***Title:* The Challenges of Ethiopian Federal State Structure in Addressing Distributive Justice Issues, In the Distribution of Land for Urban Housing: In Case of Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones.**

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***Abstract***

*Land is the basic resource for all activities and lives of human beings all over the world. Contemporary this resource becomes a scarce resource, especially in urban areas of developing countries like Ethiopia for housing purposes. In Ethiopia, even though the Federal state structure was adopted in post-1991 to resolve such problems, there are numerous problems not resolved yet. Therefore, this research examines the challenges of the Ethiopian Federal State structure in addressing distributive justice issues in the distribution of land for urban housing in the case of Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones. The researcher purposively selected two towns (‘Beddele’ and ‘Mattu’) due to their high rate of demand for urban land for housing, which can represent the rest of the urban in two Zones. To address the objectives of the study the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews, observation and focus group discussion with key stakeholders, and quantitative surveys of residents in urban housing developments. Findings reveal that hidden land market, power dynamics, inconsistencies in the legal framework, varying levels of satisfaction among residents, corruption, misinterpretation of laws by officials, poor land management, and absence of professional workers are the major ones. Policy recommendations include enhancing transparency, strengthening responsibility mechanisms, and engaging with stakeholders to improve the land allocation process assigning professionals workers on the positions and increasing awareness for workers for interpretation of laws. By addressing these issues, federal and regional authorities can promote distributive justice and create more equitable urban communities in Ethiopia in case of land distribution Justice.*

***Key Terms****: Land allocation, Federal and regional authorities, Urban Housing, Legal framework, Distributive justice.*

**1.1. Introduction**

Promoting distributive justice in urban housing development requires establishing clear criteria for land acquisition, putting in place mechanisms for community participation, and regularly monitoring and evaluating land distribution procedures (Ethiopian Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, 2019).When it comes to distributive justice, Ethiopia's federal state structure has several obstacles to overcome, especially when it comes to the allocation of land for urban construction. The distribution and allotment of land in urban areas has become crucial to guaranteeing that all citizens have equitable access to housing due to the fast pace of urbanization and the rising demand for housing (Temesgen, K. (2021).

Ethiopia's complicated federal state structure makes it difficult to ensure distributive justice when it comes to the distribution of land for urban housing. The distribution of land for urban development poses challenges in the particular contexts of the Bunno Bedelle Zone and Ilu Abba Bor Zone that must be successfully resolved by cooperation between federal and local authorities. The main obstacles and essential actions to improve distributive justice in the distribution of land for urban dwelling in these zones are examined in this study.The goal of the research is to uncover the gaps and hurdles that prevent distributive justice in this important sector from being achieved by looking at the current laws, regulations, and practices concerning land distribution in metropolitan regions.

* 1. **Statement of the Problem**

Land allocation in federal state structure is not simple it face numerous problems in every structure if it is not implement accordingly. The federal state structure of Ethiopia faces numerous significant obstacles in resolving distributive justice concerns related to land distribution for urban housing. Lack of Transparency and Accountability: One major complaint has been the lack of transparency and accountability in the urban land allocation process. Unfair land allocation that favors some groups or persons over others might be the result of corrupt activities and a lack of accountability (Teshome, 2019).The present land distribution system frequently benefits rich people or well-connected groups, vulnerable populations, such as low-income families and marginalized communities, have unequal access to land for urban housing (Yared,2018). The federal system of government in Ethiopia, which divides authority among several regional states, can result in inconsistent land policies and fragmented governance, making it difficult to guarantee consistency and fairness in the distribution of land for urban housing (Tessema, 2017).According to Getahun (2020), the current legal framework controlling the distribution of land in urban areas may be insufficient or antiquated, missing mechanisms for resolving distributive justice concerns and guaranteeing an equitable and transparent distribution of land for urban housing. The process of making houses is incredibly costly, which is one of the goals of federalism that is not achieved yet (Ayele, Policy Impacts on Housing Sector)Various studies have been carried out in this field, for example (Teklu, A., & Wolday, A,2019). Ethiopian housing development and urban land policies demonstrate how urban land policies affect Ethiopian housing development. Additionally,( Berhanu, G., & Mulu, T. (2020) discuss the influence of land tenure systems on housing affordability in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city, in their study on the relationship between these systems and housing affordability in Ethiopian cities. It examines how problems with housing affordability and the growth of informal settlements are exacerbated by erratic land tenure regimes and unclear property rights. Furthermore, as stated by Alemu and Mekonnen (2018), examined in the study titled "Study on Urban Land Administration and Housing Affordability." It investigates the effectiveness and transparency of land management practices as well as their impact on the affordability of housing for those with low and moderate incomes. (T. Abate, Gebre, & (2017) Lessons from Ethiopia also addresses the role played by public policy in Ethiopia's capacity to provide affordable housing. It examines the effectiveness of policy measures such as the dwelling Development Program and the Affordable Housing Scheme in addressing housing affordability problems and expanding access to safe dwelling options.Furthermore, in their research Challenges of Urban Land Policy Implementation in Ethiopia: Lessons from Selected Cities, (Kebede, F., and Mekonnen, T. (2019).It addresses problems like insufficient infrastructure, lax enforcement procedures, and bureaucratic inefficiencies that impede the successful execution of housing and urban land policy programs. Not to be overlooked is the work by Yohannes, B., and Hailu, B. (2016) on community involvement in urban land governance, examines how communities might participate in the governance of urban land, with a particular emphasis on Ethiopian informal settlements. Different from above researches this study focus on the challenges of Ethiopian Federal State Structure in Addressing Distributive Justice Issues, In the Distribution of Land for Urban Housing: In Case of Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones.

* 1. **Objectives of the study**

1. To Identify the key challenges within the Ethiopian Federal State structure related to distributive justice in urban land distribution Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones of selected towns
2. To Examine the dynamics of urban land demand and allocation in Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones of selected towns
3. To identify the systemic factors contributing to challenges in urban land distribution Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones selected towns.
   1. **Significance of the Study**

The study has generated knowledge with regard to the challenges of Ethiopian Federal State Structure in addressing distributive Justice Issues, in the distribution of land for urban housing: In case of Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones. Furthermore, the study has constructed line of thoughts that might help the stakeholders as a blue print for the revitalization of relevant traditional means of utilizing land for the sake of enriching and legitimizing the existing modern land and land use related rules, regulations and policies. Last but not least, the study compliments further researches by providing thought-provoking ideas and suggestions.

* 1. **Review of Related Literature**
     1. **An Overview of Ethiopian Land Policy and Distributions**

Land is not the only problem facing developing nations; it is a problem facing all developing and developed nations. The equitable and shared allocation of land is one of the major concerns under this huge dilemma. Different nations introduce various governmental structures, such as federal state structures, to mitigate this issue. In Ethiopia and other third-world countries, there was no legislation pertaining to urban public leasing until the 1980s because, the landlords benefited and paid annually, and non-progressive (Abate and Kiros, 1983).The land tenure system in Ethiopia prior to the imperial regime's dissolution in 1975 suggested that the regime held exclusive political and economic authority over land and other tangible properties. The most of the valuable lands were in the hands of few feudal nobility property owners and royal family members(Tadesse, 1994).Town plan was broken by the royal family and landlords who were exempt from the law. They defied the plan when building their homes and used public land for their own needs even though it was set aside for public use. By abusing their authority, the bureaucrats broke the plan. Therefore, no plan could be enforced. Radical land reform was necessary to address all of these development impediments brought about by the feudal system (Tarekegn, 2008).

Ethiopia's land tenure system underwent significant modifications following the overthrow of the imperial state in 1974 by the Derg (military regime). One of the driving causes behind Ethiopia's revolution in February 1974 was the land question. In an attempt to compel a more equitable distribution of wealth throughout the nation, Proclamation No. 47/1975, "Government Ownership of Urban Lands and Extra Houses," nationalized all urban land and rental properties in Ethiopia in July 1975. Two housing typologies were established during the Derg regime (1975–1991): kebele housing, which is managed by Kebele Administration units, the smallest government administration unit that operates at the neighborhood level, and government-owned rental units, which are overseen by the Agency for the Administration of Rental Houses (Dejene, S., Teshome, W., Makombe, G., Awulachew, S. B., & Prasad, K.,2008). It is important to emphasize that although the centralized government managed housing supply during the Derg dictatorship (1974–1991). The Derg relaxed its restrictions on home supply in the late 1980s by enabling private property owners and public housing occupants to premises to exchange and sell their homes, despite the fact that in practice the government retained its position as the primary force behind housing supply and gave up very little control (Mulugeta, 2005).

Ethiopia implemented significant policy reforms immediately following the overthrow of the Derg in 1991, particularly the transition from a command to a market-oriented economy. The problem of rural and urban land is one area that has experienced a significant transition and addresses the demand for the poor. Furthermore, it is believed that the presence of good governance is a fundamental institutional requirement for the growth of a land and landed property market that is effective, fair, and well-functioning, for the maintenance of a strong free market economy, and for the establishment of an open and transparent land administration system that protects the rights and responsibilities of both lessors and lessees (Urban Lands Lease Holding Proclamation No.721/2011).Urban housing development was a major pillar in the government's priority intervention areas of policy, and it is being established as part of the process of developing an urban lease system to achieve these national goals currently. In addition to providing citizens with decent urban housing, the policy envisions using housing as a tool to support urban development, generate employment, boost the local urban economy through MSE development, encourage saving and empowering urban residents through property ownership, and expand the capabilities of the domestic construction sector. The policy documents stated intervention areas served as the foundation for the 2005 establishment of the IHDP (Ministry of Works and Urban establishment, 2007).

* 1. **Research Methodology**

For the purpose of explaining and describing the results, implications and findings of the study, descriptive research design was applied. The study employs a mixed research approach. The researchers selected this research approach, since it could enable to thoroughly investigate and adequately explain the research variables both qualitatively and quantitatively. In order to collect required data both primary and secondary sources of date were used. In this study, primary data sources were used to select sample respondents, interviewee and field observation. Administered questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to collect data from the sample respondents and interviewees respectively. The direct non-participant observation used to gather data from different institutions. For the purpose of this study, secondary sources of data were collected from the *woredas*’ revised structural plan and previous research documents (published or unpublished thesis), related literature, different rules and regulations, books and electronic journals are secondary data sources.

## Methods of Data Collection

For the purpose of this study Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected key informants from the two municipals. Focus group discussion has been conducted with seven (7) urban land use assessment experts from the two towns. Document analysis and review of Ethiopian and Oromia urban land management related policy documents have been conducted in order to come up with areas of disparity that could be enriched with the findings of the study. Lastly, Open-ended and close-ended questionnaires have been distributed to 100 of urban land management registered demanders of the two towns. Therefore, a total of 100 respondents responded to the questionnaires.

## Sampling Technique and Sample Size

For the sake of selecting the above listed respondents and interviewees, the researcher have applied purposive sampling technique to select two the towns as well as for the sake of contacting the urban land officers and experts and their clients who possess a good understanding of the issue under consideration. With regard to survey in order to select the population respondent from towns, the researchers have made use of Krjecie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique formula given as follows. Where: n = required sampling size, X2 = the table values of chi-square (3.841) confidence level of 1.962, N = number of population=1500(total number of registered people for seeking urban land for housing in the two zones, taken from urban and housing development offices of the zones and the two municipals, 2020), P = the population proportion (0.5) and d = the degree of accuracy (.05) which gives **175**

* + 1. **Methods of Data Analysis**

The data collected have been analyzed qualitatively where generic approach was used .for quantitative part , Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) which is the most popular quantitative analysis software program used by social scientists have been applied for the quantitative part of the data.

* 1. Result and Discussion

In Ethiopia Land history of distribution for urban rural land was political, economic and social consequences. Starting from feudalism to federalism there are complexity regarding to land distribution, even though introducing federal state structure assumed as the possible solution in distributing land through equitable ways it face challenges in line with distributive justice .Based on the existing data the researcher identified the following challenges

* + 1. **Hidden Land Market**

In the study area the researcher identified that the equitable allocation of land for urban housing in Ethiopia in the study area is severely hampered by the existence of a hidden land market. The term "hidden land market" describes the unofficial, unregulated land trading that takes place outside of official legal frameworks and frequently involves bribery, favoritism, and unethical acts. This underground market disadvantages low-income families, marginalized communities, and vulnerable populations by enabling affluent individuals, powerful groups, and speculators to purchase land at below-market prices or through illegal ways.

The hidden land market exacerbates inequalities in land ownership and housing opportunities while undermining accountability and transparency in the land distribution process. Due to rival interests vying for control over scarce urban land resources, this covert commerce also fuels social instability, violence, and insecurity.



Photo1.1. Informal settlement (observation .2024)

In order to effectively address the harmful impacts of the hidden land market and gain a deeper understanding of its dynamics and impact on distributive justice, research and analysis are necessary. Through illuminating the hidden land market and executing focused actions to tackle its underlying causes, authorities can strive towards establishing a fairer and more comprehensive framework for distributing land for urban housing in Ethiopia.

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* + 1. **Power Dynamics**

The allocation of land for urban housing in Ethiopia is shaped in large part by power dynamics, which can also have a substantial effect on distributive justice in the industry. Numerous factors, including political, economic, social, and cultural ones, impact these power dynamics by determining who controls the processes of land allocation, who has access to land, and who gains from the construction of urban housing. In Ethiopia, in general and study area in particular decisions about the distribution of land are heavily influenced by political authority. The distribution of land for urban housing is frequently heavily influenced by powerful individuals, political elites, and government officials who use their positions to advance their own or their constituency's interests. Favoritism, corruption, and the denial of housing land to vulnerable populations are possible outcomes of this. Similarly in the two towns the registration of land paused in 2013 E.C indicate this problem. The distribution of land for urban housing is also influenced by economic power, with wealthier people and businesses frequently possessing more means to exert influence over land allocation procedures. Financially capable developers, investors, and speculators can outbid or outmaneuver other prospective land users, concentrating land ownership in the hands of a select few and restricting access for people with less financial resources. Similarly in the two towns this group are involved in the hidden land market ,which is share lion share as the problem of land distribution justice in federal sate structure in the study area .

* + 1. **Inconsistencies in the Legal Framework**

Inconsistencies in Ethiopia's legal system controlling the distribution of land for urban housing might make distributive justice difficult to implement and make access to land inequality worse. These discrepancies may result from contradictory laws, rules, and policies at different governmental levels as well as from holes or weaknesses in the laws that permit uncertainty and subjective judgment. It is imperative to comprehend and tackle these discrepancies in order to advance equity, openness, and responsibility concerning the allotment of land for urban residential purposes. Federal, regional, and municipal governments are only a few of the many levels of authority involved in Ethiopia's complicated legislative system that regulates land administration. Inhomogeneous rules and policies among these several governmental tiers may result in misunderstandings, conflicts, and ineffective land distribution for urban residential purposes. For a legislative system that supports distributive justice to be cohesive and harmonized, coordination and clarity amongst different parties are crucial. In the study area similar problem were identified

In addition to undermining distributive fairness, inadequate regulatory supervision, corruption, and a lack of accountability can lead to abuse and partiality in the allocation of land in the study area for urban housing. Furthermore, inconsistent zoning and urban planning regulations may have an effect on how land is allocated for housing in Ethiopia. Inadequate infrastructure planning, arbitrary zoning designation changes and unclear rules lead to unplanned urban development, land speculation, and unequal access to housing options. According to key informant the facing difficulties for designing .Farther more, the researcher identified the area were settlements oppose urban planning’s .The data collected through questionnaires’ also reveal that 95% of settlement are identified as the result of inconsistencies in the legal framework

* + 1. **Varying Levels of Satisfaction Among Residents**

There are a number of reasons why residents of urban housing developments have varying degrees of satisfaction, including socioeconomic inequality, problems with infrastructure, problems with service delivery, dynamics within the community, and the standard of the housing offered. Inadequate roads, water supplies, electricity, and sanitary facilities are a few examples of the infrastructure that can lead to unhappiness among urban housing complex occupants. Problems with inadequate service provision, sporadic upkeep, and restricted availability of public facilities can influence an individual's quality of life and contentment with their living space. Addressing these issues and raising resident satisfaction can be accomplished through making investments in reliable infrastructure and guaranteeing effective service delivery..

In the study area the majority of the town's residents are unhappy with the town's land allocation process, including those who have registered for land demand and those who haven't but still have a strong desire for housing. The main source from Bunnoo Beddele Zone and Beddele Town states that the town's land distribution registration procedure was postponed in spite of a significant demand for land for housing. They were questioned by the investigator to find out what caused the problem. The reply claimed that budgetary constraints on land expropriation, orders from the highest commissioners, and a lack of land were the reasons behind the suspension of land registration. Field survey also reveals similar context in 95%of them not satisfies in land distribution for housing in the two towns.

* + 1. **Corruption**

One major issue that can impede Ethiopia's progress on urban housing construction and fuel resident discontent is corruption. Inequalities, inefficiencies, and subpar housing developments can result from corruption in the issuance of building licenses, the distribution of land for housing, and the delivery of services. In order to ensure that citizens have access to safe and affordable housing options and to promote openness, accountability, and fairness in the distribution of resources, it is imperative that corruption in the urban housing sector be addressed.

Moreover, unfair distribution practices, partiality, and land grabbing can arise from corruption in the process of allocating land for urban housing. The integrity of the land distribution process can be compromised by bribery, opaque decision-making, and discretionary decision-making. These issues can also make it more difficult for locals, particularly those from marginalized communities, to find safe and cheap homes. Corruption can be reduced and fair access to land for housing can be promoted by putting in place transparent and uniform procedures for land allocation, strengthening supervision systems, and holding those responsible for corrupt acts accountable.

One of the main obstacles to the allocation of land for urban dwelling is the dishonesty and corruption of the staff at the municipal of the towns and urban land management office. The primary responders in Beddele in 2021 stated that seventeen (17) employees were suspected of engaging in land corruption, including nepotism. About ten of them have been investigated, and more are still being looked into.

* + 1. **Misinterpretation of Laws by Officials**

There are various legal instruments pertaining to land distribution and use in EFDR. Among them, the general constitution is given. This constitution's article 40(3declared that, ‘*the right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange* nonetheless, this idea was misunderstood, particularly in the context of land expropriation. In the study area some responders claim that in the town, land is expropriated through negotiations with farmers. During these negotiations, each farmer receives a plot of land for their home, with the remaining land being distributed to a group of registered land demanders. This method of expropriating land has been declared unlawful and void. Furthermore, one issue with the expropriation of land for urban housing is the limitations imposed by professionals. Moreover, officials' misinterpretations of the law may have a negative impact on Ethiopia's urban housing market and increase resident unhappiness. Inaccurate interpretations of the rules and laws controlling property rights, building permits, land use, and other areas of urban development cause miscommunications, disputes, hold ups, and make it more difficult to find safe and affordable housing options.

When housing regulations are not sufficiently enforced and monitored, there is potential for officials to misunderstand and abuse the situation. Corruption, a lack of accountability systems, and inadequate supervision can make it more difficult for laws and rules intended to uphold the rights of citizens, guarantee the standard of Ethiopian urban housing sector officials' misreading of the law necessitates a cooperative, multi-stakeholder strategy that includes stakeholder engagement, legal education, capacity building, enforcement of regulations, and transparency in decision-making processes.

* + 1. **Poor Land Management**

Opinions of key informants to ascertain the degree to which inadequate land management contributes to the expansion of informal settlements. The researcher set out to determine why people were increasingly establishing informal settlements in the towns with inadequate land administration, particularly in government open space and highly sloped areas that are not under local government jurisdiction. They sought the opinions of the study's general respondents as well as the study's key informants in order to accomplish this. Data on how the area's inadequate land management practices affected the expansion of informal settlements was gathered and examined. Out of the total responses, 97.8% accepted that bad land administration was a key factor driving the rise of informal settlements; the remaining 2.2% disagreed that population growth was a factor driving informal settlement growth. The majority of key informants concur that the development of informal settlements is a result of the towns of study regions' inadequate land administration.

Furthermore, key informants state that the outcomes of the conversations show that the following are the primary causes of bad land management: inadequate land supply from the municipality, and urban areas are not well integrated, inadequate official land distribution system and formal land distribution's termination, particularly after 2008 E.C. Municipalities' inability to give farmers or others whose land is expropriated fair compensation due to budgetary restrictions. Weak or nonexistent enforcement actions by the municipality against people who sell their farmlands to unauthorized settlers, the researcher also observed that in all direction of the towns informal settlement are increasing.

* + 1. **Absence of Professional Workers**

In order to ensure high-quality construction, compliance with laws, and sustainable urban development practices, professional personnel are essential to the planning, execution, and management of housing projects. According to key informants in the two towns there is high constraints of professional workers The overall quality of life for residents can be negatively impacted by inefficiencies, delays, and subpar housing developments resulting from a shortage of trained experts in the urban housing sector. Without professional worker land distributions faces the fairness during distribution of land for housing, therefore the researcher observe that in the two towns absence of professional workers identified as one of the problem in land distribution

* 1. **Conclusion and Recommendation** 
     1. **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the scarcity of land for urban housing in developing countries like Ethiopia poses significant challenges that the Federal State structure has struggled to address effectively. The research conducted in Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones highlights the numerous obstacles hindering the fair distribution of land for housing, including a hidden land market, power dynamics, legal inconsistencies, corruption, and poor land management. To promote distributive justice in land allocation, it is essential to enhance transparency, strengthen responsibility mechanisms, engage with stakeholders, assign professional workers to key positions, and increase awareness for law interpretation. By addressing these issues, federal and regional authorities can work towards creating more equitable urban communities in Ethiopia and ensuring that all residents have access to housing opportunities.

* + 1. **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the research on land distribution challenges in Ilu Abba Bor and Bunno Bedelle Zones in Ethiopia, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the system of land allocation for urban housing and promote distributive justice:

* The two municipals and urban land management should implement measures to make the land allocation process more transparent by publishing clear guidelines and criteria for land distribution, ensuring that decisions are made openly and documented.
* The two municipals and urban land management should hold officials and stakeholders accountable for their actions in the land allocation process, establish oversight mechanisms to monitor and review decisions, and impose consequences for misconduct or corruption.
* Involve local communities, residents, and relevant stakeholders in the land allocation process through consultations, feedback mechanisms, and participation in decision-making to ensure that their needs and concerns are addressed.
* Ensure that qualified and trained professionals are appointed to key positions in land administration and management to uphold standards of professionalism, ethics, and compliance with legal frameworks.
* Implement efficient land management systems and processes to ensure proper documentation, tracking, and allocation of land for urban housing.

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