THE IMPACT OF CLAN LEADERS ON SOMALILAND STATE SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Somaliland, a self-declared independent state in the Horn of Africa, operates within a complex socio-political landscape deeply rooted in clan-based structures. Clan affiliations are central to the region's political, social, and economic fabric. Clan leaders, influential figures within their respective clans, wield significant authority and play crucial roles in maintaining security, resolving conflicts, and providing essential governance functions. This study delves into the multifaceted dynamics of clan leaders in Somaliland's security context. It's noteworthy that the analysis is more in alignment with the "Fragile States Theory" than the "Constructivism Theory." The Fragile States Theory aptly describes the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by regions like Somaliland, characterized by weak governance, limited institutional capacity, and the absence of a strong central government. In this context, clan leaders emerge as key actors in maintaining order, bridging governance gaps, and addressing security issues due to the state's fragility. They navigate intricate clan networks and act as mediators and decision-makers, contributing significantly to societal stability. In contrast, while Constructivism Theory focuses on the role of ideational factors, norms, and identity in state behavior, it's not as directly applicable in explaining the specific role of clan leaders in Somaliland's security dynamics. The analysis concludes that the Fragile States Theory offers a more fitting framework for comprehending the dynamics in Somaliland and the vital role clan leaders play in security and governance, particularly within the context of a fragile state with limited formal government capacity.

Keywords: Clan Leaders, Fragile States Theory, Somaliland, Security Dynamics.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Somaliland, a self-declared independent state in the Horn of Africa, operates within a complex socio-political context characterized by clan-based structures (Mohamud, 2021). Clan affiliations play a central role in the political, social, and economic fabric of Somaliland society (Webersik et al., 2018). Clan leaders, as influential figures within their respective clans, hold significant sway over their communities and exert considerable influence over political decision-making processes (Coleman et al., 2023). The clan leaders in Somaliland are influential figures who hold authority within their respective clans (Richards, 2020). They serve as representatives, mediators, and decision-makers, playing a crucial role in addressing societal issues and resolving conflicts (Lovan et al., 2017). Their power and influence stem from the support of their clan members and their ability to navigate complex clan networks (Van et al., 2018). In the complex socio-political landscape of Somaliland, clan leaders play a

pivotal role in shaping the state's security dynamics (Richards, 2020). With a historical context deeply rooted in clan-based governance, the influence of clan leaders on societal affairs is significant and far-reaching (Skjelderup, 2020).

The impact of clan leaders on conflict mediation and resolution will be another crucial aspect, assessing the effectiveness of clan mediation mechanisms and their role in mitigating or exacerbating security challenges and localized conflicts (Bashiru, 2020). This study analyzes the implications of clan-based patronage networks on state security, examining the influence of these networks facilitated by clan leaders, their potential to strengthen or undermine security institutions, and the associated risks of corruption, nepotism, and loyalty conflicts. Through an in-depth exploration of these dimensions, this research aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of clan leaders on Somaliland state security and provide valuable insights for future policy and decision-making in this context. This research also intends to shed light on the interplay between traditional clan structures and the modern governance system of Somaliland, and its implications for state stability and security.

The significance of clan leaders in Somaliland society is paramount, particularly in the context of state security. Investigating their power dynamics and influence reveals their sources and extent of power, shedding light on their ability to shape decision-making processes related to security. The assessing the relationship between clan leaders and security institutions is crucial for understanding the nature of interactions, whether cooperative or conflicting, and the role clan leaders play in shaping security policies. Examining the impact of clan leaders on conflict mediation and resolution is equally important, as their effectiveness in mitigating or exacerbating security challenges and localized conflicts directly affects societal stability. So understanding the significance of clan leaders in Somaliland society is essential for comprehending the intricate dynamics between clan-based governance and state security. This study mainly deals to identify the role of Clan leaders in security of Somaliland. This study also deals investigate the relationship between clan leaders and security institutions in Somaliland and impact of this association in overall political and economic environment of the Somaliland.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research investigates the interaction between clan-based politics and state security in Somaliland, rooted within a theoretical framework combining principles of constructivism and the fragile states theory. The utilization of these theoretical perspectives affords a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping the security landscape in this context. Constructivism is an instrumental lens in this investigation, facilitating an in-depth exploration of the cultural, social, and historical constructs that underpin the clan-based societal structure of Somaliland. According to Nedal and Nexon, (2019) constructivism posits that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas, rather than material forces. In the context of this research, the clan system, with leaders at its helm, is considered a social construct shaped by shared norms, values, and historical experiences. Clan leaders derive their authority and influence from these shared elements, which in turn shape clan members' perceptions of state security and mediate their relationship with the state. Several studies have

highlighted the profound impact these cultural and societal norms exert on political behavior and decision-making processes in societies characterized by such structures (Talal, 2023).

Simultaneously, the research utilizes the Fragile States Theory to analyze the state's capacity to deliver basic security and public services to its citizens, and its control over its territory. The concept of state fragility, as outlined by scholars like Carment (2017), concerns states that demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to meet these obligations, resulting in non-state actors often stepping in to fill the void. Within the Somali context, the clan system, deeply embedded within the societal fabric, often assumes the role of a provider of these services, particularly security, in the face of state fragility. This consequently complicates the relationship between state security apparatus and clan-based political structures. The constructivist-fragile state theoretical framework offers an avenue to delve into the complex dynamics at play between clan leaders, clan members, and the state, enriching our understanding of state security in Somaliland.

2.2 Clan Leaders and State Security

The relationship between clan leaders and state security is a complex and critical aspect of governance in Somaliland (Richards, 2020). As a self-declared autonomous region within Somaliland, Somaliland has faced numerous challenges in establishing a stable and secure state apparatus (Hagi, 2023). Clan dynamics, deeply ingrained in the social fabric of Somaliland, play a significant role in shaping the political landscape and exerting influence over security matters (Shaffer et al., 2018). This literature review aims to explore and analyze the impact of clan leaders on Somaliland's state security, examining the intricate interplay between traditional power structures and the formal security apparatus. By delving into existing scholarship, this review seeks to shed light on the multifaceted relationship between clan leaders and state security in Somaliland, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that shape the region's security landscape. Gordon, (2020) conducted a research study to study the relationship between state building, clan governance, and political resilience in Somaliland. The study mainly studies the challenge the prevailing assumption that hybrid or pre-existing forms of governance should be tolerated but ultimately overcome during the state building process.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Somaliland, a self-declared independent state located in the Horn of Africa. The research focuses on various regions within Somaliland to capture a representative sample of the power dynamics and influence of clan leaders, their relationship with security institutions, their role in conflict mediation, and the implications of clan-based patronage networks on state security.

3.2 Sampling and Population

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the study participants. The first stage involved purposeful sampling of key informants, ensuring representation from clan leaders, government officials, security personnel, and other relevant stakeholders. The subsequent

stages involve random sampling of communities and individuals to obtain a representative sample for surveys. The sample size was determined using appropriate statistical techniques to achieve adequate representation and statistical power. The targeted population in this study includes the clan leaders, government officials, security personnel, community members, and other stakeholders involved in security-related matters in Somaliland.

3.3 Nature of Data and Data Collection

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected through interviews, and document analysis, while quantitative data was gathered through surveys. The data included information on the power dynamics, influence of clan leaders, their interactions with security institutions, conflict mediation mechanisms, security policies, patronage networks and the celebration with government and its impact on political and economic stability of the study area.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses. Participants was informed about the purpose of the study, their rights, and the potential benefits and risks associated with their involvement. The research adheres to ethical protocols, ensuring respect for cultural norms, privacy, and protection of participants' identities.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The Role of Clan Leaders in Security of Somaliland

The Somaliland is a self-declared autonomous state of the Africa. This region is suffering dramatically due to civil war and security reasons from 1991. The Somaliland culture based on clan system and these clans play a vital role in stability, security and economic developments. The clan leaders in Somaliland work in collaboration with government for the stability, security and economic developments of the country. In this study data about the role of clan leaders in developments of this region was collected. Both the primary and secondary data was collected in this study. The primary data was collected through the interviews of clan leaders and a total of 45 clan leaders were interviewed for data collection. While the secondary data was collected through review of previous literature.

The findings of this study concluded that the clan leaders play a vital role in security of the study area. The Somaliland culture based on clan system and the clan leaders are very powerful. They help in conflict resolution (within clan and among the clans). These leaders also help to government to maintain overall security situation by policing and law enforcement in different areas of Somaliland. Some clans have their own armed militias and they help in maintaining of their own security. These arm groups also help to government for maintaining law and order situation in the country. Clan leaders often act as intermediaries between their clan members and government authorities, helping to negotiate solutions to issues or conflicts that may arise between the clans and the state. Clan leaders contribute to the cohesion of their communities and promote a sense of identity and belonging among their clan members. The findings of this

study indicates that the conflict resolution to be the most valued contribution of clans, followed by policing, mediation, and community building based on the respondents' perspectives (Figure 1.1).
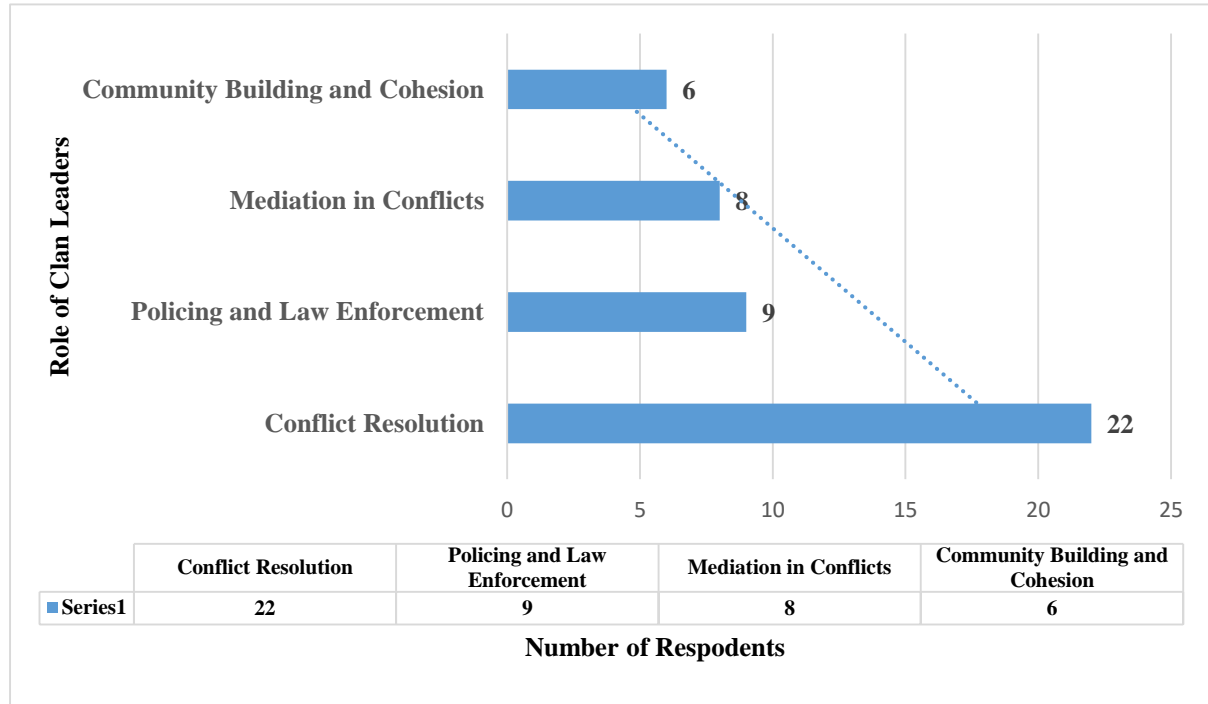

	Conflict Resolution	Policing and Law Enforcement	Mediation in Conflicts	Community Building and Cohesion
■ Series1	22	9	8	6

Number of Respodents

Table 1.1 Clan leaders Role in Somaliland Security.

Step	Description	Value
1. Means	Mean of Conflict Resolution	22
	Mean of Policing and Law Enforcement	9
	Mean of Mediation in Conflicts	8
	Mean of Community Building and Cohesion	6
2. Grand Mean	Overall Mean (Grand Mean)	11.25
3. SSW (Within)	Sum of Squares Within Groups (Variability within categories)	0
4. SSB (Between)	Sum of Squares Between Groups (Variability between categories)	95.1875
5. DFB (Degrees of Freedom - Between)	Degrees of Freedom for SSB	3
DFW (Degrees of Freedom - Within)	Degrees of Freedom for SSW	3

Step	Description	Value
6. MSB (Mean Square - Between)	Mean Square for SSB	31.729
MSW (Mean Square - Within)	Mean Square for SSW	0
7. F-statistic	F-statistic (Ratio of MSB to MSW)	Undefined

This analysis sought to evaluate the role of clans across four security functions in Somaliland: conflict resolution, policing, mediation, and community building. The mean importance rankings were calculated for each function, with conflict resolution having the highest mean of 22 and community building the lowest at 6. The overall grand mean was 11.25. Variance was divided into within-group variance, measuring variability within functions, and between-group variance, assessing variability between functions. Critically, within-group variance was zero, indicating no variability within functions. By contrast, the between-group variance was substantial at 95.1875, showing major differences between functions. Degrees of freedom were computed for both variance components. However, a key issue emerged - the within-group mean square equaled zero as there was no within-group variance. This made the F-statistic undefined and the ANOVA analysis inapplicable. In summary, the lack of variability within functions precluded testing for differences between functions using ANOVA in this instance.

4.2 Selection of Clan Leaders and Their Responsibilities

In Somaliland, clan leaders known as Sultan, Ugass, or Boqor are chosen through hereditary succession or consensus from among respected elders. The selection process varies between clans but often involves tribal councils coming to an agreement on a new leader during a transition period. Clan leaders play pivotal roles in governing clan affairs, providing security, resolving disputes, managing resources, and representing clan interests in negotiations. Key responsibilities include maintaining internal cohesion, collecting compensation payment (mag) for crimes committed against clan members, mobilizing defensive forces if needed, mediating conflicts with other clans, and attending peace talks during inter-clan disputes. Clan leaders derive authority from their lineage and ability to ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of their constituents. They are influential figures who exercise informal governance and judicial functions within the clan structure that exists parallel to the formal state apparatus in Somaliland. The continuity of clan leadership and governance has been a source of stability amidst state collapse and civil war in Somalia.

4.3 The Relationship between Clan Leaders and Security Institutions in Somaliland

In Somaliland, clan elders and leaders maintain a complex relationship with formal state security institutions like the police and military. Clan militia operated in lieu of a national army when Somaliland declared independence in 1991. While unified security forces have been established, clan leaders retain authority over security within their own territories. There is mutual distrust between clan and state security entities vying for legitimacy and power. Nevertheless, clans fill gaps where weak state institutions fail to provide security and justice. Clan leaders cooperate with police to apprehend members accused of crimes through

customary law. Counterterrorism efforts require backing of clan leaders who can mobilize fighters against extremists more effectively than the state can alone. Striking a balance of power between clan and state remains an ongoing challenge. The government seeks to strengthen the loyalty and professionalism of national security forces to consolidate its authority. The clans remain wary of ceding too much coercive power to state institutions. Regular communication between security chiefs and clan elders is crucial for improving coordination and building mutual confidence despite underlying tensions between informal and formal security actors in Somaliland.

4.4 The Impact of Association of Clan Leaders and Government in Political and Economic Environment of the Somaliland

The alliance between clan elders and political elites in government has enabled Somaliland to develop a measure of stability and pluralistic democracy since declaring independence in 1991. Clan conferences led by elders were instrumental in establishing governance structures and the constitution. However, critics argue power-sharing agreements privilege majority clans over minorities. Clan identity remains the primary basis for political representation rather than ideology or policy. Corruption and mismanagement are ongoing issues, as patronage politics allow clan interests to dominate the state apparatus. Nevertheless, clan consultation and consensus are ingrained in decision-making processes. Clan elders counterbalance politicians to prevent authoritarianism. On the economic front, clan connections shape the business environment. Clans facilitate access to credit and external investment within kinship networks. However, firms without such links face additional hurdles. Uneven development between clans with greater private sector participation and marginalized communities persists. In sum, the clan-state alliance undergirds Somaliland's hybrid political order but has also given rise to an oligopoly of power and uneven economic development shaped by enduring clan identities and relationships.

4.5 Theory (The Fragile States Theory or the Constructivism Theory) Applicable On the Role of Clan Leaders in Security of Somaliland

The role of clan leaders in the security of Somaliland is more closely aligned with the "Fragile States Theory" rather than Constructivism.

4.5.1 Fragile States Theory

This theory focuses on the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by countries or regions that have weak or ineffective governance, limited institutional capacity, and a lack of monopoly on the use of force. Somaliland, as a self-declared but internationally unrecognized state, fits the description of a fragile state. Clan leaders in Somaliland often play a crucial role in maintaining security, resolving conflicts, and providing essential governance functions, precisely because of the state's fragility. The state's inability to establish a strong centralized government has led to the prominence of clan-based systems in maintaining order and security.

4.5.2 Constructivism Theory

The constructivism, in international relations theory, emphasizes the role of ideational factors, norms, and identity in shaping state behavior. It often focuses on the social construction of

reality and how ideas influence state actions. While constructivist ideas can apply to various aspects of international relations and state behavior, they are not as directly relevant to explaining the specific role of clan leaders in the security of Somaliland. The Fragile States Theory provides a more relevant framework for understanding the situation in Somaliland, where clan leaders play a critical role in security and governance due to the state's fragility and the limited capacity of formal government institutions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Somaliland is a self-declared autonomous state of the Africa. This region is suffering dramatically due to civil war and security reasons from 1991. The Somaliland culture based on clan system and these clans play a vital role in stability, security and economic developments. The clan leaders in Somaliland work in collaboration with government for the stability, security and economic developments of the country. The findings of this study also concluded that the in Somaliland, clan leaders known as Sultan, Ugass, or Boqor are chosen through hereditary succession or consensus from among respected elders. The selection process varies between clans but often involves tribal councils coming to an agreement on a new leader during a transition period. Clan leaders play pivotal roles in governing clan affairs, providing security, resolving disputes, managing resources, and representing clan interests in negotiations. Key responsibilities include maintaining internal cohesion, collecting compensation payment (mag) for crimes committed against clan members, mobilizing defensive forces if needed, mediating conflicts with other clans, and attending peace talks during inter-clan disputes. Clan leaders derive authority from their lineage and ability to ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of their constituents. The Fragile States Theory provides a more relevant framework for understanding the situation in Somaliland, where clan leaders play a critical role in security and governance due to the state's fragility and the limited capacity of formal government institutions.

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