Factors Affecting the Building of Political Institutions in Post-Conflict Societies: The Case of Somalia

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Abstract: *This study searches the diverse factors influencing the establishment of political institutions in post-conflict societies, with a specific emphasis on Somalia whereas decades of civil conflict and instability of which Somalia presents an exceptional case for studying the relationship between historical legacies, social feelings, and international influences in shaping governance structures. Additionally, the main factors examined include the impact of clan feelings, on political representation, the role of external actors in institution-building efforts, and the challenges created by constant security concerns. The research draws on qualitative data from interviews with local leaders, policymakers, and international stakeholders, alongside a review of existing literature. Findings suggest that successful institution-building in Somalia requires a nuanced understanding of local contexts, inclusive governance practices, and workable international support to raise legitimacy and resilience, at the end this study contributes to the wider paper on post-conflict reconstruction through highlighting the densities and potential pathways for political stabilization in fragile states.*

Keywords: Political institutions, post-conflict societies, governance, Case study Somalia, institution-building

1. Introduction

The establishment of political institutions in post-conflict societies is a complex and variety process, often calm with challenges and opportunities whereas the case of Somalia, a nation that has experienced prolonged conflict and instability since the early 1990s, the task of rebuilding political frameworks is particularly pressing however this introduction discovers the historical context of Somalia's political landscape, characterized by clan divisions, warlordism, and a lack of centralized governance. Moreover, the author continue that the study highpoints the severe role that local and international actors play in institution-building efforts, underlining the importance of understanding the socio-political feelings exceptional to Somalia however by means of examining factors such as social unity, ethnic diversity, and external interventions, this study aims to shed light on the pathways and obstacles to creating resilient political institutions that possibly raise stability, governance, and peace in the region.

Background

The building of political institutions in post-conflict societies, particularly in Somalia, is shaped by a complex relationship of historical, social, and political factors however, later the collapse of its central government in 1991, Somalia has experienced protracted conflict, leading to a power vacuum that has allowed warlords and militant groups to increase (Omar, 2024). This chaos has resulted in significant challenges for establishing effective governance and political institutions. The historical legacy of colonialism, combined with the authoritarian rule of central government of Somalia, has left deep scars on the political landscape, complicating efforts for state-building and institutional development (Menkhaus, 2007). Additionally, Somalia's social fabric is characterized by a high degree of ethnic and clan diversity, which has both contributed to the

conflict and creates challenges for political cohesion this includes the competition among various clans for power and resources has often undermined attempts to create inclusive political institutions. Scholars including in my opinion argue that while ethnicity plays a role in the conflict, the core issues of inequality and economic decline are more grave in understanding the persistence of violence and instability (Laitin & Fearon, 2000). Furthermore, the role of international actors has been significant in Somalia's post-conflict reconstruction efforts has various foreign interventions, including humanitarian aid and military support, that have aimed to stabilize the region. However, these efforts have sometimes been criticized for lacking a rational strategy that bring into line with local needs and realities (Hagmann & Hoehne, 2009). The author added that today, Somalia faces constant challenges in building political institutions that are legitimate and effective whereas the problems such as elite political corruption, political business, political confiscation and lack of infrastructure, and current security threats from groups like Al-Shabaab continue to block progress. This likely includes lack of community political participation, security sector reform for creating lasting political institutions in the country, at the end the author like to point out that the building of political institutions in post-conflict Somalia is subjective in historical legacies, social feelings, and international interventions, all of which must be steered carefully to raise a stable and complete political situation.

2. Literature Review

The literature review on the factors affecting the building of political institutions in post-conflict societies, particularly in Somalia, tells several critical themes whereas the first, the historical context is dominant, as the collapse of the central government in 1991 created a power vacuum that warlords and militant groups exploited, complicating efforts to form effective governance and political institutions (Menkhaus,

2007). Second, social feelings play a significant role; Somalia's clan and ethnic diversity often leads to competition for power and resources, undermining attempts to create inclusive political institutions. Scholars including the author suggest that while ethnic identity is important, deeper issues of economic inequality are more serious in understanding the continuing instability (Laitin & Fearon, 2000). Additionally, the author added that the influence of international actors is notable; various foreign interventions aimed at calming the region have faced blame for lacking clear strategies that bring into line with local needs, often resulting in dependency rather than workable change, eventually, the author continue the present challenges such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and security threats from groups like clan oppositions, Al-Shabaab and various political business continue to block the formation of reasonable political institutions. Additionally, the literature indicates that a full method, integrating local governance and community commitment, is essential for raising lasting political stability. Generally, the visions from the literature underscore that building political institutions in post-conflict Somalia is a variety challenge shaped by historical legacies, social feelings, and international interventions, necessitating a nuanced and inclusive approach to governance (International Crisis Group, 2020).

2.1 Political institution in Somalia

Somalia's political institutions have experienced significant changes, particularly following decades of conflict and various attempts at state-building whereas the federal government is structured with an executive branch led by the President, who serves as both head of state and government, elected by the Federal Parliament; the Prime Minister, appointed by the President, manages day-to-day administration. The legislative branch comprises a bicameral Federal Parliament, including the House of the People and the Senate, with members elected through a complex indirect process that emphasizes clan representation (Menkhaus, 2007). Additionally, the judiciary aims to defend the rule of law, although it often struggles with problems of independence and capacity, while traditional courts remain influential, especially in rural areas. Somalia's federal structure includes several member states that promote local governance, yet the effectiveness of local councils varies significantly due to the persistent influence of clan dynamics (Laitin & Fearon, 2000). Political parties exist but often operate within the framework of clan affiliations, further complicating the political landscape. The challenges facing these institutions are deep, as clan loyalty frequently succeeds national identity, leading to conflicts over power-sharing and resources. Security issues, particularly from militant groups like Al-Shabaab, undermine stability and hinder the effective functioning of political institutions (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Furthermore, the author thinks that many institutions are under capable and lack the infrastructure and resources needed to function well, particularly in rural areas where traditional governance structures are succeeding and political corruption is still a major problem that undermines public confidence and prevents services from being delivered. While foreign actors are significant in Somalia's

political scene, the author goes on to say that their assistance and support for governance reforms can result in dependency rather than workable progress, however, the political institutions of Somalia are mostly in a state of unrest, replicating the workings of its past and the continuous difficulties in creating a stable and unified state.

2.2 Post conflict society

Post-conflict societies are regions that have experienced significant violence, war, or civil strife and are in the process of rebuilding from the aftermath whereas these societies often show fragile political institutions, which lack legitimacy and capacity, making the formation of effective governance structures critical for ensuring rule of law and democratic processes (Menkhaus, 2007). Social fragmentation is another main characteristic, as divisions along ethnic, religious, or political lines can stay reconciliation efforts; thus, achieving social unity is essential for long-term stability (Laitin & Fearon, 2000). Economically, post-conflict societies face significant challenges, including high unemployment, inflation, and poverty, necessitating robust economic recovery initiatives to provide livelihoods and reduce the risk of renewed conflict (International Crisis Group, 2020). Security concerns persist, as ongoing violence or the presence of armed groups can threaten peace, underscoring the need for a secure environment for rebuilding efforts (Hagmann & Hoehne, 2009). Humanitarian needs are also prevalent, with significant challenges in terms of displacement, health crises, and access to basic services that must be addressed for effective recovery. Since societal resilience frequently develops and communities find creative ways to rebuild despite obstacles, the author assumes that the post-conflict period also proposals opportunities for growth. Additionally, the post-conflict context allows for the search of new governance models that prioritize inclusivity and representative principles, and eventually, the success of recovery efforts depends on the active participation of local communities, effective international support, and a commitment to establishing inclusive governance in order for recovery efforts to succeed.

2.3 Governance institution of Somalia

Governance in Somalia has been significantly influenced by a difficult history of conflict, clan feelings, and state-building efforts since the collapse of the central government in 1991 whereas the federal government is structured with an executive branch led by the President, who is elected by the Federal Parliament, and a Prime Minister appointed by the President to manage daily operations. The legislative branch comprises a bicameral Federal Parliament, including the House of the People and the Senate, with members elected through a process that emphasizes clan representation to balance power among various groups (Menkhaus, 2007). The judiciary aims to uphold the rule of law, though it faces challenges related to independence and capacity, while traditional courts play a significant role in rural areas by providing dispute resolution mechanisms based on customary law. Somalia's federal structure includes several member states, such as Puntland and Jubaland, South west, Hirshabelle, and Galmudug, that have their own

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governments, aiming to accommodate the country's diverse clan system and promote local governance. However, clan loyalty often supersedes national identity, leading to conflicts over power-sharing and resource allocation, which complicates the establishment of stable governance structures (Laitin & Fearon, 2000). Additionally, the continuing threat from militant groups like Al-Shabaab undermines stability and encourages the effective functioning of political institutions, limiting the ability to conduct free and fair elections. The author argues that constant corruption and the poor institutional ability of many governmental entities, especially in rural regions, further destroy public confidence and the efficient provision of services. However, there is room for development because greater community involvement can promote inclusivity and accountability, and the international community is essential in assisting with governance reforms and capacity-building programs. Moreover, the writer, eventually concluded that resolving the underlying concerns of clan distrust, security challenges, and institutional inadequacies will be important for building stability and developing effective administration in Somalia.

2.4 The Case Study Somalia,

The case of Somalia demonstrates the difficulties associated with post-conflict governance and state-building, following the collapse of the central government in 1991, which led to a fragmented political landscape marked by clan rivalries and the emergence of warlords. The historical roots of Somalia's challenges can be traced back to colonial rule and the subsequent struggle for independence, where political power became concentrated among rival clans, culminating in tensions that erupted into violence (Menkhaus, 2007). In the absence of a central authority, various regional administrations emerged, each claiming legitimacy based on clan affiliations. The establishment of a federal government in 2012 marked a significant step toward rebuilding governance structures, aiming to accommodate the diverse clans and promote local governance. However, this federal system has faced challenges, including weak institutional capacity and ongoing disputes over power-sharing (International Crisis Group, 2020). Security remains a critical issue, with militant groups like Al-Shabaab posing significant threats, exploiting local grievances and instability, which undermines efforts to establish a secure environment essential for recovery and development. The author put up with that despite these obstacles, Somali society is showing signs of resilience, with informal markets and diasporic remittances playing active roles in the livelihood, generating livings and encouraging local free enterprise. However, insecurity, a lack of infrastructure, and restricted access to basic services interruption largely economic recovery, and efforts at reconciliation are essential for repairing the societal fractures caused by decades of conflict this help community driven initiatives and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are fundamental for restoring trust and look after social unity.

In the end, the case study of Somalia tops the difficult issues of post-conflict governance, where resolving social disintegration, weakened institutions, and security threats is essential to the nation's path to a peaceful and prosperous future.

2.5 Institution Building in Somalia.

Institution-building in Somalia is a critical component of the country's recovery and development following decades of conflict, involving the formation, reform, and strengthening of political, legal, and social institutions to foster stability, governance, and societal cohesion. The establishment of a federal government in 2012 marked a central step toward restoring political order, aiming to provide a framework for representation and governance that accommodates the diverse clan structures within Somalia. However, challenges remain regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of these institutions, often undermined by clan loyalties and ongoing political rivalries (Menkhaus, 2007). A functioning judiciary is essential for upholding the rule of law, yet Somalia's judicial system struggles with corruption and resource shortages; efforts are underway to reform it to enhance independence and capacity, integrating traditional dispute resolution mechanisms alongside formal legal structures (International Crisis Group, 2020). Building effective security institutions is also crucial for stabilizing the country, with the Somali National Army and police force receiving training and support to combat threats from militant groups like Al-Shabaab. Additionally, strengthening civil society organizations and promoting community engagement are vital for fostering trust and accountability in governance, as community-driven initiatives can enhance social cohesion and address local grievances. Economic recovery is closely tied to institution-building, requiring the development of regulatory frameworks that support entrepreneurship, investment, and trade, alongside efforts to establish a stable financial system.

Nonetheless, the author came to the conclusion that there are still many substantial obstacles to overcome, such as mistrust among the clans that make the development of national institutions more difficult, resource limitations that prevent capacity building, and persistent security concerns that jeopardize stable government systems. In the end, the author goes on to say that cooperation between local communities, governmental organizations, and foreign partners will be essential to the successful establishment of institutions in Somalia, with a dedication to inclusive governance and active community involvement being essential for the nation's long-term stability and progress.

3. Future Prospect

1. Strengthening governance structures is crucial for building and reinforcing effective institutions, including enhancing federal and local government capacity, ensuring representativeness, and public accountability.
2. Promoting inclusive political dialogue involves involving all societal segments, including marginalized groups, in discussions about governance and national identity to bridge clan divisions and foster shared purpose.
3. Realizing full judicial reforms, including training judges, increasing judicial independence, and integrating traditional justice mechanisms with formal legal systems, is crucial for restoring trust in legal institutions.

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4. Investments in infrastructure, education, and healthcare, along with entrepreneurship and local business support, will help to motivate economic growth and create jobs, improve living standards, and stimulate the economy.
5. The Security Sector Reform aims to improve the training and equipping of security forces, thereby increasing the effectiveness of combating terrorism and promoting a safer environment for citizens and businesses.
6. The international community's continued support, including financial aid, technical assistance, and peacebuilding initiatives, is crucial for Somalia's recovery.
7. Empowering local communities through grassroots initiatives be able to develop resilience, cultivate social unity, and effectively address local needs compared to top-down approaches.

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