



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MBA (Open University of London)
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**“From Left Wing Liberation Army Into Government: The Challenges of
Transition and the case of TPLF/EPRDF”**

School of Public Administration

Tuesday, April 24th, 2018

9:00 a.m.

Clearihue Building

Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Evert Lindquist, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Thea Vakil, School of Public Administration, UVic (Member)

Dr. Martin Bunton, Department of History, UVic (Outside Member)

Dr. Marlea Clarke, Department of Political Science, UVic (Outside Member)

Dr. Alex DeWaal, Faculty of Human and Social Development, UVic (Additional Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Christopher Clapham, Centre of African Studies, University of Cambridge

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Alexandre Brolo, Department of Chemistry, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

The quest for transparent and accountable governance in Africa is still a work in progress. Despite having regular elections, real democratic systems are far from achieved in several African countries. Incumbents control independent institutions a democracy requires to be subservient to their interests. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is a reform rebellions that came to power in the last decade of the 20th century and continues to rule with varying level of success along its promises. This dissertation attempts to provide a full account of the evolution of the EPRDF government and challenges to its promised state building project.

Understanding current gaps and limitations of the EPRDF in government and the key drivers for those is not possible without a comprehensive understanding of the genesis of the organization, its model of leadership and its institutional values. Unfortunately, accounts of the liberation war is not available in writing as a result of the difficulties of the war environment. Accounts of the critical moments and decisions that shaped the internal institutional values and norms of the organization are mostly available in the memories of individual leaders who by now are at their retirement age and some are already passing away without writing any of their memoirs.

In researching and writing this dissertation, I brought a special perspective to bear as an author: I was a veteran of the armed struggle, a member of its leadership team during the revolutionary war, and played a role during the transitional government and its critical initial years in government. This is the strength and the limitation of this study.

The findings of the study show that it some of the critical success factors in the civil war have a lot to do with the nature of its early organization and leadership philosophy that guided the movement through the different phases of its organizational maturity and eventual development into government. Understanding the liberation war time values and strategies helps understand not only the drivers to its successes in government but also its limitations.

The research explicates the critical factors for the success of the rebellion when various contending rebellions failed. It also chronicles the evolution of the EPRDF into a party that leads a government, its achievements and limitations. It also illustrates how the behavior of the organization and its model of leadership evolved in its time of transition into government. The evolution of the leadership is chronicled along the different phases of in war and in government. Analyzing the economic and political model of the organization is not the focus of the research and will only be covered as much as it helped understand the leadership model, which the researcher considered to be at the center of its successes and limitations.