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ENVIRONMENTAL WORLDVIEWS: COMPLEXITY AND  
NETWORK GOVERNANCE APPROACH**

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# ANALYSIS ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY-MAKING AND ENVIRONMENTAL WORLDVIEWS: COMPLEXITY AND NETWORK GOVERNANCE APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental policy making has been a research agenda by many scholars for the last decades. Policy making demands the participation and attention of different actors. The participatory approach of actors on the decision making process must be interdependent each other. The failure of one of the actors may cause for the failure of the other. It is therefore that actors such as government, private, individuals, NGOs or CBOs should support each other for the environmental policy making process to be effective. The government is no longer seen as occupying a superior position to other parties, but as being on equal footing with them. Environmental policy making as one of public policy making within networks is about cooperation or non-cooperation between interdependent parties with different and often conflicting rationalities, interests and strategies. Policy making process in Ethiopia takes top down approach. It is an approach that the policy has formulated at the top level of the government hierarchy then trickle down to the community or those responsible bodies close to the community for execution or implementation. However, for a public policy making process to be sound and effectively implemented, consensus has to be an approach for decision making. There has to be community participation for example in ecosystem or biodiversity conservation. Therefore, this critical review of literature has been aimed at how the complexity and network governance stretched to analyze environmental policy making process from the Ethiopian perspective and it dealt with how ecosystem environmental worldview can be viewed through this approach.

**Keywords:** Network, Environment, Policy, Environmental Worldview, Ecosystem, Governance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that government is not the cockpit from which society is governed and that policy making processes are generally interplay between actors has resulted in a full scale search for new steering methods a discussion on governance and public management. Governance can literally be defined as 'directed influence of societal processes'. It covers all kinds of guidance mechanisms and stresses that guidance is a result of complex mechanisms, which do not only originate from public actors.

With regard to policy making processes and governance, network governance approach states that policy making processes must be taking place based on networks consisting of a range of actors such as individuals, coalitions, bureaus or organizations none of which possesses the power to determine the strategies of the other actors. The government is no longer seen as occupying a superior position to other parties, but as being on equal footing with them.

Environmental policy making as one of public policy making within networks is about cooperation or non-cooperation between interdependent parties with different and often conflicting rationalities, interests and strategies. Policy processes are not viewed as the implementation about problems, preferences and means, trade off goals and resources (Klijn, E. H. and Koppenjan, 2007).

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHOD**

To analyze how complexity and network governance works on environmental policy making and to critically investigate ecosystem, one of the environmental worldviews, the study has been employed qualitative approach. Cresswell (2008) has strongly arguing that researches which have exploratory characteristics can be effectively carried out through qualitative approach. The scholar also added that the approach is also best suited for detailed and complex analysis of a given issues as well as for problems that cannot easily be quantified. This study mainly used secondary sources of data, experience and observation. I have been in The Netherlands for the last 12 months. In my stay in the Netherlands, I realized that ecosystem environmental worldview can be realized by different actors' participation. Hence, experience and observation are one of the methods of data collection techniques. Furthermore, books, journals, working papers, magazines and newspapers were also important to conduct the study.

## **3. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY MAKING: ACTORS PARTICIPATION**

According to Roberts (2011), environmental policy is a set of principles and intentions used to guide decision making about human management of environmental capital and environmental services. The development of environmental policy in Ethiopia has three main discourses which have been dominant in the country's policy agenda over recent years. These are the green revolution discourse to overcome food shortage, the environmental rehabilitation discourse to improve degradation of natural resources and participatory natural resource management discourse (Keeley and Scoones, 2000 and Ruffies et al, 2012).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit by around 190 countries of the world including Ethiopia put environment as an essential component to reach development goals (Lanka et al, 2008). As a response to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was held in Rio in 1992, Ethiopia established Environmental Protection Authority in 1995 with proclamation No. 9/1995 under the Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection. EPA has the responsibility of implementing laws to protect the urban environment. As a result of Rio Agenda 21, EPA in collaboration with Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation developed an environmental policy of Ethiopia in 1997. This implies that however, the establishment of environmental policy in Ethiopia is a result of donor requirements than that of political will. This again implies that awareness of environmental issues is generally low at policy level (Ruffeis et al, 2012).

Environmental policy making process and the participation of stakeholders or actors on the issue are determined by the nature of the political environment. Ethiopia has parliamentary democracy in which the house of people's representative has strong power but in reality, the prime minister interferes and plays every role. The political system of Ethiopia is seemingly democratic and participatory but open policy debates among different parties on key environmental issues are hardly found. However, UN HABITAT report (2009) stated that policy is not a purely technocratic exercise made by professionals in collaboration with authoritarian political power holders or even by elected representatives alone. Rather it includes voice, responsiveness and accountability. To develop or change an existing policy, in Ethiopia, however, the decision is on the hands of the government. In most cases the federal government adopts policies related to environment from abroad. Once the policy is designed, adopted or developed at the federal level, the policy will be pushed down to the regional and local governments for implementation without the consultation and involvement of the people. The involvement of actors in the policy making process is totally absent. In addition, it is headache for the government to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the policy. Therefore, I would say that the environmental policy making process of Ethiopia has a top-down approach. The community is not empowered to influence and share ideas towards the policy making process due to the bad political structure of the country. However, in the implementation stage of the environmental policy, there are a number of actors involved.

Participatory decision making process in the area of urban environment is highly appreciated. However, in the Ethiopian context, the major challenge in achieving urban environmental policy making process is lack of coordination among sectors that means sectoral policies dominate over cross- sectoral policies. For me, cross-sectoral integration is necessary to achieve the urban environmental policy making process and, therefore, get actor's involvement, coordination and commitment better in the decision making process. For example, if you see the transport policy of Ethiopia, there is almost no policy and coordination between EPA and the transport sector on the issue of improving the use of fuel. The city is widely suffered from high levels of traffic congestion leading to air and noise pollution due to vehicular emission (FDRE, 2011). The *polluter's pay principle* is totally missed. There is no application of green taxes to ensure that polluters bear the costs of the inhabitants and the emission they produce.

In principle, the constitution of Ethiopia states that all citizens shall have a right to live in a clean and healthy environment. Government and citizens shall have a duty to protect the environment. However, this is not existed in practice. For example, in Addis Ababa city, there is only one open dumpsite called *Repi* which has been established 40 years ago. The dumpsite is already full and the management of the dumpsite is too poor i.e. it hard to health. People are living very near to the dumpsite and even there is elementary school. People were asking the government many times to change the location of the dumpsite but the government ignored their request. For this response, in 1993, people organize themselves and protest against the government. Finally, agreement was reached between the protestors and the municipality on the condition that the municipality would relocate the site, although it has not been yet realized. This implies that the government does not give a place to accommodate the inhabitants' demand. However, in Robert's conceptual framework, I realized that policy is emanated from people's demand.

In 1992, the internationally agreed Agenda 21 for sustainable development was developed by the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio. This emphasized on a need for public involvement in the design and implementation of many forms of environmental policy (Eden 1996, cited in Holmes and Scoones, 2000). In particular, the local Agenda 21 supported the development of methods working with and for the community. Ethiopia the mechanism for involving

people in the policy making process is that of representative democracy. Representatives are members of the ruling party so that everything is politicized so that environmental concern has not been adequately taken in to account in local and national governmental policy making.

To conclude, in the environmental decision making process, I couldn't find any actors interaction because the Ethiopian government does not have a room to participate concerned actors. Rather, the government is the main actor in the policy decision making process and other actors will participate in the implementation stage.

To analyze actors' interaction in the urban environmental policy implementation of Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa in Particular, I am going to use both Roberts' and IDS conceptual framework. Policy making process starts from the context in which the policy will be applied (Roberts, 2011) but later on policy may be shaped by politics (IDS, 2006). For example, the political, social, economic and environmental factors in a certain country may be considered as deriving forces to devise a policy. Sometimes demand may arise from the society to develop or revise a certain environmental policy; therefore, the society may provide resources or money to the government to make the policy change real. These can be considered as inputs to the policy making process. Based on these, the policy may be changed and the outcome may also be behavioral change on the society with regard to environment. In the Ethiopian political system, politicians bring with good ideas on paper to get only vote from the people. However, once they are elected, they do not do what they promised to the people. When the election time is reaching, they start a number of projects including environmental projects but later on the politicians do not finish what they are already started.

The policy environment is a context in which the policy system is operating at any one time. It includes the political completion of the government of the day and prevailing public political ideologies. In modern democracy policy is made in response to the pressures, opportunities and constraints provided by the combination of demand, support and resources. Demands are arise within the policy environment. Perceived problems affecting various interests will lead to pressure for policies to be formulated to address the problem. This pressure is likely to be complex (Roberts, 2011). To clearly see actors' involvement, let me take SWM as an example. In Addis Ababa city, the municipality is acting as the main actor in the middle and duties and responsibilities of solid waste management are often undertaking by it whereas tasks like formulating legal and policy framework, standards and establishing monitoring mechanism is undertaking by EPA at the federal level. In reality, SWM involves not only local governments but also NGOs, international organizations like UNEP, public institutions, households, CSOs, business organizations and Qorales<sup>1</sup>. But in the solid waste management of Addis Ababa, there is no integration between formal and informal sectors that is why the government labels informal sectors as illegal. Before few years ago, Addis Ababa has been the most polluted city in Ethiopia. But the city administration in collaboration with concerned individuals like Selish Demessie publicly known as Gash Abera Molla, a known environmentalist made an effort to involve the community and change their attitude towards cleaning the environment. In addition, embassy of the Federal republic of Germany was also participated as one actor. Therefore, each year on November 23, there is a national clearing day with a title of 'Hidar Siaten', the community woke up early in the morning and burn every solid waste they have in their houses and their locality. However, I don't agree with this idea because burning the waste causes air pollution, therefore, it needs solution. The policy and regulations with regard to solid waste management is

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<sup>1</sup> Informal waste collectors in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

emanated from the problem (being dirty) in which the policy is applied. This is consistent with Robert's idea. He states that problems and demands force the local governments to devise a policy. He also recommends that to change the policy in to action, actors should be participated.

To sum up, in the Ethiopian policy making process, small number of individuals control most decisions. For example, ministers, those top party members (supporters of the ruling government) and technical experts and these groups will be successful to the extent that their interest coincides with the interest of the government.

As a recommendation, the policy making process of Ethiopia should be participatory in nature. Actors should be involved in the decision making process. The coordination of different sectors in the policy making process should also be strong. Environment should also be included in each sectors' policy because everything matters with environment. Rather than a technocratic exercise carried out by politicians or experts, policy making process should be interactive and communicative activity. Citizens and different actors on the issue should be empowered to forward ideas, critics or comments towards the decision making process and the implementation of the policy. Policy should be made with discussion until consensus is reached among participants. The already implemented policy should be evaluated with proper measurement criteria. With regard to SWM in Addis Ababa for instance, the community should be provided with awareness creation and adequate education how to handle waste. The policy is stated that the community should properly segregate the waste at home without stating the way how it is. Therefore, policy should not be open rather it should be comprehensive and all rounded. Finally, in the policy making process, informal sectors should also be taken in to consideration.

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL WORLDVIEWS: AS AN ECOSYSTEM CENTERED THINKER-FROM THE NETWORK PERSPECTIVE**

According to Blewitt J. (2008) and points raised in class, environmental worldview is the way in which people make their perception on how the ecosystem on earth is working and it is the system in which people make their perception about the change in nature. It includes how we think the world works, what we believe our environmental role in the world should be and what we believe is right and wrong environmental behavior. There are different environmental worldviews. Some of them are biocentric, ecosystem centric, anthropocentric, eco-feminism and others.

When I look into my heart, I am ecosystem centered thinker, meaning I really believe that the existence of one organism is determined by the next organism because nothing is self-sustained and independent, they are coexisted. I strongly believe that we are not the only species for earth and we are not the only species who are in charge of the earth. Everything is interconnected to everything else, and if one of the earth's systems is negatively affected, there will be a multiple effect throughout every other system. The earth is as fragile, multipart and inter-connected as a web of a spider. It is with reason that everything is here, and it is due to evolution and adaptation that everything come into play.

I believe that the resources that are available in the world are not only for us and they are scarce hence we should utilize them fruitfully without intimidating the existence of the earth ecosystem. We should cooperate with one another to make the ecosystem functioning instead of causing it badly, and work to encourage the sustainability of

the environment. The natural resources will not be existed for life on earth so that we should not waste them. Instead of creating harmony and cultivating the ecosystem of the earth, we reap the earth to live a luxury life on the cost of it.

People may going to be urban environmental specialist in the future that helps them in the area of devising environmental policies related to conservation of biodiversity. Biodiversity is essential for healthy functioning of the earth's ecosystem. In order to make their argument real, being environmental specialist is logical. They can devise environmental policies in the way that local people can conserve the ecosystem like forests, means of livelihood, and in return they will receive money from those who share the values of the forest after calculating the economic or social values of the forest, make policy that encourage people to use renewable energy production through subsidy and tax credits. In the context of my country, Ethiopia, the livelihood of poor is really depend on natural resources like forest meaning they sell fire wood, charcoal, timber etc from the forest by degrading and affecting the biodiversity negatively. However, by introducing environmental policies that preserves forests, we can keep the sustainability of our earth real. In addition to the points I raised, let me add some points from the excursion I had in The Netherlands as an argument for ecosystem centered environmental worldview.

From the visit I had in Culmborg (The Netherlands) and its neighborhood, I understood that the people are keeping the ecosystem being functional. The community is using solar energy than gases to warm their houses. Almost each household has solar PV in their house and on the top of that, the people are using car sharing mechanism meaning people share one car for many to keep the environment safe. You see how the community is concerned about nature and other species like birds and animals. Therefore, after seeing what is going on there, ideas are coming across my mind to relate with one of the environmental worldviews that is ecosystem-centered worldview. People should not live today by assuming that dying tomorrow. We should not be greedy. We should think of other species which are living on earth and coming generation to transfer to them by keeping our earth safe. It is true that innovation in technology is fine but I believe that this technology should not be danger for the sustainability of the ecosystem and other species we have rather it must be used in line with what our planet needs. For example, having a car is a pleased idea but to keep the ecosystem functional and balanced, bicycling and walking is preferred due to CO<sub>2</sub> emission. Do not say 'who cares?' because we can survive if and only if we have a very good interaction with nature. Otherwise, nature will punish us with tsunami, cyclone, flood, earthquake and others.

To sum up, I still believe that survival depends on how we interact and integrate with nature and we should live also for others not only for ourselves because we are not the only species that belongs to this planet. It is true which cannot be dined that directly or indirectly our life depends on the benefits or services obtained from ecosystems so that let us give care for the conservation and efficient utilization of the ecosystem that we have.



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