

Editorial Note

Advancing knowledge and spearheading social and political transformation: evidence from Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences, the December 2023 issue

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Based on information obtained from the Ministry of Education, the number of higher education institutions in Ethiopia has significantly increased over the past two decades. Similarly, higher education institutions in Ethiopia have the responsibility of undertaking research and providing community services at national and local levels (Yigzaw, 2012; Mulugeta, 2023). This implies that carrying out research and publishing its output in a peer-reviewed journal is one of the criteria for promotion of the academic staff and graduation of PhD students (MOE, 2016). Hence, professors and graduate students should try to publish their work in peer-reviewed and indexed journals. It is also to note that the research output should solve societal problems, instead of gathering dust on library shelves. In this regard, Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences aims to achieve this objective.

At this stage, it is possible to say welcome to the second issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences for the year 2023. In this issue, we feel that we have made progress in fulfilling some of the promises we made to get our journal accredited by MOE, indexed in African Journals Online (AJOL) and given Digital Object Identifier (DOI). The editorial team of EJSS is working hard to improve the overall standard of the journal. Not only the editorial board but the international board members and specialists whom the editor calls on for expert advice in evaluating manuscripts played a vital role in maintaining the quality of our journal. Specialists whose identities are not revealed have played a great role in helping EJSS reach its current state of relative renown. Our major priorities were to advance the quantity, quality and diversity of manuscripts that are published in each issue. At this point we are pleased to inform our readers that we have accomplished many of the issues in the present publication with support from Faculty of Social Sciences, Bahir Dar University.

To maintain the quality of our journal we do the following. First, the manuscript sent to the office is collected by the editor-in-chief for further review. In this regard, the editor-in-chief has

long experiences in publishing manuscripts and plays a vital role in leading and managing the journal for its advancement. Second, members of the editorial team with respect to their discipline do a preliminary reading with respect to content, originality and methodology. Finally, it is ready to be sent for peer review and suggestion by specialists such as political scientists, historians, geographers, and anthropologists related to their particular fields of study. In the selection of readers, the editorial team tries to decide who is most interested and equipped to give us an evaluation of a particular manuscript through internet and phone to confirm their willingness to give us a reading and an appraisal of the manuscript. For that reason, two readers based on their specialization are assigned to evaluate the manuscripts. If the responses given by the authors do not satisfy the evaluators, the assessed manuscript has a great chance to be rejected.

By publishing a total of 6 articles and 2 two book reviews the December 2023 issue, excluding this editorial note, has set a new record for the journal in the present issue. This increase in the number of manuscripts and diversity demonstrates our commitment provided that our readers with a wide range of communities can reach the findings and policy implications obtained from each article. The diversity of the manuscripts promises to offer a rich and multifaceted discourse for readers interested in a wide spectrum of topics related to political sciences, history, gender, culture, and environment and development. Another important historical event that makes the present issue different from its predecessors is the fact that it is published at a time when journal indexing and abstracting from AJOL and its DOI have been realized.

The articles and book reviews in the present issue are authored by a total of thirteen scholars from six universities and organizations. They cover a variety of topics pertaining to political sciences, history, culture and development. More specifically, the articles and book reviews cover topics related to ancient and modern history, conflict resolution, federalism, foreign policy and peacekeeping missions of the Ethiopian National Military. The diverse topics covered in this issue indicate the breadth and depth of research being conducted in the field of social sciences. In the following paragraphs, we highlight the key themes and brief findings/policy implications of each article and provide insights of the important contributions that the authors have made to the development of social science research.

In this regard, the first article of this issue, authored by Tadie and Kidane examined the success of Ethiopian and Kenyan military operations in defeating al-Shabaab, securing their border, and disrupting anti-Ethiopian and Kenyan movements. The article also assessed how these countries failed to prevent al-Shabaab's financial and training backing and break its network with local, regional, and international entities. The authors also indicated that the major factors that influenced the success of Ethiopia and Kenya intervention include their lack of comprehensive intervention planning, the presence of various alignments and antagonisms, the hostile historical links, as well as the views of the Somalis towards this operation. The second article by Adinew, Shumet and Aychegirew deals about acquisition, transportation and emancipation of slave trade in the far west of Ethiopia. In this article, the authors showed that the first three decades of the twentieth century was a period when slaves were locally owned to serve as labor force by government appointees. However, later with the introduction of ox-drawn plowing slaves were used as producers of gold and ivory. The authors also presented that transportation of slaves from the western frontier of Ethiopia also intensified due to the diversification of actors and destinations of the slaves. These local acquisition and transportation of slaves from this area had economic, social and psychological impact on the enslaved communities of the area. The activity continued in the region even during the Italian occupation. It was terminated only in the final years of the 1930s when the power of local governors and family members declined.

The third author on this issue is Yohannes who published the political legitimacy of the Ethiopian ethnic federal system. His work indicated that constitutional arrangements, multiparty constitutional deliberations are important to fulfil varied and competing interests of ethnic and national groups. Most importantly, in post-conflict federal constitutional makings, multiparty constitutional writing influences the power imbalance from dictating the terms of the constitution-making. This article also presented criticisms of the political program of EPRDF in terms of illiberalism, instability, ethnic fragmentation and ethnic-based violence and conflicts. The article also argued that redeeming the legitimacy crisis of the ethnic federal system requires dealing with the very serious flaws of multiparty democratization in Ethiopia. The fourth publication by Chalachew, Shumet and Fantahun on royal patronage for indigenous and foreign craftsmanship in the Kingdom of Šäwa from 1813–1847 showed more technological progress than any other part of Ethiopia in the first half of the nineteenth century. The publication noted

that King Šahlä Šəllase was a notable king who passionately attempted to advance the indigenous status of craft technology. The King established workshops in the main political centers and residential areas. The article indicated that the workshops still exist and serve as tourist attractions and center for historical and archaeological studies. The King was the first among the kings of Šäwa to play a great role in improving the kingdom's technology that was remarkably different from the other parts of Ethiopia in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The fifth publication in this issue is authored by Shimeles, Shumet and Tigab on the peacekeeping mission of the Ethiopian national army in Rwanda. The publication described the roles Ethiopian troops played in peacekeeping and the challenges they faced because of lack experience, language and poor resource management of the Ethiopian battalions in Rwanda. However, the authors described the success of Ethiopian battalions in maintaining peace and security and facilitating roles in the safe passage of humanitarian assistance. The authors also presented the roles played by Ethiopian battalions in humanitarian support that improved the forces interaction with the local community. The sixth author is Tesfamichael who examined the construction of roads and bridges in Simen and Begemider province from 1963-1991. The article explored the history of roads and bridges, as well as their significance to the inhabitants of Simen and Begemider province. The article reports that the construction of roads and bridges dates back to the Italians' initial occupation of the province. However, according to the study, most of the roads and bridges experienced damage after years of service. Fortunately, most were restored during the monarchical period including the Tekeze River Bridge. These roads and bridges played a role in connecting different districts in the province.

The seventh and eight publications by Yehenew and Shmeles are book reviews on state building and national identity reconstruction in the Horn of Africa: Eritrea and Ethiopia. The book reviewed by Yehenew deals with state building, state reconstruction, and the making of national identity in states in the Horn of African. The review shows the intricate dynamics and difficulties associated with state building, state reconstruction, and identity formation processes experienced in the Horn of Africa. Similarly, the book review by Shimels focuses on history of the Eritrean federation with Ethiopia from 1952-1962. The book review is also first of its kind in comprehensive historical writing on the history of Eritrean federation with Ethiopia. The reviews tried to identify the contribution by these books and limitations of the books.

In general, the December 2023 issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences presented different issues related to ancient and modern history, conflict resolution, federalism, foreign policy and peacekeeping missions of the Ethiopian National Defense Force. We hope that the articles published in this issue will evoke the relevance of the past and teach history to the young generation and the role ethnic federalism played in Ethiopia and the peacekeeping missions of the Ethiopian army in Ruanda. In addition, we are sure the insights and recommendations presented in this issue will inform and inspire further research, foster the improvement of historical, political and ethnic federalism issues in the country.

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