

Role of Civil Society Civic Participation on Performance of Devolved Units in Selected County Governments in Kenya

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Abstract: Civil society organizations play a prominent role in governance and are viewed as key to delivering government policy agendas of social action, open public services and grass root mobilization. A strong and positive relationship between democratic governments and the civil society has materialized to be a stable pillar in governance such that the civil society organizations are seen as an integral part of governance process. However, even in the most democratic and prosperous societies in the modern world, there are many services that are not adequately provided especially to the minorities therein creating a gap which is occupied by the civil societies. They therefore fulfill important duties of checks and balances in democracies with their ability to influence the government and hold it accountable. The objective of the study was to establish the civil society' civic participation on performance of devolved units in Kenya. The study used the descriptive survey research design to analyze and describe the relationship between civil society' civic participation and performance of devolved units in Kenya. The population of the study was all 1290 top management staff to be drawn from the civil society organizations registered in Kenya; 470 (county ministers and chief officers) in the county governments of Kenya. The data collection instruments were questionnaires. The study initiated a pilot study to pretest and validates the questionnaire. Content analysis was used to test data that is qualitative in nature or aspect of the data that was collected from the open ended questions. Regression analysis was carried out to test the nature of relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables at .05 level of significance. Results revealed that all the civil society' civic participation dimension had a positive and significant relationship with performance of devolved governance units in Kenya. The results support the current theories related to the study. Consequently, this study provides national and county governments with insights of how to improve performance of devolved units through the civil society governance interventions. The study recommended that national and county governments should adopt a culture of incorporating civil society governance interventions (civic participation). This could go a long way in ensuring there is improved performance of devolved units in the county governments of Kenya.

Keywords: Civil Society Governance Intervention, Civic Participation, Performance of Devolved Units.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Based on the civic participation, the civil societies are involved in solving societal needs by offering various services to the public in several sectors such as in health, education, governance and finance. Omedo and Bakare (2014) define participation as a process, through which stakeholders' input and share control over development initiatives, decisions and

resources which affect them. Munene and Thakhathi (2017) further describe it as a process whereby stakeholders influence policy formulation, alternative designs, investment choices and management decisions affecting their communities. Bhargava (2015) argues that civil Society Organizations are key players in the push for universal values around human rights, labor standards, operating environment and anti-corruption and he terms CSOs as agents of development in any given economy as they play a significant role politically, socially and economically. The other role of the civil society is in social justice and the CSOs play this role by improving the quality of governance through application of good governance principles which are transparency, accountability and openness.

Several scholars have studied the participation of civil societies and most have found out that participation of the CSOs in the governance process plays a vital role in the enhancement of democracy. Pauly, De Ryanck and Verschuere (2016) recognized importance of CSOs participation in the finance sector while Wachira (2014) appreciated their significance in citizen sensitization, however some CSOs actions have recently come under criticism and their role as a promoter of good causes has been called into question (Bang & Esmark, 2013) hence the need to study civil society participation in relation to governance.

Statement of the Problem

Civil society play a prominent role in governance and are viewed as key to delivering government policy agendas of social action, open public services and grass root mobilization (Phillimore & McCabe, 2015). A strong and positive relationship between democratic governments and the civil society has materialized to be a stable pillar in governance such that the CSOs are seen as an integral part of governance process (Piotrowicz & Ciancira, 2013). In a perfect society, the government should be able to provide all the required services to its citizens. However, even in the most democratic and prosperous societies in the modern world, there are many services that are not adequately provided especially to the minorities therein creating a gap which is occupied by the civil societies (Meriläinen, Fougère & Piotrowicz, 2019; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). Therefore, globally, the civil society plays a hidden role of complimenting or limiting the provisions of the state, a function which CSOs achieve by providing a platform for checks and balances through advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of government duties of ensuring security, cohesion and credible elections which enhance the performance of devolved governance.

The devolved units in Kenya are underperforming and a report by Kenya Institute for Public Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) highlights key sectors like health, water and sanitation, education among others which have faced challenges in service delivery (Lubale, 2018) associated with issues of accountability and integrity in county governments of Kenya. A survey done by Transparency International (TI) (2016), reported that 41% of Kenyans were not satisfied with their county governments' service delivery and infrastructural development. According to the Controller of Budget (March 2020), it emphasized that the duty of the county governments is to be concerned to why the citizens are not satisfied with the performance. "Over 30 counties in Kenya registered zero development between July and September 2019". Successful devolved government requires an efficacious design for the context within which it is to be undertaken as there was a great need to assess the capacity and other resource needed for the successful devolution agenda. This calls for the active participation of civil society to strengthen service delivery in the devolved units (Opiyo, Moronge & Guyo, 2018).

A number of studies have been done on the role of the civil society in different sectors and institutions. Omede and Bakare (2014) study focused on the impact of civil society organizations on sustainable development in developing countries, the Nigerian experience. It was established that that Civil Society groups in Nigeria sanitized and strengthened service delivery through the creation of an enabling environment for their operation and that they should maintain a high degree of independence from the government. Bernauer and Gampfer (2013) study focused on the effects of Civil society involvement on popular legitimacy of global environmental governance. The study results indicated that civil society involvement enhanced global climate policy-making, improved attention to changes of the status quo than to static conditions and reduced the persistent stalemate in global climate negotiations.

Further, Muok and Kingiri (2015) study focused on the role of role of civil society organizations in low-carbon innovation in Kenya. The study findings indicated that that civil society played a crucial role in low-carbon innovation in terms of learning and competence-building in Kenya. Maingi (2016) study evaluated the developmental impact of civil societies and their contribution to sustainable economic development. The study examined the challenges faced by CSOs and how these challenges affect their performance in impacting developmental agenda setting. The legal, policy and institutional

frameworks of these CSOs played a very important role in impacting the developmental agenda setting. Munene and Thakhathi (2017) analyzed the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in promotion of community participation in governance in Kenya. The study established that CSOs also need to be given training and exposure to programs to successfully address governance issues in the country

From the aforementioned studies, though the civil societies' interventions have gained a lot of popularity as a tool for improving service delivery and governance. They have their own challenges the role they play in different institutions and sectors which this study seeks to identify especially in the devolved governance units in Kenya. Further, due to the contextual, sectorial and managerial differences among institutions, countries and sectors, the role of civil society governance interventions on enhancing good governance cannot be assumed to be similar, unless empirical studies demonstrate so. It is on this premise the current study aim to fill the gap by examining the role of civil society (civic participation) on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Research Objective

The purpose of the study was to establish the role of civil societies' civic participation governance intervention on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The new public management theory emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. The theory was proposed by Hood (1991) who argued that to reconfigure the state along more cost-efficient (and effective) lines. The protagonist recommended that the public sector is opened up to greater private sector influence. Riany, Were and Kihara (2018). (2011) citing Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) avers that new public management reforms were aimed at improving the county governance in terms quality of public services, saving public expenditure, increasing the efficiency of governmental operations and making policy implementation more effective. The belief that large and monopolistic public bureaucracies are inherently inefficient was a critical force driving the emergence of the new public management (Casady, Eriksson, Levitt & Scott, 2020). The theory represents a set of ideas, values, and practices aimed at emulating private sector practices in the public sector (Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016).

Recently, Christensen, Lægreid and Rovik (2020) citing Hyndman and Lapsley, (2016) further opined that there was a need to reinvent government and harness the entrepreneurial spirit to transform the public sector and later "banish the bureaucracy". Wu (2020) posits that the new public management theory takes its intellectual foundations from public choice theory, which looks at government from the standpoint of markets and products, and from managerialism, which focuses on management approaches to achieve productivity gains. The three underlying issues which new public management theory attempts to resolve to include citizen-centered services; value for taxpayers' money and a responsive public service workforce (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

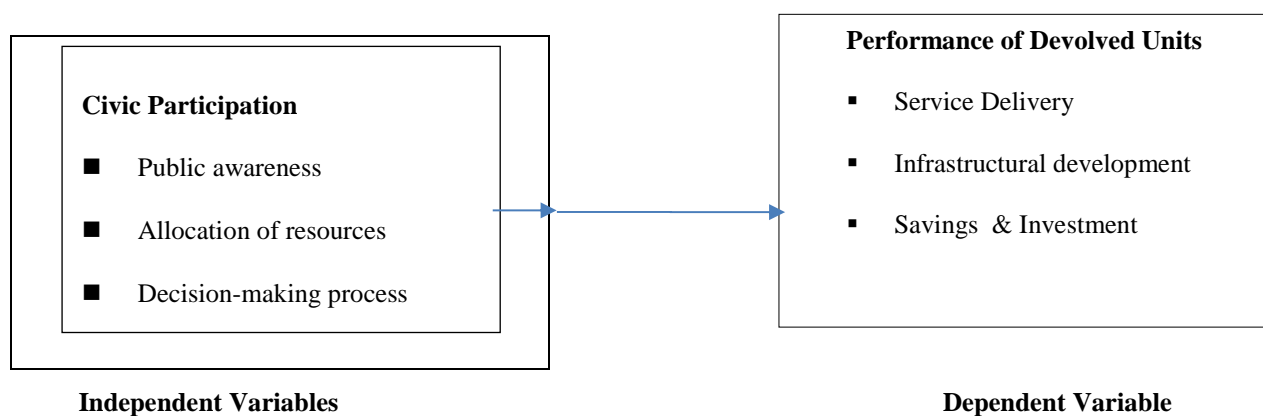
Notably, there are also studies that indicate that the new public management reforms do not necessarily lead to improved service delivery. For example, Selladurai and Selladurai (2020) analyzed governments' attempts at providing better health-care services for less in USA. The new public management is often mentioned together with governance (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020). Governance is about the overarching structure of government and the setting up of the overall strategy, while new public management is the operational aspect of the new type of public administration. The theory has also been supported by Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) who contends that the dominant theme of new public management is the use of market techniques to improve the performance of the public sector. The main features of new public management include performance management, e-governance, contracting out and outsourcing, decentralization and accountability among others (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

The proponents of this theory advocate that the government should put in place social accountability mechanisms to increase efficiency in service delivery. The new public management theory is relevant to the current study as it informs citizen's participation, social accountability practices, and service delivery variables. The theory advocates for citizens participation in the process of evaluating public services since the new public management principle of customer responsiveness requires that the degree of the user satisfaction be measured (Wu, 2020). This study drew from the theory of new public management in understanding the county governance. The broad idea of new public management theory is the use of market mechanisms in the public sector to make managers and providers more responsive and accountable (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

The New Public management Theory recommends for an active and meaningful participation of CSOs in public affairs is the distinguishing feature of democratic societies, which are judged by the extent to which governments open up to citizen involvement in public affairs and the space they give for citizens to hold the government accountable (Ali & Noel, 2020). It is because of this that CSOs in Kenya and Africa in general continue to demand increased space for participation (Anthony & Nala, 2018). This theory is about the challenges of participatory democracy in county governance in Kenya; it applicable on the state of CSOs civic Participation in the country. It examines the political processes that would contribute to the consolidation of civic participation in county governance. The theory is anchored to the available instruments, such as the Constitution of Kenya (2010), to enhance CSPs civic Participation in county governance.

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

A conceptual framework is a concise description of the phenomenon under study accompanied by a graphical or visual description of the major variables of the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Michelle (2017) states that a conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. This study's conceptual framework sought to demonstrate the relationship between civil societies' civic participation and performance of devolved units in Kenya. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.



Empirical Review

Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako (2013) study focused on the role of Civil Society Organizations in Supporting Fiscal Transparency in African Countries. The study reviewed some recent measures to improve fiscal transparency in Nigeria, and highlights the role played by CSOs. More effective participation of civil society groups in public discussions on fiscal transparency will require strengthening capacity of these organizations to participate in such debates. At the same time, senior government officials must welcome the increasing involvement of civil society as an opportunity to increase transparency and debate on public finance issues. The study concluded by identifying possible strategies which civil society organizations and senior government officials in various African countries may adopt in order to promote more constructive and transparent dialogue on fiscal management issues.

Anti-Boasiko (2019) assessed the role of civil society organizations as a stakeholder in the public financial management process of Ghana. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and sampled ten civil society organizations from Ghana. The study observed that civil society organizations rely on participatory approaches at the planning and budgeting stages of the public financial management process. Also, civil society organizations in Ghana track government expenditures, analyze government contracts for leakages and follow-up on the Auditor General's report to address discrepancies. The study concludes that if indeed, civil society organizations succeed in playing these roles effectively; they can help improve the public financial management of Ghana.

Ali and Noel (2020) carried out study to assess the role of civil society organizations in promoting good governance in Somaliland. The study adopted case study research design and 50 respondents were sampled. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and key informant interviews with NAGAAD NETWORK members and employees. Data was analyzed using SPSS. It was revealed that, NAGAAD NETWORK has contributed a lot towards promotion of good governance in Somaliland especially supporting the Social audits of women in the decision making processes, fighting

against gender based violence, increasing visibility of women in political leadership, raising awareness in communities to demand women rights, and improving women's economic empowerment.

Lamaon (2018) study sought to establish the relationship between fiscal governance and performance of County Governments (CGs) in Kenya. The Specific objectives were to assess the relationship between funding from National Government, locally generated revenues, loans, grants and borrowings and budget control function and the overall performance of county governments in Kenya. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression models as an inferential analysis. The study findings revealed that Fiscal Governance had a statistically significant relationship with performance of county governments in Kenya. The study specifically found out that Funding from National Government, Locally generated revenue, borrowings/grants/loans and budget control function had positive and significant relationships with performance of county governments.

Githinji and Okuto (2018) study sought to understand devolved governance and financial resource mobilization in county governments in Kenya with reference on Kiambu County Government. The study used two theories, Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory. The research study used mixed research methods and hence employed descriptive research design. The target population for this study was county employees working in the department of finance, economic planning, youth, women and business community leaders' representatives from Kiambu County. The study findings indicated that the national government revenue transfer to county government is sufficient in sustaining county sustainable development projects as long as appropriate accounting and auditing procedures in the various departments are enhanced to ensure financial resourcefulness. The study concludes that the county government has made efforts to enhance its financial resource mobilization, empower and train its employees.

The Institute of Economic Affairs budget analysis report 2017 indicates that county budgets targets were not achieved. Against a performance benchmark of at least 80%, absorption of development budget for the period 2013/14 to 2015/16 has consistently been below 66%. As a result of this, the IEA note the importance of CSOs on government enforcing austerity measures so as to focus spending to priority areas. The Fiscal Strategy Paper 2014, County Governments importantly articulates that there was lack of integration in the implementation of most programs and projects in the county. Further, according to research by World Bank (2018) recommends that guidelines and templates need to be developed to guide the formulation of county budgets. More so the World Bank advocate for a country-wide chart of accounts for preparing, executing and reporting the budget. In addition to this, the counties would be expected to develop adequate PFM, Human resource and service delivery capacity.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a positivist research paradigm. Cooper and Schindler (2017) assert that the positivism research paradigm takes the quantitative approach and is based on real facts, objectivity, neutrality, measurement, and validity of results. The study adopted a descriptive research design to obtain the correct information on the role of civil societies' civic participation on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

The formula for calculating sample size for a large population is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where n=required sample size

p and q =Population proportions which are set at 0.5 each

Z=Level of confidence

Typically, the level of confidence for surveys is 95% in which case Z is set to 1.96.

e= Sets the margin of error of the sample proportion. This will be set at 0.05.

This being a large (binomial) population, the sample will, therefore be worked out as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384.16$$

Therefore, the sample size was 384 key staff of the civil society who were selected through simple random sampling. Further analysis was done to test the significance of the model by the use of Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and R^2 was used to measure the extent of the goodness of fit of the regression model. The statistical significance of the hypothesized relationship was interpreted based on F and t-test values at a 95% confidence level.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of performance of devolved units (dependent variable) which could be predicted by civic participation (independent variable). A regression analysis was conducted to establish the role of capacity building in the delegated legislation process in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated:

H₀₁: There is no significant role of civil societies' civic participation on performance of devolved units in Kenya

Therefore, to test this hypothesis, the model

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ was fitted. Where y is delegated legislation process and X_1 is civil societies' civic participation

The R-Squared tends to depict the variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables: the greater the value of R-squared the greater the effect of independent variable. The R Squared can range from 0.000 to 1.000, with 1.000 showing a perfect fit that indicates that each point is on the line. As indicated in Table 1, the R-squared for the relationship between civil societies' civic participation and performance of devolved units in Kenya was 0.659; this is an indication that at 95% confidence interval, 65.90% variation in performance of devolved units in Kenya can be attributed to changes in civil societies' civic participation. This means that the remaining 34.10% are other factors associated with civil societies' civic participation which were not explained by the model. The correlation coefficient of 0.812 indicates civil societies' civic participation had a positive correlation with delegated legislation process in Kenya. Therefore, civil societies' civic participation was an important factor that could be considered in the performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Table 1: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.812	0.659	0.637	0.56321

The ANOVA results in Table 2 shows that ($F(1, 185) = 362.916, p < 0.05$). This shows that the overall model is significant. The findings imply that civil societies' civic participation was statistically significant in explaining performance of devolved units in Kenya. Therefore, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, null hypothesis "H₀₁: There is no significant role of civil societies' civic participation in the performance of devolved units in Kenya" is rejected. This implies that civil societies' civic participation played a significant role in performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Table 2: ANOVA

Regression	8.710	1	8.710	362.916	0.000b
Residual	4.507	185	0.024		
Total	13.217	186			

Based on the regression coefficients as established in Table 3, the regression equation revealed that holding other factors to a constant zero, performance of devolved units in Kenya would be at a constant value of 2.765. Therefore, the regression of coefficients results in Table 3 shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between capacity building and delegated legislation process in Kenya as supported by a $p < 0.05$ and a beta coefficient of 0.846. This implies that a unit increase in capacity building would increase the performance of devolved units in Kenya by 0.846 units. This was supported by the t values whereby $t_{cal} = 6.175 > t_{critical} = 1.96$ at a 95 percent confidence level which depicts that we reject the null hypothesis. Further, this confirms the positive role of civil societies' civic participation on performance of devolved units in Kenya. The fitted equation is as shown below: $Y = 2.765 + 0.846X_3$, that is, performance of devolved units = 2.765 + 0.846 civil societies' civic participation.

Table 3: Beta Coefficients for Capacity Building

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.765	1.093		2.529	0.000
Capacity Building	0.846	0.137	0.812	6.175	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Delegated legislation

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that civil societies' civic participation is statistically significant in explaining performance of devolved units in Kenya. Despite civil societies' civic participation playing an important role in ensuring successful performance of devolved units, it faces challenges. The study recommends that there is need for the civil society to facilitate the continued engagement of citizens in the county's political and civic life, through quality civic education programs and citizen-led participation initiatives; to ensure that citizens are informed and have the skills to participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes of the county; it guarantees the right of all individuals. It also creates an environment for more open consultation and engagement and strengthens collaboration between the County and National government, community-based organizations, civil society, and citizens to improve performance of the devolved units in Kenya..

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