

Challenges and Opportunities of Federalism in Mogadishu, Somalia

High-quality Research Support programme (HQRS)

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The term federalism originates from the Latin word *foedus*, which refers to the fact that such a covenant is usually the starting point for the merger of two or more political entities. While modern federation originated in 1787 in the United States (which is often accepted as the first federal system) federalism has a much more ancient history. The first documented federal system was that of the ancient Israelite tribes that came into being in the thirteenth century before the Common Era or over 3200 years ago. (Daniel J. Elazar, 2001).

In Africa Federalism is unique in today's states. The most populous federal countries in Africa are Nigeria (2001), Ethiopia (1994), South Africa (1990-94) and Somalia (2004- 2012). The federal system is often used as a way of uniting divided societies particularly where divisions are ethnic, linguistic, and religious, and develop African governance systems in order to move ahead from violence and conflict.

In Somalia, after decades of civil war, the first attempt to form a federal government were in 2004 in Kenya for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and later, in 2012, a legitimate government was elected with a new president and a provisional federal constitution was adopted and federal parliament were selected. A federal government in Somali brings the expectation of a stable, secure and united Somalia.

Scholars define federalism in different ways; Heywood (1999), states that federalism is the division of law-making power between a central body and a number of territorial units; on the other hand Daniel, Harper & Row (1984) describe federalism as a system of shared power between two or more governments with authority over the same people and geographical area. Federalism is a way of organizing a nation so that two or more levels of government have formal authority over the same area and people (Ronald,1998).

According to Albertini, federalism is a form of political rational conduct with both a "social basis" and an "historical reference". The social basis corresponds to the character of a federal society, i.e. the sense of community and cosmopolitanism. The historical reference is provided by the stage of evolution of economic and political interdependence.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Federalism is a highly decentralized form of governance in which two or more states or provinces agree to form and share a central federal government and institutions while retaining some of their powers. The federal constitution defines and distributes these powers and functions between the central government and the constituent states or provinces with the necessary guarantees. A federal system has a lot of merits over other of forms of governance, including: conflict management, economic development and enhancement of political participation (Watts, 1999 and Elazar, 1987).

Recently Somalia has adopted a federal system that is now facing challenges among the people of Somalia. The constitution is provisional, flexible and ambiguous in some areas especially federal articles. There has been a misunderstanding and lack of cooperation between the national government and Puntland state of Somalia.

To the best knowledge of researchers there is no previous literature about federalism in Somalia, thus we are motivated to explore opportunities and challenges faced by the federal system in Somalia in terms of power, resources, intergovernmental relations and others.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the challenges and opportunities of federalism in Mogadishu, Somalia?

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The numbers of people in Mogadishu is estimated at 2.7 million. This study is applicable in Mogadishu, Somalia, because there are many challenges and opportunities for federalism in Mogadishu, Somalia at this moment. Communities were accessed and are represented in this study as well such as civil society, policy makers, political commentators, political scientists and public servants.

RESEARCH: OVERALL AIM AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to understand the opportunities and challenges of the federal system in Somalia because Somalia has recently chosen that form of governance.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To explore future opportunities of the federal system in Somalia.
- To identify the challenges that can exist if a federal system is chosen for Somalia

EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AND HOW THE RESEARCH WILL ADD TO IT

DEFINITION AND CONCEPTS OF FEDERALISM

The term federalism originates from the Latin word *foedus*, which refers to the fact that such a covenant is usually the starting point for the merger of two or more political entities. Federalism is the splitting up of the powers of government between Central and sub-national levels with each level possessing and exercising important powers and access to government. Competing authority centers, the right of exit and local experimentation relate to the structure of federalism (Field, 1993).

Federalism is the theory of federal principles for distributing powers between member units and common institutions unlike in the unitary system. Scholars define federal government as "the method of sharing powers so that general and state governments are each, within a sphere, co-ordinated and independent." A scholar named Daniel Elazar further expounded this concept and claimed that the federal structure is a system of "*self-rule plus shared rule*." The federal system is non-centralized, often constitutionally, between at least two levels so that units at each level have final authority and can be self-governing in some issue areas.

OPPORTUNITIES OF FEDERALISM

- ✓ **Conflict Management**

Federalism helps manage policy conflict. Federalism can reduce conflict by creating new avenues for political participation and giving people more opportunities to influence government. Because state governments and administrations often have better information about local dynamics and customary norms of decision making, they have potential to do better jobs of preventing, managing, and solving problems than national governments. The conflict-reducing potential of federalism is especially appealing in countries where ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural groups are concentrated in distinct territories.

✓ **Economic development**

Historically, the most commonly cited reason for federalism is its purported impact on economic development. Sub national governments can promote the conditions for investment and economic development in a number of dimensions, including public infrastructure investment, pro-growth regulatory and tax environments, human resource development, and public private partnerships. In some cases, competition among state governments may raise economic prosperity.

✓ **Increased participation**

Federalism increases political participation. It allows more people to run for and hold political office. In the United States a million people hold some kind of political office in counties, cities, townships, school districts and special districts. These local people are always closer to the people than Washington officials

✓ **Dispersal of power**

Federalism disperses power. This widespread distribution of power is regarded as protective against tyranny. To the extent that pluralism thrives in the United States, state, and local government have contributed to its success. They also provide a political base for survival of the opposition party when it has lost national elections.

✓ **Improved efficiency**

Federalism enhances efficiency. Even though we may think of 89,000 governments as an inefficient system, governing the entire nation from Washington would be even worse. Imagine the bureaucracy, red tape, delays, and confusion if every government activity in every community in the nation – police, schools, roads, firefighting, garbage collections, sewage disposal, street lighting, and so on – were controlled by central government in Washington.

CHALLENGES OF FEDERALISM

✓ **Division of Power**

In federalism, the power of the state is divided across governments. State governments often have little power compared with national government. Sub nationals can enforce functions such as: roads, schools, waste disposal, education, health, and others, while the federal government have legitimate power to enforce state functions and some monopoly functions: national defense, coinage, Citizenships, public finance and international relationships.

The constitution of the federal states makes clear the power division as above, but a challenge can be a misunderstanding of the division of powers. Sometimes a state tries to have ultimate power over central governments, so this is an obstacle of the federalism because unitary systems should not have such obstacles.

✓ **Clan based Federalism**

Federalism is, nowadays, an instrument to weaken nation-centric efforts intended to revive state institutions, hence, strengthening the so called clan interests found in clan federalism. There are two separate camps in the Somali Parliament and in the wider society: Federalists and Anti-federalists. In reality, the so-called federalists are, in fact, confederalists that believe in separate and co-sovereign branches of the government.

Somalia's fault lines have always fallen on clan borders. Jubbaland has ignited a polarized form of clan federalism. Accordingly, it attracted unprompted reaction from Digil and Mirifle instigated regional administration recently announced in Baidoain claims of six regions, Lower Shebelle, Bay, Bakool, Lower & Middle Juba regions and Gedo. Similar claims already exist in the disputed regions of Sool, Sanaag between Somaliland and Puntland states of Somalia. That disputed area has now become Khatumo state of Somalia which is independent from both contesting administrations (Hon Abdullahi Jama MP, 2013).

✓ **Nationalism**

A main challenges for federalism identified by political scientists is that is the population of federal states give their loves to their sub-national government rather the state. This means that the populations

do not care about the state, for example the participation in national anniversaries is not well-arranged, a problem is in Canada (AbdiElmi, 2010)

✓ **Intergovernmental Relations**

The federal constitution did not only distribute power but also responsibilities, so in general the two governments (national and regional) are responsible for the state affairs and they should have good communication in order to serve the state and national interest. However, clashes may occur between the governments, leading to state nonfunctioning and a stagnant state, for example this is the problem now in Somalia.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted through a quantitative survey. The researcher used this approach in order to describe the opportunities and challenges of the federal system in Mogadishu, Somalia using information that was gained from a questionnaire. Descriptive method was use to establish the described variable through quantitative approach and quantifiable results.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To carry out this study, the researcher used both individual and institutional data. Thus, the data collected was kept confidential and the information gathered on these organizations was only used for an academic purpose. The respondents were informed of the content and aim of the research before administration of any instrument as we maintained in the above sections.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Extraneous variables: This was beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' honesty, personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study.

2. Instructions: language was assumed to be the greatest barrier to getting the most correct answers from the questionnaire.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

This part presents the background information of the respondents who participated in this study. The reason for presenting this background information was to find out the characteristics of the respondents.

As shown in table 4-1, in total, 10 respondents filled in the questionnaire; 100% were civil Society, In terms of gender 60% were male, while 40% were female.

In terms age of <20 years was 20.0 %, 21-30 years were 40.0 %, 31-40 years were 20.0 %, 41-50 years were 20.0 %

In terms marital status, unmarried were 50.0%, married were 30.0%, widow/widower were 10.0% and divorced 10.0%

In terms of qualification 20.0% of the respondent were secondary, 10.0% of the respondents were Diplomas, 40.0% of the respondents were Bachelors, 30.0 % were Masters.

In terms of respondents' experience, 1years were 2.0%, 2 years were 10.0%, 3 years were 50.0%, 4years and more than were 20.0%.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	60
Female	4	40
Total	100	100

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Age		
<20	2	2
21-30	4	4
31-40	2	2
41-50	2	2
Total	10	10
Marital status		
Married	3	3
Unmarried	5	5
Window / widower	1	1
Divorced	1	1
Total	10	10
Educational level		
Secondary	2	2
Diploma	1	1
Bachelor	4	4
Master	3	3
Total	10	10
Work experience		
1 year	2	2
2 year	1	1
3 year	5	5
4 year	2	2
Total	10	10

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FEDERAL SYSTEM IN SOMALIA

Table 4-2 Descriptive data on opportunities of federal system in Somalia

No	Question	Mean	Standard	Interpretation
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			Deviation	
1	If federalism is really applied in Somalia, the expectations are a peaceful and stable Somalia	1.90	.316	Agree
2	Federalism tends to produce economic Development, because any state governments can independently manage its economy	1.90	.876	Agree
3	In general federalism allows Somali people to participate in politics and administration	1.80	.422	Agree
4	Federalism is good for serving the people because sub national officials are closer to information than Mogadishu officials	1.70	.483	Agree
5	In federal system the power and responsibilities of the state are distributed by the constitution into national and regional governments	1.90	.876	Agree
6	Regional Autonomy is federalism's strength	1.70	.483	Agree
7	Federal system eliminates political tyranny	2.00	.816	Agree
8	Federal system is based in democracy rather than autocracy	2.30	.949	Agree
9	Federal system allows sub national officials flexibility to respond more effectively to conditions.	1.60	.516	Agree
	Mean index	1.86		Agree

Table 4-2 Descriptive on challenges of federal system in Somalia

No	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
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1	Federalism may give rise to misinterpretation about distributed powers by constitution between National and regional governments	3.80	1.317	Disagree
2	Federalism enhances the love of regional governments rather than the nation (patriotism)	4.00	1.155	Disagree
3	Sometimes federalism creates non cooperation between the two governments.	4.10	.876	Disagree
4	Federalism divides Somali people by clan, because every clan establishes their own state.	3.80	1.033	Disagree
5	Federal system is obstacle to unity of the Community	4.50	.527	Disagree
6	There is not sufficient knowledge about the federal system in Somali	4.10	.876	Disagree
7	Federal system may create resource conflicts between Somali society.	3.90	.876	Disagree
8	Regional power may simplify to claim self for determination	4.30	.483	Disagree
9	Federal system increases the number of politicians since it allows more access to politics and civil administration rather than other specialization	4.00	1.155	Disagree
	Mean index	4.05		Disagree

MAJOR FINDINGS

This study was entitled the federal system in Somalia: opportunities and challenges. This section discusses the research results and the findings derived from the data collection. The main objective of this study was to examine whether the federal system in Somalia has created opportunities or challenges. The first objective of this study, was to indicate the opportunities of the federal system in Somalia for the people. The mean responses show a favorable perception. The mean responses shown in research objective one illustrate generally a positive attitude to federalism, so, in the perception questions the majority responses are agree and, with the mean index in this objective resulted 1.86 which means agree as we have mentioned in above special data analysis. The mean responses suggest that, in general, federal system are the subject of an overall positive attitude by civil society.

The second research objective deals with challenges of the federal system in Somalia and perceptions by all parts of society. This research objective is important because of the possibility of discovering or determining the challenges which is in practice useful. The mean responses shown in research objective two illustrate that the perception of challenges is that they generally have a negative impact. All the majority responses are “disagree” by respondents, that is why the mean index in this objective resulted in 4.05, which means “disagree”.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the federal system in Somalia: opportunities and challenges by using descriptive analysis and collecting data through a questionnaire, with a sample size of 10. After analyzing the data collected from civil society, the researcher reached the following results:

- According to the findings of this study, the majority of respondents agree concerning the opportunities of the federal system in Somalia, resulting in a mean index for this objective of 1.86.
- This supported the previous study made by Doig (2007)

- The findings of the study indicated that the majority of respondents disagreed concerning there being challenges of the federal system in Somalia, resulting in a mean index in this objective of 4.05.
- The researcher has clearly revealed that the opportunities of federalism are greater than its challenges
- Therefore the study approves the application of federalism.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception the federal system in Somalia, Opportunities and challenges. The first objective of this study was to identify the opportunities of federalism. The conducted study found that the perception of the majority of respondents was that they agreed that federalism provides perfect opportunities including conflict management, economic development, protection against tyranny and many others, with the mean index of 1.86. Therefore federalism has key opportunities and is needed in Somalia.

The second objective was to examine the challenges of the federalism. The majority of responses disagree that federalism has challenges including regionalism and non-intergovernmental relations, with mean index of 4.05

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests the following:

1. The researcher recommends to increase the knowledge of Somali citizens concerning federalism since this form of governance has perfect opportunities.
2. If the federal system is really applied in Somalia I recommend enacting complete laws about federalism, for example regarding division of power and resource, in order to avoid conflict.
3. The researcher recommends the government of Somalia should strongly protect the national spirit of the country since there is much concern about unity due to a federal system.

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