Resolving the Grand Challenges in Public Administration: A Comparative Analysis of Ethiopia and Tanzania

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Abstract

Comparative studies on the grand challenges in public administration in Africa are scarce. Using historical and sociological neo-institutionalist perspectives and multiple secondary datasets, this study explores and describes the grand politico-administrative challenges, the progress made, and the challenges hindering the achievement of six SDGs with regard to certain selected targets. It also seeks to find out how Ethiopia and Tanzania, and Africa in general, should respond to the grand challenges facing public administration in the age of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). The findings indicate that deep-seated historical, sociological, and politico-administrative factors constrain the performance of public administration in Ethiopia and Tanzania. Second, despite the differences noted, the progress made in pursuit of SDG4, SDG5, SDG8, SDG9, and SDG16 is positive in both countries, but more so in Tanzania than in Ethiopia. However, in both countries, there is gender-based inequalities, the risk of an unsustainable GDP growth rate, and the lack of economic transformation. Moreover, the unprecedented digital divide and the consequences of COVID-19 to a large extent not only constrain the progress toward achieving the SDGs in both countries but also expose the countries to the possibility of losing the hard-won gains. Third, if not handled effectively, the 4IR will compound the challenges and erode the political sovereignty of Tanzania and Ethiopia, Africa, and Africans. To overcome the aforementioned challenges and to develop a new path that balances social, economic, and ecological goals in the two countries, there is a need to reform critically all the sectors, strategically and continuously invest in digital infrastructure, and introduce sector-fit capacity-building programs by taking into account the relevant politico-administrative contexts, and socio-economic structural and geo-spatial inequalities. The study contributes to the literature on the developmental state in Africa.

Keywords

Introduction

The Unite Nations envisions a world where no one is left behind by 2030 and where social, economic, and ecological goals are equilibrated and sustained to build an equitable future. This vision requires effective, accountable, and inclusive public administration at all levels (United Nations, 2015). The signatory countries (developed and developing ones) have endorsed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and integrated them into their National Development Plans. Similarly, the African Union (AU) is committed to implementing the SDGs, although the AU adopted Agenda 2063 in 2013, two years before the SDGs come into force (African Capacity Building Foundation, 2019; UN-ECA, African Union, African Development Bank, & UNDP, 2017). Furthermore, many countries have conducted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). For example, Ethiopian did so in 2017 and Tanzania in 2019. Ethiopia and Tanzania have also established a unit within some of the existing institutions to coordinate the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the pursuit of the SDGs (ACBF, 2019).

As with other UN goals such as the erstwhile Millennium Development Goals, the progress toward achieving the SDGs is presumed to vary by country, goal, and target. This is partly due to the grand challenges facing public administration, which are large in scope and which require significant innovation and long-term commitment, seek to achieve worthwhile and ambitious goals which, in turn, are challenging and require paradigm shifts in thinking and/or significant changes in government functioning, and have significant individual, governmental, and societal impact (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019, p 435).

For example, despite the headway made, Africa's economic transformation still has a long way to go, and across the continent there is a need to change how nations address the developmental challenges (ACBF, 2019). However, given the inadequate digital connectivity and ICT infrastructure, there is limited knowledge of how Africa can harness the 4IR to address the public administration challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has adversely affected all aspects of human development all over the world (World Bank, 2021) and has exposed the world to the grand challenges facing public administration and continue to exacerbate the prevailing inequalities (World Economic Forum, 2020), particularly in Africa (UN-ECA, 2021). UNDP (2019) maintains that new forms of inequalities flourish, among others, the pandemic declined the GDP of the continent by 2.0% to 5.4% in 2020 and exposed the digital shortages of Africa (UN-ECA 2021). The challenges to respond to socio-economic crisis are rooted in the politico-administrative culture and historical paths that affect public-sector coordination and administrative capacity, even in the West (Bouckaert et al., 2020; Kuhlmann et al., 2021; UNDP, 2020). However, comparative research on the grand challenges facing public administration is limited, if not non-existent, especially in Africa.

Drawing on the historical and sociological neo-institutionalism perspectives, we assess the progress that Ethiopia and Tanzania have made in pursuit of Quality Education (Goal 4, target 4.1); Gender Equality (Goal 5, target 5.5), Economic Growth (Goal 8, target 8.1); Infrastructure (Goal 9, target 5c), and Public Administration (Goal 16, targets 16.3, 16.5 and 16.6). We also look at how public administration in Ethiopia and Tanzania needs to respond to the grand challenges. To answer the research question, we use national and international datasets, documents, and the relevant literature. We contribute to the literature on public administration and policy, and to the debate on the progress made toward achieving the SDGs and to how Africa can seize the opportunities provided by the 4IR.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section describes historical and sociological neo-institutionalism to develop the theoretical framework for the study. Then, we present the research methodology adopted in this study. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of the results of the study. The last section provides concluding reflections, the implications of the results, and the limitations of the study.

Theoretical Framework

This paper uses historical and sociological neo-institutionalism as its theoretical frameworks. We adopted historical neo-institutionalism because we assumed that administrative arrangements and path dependencies are crucial to understanding and explaining the grand challenges facing public administration, and how public administration responds to the challenges (Bouckaert et al., 2020; Hall & Taylor, 1996; Kuhlmann et al., 2021). This theoretical viewpoint holds that previous memories inform the present and future actions and choices in public administration (Peters, 2013; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2009), thus allowing one to understand the asymmetries of power relations and determine continuity and change over time (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2009). Depending on countries' historical landscape, countries might use different approaches to try to respond to the grand challenges in public administration (Kuhlmann et al., 2021). The UN also notes that there is a need to take into account history and institutional settings in pursuing the SDGs at all levels (UN, 2019).

We also adopted the sociological neo-institutionalism perspective because, according to this perspective, institutions/cultures guide human action according to which actors condition their behaviour based on what is "socially appropriate" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p 949). According to Hofstede (2001), national cultures usually remain

stable, thereby affecting how public administration functions and responses to societal problems. However, the 4IR significantly alters everything in the world, including institutions (Benyera, 2021; Lewis, 2018; Prisecaru, 2016).

In this study, in order to understand the administrative culture of Ethiopia and Tanzania, we deployed Hofstede's dimensions of culture, namely power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long-term versus short-term normative orientation, and indulgence versus restraint (for details on these dimensions, see http://www.geert-hofstede.com).

Research Methodology

We applied an exploratory-descriptive research design. We reviewed the relevant literature, national development plans, strategies, reports (including VNRs[1]), international conventions such as the UN's Agenda 2030, the AU's Agenda 2063, international documents (including UNDP's and UN's World Public Sector Reports), and Hofstede's dimensions of culture. In order to examine the progress in pursuit of SDG 4 (target 4.1), SDG 5 (target 5.5), SDG 8 (target 8.1), SDG 9 (target 5), SDG 16 (targets 16.3, 16.5, and 16.6), we collected data from various sources, including the World Bank database, the UNDP database, reports, World Governance Indicators, the Transparency International dataset, Mo Ibrahim's reports, and African Capacity reports.

Table 1: SDG Targets, Indictors, and Data Sources

SDG	Indicator	Data source
SDG 4 (target 4.1)	Gross primary and secondary school pupil enrolments (by gender)	The World Bank database and national reports
	Net primary school pupil enrolment (by gender)	The World Bank database
	Human Development index	(UNDP) the World Bank database
	Quality of the education system (alignment of education with market needs)	Mo Ibrahim's reports
SDG 5 (target 5.5)	Gender development index	(UNDP)
	Seats in the national parliament (% female)	The World Bank database & published research papers
SDG 8 (target 8.1)	GDP growth rate	The World Bank database
	GDP per capita (current US$)	The World Bank database
	Sectors' contribution to the GDP (agriculture, industry, and service)	The World Bank database
SDG 9 (target 9.5c)	Individuals using the Internet (% of the population)	World Bank Database and Mo Ibrahim reports
	Cellular phone users (per 100 people)	The World Bank database and Mo Ibrahim's reports
SDG 16 (target 16.3)	The rule of law	The World Governance Indicator (WGI) and Mo Ibrahim's reports
SDG 16 (target 16.5)	Reduction of corruption	TI and WGI
SDG 16 (target 16.6a)	Government effectiveness	WGI and Mo Ibrahim's reports
SDG 16 (target 16.6b)	Accountability	WGI and Mo Ibrahim's reports
SDG 16 (target 16.6c)	Transparency	The World Bank database, Mo Ibrahim's

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[1] The VNRs are part of the formal intergovernmental follow-up and review process on Agenda 2030 and are presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

SDG	Indicator	Data source
		reports, and TI

We also obtained data and literature from the internet. Since the SDG targets comprise a set of public administration principles that cause certain challenges in measuring the progress made in pursuing the targets, we used separate principles to compare the progress on separate principles. Table 1 depicts the SDG targets, indictors, and major data sources on the same targets.

Results

The Politico- administrative contexts of Ethiopia and Tanzania

Ethiopia and Tanzania: Before 1960s/1970s
Although Ethiopia was not colonized, the history of Ethiopia is exceedingly complex and contested (Záhořík, 2017). In the literature, three theses stand out: the nation-building thesis, the national oppression thesis, and the colonial thesis. The nation-build thesis maintains that Ethiopia is an ancient country, and that all the imperial regimes' actions aimed at building the nation were legitimate (Bach, 2014). The national oppression thesis claims that Ethiopia was a product of "genocidal campaigns" of Emperor Menelik's conquests and expansion toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The thesis was pioneered by the Ethiopian student movement that asked the fundamental "nationalist question" (who is an Ethiopian?) and claimed the rights of ethnic groups (Abbink, 2011; Bach, 2014). The thesis was reinforced by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which directly challenged the hitherto hegemonic Ethiopian nationalism (Barata, 2012), according to which Ethiopianness is the root cause of Ethiopia's troubles. It also claimed that Ethiopianness is a choice but not an obligation, which means Ethiopianness is of secondary importance (Bach, 2014).

The colonial thesis is advocated by, among others, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), which respectively demanded the independence of the "colonized" people, the Oromo and Somali (Abbink, 2009; Jalata, 2002, 2016). The proponents claim that Ethiopian Emperors, exceedingly supported by the European imperial powers, conquered the Oromo and many people in the south and imposed their rule and the culture of "Northerners" on them, and that they marginalised other people and relegated them to second-class citizens (Jalata, 2002, 2016). However, some scholars maintain that despite state-led institutional violence against the Oromo and other people in the south, for example, the Oromo kept their Oromoness and advanced their Oromo nationalism to resist and fight against the colonial settlers (Jalata, 2016; Záhořík, 2017).

The United Republic of Tanzania (hereafter Tanzania) was formed on April 26, 1964 by two historically different countries (Tanganyika and Zanzibar) through articles of the Union. The Union was confirmed by an interim constitution in 1965 that introduced a one-party system in the country. Tanganyika was colonized by Germany (1885-1920), and then by the British until independence in December 1961. Zanzibar was occupied by the Omani dynasty from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, and then by the British from 1891 until its independence in December 1963 (Egboh & Aniche, 2015). The 1977 Constitution reconfirmed the Union (Karume, 2004). The ruling Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) in Zanzibar merged with the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) to form Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in February 1977.

The Socialist ideology in Ethiopia and Tanzania
Ethiopia and Tanzania adopted a socialist ideology, with Tanzania doing so earlier than Ethiopia. Tanzania adopted her own version of socialism called Ujamaa in 1967 as a national development ideology (Kjaer, 2004). Under this, Tanzania implemented a massive villagisation and collectivisation programme, and nationalised land and private property in 1969 (Bamwenda, 2018). The 1977 Constitution categorically stipulates that the country is a democratic and socialist state (Katundu, 2018). To suppress ethnic and linguistic diversity, the country adopted Kiswahili as a language of instruction in primary school and a medium of communication in socio-political and business communication (Blommaert, 2014; Heilman & Kaiser, 2002). However, although Kiswahili is the national

language, English became the second language over time, implying that the Swahilisation efforts and ideological unification were unsuccessful (Blommaert, 2014).

In 1975, the Ethiopian unitary and anti-feudal Derg regime (1974-1991) also adopted the Marxist and Leninist socialist ideology and proclaimed itself a republican government (Abbink, 2009, 2011; Holcomb & Ibssa, 1990), led by national Shengo, a one-party- substantially weak parliament; with the president extremely powerful (Ayenew, 2019). The exceedingly centralised government promotes "democratic revolutionary socialism" (Bassi, 2014). Like the Tanzanian government, the Derg nationalised private propriety, abolished the imperial land-tenure system, and conducted villagisation and collectivisation programmes in 1975. Furthermore, like Tanzania, although Ethiopia is home to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, the Derg, though they curtailed all religions, did not change the language policy of the imperial regime; Amharic remained in use in primary school and was the national language.

Post-1990s Ethiopia and Tanzania
Since the 1990s, Ethiopia and Tanzania have seen a new trajectory. After toppling the Derg regime in the 1990s, the EPRDF established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) (1991-1995) (Abbink, 2006), and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in 1995, which comprised nine ethnic-regional states and two administrative cities (EPRDF, 1995) which, according to Keller (2002), typify a holding together type of federalism with features of "putting together federation, comprising both self-rule and shared-rule" (Teshome & Záhořík, 2008:p. 4-16). Unlike during the former regimes, the nation, nationalities, and the people in the country now have the right to self-administration, including the right to secession (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia FDRE, 1995; Teshome & Záhořík, 2008). Consequently, Ethiopian regions have their own official and primary school languages; Amharic became the Federal working language (Abbink, 2006). The single official language continues to undermine non-Amharic language proficient citizens' interaction with the federal government. In addition, the country adopted a neoliberal economic policy during the transitional period (Adejumobi, 2007) and officially embraced elements of new public management theory after 1995 (Mengesha & Common, 2007).

In contrast, Tanzania adopted a unitary, presidential, and republican system with features of quasi-federalism or partial federalism, and typifies the coming together type of federalism (Egboh & Aniche, 2015). The union has a two-tiered government system: the Union Government and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. The Union Government deals with the union matters and the non-union matters relating to Mainland Tanzania, and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar deals with the non-union matters relating to Zanzibar (Egboh & Aniche, 2015). In the 1980s, Tanzania implemented the IMF/World Bank policy prescriptions—the Structural Adjustment Program —and shifted its orientation from Ujamaa to a market-oriented approach (Egboh & Aniche, 2015).

Moreover, in the 1990s, driven by both internal and external pressure, Ethiopia and Tanzania officially shifted from single to multi-party politics (Abbink, 2017; Katundu, 2018; Matlosa, 2004). Opposition political parties have contested in all the elections since the 1990s and tensions resurface continuously. In both countries, the tensions between political parties are due to ideological or policy differences between the parties and the hunger for power (Abbink, 2009; Katundu, 2018), authoritarianism (Egboh & Aniche, 2015; Nur, 2013), unjust resource distribution, an unlevelled political playing field, inequalities, and the instrumentalism of the politics of ethnic-religion and regionalism (Abbink, 2009; Semwaza, 2016). Opposition political parties have strong support in urban centres, while the ruling parties (EPRDF and CCM) are dominant in rural areas (Abbink, 2009; Semwaza, 2016).

In both countries, opposition political parties were constrained by internal and external factors. Internally they remained weak (Abbink, 2017; Katundu, 2018), and externally they were systematically weakened by the ruling parties, which used electoral commissions to constrain the role of CSOs and media, and in the long run affected the civic engagement (Abbink, 2017; Katundu, 2018; Záhořík, 2017). The Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation No.621/2009 (Abbink, 2009; Bassi, 2014) and the Tanzanian NGOs Act of 2002 restricted the NGOs/CSOs from undertaking political activities (Egboh & Aniche, 2015).

The "democratic centralist" principle of the EPRDF and CCM, driven by the Marxist-Leninist ideology, also markedly curtailed the space for political engagement at all levels (Bamwenda, 2018; Clapham, 2018; Katundu, 2018; Záhořík, 2017). The first-past-the-post (FPTP) system in a multi-party electoral system has also exceedingly enabled the ruling parties in Ethiopia and Tanzania to consolidate power (Abbink, 2017). The prevalence of features of Office-Seeking rather than Policy-Seeking political parties, the former focusing on maximising their control over political office and the latter emphasising maximisng their impact on public policy (Katundu, 2018) has also played a significant role in consolidating power.

Consequently, though both Ethiopia and Tanzania hold periodic elections, the EPRDF in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2017) and CCM in Tanzania (Bamwenda, 2018; Semwaza, 2016) are unwilling to relinquish power and are de jure one-party rule and ultimately turned into a one-party authoritarian regime (Abbink, 2017; Matlosa, 2004). Despite the above situation, Tanzania is considered one of the most stable states in Africa (Cheeseman, Collord, & Reyntjens, 2018). With the recent results of the general election, some scholars are warning that Tanzania is slowly returning to the de facto one-party state it once was (Collord, 2021). Table 2 depicts the election results in Tanzania and Ethiopia from 1995 to 2021.

Table 2: Parliamentary (National Assembly) Election Results in Ethiopia and Tanzania (% Seats), 1995-2021

Party	1995		2000		2005[2]		2010		2015		2021	
	ET	TZ	ET	TZ	ET	TZ	ET	TZ	ET	TZ	ET	TZ
Ruling party (% seats)	94	79.6	88	87.1	67	86	99.6	75.5	100	77.8	94	97
All opposition parties (% seats)	6	20.4	12	12.9	33	14	0.4	14.5	0	22.2	6	3

Source: Ethiopia (Abbink 2017: 316), Tanzania (Egboh & Aniche, 2015), Katundu (2018) for the 2015 election), Collard (2021) (for the 2020 election), and NEC (2020).

The Legislature, executive, and judiciary

The national legislatures in Ethiopia and Tanzania are elected for a period of five years and are responsible for enacting national laws and policies. Yet, while the Tanzanian legislature is unicameral (Egboh & Aniche, 2015), the Ethiopian parliament consists of two houses: the House of People's Representatives (HPR) and the House of the Federation, the latter comprising elected and assigned delegates, among others, who are responsible for interpreting the constitution and setting the resource distribution formula (Abbink, 2009). The regional legislatures in Ethiopia and the Zanzibar House of Representatives make laws and policies applicable to the relevant regions and the Islands of Zanzibar, respectively. However, the Ethiopian regions appear to be less autonomous than the Zanzibar government.

Despite certain similar features, the executive organ in Ethiopia and that of Tanzania differ. In Tanzania, the highest executive power is vested in the President, the Vice-President, the President of Zanzibar, the Prime Minister, and the cabinet ministers (Egboh & Aniche, 2015). In Ethiopia, the highest executive power is vested in the Prime Minister and the council of ministers (FDRE, 1995). In Ethiopia, the Prime Minister is the Head of Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Military, and the President is the Head of State (FDRE, 1995). The Tanzanian president is "both the head of state and head of government and the 'commander-in-chief of armed

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[2] Although contested, the 2005 Ethiopian national elections were relatively free.

forces" (Egboh & Aniche, 2015). Unlike in Ethiopia, in Tanzania the civil service includes the ministries and the political executives.

The judicial structures in Ethiopia and Tanzania are different. The federal and regional courts in Ethiopia are divided into three levels: the Federal/State First Instance Court, the Federal/State High Court, and the Federal/State Supreme Court, and cases end at the Federal Supreme Court FDRE (1995). Some of the regions have the fourth tier—social (village) courts. The Tanzanian judicial system comprises five levels: the Primary Courts, the District Courts, the Resident Magistrate's Courts, the High Courts, and the Court of Appeal of the Union, whose decision is final and conclusive (Egboh & Aniche, 2015).

Socio-economic issues

Both Ethiopia and Tanzania promote the developmental state doctrine and are considered low-income and human development countries. Both are highly donor-dependent, with Tanzania's dependency level ranging from 25% to 30% (Matlosa, 2004), and Ethiopia getting one-third of the government budget from donors (Peterson, 2015). Socially, both are ethnically heterogeneous, and ethnic differences and political violence resurface periodically in the two countries (Abbink, 2006; Kaiser, 1996). Figure 1 shows that political violence against civilians is more severe in Ethiopia than in Tanzania. Indeed, Tanzania is politically more stable than Ethiopia; Tanzania has an 'N' and Ethiopia a decreasing trend (Figure 2). Similarly, Figure 3 shows that political rights and opportunities have been slightly improving in Tanzania and decreasing in Ethiopia.

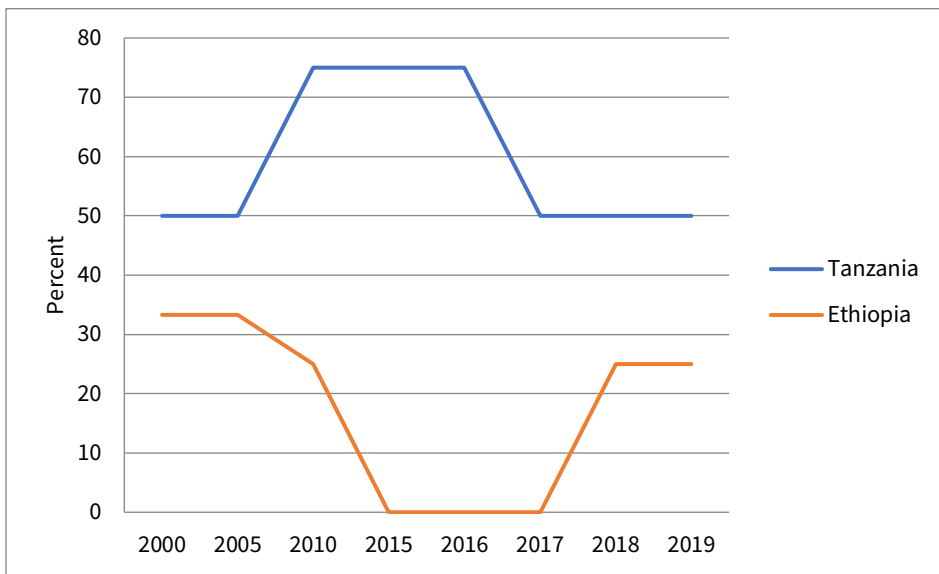Figure 1: Absence of political violence in Ethiopia and Tanzania
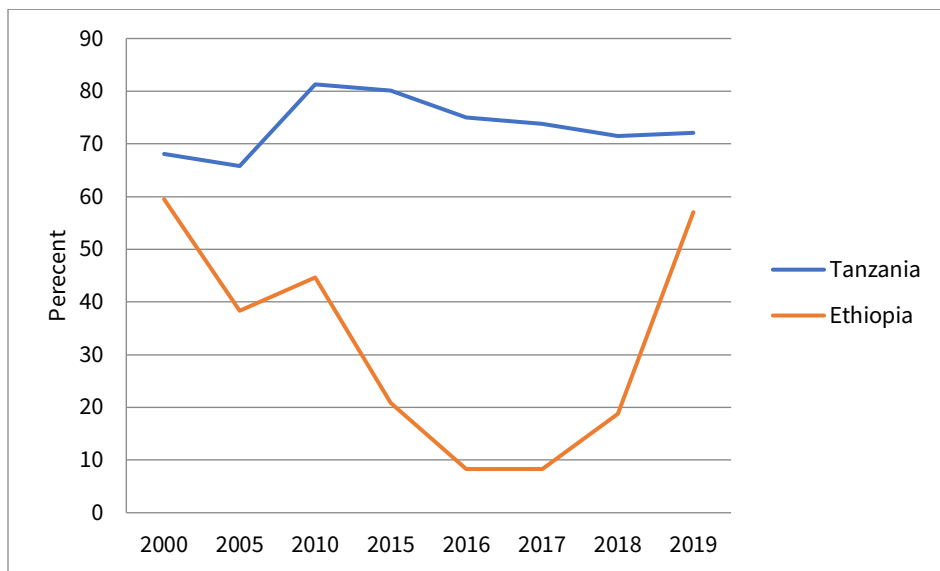
Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Figure 2: Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism
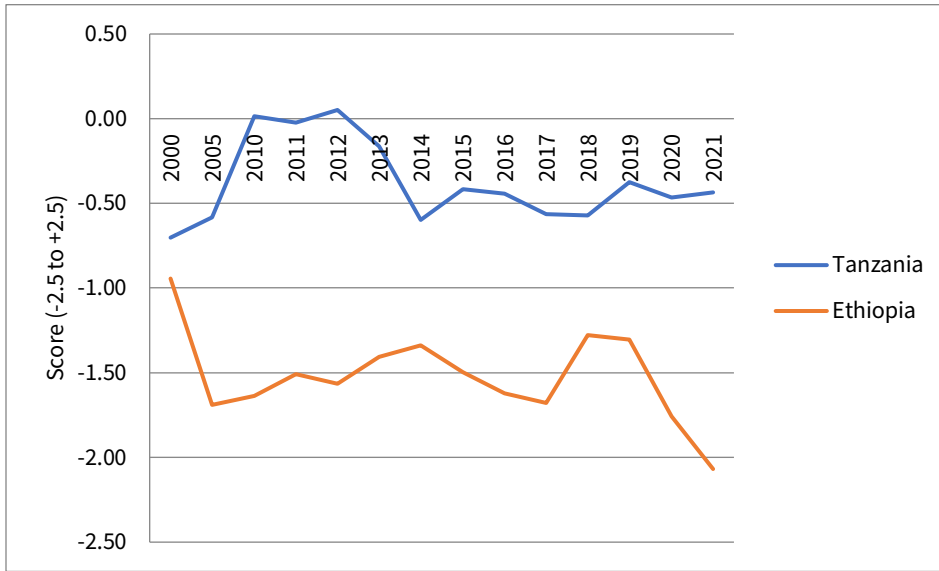
Source: World Bank

Figure 3: Political Rights and opportunities

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

The top-down politico-administrative system in Ethiopia and Tanzania is reinforced by national culture. With regard to Hofstede's dimensions of national culture, Ethiopia and Tanzania differ significantly only on the masculinity and femininity dimension (see Figure 4). Whereas Ethiopia is categorised as a competitive masculine society (65), Tanzania is a feminine society (40) that emphasises harmony, cooperation, and dialogue.

Ethiopia and Tanzania scored high (70) on the power distance dimension, meaning that the hierarchical-authoritarian administrative systems and the societies tend to accept the inequality inherited from the past regimes. Though opposing the state and the ruling party is unacceptable, the situation in Ethiopia since 2015 proves that citizens have the power to shake up the government (Záhořík, 2017). Second, both countries are considered to be collective societies and promote conventional values; they give more weight to groups' well-being than to individual freedom. Despite these differences, the score on the indulgence dimension shows that Ethiopians and Tanzanians emphasise strict adherence to social norms over natural human freedom and fun. Tanzania is a short-term-oriented society (34) and prefers maintaining the existing traditions, rather than investing in the long-term future. Ethiopia has no score on the long-term orientation dimension but given the top-down politico-administrative culture, Ethiopia appears to be a short short-term oriented society. Notwithstanding the role of legal instruments, these conservative social norms constrain the effort to end any form of discrimination (UN-ECA, et al., 2017; UN, 2019). However, the 4IR may help to deflect the ingrained institutions, but that depend on the extent of digitalisation, digital literacy, and digital readiness in both countries (Benyera, 2021). Figure 2 depicts the cultural dimensions in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Figure 4: Hofstede's cultural dimensions in Ethiopia and Tanzania
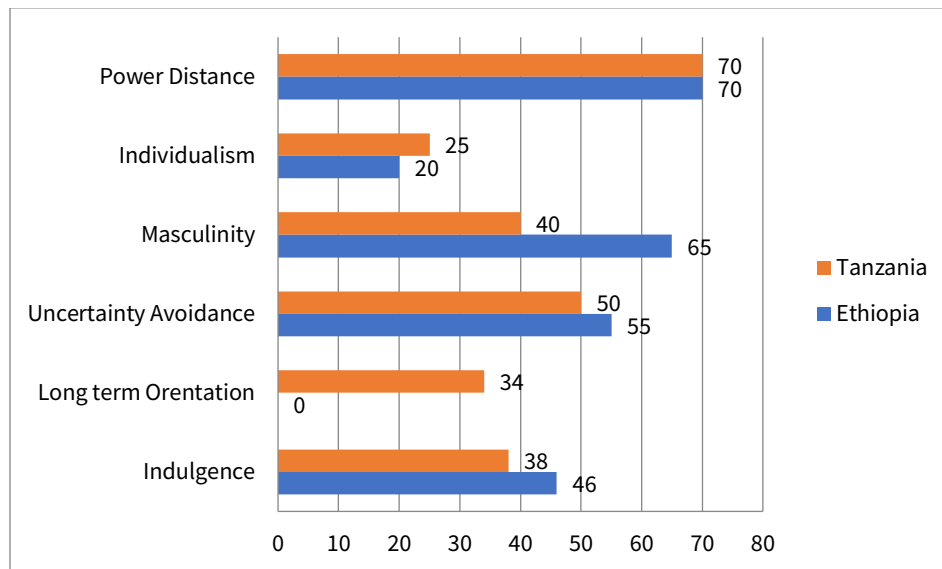
Progress Made and Challenges Hindering Achievement of the Selected Sustainable Development Targets in Ethiopia and Tanzania

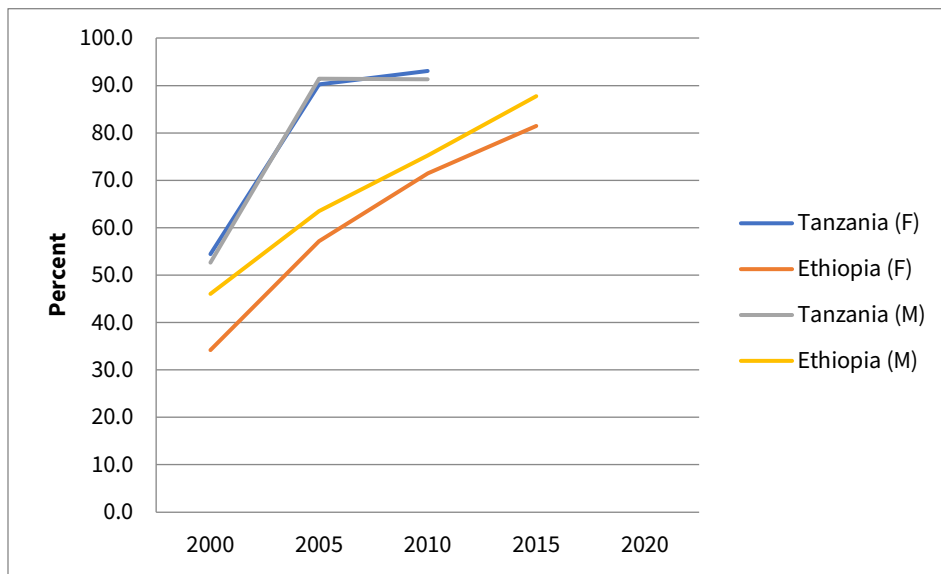- Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education (target 4.1)

    Between 2000 and 2021, Ethiopia and Tanzania had commendable performances on the gross and net primary school pupil enrolment (females and males), but with substantial differences between the countries and gender within the countries (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). Both increased the gross and net primary school pupil enrolment. But, while Ethiopia had an upward trend, Tanzania had a fluctuating trend for both males and females. Figure 5 shows that female and male secondary school gross pupil enrolment was significantly low in the two countries, but Ethiopia registered an upward progression and Tanzania a bouncing back trend. Overall, both countries substantially reduced the gender gap in education over time; comparatively, the progress made by Ethiopia is remarkable. However, Tanzania had a better score on gender gap both in primary and secondary school pupil enrolments.

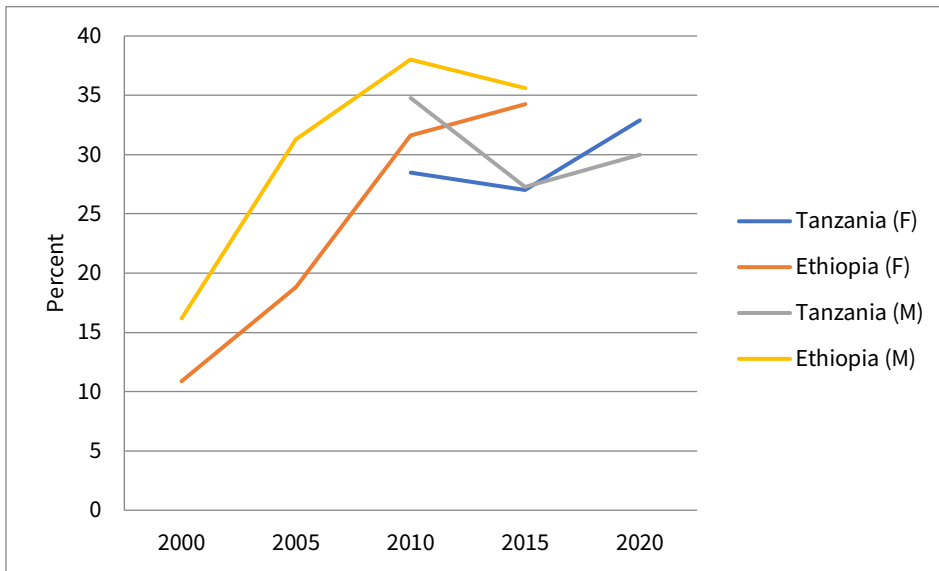Figure 5: Gross primary school enrolment by gender (%)
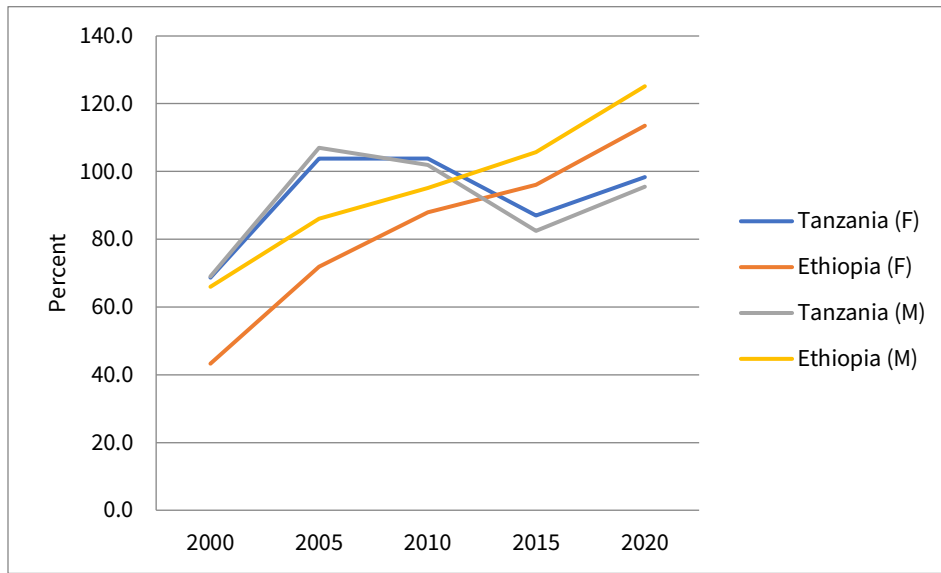
Source: World Bank

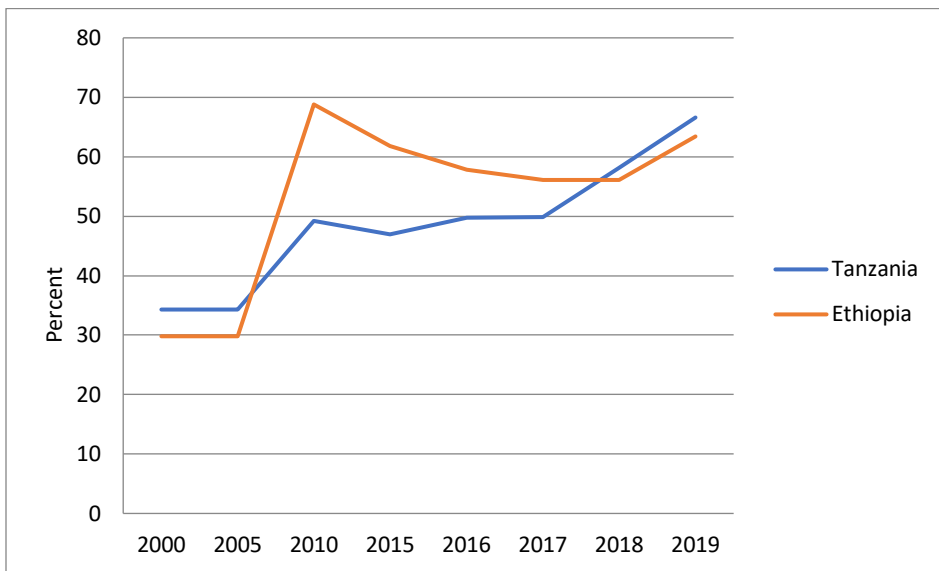Figure 6: Primary school net enrolment by gender (%)

Source: World Bank

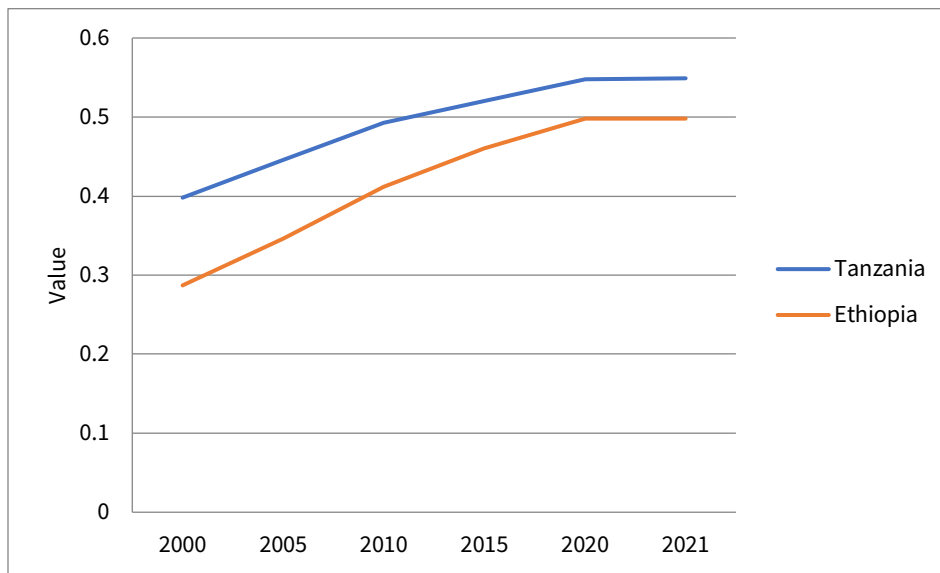Figure 7: Gross secondary school enrolment per gender (%)

Source: World Bank

Figure 8: Education system quality

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Figure 9: Human Development Index
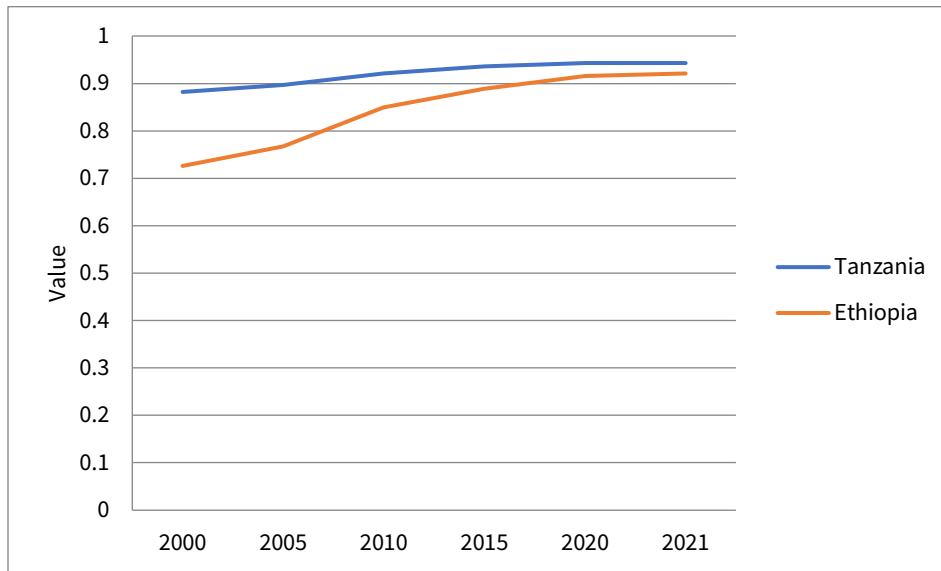

Source: UNDP

- Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality

The UN's SDG Goal 5 is about achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN, 2015). Both the UN and the AU emphasise that countries ensure gender equality so as to achieve the other goals (UN-ECA et al., 2017). The AU confirmed its commitment to gender equality and women empowerment in its constitutional framework (2000) and gender policy (2009). Both Ethiopia and Tanzania ratified the Maputo Protocol (2003) on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW-1979), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Moreover, the constitutions of Ethiopia and Tanzania contain women's rights and non-discrimination and equality clauses relating to politics and socio-economic development programs. Furthermore, in both countries, women and men have equal rights to own property (World Bank, 2016).

However, there are differences between the two countries. First, women's participation in the labour force is lower in Ethiopia (81%) than in Tanzania (90%) (World Bank, 2016). Second, the Ethiopian federal and regional constitutions recognise customary laws and courts which become invalid only when they violate non-discrimination or equality provisions. But the Tanzanian constitution does not recognize customary laws (FDRE, 1995; World Bank, 2016). Third, whereas Tanzania has quotas (30%), Ethiopia does not have quotas for women in parliament.

Despite these differences, over the last twenty years, the gender development index (GDI) has slowly improved, and the proportion of women parliamentarians in Ethiopia and Tanzania is encouraging. Between 2000 and 2019, for example, Ethiopia increased its GDI by 9% and Tanzania by 7%, but the GDI gap was low in Tanzania. Globally, out of 156 countries, Ethiopia ranked 97th and Tanzania 82nd in relation to the gender gap (World Economic Forum, 2021). In SSA, they ranked 18th and 13th, respectively. The participation of women in the national parliament in Ethiopia and Tanzania is impressive. Ethiopia increased the percentage of women in the national parliament from 7.69% in 2000 to 42.6% in 2021, and Tanzania increased it from 22.26 % in 2000 to 36.9% in 2021.

Figure 10: Gender development index

Source: UNDP

Figure 11: Women seat in national Parliament
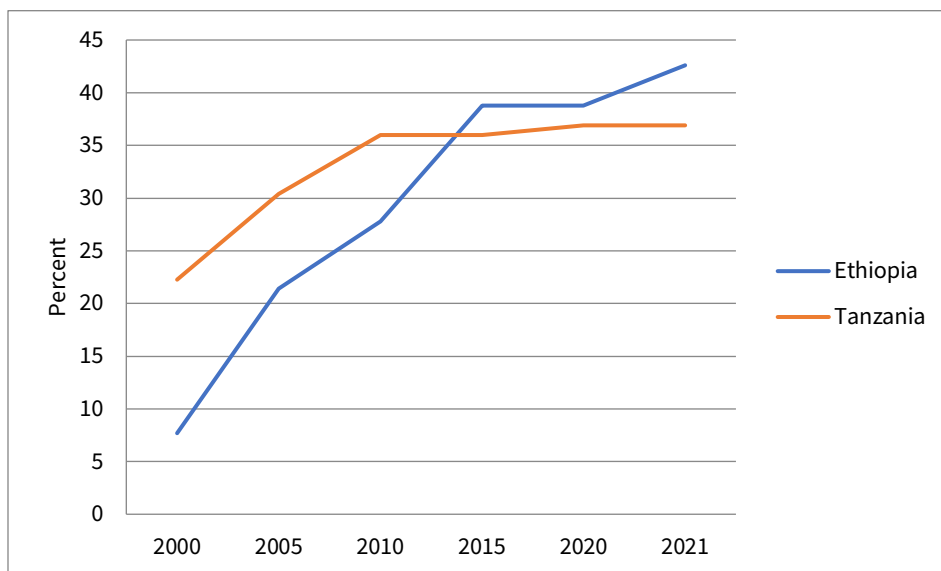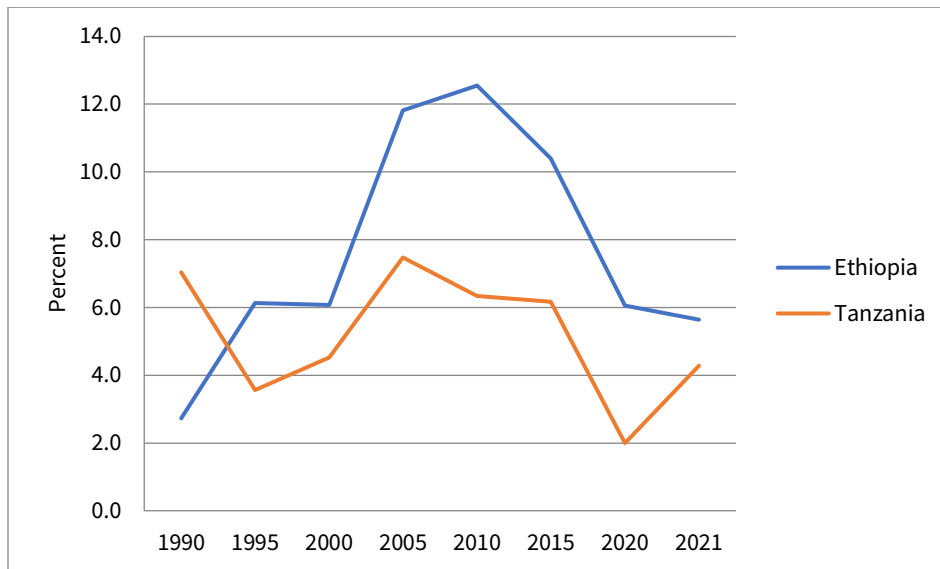

Source: World Bank

However, the politico-administrative contexts and "democratic centralism" party discipline of the EPRDF and CCM would significantly restrict the voice of women in parliament. The gender-based digital divide, coupled with other factors, would diminish the GDI and limit the role of women parliamentarians at all the stages in the public policy-making process and at all government levels. The findings of this study reveal that there is a steady increase in the percentage of women in the national parliaments in both countries (Ethiopia 43% and Tanzania 37%). Figure

10 and Figure 11 show the trend in the gender development index and women's seats in the national parliaments in Ethiopia and Tanzania. Ethiopia and Tanzania.

- Sustainable Development Goal 8: Economic Growth (target 8.1)

    With regard to economic growth, between 1990 and 2021, the economic growth rates both in Ethiopia and Tanzania were positive, but with different trends between the two countries. Tanzania had a bouncing back trend, and Ethiopia had increasing economic growth (Figure 12). The economic growth rate was better in Ethiopia than in Tanzania. Both countries registered improvement trends in the GDP per capita, with Tanzania leading in the GDP per capita (Figure 13).

Figure 12: GDP growth

Source: World Bank

    The industrial, agricultural, and service sectors contributed greatly to the GDP in both countries. For example, the industrial sector's contribution to the GDP (%) was slowly increasing (Figure 14). The contribution of agriculture to the GDP was slowly declining in Ethiopia and bounced back slowly in Tanzania. The contribution of the service sector to the GDP was gradually decreasing in the two countries but was the main contributor to it since 1990 in Tanzania and since 2010 in Ethiopia. Therefore, one may question the sustainability of the economic growth rate, having negative consequences on the vision of sustained economic growth set out by the United Nations (UN, 2015). The 4IR would further increase the uncertainty as to the contribution of each sector to the GDP. Multinationals may destroy all the national sectors, surge job loss due to automation, and disrupt social capital (Benyera, 2021; Gleason, 2018).

Figure 13: GDP per capita (current US$)
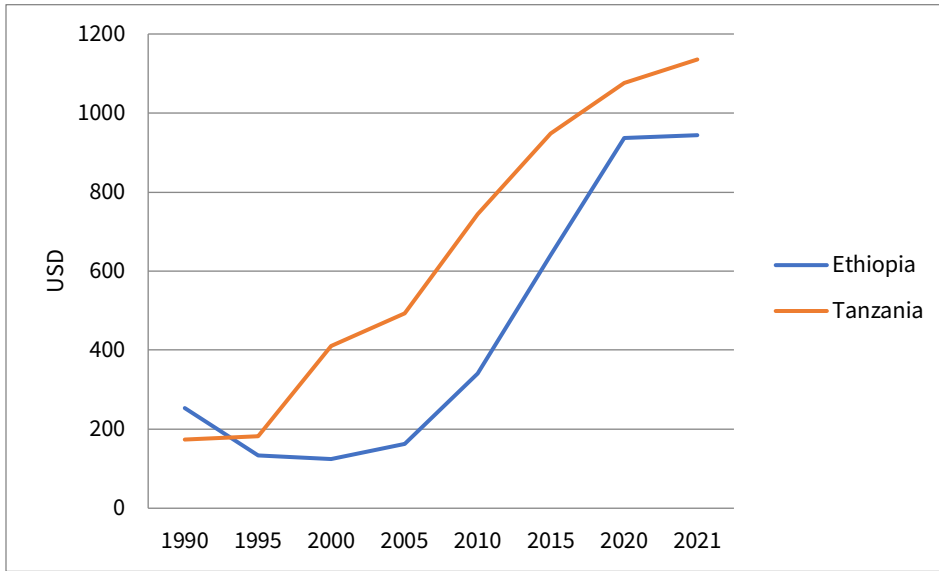
Source: World Bank

Figure 14: Sector contribution to GDP
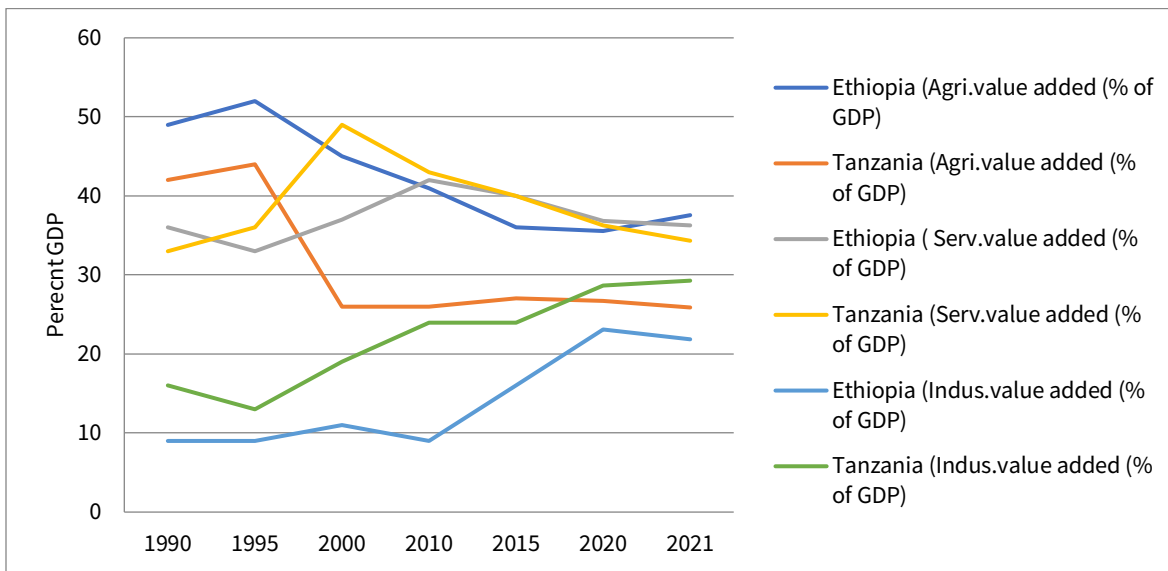
Source: World Bank

- Sustainable Development Goal 9: Infrastructure (target 5c)

The building of resilient infrastructure is expected to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation (UN, 2015). SDG target 9C, in particular, emphasises access to information and communications technology (such as mobile phones) and affordable access to the Internet. Similarly, the AU's draft digital

transformation for Africa (2020) envisions the building of integrated and inclusive digital societies and economies in Africa by 2030 (AU, 2020).

However, both Ethiopia and Tanzania registered shortfalls in pursuit of this target. As Figure 15 shows, there was continuous improvement, and the digital divide on cellular subscriptions per 100 people is high in both countries, especially in Ethiopia. The subscription rate was less than 40 in Ethiopia, but less than 86 in Tanzania. Mobile technology is becoming the centre of digital transformation in Tanzania (GSMA, 2019). However, in Africa, women have less access to mobile phones and other digital technologies than men (AU, 2020; UN-ECA et al., 2017). All over the world, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women's jobs (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The findings of this study reveal that in Ethiopia and Tanzania the digital divide worsens when individuals using the Internet (percent of the population) are considered. Despite slow improvement, in 2020, fewer than 25 individuals had access to the Internet (Figure 15). However, according to Mo Ibrahim's reports, digital connectivity was better in Tanzania than in Ethiopia (Figure 16). From 2000 to 2019, for example, digital connectivity ranged from 0.1% to 9.2% in Ethiopia, and from 1% to 10.6 % in Tanzania.

Figure 15: Internet and mobile subscription (2000-2020)
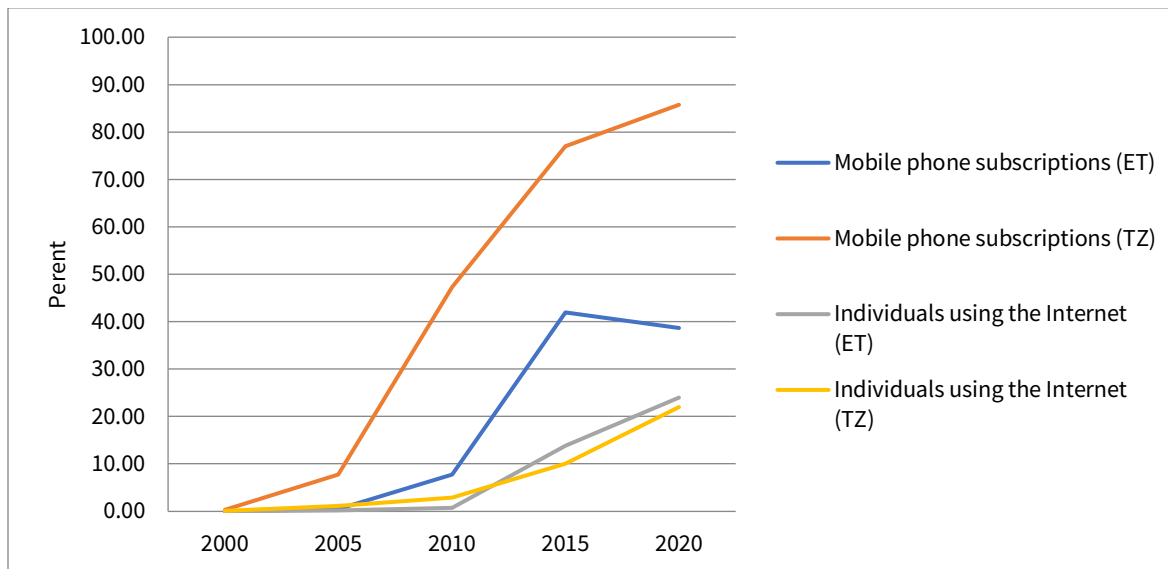
Source: World Bank

The digital and infrastructural divides significantly limit the capacity of the two countries to overcome the challenges of the 4IR. The 4IR—the digital revolution—also called the internet of things, has exceedingly changed how private, public, and civil society sectors and higher education are functioning, the interaction between multiple actors all affecting the well-being of society with substantial consequences depending on politico-administrative and socio-economic contexts and transformation thereof (Benyera, 2021; Gleason, 2018; Lewis, 2018; Prisecaru, 2016; Tan, 2020).

Figure 16: Digital access
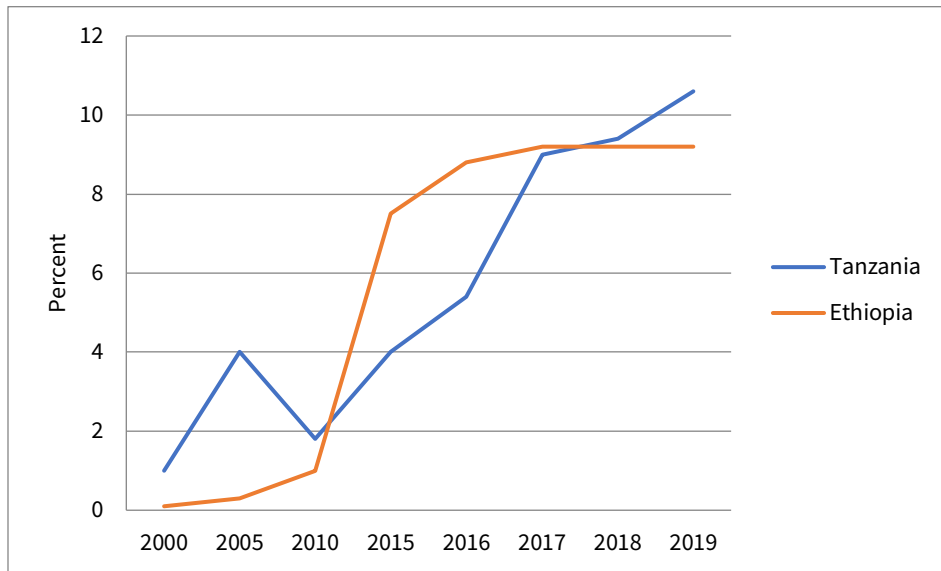
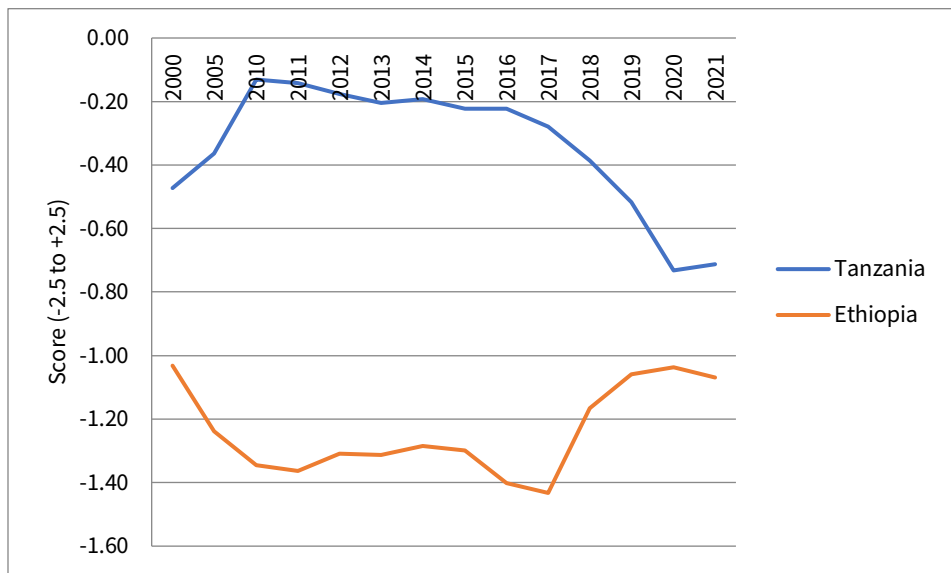

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

- Sustainable Development Goal 16: Public Administration (target 5)

Figure 17 to Figure 25 show the performance of Ethiopia and Tanzania in relation to public administration. The World Bank dataset shows voice and accountability were deteriorating slowly in Tanzania, while Ethiopia had a bouncing back trend. But Ethiopia was significantly below Tanzania (Figure 17). Mo Ibrahim's reports, however, show continuing improvement in the accountability of public officials in Tanzania and a gradual increase in Ethiopia (Figure 18). The World Bank dataset reveals that the government's effectiveness was deteriorating in both countries, particularly in Tanzania (Figure 19). However, the reports show a slowing improvement in public administration effectiveness in both countries, with Tanzania having been better than Ethiopia in the last two years (Figure 20).

A performance variation between Ethiopia and Tanzania on the rule of law was also reported. According to the World Bank database (Figure 21), while Ethiopia had increasing improvement, Tanzania had a significant deterioration. Mo Ibrahim's reports, however, reveal the rule of law was slowly improving in Ethiopia and decreasing in Tanzania. Yet, Tanzania outpaced Ethiopia throughout the period (Figure 22).

Concerning corruption, according to the World Bank database (Figure 23), Tanzania had a slowing improvement, while Ethiopia had a bouncing back trend. Mo Ibrahim's reports (Figure 24), however, reveal that there was no significant difference in relation to the absence of corruption in the public sector in both countries. Furthermore, the Transparency International (TI) database (Figure 25) shows a slow improvement in corruption perception in Ethiopia and Tanzania.
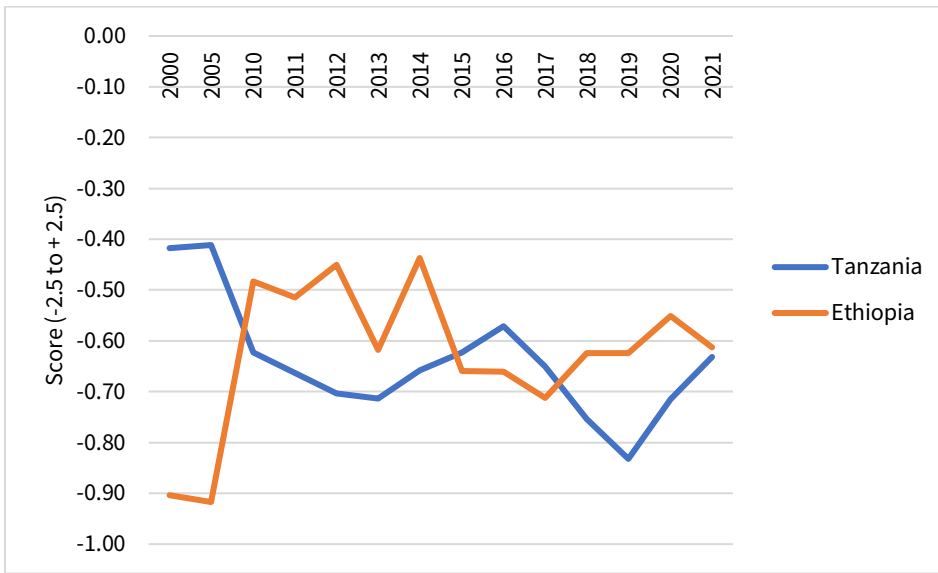
Figure 17: Voice and accountability

Source: World Bank

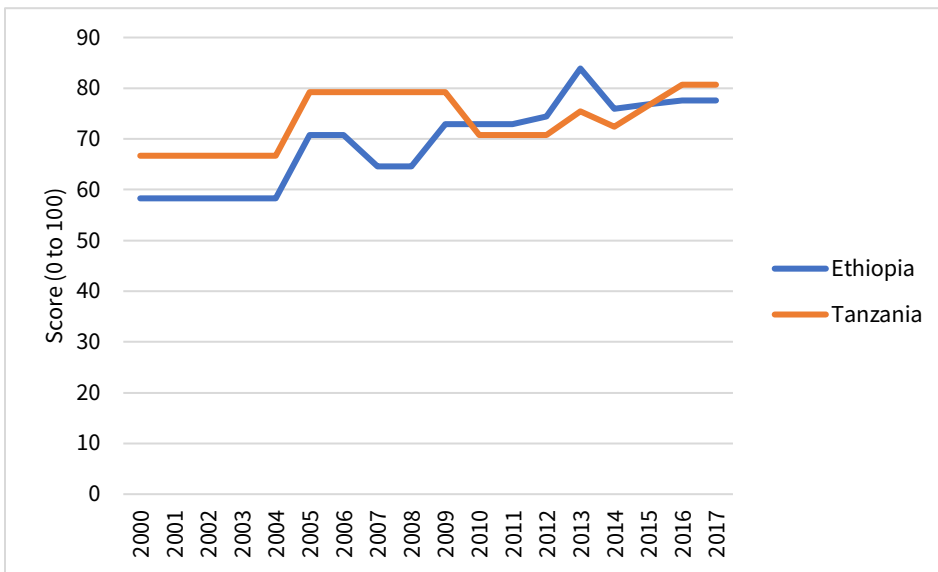Figure 18: Accountability of Public Officials
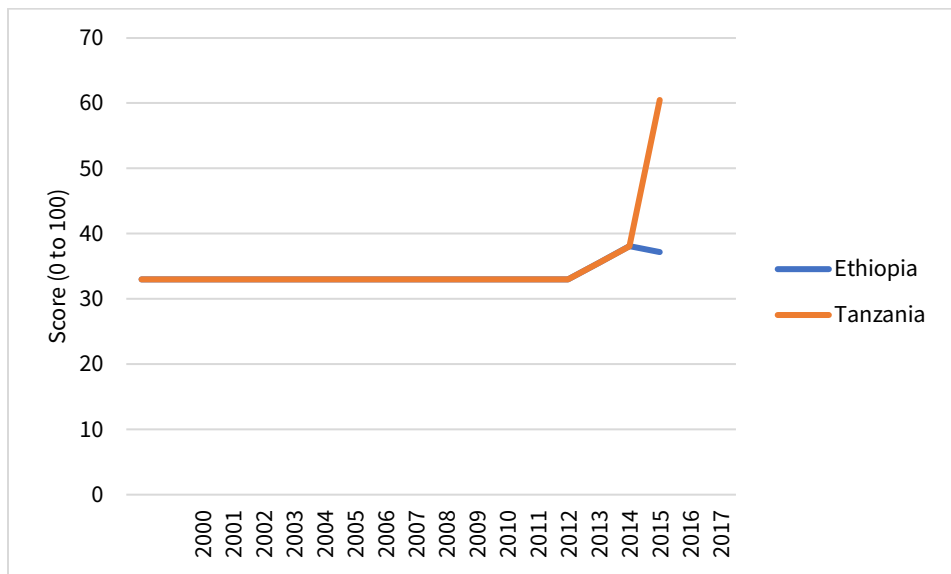
Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Figure 19: Government Effectiveness
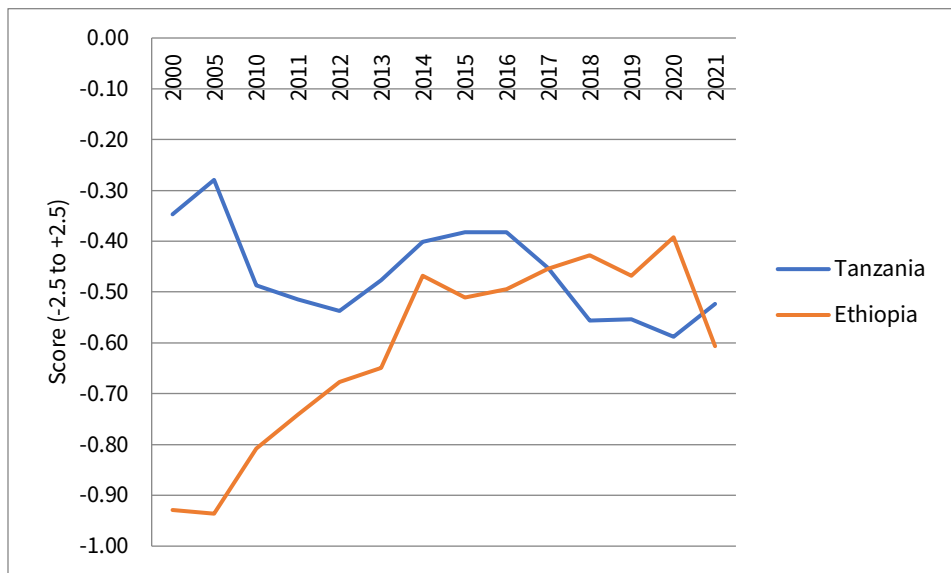

Source: World Bank

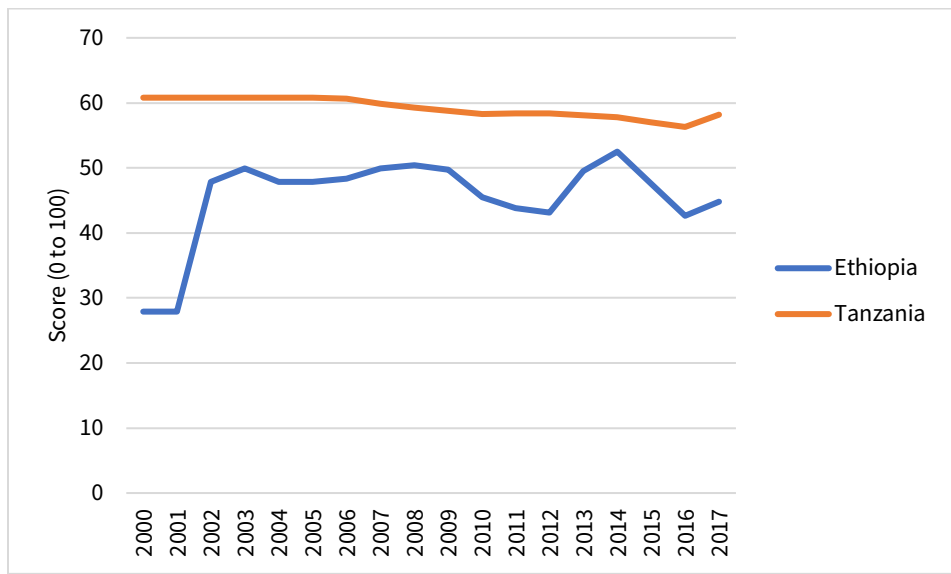Figure 20: Public Administration Effectiveness

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation
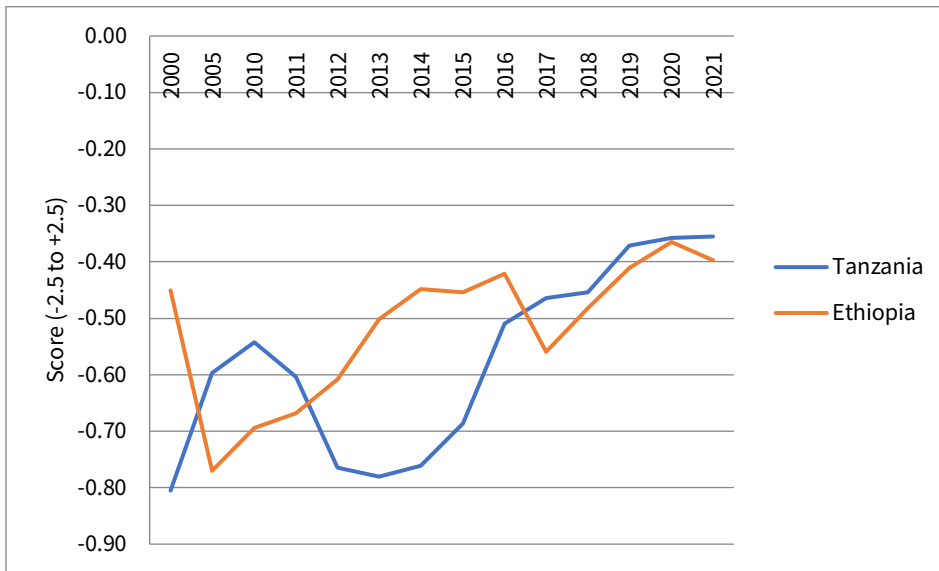
Figure 21: Rule of Law

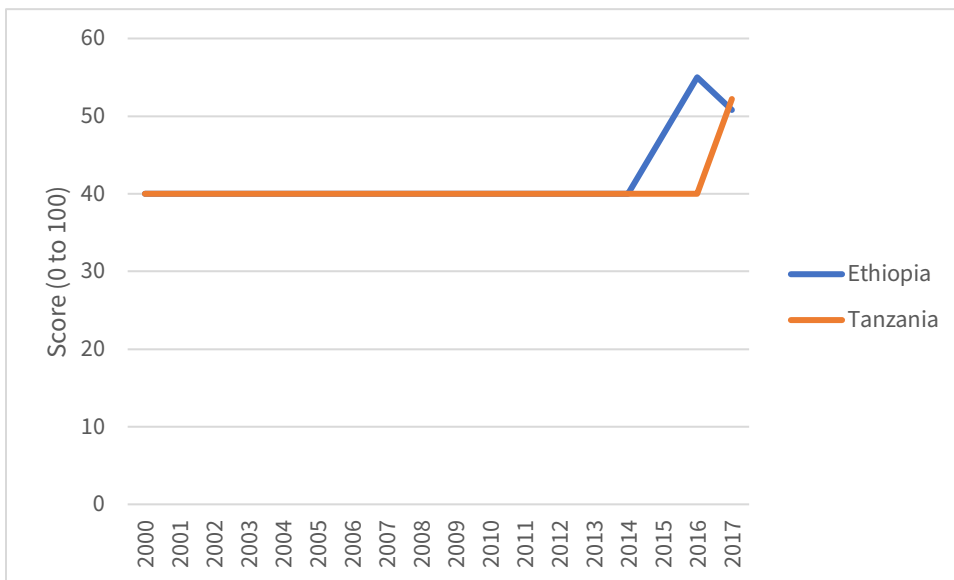Source: World Bank

Figure 22: Rule of Law

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation
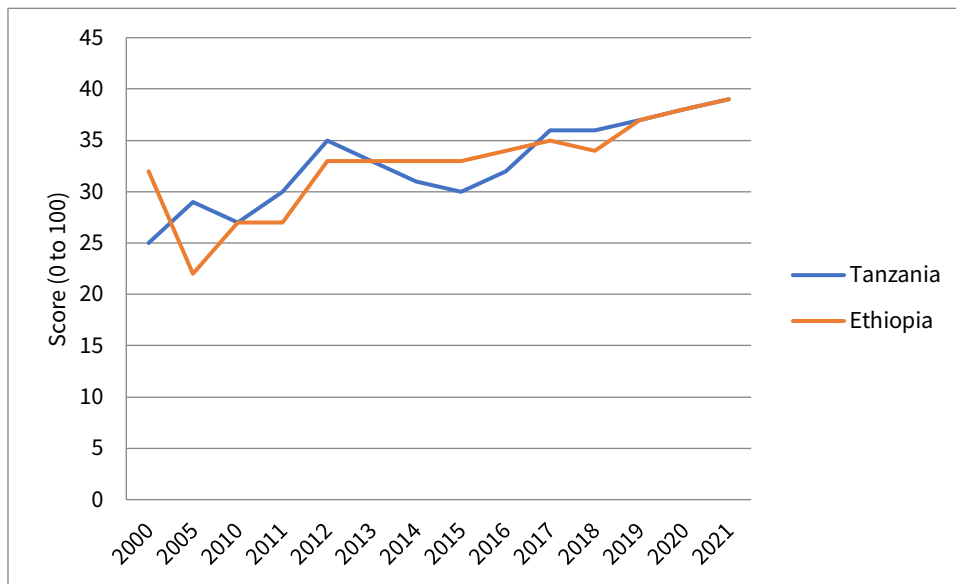
Figure 23: Control of Corruption

Source: World Bank

Figure 24: Absence of Corruption in the Public Sector

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Figure 25: Corruption Perception Index

Source: Transparency International

Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

This study attempted to assess the progress that Ethiopia and Tanzania have made in the effort to achieve the selected SDGs (Quality Education (Goal 4, target 4.1), Gender Equality (Goal 5, target 5.5), Economic Growth (Goal 8; target 8.1), Infrastructural Development (Goal 9: target 5c), and Public Administration (Goal 16; targets 16.3, 16.5 and 16.6). It was guided by the historical and neo-institutionalist theories.

Our findings from politico-administrative contexts reveal several interesting insights. But three are the most remarkable. First, although Ethiopia and Tanzania have different historical contexts, both have top-down and autocratic politico-administrative traditions reinforced by the national culture. The unhealthy interaction between citizens and the colonial powers and/or even expansionist tendencies in Ethiopia have affected inclusive, local, functional. and democratic institutions in both countries, marking the first blockage in the process of developing a democratic culture that could be built on indigenous democratic principles. The effect of the colonial systems, norms, structures, and asymmetric power relations is still evident in Africa (Basheka, 2015, 2020; Benyera, 2021).

Second, the influence of the socialist ideology is markedly disastrous in the two countries. The socialist ideology was instrumental in centralising public administration. Third, in the post-1990s period, the politico-administrative and economic structural change and multi-party politics have not resulted in institutional transformations nor provided solutions to the deep-rooted politico-administrative problems in practice both in Ethiopia and Tanzania. Since the 1990s, political parties have contested all the elections, ethnic and religious conflicts have been resurfacing, and citizens and opposition parties have been marching to the streets, not to the judiciary. However, Tanzania is a relatively more politically stable country than Ethiopia. Interestingly, many citizens still resolve conflicts using indigenous institutions, particularly in Ethiopia, which signals the need to harmonise indigenous institutions with formal ones.

The results on the progress made in the effort to achieve the selected SDGs also provide some insights. First, despite the differences between the two countries, female and male primary school pupil enrolment is outstanding, particularly when it is compared to secondary school pupil enrolment in both countries. Second,

both countries have had positive GDP growth rates and a positive GDP per capita, improved the HDI and the GDI, and reduced the gender gap in education and parliament. However, the progress in the economic transformation was slow. The industrial sector's contribution to the GDP was lower than that of the service sector. In addition, despite the improvements discussed earlier, poverty and inequality remain a challenge in both countries, and there is no guarantee that the progress made can be maintained with regard to all the targets. COVID-19 has already proved this (UNDP, 2020). Third, the digital divide in relation to cellular phone subscriptions and Internet users (percentage of the population) in both countries is significantly high. Fourth, despite certain differences between Ethiopia and Tanzania, Tanzania has better public administration than Ethiopia. According to the 2019 African Capacity Building Index (ACBI), Tanzania ranked 5th (with an index score of 64.5), while Ethiopia ranked 27th (with an index score of 51.2), but Mauritius (70.8), Burkina Faso (67.0), Malawi (66.2), and Ghana (65.2) were the top four countries (African Capacity Building Foundation, 2019). A score of 0 to < 20 is very low, 20 to < 40 is low, 40 to < 60 is medium, 60 to < 80 is high, and 80 to 100 is very high (African Capacity Building Foundation, 2019). In 2014 and 2017, Tanzania scored 64.4 and 67.4, while Ethiopia recorded 49.0 and 55.5, implying that the performance of Ethiopia was lower than that of Tanzania. Yet, both countries need to make significant efforts to improve the quality of public administration. In particular, Ethiopia has to set clear objectives and targets for capacity-building programs in the national development plan (African Capacity Building Foundation, 2019). Tanzania has already specified the objectives and targets, but given the effect of the 4IR, it might be necessary to revise them.

Overall, the deep-seated historical and structural inequalities, coupled with gender-based inequalities and the risks to sustainable GDP growth rate, unprecedented digital divide, and the consequence of COVID-19, cast a deep dark shadow on the progress made toward achieving the SDGs in both countries. If not systematically addressed, due to the lack of an African digital infrastructure (Ndung'u & Signe, 2020), the 4IR will compound the challenges hindering achieving the SDGs and erode the remaining hard-won political sovereignty of the countries, Africa, and Africans (Benyera, 2021). This shows the necessity to create a digital capacity building centre(s) that exclusively focuses on digital innovation and digital capacity-building programs (Benyera, 2021; Zapata et al., 2020), the need to invest in digital infrastructural development, effective use of digital technologies, and reform of the education sector at all levels (Lewis, 2018; Philbeck & Davis, 2018; Prisecaru, 2016). To this end, Africa and the two countries need to mobilize domestic resources and reduce dependency on foreign aid. They need to finalise, adopt, and implement the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020), and formulate digital policies and strategies. Ethiopia has already issued the 2025 digital strategy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, n.d.)

However, before investing in digital infrastructure and capacity-building programs, the application of digital infrastructure such as Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain Technology and a model for governing the infrastructure should be conceptually clarified and proofed at all levels of government and in all sectors (Ndung'u & Signe, 2020; Tan, 2020). In addition, such investment should consider the politico-administrative contexts and socio-economic structural and geo-spatial inequalities and be built on stakeholders' dialogue and adequate monitoring and evaluation. The old system is not helpful, and a new path that balances the planet with economic and social goals needs to be carefully designed (Schwab, 2016; UN-ECA 2021; UNDP, 2020). There might be a need to strengthen the lessons and experience of Digital Earth Africa (DE Africa).

Finally, it should be noted that the study used exploratory-descriptive research and relied on secondary data sources, which may lack adequate validity and reliability. Nevertheless, this comparative study contributes to the literature on public administration and policy, and to the debate on sustainable development. The study identified the historical and sociological politico-administrative challenges, the progress made, and the challenges facing the pursuit of the selected SDGs. It has also shown how Ethiopia and Tanzania, and Africa in general, could respond to the 4IR.

Acknowledgments

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