The Role of Federalism on State Building in Somalia

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the impact of federalism on state building in Somalia. Federalism is a constitutional manner for breaking up the power between the central government and its member states, so that federated units and state are a territorial and constitutional community forming part of a federation. Thus, federalism incorporates partial self-government with collaborative government. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of federalism on state building in Somalia. There have been imaginative efforts to trace the history of federalism back into antiquity, the United States Constitution 1787 is the earliest example of a modern federal constitution. Federalism, the division of sovereign authority among levels of government, can be seen as a way of stabilizing, or making credible, decentralized governmental structures. The study is cross-sectional and quantitative in nature to establish the relationship between federalism and state building in Somalia. The population of the study is unknown; therefore, the study used 100 respondents comprising of civil society, politicians, and civil servants that were most important sources to get reliable information about the study. The data has been analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences SPSS.

Keywords: *Federalism, central government, member states, state building, Good Governance*

Introduction

Federations have been formed in a series of historical waves over the last two centuries. The first wave, from late 18th to early 20th centuries with formerly independent units coming together in a confederation, lasted for only eight years, from 1781 to 1789, when the 13 states addressed a weakness at the center by forming the first modern federation: the Swiss confederation evolved over more than five centuries, but after a brief civil conflict it adopted, in 1848, a federal constitution modeled on the American example. The next significant wave came with new federations emerging from the collapse of communism. The communist Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia all normally had federal constitutions, but were in reality a centrally controlled one-party regime. However, as they democratized, their federal structure took on real political significance (Mohamed-Bishar Barre Jama, 2019).

In Africa, federalism is associated with the colonial experience of divide and rule (Assefa 2007). However, in Africa, one of the most difficult problems in federal states is the persecution and expulsion of members of various ethnic groups who do not belong to that specific region. Until

recently, the only federal state in Africa was Nigeria (Brosio 2000).) But, as Osaghae (2004) notes, at present, some more countries in Africa like Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania follow federalism (Bednar 2006). In general, countries like Cameroon, Comoros, Congo DR, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda either follow federalism or have constitutions with strong federal flavor (Teshome, 2008).

Federalism is a political organization in which the activities of government are divided between regional governments and central governments in such way that each kind of government has some activities on which it makes final decisions (Riker 1975). This is how one of the most important researchers in the field of federalism, William H. Riker, defines federalism. By this statement it is clear that a division of power between different levels is the fundamental characteristic for a federal state (Söder, 2009). In 1991 after the ouster of Siad Barre, Somalia plunged into a political conflict leading to state collapse. The country did not have a recognized functioning government for more than 20 years due to prolonged civil war and inter-clan conflicts which resulted in massive destruction and incalculable loss of human life and property. During this period, 14 national reconciliation meetings were held outside the country, mostly sponsored by the countries of the region under the auspices of the Regional Organizations of IGAD, AU and the Arab League (Dharar, 2016). The politics of Somalia have gone through various periods of change. A few autonomous regions, including the Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug administrations, emerged in the north in the ensuing process of decentralization. The early 2000s saw the creation of fledgling interim federal administrations. The Transitional National Government (TNG) was established in 2000 followed by the formation of its successor the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004, which reestablished national institutions such as the Military of Somalia. In 2006, the TFG assisted by Ethiopian troops, assumed control of most of the nation's southern conflict zones from the newly formed Islamic Courts Union (ICU).

The ICU subsequently splintered into more radical groups such as Al-Shabaab, which battled the TFG and its AMISOM allies for control of the region, with the insurgents losing most of the territory that they had seized by mid-2012. Following the end of the TFG's interim mandate in the same month, the Federal Government of Somalia, the first permanent central government in the country since the start of the civil war, was also formed. The nation has concurrently experienced a period of

intense reconstruction, particularly in the capital, Mogadishu. Several internal and external actors tried and failed in reconstructing the Somali state (Dahiye, 2014).

Research Problem

Since its last government's collapse in 1991, Somalia remained lacking a viable and functional government for over twenty years. The civil war, collapse of its central state, and now armed rival factions continue to haunt the country (Ciment, 2015). For over 20 years Somalia endured turmoil caused by militia warfare, corruption and terrorism. Somalis suffered because of the governing dysfunction. The most common reasons given for Somalia's failure include: its clan system, enduring effects of colonialism, lack of sufficient economic resources, and blundering by the international community at peace building (Dahiye, 2014). A decentralized central federation of regional political entities has emerged, including the self-proclaimed but unrecognized Republic of Somaliland in the northwest, Puntland State in the northeast, Jubaland in the south near Kismayo. Therefore, the researcher wanted to conduct research on how federalism can be part of Somalia's state building.

Aims of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the role of federalism on state building and its specific objectives are:

i. To investigate the role of central government on state building
ii. To examine the role of state preparedness in terms of systems and government on state building.

1.0 Methods

1.1 Study design

The study used descriptive design through quantitative approach and cross-sectional survey questionnaire.

1.2 Population and Sample size

The population of the study is unknown; therefore, the study used 100 respondents as a sample compromising of civil society, politicians, and civil servants that were most important sources to get reliable information about the study.

1.3 Sampling Procedure

In this study, simple random sampling was used which is a reliable method of obtaining information where every single member of a population is chosen randomly, merely by chance.

1.4 Study Instrument

Questionnaire was the main tool used in this study in order to get more information in the shortest possible time.

1.5 Data analysis

SPSS version 24 was used to analyze the data in this study and the result was tabulated displaying frequency distribution and percentage basis.

Results

Respondents

According to the above-mentioned statistic, 88% of the respondents were men, and only a small percentage of the remaining 12% were women. The above figure shows that 68% of the respondents were married and only a little over 32% were single. The aforementioned figure shows that only 6% of respondents had a PhD, 14% had a bachelor's degree, and 80% had a master's degree.

Table1: Federalism has played a role in the process of state-building in Somalia.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	32	32.0	32.0	**32.0**
	Agree	28	28.0	28.0	**60.0**
	Neutral	12	12.0	12.0	**72.0**
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	**86.0**
	Strongly Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	**100.0**
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

According to the above table, 32.0% of respondents strongly agreed that federalism has contributed to Somalia's state-building process, 28.0% agreed with that statement, 12.0% said they were neutral on the matter, 14.0% disagreed that federalism has not contributed to Somalia's state-building process, and only 14.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 2: The federal system is seen as a potential factor for contributing to peace and stability in Somalia.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	50.0
	Neutral	18	18.0	18.0	68.0
	Disagree	16	16.0	16.0	84.0
	Strongly Disagree	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 2 shows that 12.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the federal system is seen as a potential factor for promoting peace and stability in Somalia, 38.0% agreed with that statement, 18.0% said they were neutral on the subject, 16.0% disagreed that the federal system is not seen as a potential factor for promoting peace and stability in Somalia, and only 16.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 3: The federal system has the potential to support consolidation and democratic progress in Somalia.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	52.0
	Neutral	18	18.0	18.0	70.0
	Disagree	22	22.0	22.0	92.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

According to Table 3, 12.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the federal system has the potential to support consolidation and democratic progress in Somalia, 40.0% agreed, 18.0% said they were neutral on the issue, 22.0% disagreed that the federal system has the potential to support consolidation and democratic progress in Somalia, and only 8.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 4: The central government of Somalia is working towards fair and equitable reintegration of citizens.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	26	26.0	26.0	36.0
	Neutral	20	20.0	20.0	56.0
	Disagree	34	34.0	34.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

In accordance with the data in the table above, 10.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the central government of Somalia is working towards fair and equitable reintegration of citizens, 26.0% agreed with that statement, 20.0% indicated they were neutral on the subject, 34% disagreed, and only 10.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 5: The central government of Somalia is working to resolve disputes between different groups in society and encourage reconciliation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Agree	50	50.0	50.0	62.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	78.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	92.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

According to the information in the table above, 12.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the central government of Somalia is trying to settle disagreements between various social groups and promote reconciliation, 50.0% agreed, 16.0% said they were neutral on the issue, 14% disagreed, and only 8.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 6: The central government has made efforts to rebuild state structures, reduce violence and promote peace and order in the country.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	60.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	76.0
	Disagree	20	20.0	20.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 6 shows that 20.0% of respondents strongly agreed, 40.0% agreed, 16.0% said they were neutral on the matter, 20% disagreed that the federal system is not seen as a potential factor for promoting peace and stability in Somalia, and only 4.0% strongly disagreed. The central government has made efforts to rebuild state structures, reduce violence, and promote peace and order in the country, according to Table 6.

Table 7: State governments are working to balance representation of different clans while adhering to the federal government's policies on direct elections for political positions.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.0	
	Agree	24	24.0	40.0	
	Neutral	26	26.0	66.0	
	Disagree	26	26.0	92.0	
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.0	100.0	
	Total	**100**	**100.0**		

According to the information in the table above, 16.0% of respondents strongly agreed that state governments were trying to balance representation of various clans while adhering to federal policies on direct elections for political positions, 24.0% agreed with that statement, 26.0% said they were neutral on the issue, 26.0% disagreed, and only 8.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 8: State governments have a significant role to play in preparing for and responding to political and economic transformation processes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	50	50.0	50.0	70.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	86.0
	Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

According to the data in the table above, 20.0% of respondents strongly agreed, 50.0% agreed, 16.0% said they were neutral on the matter, 10.0% disagreed, and only 4.0% strongly disagreed that State governments have a significant role to play in preparing for and responding to political and economic transformation processes.

Table 9: Somalia faces challenges in implementing a functional federal system.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	56	56.0	56.0	56.0
	Agree	30	30.0	30.0	86.0
	Neutral	4	4.0	4.0	90.0
	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

According to Table 9, 56.0% of respondents highly agreed, 30.0% agreed, 4.0% claimed they were neutral on the subject, 6% disagreed, and only 4.0% strongly disagreed that Somalia confronts difficulties by enacting a workable federal government. According to Table 9, Somalia has difficulties putting in place an effective federal structure.

Table10: The distribution of power and resources between the federal government and regional states has impacted state-building efforts in Somalia.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	82.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	90.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 10 shows that 46.0% of respondents strongly agreed, 36.0% agreed, 8.0% said they were neutral on the issue, 4% disagreed, and only 6.0% strongly disagreed that Somalia's state- building efforts have been hampered by the division of power and resources between the federal government and regional states. Table 10 shows how Somalia's efforts to construct a state have been impacted by the division of authority and resources between the central government and regional states

Discussion

Table 1 shows that 60% of respondents believed that federalism contributed positively to Somalia's state-building process. Additionally, according to Table 3, 52.5% of respondents said that the federal system may aid in Somalia's political consolidation and democratic advancement. Therefore, a federal system is appropriate for Somalia and can aid in the peace-building process that would lead to the country's democratic development. According to Table 5, 62% of respondents thought Somalia's central government was trying to reconcile differences among social groups and resolve conflicts. Furthermore, Table 6 shows that 60% of respondents said the national government had worked to reestablish state institutions, lessen violence, and advance peace and order in the nation. As a result, Somalia's central government works to resolve social issues and lessen ongoing hostilities among its citizens.

In response to political and economic change processes, state governments are expected to play a substantial role in both planning for them and providing a response, according to Table 8's responses. In order to meet human needs, state governments must provide and facilitate government services

for state member societies. Table 9 reveals that 86% of respondents concurred that Somalia faced difficulties in putting in place a workable federal structure. That is accurate since federalism is a system that is founded on western society and not on our norms, values, or cultures.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study looked at how Somalia's federalism and state reconstruction interacted. This study has demonstrated that the federalism in Somalia differs from that of the rest of the world. The clan system in Somalia serves as the foundation for the federal structure there.

So, the study also recommends: Somali federalism should not be similar to the federalism of western countries. The federal system should originate from the societal, sociocultural, economic, and political values of Somalia.

Educating and raising awareness of the federal system in order to ensure political stability. For the survival of the current constitution, the constitution must be approved, and there must be consensus amongst the country's political elite in order to guard against 'spoilers. The Government of Somalia should ensure coordination, advocacy, collaboration, and networking with the various development partners

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