

An Investigation of Clan based Parliamentary System on Government Accountability: Case of Puntland State

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Abstract

In Africa, Parliaments are commonly seen to be ineffective, powerless, useless, often redundant, or just talk-shops (Nijzink, Shaheen, Elisabete & Mpanyane, 2009). After the collapse of the brutal tyranny regime led by Siyad Barre which ousted by the clan rebellions in 1991; Somalia experienced prolonged civil war and conflicts as notes Menkhaus, (2010), Somalia entered a long period of conflict and instability, resulting in the current failed state. The former greater Somalia is now divided into three territories: Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia. Each of these territory is run independently by different levels of governments (Lewis, 2001). In 1998, the people of Puntland whose endogenous land was nicknamed ‘inaccessible’ during Sayid’s regime established the semi-autonomous state of Puntland on basis of clan-power-sharing with the government architecture of three arms: Legislative (66 members), Judiciary, and the Executives, and adopted a three-year charter envisioning a transition from the clan-based system to a democratic system by the end of the first government’s term (PDRC, 2015). Nevertheless, as Osman, & Ibrahim, (July 2005) state, “Puntland House of Representatives was formed with members identified and seat allocated on the basis of clan identity and power-sharing agreements between the clans.” The study seeks to investigate clan based parliamentary system on government accountability, with the objectives of the study focuses on how parliamentarians’ selection process affects government accountability, and how parliamentarians’ decision-making influences government accountability. Realizing the research objectives, the researcher employed descriptive research design to purposively target 50 people clustered around Puntland parliamentarians, traditional elders, retired politicians, and young educators of the community using population census for interviewing and analyzing with SPSS tool. Besides, the researcher took any step guaranteeing research ethics to avoid plagiarism. The researcher based on the research findings concludes that; there is a positive relationship between the clan based parliamentary system and Government accountability in Puntland State. This study agrees with other researchers that nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests in public affairs; it leads to the corruption of the legislator, which is an even worse evil than the abuse of the laws by the government because there is no effective PFM policies, functional procurement unit in the legislature, monitoring and evaluation against set goals in programmes, presenting annual audit reports to people and allowing CSOs to attend parliamentary sessions for budget setting and review. It also discovered that MPs selection is an exclusive approach 58% of the respondents underlined women and young men as the currently Puntland parliament 2(66) is women. This means that clan based parliamentary system can compromise government accountability in terms of service delivery and checking corruption and eliminates MPs’ legitimacy as people are reluctant to accept the decisions made by the legislature.

Keywords: Investigation of Clan based Parliamentary System, Clan based Parliamentary System

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

Globally, in the last five decades of the 20th century, the numbers of parliaments for the countries and states have dramatically increased all over the world. According to Greg, P. & Rebecca, A. (April 2012 [the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)], stated that ‘190 of 193 countries now have some form of functioning parliamentary institution, accounting for over 46,000 representatives. Parliaments vary hugely in terms of their power, influence and function, but the existence of a public forum to articulate those concerns appears to be a prerequisite for the legitimacy of government. Today’s parliaments have their roots in a variety of contexts, reflecting the tendency of all societies to create bodies to discuss, deliberate and represent the interests of the people.

Such gatherings can be found in every society, from the majlis throughout the Arab world to the panchayat in India and across Africa, tribal gatherings took a variety in forms and roles. The parliaments of Africa and the Indian subcontinent were (and to some extent still are) shaped by the colonial legacy’. According to Courtney (2000) “the mobilization of political groups along ethnicity in Africa is characterized by constant change over time and heterogeneity across space.” Many countries in Africa with high ethnic diversity attempted to incorporate ethnicity as political identity in the process of modern democracy (Courtney, 2000).

In the past decade, strengthening public accountability has emerged as a key strategy for improving public services and making progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (World Bank, 2004; Deverajan and Widlund, 2007). Increasingly, debates about strengthening accountability have focused on two types of initiatives: (a) increasing government

transparency (bringing previously opaque information or processes into the public domain) and b) social accountability (citizen-led action for demanding accountability from providers).

B. Specific Objectives

- To determine the effect of parliamentarians’ selection process on the government accountability.
- To examine the legitimacy of the parliamentary system on the government accountability.
- To establish the effect of parliamentarians’ decision-making on the government accountability.

C. Theory of political representation

According to Greg, & Rebecca, (April 2012) [Carothers, 2006.] One of the key factors determining parliamentary performance in every country is the representative quality and effectiveness of its political parties. Political parties perform vital functions in any representative democracy, providing the principal vehicles for the representation of citizens’ interests, framing political choices at elections and forming the basis for government. Although democracy is continually evolving, it is still difficult to envisage a democracy with broad-based representation of citizens’ interests without political parties or organizations very much like them. Representational roles are considered coherent sets of norms of behavior which are thought by those involved in the interactions being viewed, to apply to all persons who occupy the position of a legislator” (Wahlke et al. 1962).

D. Participatory theory

(Antonio, 2013). “Participation” is clearly a term that can encompass a broad range of phenomena: it may be distinguished according to the sphere in which it is expressed (political, social, economic, etc.) or according to the forms it can take. Those who put their faith in expanded participation assume that the desire to participate is widely distributed; thus, opening government doors will lead to a more representative democracy. (Morris, & Fiorina, 2001).

Participatory democracy is a process of collective decision making that combines elements from both direct and representative democracy: Citizens have the power to decide on policy proposals and politicians assume the role of policy implementation.... Real life experiences of participatory democracy have mainly materialized in processes of “Participatory Budgeting” at the city level. Aragone, & Sa´nchez, (2008).

E. Legitimacy Theory

The term legitimate comes from the Latin for ‘lawful’. In the most basic sense, a state is legitimate if it exists and operates according to the law. But this definition is too shallow: if a country has no laws about how a government can come to power, then no matter how the government came to power, it will be legitimate. Or again, if a government is elected lawfully, but then changes the laws to create a police state ruled by a dictatorship, the dictatorship will be legitimate. But this is not what we mean by a legitimate government

As other African societies these were “tribal” historically and experienced the policy of divide and rule of colonial state, yet were successful in terms of governance since their independence. For example, during the colonial era, people in Botswana were divided into different tribes that share cultural background and “each group was led by a king (Kgosi) who dominated its political affairs”, and as in the case of Somalia, British authorities recognized and institutionalized “Kgosi” (Samatar, 1997).

Table – 1
Interviewees

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Male	39	78.0	78.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher 2017

Table 1. Above shows that the interviewees were all most men: 78%, in spite of the researched interviewed 5 respondents from Puntland parliamentarians and other 50 from non-parliamentarians, yet, this shown at the response rate and the fact that the distribution of questionnaire was done with the focus of men as 22% were female which are less than two-third of the total respondents. The above statics reveals that the research is gender-biased and presents that Puntland house of representative men are more than women. The results mean that in order to cover the gender gap, it is about to advocate for political inclusiveness in legislature as more women are given political space.

Making of the country as it undermines the ability to hold accountable to the government.

Table – 2
The results of the correlation

	Mean	r-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Clan based parliamentary system	3.4380	0.260**		Significantly correlated	Null Hypothesis Rejected
Government accountability	3.8210		0.046		

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher 2017

F. Regression Analysis to test the degree of relationship between the variables

The regression model below shows the predictive potential of clan based parliamentary system on Government accountability.

1) *Regression Model*

The results in the table below show the degree to which clan based parliamentary system can influence Government accountability. The coefficient of determination which is represented by R² as guided by the model as presented in chapter three:

$$Y=f(X)$$

$$Y=f(X_1, X_2)$$

Where

Y: Dependent variable: government accountability

IV: clan based parliamentary system

a: Constant

$$Y=a+a_1 X_1+a_2X_2$$

Table - 3

Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	T
	B	Std. Error		Beta	
(Constant)	1.636	.229		7.150***	
Clan based parliamentary System	.455	.048	.413	9.413***	
<i>Dependent Variable: Government Accountability</i>					
R	.415				
R Square	.172				
Adjusted R Square	.169				
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.153				
F Statistic	45.130				
Sig.	.000				

Source: Researcher, 2017 ***Significant at 0.01; ** Significant at 0.05; * Significant at 0.1

Basing on the results attained from regression analysis as presented in table above, Results indicate that the clan based parliamentary system influences government accountability by 17.2 as reflected in the (R Square = .172). The regression model was significant as noted from the level of significance (Sig.<.01). The findings showed that of the two variables clan based parliamentary that influences more on the government accountability at (Beta= .413; ts=9.413). This implies that corruption and contributes 41% change in government accountability. Furthermore when poor service delivery goes high, the more government accountability practice also decreases. The findings also reveal that service delivery has had a significant influence on government accountability. Whereas corruption has significant influence on government accountability at (Beta= .017; ts=.389). This implies that the increase in clan based parliamentary system may not necessary lead to increase in government accountability levels among employees of Puntland State.

G. The Findings

1) *Parliamentarians' selection process on the government accountability.*

The study found out that the selection process of the parliamentarians is followed an exclusive pathway as 58% of the respondents underlined women and young men of the potential clans for MPs does not give political space for participation which in turns undermines the governance inclusiveness and the consciousness about accountability as well as the trust in clan-MPs representativeness whereby 58% of the respondents clearly indicated that women are not given political space and even those represented not all participate in as priority is given to those who select the representatives, the village influential elders.

Besides, 82% (56% S.A, 26% A) of interviewed persons also stated that people in the clan have no saying in the determination of who would be an MP for Puntland house of representative, but according to Farja' O. (2014), the legislature is nominated by the tribal chiefs, clan chiefs and sub-clan chiefs; even though not all of them have been nominated by the indigenous well respected traditional tribal chiefs' whereby 78% respondents stated that Puntland member of parliamentarians are not selected on merit basis. And this act undermines the theory of representativeness which may give space to the community and legislatures would not be accountable to their constituents or even to the entire citizenries whom would be represented in the light of the constitution. Besides, the study found out that that 42% of the respondents replied strongly agreed while 30% replied agreed that presidential candidates intervenes MPs selection process to secure their election victory as they influence clan elders to nominate MPs who will be voted for and in reciprocal, any presidential candidate who may elected would have some influence over the legislators that in return reduces the degree of horizontal accountability based on check and balance among government institutions and legislators surveillance and scrutiny omitted.

Due to the political exclusiveness of women and young people, and the extraordinary of presidential candidates intervenes during elections; and the people of the Puntland citizenries are outspokenly demanding to eliminate the clan-power-political system that Puntland government has been practicing since 1998 since it undermines the social accountability.

2) *Legitimacy of the parliamentary system on the government accountability*

The study found out that 56% respondents generally agreed that selected Puntland legislators through clannish system neither serve for their sub-clans nor the other clan in that region, district or areas they hail from, and if served for; the study discover that 38%

strongly disagreed, and 32% agreed that do nepotism, although very small percentage of the 24% stated that the legislators service fairly for the various clans in the same area. In addition to that, study finding also indicates that 32% said agreed while 18% responded strongly agreed with the cumulative percentage of 50% of the respondents implies that that MPs are responsive, repetitive and fully fledged serve for their community when it comes that MPs are glancing back their clan constituents by visiting to search information considered public problems and present to the government in order to put into its agenda and sought for relief by responding the people's demand whereby 28%

3) *Parliamentarians' decision-making on the government accountability*

The researcher found out that in total 60% of the respondents agreed upon in negatively that parliamentarians' decisions are unaccepted in all the clans in Puntland whom they claim to represent. However, the strongly rejection against the parliamentary decisions is valid example how society are depressed the clan-based parliamentary system that Puntland government has been practicing for 17 years consecutively with political will to shift from clan politics into pluralism and democracy governance.

4) *Clan-based parliamentary and government accountability*

The researcher found out that 60% of respondents thrown their attention that government would no longer able to hold accountable to the government as long as the clan-based political system is actively practicing because of it undermines the constitutional powers of the legislature guaranteed under 1st Section-Legislation of article 47 since the MP is clan chiefs representative. It also explicitly indicates that Puntland legislators do not pay attention to ensure equity in service provisions, development programmes and even aid across Puntland regions due to lacking legislative supervision and surveillance role as 68% of the respondents agreed upon. In result to the unaccountability among government arms, the studies implies that the executive arm of the government can manage the projects in their sole decision-making which can create mistrust, doubt among regions as well as open doors for the power holders to dare corruption if easily shift a project for region A to regions B for the aim of political party programme, favourism, nepotism and even clan interest that results the economic disparity among regions.

II. Summary

The researcher based on the research findings concludes that; there is a positive relationship between the clan based parliamentary system and Government accountability in Puntland State at 0.05 level of significance. The findings also indicate that the null hypothesis was Rejected while the alternative was Accepted because the r -value (r -value=0.260) were big enough and above 0.05 level of significance and the accompanying sig (sig=0.046) was small enough. Therefore, the null hypothesis stated which there is no significant relationship between clan based parliamentary system and Government accountability in Puntland State was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant relationship between clan based parliamentary system and Government accountability in Puntland State was accepted. This means that clan based parliamentary system can compromise government accountability in terms of service delivery and checking corruption.

This study agrees with other researchers that nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests in public affairs; it leads to the corruption of the legislator, which is an even worse evil than the abuse of the laws by the government; it makes a substantial change in the state, and all reformation becomes impossible, A people that would never misuse governmental powers would never misuse independence; a people that would always govern well wouldn't need to be governed, (Bennett, 2010), This argument underscores if the parliament are involved private-interest motive, it is obvious that they will be untrusted in social and political institutions of the government and the outcomes of these involvement will shape citizen perceptions of government as illegitimacy.

I. Recommendations

The Puntland Parliament should consider the establishment of social accountability mechanism, comprehensive public finance management policies application, dignified representation, and inclusiveness governance, particularly considering women's voice and young people in order to improve good governance and citizen acceptance to government legitimacy as well as basic social amenities provision.

The citizenries of Puntland should embrace the momentum opportunity of creating democratic government of multiparty system since there is a maturity of governance understanding in the society as well as totally elimination clan-politics and horizontally and vertically accountability practice in government institutions to ensure fully representation in the government structure.

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