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Survival as Politics: Community Resistance and Hybrid Governance in Mogadishu, Somalia

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Abstract

This study explores the dynamics of community resistance and hybrid governance as mechanisms of political practice, focusing on the forms of community resistance, survival strategies, and the political ramifications of hybrid governance within the fragile urban environment of Mogadishu, Somalia. A quantitative correlational research design was utilized, with data gathered from 180 residents across four districts (Hamar Weyne, Wardhigley, Hodan, and Karan) through stratified random sampling. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 23, employing descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation to investigate the relationships among Forms of Community Resistance (FCR), Community Survival Strategies (CSS), and Political Implications of Hybrid Governance (PIHG).

The results indicate significant positive correlations between FCR and CSS ($r = 0.56, p < 0.01$), FCR and PIHG ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$), and CSS and PIHG

($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance are interdependent. The principal contribution of this study is the identification of survival strategies in Mogadishu as not merely adaptive responses to weak governance but also as political mechanisms through which communities are associated with hybrid governance structures and local authority relations. Overall, the study underscores the role of informal community practices as both survival tools and instruments of political influence in contexts of fragile urban governance.

Keywords: *Community resistance, survival strategies, hybrid governance, political participation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The governance framework in Mogadishu is intricately linked to Somalia's extended period of state disintegration, which began with the fall of the Siad Barre government in 1991. The collapse of centralized power led to the weakening of formal political structures and the breakdown of public administration in the region (Menkhaus, 2006). In urban communities, clan elders, religious leaders, and local networks are integral to ensuring security, resolving conflicts, and managing resources. Over time, these informal systems became deeply ingrained in daily life, transforming survival into a politically driven process influenced by power dynamics and resistance (Hagmann, 2016).

Empirical evidence indicates that in cities characterized by fragility and conflict, survival strategies frequently serve as alternative mechanisms of political engagement. In contexts where state authority is diminished, communities often depend on informal governance structures to uphold order and manage collective risks (Zielinski et al., 2025). They contest state-centric governance by demonstrating that power can manifest beyond formal institutions. The act of survival becomes a political endeavor that asserts agency and reconfigures local power dynamics (Commins, 2011).

In the Horn of Africa and East Africa, hybrid governance has emerged as a key characteristic of political authority in regions that face conflict, displacement, and fragile institutions. Traditional institutions, religious leaders, and community groups frequently operate alongside official state systems, resulting in overlapping governance (Bagayoko et al., 2016). This phenomenon is particularly evident in Somalia, especially in urban areas, where rapid population growth, internal displacement, and ongoing insecurity increase the dependence on informal authority.

Mogadishu serves as a prime example of this regional trend, in which governance is shaped by formal and informal means (Hassan et al., 2023).

This study frames survival as an active political process rather than a mere passive reaction to crises. Survival is viewed as a collection of daily actions through which people and communities ensure their safety, maintain their livelihoods, and gain access to services amid uncertain conditions (Pain & Levine, 2012). Community resistance is defined as collective and individual efforts that negotiate, circumvent, or subtly oppose authority without necessarily resorting to direct confrontation (Bekele, 2025). Hybrid governance refers to the interplay between official state institutions and informal entities, creating a multilayered authority system that influences urban governance in Mogadishu, Somalia.

This research is anchored in two interrelated theoretical frameworks. Everyday Resistance Theory and Hybrid Governance Theory. Everyday Resistance Theory, linked to (Vinhagen & Johansson, 2015), describes how marginalized groups use subtle, nonviolent tactics, such as negotiation, evasion, and informal organization, to manage domination and exclusion. Hybrid governance theory focuses on the coexistence and interaction of formal and informal authorities in areas with limited state control (Security et al., 2016). Together, these theories offer a strong analytical perspective for examining how survival strategies function as political factions within the intricate governance landscape of Mogadishu.

This study applies two theories, called Everyday Resistance Theory and Hybrid Governance Theory as analytical frameworks. Everyday resistance refers to subtle, routine, and nonviolent actions—such as negotiation, avoidance, and informal practices—used by marginalized individuals to cope with domination and exclusion (Vinhagen & Johansson, 2015). Conversely, hybrid governance refers to a system in which formal state institutions and informal actors, including community leaders and non-state groups, simultaneously exercise authority and influence governance processes (Security et al., 2016). Survival strategies are actions to secure livelihoods, safety, and stability in difficult conditions. They differ from everyday resistance but may overlap. In Mogadishu, they shape hybrid governance where formal and informal systems interact in daily life.

This research focuses on Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia and the administrative hub of the Benadir region. The city is experiencing rapid

growth and is home to a significant number of internally displaced individuals, which has increased the strain on local governance systems (Yasmin et al., 2022). Consequently, Mogadishu is grappling with major issues concerning security, land conflict, and access to essential services. In response to these circumstances, communities have devised their own methods of organization and self-protection. Thus, this study explores community-level governance interactions and resistance strategies in specific districts of the city, illustrating how local actors handle everyday challenges and adapt to hybrid governance frameworks.

Although efforts to restore formal governance structures in Mogadishu are ongoing, numerous residents still depend on informal and community-based systems for survival and protection (Agegnehu, 2024). These systems include clan elders, religious leaders, and neighborhood committees, which have long functioned as key sources of authority and dispute resolution in the absence of an effective state institution (Pagoaga & De, 2006). Existing studies often regard these practices as temporary coping mechanisms or indicators of weak state authority. This viewpoint does not recognize the political importance of these mechanisms in daily life. Communities use them to negotiate power, resolve conflicts, and access essential services. There is a scarcity of research that systematically explores the interaction between community resistance and hybrid governance in Mogadishu (Bagayoko et al., 2016). Understanding these dynamics is essential to understand how local authority is established. Addressing this research gap offers valuable insights into urban governance in fragile African settings.

The primary aim of this study investigates the influence of community resistance and hybrid governance on survival as a political practice in Mogadishu, Somalia. This study aims to identify various forms of community resistance, evaluate the role of survival strategies on local governance outcomes, and examine the larger political implications of hybrid governance within an urban Somali setting. This study offers a novel perspective by redefining survival as an active political involvement rather than a mere humanitarian issue. This study integrates Everyday Resistance Theory and Hybrid Governance Theory as mutually constitutive frameworks in Mogadishu, where community resistance and hybrid governance shape each other through informal actors who link resistance, survival strategies, and governance outcomes. By combining daily resistance theory with hybrid governance theory, this study improves the conceptual understanding of urban governance in fragile African cities (Collord & Goodfellow, 2021). The results are

expected to contribute to African political scholarship and inform policy discussions on inclusive and context-sensitive governance in urban areas affected by conflict.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Community resistance

Community resistance encompasses the methods and tactics used by individuals to manage, negotiate, or oppose authority, especially in situations where governance is weak, conflict persists, or state institutions are disjoint. According to this Author (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2015) states Everyday Resistance Theory offers a crucial framework for comprehending these dynamics, suggesting that marginalized groups assert their agency through subtle, nonconfrontational resistance. These actions include evasion, negotiation, subversion, informal organization, and the creation of parallel governance systems. In urban African settings, particularly fragile cities, community resistance goes beyond mere survival; it acts as a form of political engagement that influences power dynamics and governance results (Mitton & Abdullah, 2021).

In Mogadishu, for example, locals often negotiate with city officials and informal figures to obtain water, electricity, and other essential infrastructure. Similarly, in Juba, South Sudan, residents form informal security committees to fill the void left by inadequately funded police forces (Ibreck & Pendle, 2017). In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, communities that depend on local militias or neighborhood patrols exemplify how people respond to systemic insecurity by establishing their own governance structures (Lookens et al., 2022). These examples show that community resistance is politically important, allowing urban populations to shape authority, influence resources, and assert legitimacy even when institutions are weak.

Resistance can manifest itself in more subtle ways, such as through everyday survival tactics, such as informal conflict resolution, adherence to local customs, and steering clear of exploitative authorities (Access et al., 2012). These strategies strengthen community unity, reduce risks, and protect vulnerable people without conflict. In cities like Mogadishu, residents actively shape local governance, showing political agency rather than simply receiving aid or suffering institutional failure.

2.2 Hybrid Governance

Hybrid governance refers to the co-existence and interaction of formal state institutions with informal or non-state entities, such as clans, elders, religious figures, and neighborhood committees (Moe, 2014). In cities facing instability, hybrid governance emerges out of necessity because formal institutions often lack resources or capacity, prompting informal actors to step in to provide services, resolve conflicts, and mediate. Contrary to the belief that this indicates state weakness, scholars suggest that hybrid governance forms a functional political system that offers flexibility, resilience, and adaptability in governance processes (Abbott & Faude, 2022).

In Mogadishu, hybrid governance is evident in the concurrent functioning of city officials, clan leaders, religious figures, and community groups. These entities engage in intricate interactions to provide services, resolve conflicts, and uphold social stability. Research indicates that these systems are dynamic and adapt to changes in political, social, and security landscapes (Luckham et al., 2012). Similarly, in other African cities, such as Kinshasa, DRC, and Khartoum, Sudan, hybrid governance arises as formal institutions operate alongside informal networks, creating layered political authority and alternative forms of legitimacy (Hobson & Regan, 2017).

Hybrid governance creates a framework that allows community resistance to thrive. Informal participants often act as intermediaries between city dwellers and official authorities, facilitating residents' efforts to secure services, safeguard property, or settle disputes. This interaction between resistance and hybrid governance results in a dynamic system in which local communities can influence governance outcomes, even when state structures are not fully operational (Atkinson et al., 2021).

2.3 Urban Governance in Fragile States

Managing urban areas in fragile states poses a significant challenge. While cities serve as hubs for economic growth, commerce, and social engagement, they also face persistent insecurity, fragile institutions, rapid population increases, and insufficient service delivery. Research from Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo reveals that official governance systems often fail to address the fundamental

needs of urban residents, forcing communities to depend on informal networks and social capital for their survival (Smit, 2018).

Rapid urban growth has exacerbated these issues. In Mogadishu, years of conflict and internal displacement have led to overcrowded areas with inadequate infrastructure, frequent land conflicts, and unstable housing conditions (Setifi et al., 2017). To cope, residents are heavily dependent on community networks, such as clan leaders and civil society groups, to address urban challenges. These local systems underscore the need to view governance not only through formal policies, but also through everyday practices and adaptive strategies that facilitate survival in fragile urban environments (Esposito, 2025).

In urban governance studies, there is a growing recognition that relying solely on formal institutions and policies is insufficient to fully understand political authority or legitimacy in these settings. Instead, a more comprehensive perspective is offered by examining the blend of formal and informal governance structures, referred to as hybrid governance, and the political tactics employed by residents, known as community resistance, to better analyze urban political dynamics (Manara & Pani, 2023).

2.4 Interplay between Community Resistance and Hybrid Governance

Numerous studies have highlighted the reciprocal relationship between community resistance and hybrid governance. Resistance activities empower communities to navigate and influence hybrid governance frameworks, while these structures offer the institutional and social environment necessary for such activities to thrive (Albrecht et al., 2015). In Mogadishu, clan elders often mediate between residents and officials, negotiating access to services, land security, and local safety. These survival strategies are political and shape governance, legitimacy, and stability.

In other African cities, similar patterns are evident. In Khartoum, Sudan, informal community committees have emerged as key actors in the management of basic services such as water and electricity in informal settlements, often operating in collaboration with local authorities (Steel et al., 2020). The communities of Juba, South Sudan, organize their own security patrols and liaise with formal security actors to address crime and insecurity in the absence of effective state

provision. Such examples demonstrate that community resistance and hybrid governance are not marginal or temporary phenomena; rather, they constitute central mechanisms through which urban populations shape their social, political, and economic environments (Change, 2022).

2.5 Gaps in Existing Literature

Although there is a growing focus on hybrid governance and community resistance, there are still considerable understanding gaps. Many researchers view community practices as short-term coping strategies or signs of state failure, overlooking their wider political importance (Marshall, 2008). Few studies have systematically explored how survival strategies influence governance outcomes in Mogadishu or other African cities experiencing persistent fragility. Additionally, research often fails to bridge theory and practice: While Everyday Resistance Theory elucidates individual and collective actions, and Hybrid Governance Theory addresses structural governance frameworks, few studies integrate both to offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing urban political dynamics (Masa, 2024).

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring how community resistance and hybrid governance function as survival strategies in Mogadishu. By integrating everyday resistance theory with hybrid governance theory, this study offers both a conceptual and empirical framework for understanding urban governance in fragile settings (Dirkx, 2020). It emphasizes that local communities are not merely passive aid recipients or powerless in the face of state fragility. Rather, they actively influence authority, legitimacy, and service delivery through resistance and engagement in hybrid governance structures (Dijk & Mangai, 2024). This approach enriches African political scholarship and provides valuable insights for crafting policies that are inclusive, context-sensitive, and attuned to the realities of urban fragility.

Contemporary research frequently prioritizes state-centric or externally influenced perspectives on governance, often neglecting local insights and the everyday experiences of urban residents in fragile contexts (Mkhize & Nel-sanders, 2025). Consequently, the perspectives and actions of communities facing insecurity, displacement, and service deficiencies have been inadequately theorized and empirically investigated. This oversight constrains a comprehensive understanding of how governance is genuinely constituted and contested at the neighborhood level. By emphasizing community agency and localized

governance practices in Mogadishu, this study addresses the need for more grounded and context-specific analyses of African urban governance and improves the understanding of how authority and order are established in persistently fragile conditions in Africa (Zoma et al., 2022).

3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between community resistance and hybrid governance in Mogadishu. The research was conducted across four districts—Hamar Weyne, Wardhigley, Hodan, and Karan—selected for their pronounced presence of hybrid governance systems that encompass both formal state institutions and informal actors, including clan elders, religious leaders, and community councils. Hamar Weyne, recognized as one of the oldest districts, is distinguished by its established clan-based governance operating in conjunction with municipal structures. These districts offer a pertinent context for examining the interactions between formal and informal authority, providing valuable insights for policymakers and development practitioners aiming to enhance governance and service delivery in urban Somalia.

Wardhigley exemplifies a blend of formal governmental institutions and active informal actors, whereas Hodan, marked by significant urban migration, exhibits a strong dependence on informal survival strategies due to the limited presence of government structures. Karan, situated on the periphery of central Mogadishu, illustrates an adaptive hybrid governance model where formal and informal authorities engage closely. These variations in governance structures, population density, and service accessibility render the districts a representative sample of urban Somali communities. The study population was estimated at approximately 620,000 residents, from which a sample of 180 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling. The sample was proportionally distributed across districts: Hamar Weyne (50), Wardhigley (45), Hodan (45), and Karan (40), with participants randomly selected within each stratum to minimize bias and enhance generalizability.

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire measuring Forms of Community Resistance (FCR), Community Survival Strategies (CSS), and Political Implications of Hybrid Governance (PIHG) on a 5-point Likert scale. FCR included

items on peaceful resistance, rejection of unfavorable government decisions, and the role of clan and religious leaders. CSS measured reliance on informal systems, community support mechanisms, and stability through self-help strategies. PIHG assessed perceptions of state and non-state influence, the political role of informal actors, and the impact of hybrid governance on stability. To mitigate common method bias, procedural strategies such as neutral wording, item randomization, and assurance of anonymity were employed. A pilot test with 20 respondents from a comparable district was conducted, resulting in minor adjustments to the questionnaire, such as rewording unclear items and simplifying questions to improve clarity. Harman's single-factor test was used to evaluate common method variance.

Construct validity was verified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with values of FCR ($\alpha = 0.78$), CSS ($\alpha = 0.81$), and PIHG ($\alpha = 0.76$), all exceeding the 0.70 threshold. Content validity was established through expert review and alignment with existing literature. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 23. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation were employed to summarize the data and examine the relationships among the FCR, CSS, and PIHG. The assumptions of normality and linearity were assessed before the analysis, and the results were interpreted at the 0.05 significance level. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the Capital University of Somalia, and informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were ensured throughout the study.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Identify and analyze the various forms of community resistance practiced by residents in urban Mogadishu, Somalia

This objective identifies the various forms of community resistance practiced by residents of urban Mogadishu. It examines how communities respond to decisions that affect their social and political interests.

Table 1: Forms of Community Resistance

S/N	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Community members resist that government decisions negatively affect their area.	6.1	9.4	14.4	40.6	29.5	3.78	1.08
2	Resistance in this community is mostly peaceful (dialogue, petitions, collective action).	5.0	10.0	16.1	38.9	30.0	3.79	1.04
3	Clan elders and religious leaders influence how resistance is organized.	4.4	8.3	12.8	41.1	33.4	3.91	1.02
4	Community resistance occurs due to lack of trust in formal government institutions.	6.7	10.0	15.0	35.6	32.7	3.78	1.12
5	Residents prefer engaging informal leaders rather than formal authorities when problems arise.	5.0	9.4	13.9	39.4	32.3	3.85	1.05

According to Table 1, presents a consistent pattern of consensus among respondents concerning the nature of community resistance in Mogadishu, with mean scores ranging from 3.78 to 3.91. The findings suggest that resistance is organized, predominantly peaceful, and significantly influenced by informal actors. The highest-rated item underscores the pivotal role of clan elders and religious leaders, indicating that resistance is coordinated through established informal authority structures rather than occurring spontaneously. The results also reveal a tendency for communities to rely more on informal leaders than formal institutions, highlighting underlying trust deficits in official governance. This pattern implies that community resistance is not merely reactive but structured and socially embedded, reflecting the broader influence of informal governance networks in shaping political engagement and collective action.

4.2 Examine the community survival strategies adopted by urban communities in Mogadishu, Somalia

This objective examines the survival strategies of urban communities in Mogadishu in response to limited state presence, highlighting their reliance on informal systems and community contributions to maintain stability and access essential services.

Table 2: Community survival strategies

S/N	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Community members rely on informal systems to access basic services.	4.4	7.8	13.9	41.7	32.2	3.92	1.03
2	Informal mechanisms provide security and dispute resolution in this community.	5.0	8.3	14.4	38.3	34.0	3.89	1.08
3	Community self-help initiatives reduce dependence on government services.	4.4	9.4	15.6	37.2	33.3	3.86	1.06
4	Survival strategies help maintain stability in the absence of effective state governance.	5.6	8.3	14.4	36.7	35.0	3.88	1.09
5	Community contributions (money, labor, resources) support local survival strategies.	4.4	7.8	13.3	39.4	35.0	3.94	1.03

In the above Table 2 states a discernible pattern of consensus among respondents regarding the utilization of community survival strategies in Mogadishu, with mean scores ranging from 3.86 to 3.94. The findings collectively suggest that these survival strategies are communal, widely implemented, and embedded within informal systems. The item with the highest rating underscores the significance of community contributions, highlighting the pivotal role of shared resources and cooperation. The results further indicate a strong dependence on informal mechanisms for accessing services, maintaining security, and resolving disputes, implying that these systems are integral components of daily life. This pattern reflects an adaptive, community-driven approach to managing the limitations of formal services, wherein informal networks play a vital role in sustaining stability and social support within a hybrid governance framework.

4.3 Examine the political implications of hybrid governance in urban communities in Mogadishu, Somalia

This objective examines the political implications of hybrid governance in Mogadishu, focusing on how the interaction between formal and informal authorities affects decision making, power distribution, and community participation.

Table 3: Political Implications of Hybrid Governance

S/N	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Both state and non-state actors influence governance in this community.	4.4	7.8	12.8	41.1	34.0	3.92	1.03
2	Hybrid governance increases the political power of informal actors.	5.0	8.3	13.3	38.3	35.0	3.88	1.06
3	Hybrid governance improves community participation in local decision-making.	4.4	7.8	14.4	39.4	34.0	3.90	1.04
4	Hybrid governance weakens the authority of formal government institutions.	5.6	8.3	15.0	36.7	34.4	3.85	1.09
5	Hybrid governance contributes to long-term political stability in urban areas.	4.4	7.8	13.9	38.3	36.7	3.92	1.04

In the above Table 3 presents a consistent pattern of consensus regarding the political implications of hybrid governance in Mogadishu, with mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 3.92. The findings suggest that governance is predominantly perceived as a shared responsibility between formal and informal actors. The highest-rated items emphasize the coexistence of state and non-state actors and their role in maintaining stability, thereby reflecting a dual system of authority. The results further indicate the growing influence of informal actors and increased community participation, suggesting a transformation in the experience of governance at the local level. Concurrently, the perceived decline in formal institutional authority signifies a rebalancing of power within the governance structure. This pattern underscores a hybrid governance arrangement wherein multiple actors interact, with informal institutions playing a central role in shaping local decision-making, service access, and political engagement.

4.4 Inferential Statistics: Correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships among community resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3
1. Forms of Community Resistance (FCR)	1	0.56**	0.48**
2. Community Survival Strategies (CSS)	0.56**	1	0.52**
3. Political Implications of Hybrid Governance (PIHG)	0.48**	0.52**	1

The Pearson correlation analysis detailed in Table 4 reveals significant positive associations among forms of community resistance (FCR), community survival strategies (CSS), and the political implications of hybrid governance (PIHG) in Mogadishu. Specifically, FCR exhibits a moderate positive correlation with CSS ($r = 0.56, p < 0.01$), suggesting that elevated levels of community resistance are linked to an increased reliance on informal survival strategies for accessing services, ensuring security, and resolving disputes. Furthermore, FCR is positively correlated with PIHG ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$), indicating that resistance is associated with the perceived influence of informal actors and the extent of community participation in local governance. Similarly, CSS demonstrates a positive correlation with PIHG ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), implying that a greater utilization of informal survival strategies corresponds with stronger perceptions of hybrid governance arrangements. Collectively, these findings suggest that resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance are interconnected and tend to co-occur within community experiences in urban Somali contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide empirical insights into the dynamics of community resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance in urban Mogadishu. The results indicate that residents engage in organized, informal, and predominantly peaceful forms of resistance, often facilitated by clan elders, religious leaders, and local community networks. This pattern aligns with studies in other fragile urban contexts, where non-state actors significantly influence political behavior and local governance processes in environments characterized by weak or contested state authority (Dijk & Mangai, 2024). Furthermore, the study demonstrates that community survival strategies

are closely linked to urban coping mechanisms, as residents rely on informal networks to access services, maintain security, and resolve disputes. This reflects broader evidence that informal institutions enhance resilience in fragile and conflict-affected urban settings (Yasmin et al., 2022). The correlational analysis reveals positive associations among community resistance, survival strategies, and the political implications of hybrid governance, indicating that these variables coexist in the same governance environment.

This finding is consistent with hybrid governance theory, which asserts that in contexts of limited state capacity, authority is shared between formal institutions and informal actors who collaboratively shape local governance processes (Masa, 2024). Similar findings in other fragile cities demonstrate that informal institutions and community networks operate alongside formal governance structures, resulting in hybrid systems of authority, service delivery and participation. In this context, hybrid governance in Mogadishu exemplifies a dual political reality in which both formal and informal actors influence decision making, participation, and local stability. Overall, the findings contribute to the understanding of fragile urban governance by illustrating how resistance and survival practices are embedded within broader governance arrangements that shape social organizations and political interact. This study acknowledges several limitations. The dependence on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias. Additionally, the findings derived from four districts in Mogadishu may constrain the generalizability of the results to other contexts. Moreover, the correlational research design precludes any causal inferences among the study variables.

5.1 CONCLUSION

This study investigates the dynamics of community resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance in Mogadishu's urban setting. The findings reveal that residents engage in organized and predominantly peaceful resistance, primarily facilitated by informal leaders such as clan elders and religious figures. These residents rely extensively on informal networks for services, security, and conflict resolution because of the limited capacity of the state. The results further indicate significant positive relationships among community resistance, survival strategies, and hybrid governance, underscoring their interconnected roles in shaping urban governance. Overall, this study demonstrates that survival

in Mogadishu is not merely an adaptive response to weak institutions but also constitutes a form of political practice through which authority is continuously negotiated. This suggests that state-building and urban order in fragile contexts are co-produced through interactions between formal and informal actors in the state.

Future research should employ mixed-methods and comparative studies across other fragile cities, as well as longitudinal designs, to better understand the evolution of these dynamics over time and to incorporate perspectives from both state and non-state actors for a more comprehensive analysis.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION

According to the findings, it is recommended that policymakers and stakeholders in Mogadishu advance beyond the general inclusion of informal actors by instituting structured district-level liaison committees. These committees should formally engage clan elders and religious leaders in the domains of service delivery, security, and conflict resolution, particularly in areas such as Wardhigley, Hodan, Hamar Weyne, and Karan. It is imperative to support community survival systems through capacity-building initiatives for self-help groups and resource-sharing programs. Furthermore, trust in formal institutions can be enhanced through regular public accountability measures and participatory forums. Additionally, the establishment of institutionalized dialogue platforms is essential to provide secure and continuous channels for peaceful civic engagement. Overall, interventions should aim to formally integrate informal networks into local governance structures to enhance legitimacy, participation, and service delivery outcomes.

5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

5.3.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to theory by showing how informal actors interact with formal institutions to influence governance outcomes in Mogadishu. It highlights that community resistance and survival strategies are interconnected mechanisms that shape political processes in fragile urban settings.

5.3.2 Empirical contribution

The study provides quantitative evidence from 180 participants in four districts, illustrating the prevalence and organization of resistance, survival strategies, and their effects on hybrid governance. Correlational analysis offers a replicable framework for future studies in similar fragile urban settings.

5.3.3 Practical Contribution

The findings offer practical insights for policymakers, NGOs, and development actors by emphasizing the importance of informal networks and community-led initiatives. Engaging these networks can improve service delivery, conflict resolution, and the political participation in the urban communities of Mogadishu.

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Author's Contribution

Ali Abdi Yusuf conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, developed the survey instrument, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the original draft. Abas Omar Hassan reviewed, edited and approved the final manuscript.

Potential Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the investigation, authorship, or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The data sets generated and analyzed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and participant confidentiality.

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