopians can benefit from the country's legacy of intellectual and material resources.” Sub-Article 2 also states that the government “has the duty to ensure that all Ethiopians get equal opportunity to improve their economic condition and to promote equitable distribution of wealth among them.”

Currently, one can believe that the federal system of Ethiopia is in a “fragile” state. As mentioned above, infrastructure distribution is one of the causes of this crisis. Thus, relatively large differences in economic situations between regional states are likely to threaten the social cohesion of the federation and to distort federal policy-making and the operation of the internal market. It is incompatible with the very notion of a federal system of government (Poirier and Saunders, 2015). Infrastructure equity helps the national consensus and the nation-building process (Rubin, 2006). This also needs the knowledge of addressing equity issues in decision-making, which requires a theory of social choice and an applicable method of preference modeling that simultaneously addresses equitable social and spatial distributions in infrastructure (Wismadi, 2015). Therefore, the equity theory asserts that the satisfaction of citizens and regional governments rather is influenced by the extent to which they feel that they are being treated equitably by the federal government. However, the citizens and regional states believe that they are not fairly treated by the federal government. The researchers also strongly believe that the misallocation of infrastructure is one of the reasons for the current crisis in Ethiopia.

Finally, 89% of interviewees (except 2 out of 18) believed that there is no infrastructure equity in Ethiopia. Moreover, all focus group participants believed that there is no equitable allocation of infrastructures in Ethiopia. They also stressed that, in the previous years, infrastructure was allocated based on political interference without any clear criteria in Ethiopia. Hence, the focus group's result on infrastructure equity was similar to that of the majority (89%) of the interviews.

See Appendix C Figures C2–C6 for the large-scale electricity, Ethio-telecom, industrial park, airport, and university infrastructure network expansions across regional states in Ethiopia.

According to Adams' (1963) equity theory, individuals who perceive themselves as either under-rewarded or over-rewarded will experience discomfort, and this discomfort leads to efforts to restore equity. Hence, there is a struggle among elites to restore infrastructure equity in Ethiopia. This is because infrastructure plays a decisive role in encouraging economic growth and thereby contributes to the reduction of economic disparity, poverty, and deprivations in the country (Ferro and Lentini, 2008). Therefore, collaborations across sectors, across neighborhoods, and across jurisdictions are essential for moving the regional equity agenda to ensure both horizontal, vertical, spatial, social, and environmental equity including solidarity and subsidiarity (Wismadi, 2015; Thomopoulos et al., 2009; Thomopoulos and Grant-Muller, 2013).

In principle, the above argument is correct. Therefore, implementing smart practices and securing more funds alone cannot guarantee infrastructure equity. Instead, it needs to be recognized that infrastructure equity has been missing from the discussion and acknowledgment that its absence leads to infrastructure disparities (Rubin, 2006). But, in reality, the Ethiopian incumbent government does not ensure infrastructure equity across regional states in Ethiopia due to coordination failures. From this argument, one can conclude that there is no infrastructure equity across regional states in Ethiopia, which is a systemic problem that is not only a perception but also an actual inequity.

5.4. Who were the decision-makers and what were the criteria for infrastructure equity?

All interviewees believed that, generally, infrastructure allocation is mainly decided by the government and approved by the parliament. They also mentioned that, during the decision-making process, as there is a lack of transparency and participation, there are misallocations of resources. The lack of dialogue on infrastructure development with its end-users, civil society, and the private sector has also a negative impact on the quality of planning and project implementation. Besides that, governments are said to lack the tools and institutions that provide the foundation for good decision-making (Wegrich and Hammerschmid, 2017). BR1 and BR2 (11%) mentioned that there is a Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a budget formula for budget allocation, which is prepared by the FDRE House of Federation. The budget for federal infrastructure projects is allocated by the executive body and is approved by the parliament. However, the government's capital spending is excluded from the main budget and hence is excluded from the formula. This is not proper, as it is exposed for misallocation due to the lack of transparency and accountability of government officials. Thus, there should be unbiased and impartial institutions in this sector in Ethiopia.

The problem is that the budget for infrastructure is allocated via political interferences/influences. OR2, FG4, and FG5 (17%) said that the budget is prepared by the FDRE Ministry of Finance based on the formula and approved by the federal parliament. However, the budget for infrastructure is

mainly allocated by the executive body, which makes it unfair. It is revealed that “the practice of policy formulation process in Ethiopia is not always in line with the constitution of the country and the principle of constitutionalism” (Kaso et al., 2018, p. 159). Kaso et al. (2018) also revealed that most policies that guide the existing system are derived from the executive, particularly the Prime Minister (PM). This is contrary to Article 89(6) of the FDRE constitution that stated that the government “shall at all times promote the participation of the people in the formulation of national development policies and programs; it shall also have the duty to support the initiatives of the people in their development endeavors.” Article 43 of the FDRE constitution also stated that the people, nations, and nationalities of Ethiopia have the right to development, and particularly, the right to participate in national development and to be consulted with respect to policies and reject projects affecting their community. Therefore, it indicates that there is a limitation for public and stakeholders’ participation in the process of Ethiopia’s policy formulation, especially in the infrastructure sector.

According to FG3 and OR2, infrastructure is allocated by the political leadership by using subjective criteria. As a result of this, there is political tension between the federal government and the regional states, and among the regional states in the country, which results in the current social problems, such as exclusion, marginalization, inequalities of individuals and ethnic groups, and absence of equal access to opportunities and resources (Kaso et al., 2018). Thus, a society without political commitment is a society of perpetually disengaged or permanently dissatisfied citizens, where vital decisions end up being taken by a handful of elites (Ypi, 2016). To sum up, both the interviewees (89%) and the focus group participants believed that the federal government prepares proposals, which are approved by the federal parliament, that are not transparent to the public. This is because there is no clear standard and criteria for the allocation of infrastructure in Ethiopia.

6. Effects on state- and nation-building processes

All interviewees and FGD participants believed that equitable allocation of infrastructure has a tangible effect on state- and nation-building processes. They also stated that infrastructure improves the citizens’ lifestyle. For example, the expansion of road, electric, and telecom will help Ethiopia to continue as one unified country; to introduce its communities to each other; to be connected in different economic, social, and political activities; to create a common vision opportunity; and to widen the opportunity to live together. TR1 also explained that the experiences of other developed countries showed the importance of infrastructure in creating a connected society. For example, the European countries are not only connected within the country but are also connected across the countries through infrastructure. Likewise, many infrastructures have been constructed in Ethiopia in the last 27 years. As a result of this, many communities have been connected and introduced to each other. From this, one can say that infrastructure is very crucial for state- and nation-building by ensuring the rule of law and democratic/public accountability. Thus, it is explained that state-building is “a process that integrates the disparate groups, peoples, and nations together. It also determines the relation as well as makes the state represents all these different groups structurally and institutionally” (Hundara, 2016, p. 4–5).

FG3 also described that it is impossible to build a country with one nation’s superiority, and rather it must be built by giving equal opportunity and equitable benefits for all in the country.

To achieve this mission, first of all, the government should build an institutional capacity in the infrastructure sector. Secondly, infrastructure governance must follow. Then, if the institutional capacity and infrastructure governance are properly executed, it could be possible to achieve an equitable allocation of infrastructure and the right nation-building process. This is because a country stays together when its citizens share enough preferences and values and can communicate with each other (Alesina and Reich, 2015). Moreover, equal access to infrastructure services and a policy environment that does not discriminate against certain regions or ethnic groups is a central ingredient of structural transformation (Kedir, 2014). This is also because the lack of accommodation of diversity could lead to clashes and pose risks for unification, particularly, in a multiethnic federal system such as in Ethiopia (Mengie, 2016).

In addition, it has been indicated that the core of the federal arrangement lies in the establishment and care of power-sharing that pursues to accommodate certain values suitable to their common circumstances in the process of nation-building (Kincaid, 2011). It is also crucial to strengthen the focus on citizens, which is “an important and necessary building block to help accelerate the power of the citizen in guiding and disciplining the nation’s infrastructure capital and operational expenditure” (Bowditch and Noble, 2009). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that nation-building is the primary interest in Ethiopia. Hence, there should be a great effort for institutional capacity, infrastructure equity, and infrastructure governance. But, currently, as regionalism/provincialism becomes a primary interest, it seems unlikely to give priority to the nation-building process in Ethiopia. However, according to Elazar (1994), to reach that fulfillment of the promise, the government must address people’s minds, their cultures, and their institutions, and “one of the most promising vehicles to addressing all three...is the federal idea” (p. 5). Thus, it is also necessary to ensure the rule of law in the country. Hence, the three central elements of a successful nation-building process are closely interlinked in most cases, which are a unifying and persuasive/integrative ideology, integration of society, and a functional state apparatus (Hippler, 2005).

7. Concrete comments on the way forward in infrastructure development in Ethiopia

89% of interviewees believed that, first of all, the federal government should accept the presence of an unbalanced distribution of infrastructure in the country. Moreover, it is necessary to scientifically audit the current performance of each institution and then to prepare remedial/corrective measures for this issue wherever necessary. And then, the government should explain to the public why such an unbalanced distribution of infrastructure has occurred. Next, the government should develop a clear plan on how to correct this unfair distribution in the country. Based on these two critical issues, the government should build a consensus with the public. Then, the government should implement the plan as per consensus. After the implementation of these principles and directions, the government can solve the unbalanced distribution of infrastructure in the country. This process will help to enhance institutional capacity and good governance. Thus, it is indicated that the human capital, which is a set of person’s abilities and skills having a direct effect on one’s economic and social activity potential, needs to be used to find the corrective measures (Lonska and Mietule, 2015). More importantly, FG6 explained that the Ethiopian government should strengthen the IGR system in the country. There should be strong regional government representatives at the federal level. To ensure this issue, it is good to benchmark the Australian government, as it has

a very strong IGR system. Thus, IGR is a forum for bargaining with the federal government on matters of common interest (Fiseha, 2009).

Finally, all interviewees indicated that all infrastructural development institutions have to prepare a transparent master plan at the national level with the participation of regional state appointees and experts. However, it has been indicated that the process of policy-making in Ethiopia lacks the central element of the process, which is not following the consultative and systematic procedure, and rather it is less consultative and less systematic, as well as being a top-down approach, while a genuine bottom-up policy process is preferable and possible. Following this, the regional governments have to prepare plans at the regional level and develop infrastructures according to their objective realities in order to ensure equity and efficiency as far as possible. Regarding shared national identity, there has to be a political will in the first place and an agreement among the Ethiopian political elites on the benefits of their unity and on how they would be able to strengthen their unity sustainably. Generally, the focus group participants suggested the following issue: the problem is multifaceted in the infrastructure sector. Ethiopians need to work hard on every aspect that will lead to the improvement of professionals, government officials, labor, ethics, work and life security, and good knowledge-based leadership. The current Ethiopian reform is not efficient. It needs a revolution. Especially, the old mentality/mindset and the new hidden agenda hinder the change process due to, for instance, “conspiracy theory” that some underground but powerful organization/party is responsible for not openly acknowledging or displaying actions. It needs to reveal the previous hidden agenda in the reform process, specifically in the distribution of infrastructure.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

Analyzing the qualitative data collected, the paper revealed that the equity of public investments in infrastructure is falling/disrupting and is damaging the state- and nation-building processes in Ethiopia, and that it is a systemic problem. This is due to the lack of an integrated framework as a result of coordination failures and the lack of proper government interventions, including the lack of proper understanding and implementation of the constitution and the federal system in Ethiopia. Moreover, the lack of institutional capacity is the main cause of the lack of infrastructure governance and equity. Therefore, the federal government should implement corrective measures on the inequitable distribution of infrastructure. These require other factors, such as establishing the Ministry of Infrastructure to upgrade the infrastructure coordinating agency to coordinate infrastructure sectors, policy issues such as place-based policies, and long-term plans and to address deep interventions and other governance issues that need to be considered in the federal government.

It has to be understood that infrastructure delivery is becoming increasingly more complex and multifaceted. Especially, as citizens’ contact increases, grows more unstructured, and takes place outside supported channels or traditional boundaries in, for example, social media and digitally-based information delivery, this can lead to political instabilities in a country (Bowditch and Noble, 2009). According to the interviewees, so long as the unmet demand for infrastructure exists, it remains a key restraint on doing business in most African countries, which reduces their firms’ productivity by roughly 40% (World Bank, 2013).

Institutional incapacity, very long tender processes, corruption and fraud, inflation of costs, high risks, not providing adequate assistance to make projects viable, false reports, and the lack of best practices are the main challenges of the infrastructure sector in Ethiopia. Thus, due attention should be given in designing an enabling organizational structure for institutional capacity-building. The big challenge for the nation-building process is that the right person is not assigned at the right position in the federal and regional governments as well as in the enterprises. When the executive bodies of the government are involved in corruption, they are not punished properly, but rather they are transferred from one Woreda (district) to the other Woreda or from one institution/enterprise to another. If somebody from one ethnic group comes into a position, he/she will appoint members of his/her ethnic group to offices even without any adequate qualification. Nation/nationalities/regional-state-based political parties have had an adverse effect on state- and nation-building. Hence, this type of power-sharing has an adverse effect on a fair infrastructure distribution throughout the country with the “me first” or “us-them” conspiracies. In the experts’ views, the intention of the higher leaders of Ethiopia is not concerning infrastructure and growth, but they are playing gambling using the citizens for their interest and thirst for power. They are eager to show up, but not for progress.

Lastly, the government should assign/nominate the right person in the right position. The attitude of nomination through the eyeglass of politics should be avoided. Politics versus merits should be avoided. There are intellectuals in NGOs, different institutions, and abroad due to the lack of chance in public sectors. They are resources. The intellectuals need to be brought into the infrastructure sectors. Whether these large trends inspire a more equitable and sustainable Ethiopia or exacerbate inequities/disparities and divisions, these will basically govern the shape of Ethiopians’ common future.

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Appendixes

Appendix A. Interview questions

1. Do you have **an idea** about institutional capacity in the infrastructure sector, infrastructure governance, and infrastructure equity in the nation-building process in current federal Ethiopia? If yes, what is (are) the **role(s)** in state- and nation-building processes? How/Why?
2. What is your **observation and understanding** of infrastructure **(in)equity among regional states** in contemporary Ethiopia? Do you have an idea who is the **decision-maker** and how public infrastructure **allocation is done** among regional states? What are the criteria for infrastructure allocation in our country?
3. What are the challenges of the above issues (institutional capacity, governance, and equity in the infrastructure, etc.) for the future in our country? What best **strategy(ies) could be used** for each issue in current federal Ethiopia? What kind of **standard** can be applied to allocate public infrastructure equity among regional states? How/why?

Appendix B. Tables

Table B1. Profiles of in-depth interviews' participants

Participant's code	Designation/Position	Organization's main business
TR1	Higher Official, Chief Administration Office, Tigray National Regional Government	Planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating the regional government institutions and the public at large.
TR2	Higher Official, Tigray Region Road and Construction Bureau	Leading and coordinating road and construction sectors in the region.
AR1	Higher Official, Amhara Rural Road Agency	Designing, constructing, contracting, and administering rural roads in the region.
AR2	Higher Official, Amhara Region Electric Utility office	Distributing electric utilities for industry, commercial, and at household level, and giving services in the region.
AR3	Higher Official, Amhara Region Telecom	Designing, constructing, and giving telecom services for its customers in the region.
OR1	Higher Officials, Oromia Region Road and Transport Bureau	Designing, constructing, contracting, and administrating road and transport in the region.
OR2	Higher Officials, Oromia Region Urban Development and Construction Bureau	Leading and coordinating urban development and construction sector in Oromia region.
BR1	Higher Official, Chief Administration Office, Benshangul/Gumuz National Regional Government	Leading and coordinating the regional political, economic, and social activities.
BR2	Higher Official, Benshangul/Gumuz Region Urban Development and Construction Bureau,	Coordinating and leading the urban development and construction sector.
BR3	Higher Official, Benshangul/Gumuz Region Road and Transport Bureau,	Coordinating and leading the road sector.
FG1	Higher Official, PM Office, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Giving advisory services in the infrastructure sector for the government.
FG2	Higher Official, Ethiopian Road Authority	Designing, constructing, contracting, and administrating highways in Ethiopia.
FG3	Higher Official, House of Federation, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Preparing Budget allocation formula and allocating budget based on the approved formula in Ethiopia.
FG4	Higher Official, Ethio telecom, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Designing, constructing, and giving telecom services for its customers in Ethiopia.
FG5	Higher Official, Ethiopian Electric Utility	Distributing electric utilities for industry, commercial, and at household level, and giving electric services in Ethiopia.
FG6	Higher Official, House of Federation, Budget Committee	Preparing budget allocation formula and allocating budget based on the approved formula in Ethiopia.
C1	Higher Executive, Ethiopian contractors' association	Leading and coordinating contractors' association's activities.
C2	Higher Executive, Ethiopian consultants' association	Leading and coordinating consultants' association's activities.

The study also conducted FGDs with participants from four regions in Ethiopia, as follows. Table B2 shows the profiles of the focus group's participants.

Table B2. Profiles of focus group's participants

Group code	Participants' codes	Region	City
T1	TM1, TM2, and TM3	Tigray	Mekelle
A1	AB1, AB2, and AB3	Amhara	Bahir Dar
O1	OA1, OA2, OA3, OA4, and OA5	Oromia	Adama
B1	BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4, BA5, and BA6	Benshangul/Gumuz	Assosa

Appendix C. Figures

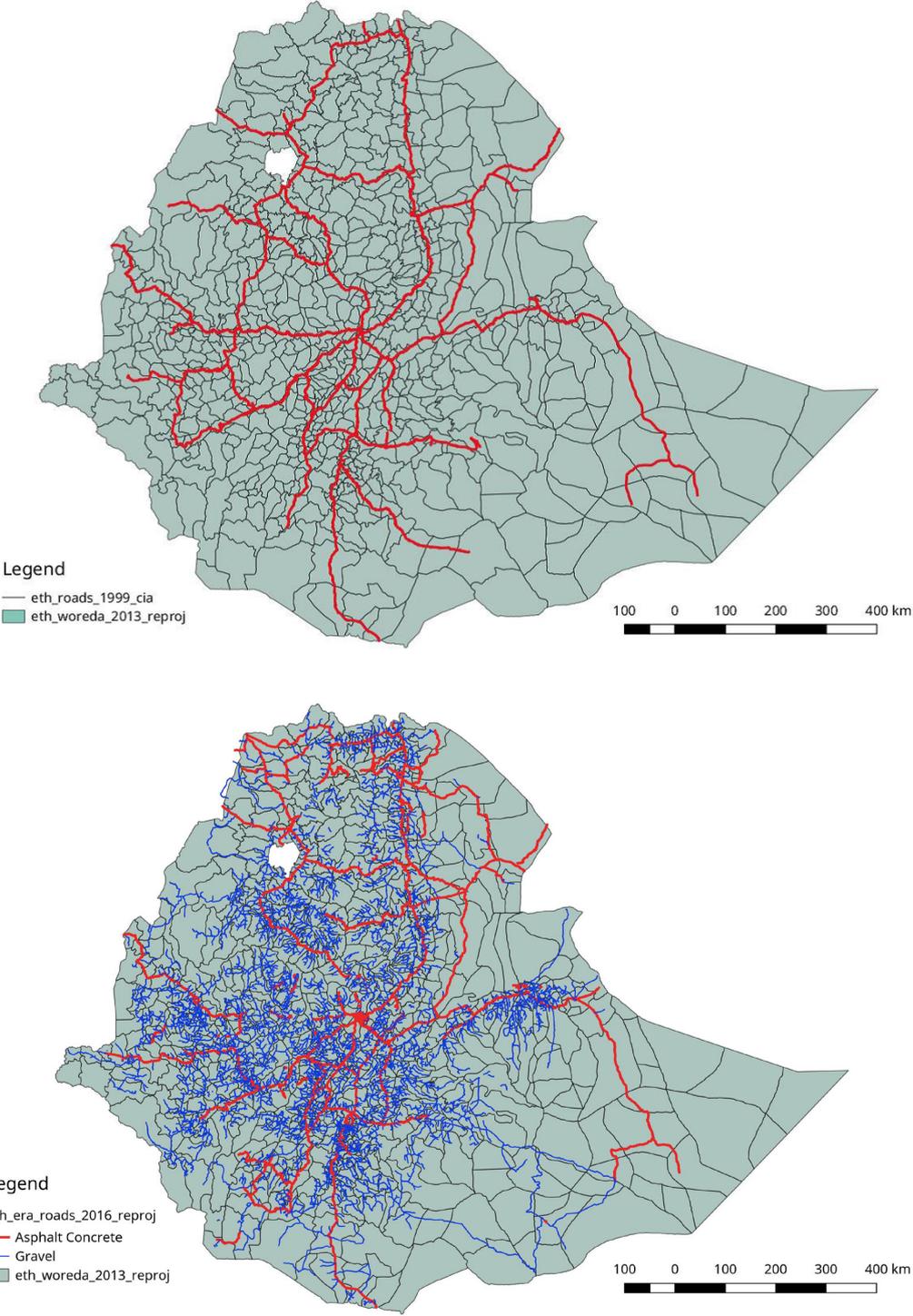


Figure C1. Large-scale road network expansion (2000–2016) (Moneke, 2020)

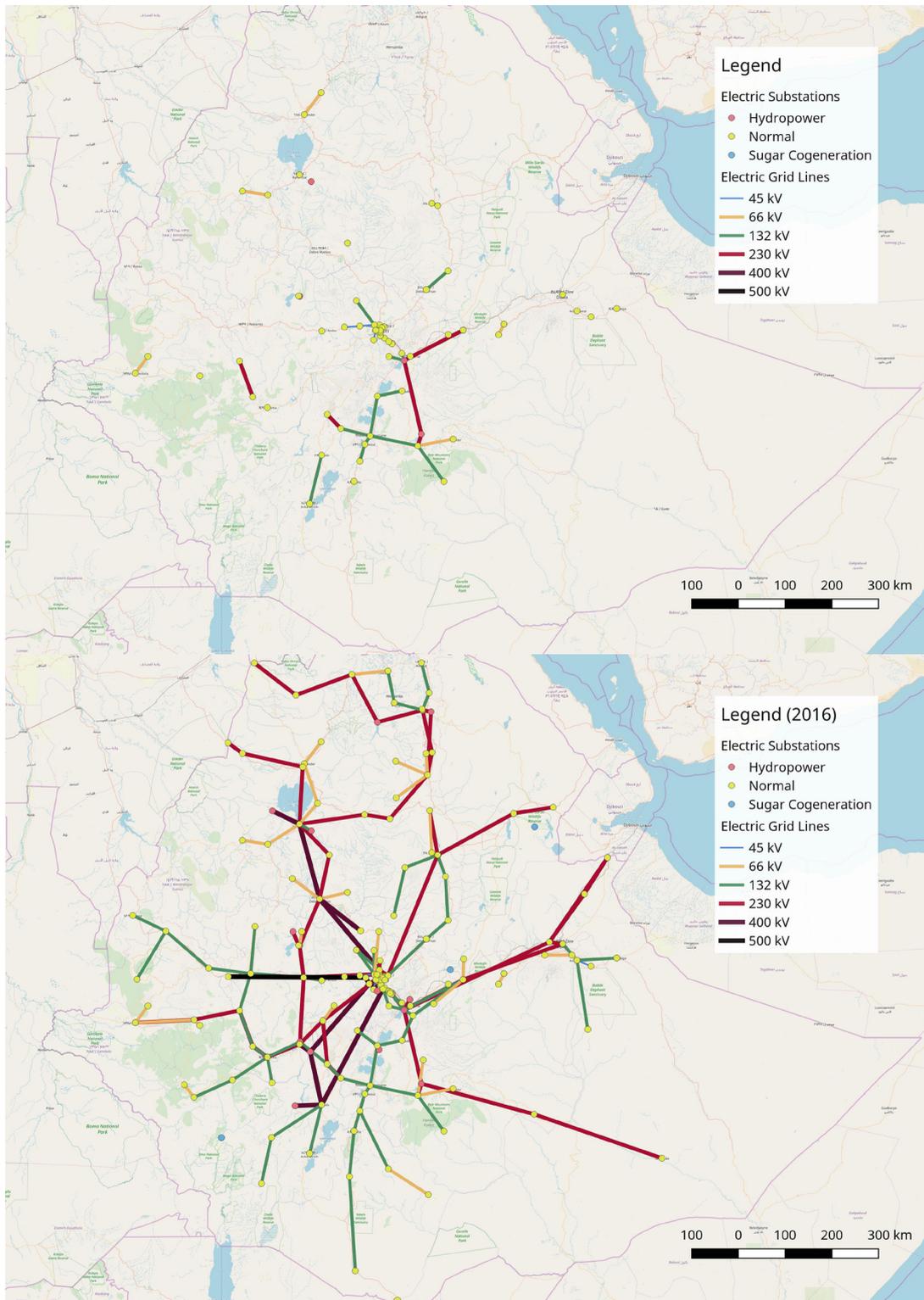


Figure C2. Large-scale electricity network expansion (1990–2016) (Moneke, 2020)

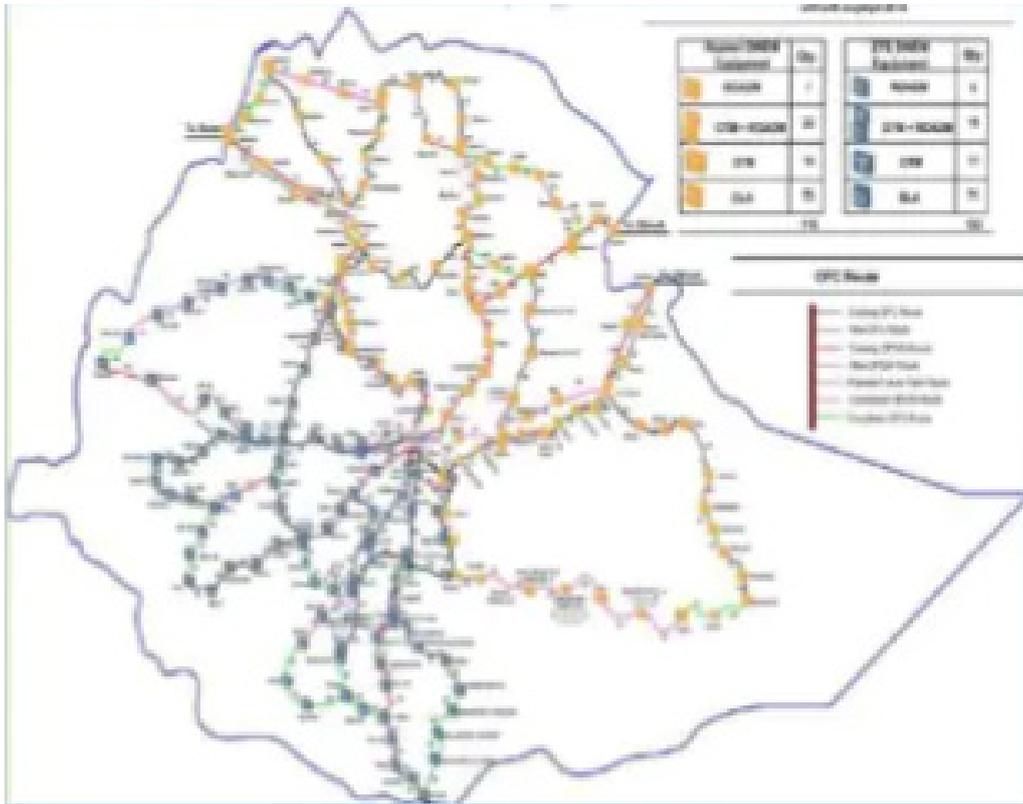


Figure C3. Large-scale Ethio-telecom network expansion

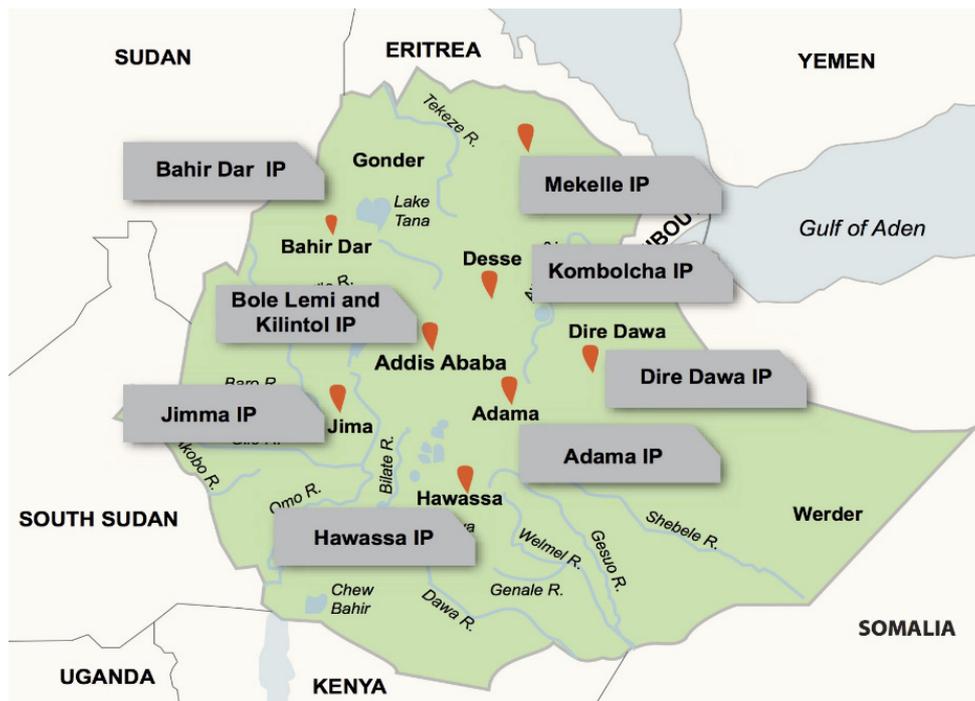


Figure C4. Large-scale industrial park expansion (2018)

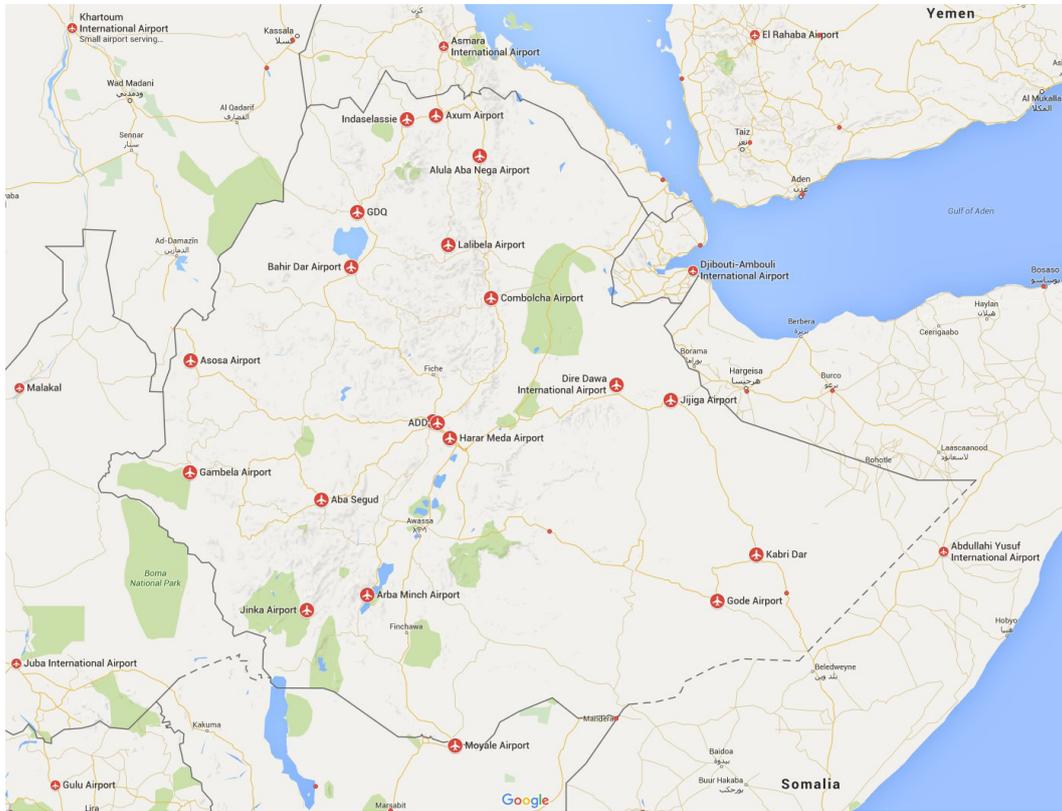


Figure C5. Large-scale airport infrastructure network expansion (1991–2017)

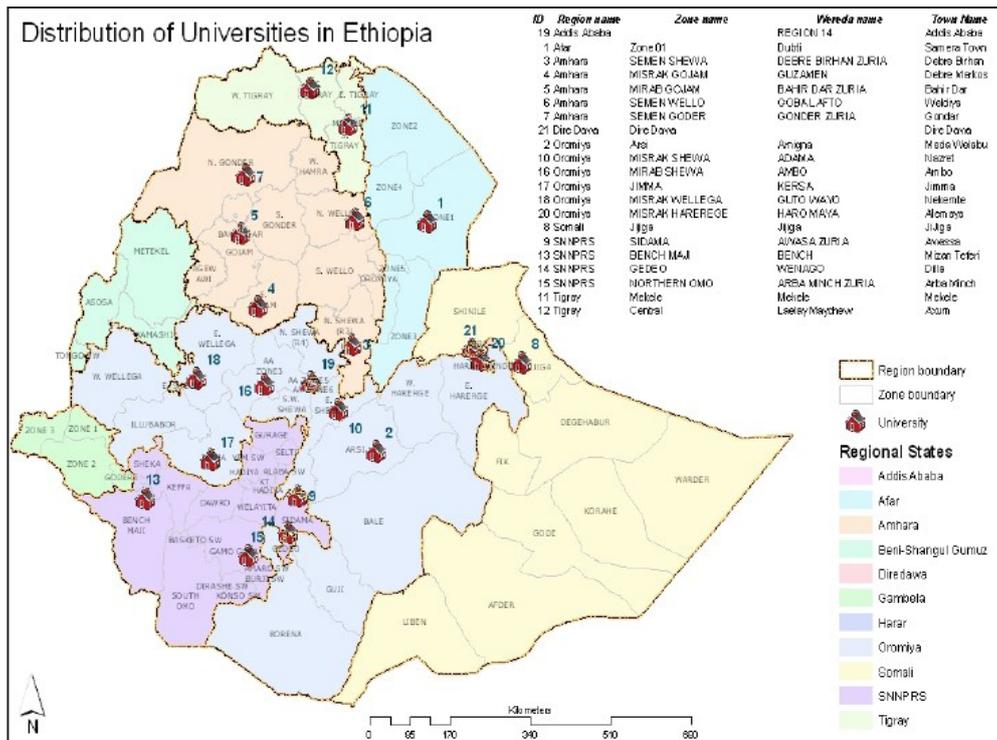


Figure C6. Large-scale university infrastructure network expansion (1991–2017)