A Critical Analysis of Urban Land Policy Formulation and Implementation in Ethiopia: What is There and What is Not?*

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The purpose of the study was to assess urban land policy implementation in Ethiopia. In undertaking the study, the descriptive survey method was employed. Questionnaires and interviews were employed for data collection. 847 questionnaires were collected from implementers and users and 32 interviews were conducted with experts, middle, and top managers. Descriptive statistics were applied for data analysis. The results of the data analysis were presented using frequency, percentage, & mean. The major finding indicates the policy was formulated by the top policymaker and citizens and implementers have not participated. The offices of land management relied on outdated instruments to implement the policy. Furthermore, the behavior of implementers, the cooperation and involvement of stakeholders, resource availability, political issues, and leadership and governance are the key factors of urban land policy implementation. The economic capacity of the country, the increment in population, the complexity of illegal work on urban land, problems with commitment and sincerity, problems with service delivery, delays in the approval of housing plans, a lack of responsibility, a delay in addressing problems and the problem of good governance are also factors in the implementation process. Generally, the masses do not benefit from the policy, aside from the few wealthy people. As a result, citizens are not satisfied with the formulation and implementation of the urban land policy. Thus, the policy should be revised based on the interest of the masses and modern systems should have to be implemented in the policy implementation process to implement it effectively.

Introduction

Public policy formulation in democratic countries is a dynamic mechanism involving a variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions and actors (Rahmat 2015). The importance of policymaking in public administration derives from the fact that no public action can be undertaken without a specific goal and a well-defined policy (Marume 2016). Politicians, bureaucrats, the private sector, or a mixture of these are all capable of initiating policy. Interest groups can push changes in administrative procedure that become de facto policy, or policies may develop across a structured framework (Power & Tolopa 2009). Therefore, public policies, as part of the broader context of a political system, are a reasonably comprehensive, enforceable, authoritative, binding, legitimate, deliberate, and purposeful framework of and for interaction within which elected political office-bearers can make a variety of public decisions, and public administrators can put various courses of action into practice (Marume 2016).

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Any government's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for its people while also promoting growth and development. The achievement of these noble objectives means that the public bureaucracy not only formulates policies, but also implements them efficiently (Ugwuanyi & Chukwuemeka 2013). In order to achieve the policy goal, the public sector bears the burden and obligation of policy implementation (Ezeani 2003). A well-crafted policy is important for effective policy implementation (Rahmat 2015). The policy implementation stage is an operational period in which policy is actually put into action in the hopes of solving a public issue (Theodoulou & Kofinis 2004). Policy objectives can only be met if an appropriate implementation and control mechanism is in place (Rahmat 2015).

„In principle, the effective implementation of public policies determine, the level of provision of social services, the level of industrialization, the available employment opportunities, the size of social security, the creation of social and economic inequality, the availability of financial services for economic activities, the availability of health facilities, and the level of educational development" (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka 2013). Successful policy implementation also necessitates the assistance of a champion or advocate who can assist in securing appropriate resources and motivating employees to provide opportunities for physical activity (Salvesen et al. 2008). Moreover, the quality of a policy is just as good as how well it is implemented (Rahmat 2015). The execution of policies is difficult. Controlled experiments are unlikely to reflect real-world implementation scenarios, and given the nature of the field, controlled experiments are unlikely to be representative of real-world implementation scenarios (Signé 2017).

Generally speaking, the ruling party's philosophy and political strategy shape policy formation and implementation in Ethiopia, the political and logistic realities of governing such a large and complex country, the influence of key players (including the international community), and the lack of capacity at all levels of government (Taylor & Teshome 2007). Moreover, Vaughan and Tronvoll (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003) said that Ethiopia has a less systematic, less consultative and top-down policy formulation process. However, some researchers and the ruling party argue that the public policies are well and brilliantly formulated but ineffectively implemented. As a result, public policies fail to achieve the objectives for which they were designed. Wide gaps are evident between policy goals and what is obtained on the ground due to ineffective implementation.

Urban development is influenced by urban land policy (Zewdu & Malek 2010). *„The most effective way of gaining an insight into the urban land development policies is to evaluate the process of policy implementation. Efforts should be made to foster a better understanding of urban growth through policy evaluation in the fields of urban growth and expansion. Post-implementation evaluation can teach us much about this, particularly in those developing countries experiencing extreme problems. It can suggest alternative approaches to urban land"* (Azizi 1998).

Therefore, a critical analysis on formulating and implementing the urban policy of Ethiopia is timely. Urban land is the area most exposed to conflict and fraught with the complications of management in Ethiopia because it is a major socio-economic asset and the dispute over who controls the land, which is similar to the issue of who controls power, has played a big role in Ethiopia's past and may continue to do so in the future (Melkamu and Shewakena 2010). Therefore, this study comes up with findings on the

practice of urban land policy formulation, its implementations and its key factors. Finally, the questions of what is there for urban land policy formulation and implementation and what are not were answered in this study. The following specific questions were addressed in this study: How was the urban land policy formulation process in Ethiopia? What seems to be the implementing process of urban land policy in Ethiopia? What are the factors influencing the urban land policy implementation in Ethiopia?

1. Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey method. This method was selected because the nature of the problem requires a wide ambit of description and investigation. The study is descriptive because it helps to make a detailed analysis of existing phenomena with the intent of employing data to justify current conditions. Both primary and secondary data sources were employed in this study. Data from the primary data source was collected using key informant interviews and questionnaires. Moreover, the secondary data studies on policy implementation were analyzed. Data gained from primary and secondary sources was triangulated. Within the method of triangulation, data triangulation and theory triangulation were both employed. The primary and secondary data were analyzed mainly using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Thus, a mixed approach was employed in this study. Finally, the study employed a cross-sectional design since data were collected at a time.

A multi-stage sampling method was employed to collect data. First, representative regions in the country were chosen. Thus, the four major regions (Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, and SNNP) were selected purposively and one emerging region (Benishangul-Gumuz), and one city administration (Addis Ababa) were chosen randomly. Second, in Addis Ababa, sub-cities were selected randomly, whereas in the regions, the capital cities were chosen purposively and the other three big cities were selected randomly. Third, the institutions implementing the policy were selected purposively. At the last, the individual respondents were selected systematically. Thus, 847 respondents were selected for this study.

The respondents for the interview were selected purposively based on the reason that they have better information concerning policy implementation and the position they possess. Thus, regional and town officials who are working on the implementation of the urban land policy were selected to give information concerning policy implementation. 32 officials and professionals were recruited for the interview.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were used. Data collected through questionnaires was entered into the data analysis software. In the quantitative analysis, simple statistics were employed. Within these simple statistics, the study discussed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation, etc. to address the objectives. In the qualitative analysis, the data obtained through interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. The qualitative data was first transcribed and summarized according to the objectives of the study. Finally, the results were summarized into tables and descriptions so that the analysis and meaningful interpretation of results could be made to draw conclusions and implications.

2. Results and discussions

This chapter analyses and discusses the major findings of the research based on the survey collected in the study area. The variables were presented using tables and percentages to indicate the findings on the policy formulation and implementation process of the policy. First, the policy formulation process in Ethiopia was presented and then, the implementation process.

2.1. Policy formulation process

Table 1: Participation on urban land policy formulation process

Variables	Cases in percent					Mean
	SDA	DA	UN	A	SA	
The urban land policy formulation was participatory	13.1	29.5	34.9	19.0	3.4	2.70
Citizens participate in policy-making through formal means	18.1	35.9	28.0	15.5	2.6	2.48
There is a strong legal framework that maintains active participation of key stakeholders	14.7	34.4	28.1	19.7	3.0	2.61
The policy is formulated based on consent of beneficiaries	17.2	43.1	26.9	11.4	1.3	2.36
Attitude surveys were made from the community on the policy formulation process	14.5	39.0	27.3	16.2	3.0	2.54
The community appointed a few representatives as advisory groups who have influenced the policy makers	14.0	40.4	26.8	15.6	3.2	2.53
The responsibility of policy formulation was shared between the people and policy makers	15.9	40.7	27.4	13.7	2.4	2.46
The policy formulation was initiated and influenced from the people	17.8	42.1	23.9	11.5	4.8	2.43
The people had genuine power in the policy formulation process	21.3	41.2	25.2	11.0	1.3	2.29
The people were allowed for feedback and negotiation in the policy formulation process	17.5	42.2	26.3	12.5	1.5	2.38

NB: *SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; UN=Uncertainty; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree*

Source: surveys made by the author

As it is indicated in Table 1, the mean scores of all the items are below 3.00 which shows a tendency towards the negative side. Most of the scores are reclined on the disagree position and some of them are on the uncertain position but there is no item

above the mean. This means that most of them agreed that the policy formulation process was not participatory while some were not sure about it.

Moreover, the interview results indicated that the policy formulation process was not participatory at the grassroots level. The majority of the experts and implementers do not have a thorough understanding of the formulation process of the policy. Even they do not know how and when it was formulated. Higher regional officials revealed that the participation of every citizen in the policy formulation process is impossible; instead, citizens get to reflect their opinion through their representatives. So, some higher regional officials and representatives have participated in the discussion and ratification process but the society did not participate directly in the formulation process of the urban land policy because the mandate was given to the federal policymakers. Thus, the policy was formulated only by the federal bodies (federal policymakers) without massive participation of the lower bodies or implementers.

For instance higher government official remarked: *Society didn't get the chance to participate and give input directly not only to the policy formulation but also to the formulation of proclamations, rules, and regulations. As a result, we faced various challenges while implementing the policy, proclamations, and rules and regulations. Society was simply a distant observer on the policy formulation process.*

Table 2: Consultation on urban land policy formulation process

Variables	Cases in percent					Mean
	SDA	DA	UN	A	SA	
Consultation was made with the direct beneficiaries	15.1	32.7	32.3	17.8	2.2	2.59
Different groups consulted in the policy formulation	15.2	34.1	28.2	17.6	5.0	2.63
Public feedback was taken seriously so as to meet citizens priorities	17.6	39.4	26.0	12.3	4.3	2.50
Key stakeholders are consulted to test the appropriateness and workability of the policy	13.7	36.7	32.3	15.2	2.2	2.55
Public hearings included in the policy formulation	15.2	37.4	28.8	14.1	4.3	2.59
The policy formulation followed two-way flow of information b/n officials & community and vice-versa	17.5	45.3	21.3	13.8	2.2	2.37

NB: *SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; UN=Uncertainty; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree*

Source: surveys made by the author

Table 2 shows that there was no consultation made at the time of policy formulation with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The public feedback was not taken into consideration and there was no two-way communication between the people and policymakers. The mean score of all items is below average. This indicates either that

the implementers are not sure about the consultation or that there was no appropriate consultation in the policy formulation process.

The regional government official revealed that: *Most of the time policies are formulated without participating and consulting the direct beneficiaries, implementers, and other stakeholders. The professionals who have a thorough knowledge of the area are not also consulted. However, it gets down to the ground for implementation. Thus, the urban land policy is not including the interest of the majority with low income*.

The interview results indicated that a consultation with the concerned bodies, especially with the direct beneficiaries, was not made. As a result, the urban agriculture in the big cities was left in danger and the income of urban peasants was negatively affected. The policy formulation process was not supported by scientific research and was realized based on the decision of the top federal policymakers. Let alone the lower classes of society, the implementers themselves were not consulted on the policy formulation process either; instead, they have provided input through a questionnaire to the proclamations, not to the policy. As a result, implementers are implementing the policy without understanding and identifying the objectives and its outcomes.

2.2. Policy implementation process

The policy is effective when its implementation process is successful. The success or failure of the policy is measured after implementation. Implementation of a policy needs a modern system and automation. Thus, the following finding discussed thoroughly what requirements were there for the effective implementation of urban land policy and what were not.

Table 3: Systems availability in the urban land policy implementation process

Variables	Cases in percent					Mean
	SDA	DA	UN	A	SA	
There is standardized cadaster system in the city/town	10.5	16.5	35.9	30.0	7.1	3.06
There is modern digital service delivery system on land in the municipality	11.0	21.9	42.5	22.8	1.8	2.82
There is automation system for land registration	9.4	19.6	48.2	20.7	2.1	2.86
There is digital identity number and standardized certificate system on land registration	10.3	22.8	40.7	21.8	4.4	2.87
Effective action taken on the slum houses in the city	10.1	45.0	27.3	15.7	2.0	2.54
There is adequate land provision for unions of the city	10.8	27.9	42.5	14.4	4.5	2.73

NB: *SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; UN=Uncertainty; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree*

Source: surveys made by the author

Table 3 indicates that all the items except one have scored below the mean. This shows that a modern urban land administration system is not yet introduced. The urban land management system is still dependent on traditional administration mechanisms. The policy clearly described that the urban land should be administered based on standardized cadastre, modern digital service, automation system, digital identity number for plots, etc. However, these systems are not effective all over the country.

Moreover, the qualitative result indicates the same as the quantitative result. Land banking was introduced in all regions in the near past but it is not auditable and has no effective system of implementation. Therefore, it is not being implemented appropriately to control and manage the urban land. Moreover, land banking has not been started appropriately, especially in small towns. In general, the land banking system is not effective in the country, although there are beginnings. The reason for this is that a modern handling and management mechanism of the land banking system has not been implemented. There is a land inventory, but the land information system is not effective because of material shortages, a lack of human resources, and a lack of educated employees. Even though the counting of small free plots, the assignment of identity numbers to plots and their registration have been started, the disputes over the ownership rights of small free plots and other lands whose ownership is controversial have not finished. So, without accomplishing all these, it is difficult to bring them into land banking.

The cadaster system was introduced in all regions to implement the policy appropriately. The cadaster system is stand-alone as an office and it has trained professionals who run it as an office. Even though the cadaster office has been established, it is not yet decentralized at the level of all the district towns. However, it has not been functional until now because of material shortage.

The automation and digital services are not yet functional, although they are mentioned in the policy. In some regions, the plot numbers are recorded as a soft copy but still, there is a problem of possessing appropriate software. Except for AutoCAD, there is no modern system utilized in urban land management. For example, in the Tigray region, the introduction of a land parcel identification number was started but it was stopped because of unclear standards. Of course, the files and the land are now in the process of harmonization but the modern systems are not fully functional. Even though there is an interruption in the implementation process, urban land information management is relatively good. But still, there is a poor utilization of technology in the urban land management system, based on the available resources.

Table 4 shows the actions taken so far by the implementers based on the policy. The urban land policy stated that illegal actions on urban land would decrease, sustainable land provision would be assured, green areas would be developed, leases would be reviewed every year, and the problem of informal settlements would be solved.

However, it shows that the objectives and actions stated in the policy are not implemented appropriately. Except for the last item, all the items score below the mean. Therefore, there are illegal practices in the urban land management, there is a lack of green area development, no sustainable land provision, the lease is not reviewed every year and the informal settlement issue is not solved. But there is transparency in public procurement.

Table 4: Actions taken against the urban land policy standard

Variables	Cases in percent					Mean
	SDA	DA	UN	A	SA	
The illegal practices in the urban land management are decreased	10.7	23.1	42.2	19.6	4.3	2.83
Sustainable land provision is assured	12.2	22.9	43.4	18.9	2.5	2.76
Green area development is implemented based on the plan in the city/town	9.8	24.7	45.7	17.4	2.5	2.78
The initial cost of lease reviews every year	13.7	22.3	27.5	33.1	3.4	2.90
The informal settlement problems are solved	17.2	26.6	42.3	11.0	2.9	2.59
There is transparent and accessible information on the public procurement and land allocation system	6.5	38.8	34.3	16.0	4.3	3.53

NB: *SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; UN=Uncertainty; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree*

Source: surveys made by the author

Furthermore, the qualitative result indicates that illegal urban land grabbing, illegal constructions and illegal practices on the land are common. The issue of urban land grabbing has decreased somewhat but it has not stopped. The focus group discussants agreed that the lease program is not pro-poor in the country. The lease price does not take into consideration the economic capacity of the people. Therefore, the urban land remains controlled in one way or another by the few economic elites, and the poor are ostracized from the land resources. So, the lease program did not address the interest of the majority because the competition for land ownership through a lease is made among the rich and it is not based on fairness and benefit of the poor. Thus, urban land is monopolized by a few individuals.

The interviewee explained that the policy has clear objectives and strategies. Moreover, it has good proclamations, rules, and regulations derived from it but there are many problems in the implementation process. The employees do not know the objectives and contents of the policy but they know the proclamations derived from the policy. Besides, except the lease proclamation, they took the view that the other proclamations on urban land were good. They agreed that the lease proclamation does not consider the capacity of the poor.

2.3. Factors of policy implementation

There are numerous variables that influence policy implementation. There may be an implementation gap due to a variety of reasons, including the policy itself, the policymaker, or the context in which the policy was developed. When a policy comes from the government rather than the target groups, the implementation gap will emerge from the policy itself. This implies that preparation is done from the top down. As a

result, the target beneficiaries are not permitted to participate in the creation of policies that impact their lives. In most developed countries, this is the standard (Makinde 2005).

Table 5: Factors of urban land policy implementation

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Implementers behavior	448	2.9116	.92135
Cooperation and involvement of stakeholders	448	2.8437	.74645
Resource availability	448	2.7035	.83117
Political issue on the policy implementation	448	2.6555	.87701
Leadership and governance	448	2.7955	.74187
Team work	448	3.1873	.82312
Skill and ability of implementers	448	3.1479	.79843
Motivation of implementers	448	3.1533	1.05677

Source: surveys made by the author

Table 5 shows the factors of policy implementation and their score. The results show that teamwork, motivation and skills, and the ability of implementers are not the major factors affecting urban land policy implementation. Teamwork consists of the collaboration of implementers, the employment of reform tools and teams with different skills. Skill and ability consist of the qualification, experience, problem-solving skill, and analytical skill of implementers. Motivation consists of the recognition, effective evaluation, and incentives of implementers. Although the qualitative result shows that the motivation and the skills of implementers are the main problems, these results show otherwise: the behavior of implementers, the cooperation and involvement of stakeholders, resource availability, political issues, and leadership and governance appear to be the factors most affecting urban land policy implementation.

Moreover, many factors were identified from the interview discussions. Accordingly: the economic capacity of the country, the population increment, the complexity of illegal work on urban land, problems with commitment and sincerity, problems with service delivery, delays in the approval of housing plans, a lack of responsibility, a delay in addressing problems and the problem of good governance are the challenges in the implementation process. Further, fluctuating regulations, a lack of human resources, a shortage of budget, the dread of employees in making decisions (since land is a sensitive issue), a lack of materials, low levels of technology, a lack of qualified and competent workers, a lack of training, etc. are other challenges. Besides, leaders being changed before addressing the case at his/her hand is another major problem. The institutions are not led by professionals rather the leaders are appointed based on political affiliation. As such, they decide to consider the political issues, not rules and regulations.

The lack of impartial and quick service delivery on land (especially during the implementation of plans to legalize the existing tenure on lands incorporated from rural to urban status), and lack of control over illegal buildings are challenges. Moreover, urban lands that are taken for business purposes are frequently changed to residences. Investors take a large plot of land based on an agreement for development purposes, but they do not follow along with the agreement. Even though the regulation obliges them to adhere to the agreement, the implementers do not influence or punish them. So, when it comes to investors, the rule is commonly violated. Other problems include the lack of automated mechanisms, the delaying of compensation and the lack of land provisions to youth associations.

The informal settlement issue is one of the headaches of the local government in the implementation process of urban land management policy. The government is still unable to address the issue of informal settlements.

Conclusions

In the formulation of urban land management policy, citizens, implementers and other stakeholders were not part of the policymaking process. It was formulated by the top policymakers and sent down to the implementers. Therefore, the majority of the experts and implementers did not have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the policy. Besides, there was no consultation made at the time of policy formulation with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The public feedback was not taken into consideration and there was no two-way communication between the people and policymakers. All these have negative implications on the implementation process of the policy. Thus, they are implementing the policy without having enough knowledge on the purpose, content, and outcome of the policy. Even though most of the implementers are not aware of the policy, the policy has clear and understandable objectives, it is inclusive, and it has good implementation strategies. However, the urban land policy favors the few wealthy individuals rather than the poor who make up the majority population of the country. The poor are not only segregated from the economic benefit of urban land but also oppressed because of it.

In the implementation process of the policy, there are stories of success and failure. The modern urban land administration system is not yet introduced. The urban land management system is still dependent on traditional administration mechanisms. The policy clearly describes that the urban land should be administered based on standardized cadaster and the use of modern digital services, automation systems, digital identity numbers for plots, etc. However, these systems are not being implemented effectively all over the country.

The study identifies major factors of policy implementation. Among the factors, the behavior of implementers, the cooperation and involvement of stakeholders, resource availability, political issues, and leadership and governance are the key factors of urban land policy implementation. Moreover, issues related to lack of commitment, resources, budget, the economy of the country, responsibility, service delivery, good governance, materials, technology, human resources, controlling illegal buildings, etc. are all among the major challenges of urban land policy implementation.

The major stakeholders had not participated during the policy formulation process. So, there is little acceptance or support from society in the implementation process of

the policy. Beneficiaries react in a negative way when they are dissatisfied or disappointed by the service renders. They quarreled and insulted the implementers. Moreover, citizens reflected their complaints through illegal control of urban land, illegal buildings, conflicts with the implementers, and hiding information.

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