

Influence of Civil Society Participation on Accountability and Governance System Performance In County Governments In Kenya

Elijah Kimeu¹ & Chen Zhixia¹

College of Public Administration, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China
Correspondence: Chen Zhixia,

ABSTRACT: Civil society participation in administrative decision making for accountability and good governance has been extensively lobbied for by theorists and practitioners of public administration. However, despite its value little has been confirmed on its impact on accountability and governance system performance. The study focused to determine the influence of civil society participation on accountability and governance system performance in county governments of Kenya. This paper embraced descriptive research design in all the 47 county governments and 49 civil society groups in Kenya while conducting the survey. The study applied primary and secondary material where Primary data was obtained and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study revealed that civil society participation influences accountability and governance system performance most specifically in county governments of Kenya. To realize benefits of civil society participation on governance system performance, the management of county governments need to embrace fair play in resource allocation by encouraging participation during the county budget making process. They also need to involve civil society in cost recovery process as both, will promote accountability and effectiveness of governance system performance.

Keywords: Civil Society Participation, Accountability, Governance system performance, County Governments, Devolution, and decentralization

Date of Submission: 04-10-2018

Date of acceptance: 16-10-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

Civil society and public participation in supremacy and service delivery is gradually with an aim of improving Government performance and to enhance accountability. Ideally, enhancing the level of civil service delivery is a priority that tops the strategies for public administrators and academic scholars. Faced by challenges and weaknesses on a common system service delivery particularly at the domestic level, governments alternatively have embraced the invariant mechanisms of delivering services (Robinson, 2013). According to Azfar, Kähkönen, Lanyi, Meagher and Rutherford (2009) decentralization involves the transfer of administrative, fiscal and political powers and functions of the central government to lower-level governments'. Several countries are accepting and implementing it, and so the point of execution has enabled the decentralization an important and worldwide tendency in the civil administration domain and administration in the recurrent triple centuries (Steiner, 2015).

In a World Bank policy research paper on devolution and delivery of services, Ahmad, Devarajan, Khemani, and Shah (2015) observes that the period 1980-2015, over seventy five nations tried to relocate errands for the country to inferior layers of government. What draws concerns is the aspect that since the prior attention of devolution was on reassignment of possessions and departments to boost management and delivery of services results; the current move has been on the state's association with the public (Brinkerhoff & McNulty, 2017). Such move was prompted by what Hayden (2014) terms as 'an assumption that development was due to what citizens opt to perform by themselves to enhance their standard of living. Since humanities are the single important agents, devolution concerns now have the public credibility and partaking in resolution building within their core. In fact Steiner (2015) notes that the capability of decentralization for higher popular participation via local elections and opportunities for social involvement over civil consensus building is of essential role on the road heading to decentralization.

All the above is derived from the drive to increase the focus of attention on participatory governance, whose main focus entail democracy, honesty, liability, auxiliary besides separation of powers. In this context, devolution is often perceived as a better avenue for obtaining organizational goals, going by Cheema (2014) who reiterated that giving an organizational structure at the local-national level out of which teams and public

members strategize and get involved in social economic challenges pulling them down. Robinson (2013) in his study, confirmed that similar strategies are pegged on the fact that the county government sub-sections are kind of concerned to such public requirements so factor in their respective tastes and likes for consideration on establishing the kinds of services to render in similar cases, amount of resources needed, and maximum avenues for certifying effective delivery. This requires county government sub sections that got the political avenues and ability to develop and execute resolutions. It is for this reason that decentralization has been considered and actively encouraged internationally (Blunt & Turner, 2013).

Governance has been factored as an umbrella concept as the content of the concept varies enormously from one theory and the other (Brown, 2013). Ideally, the concept of supremacy was and has been comprehended in different ways. The traditional aspect of authority was viewed as a very influential notion. Supporters of this idea defined it a tool or process of implementation of government decisions. UNESCAP (2014) defined governance as 'a way of making decision and the process through which decisions are executed (or not implemented)'. Similarly Shelly (2010) described governance as a process that is aimed at achieving three vital objectives through an effective and people-oriented mechanism of bureaucracy: poverty reduction, creation of essential employment and social integration. Accordingly, Langlands (2014) explained governance as a better management, which underscores good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, finally, outstanding results. From this end, supremacy entails a workable perspective of resolution building as to execute state plans and services.

From the same vein, in more current terms governance is seen as a normative concept. Supporters of this view defined it as reform (Minogue, 2013), outcome (Barten, 2012) or a shift (Geddes, 2015) of Government. Hirst (2010) considered that the word governance has been seen as an alternative to Government. In government, a political actor is the only role player for service delivery, in governance this responsibility is shared between the state, people and private institutions (Roelofs, 2013). Rhodes (2010) contemplated the word governance 'can be used as a blanket term to signify a change in the definition of government'. Similar to getting the true definition of the word, Rhodes (2010) confirmed several distinct uses of governance. Nonetheless, from the confirmed vast uses the principal and effective ones include: stakeholder involvement, liability, honesty, reducing the country powers, and straight down collaborations. Thus governance entails a considerable modification in the definition of government administration and means a different avenue for governing using distinct involvement of the country and vast commitment of people in the public system of service delivery (Litvack & Seddon, 2013). Additionally he explained governance as the result of interactive social-political types of governance. He indicated people and civil society participation as another term for governance; public sector should be run with less government and more governance (Carley, 2016).

In democracy, originally, the citizens utilize their rights to vote for respective leadership, who in turn are answerable to them for executing most if not all the resolutions that affect them locally. This ideally, is the regular norm in the local governance, that involves people voting for the leadership who in turn are governed by the same (Bardhan, (2012); Mollah, (2014). That means people should participate in the governing process through their representatives to get services from the government. However, this scenario is changing as researchers argues that people no longer want to be considered as clients in the representative types of democracy (Leighninger, (2015); Sarker (2016). Today, majority of the citizens, mainly in developed societies, want to put forward their opinion regarding any decision that has any future effect over them (Holzer & Kloby, 2015). Participation involves stakeholders' inputting and sharing direction over enlargement strategies, resolutions and possessions as challenges for them (Odhiambo & Taifa, 2009). Gardiner (2015); Okello, Oenga and Chege (2014) further described it as a process whereby stakeholders influence policy formulation, alternative designs, investment ideas and management decisions touching their communities. People's participation is a lawful necessity or prerequisite for local governmental in making decisions in most of the developed countries.

Civil society participation establishes accountability in local government institutions that makes government at the local level more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery, which consequently alleviate poverty (Blair, 2010). The understanding is that as government comes near to the people, more people will participate in the governing process. Civil society participation is important because practical experience on the ground shows that it establishes the necessary sense of ownership. Generally people usually resist new ideas if these are focused on them. Participation in away, has enhanced the maintenance of expansion strategies, boosted domestic capabilities, offered some directives to the less able and ignored and linked development to the people's needs (Thindwa, 2016).

Participation is influential in preventing office mismanagement by civil workers plus opinionated leadership. It additionally offers prevention on excessive discretion being vested in civil servants in public procedures. Participation has offered strong controls against pointless opinionated challenges in service delivery and disrespect for professionalism and meritocracy prevailing in the civil service amongst others (Odhiambo & Taifa, 2009). Through this participation, the domestic citizens speak out their concerns in relation to the state

resolutions which ideally affect them (Holzer & Kloby, 2015). Thus a participatory decision provides more appropriate outcomes and the highest use of any development program, which enhances economic growth. These economic improvements then alleviate poverty and enhance equity among all community members (Barten, 2012).

In Kenya, citizens ought to be privy of Chapter seven of the constitution of Kenya which is titled 'People' Representation and focuses on fair and inclusive representation by elected officials, election legislation (including a code of conduct and disputes) and legislation on political parties (Minogue. (2013). Inclusive representation connotes representing women, youth, and the disabled and other minority groups, and also ordinary citizens. People from all groups should be educated in electoral processes so that they are in position to exercise their votes in line with the law. People need to be privy of their right to chip in for state activities, participating and ways of overcoming them, either through voting in the leadership, critically analyzing anticipated guidelines and provisions or demanding accountability. It is of essence for people to know the impact of not taking parts in government activities and also as reasons to why they should (Omolo, 2010), and if their desire to participate is objected by authorities, citizens should know that they are entitled to an explanation (Wagle & Shah 2012). It is upon this background that this paper sought to determine the influence of civil society participation on accountability and governance system performance in county governments in Kenya.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The need to constantly embrace independent values of citizenship participation and involvement is a very common concern in the current political discipline arena in the world. Devolution involves and entails delegation of authority and universal distribution of nationwide resources among its citizens in wholesale (Blair, 2010). The engines of administration and equality run on different tracks, leaving from distinct origins and headed for different targets. Indeed, whereas democracy underlines contributions, equality, and a bottom-up approach to decision making, bureaucracy values competence, chain of command, and top-down decision making (Thindwa, 2016).

Despite the centrality of public participation in ensuring sound governance (Robinson, 2013), studies reveal an information gap on the devolved structures and what constitutes devolution in the Kenyan context (Okello et al., 2015). Consensus has also arisen among scholars on the centrality of citizenship involvement in the democratic process, and it has been considered that theory should further suggest better explanations of how democratic worth such as high participation and widespread involvement emerge, develop, and transform in an ultra dynamic and highly demanding modern society.

The findings of a baseline survey report on the position of governance in Kenya revealed that only 24.7% of the citizens understood how devolution will work and about 29% stated they understood the county structures in the devolved governments. Below 1% of the public reported engaging in development of policies on devolution and representation. Further, the survey reveals that majority of the public's interest is centered on voting and election of leaders at the cost of other processes (Society for International Development, 2012). It is confirmed that those who do not participate in making of decisions are likely to have a highly undemocratic idea of the world. This is an indication that in as much as the devolution governance is being implemented in Kenya, public participation is necessary yet, still negligible. This study therefore aimed at establishing the influence of civil society participation on accountability and governance system performance in county governments in Kenya.

Research Objectives

The study sought to establish the influence of civil society participation on accountability and governance system performance in county governments of Kenya.

- i. To determine the effect of civil society participation on accountability in county governments of Kenya
- ii. To assess the effect of civil society participation on governance system performance in county governments of Kenya
- iii. To determine the challenges facing civil society participation in county governments of Kenya

Hypotheses Statement:

The research study looked into the following hypotheses;

- i. **Hypothesis:** There is no relationship between civil society participation and accountability and governance system performance in county governments of Kenya

Theoretical argument

This study was grounded on public choice theory and public value theory

Public Choice Theory

The Public Choice Theory (PCT) evolved within the economics arena, which basically focuses on people's

choice in selecting public services. The theory conceptualizes market-like competition in delivery of service in public where the public is considered as the buyer of the best product (Lamothe & Lamothe 2009). Public choice theorists intimate that both public and private monopolistic production of goods and services inherently lead to inefficiency in delivery of service management (Ostrom, 1971; Savas, 2002).

The application of strategies outlined in PCT induces public institutions to provide cost effective, innovative and locally sustainable products. To pursue this instrumental strategy, public service organizations have undergone more decentralization and outsourcing of service delivery processes (Savas 2002). Greene (2003) affirms the notion by reviewing that, generally, 'the evidence suggests that better efficiency comes from competition rather than from the privateness or publicness of organizations' (Savas, 2002). Implementation of this theory, thus give advantage to the expected beneficiaries and local people over the officials in public service functions. Nonetheless, PCT has also induced participatory implementation and monitoring in local public services, as it facilitates publics' choice (Dollery, 2003). Therefore, the core element of public involvement in PCT matches with the core concept of decent governance (Omolo, 2010).

The theory explains the function of civil society involvement in governance in ensuring successful public goods and services delivery. The above discussion shows that some basic elements of sound governance fall within the PCT philosophy as they have demonstrated either of the following characteristics: local knowledge use and resources to get best alternative choices and cost effective services deliberation (Robinson, 2013); Reduce the function of the national government in delivery of public service and influenced local people to make best innovative local institution; Decentralize management functions to the local levels and share it with other local stakeholders to give services according to local people's choice; Increase involvement of civil, private and NGO to make the service delivery more systemic and locally sustainable (Thindwa, 2016).

Public Value Theory (PVT)

The fundamental assumption of public value theory is to provide services as per the public interests (Bozeman, 2002). Public interest is defined as what people would 'choose if they vividly see, think objectively, and takes action without self interests and benevolently' (Bozeman, 2002; Lippman, 1955). Thus this theory entails desired outcomes of public programs and participation of expected beneficiaries for the services when granted by the government bodies. Bozeman argued that 'Public value theory tends to operate at the highest levels, such as philosophical treatises about the interests of public, or at the functional level, focusing on specific desired program outcomes' (Omollo, 2010). This theory induces public institutions to recognize public value of resources, goods, and services and to think the arrangement under what 'is the public best served' (Bozeman, 2002).

Even decades ago, public interest was viewed as too vague, too value loaded, too ambitious and too conflicting with the policies of group accommodation; today most of the public programs and policies, even in the developing countries, are levelled as 'for the interests of the public (Staples & Dalrymple, 2008; Stoker, 2006). This trend of embracing people and their interests forces the governments to introduce good governance, which is transparent and foreseeable by the citizens especially when a program is promoted by the development agencies (Robinson, 2013).

Moore's (1995) 'Theory of Public Value' states that the public sector can stay alive by ensuring public value through the successful practice of public management to increase the public value produced by public sector organizations. O'Flynn (2007) states the public value paradigm turned the old bureaucratic practice of delivery of public service towards a new way of reasoning, incorporating people's interest and choice for the services provided. Public value expresses a more proactive and political role for public sector managers rather than only staying with traditional reactive and process oriented mindsets in delivering services (Moore 1995). Researchers asserted that the function of the public manager includes both managing up to an authorizing level and managing out to a citizen level (Moore 1995; O'Flynn, 2007; Stoker, 2006). Therefore, the public value theory articulated that public officials and representatives should include people in decisions making for service delivery, and thus the theory pursues the execution of sound governance with people as the central element of both the approaches.

Civil Society Participation

Thindwa, (2016) opined that civil society denotes the space between the state and individual citizens where the latter can develop autonomous, organised and collective activities of the most different nature, including social movements. On the other hand, Wagle and Shah (2012), asserts that civil society comprises all formal and informal private/non-governmental organizations which are self-initiated and -regulated and have a voluntary membership. Social groups and organizations situated outside of government and not working purely for gains in the private sector; political groups; NGOs and community and neighbourhood organizations; and other groups, which advance public interest, tend to constitute what is commonly known as civil society (Holzer & Kloby (2015). However, the relationships between governments and civic institutions are far more

complicated than expected. Analysis of these ‘ambiguous associations’ (Read & Pekkanen, 2015) is not yet complete, but it is now being recognized that many modes of popular association eliciting participation are not always independent but linked to the state in several ways. Since the main aim of worldwide development organizations is to make and implement, hold up and work in conjunction with the public society, critics have explained that the respective donor support to NGOs is often external to indigenous development processes (Hayden, 2013).

As Chatterjee (2014) argues out that democratic development is not dependent on developing blocks of ‘civil society’ but on the enabling of poor into the ‘political society an arena of governance way of thinking where the disadvantaged can put pressure on the state to negotiate their entitlements. The regulatory capacity of colonial governments included these populations into the legal framework of citizenship. Therefore, the overwhelming big numbers of postcolonial subjects keep maintaining only the majority fragile association to formal citizenship, and interacting with a state that sustains itself by violating its own regulations (Chatterjee, 2012). It is via this nebulous and tumultuous political dynamics that much of the daily negotiation and organization of state power actually takes place (Robinson, 2013).

Thus, civil society differs from the political society. In the former, individual groups express their interests (Thindwa, 2016). On the contrary the contested terrain of political society is where formal and informal institutions and citizens plus the poor with little engagement with citizenship deliberate with the local state for security, entitlements and services and the rights related to welfare are seen as collective rights ((Read & Pekkanen, 2015). In essence, many donor funded programs supporting advanced liberal principles view fighting poverty as the shared obligations of individuals, private institutions, and NGOs that scuffle for the ‘rights’ of poor citizens while the state takes no responsibility in the process (Atieno, 2016). In this individualistic world, citizen involvement as entrepreneurs and consumers in global markets and domestic financial systems is a panacea for poverty and exclusion (Steiner, 2015). This discourse therefore does not factor the political dimensions of citizen-state relations, critical of political society and how in such a context, the (postcolonial) state secures ownership for the less fortunate (Chatterjee, 2012).

Accountability

Accountability has been seen as “a point of view towards developing responsibility that is dependent on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is normal citizens and/or civil society institutions who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2014). The apparatus for executing this form of accountability are vertical. Although elections have a similar function, they are seen as a ‘blunt instrument’ as they never let citizens to state their choices regarding specific issues, participate effectively in public decision making or hold public officials accountable for particular decisions and behaviour (Ahmad et al., 2015).

According to Brown (2007), social accountability initiatives include traditional forms, such as public demonstrations, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism; and, the current ones such as citizen report cards, public participatory policy making, tracking of public expenditure, and “efforts to foster the success of “internal” accountability apparatus of the government, for example by including citizens in public commissions and hearings and oversight committees (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2014). It has also been debated that social accountability drive are more successful when they are institutionalized and when the states’ internal (horizontal) accountability mechanisms are more clear and open to civic involvement (Chatterjee, 2014). Thus, transparency is inevitably linked to accountability. Effective social accountability drives benefits most the poor people as they are the ones who depend on government services and are not well placed to hold government officials accountable (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2014). The proponents of social accountability maintain that by incorporating citizens in drives geared towards asking for accountability of elected leaders, social accountability also strengthens democracy. The monitoring of government performance and ask for transparency protects against corruption (Omolo, 2010).

Craig and Porter, (2016), opined that a core feature of recent practices is the increased dependence on civil society organizations (CSOs) through domestic imperatives or outwardly motivated donor support to influence government prime concerns for spending and reform and controlling public expenditures. Most recent practices implementing the concept of social accountability include, among others, participatory budgeting, tracking of public expenditure, public service delivery monitoring, investigative journalism, public commissions and citizen advisory boards (Omolo, 2010). A critical feature of such practices is the increased dependence on CSOs – to effect government prime concerns for spending and reform, and public expenditures monitoring (Thindwa, 2016). Some of the good models have come up at the local level, either from civil society or local government usually with external donor support, and signal the importance of going down to local levels for innovation (Wagle & Shah, 2012).

Various organizations, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations (2015), the Asia Foundation, and the International Budget Project have supported the introduction of participatory budget processes, majorly at local government and now the use of such of it is fairly widespread.

These operatives function along the public expenditure cycle, based on the presumption that budgets and their execution indicate real policy decisions and their implementation (Wagle & Shah, 2012). Participatory budgeting is viewed as instrumental in making allocation of public resources more 'inclusive' and 'equitable.' By ensuring public access to budget information, transparency in fiscal policy and public expenditure management can be attained that in turn reducing clientelism, elite capture, and corruption (Omolo, 2010).

The World Bank has identified various types of social accountability apparatus that can be used at different stages of the policy sequence (Steiner, 2015). These apparatus operate along the budget and public expenditure process, comprehending that budgets and their implementation more clearly reflect actual policy decisions and their implementation (Wagle & Shah, 2012). CSOs have appeared as collaborators of local governments in areas such as finding voice in development of local planning and budgeting processes; making local governments accountable in allocation of local resources; local revenues promotion; and finding the use of resources and the effect of local policies and programs (Thindwa, 2016).

Governance System Performance

As a result of lack of clear definition of good governance, it has been extremely attractive to the donor agencies, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. Guided by their Charters, the international financial institutions (IFIs) find the route of 'institutional reform' much easier to manage (Kohli, 2017). However, absence of a direct political economy lens, the development agencies, governance agenda has also been referred as 'naïve' for it ignores that better governance is not simply available on order, but requires a particular kind of politics both to institute and sustain it" (Leftwich, 2013). Agendas for good governance ought to be seriously factored as these may end up diverting attention from the 'real' issues such as the political process itself or redistribution of assets such as land (Thindwa, 2016). For instance, studies clearly show that land ownership leads to greater employment opportunities, an increased ability to borrow money, greater self-respect and less amenable and poverty (Omolo, 2010).

Contemporary research has indicated that the practice of 'development' is beyond its 1980s and 1990s phase of classic neo-liberal policy prescriptions: structural adjustment, deregulation, privatization, and making state smaller. Craig and Porter (2016) have stated that the current engagement with issues like poverty and governance, pro-poor services through decentralized governance underestimate the essence of a 'capable state' (Steiner, 2015). With a thorough scrutiny of the entitlements' documentation in the post-structural review stage of expansion, the data portrays that the state's political awareness and responsibility is never taken serious; and the top agenda on service delivery overwhelms the much needed political and organizational capacity of states to respond to security issues, entitlements and social justice (Minogue, 2013). Decentralized local governance patterns and involvement also work where political context is favorable. For instance, some have believed that in the Indian context, states such as Kerala and West Bengal indicate successes in terms of civic involvement and local state responsiveness where a 'supportive' political environment is available (Kohli, 2017).

Civil Society Participation, Accountability and Governance System Performance

With widespread impunity continuing to afflict Kenya's body politic and the management of the economy, many Kenyans welcomed the Constitution of Kenya of 2010 with even greater expectations in regard to better opportunities for their empowerment against the prevalence of state patrimonialism. Most of them are optimistic that, armed with the Constitutional provision on accountability of public authority, they are just not far away from slaying the legendary dragon of impunity (Omolo, 2010). Civil society participation ideally generates not only advantages for the participants in disguise but also has enormous social values as it boosts the public service performance. Therefore, participation in managerial decision making can be defensible not just in normative terms but it again been a significant influential role for civil managers in terms of higher competitiveness for the civil service provision (Thindwa, 2016).

Ordinarily, accountability is often used expressing with such allied concepts as responsibility, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with the supposition of account-giving (Wakabubi & Shivehenje, 2003). Optimum performance of the civil sector influences the public's satisfaction and involvement to play their roles in the collective accord. As a significant aspect of good governance, it has been central to discussions pertaining to decision-making challenges in the public sector, non-profit and private spheres. In public sector leadership roles, accountability amounts to the acknowledgment and presumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, policies and outcomes (Minogue, 2013). This includes the administration, governance, and execution within the scope of the function encompassing the obligation to own up, account, explain and be accountable for the repercussion (Leftwich, 2013). In order for accountability to be factual, successful enforcement apparatus must accompany the policy frameworks, state provisions and by-laws that will be required to anchor it within the domains of binding rules, the infringement of which will attract deterrent actions by legitimate authorities for the sake of people but not for tendentious political competition (Tusk Force Report on Devolved Government, 2011).

Freedom of information is core to good governance, meaningful participation, and efficiency-enhancing transparency. It is, therefore, recognized by a broad majority of the people as an essential human right without which the claim on and the exercise of democratic citizenry and upholding of democratic worth of equality and justice remain a pipedream (Robinson, 2013). Sustainable devolution, consequently relies on a knowledgeable membership whose right of entry to vast information enables it to participate extensively in public life, while helping to establish priorities for civil spending, receives commensurate access to justice, and holds its public officials accountable and for that matter more responsive to the social development needs of the entire population (Tusk Force Report on Devolved Government, 2011). From the same point, governance performance system may give confidence to the citizens and contribution in communal and the public lives in avenues distinct from what is the tradition today. This participation to democracy through daily management acts is a concealed goal for civil-sector systems. In democratic nations, the civil administration teams have significant authorities. All is derived from their main goal in the community, of which, is equal to serving big number of populations with dissimilar requirements and in maintaining a optimum class of performance over big environs and protracted periods. Such functions ideally allow the conspicuous growth and healthy development of democracy. The civil sector organizations ought to be committed to serve the people's interests and to the best of their capability besides encouraging autonomous citizenship participation, which actually portrays minimal dormancy among individuals.

Inadequate access to public information leads to corruption flourish and results to unequal access to public resources; and since politics, at its very basic level, is about resource distribution decisions and, for that matter, the red meat of politics, lack of transparency in public affairs is, therefore, an ingredient for the dark forces in society to suggest their harmful influence over the creation of appropriate social capital (Odhiambo & Taifa, 2009). The gains of such social capital can only be best used if it is sustained by efficient knowledge management as a conflated product of free, accessible, accurate and timely information (Tusk Force Report on Devolved Government, 2011). As a necessity of sound governance, transparency is provided for in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 by the requirement for County Assemblies to perform their activities in an open manner, to hold sittings of their committees in public and to facilitate involvement of citizens (Article 196) (1) (a) (b) in matters of public interest (CoK, 2010). Budget literacy, not only among the elite stakeholders in the urban areas, is a key ingredient of effective citizen participation. Access to budget information and citizen involvement in all stages of the budget preparation process will only be useful if the budget information is appropriately disaggregated to ensure maximum transparency in respect to cost per sector, County, Sub County and Ward. Only then can citizens appreciate their direct involvement in a process that makes meaning for them (Rhodes, 2000).

Challenges to Civil Society Participation in County Governments in Kenya

In development planning and implementation, people as citizens and consumers of the services are the very valuable resource, since they know and comprehend their needs and how such needs can be met (Thindwa, 2016). This definition is backed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) which further explain that in public participation, people themselves are accorded an opportunity to foster their conditions of living, with as much reliance as possible through their initiative (Davids 2015). Public participation is a useful tool to promote the engagement of the public in governance. The World Development Report (2010) explains that governments at all levels have begun to comprehend the benefits of inclusive, participatory and consensual models of public participation. As a result, various strategies are applied to consult and engage with members of the public in progressive nations across the globe (Steiner, 2015).

While the global drive towards promoting public participation is promising and benefits for sustainable development, the implementation of public participation approaches isn't that perfect. For example, the more sensitive the issue, the less likely that consensus will be reached (Robinson, 2013). According to Sisk (2011), the World Bank study on participation in practice identified the following as some of the major short comings to successful civil involvement in planning: Lack of governments' commitment to adopting a democracy: the civil teams involvement is mostly viewed a time consuming process (Thindwa, 2016).

Due to unwillingness of the project officials to give up control over project activities and directions, officials are usually not receptive and do not attest to the significance of citizens' views (Wagle & Shah 2012). This is explained by the fact that the officials deem themselves as experts in their field. Lack of incentives and skills by the project staff to force them to adopt a participatory approach: Public participation demands a set of skills amongst officials to interact with different communities and understand dynamics of the society (Thindwa, 2016). Without incentives, officials never go further to engage the public. Lacks of community involvement skills also include successful public participation (Robinson, 2013). In addition, limited capacity of local-level participation and insufficient investment in community capacity building poses a challenge to public participation. Additional challenges include lack of resources; misuse of participatory structures by community elites and opportunists; marginalization of communities from decision-making; legitimacy of structures through

which the public participates. Additionally, poor communication for transport issues, which the members can use to help the community participatory groups and the use of ward teams as avenues, is an uphill task (Steiner, 2015).

Research Model

Based on the reviewed literature, the functional relationship between civil society participation and its influence on accountability and governance system performance in county governments of Kenya is conceptualized as below;

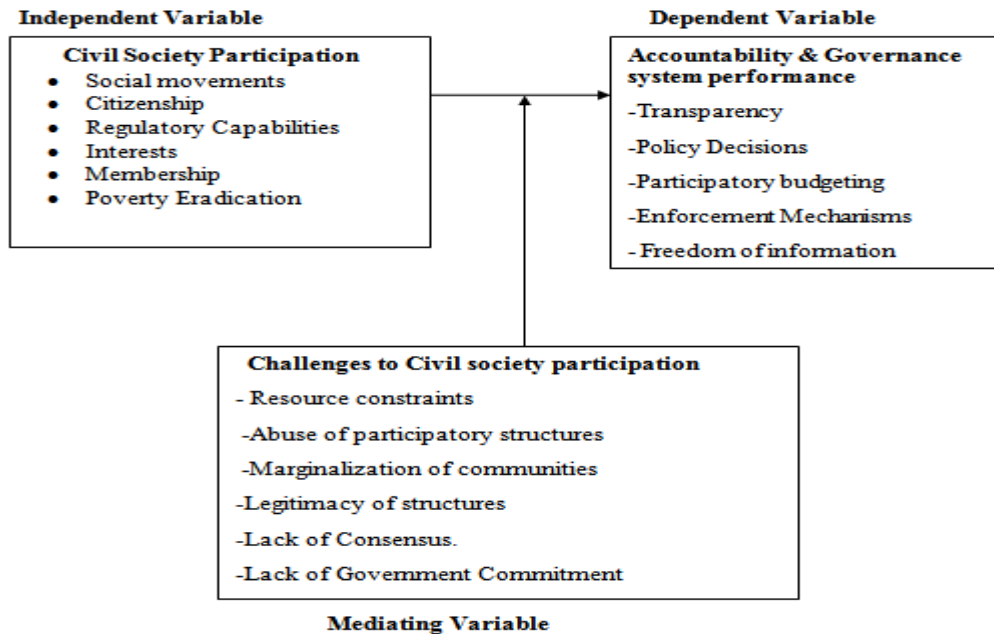


Figure 1: Research Model

III. METHODOLOGY

This article adopted descriptive research design since the design helps reveals a clear indication of the group features in without any environmental influence, provides ideas for further examination for making certain decisions (Sekaram, 2003). This study was census survey in all 47 county governments and 49 civil society groups in Kenya. Secondary data was retrieved from relevant authorities and prior approved research studies, internet, journals, publications and books. From the foregoing, the study opted for 5% significance level. The study embraced quantitative analysis to determine if the literature reviews concur with the theoretical argument. Since the article was focused on evaluating participation of civil society in regard to accountability and governance issues, the study design was qualitative and quantitative in perspective. The target population was all the 47 county governments and 49 civil society groups in Kenya. The respective academic studies of participation by the public teams in these regions were the focus, with a detailed focus on governance structures due or have been due for implementation in local communities. Questionnaires were the main research tool and were prepared into two sections; part one solicited information on respondents’ bio data to aid in profiling them, and the second section was tailored to give information on the influence of civil society participation on accountability and governance system performance. A Likert scale of five point questions were embraced to help in collecting more objective data wherein, each respondents’ view could fit to the specific and commensurate scale. Structured questionnaires ideally minimize response variations hence minimal subjectivity. For accomplishment of allowed period of time, the questionnaires were dropped and picked up later after two weeks. Frequent communications were done to keep the respondents up to speed on participation. The principal of least harm was embraced, authority was sought from relevant authorities and the respondents too were assured of utmost confidentiality.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

More male (58%) than female (42%) were revealed to exist in the county Governments hence gender imbalance in the County Governments and civil society organizations. Majority of respondents were aged between 31-40 years (44%), followed by those more than 40 years of age (41%) and the least minority were those between 18-30 years of age (15%). On the level of education, most of the respondents had achieved certificate/diploma levels (37%), those of Bachelors were %, followed by post graduate levels (17%) and the

least were of secondary level (13%). On employment status, majority (42%) were contacted staffs, 7% selected the option of others while 21% were employed on permanent basis.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis to assess the amount of association existing amongst the variables was conducted and the findings were as below;

		CSP	AG
CSP	Pearson Correlation	1	.863**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	96	96
AG	Pearson Correlation	.863**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	96	96

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It was evident that at 0.01 level of significance, civil society participation had a strong positive correlation with accountability and governance system performance (r= 0.863). The correlation coefficient was additionally statistically significant with P values < 0.001.

Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
In your view, do you think membership in Civil society organizations do help the local communities to participate in governance and ensure accountability?	96	3.4271	1.24600
Civil societies lack clear rules on how to relate with others including its beneficiaries	96	3.7396	1.15389
Are the civil society organizations responsible role models of the changes they wish to implement (transparency, optimum performance and accountability)?	96	3.2500	1.17876
Are the available civil society organizations actively promoting civil society’s participation and building coalitions with key stakeholders in order to influence accountability and good governance?	96	3.3750	1.25865
Are the citizens actively participating in the decision making processes or some regulatory capabilities are observed before hand?	96	3.6771	1.18317
Fighting poverty is a shared responsibility of individuals, private institutions, and civil society Organizations that struggle for the ‘rights’ of poor citizens	96	3.1250	1.12624
Citizens can develop autonomous, organized and collective activities of the most varied nature, including social movements	96	3.2708	1.19190
By enhancing public access to budget information, transparency in fiscal policy and public expenditure management can be achieved	96	3.5729	1.09299
In order for accountability to be real, effective enforcement mechanisms must accompany the policy frameworks, statutory provisions and by-laws	96	3.5313	1.16034
Freedom of information is the cornerstone to good governance, meaningful participation, and efficiency-enhancing transparency	96	3.6146	1.16411

Budgets and their execution reflect actual policy decisions 96 and their implementation by the membership	3.6771	1.08088
Participatory budgeting is seen as instrumental in making the 96 allocation of public resources more 'inclusive' and 'equitable.'	3.3021	.99599
Mean Score	3.459	1.148

A mean score of M= 3.459; SD = 1.147. The mean value is averagely two (4), meaning a good majority respondents consented that civil society participation affects accountability and Governance performance. A mean score of 1.147 indicated a low variation in the respondents' selection of the choices on civil society participation, accountability and Governance performance.

A linear regression modeling was conducted to further derive conclusions from the association of devolution and transparency and Governance performance.

Regression Analysis between Civil Society Participation and Governance System Performance

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.863 ^a	0.745	0.742	0.48662

Model summary is used to analyse the variation of dependent variable due to the changes of independent variables. The study analysed the variations of accountability and governance system performance due to the changes in civil society participation. Adjusted R squared was 0.742 implying that there was 74.2% variation of accountability and governance system performance, due to the changes in civil society participation. The remaining 25.8% imply that some factors not included in the study lead to accountability and governance system performance which were not discussed in the study.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.770	0.175		4.41	0.000
	Civil Society Participation	0.812	0.049	0.863	16.551	0.000

The regression equation was

$$Y = 0.770 + 0.812X_1$$

The equation above reveals that holding civil society participation to constant zero, accountability and governance system performance in the county government will be 0.812. The findings indicate that civil society participation is statistically significant to governance system performance as shown by (p= 0.000) this shows that civil society participation had significant positive relationship with accountability and governance system performance. This implies that a unit increase in civil society participation will result to increase in accountability and governance system performance.

V. CONCLUSION

This article discovers that civil society participation significantly influences accountability and governance system performance in county governments of Kenya. We derive a very strong support to dispel the hypothesis that civil society participation has no relationship with accountability and governance system performance: in essence, citizen input is positively and significantly associated with accountability and governance system performance. The study found that county governments must; be strategic and evaluative, ensure that services delivered match the preferences of the citizens, that resources are being used to produce the services most wanted by society, both look ahead and define what it wants to accomplish and look back to examine the results, distribute resources on the basis of the effectiveness of public programs so as to meet their strategic objectives and should establish and prioritize objectives and asses the actual or expected contributions. These findings were also supporting the findings of Azfar, et al., (1999), who argued that through participation by citizens, the home rulers own better knowledge of the preferences and hence can vary services to suit demands. Similarly, the study findings were found to concur with the findings of Oates (1999) that those local governments keener in their resource allocation so as to satisfy the citizens in their jurisdiction in times of competition and fear of misappropriations of revenues.

These findings are in line with the findings of Devas and Grant (2003), who asserted that enhanced citizen participation can strengthen accountability. Wainaina (2011) also asserted that reduction of corruption is the extent to which embezzlement of public resources for personal gains has been controlled and minimized. The article clearly brings out other ways through which accountability influences the effectiveness of governance system performance in Kenya, such as reduction of corruption. Reduction of corruption minimizes embezzlement and abuse of public resources for private gain, when those charged with decentralized service delivery apply all resources for the intended purposes.

Even though it is widely acknowledged that devolution and transparency in county governance is fundamental to democratization, it is inevitably faced with multiple challenges, even more so in devolved government contexts. This is because it challenges the laid out chains of command and aims to be transformative, rather than conforming. It means that understanding power in all its forms is crucial for intelligent design and helps in understanding which stakeholders to include, what approaches to use, what skills and capacities to develop. It is evident that accountability and governance performance is more important in devolved government context in Kenya. Good communication builds relations and trust, and successful means have been platforms, networks, and public hearings. The cases also show how specific attention needs to be paid to inclusion questions and the risks of elite capture. The findings also show that devolution and liability requires skills that neither citizens nor county government officials may have; skills in budgeting, deliberation, and questioning. To acquire and practice these skills requires time, a structured programme, and needs to include the right actors to foster inclusion.

This article brings a practical and hypothetical grip to the study of civil society participation and accountability plus governance system performance voice. The empirical results from the article compounded with the primary data collected give way to vast strategy-related outcomes. For example, the findings suggest that participating in governance performance system and accountability is actually taken and understood to be a successful action. A good comprehension of the impact of various means of communication with the public is of dire and true significance to public administrators when they decide the suitable involvement avenue, of course, considering the respective and specific goals and environs in which they operate in. The study provides another distinct perspective at the relationship between governance system performance and accountability with patterns of citizenship involvement. This article, apart from bringing out the importance of citizen participation in accountability and system performance system, also provides a litmus test for county Governments to reflect in real time, on such issues as resource allocation for civil participation processes. The study additionally updates while expanding existing research on the influence of civil society participation, accountability and Governance system performance, and context. Therefore the contribution of the study is in its attempt to bring on board a kind of specific linkage between governance system performance and the cultivation of civil society participation in the current societies

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends a necessity of the County governments in engaging the public's during the allocation process of the county funds to various projects. The county government needs to augment its responsibility aspects in the management of the county funds by involving various stakeholders as this will help to promote effectiveness of governance system performance in Kenya. The study recommends that the management of county government should ensure equity in resource allocation by encouraging participation during the county budget making process; this will promote accountability and success of governance system performance in Kenya. The study also recommends that the county government should involve civil society in cost recovery process, as it will promote accountability and success of governance system performance.

There should be continuous civic education to sensitize the public on the essence of their involvement in public affairs, starting at the micro-level by encouraging participation in school and church committees, Citizens Assemblies at sub-county level, Customer care desks in each county. Feedback between citizens and government to enhance citizen participation, Creation of development information networks, To promote grassroots interaction up to village levels, Use of focus groups to discuss development issues and complex taboo issues, Creation of media and cultural centers in the counties, To promote the use of local theatre and drama for social integration and peace building and reconciliation, To use the local media and community to provide development information to the counties and also to explain development issues at the county level, Use the media at the counties for posting county events that seek citizen participation, Use mainstream media and community media for overall promotion of development and awareness creation at the counties.

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Elijah Kimeu & Chen Zhixia "Influence Of Civil Society Participation On Accountability And Governance System Performance In County Governments In Kenya "IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 23 no. 10, 2018, pp. 19-31.