Citizens Perception on the Fairness of Rule of Law in Botswana and Tanzania and Its Implication for Good Governance

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Abstract
Under democratic government, rule of law is one of the important and primary aspects which every citizen would expect to be upheld. Democracy cherishes rule of law and this should be seen to prevail in all facets of the government as well as private sector. This paper analyzes the findings obtained by Afrobarometer in 2011-2012. Comparative analysis of the way Batswana and Tanzanians perceive operation of the rule of law by their governments shows divergent views. Whilst Batswana strongly affirms their government to treat people equitably under the law, Tanzanians perceive their government to operate inequitably as far as justice dispensation is concerned. The paper explores this dichotomy and gives probable explanations to this ramification and its implications for good governance. It also suggests the way the situation can be improved.

Keywords: Rule of law, good governance, democracy, Botswana, Tanzania.

1. Introduction
The contemporary heightening pressure for good governance in the world has triggered a growing importance on its building blocks, that is: rule of law, accountability, participation, transparency, responsiveness, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, strategic vision and consensus orientation. The quality of a country’s governance depends very much among other things on the degree to which these building blocks are upheld by institutions and also individual citizens. Several challenges have been encountered in the course of embracing good governance some of which are rooted in defective uptake of one or many of the mentioned building blocks. This paper examines how fairly the rule of law operates in Tanzania and Botswana. Although both countries belong to Sub-Saharan Africa, they have been chosen because Botswana is considered to have made remarkable development in various facets including governance. Unlike Tanzania which is …income country, Botswana is a middle income earning country. These facts nevertheless justify comparative study. The paper has singled-out the rule of law as a component of good governance and tries to see how its operation compares in the two countries. The rule of law affects all of us in our everyday lives. It is not only important to lawyers and judges, but to businessmen, builders, consumers, doctors, and journalists as well. Every sector of society is a stakeholder in the rule of law (Agrast et al, n.d:8)

It is the intent of this paper to attempt to compare the operation of rule of law in the aspect of the way people are treated under the law, including punishment to officials and ordinary people. In enhancing this, the paper highlights the research gap and then gives a briefing on the methodology. It continues by documenting conceptual issues, the findings and discussion of the findings. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are given.

2. Research Issue
In a democratic state, pursuance of the rule of law is something every one would expect. The rule of law is not only expected to be upheld by the state but also justice should seem to prevail in all facets of the government. Tanzania and Botswana are among countries which espouse democratic governance. The Afrobarometer 2011-2012 findings show that, unlike Batswana, Tanzanians perceive their government to operate inequitably in the dispensation of the rule of law. It is evident from the report that people are often treated unequally under the law and that whereas officials who commit crimes often go unpunished, ordinary people punished (Afrobarometer, 2012). Based on these findings, this paper explores the differences in perception between Tanzania and Botswana with respect to the fairness of the law and its implications for good governance in the two countries. In this endeavor, based on the review of literature on the rule of law as one of the components of good governance,
it is hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 1:
(1) In a full democracy-embracing state, the rule of law is expected to operate equally to all categories of people.

Hypothesis 2:
(2) People are likely to have high trust in the judicial system, if the rule of law is dispensed justly.

Hypothesis 3:
(3) People are likely to have a high trust in the judicial system if Judges and Magistrates are not corrupt.

We will use simple frequencies to report the results in this paper.

3. Methodology
Data for this paper will be drawn from the Afrobarometer round five (5) results of the two countries, generated in 2011 and 2012. This is a comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa which covered 35 countries, including Tanzania and Botswana. Data will be tapped from responses made to Q.56 which states: In your opinion, how often, in this country: (B). Are people treated unequally under the law? (F). Do officials who commit crimes go unpunished? (G) Do ordinary people who break the law go unpunished? Response options were “Never”, “Rarely”, “Often” and “Always”. To be able to give explanation to the subject as well as infer implications, we corroborated some information. In this case, responses for three more questions for both countries from the same questionnaire were captured and consolidated, each in a single table. The questions were:

Q59. How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say? (J). Courts of law. The response options were: ‘Not at all’, ‘Just a little’, ‘Somewhat’ and ‘A lot’.

Q60. How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say? (G). Judges and Magistrates. The corresponding response options were: ‘None’, ‘Some of them’, ‘Most of them’ and ‘All of them’.

The variables to these questions were traced from the original Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) template, re-run to obtain their frequencies which were then used to draw tables. Arguments were built on the basis of data patterns. Triangulation with other secondary data obtained from other sources reinforced explanatory power as well as validity and reliability of the study.

4. Conceptual Issues
There is no widespread consensus on what precisely constitutes the rule of law, just as there is no widespread consensus on what exactly it means to have a just society (Tamanaha, 2007, Yu & Guernsey, n.d). However, there is a common ground regarding some of the basic features of the rule of law and even more so regarding the rule of law operations (Cole, 2011).

As used by the World Justice Project, the rule of law refers to a system in which the following four universal principles are upheld:

- The government and its officials and agents as well as individuals and private entities are accountable under the law.
- The laws are clear, publicized, stable, and just, are applied evenly, and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and property.
- The process by which the laws are enacted, administered, and enforced is accessible, fair, and efficient.
- Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve (Agrast et al, n.d: 3).

These principles are derived from international sources that enjoy broad acceptance across countries with differing social, cultural, economic, and political systems, and incorporate both substantive and procedural elements (Ibid).

Fallon (1997 cited in Cole 2011:2) argues that although there is some philosophical disagreement about why we have law, there is broad acceptance that the rule of law has essentially three purposes. Firstly, the rule of law should protect against anarchy and the Hobbesian war of all against all. Secondly, it should allow people to plan their affairs with reasonable confidence that they can know in advance the legal consequences of various actions. Third, the rule of law should guarantee against at least some types of official arbitrariness.

Simply, the purpose of law is served by five elements:

- Capacity of legal rules, standards, or principles to guide people in the conduct of their affairs. People must be able to comprehend the law and comply with it.
- Efficacy. The law should actually guide people, at least for the most part. In Joseph Raz’s phrase “People should be ruled by the law and obey it”.
- Stability. The law should be reasonably stable in order to facilitate planning and coordinated action over
time.

- Supremacy of legal authority. The law should rule officials including Judges, as well as ordinary citizens.
- Instrumentalities of impartial justice. Courts should be available to enforce the law and should employ fair procedures (Fallon, 1997 in Cole, 2011:2).

Another approach to the rule of law is offered by Rachel Kleinfeld who defines the concept in terms of five different goals of the rule of law, that is:

- Making the state abide by the law
- Ensuring equality before the law
- Supplying law and order
- Providing efficient and impartial justice

Narrowly or formally, the rule of law can be conceptualized to entail a set of minimal characteristics: law must be set forth in advance (be prospective), be made public, be general, be clear, be stable and certain, and be applied to everyone according to its terms. In absence of these characteristics, the rule of law cannot be satisfied. The broad definition of the rule of law includes reference to fundamental rights, democracy, and/or criteria of justice or right (Tamanaha, 2007:3). Tamanaha (2007:3) argues that, narrow definition represents a common baseline that all of the competing definitions of the rule of law share, though a number of versions go beyond this minimum.

Functions of rule of law

According to Tamanaha (2007:3), the functions of the rule of law is in two folds: firstly, imposition of legal restraints on government officials and secondly, to maintain order and coordinate behavior and transactions among citizens.

1. Imposition of legal restraints on government officials

Tamanaha (2007) argues that imposition of legal restraints on government officials is done in two different ways (a) by requiring compliance with existing law; and (b) by imposing legal limits on law making power. The first type of legal restraint according to Tamanaha (2007) is that government officials must abide by valid positive laws in force at the time of any given action. This first restraint has two facets: government actions must have positive legal authorization (without which the action is improper); and no government action may contravene a legal prohibition or restriction (Ibid).

Tamanaha (2007) argues that even though exceptions or flexibility may exist with respect to the first facet, the second (prohibitive) facet is strict. In case government officials desire to pursue a course of action that contravenes existing positive laws, it is necessary to change the law in accordance with ordinary legal procedures prior to taking any course of action. Although the first type of restraint poses primary problem of enforcement, the remedy is the government to bind and coerce itself (Hobbes, 1996 cited in Tamanaha, 2007).

The second type of legal restraint according to Tamanaha (2007) imposes restrictions on the law itself, erecting limitations on the law making power of the government. In this aspect, certain prohibited actions cannot be legally allowed, even by a legitimate lawmaking authority. It is further argued that legal restrictions of this kind rank above (control over) ordinary lawmaking. Tamanaha (2007) cites constitutionally imposed limits, human rights limits, transnational or international legal limits and religious or natural law limits as the most common versions arguing that these types of laws are superior to and impose restraints upon routine law making.

2. Maintaining order and coordinating behavior and transactions among citizens.

This function of the rule of law holds that a framework of legal rules governs social behavior. People must generally behave in a fashion that does not breach legal rules (Tamanaha, 2007). Tamanaha (2007) argues that in case legal rules are transgressed or there occurs social disruptions, it will provoke a response from legal institutions charged with the task of enforcing legal requirements and resolving disputes consistent with applicable legal norms. With regards to this, Tamanaha (2007) argues that it should not be thought that social behavior must be governed by state legal rules rather numerous normative orders that exist within every society may do. They include customary norms, religious norms, workplace norms, moral norms, family norms, norms of business interaction and norms of social etiquette. Whereas the norms from these various orders overlap, but often they are different in orientation, extension, scope, penetration, and efficacy. All in all the law need not cover everything, but what the law does cover should be largely adhered to by the people.

Principal benefits of the rule of law

Tamanaha (2007) provides five principal benefits of rule of law as discussed below:

1. Enhances Certainty, Predictability, and Security

Tamanaha (2007) argues that the rule of law enhances certainty, predictability and security in two arenas: (a)
between citizens and the government (vertical), and (b) among citizens (horizontal). With respect to the
government, populace gets advantage by being apprised in advance of the government’s probable response to
their actions. This is a significant feature of liberty, in which people become familiar with the full range of
conduct they can engage in with no horror of being subjected to government interference or sanction. Citizens
are at liberty to do whatever they want provided it is not prohibited by law.

The rule of law normally restrains unduly influence to government officials in their actions. Undue influence
may be as a result of prejudice, passion, arbitrariness, whim or ill will. The restraints by the law are enhanced by
emphasizing on government officials to work consistent with applicable legal rules. In this regard, Tamanaha
(2007) points out explicitly the following benefits:

- Government officials are required to consult and conform to the law before and during actions.
- Legal rules provide publicly available requirements and standards that can be used to hold government
  officials accountable during and after their actions.

However, Tamanaha (2007:9) argues that the main negative consequence that comes with the second
benefit is that, in numerous circumstances it may be useful or necessary that government officials exercise
discretion or make situation-specific judgments. Legal rules are general prohibitions that cannot predict every
aspect of every situation in advance. Moreover, legal rules can turn out to be obsoleto as social views and
circumstances change hence their further applications may lead to socially undesired results. In such milieu,
allowing the decision maker to use his/her wisdom, judgment or expertise, may yield better results than insisting
on compliance with the legal rules. In some circumstances, additionally, strictly following legal rules in a fashion
that produces a winner and a loser can exacerbate conflict, while finding a compromise that bypasses the rules
might achieve a consensus.

3. A Peaceful Social Order is maintained through Legal Rules.
A peaceful social order is discernible by the lack of habitual hostility, and by the existence of a considerable
degree of physical security and reliable expectations about surrounding conduct (Tamanaha, 2007). Although
legal rules maintain social order, this is not always the case. In various circumstances social norms have largely
shaped and governed social conduct. Tamanaha (2007) argues that law is the major source of social order and
that in case they are in conflict with social norms, legal rules should supersede.

Tamanaha (2007) further argues that, legal rules and institutions can enforce an oppressive social order,
as in totalitarian societies. Though such societies are not marked on the surface by routine violence, and
therefore qualify as peaceful and ordered, the social order can nevertheless be experienced as intolerably
restrictive.

According to Tamanaha (2007), the rule of law not only enhances certainty, predictability, and security but also
liberty. It is extensively considered that market-based economic systems benefit from these qualities in two ways,
the first related to contracts and the second to property. First, economic actors can better predict in advance the
anticipated costs and benefits of prospective transactions, which enable them to make more efficient decisions.
One can enter into a contract with some assurances of the consequences that will follow if the other party fails to
live up to the terms of the contract. This encourages the creation of contracts with strangers or parties at a
distance, which expands the range and frequency of commercial interactions, increasing the economic pie.
Second, the protection of property and persons conferred by legal rules grant a guarantee that the fruits of one’s
labor will be protected from expropriation by others. This security frees individuals to allocate the bulk of their
efforts to additional productive activity, and to enjoying its benefits, rather than expending time and effort on
protecting existing gains.

Tamanaha (2007) asserts that when law and legal institutions are obscure, inefficient, costly, or
unreliable, commercial transactions and economic development may be inhibited by the legal system, and
economic actors may resort to other institutions in situations of dispute (example private arbitration),
circumventing the legal system entirely. In other circumstances, other mechanisms like norms of reciprocity,
long term social or business relationships, can effectively provide predictability and security in transactions,
rendering the law secondary or superfluous (Ibid).

5. Fundamental Justice of the Requirement That the Rules must be applied equally to everyone According to
Their Terms.
It is widely considered unfair and unjust when the identity or status of a person affects how legal officials apply
or interpret the law (Tamanaha, 2007). Legal officials should not favor or ill-treat people. In some cases, the law
has imposed distinctions among people or groups, for instance laws that treat men and women differently. It only
necessitates that the law be applied in accordance with its terms no matter who it is being applied to. This critical
aspect of justice\(^1\) can have demoralizing consequences particularly in situations with considerable social

\(^{1}\) Also known as ‘formal equality’
inequalities.

Tamanaha (2007) gives an example of a law that forbids the rich and poor alike from sleeping on a park bench. He is saying if it is applied equally to all, obviously it will have consequences mainly for the poor.

**Rule of law experience in developed nations**

According to Agrast et al (n.d) developed countries tend to outperform developing countries in all dimensions. They cited countries in Western Europe and North America as good examples like Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Canada, Denmark and Norway. These countries are characterized by relatively low levels of corruption, open and accountable governments and effective criminal justice systems. The fact that these countries outperform other countries does not imply that they are perfect. They display weakness in the area of accessibility of the civil justice system especially for the marginalized section of populace as well as discrimination against foreigners and ethnic minorities (Agrast et al n.d:25).

5. Findings

Hypothesis 1:

(1) In a full democracy-embracing state, the rule of law is expected to operate equally to all categories of people. The findings on table 1 show that 44.7% of Tanzanians responded that people are treated unequally under the law often and always, 43.1% responded rarely and 11.1% responded never. On the other side, 24.2% of Batswana responded that people are treated unequally under the law often and always, 24.9% responded rarely and 43.9% responded never. Comparatively, majority of Tanzanians are of the view that people are treated unequally under the law (44.7%) whereas majority of Batswana are of the opinion that people are treated equally under the law (43.9%).

Table 2 shows that 55.6% of Tanzanians responded that officials who commit crimes go unpunished often and always, 28.2% responded rarely and 14.1% responded never. On the other side, 27.1% of Batswana responded that officials who commit crimes go unpunished often and always, 22.4% responded rarely and 39.8% responded never. Comparatively, majority of Tanzanians (55.6%) are of the opinion that officials who commit crimes go unpunished whilst majority of Batswana (39.8%) opined that officials who commit crimes never go unpunished.

Table 3 shows that 41% of Tanzanians said that ordinary people who break the law never go unpunished, 36.5% responded rarely and 20.9% responded often and always. 64.8% of Batswana said that ordinary people who break the law never go unpunished, 21.2% responded rarely and 9.8% responded often and always. Comparative analysis shows that majority of Tanzanians (41%) and Batswana (64.8%) said that ordinary people who break the law never go unpunished.

![Chart 1: People unequal treatment under the law](image-url)

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often in this country people are treated unequally under the law?

**Source:** Compiled from Afrobarometer 2011-2012 data for Tanzania and Botswana
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often in this country do officials who commit crimes go unpunished?

Source: Compiled from Afrobarometer 2011-2012 data for Tanzania and Botswana

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often in this country do ordinary people who break the law go unpunished?

Source: Compiled from Afrobarometer 2011-2012 data for Tanzania and Botswana

Hypothesis 2:

(2) People are likely to have high trust in the judicial system, if the rule of law is dispensed justly.

Table 4 indicates that 6.8% of Tanzanians do not have trust at all in the courts of law, 19.1% have just little trust, 42.2% responded they somewhat trust the courts of law and 31.4% responded that they trust the courts of law a lot. With regards to Botswana, 8% of respondents do not have trust at all in the courts of law, 15.7% responded they have just little trust, 24.5% responded they somewhat trust the courts of law and 42.4% responded that they trust courts of law a lot. Comparatively, majority of Tanzanians (73.6%) and Batswana (66.9%) responded that they had trust in courts of law.
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (J) Courts of law.

Source: Compiled from Afrobarometer 2011-2012 data for Tanzania and Botswana

Hypothesis 3:
(3) People are likely to have high trust in the judicial system if Judges and Magistrates are not corrupt.
Table 5 shows that of all Tanzanians surveyed, 11% said none of the Judges and Magistrates are involved in corruption, 50.8% said some of them are involved in corruption, 25.4% said most of them are involved and 7.6% said all of them are involved whereas 5.2% responded they don’t know. On the side of Botswana, 22.6% said none of the Judges and Magistrates are involved in corruption, 38.4% said some of them are involved, 8.8% said most of them are involved and 2.2% said all of them are involved whilst 28% responded they don’t know.

Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't heard enough about them to say? (G) Judges and Magistrates.

Source: Compiled from Afrobarometer 2011-2012 data for Tanzania and Botswana

6. Discussion
The findings show some evidence of prevalence of unequal treatment under the law to the people of Tanzania. This is represented by 44.7% of the responses. Even though those who said unequal treatment under the law in
Tanzania is rare amount to 43.9%, they are also conveying the message that elements of unequal treatment is present making up the total of 88.6% of those who at least subscribe to the presence of unequal treatment. Comparative analysis of the two countries shows that Botswana upholds equal treatment under the law compared to Tanzania. These findings tempt us to speculate that there are relatively more bottlenecks in the dispensation of justice (equal treatment under the law) in Tanzania than Botswana. These findings are in line with those of Agrast et al. (n.d) which rate Botswana and Ghana as top performers as far as application of the rule of law is concerned in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Botswana being middle income country (Ringo & Lekorwe, 2013 and Sebudubudu, 2010) outperforms some higher income countries in several dimensions (Agrast et al, n.d:49).

Regarding Tanzania, Agrast et al. (n.d) argue that the country’s judiciary system is inefficient and affected by corruption, there is poor regulatory enforcement and that crime and vigilante justice are major problems.

Prevalence of unequal treatment under the law in Tanzania is strongly supported by the fact that officials who commit crimes go unpunished often and always. This is affirmed by 55.6% of the respondents surveyed. This implies that despite the fact that the laws are in place, in some cases they are blind (they are not applied to restrain the woes they have been set to restrain equitably). This is in fact the great weakness which not only undermines good governance practices but also discredits the judicial system of the country.

Implications for good governance

Unlike bad governance, for governance to be good it ought to possess nine characteristics, namely: accountability, participation, transparency, adherence to the rule of law, efficiency and effectiveness, strategic vision, equity, responsiveness, consensus orientation (Graham et al, 2003; Richardson, 2008 and UNDP, 1997). When these features are absent or are not functioning well, then bad governance results. Walker (2009) argues that ‘bad governance’ persists when systems of governance are incapable of responding to the voices of ordinary citizens as well as being unaccountable to them.

Being one of components of good governance, the rule of law and a functioning justice system entails in particular the impartiality of the justice system, the validity and observance of the constitution and laws derived from it, separation of powers and equality before the law and legal institutions (ADA, 2011:11). The findings show that although legislation exists, the operational mechanisms are blemished by absence of equity and the presence of corruption which also jeopardizes citizens’ trust in the judicial system. If people do not trust their judicial system, there is a likelihood of abstaining from using these apparatus in seeking their legal rights hence escalation of crime and vigilante justice. This further worsens good governance practice in the country.

1 See also Agrast et al (n.d: 49)
2 Referred to as “good governance”
As Malmström (2011:2) argues that "Rule of law" is a prerequisite for a sound and long-lasting economic development, its encroachment is likely to have a negative impact on other components of good governance given the fact that good economy propels effective implementation of good governance. We are convinced that the rule of law has been encroached in the two countries differently and in varying magnitude. Corrupt practices in the system signals problems not only in the judicial system but also in the governance system. In this aspect Tanzania is badly hit whereas Botswana is better off implying that effort to implement good governance in Tanzania should be escalated. Because of the dissipative effect of rule of law as a component of good governance, if the situation is left to deteriorate more, it is likely to impoverish other components such as accountability, transparency, participation and finally overall efficiency and effectiveness (more jeopardy to good governance practice).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations
The paper has highlighted the practice of the rule of law in Tanzania and Botswana. Whereas the rule of law operates equitably in Botswana, in Tanzania it was found to operate inequitably. Inequitable treatment under the law was strongly supported by the fact that officials who commit crimes went unpunished whilst ordinary people couldn’t escape. On the other hand, both countries perceived judges and magistrates to be involved in corruption. On the basis of the foregoing discussions and findings, we recommend that:

- People should be treated equally under the law. This can be enhanced by educating those who are entrusted with the function of adjudication to uphold ethical conduct example, operating impartially,
- Strengthening the accountability mechanisms so that those who maintain double standards in the dispensation of justice are made accountable. This can be enhanced by strengthening the watchdog mechanisms and invoking strict code of conduct,
- Countries develop efficient set of tools to tackle corruption in its all forms in order to have efficient and effective judicial system,

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