

Political Accountability, Jurisprudence and Governance in Kenya

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Abstract

Political accountability refers to the obligation of public officials to report on their actions and to be answerable for them. This accountability is crucial for maintaining trust between the government and its citizens. The mechanisms through which political accountability can be enforced and which ensure that leaders are held to account to the electorate and for their decisions and their actions are; elections, legislative oversight, judicial review, media and civil society. Elections are a primary means of political accountability as it provides citizens with the opportunity to choose their leaders and to remove those who fail to meet their expectations (that is if they are free and fair without cohesion). The objective of the study was firstly, to establish the influence of political accountability on governance in Kenya and secondly, to determine the influence of political accountability and jurisprudence on governance in Kenya. Descriptive statistics were estimated and rankings of values on the study variables aggregated. Regression models on the first and second objectives were estimated and the regression results interpreted in accordance with the study findings. The findings were that political accountability significantly influences governance in Kenya. When jurisprudence is included in the regression model to accompany political accountability, governance is still significantly influenced by both variables. Political accountability alone explains 19.3% of governance while including jurisprudence reduces the explanatory power from 19.3% to 14.3%. This is possibly attributed to the difficulty of governing when there are stringent laws and law enforcement. Judicial reforms encompassing, institutional, financial prudence, administrative of justice and oversight institutions and committees of parliament (including the bigger role of parliament) should be clearly defined to enhance political accountability and governance in Kenya.

Introduction

Political accountability is vital as it enhances transparency, responsiveness, integrity and trust by the citizens of both developing and developed countries. Accountability processes are multifaceted, potentially generating friction and entailing trade-offs, and the accountability of the individual and collective actors involved in policy-making processes is characterized by ambiguities and the give and take (or scratch my back I scratch yours) attitude (Breunig, Grossman and Hänni, 2022). Political accountability is not just that policy-making is complex (because the types of accountabilities themselves are complex), and therefore, accountability relations exist at multiple points and involve a great number of actors and forums that use diverse modes of interaction. Who should be held accountable, for what exactly, by whom, how and with what kind of consequences is often a matter of political controversy and sometimes not settled in normative debate (Busuioc, 2021; Stokes, 2018). Some of the questions that linger in the world of accountability are; should actors that are not officially authorized to make collectively binding decisions be held politically accountable, and how can their contributions to policy-making be identified if they are unseen? How can one authoritatively assess to what extent constituencies are affected by policy? Which actors legitimately act as fire alarms and as account-holders? Should political accountability be primarily related to diffuse policy outcomes or to public goods delivered to particular target groups? What if responsiveness and democratic accountability to the citizenry collide with peer accountability and compliance with professional norms? Is the threat of sanctions indispensable to effective accountability, or depending on the purposes, should the approach be more educational than punitive? By highlighting core facets of the exercise and control of power, the study of policy-makers' accountability raises crucial questions on the quality of democratic government, the 'elephant in the corner' of public policy theory (Anderson, 2007; Yang, 2012; Hellwig and Samuels, 2008; Deegan, 2002). Most policies are made without consulting the constituents and without consulting them to know which ones favour them but are made and implemented to favour leaders such as Counselors, Members of Parliament (MPs) and Governors. The Chiefs and sub-chiefs and other organs of administration of justice and injustices such as the Police Force enforce the law using their own mechanisms which usually are not preferred by the law abiders. Professionals are rarely seen in the political arena (because they are not welcome anyway) because the political game does not entail professionalism. Too highly educated people (the political elite) face a lot of resistance and are normally not too smart at the political game as too much education does not add value here. When we think in terms of political accountability there are several factors that are considered to undermine it which are; corruption, lack of transparency, limited access to information and political polarization (Hood, 2015; Shende & Bennett, 2004). Corrupt leaders can manipulate systems to avoid scrutiny while lack of transparency in government makes it difficult for citizens to hold leaders accountable. Citizens need access to information to effectively hold leaders accountable and to ensure public scrutiny although these citizens are sometimes denied audience in addition to being denied a platform to air their grievances (Fossheim, 2022; Dimova, 2020; Schillemans, Karlsen, and Kolltveit, 2019). Ruthlessly, political leaders tend to buy goons to silence those who threaten their political stars and ensure they are contained at all costs. Political polarization tends to create an environment where accountability is compromised as party loyalty may overshadow the need for ethical governance. When the time for real politics is ripe, the question is; which party do the electorates

belong to? It is not enough for the institutions under transformative constitutions to announce from the rooftops for all those who care to hear that they don't do politics.

The interpretation and the implementation of the Constitution, and the administration of justice, are political projects and all electorates are doing one, some or all of these projects however small. Judiciaries under transformative Constitutions are, indeed, at the crossroads. They either accept to be enslaved by the ruling elite and succumb to that class's seduction of power, or they join the forces that resist the rule of a class that with their foreign masters, are a root cause of corruption because arguably they consider associating with foreigners as champions of democracy (Willems, Van Dooren, 2017; Aleksovska, Schillemans, and Grimmelikhuijsen, 2022). The effectiveness of electoral accountability also depends on the institutional architecture of the political system. An analysis of elections from seventy-five countries revealed that separation-of-powers systems are superior in terms of accountability; the reward–punishment model works best when the mechanisms of accountability are simple and clear (Hellwing and Samuels, 2008; Anderson, 2000; Breunig, Grossman and Hänni, 2022) which is not surprising if the sophistication required to allocate responsibility and evaluate performance following election outcomes is anything to go by. Blurring responsibility and strengthening cognitive bias, vertical and horizontal institutional and power fragmentation attenuate democratic accountability and the effect of evaluations on incumbents' popularity. Political control over the bureaucracy may have expanded, including paradoxically through participatory forms of accountability. Hence, the diffusion of the latter does not necessarily mean more democratic policy-making, but it remains uncertain if enhanced political control has become more effective. Political control is even openly seen as a threat to the impartiality and independence of the proliferating autonomous public agencies. However, this is not to say that technocratic power is unchecked, and accountability may even be overabundant. Top-level public managers and street-level employees are subject to various forms of cross-pressure resulting from conflicting accountability claims ('many eyes'), leading to dilemmas and disarray, as well as coping strategies and attempts to evade blame (Hochwarter, Ferris, Gavin, 2007; Romzek, LeRoux, Johnston, Kempf and Piatak, 2014; Finer, 1941). Furthermore, some public agencies voluntarily strive to become accountable for reputational purposes. Thus, they may be more accountable in practice than *de jure*, but once an agency's reputation is established, accountability forums tend to trust it and remain inactive. The strategic use of accountability as a reputation-enhancing resource, intended to subsequently shield from overly invasive controls, is perhaps a more generalized mechanism in bureaucracies that has not yet been sufficiently studied (Vis, 2016; Rubenstein, 2007). Keane (2009) offered a more positive account in his book on 'monitory' democracy, in which he pointed out that 'the rapid growth of many different kinds of extra-parliamentary, power scrutinising mechanisms' and referred, in particular, to 'guardian' type institutions that use their claimed neutrality to appear as protectors of the public interest and to participatory mechanisms involving advocacy groups that act as 'surrogates' in their monitoring roles for the various populations and interests that they claim to represent (Rubenstein, 2007).

Judicial independence has been at the core of the world's democratic and constitutional evolution. An independent judiciary fasttracks judicial reforms and institutional reforms that ensures that justice is administered, that the rule of law is followed and that the fight against corruption or the corruption war is not lost. The principles of "separation of powers" and "checks

and balances” principles that govern the inter-branch relations within the state, and of which judicial independence is a conceptual derivative have been the holy grail of the modern liberal nation for centuries and future generations. The independence of the Judiciary and the decisional independence of the individual judicial officers is about the integrity of the judicial officers whose ideological and political positions uphold the integrity of the constitution. The judicial officers are of integrity if the authors of the pressures, duress, and influence narrated cannot manipulate or compromise their integrity (Brandsma and Moser, 2020). Where judicial decisions are invariably seen and judged through various divisive lenses of the Kenyan people, clearly the integrity of the judicial officers is of monumental judicial and political importance. The Directorate of Audit and Risk Management which majorly focuses on financial audits but additionally needed investing in mounting courses on ethics and integrity in Judiciary Training Institute (JTI) for all judicial officers and staff (Egeberg and Trondal, 2009). Lee and Campell (2012) define judicial independence as the principle that focuses on the creation of an environment in which the Judiciary can perform its judicial function as one of the three branches of government (the executive, the judiciary and parliament) without being subject to any form of duress, pressure or influence from any person or other institutions, in particular the other branches of government. Judicial power which indeed is also political, must be exercised in the interests of the people it is derived from. Additionally, the Judiciary should be seen to be a beacon of integrity for citizens and all institutions of governance (Knight and Schwartzberg, 2020). Professor Baxi in his book, “The Indian Supreme Court and Politics” quotes CJ Bagwati of the Supreme Court of India as saying that the “Indian Constitution is a document of social revolution. Professor Baxi believes that it is time to take stock and say what judges regard as unsayable, that the Supreme Court (of India) is a centre of political power but; “What kind of political role does the court ought to play in a changing India?” The Judiciary has therefore a socio-economic destination and a creative function”. In the case of Kenya, the view is that the Constitution is activist and the judges and other judicial officers are all expected to be activist in their quest to implement an activist Constitution (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015; Esser and Strömbäck, 2014). Essentially, it becomes extremely difficult for passive judges to implement a Constitution that is spear headed by activists. The Professor Upendra Baxi, who is also the Indian radical Scholar and also an intellectual states that all judges are active but not all judges are activists. An active judge regards herself (himself) as a trustee of the state regime power and authority. Accordingly, he (she) usually defers to the executive and legislature, shuns appearance of policy making, supports patriarchy and other forms of violent exclusion, and overall “stability” over “change”. An active judge regards herself (himself) as holding judicial power in fiduciary capacity for civil and democratic rights of all peoples, especially the disadvantaged, dispossessed and deprived. She (he) does not regard adjudicatory power as a repository of the reason of state she (he) constantly reworks the distinction between the legal and political sovereign, in ways that legitimate judicial action as an irreducible characteristic of activist adjudication; namely, that a judge remains possessed of inherent powers to mould the greater good of the society as a whole (Bertelli, 2016; Weaver, 1986; Achen and Bartels, 2017; Jann, 2016; Li, Qin, and Koppenjan, 2022).

Fight against corruption and outcomes of fought corruption is an output of an implemented transformative Constitution which has one of the motives as that of reforming the judiciary and scaling up the country’s jurisprudence. The Ant-corruption strategy papers and plans drafted

continuous to provide guidance to ensure efficiency in provision of public services. Promoting integrity by having in place institutions such as the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) with power to process anti-corruption cases and prosecute culprits of corruption is part of a country's jurisprudence agenda. Overcoming a long and hardened institutional culture of corruption and unaccountability calls for putting in place internal institutional infrastructure (Boin, McConnell and 't Hart, 2008; Boin, 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius, 2005; Bovens and Wille, 2021). The citizens (who are the electorate) and the political class need to rise to moral conviction so that they deliver the mandates of those who elected them and display ethical courage so that they do not excessively misappropriate country resources under political resolve since they are politicians in nature. Corruption is an enemy of economic development especially when integrated with ethnicity in which case it fuels electoral contests and compromises national stability. Kenya is a country which leverages on ethnicity as it prides of having 42 tribes headed by the popular Kikuyu tribe which dominate all spheres of life and every part of the country. In fact there is no part of the country Kenya where you can go and not hear "atiriri" unless you are not Kenyan but even the "wazungus" will clarify that the Kikuyus are everywhere even abroad. The irreducible minimum for the judicial reforms is to ensure that there is a successful corruption fight (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea; 2015) whether championed by political leadership or non-political leadership but that which should be committed and one that is ready to pay an electoral price to win the war. Electing leaders that crucify corruption at all levels and leaders that face the dragons of corruption head on to keep the resources of the country afloat and to ensure that the country does not become insolvent are the theoretical leaders of the Kenyan state as the dangerous dragons and barons of corruption poses the threat of being ready to smear and blackmail those who resist to be corrupted who must struggle to remain steadfast enroute.

Dimova (2020) observes that elections seem to perform relatively well as an accountability mechanism since those who are not found accountable are voted out. They elected plausibly incentivize office-holders to be responsive to citizens' preferences by delivering last minute promises so that they can be re-elected. The office-holders by far tend to fear retrospective voting and they are normally there physically or by proxy to convince the electorate to vote for them, although there may be a gap between their fears and citizens' actual behaviour. However, even though competitive elections are considered the primary channel of democratic accountability in representative government, accountability mechanisms are mandatory to electoral justice for purposes of ensuring credibility of electoral outcomes (Powell and Whitten, 1993; Kriner and Schickler, 2017). The media serves as a watchdog in investigating and reporting on government actions while the civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for accountability and transparency (de Wilde and Rauh, 2019). Koliba, Mills and Zia (2011) studied the breakdown of the collaborative governance network that had been at work following Hurricane Katrina and related the lack of crisis-coping capacity to multiple accountability deficits in the network's hybrid accountability regime (Birkland, 2006; Schonhardt-Bailey, 2022; Moynihan, 2012; Boin, Brown and Richardson, 2019). They pointed out crucial gaps with regard to multiple accountabilities; democratic (elected officials and government agencies saw other actors as chiefly responsible), administrative (lack of clarity of responsibility, poor design of contracts and delays due to rigid procedures), professional (dearth of expertise and inadequate training) collaborative (information gaps and communication failures) and consumer accountability (to the mostly poor and powerless residents). All these

different types of accountabilities demand leadership mechanisms and leadership styles that promise not only thorough understanding and appreciation of the multiple accountabilities but balancing and collating to have the desired political and governance outcomes.

Bureaucracy is the natural extension of the cabinet in the chain of delegation, and it is a policy-maker in its own right. Many studies have demonstrated the roles of groups of top civil servants as ‘programmatically elites’ with clear views of the policy reforms that they believe must be carried out (Hassenteufel and Genieys, 2021) or of individual bureaucrats as policy ‘brokers’ who mediate between opposing coalitions and are active in the pursuit of compromise (Ingold and Varone, 2012; Kratochwil, 2008; Herber, 1989). Civil servants withstand the heats of different regimes since they drive policy administrative justice even when the political environment is hostile. Bureaucracies of government must take different interacting factors into account, namely, the nature of the crisis, the institutional and political contexts and, of course, actors’ strategies which they must clearly understand to remain as policy makers and implementers of policies in both favourable and hostile political regimes. Essentially, one should distinguish among the different outcomes of accountability processes especially as competing agendas may coexist, causing goal conflict between the goals of the electorate and the goals of political leaders whose balancing should be done by the administrative arm of justice who are the civil servants. In the case of the police who are charged with the responsibility for investigations for example, and is supposed to look forward and to do an investigation (forward-looking investigatory body) concerned with truth-finding seeks to analyse the causes of accidents to improve future operations, while backward-looking commercial media primarily look for culprits who will make headlines. The policemen and policewomen on the road are busy asking “kwani ako na gari kubwa sana?” literary translated; “does he or she have a very big car?” In this case neither the news headlines champions nor investigations body (who tells you what happened and the way forward instead of enabling you to take precaution before what happened happened and is at the center of investigations is catastrophic and beats human conscience (since it already happened anyway) policy makers do not appear to see the end of the tunnel as they all appear to have hit the dead end. Essentially then, sanctioning office-holders is different from triggering policy change, and both may be unrelated; policy change will not have the same scope if it stems from genuine learning from failures or from superficial strategic adjustment (Jacobs and Schillemans, 2016; Romzek and Ingraham, 2000; McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984; Karsten, 2015). The analysis should also include the long-term consequences of post-crisis accountability, but it is difficult to anticipate if a crisis will be ‘fast-burning’ with a return to ‘business as usual’ or if there will be ‘a crisis after the crisis’. After investigating the accident by the police, are there likely to be other accidents? Your answer is as good as mine. Definitely yes and in terms of policy the issue should be how to stop accidents from occurring in future or at least how to minimize their future occurrences. When elections are combined with policy how quickly public attention will move on to other concerns immediately after the general elections and the timing (how quickly or how slowly) matters more generally if we think, for example, of the tighter or looser connection with the electoral cycle (Busuioc and Lodge, 2017; Visram, Hunter and Perkins, 2021). Essentially, ‘without fully clean elections, autonomous opposition parties and a developed civil society and media, no country in the world has yet achieved fully effective government oversight through independent, high courts, vigorous parliaments, or other institutions’. Findings from research on four decades of German bicameralism confirm that the shadow of veto power acts as *a de facto*

super-majority requirement and thus fosters cooperative behavior. If the opposition controls a majority in the second chamber that enjoys veto power, this leads to a more consensual relationship between government and opposition parties. Both sides are forced to compromise early in the legislative process, and they are much more likely to vote the same way in parliament to avoid bicameral conflicts (Hohendorf, Saalfeld and Sieberer, 2021; Hawkins and Jacoby, 2006).

In parliamentary systems of governance, legislatures can be seen as the principals and governments as their agents, this being the next element of the delegation chain after the voters, as the ultimate principals, have delegated their decision-making power to legislators. In that sense, ministerial accountability to the legislature is an element of the vertical accountability chain that runs in the reverse direction of the delegation chain, with accountability of the public administration to its political superiors being the next element in the chain (Barrenda, 2014; Stark, 2018; Strom, 2000; León, Jurado and Madariaga, 2018). Checks that impose restraints with the goal of avoiding abuses of power and, more generally, control of an institution by other institutions in the same political system that is grounded on the doctrine of separation of powers are commonly included in the category of horizontal accountability. Accountability relations are therefore considered horizontal when they involve formal institutions endowed with relatively equal power to collaborate amongst themselves or to compete against each other (Schonhardt-Bailey, 2022; Apaydin and Jordana, 2020). Parliaments are unevenly able or willing to hold their government effectively accountable, so that lower *de facto* than *de jure* accountability rather unexpectedly results from forum passivity and not from agency drift since parliament is accountable to those who elected or even to those who nominated the parliamentarians. Even when parliamentary control is effective, it may come at the detriment of accountability to the public. By increasingly acting as instances of horizontal accountability, courts indirectly gain influence in the legislative process, as it is rational for policy-makers to anticipate their views. Such interference by the unelected has been criticized, but one should keep in mind that politicians may be able to limit it (Alter, Helfer and Madsen, 2018; Adam, Hurka, and Stemeback, 2019; Stimson, Mackuen and Erikson, 1995; Kam, Bertelli and Held, 2020). The ability of parliament to impose accountability on the judiciary and vice versa becomes questionable but should not be swept under the carpet.

Legislative bodies play a critical role in overseeing the actions of the executive branch through hearings, inquiries, and investigations, in which case the legislators can hold leaders accountable for their conduct. Although the coupling of vertical accountability to the citizenry with inter-institutional accountability forms is necessary, it may cause frictions between the legislative and the executive arms of government (Verhoest, Roness, Verschuere, Rubecksen and MacCarthaigh, 2010). The judiciary can also hold political leaders accountable by reviewing the legality of their actions as courts can rule against decisions that violate laws or constitutional provisions justifying the existence of the courts of law (to hear cases and pass judgments) (Tetlock, 1991; Kennedy, Sayers, and Alcantara, 2022; Immergut, 1992; León, 2018). The judiciary draws its legitimacy as an accountability forum from its independence, which is nevertheless subject to empirical variation and sometimes the object of political controversy particularly when judicial officers choose to be independent other than being corrupted by the system they are answerable to. The so-called judicialization of politics first means that courts

become policy actors just by being asked to arbitrate policy controversies, even if they do not aim to advance any particular policy preferences. Beyond that, judicialization is prompted by constitutionalization in which case judges become *de facto* co-legislators when courts possess constitutional review rights because legislators are then incentivized to anticipate their verdict (Wood, Matthews, Overman, and Schillemans, 2022). By acting as veto players capable of striking down legislation (regardless of their motivations), courts become pivotal actors and indirectly take over legislative functions. Like the shadow of future elections that incentivizes incumbents to be responsive to voters' preferences, the shadow of court rulings perceived as likely to reverse legislation prompts elected officials to absorb the preferences attributed to the judiciary. In the United States, for example, a newer area of interbranch bargaining research incorporates the judicial branch into the model of separation of powers in which the legislators seek to reach decisions that are as close as possible to their own preferences but robust to court interference (Braithwaite, 1997; Knight and Schwaetzberg, 2020; Romzek, LeRoux and Blackmar, 2012; Arceneaux and Vander Wielen, 2017). There are political struggles in the Judiciary itself based on each judicial officer's intellectual, ideological, political, social, and cultural position in which case then the judicial officers should be seen to be independent as individuals. Judicial officers should stop deluding themselves that they are not doing politics since at one point or another they are actually politicians. Whether their politics emerges from their judgements or their extrajudicial scholarly writings and speeches, judicial officers have consigned the Judiciary to what Baxi calls an institutional political actor since that is how they retain their seats as Judges, Deputy Chief Justice or Chief Justice since all these are political seats anyway (Tsebelis, 2003; de Vries and Solaz, 2017; Marsden, 2011).

The Constitution's political vision is not wholly liberal but has some radical ingredients of social democracy (with pillars of decentralizing the imperial presidency, the whole gamut of rights, devolution, equitable distribution of power, democratizing and decolonizing state's machinery of violence, its values and principles) including the participation of the people in the affairs of the state and that is the politics judicial officers are supposed to do (Shaffer, Ginsburg and Halliday, 2019; Alon-Barkat and Gilad, 2017). The vision of the Constitution is that for the institutional independence of the Judiciary and the decisional independence of political officers Judicial officers work in the realization and acceptance that they have differing visions of this independence on the basis of their differing intellectual, ideological, political, social and cultural positions (Skelcher and Smith, 2015; Brouard, and Hönnige, 2017). Therefore after judicial officers struggle against the various pressures inimical to their independence (executive, parliament, corporate and civil society, cartels, ethnic communities, religion, family, relatives, and friends) to achieve their individual independence, a further struggle ensues that addresses the question in whose interest and independence is exercised whether to itself or to the individual judicial officers (Vanberg, 2015; Urbinati and Warren, 2008). A more recent phenomenon is the growing horizontal accountability of rule-makers to institutions with a core oversight function, which draw their legitimacy from being independent and non-majoritarian. Their mission is to safeguard the rule of law and protect minorities and individuals from violations of their rights and, more generally, to ensure compliance with principles of good governance (Raymond and DeNardis, 2015). Traditionally, courts are the relevant forums for legal accountability, but auditing institutions have gained importance as forums of financial accountability with the movement towards performance evaluation and measurement. A

prominent example is accountability to ombudsman institutions: although the latter have no direct sanctioning power, they can mandate public organizations to justify their decisions and practices. It is sometimes remarked that ombudsman institutions' lack of a formal 'bite' can be offset through creative operation (for instance, with an active communication policy) that pressures public authorities to comply (Bovens and Wille, 2021). This would be potentially a case of an oversight institution whose *de facto* power to control and impose a change of practice is greater than the institution's *de jure* prerogatives. The Office of the Judiciary Ombudsperson (OJO) exists to receive complaints from the Public and to enhance the integrity of the Judiciary, OJO is headed by the office of Deputy Chief Justice. Wealth Declarations were embraced as part of institutional reforms but challenges arose from Section 30(1) of the Public Officer Ethics Act but the civil servants are still required to declare their wealth particularly those vying for senior positions in both the public and the private sector. Under the Judiciary Transformation Framework this section 30(1) subverts Article 10 and 35 of the Constitution with Article 10 emphasizing on the values of integrity, accountability and transparency.

Reforms have been undertaken in the Public Service under the Public Sector Reform Programme (Araujo and Tejedo-Romero, 2016). In place of the defunct Government of Kenya, Nairobi City Council and Municipalities (Town Municipal Councils) are the National Government, City Counties and Counties, which were established under the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 is governed by several statutes, including the Cities and Urban Areas Act and the Devolved Governments Act, among others. Both the functions previously performed by the now-defunct City Councils, County Councils and Municipal Councils have been taken over by the national and county governments. Services extended by these two levels of government partly through devolution are; Agriculture, livestock development and fisheries, trade, industrialization, corporate development, tourism and wildlife, public service management, and environmental planning and management (Ginsburg, 2008; Nurdiono and Gamayuni; 2018). The Core principles of the county governments are accountability, transparency, quality, accessibility, honesty, responsiveness, equity, and teamwork, all of which contribute to efficient service delivery (Sumartono and Pasolo, 2019; Chango, 2012). To carry out the mandates and powers vested in it by the legislation the City Counties have been structured into three departments; there is the Executive Branch, led by the Governor; the Legislative Branch, represented by the County Assembly; and the County Public Service Board, led by the Speaker. The Governor appoints the ten-person County Executive Committee as the county's top policymaking organ. Every member of the County Executive Committee is in charge of a specific area of County government, such as education, youth affairs, culture, children and social services, health services, information, communication and e-government, public service management, lands, housing, and physical planning, public works, roads and transportation, trade, industrialization, co-operative development, tourism and wildlife, water, energy, forestry, and the environment. These roles are duplicated in county governments and some of them tend to overlap while others conflict. Magistrates courts are in every county and some of the counties have expanded the judiciary to have judges courts in the counties which have cities such as Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa, Eldoret and other large county towns as delineated by the judiciary. The institutional structure of the judiciary has essentially been expanded and judges are not only in Nairobi which is the capital city of Kenya but are also able to adjudicate cases in other county towns.

Essentially, there is need to give credit to the quite nuanced conclusions of psychological research regarding accountability's impact on the feelings and the behaviour of individuals who are held accountable (Peters and Nagel, 2020; Flinders, 2012; Goodhart, 2011). This body of work shows that the reactions of individuals are shaped by a whole range of moderating factors, whereas studies of politics are, perhaps unduly, more assertive when they assume, for example, that politicians can decipher the preferences of accountability forums and adjust to them (Rudalevige, 2021; Jordana, Fernández-i-Marín and Bianculli, 2018). The same applies to bureaucracy studies, which suggest that public managers and employees manage the stress caused by accountability pressure through various kinds of coping strategies (McCubbins, and Schwartz, 1984; Schmidt, 2020). As the validity of such beliefs about policy-makers' attitudes and behavioural choices has been insufficiently tested until now, the study of accountability in politics would undoubtedly be improved by a careful incorporation of more evidence from social and organizational psychology (Healy, Malhotra and Mo, 2010).

This Element intended to show that cross-fertilization between various relatively insulated research communities is indeed indispensable to capture the prismatic nature of accountability. Studying policy-makers' accountability requires navigating arenas of governance that have varying properties, such as codification or visibility. It also requires looking at the role of institutions that we must not forget are populated by actors and, therefore, do not necessarily work as intended on paper, just as they do not always produce the expected results (Gersen and Stephenson, 2014; Philp, 2009; Garoupa, and Ginsburg, 2015; Fortunato, Martin, and Vanberg, 2019). An interactionist approach highlights the existence of complex accountability webs, involving various types of individual and collective actors in their roles as account-givers and account-holders, whose interdependence stems from different organizing principles that coexist, sometimes in a conflicting way, such as hierarchy, delegation, control, antagonism or cooperation. Furthermore, time matters, and accountability fluctuates between periods of routine and equilibrium and critical episodes of high dramatic intensity, in which vulnerabilities and defences come to light especially as reputations are called into question, but they can be used as a shield to protect oneself from criticism (Gasper and Reeves, 2011; Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019).

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) subsequently launched its own investigation of the financial improprieties in the Public Service Mechanisms and institutional reforms have been embraced to gang up on the fight against corruption. Putting in place an expansive and effective anti-corruption infrastructure meant there was continued "visibility" of corruption in public institutions (Hood, James, Jones, Scott and Travers, 1999). In the fight against corruption in the public service in both the executive and administration arm of government, Cabinet Ministers (CMs) and accounting officers and top directors have been prosecuted in the court of law. Some Governors have been impeached by their County Assemblies to who they are directly accountable to on behalf of the electorate and some have been able to defend themselves while others have been replaced following by-party elections. Many Cabinet Secretaries (CSs), Permanent Secretaries (PSs) and other senior government officers such as the Auditor General, the Controller of Budget, The Chief Inspector General of Police (IG), the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) boss, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Governor of the Central Bank and Vice Chancellors (VCs) of Public Universities and Heads of State Corporations among others have appeared before committees of

Parliament to answer questions relating to their areas of responsibility. The challenge continues to lie in dismantling corruption cartels some of whom are effectively entrenched in public institutions (Tsebelis, 2003; Tripathi, Singh, and Dipa, 2019).

Legal reforms have measured up to the international standards and these reforms have borrowed from what exists in other countries. The leadership of institutions (in this case, the collective leadership of the office of the Chief Justice, the Judiciary, Leadership Advisory Council, the Associations of Judges and Magistrates, and Judicial Staff) must breathe life into the provisions of the Constitution and the law to eradicate corruption in addition to embracing other judicial reforms. Collective leadership must build on the citizen's confidence in the judiciary by becoming incorruptible, so that it upholds the impeccable judicial integrity which is an important component of the country's jurisprudence. The leadership must make the institution of the judiciary a political actor that challenges the corrupt rule of the ruling class on the basis of the Constitution and the law while evaluating its impact on the country's governance system (de Vries and Solaz, 2017; Hinterleitner, 2020; Garoupa and Ginsburg, 2015). The Judiciary Transformation Framework 2012-2016, which was launched on May, 31, 2012 had four pillars, the building of courts in marginalized and far-flung areas, using technology as an enabler for the administration of justice, and building an institution of multi-gendered professionals of integrity, competence, courage and hard work. The three pillars were aimed at developing progressive jurisprudence as decreed by the Constitution. Files and records were digitized and laptops and iPads were used by judicial officers to take notes and record minutes in meetings. Judiciaries under transformative Constitutions are, indeed, at a crossroads. They either accept to be enslaved by the ruling elite and succumb to that class's seduction of power, or they join the forces that resist the rule of a class that with their foreign masters, are a root cause of corruption. Development partners provide financial support to fund electoral justice and to advocate for democratic governments.

Presidential powers which might be geared towards progressive and transformative leadership of government and public and private institutions can use and lay a foundation for fundamental changes if the judiciary is impartial (Triantafyllou and Hansen, 2022; Sørensen, 2020). Before being a mechanism of *ex post* accountability that casts its shadow over decision-makers, elections are a mechanism of *ex ante* authorization to represent the people, which constitutes 'promissory' representation based on the prospective evaluation of pledges made by competing parties and candidates. However, elections are a relatively crude instrument for the formulation of mandates, so no one should expect that the authorization to govern will necessarily determine the content of public policies (Culpepper, 2010; Esser and Strömbäck, 2014; Jantz, Klenk, Larsen and Wiggan, 2018).

Despite the growing use of voting advice applications, there are generally relatively vague profiles of parties and candidates in mind and simply diffuse expectations from the representatives. Unsurprisingly, then, discretion is inherent to representative government, and principal-agent theory has convincingly demonstrated that delegation by a principal usually leads to the discretionary power of his or her agent if the contractual metaphor is applied to describe delegation mandates, apart from being implicit, the contract is an incomplete one, with many points remaining unspecified. As a counterweight to the agents' discretionary power and related risk of opportunistic behaviour, principals need to hold them accountable to preserve their

own interests. Therefore, in representative democracies, elections are also a mechanism of *ex post* accountability with the threat of electoral sanction which should incentivize office-holders to keep their promises to voters so that citizens retain some of their self-determination despite their decision-making power being delegated (Marvel and Girth, 2016; Goodin, 2003; Goodin, 2007; Mortensen, 2016; Koliba, Mills, and Zia, 2011; Jordana, 2017). If incumbents discount the risk of being defeated in the next election, for example, in the absence of credible alternatives or because their electorate displays strong partisan loyalty – office-holders would have no incentives to remain responsive to the voters who elected them and temporarily authorized them to rule (Jacobs, 2011; Maggetti and Papadopoulos, 2022; McGraw and Dolan, 2007).

The Auditor General and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission are required to conduct forensic lifestyle audits but the battle appears to be a tough struggle by the political leadership and political elites and the war on corruption has been described as an intra-elite struggle for the political succession when elections at national and county level are due (Salehi, 2011; Ratnaningsih, Ni Made Dwita, and Dwirandra, 2016; Liston-Heyes and Juillet, 2022). Corruption is therefore fundamentally a political problem borne out of systems that ruling political elite create. A system that puts profits before people, as indeed the capitalist system does, can never be bereft of inhuman inequalities, poverty, and the denial of material needs of the majority (Tetlock, 1992; Blauberger and Kelemen, 2017). The existing self-claimed socialist systems also face corruption within their arrangements. It is the belief that global citizens must seek to build free, just, humane, peaceful, non-militaristic, non-violent, equitable, ecologically safe, and prosperous socialist societies on the planet. This global socialist Commonwealth can only be realized through solidarity struggles of global citizens under their revolutionary leadership in the South and North (Triani and Yanthi, 2019; Brouard and Hönnige, 2017). If the political leadership is an impediment, and indeed, part of the corruption, this war is far from being won. The legal framework is rich as several laws have been enacted aimed at eradicating corruption and streamlining financial management, recruitment, oversight, public procurement, vetting of judges and magistrates, public prosecutions, administration of justice, judicial service, leadership and integrity, audits, Police Oversight, ethics and anti-corruption, salaries and remuneration and witness protection through the Office of the Judiciary Ombudsperson (OJO) among others.

A few other studies have been researched on in accountability, judicialization and governance systems. One such study was on policy controversies that gave birth to blame games in the UK, Germany and Switzerland by Hinterleitner (2020) who distinguished between ‘high stakes’ and ‘below the radar’ blame games leading to different outcomes. The author found that the public salience of issues and the institutional terrain, including informal and implicit game rules, shape the space in which conflict management occurs by providing blaming gateways and barriers against blame. In the British political system, for example, restrictive conventions about resignation (and more generally responsibility attribution) ‘clearly benefit incumbents during blame games’ with limited incentives for the government to amend failed policies; in contrast, in Germany, extensive conventions of resignation are, among others, ‘conducive to creating a rather aggressive blame game that centers on political incumbents’ (Savoie, 2008; Gomez and Wilson,

2008). This stands at odds with the conventional knowledge about the conflictual Westminster-style bipartisan politics in the United Kingdom and the more accommodative style of German politics related to coalition government and institutional fragmentation (Vis, 2016; Bach, Ruffing and Yesilkagit, 2015). Another research focused essentially on economic voting – initially in the United States, and then with a comparative approach and it established that, whether voters are concerned with their individual well-being (egocentric voting) or with the state of the economy of their country as a whole (sociotropic voting), they do reward or sanction governments depending on their evaluations (Grigorescu, 2015; Maravall and Sanchez-Cuenca, 2009). However, empirical research also suggests that voters encounter cognitive limitations in their appreciation. Voters' decisions are the outcome of complex cognitive processes in that they are not just contingent on the evaluation of outcomes that voters attribute to policy; they also require that voters to judge the responsibility of governments for these outcomes, their skills and their efforts. The necessary copresence of these elements renders the accountability chain fragile and subject to bias, especially due to media coverage that can be misleadingly negative (Achen and Bartela, 2017; Montanaro, 2017).

Findings from survey and experimental research indicate that people use shortcuts to make their decisions on political matters. They use heuristics, such as party cues, the opinions of friends, media frames or the positions of interest groups and even more so for those (generally those who are less educated) who lack familiarity with politics sometimes reduce upper-class bias in participation in public affairs which may lead to inadequate conclusions and poorly informed choices. Shortcuts are instrumental in overcoming informational shortfalls and making decisions despite the complexity of political matters but do not protect against evaluation and attribution errors due to bounded rationality (such as overemphasizing recent events or overweighting incumbents' broken pledges). Kenyans generally are quick in pointing out that this character made the same promises to us before we voted him in last time; and he is promising the same things that he never delivered glaring us again with broken promises which is the true characteristic of a real Kenyan looking for votes.

Achen and Bartels (2017) challenged what they call the 'romantic folk theory' of democracy, according to which voters would choose parties and candidates on the basis of genuine evaluations of policy. They demonstrated that voters' choices continue to be tainted by social identities and partisan loyalties, with ideology being an information-saving device used as a filter to decode reality- brink-brink-brink!. Ideology thus allows voters to surmount cognitive limits to some extent, considering that the retrospective model sets the bar too high with respect to the level of sophistication required from voters (Girth, 2014; Miller, 2005). However, as preexisting views of the world serve as perceptual screens, responsibility judgements are biased by prior political beliefs because 'people prefer to give credit for good outcomes to political actors they already like and are equally willing to blame poor outcomes on political actors they already dislike'. For example, partisanship colours which decorate the country during campaigns and perceptions of the economic situation as to who is responsible for the good or bad state of the economy are commonly used in competition politics. Furthermore, voters exaggerate politicians' influence and irrelevant events seem to affect evaluations of governmental performance. Three researchers; Healy, Malhotra and Mo (2010) explore the electoral impact of local college football games in the United States just before an election, assuming that people often transfer emotions in one domain towards judgement to a different domain. Obviously, football games are

completely unrelated to public affairs and governmental actions. Nonetheless, the authors find that a win in the ten days before Election Day caused the incumbent party to (marginally) increase its vote in the Senate, gubernatorial and presidential elections between 1964 and 2008, with the effect being larger for teams with stronger fan support. They conclude by noting that there is ‘the subtle power of irrelevant events in shaping important real-world decisions’. Other debates cling on the assumption that the government is commonly blamed for people’s misfortune, even if it is not responsible for ‘bad times’ such as floods or droughts and (Gasper and Reeves, 2011) showed that the electorate is able to separate random events such as natural accidents from governmental responses. Using various counter examples, Stokes, (2008) concluded that Achen and Bartels’ (2017) severe judgement needs to be nuanced. For example, evaluating the inadequate governmental response to Hurricane Katrina, more sophisticated respondents to a survey in Louisiana were less prone to focus blame disproportionately on the president as the most obvious national political figure (Gomez and Wilson, 2008). Findings from a study based on data from twenty-five democracies across an array of policy areas, including the economy, social welfare, immigration and national security, confirm that holding governments accountable for past performance is mainly the prerogative of highly sophisticated citizens (deVries and Gigerde, 2014; Langvatn and Holst, 2022). At the same time, however, the sophistication gap narrows when voters attach a higher degree of salience to a policy area, that is, when the issues at stake are important to them. After all, isn’t that what counts most for electoral accountability?

From another angle, Federalism allows for opportunities to designate representatives at multiple levels but complicates effective popular control by generating confusion about who is in charge of policies (Leon, 2018). Lack of clarity concerning responsibility facilitates adherence to the blame-shifting frames produced by political elites to evade responsibility for poor performance, as in the case of the responses to Hurricane Katrina (Maestas, Atkeson, Croom and Bryant, 2008). Maestas et al. (2008) study on the effects of the strategies deployed by national, state and local government officials to shift blame for the poor response to Hurricane Katrina to other levels of government. The authors show that attempts by national political actors to blame the state government of Louisiana were successful, but the size of the effect was conditional on predispositions. Individuals who rated themselves as conservatives or Republicans were more likely to blame the Democratic state government for failing to call for enough help or to even predict the likelihood of the occurrence of the Hurricane Katrina or to even act responsibly after it (Matthieß, 2020). Those who were more attentive to media coverage patterns were also more likely to believe the state’s failure to call for help was to blame for the length of time it took for the national government to provide aid to New Orleans.

Using data from the European Election Studies, authors Madariaga, et. al. (2018) and Cutler, (2008) found that when partisans of the national government in federal states are confronted with poor economic outcomes, they are more likely to ‘pass the buck’ to the regional level following a blame-shift logic, while this mechanism is absent in non-federal states. The authors concluded that federalism is challenging for Canadian voters wishing to reward or punish their governments for policy outcomes. They do not easily distinguish the roles of different jurisdictional levels, and there is little variation across issues; attentiveness to politics only very slightly improves the quality of responsibility attributions and only on issues where responsibility is objectively clearer (Thompson, 1980; Overman, Schillemans and Grimmelikhuisen, 2021). A recent study showed

that interprovincial policy variation with respect to coronavirus testing in Canada is not correlated with public assessments of the adequacy of provincial testing, confirming that Canadians have difficulty assigning responsibility to the correct level of government despite high levels of issue saliency and media attention (Vanommerig and Karré, 2014; Papadopoulos, 2023; Miller and Whitford, 2016; Majone, 2001). As it is not certain that accountability processes trigger policy improvements, the overall contribution of public accountability to good governance in the context of audience and monitory democracy is ambivalent.

These studies all concur that multilevel structures risk undermining responsibility attribution and thus democratic accountability and the associated complexity of multilevel arrangements usually go far beyond the formal distribution of power. Competences are not just divided between jurisdictional levels as they are also frequently shared among them, and different levels may need to pool resources to make policies. All this necessitates collaboration between multiple interdependent actors entangled in dense networks with informal interactions that are not easily visible from the outside. In other words, even if citizens are able to allocate formal responsibilities correctly, they may only see the most visible part of the actual policy-making processes, with a possible gap between accountability and the wielding of power (Moe, 1984; Mashaw, 2006; Tetlock and Manstead, 1985; Peters, 2021; Hobolt, Tilley and Banducci, 2013; Stark, 2011; Romzek and Dubnick, 1987; Patel and Dallas, 2002).

The capacity of legislators to oversee governmental activity effectively depends on a wide range of factors. According to Wright, Feldman and Elliot (2015), the institutional setting matters. Taking the case of the United Kingdom's model of 'Westminster'-style parliamentarism, the formal accountability chain is simple, with a direct line that has the merit of clarity from government to parliament and from parliament to the electorate (Tucker, 2018; Markakis, 2020). However, this model leaves little space for effective horizontal checks, as power is concentrated in the cabinet or even in the hands of the prime minister, and the governing party usually controls a disciplined majority in parliament. The opposition may 'bark' as expected in a logic of adversarial partisan politics but is not able to 'bite'. More specific factors also matter; for example, cross-country research suggests that the control of parliamentary committee chairs significantly strengthens opposition parties' ability to engage in legislative review (Fortunato, Martin and Vanberg, 2019). In non-parliamentary systems, as in the United States' presidential government, the executive becomes dominant but it undergoes significant pressure in its horizontal accountability obligations towards the legislature, despite its powers (Kriner and Schickler, 2017; Ginsburg, 2008). Particularly in situations of 'divided government' in which different parties control the presidency and Congress, the existence of a regime of power separation incentivizes each branch to be sensitive to the preferences of the other branch. Allocating responsibility may be even more difficult when the government is divided, as in presidential systems with different majorities in the executive and the legislative resulting in a relatively weak government facing a strong 'veto point', or when the legislature is bicameral, with two differently composed chambers. This is reassuring because it appears that institutional checks can tame majoritarian discretion without greatly hampering democratic accountability (Immergut, 1992; Tsebelis, 2003; Royed, Leyden and Borrelli, 2000).

Notwithstanding cross-country differences, the recent transformations of governance styles challenge parliaments' power and seem to be at the origin of a more or less pronounced 'deparliamentarization'. A competing narrative emphasizes the rampant concentration of power with the 'presidentialization' of politics (Pogumtke and Webb, 2005; Hohendorf, Saalfeld and Sieberer, 2021; Christensen and Lægheid, 2015) and the advent of 'court government' dominated by the prime minister, who is surrounded by an informal group of few favourite ministers, and expert staff of policy professionals, public servants and public relations (PR) specialists (Svallfors, 2020). Whatever the most accurate narrative of governance transformations, both the fragmentation of power in polycentric networks of actors and its concentration in the hands of the executive are considered to negatively impact parliamentary influence. (Tsebelis, 2003; Hirschmann, 2020; Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015). Moreover, parliamentarians may not just be unprepared to check executives; they may be unwilling to do so, as with members of governmental parties, or when the issues at stake are of low salience to them and not generating any electoral payoffs. Some parliaments have nevertheless reacted to their loss of power and managed to 'fight back' (Raunio and Hix, 2000), as with the development of parliamentary Select Committees in the United Kingdom, which scrutinize, conduct inquiries and report on governmental work. This mechanism is designed to ensure the smooth coexistence of 'policy representation' and 'public responsiveness' and therefore to remain in power, governments are incentivized to adjust their policy choices to citizens' preferences, and citizens in turn adjust their views to consider the existing supply of policies (the erosion of partisan identities and the prevalence of issue voting facilitating flexibility). In addition, representation is 'dynamic' governments use policies to respond to perceived shifts in public opinion, and policies generate feedback effects, with voters also modifying their preferences depending on the changes they discern in governmental action and the outcomes thereof ((Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019; Peters, 2014; Jordana, Fernández-i-Marín and Bianculli, 2018; Hupe and Edwards, 2012).

The emergence of a 'transnational legal order' embodied in the 'global spread of constitutional review' has paralleled the successive waves of democratization, mostly in Europe and Latin America (Vanberg, 2015, Vibert, 2007). Findings from research on four decades of German bicameralism confirm that the shadow of veto power acts as *a de facto* super-majority requirement and thus fosters cooperative behavior (Hohendorf, Saalfeld and Sieberer, 2021; Hawkins and Jacoby, 2006). Moreover, although courts are primarily considered 'negative' legislators because of their formal veto rights, which allow them to nullify legislation but when judges' preferences conflict with voters' preferences, elected officials may be caught in accountability dilemmas. These dilemmas are reflected in the debates on judicialization within political philosophy and legal theory. Wright (2015) observes that 'While political constitutionalism asserts the primacy of democratic politics as the arena of accountability and the necessary limitations of the role of unelected judges, legal constitutionalism points to the dangers of mere majoritarianism and the need for the protective accountabilities that only an independent judiciary can provide.' The frictions between the exercise of popular or parliamentary sovereignty embodied in majority rule and the protection of individual and minority rights guaranteed by the rule of law as interpreted by courts have given rise to controversies regarding the quality of democracy. Developments in the direction of judicialization are preferred by those

defending a liberal–constitutionalist conception of democracy, who set the rule of law and protection of rights as primary objectives and criticize ‘defective democracies’ (Breaux, Perrewé, Hall, Frink and Hochwarter, 2008; Merkel, 2004; United Nations, 2015) for not providing sufficient countervailing powers to unrestrained majority rule. This approach builds on the fact that, when courts are perceived as independent and impartial, they usually enjoy strong legitimacy. Courts as institutions and judges as professionals tend to build credit and consolidate their reputations in the long run (as independent agencies and their expert staff do). They usually enjoy high levels of positive opinions from the general public, although – or maybe rather because they constrain popularly elected policy-makers (Garoupa and Ginsburg, 2015; Keane, 2009; Brandsma and Moser, 2020; Manin, 1997). Therefore, legal constitutionalism praises courts’ contribution to good governance when they act as safeguards against democratic backsliding. Obviously, this doctrine is highly critical of situations in which governmental interference undermines the independence of justice, as it recently happened in European Union member states such as Hungary and Poland (Blauberger and Kelemen, 2017; Cichowski, 2013; Kuyper and Squatrito, 2017). Critics on the other hand contend that the rule of law entails the ‘rule of lawyers’. Those who do not feel comfortable with the consequences of judicialization point out the ‘counter-majoritarian difficulty’ that is inherent to it – in other words, the risk that majority rule is undermined by judicial activism. They are worried about the risk of the formal separation of powers being undermined, but more than that, they criticize the advent of government by judges, who are politically unaccountable by design (as a condition of their independence) and most likely unrepresentative (Hirschl, 2008). On the one hand, judicialization affects the treatment of ‘mega’ issues such as the importance of secularism, the contours of citizenship and national identity, electoral legislation and outcomes, corruption indictments and impeachment, bans on political parties and, more generally, the shaping of the democratic process itself as in rulings about transitional justice or emergency legislation (Peters, 2017). Whatever its origin, such a process of depoliticization leading to a ‘juristocracy’ is normatively problematic, especially if one also considers the spread of quasi-constitutional supranational treaties and legal institutions that place several facets of global governance beyond democratic reach (Hirschl, 2008; Hirschl, 2013; Huber and Shipan, 2002). There is also contrasting evidence, which should rather lead us to conclude that the claims about the rising influence of non-democratically legitimized judges are overstated. Despite judges enjoying discretion, governments can adopt court-curbing measures, implement court rulings selectively (if not ignore or even override them) and ultimately seek to strip courts of their power (Pollitt and Hupe, 2011; Wu and Christensen, 2021).

Backlash may be difficult if the constitution must be amended for that purpose and costly if courts enjoy public support, but judicial power is not unrestrained even in well-established constitutional democracies as revealed by a comparative study of the United States, France and Germany covering thirty-six years (1974 to 2009) which showed that the ability of constitutional courts to act as veto players is subject not just to cross-country but also to temporal variation because it depends on the way judges are selected, the pattern of government control, the rhythm of governmental alternation and the type of legislative procedures (Soroka, and Wlezien, 2010). Moreover, judicial review can also directly or indirectly contribute to policy-makers’ goals, so that an influential judiciary is not necessarily ‘a nuisance that a dominant coalition would want to eliminate’. Judges are sensitive (and perhaps even adhere) to the preferences of the majority of public opinion, and even independent judges care about policy-makers’ preferences and feel

restrained by the shadow of court packing measures, just as policy-makers care about and seek to anticipate judges' opinions (Brouard and Honnige, 2017; Vanberg, 2015; Koop, 2011; Mechkova, Luhrmann and Lindberg; 2019). Ultimately, with more assertive parliaments and with judicialization, executive and administrative power wielders become more accountable to other – elected or unelected – elite who are mahorly politicians and judges. These interinstitutional modes of accountability may mitigate accountability to the citizenry by design, but they may also undermine it unintentionally (Cichowski, 2013; Fawcett, Flinders, Hay and Wood, 2017).

Reform trajectories have diverged to some extent across states, as they are conditioned by their domestic institutional context, power balance and path dependencies, but also within them. These reforms originated in a critique of the bureaucracy, often portrayed as too powerful and obsessed with rules to the detriment of results and efficiency, and aimed at greater responsiveness to the needs of service users. For that purpose, one major change concerning accountability was the shift from legalism to managerialism that occurred under the banner of New Public Management (NPM) reforms (Brandsm and Schillemans, 2013; Overman, Genugten and Thiel, 2015). More or less institutionalized modes of 'social' or 'civil' accountability should facilitate the formulation of appropriate policy measures and enhance public trust in government (Brummel, 2021; Sorensen and Torfing, 2021; Bertelli, 2016) or if the information provided – such as quantitative indicators – is manipulated. Digitization is a case in point in which the – sometimes insidious – development of 'algorithmic regulation' (Yeung and Lodge, 2019), that is, decision-making informed by artificial intelligence, exacerbates information gaps. Busuioc (2021) emphasizes that that artificial intelligence algorithmic systems have become increasingly ubiquitous in the public sector of developed countries and permeate the lives in subte yet profound ways. Algorithm results now serve as aides to human decision-making and influence high-stakes matters, including health care, education, risk assessment and law enforcement. Such results have human consequences, including harmful ones on crucial aspects of life, such as liberty, privacy or welfare. Not only do automated systems largely dictate which neighbourhoods require more policing, which households need financial or educational support, and who is likely to commit fraud or crime, but they also may reproduce existing patterns of widely used by courts in the United States to predict recidivism has been found to be biased against black defendants, and facial recognition algorithms display much higher error rates for minorities, potentially leading to false arrests and discrimination against already marginalized groups when used in policing (Tilley and Hobolt, 2011; Denis, Ferlie and Gestel, 2015).

Although the problems described by Busuioc (2021) raise important accountability questions, it is usually difficult to identify the logic behind algorithmic decisions and to correct the biases and unintended consequences of the use of algorithms. Algorithmic outputs result from the value choices of system designers, who thereby indirectly become part of the policy-making process (Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Kennedy, Sayers and Alcantara, 2022). Algorithmic accountability first implies critically scrutinizing how the algorithmic results are reached, but this process often remains opaque. What is more, one needs to understand the role algorithmic inputs play in human decisions by for example, automated tools that can serve as 'moral buffers' for humans to shift the blame and evade responsibility over a desired decision. In other words, accountability becomes very demanding when one has to unpack both algorithmic processes and the human–

algorithm interaction. It is therefore not surprising that (as suggested by survey data, people are willing to trade away algorithmic transparency for small gains in effectiveness, even in sensitive areas such as policing (Thomann, Hupe and Sager, 2018; Vanhommerig and Karré, 2014; Hupe and Hill, 2007; Nielsen and Moynihan, 2017; Opperhuizen, Klijn and Schouten, 2020; Liston-Heyes and Juillet, 2022). It becomes questionable in such a context to what extent the ballot box continues to be an accountability mechanism ‘that has any direct impact on the day-to-day operations of government’, while it is not certain that participatory accountability provides satisfactory opportunities for redress (Rock, 2020; Vandamme, 2018; Sukrisno and Ardana, 2009). In the case of infrastructure policies, for instance, stakeholder accountability gives an advantage to groups claiming to experience negative externalities that are geographically concentrated, with the risk that diffuse interests are neglected. (Schillemans, Overman, Fawcett, (2021a; 2021b). Moreover, the formal separation of politics and administration makes it easier for politicians to blame managerial failure for their own errors, especially as managers lose anonymity in a context of increased media attention as in the case of ‘agency strategy’ that is part of ‘blame games’ (Hood, 2010; Powell and Whitten, 1993; Ingold. and Varone, 2012; Piatak, Romzek, LeRoux and Johnston, 2018; Overman and Schillemans, 2022). Evidence from a survey experiment involving local elected officials in Denmark showed that the provision of information on performance makes them more willing to attribute causal responsibility to administrative management, but only in cases of low performance, suggesting a negativity bias in the attribution of responsibility (Nielsen and Moynihan, 2017; Olsen, 2017; Caplan, Crampton, Grove and Somin, 2013). However, it has also been argued that public managers are inclined to shift the blame upwards to their political principals because their loyalty to their superiors may be less strong than concerns about their own reputations (Moynihan, 2012). Moreover, managers’ vulnerability is reduced by the fact that they can game the system. Although ‘measurementitis’ has often involved enormous costs – the growth of an industry of specialists – it frequently has not lived on to expectations as (Pollit, Dubnick and Fredericks, 2015) showed about the UK National Health Service. Bureaucrats can resort to presentational strategies and stage management, conspicuously displaying signs of conformity to the proclaimed goals that do not reflect actual performance. These unexpected effects of disaggregation have not remained unnoticed since they made the governmental centre ‘strike back’ and led to new post-NPM waves of reforms, mainly intended to remedy coordination deficits, such as the ‘joined-up’ or ‘whole-of-government’ initiatives. New reforms often did not replace previous ones but were added to them in a layering process that followed a piecemeal logic (Torfing, Sørensen and Fotel, 2009; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017). It suffices to consider that it is very difficult to reconcile the objectives of empowering service users, freeing managers and optimizing political control (Laegreid, Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans, 2014; Friedrich, 1940; Hobolt and Tilley, 2014).

The policy process is often interactive, polycentric and unavoidably messy, with policy complexity mirroring and responding to societal and problem complexity. Political decisions are formulated or implemented through bargaining or deliberation between actors who ‘coopete’ in diffuse policy networks, involving not only politicians and administrators but also interest representatives, stakeholders and experts (independent or members of advocacy coalitions). Therefore, governance becomes less public, less vertical and more interdependent. ‘Coproduct’ or ‘collaborative governance’ are the usual descriptions of such policy-making

modes, referring to collaboration with non-governmental actors, vertical intergovernmental cooperation across jurisdictional layers or a combination of both (Williams, Van Dooren, Christensen and Laegreid, 2017; Papadopoulos, 2012; Fossheim, 2022). Sometimes, collaborative modes have been adopted to remedy the flaws of purely managerialist governance, and in many cases, collaborative governance also has normative value with respect to pluralism and inclusiveness. However, from a democratic perspective, it is problematic if elected officials are unevenly engaged in collaborative policy-making arenas, as shown by a comparative study of a large number of cases across countries and jurisdictional levels (Sørensen, Hendriks, Hertting and Edelenbos, 2020). The most influential actors may not be officially authorized to make collectively binding decisions which they may not be visible, possibly leading to errors in the allocation of responsibilities, or may be unelected, so that the wielding of power is divorced from democratic accountability. The movement towards collaborative governance is prominently manifested in the advent of various modes of cooperation in public service delivery. It becomes necessary in such a context ‘to ask whether private contractors should be treated as part of the government apparatus for the purposes of holding them accountable for the exercise of public power’ (Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh, 2012). What used to be internal bureaucratic disputes become externalized, possibly leading to litigation, so this is yet another driving factor of the empowerment of courts as accountability forums (Girth, 2014; Maricut-Akbik, 2020; Grube, 2019; Hobolt, Tilley and Banducci, 2013).

Another major trend is the delegation of tasks to independent agencies that have been entrusted with considerable authority, most notably over economic and risk regulation but also more generally over service delivery and policy implementation. In particular, regulatory agencies – such as competition authorities or those in charge of the utilities sector – become crucial players with strong law-making roles in their area of competence (Carpenter and Krause, 2007; Vibert, 2007), so that their growth has been portrayed as ‘the rise of the unelected’. The influence of NPM doctrines is visible in several agency characteristics, such as the organizational disaggregation of centralized bureaucracies into specialized units that are considered to be more efficient, more *ex ante* operational flexibility for agency managers given their familiarity with the sector of operations, and performance contracting with the ensuing emphasis on *ex post* accountability for results (MacCarthaigh et. al., 2010; Soroka, 2014; Koop, 2014; Koliba, Mills, and Zia, 2011; Raunio and Hix, 2000; Majone, 2001; Eriksen, 2022; Miller and Whitford, 2016; Hanretty and Koop, 2013; Hood, 2010; United Nations, 2008; Mansbridge, 2003; Jachi and Yona, 2019; United Republic of Tanzania, 2019; Carpenter and Moss, 2013; Hill and Lynn, 2005; Hall, Frink and Buckley, 2017; Hill and Lynn, 2005).

Overall, the correlation between political independence and public accountability is relatively weak, as evidenced by a large survey encompassing 799 regulatory agencies in 115 countries and 17 policy sectors (Jordana, Fernandez-i-Marín and Bianculli, 2018). At the same time, agencies, as typical examples of output-oriented organizations, need to justify their choices and convince various audiences about the achievement of their targets. Formally, they are subject to managerial surveillance by agency boards, financial surveillance by auditing institutions and legal surveillance by courts (Schillemans, Overman and Fawcett, 2021; Schillemans, 2010; Bach, Van Thiel, Hammerschmid, and Steiner, 2017). In the European Union, for example, national agencies become part of a multilevel administrative space through their participation in EU-wide rule-enforcing and coordination networks. This amplifies centrifugal trends within

national executives because national agencies operate at arm's length from governments and tend to become 'double-hatted' by developing loyalties with respect to EU institutions. The 'many eyes' problem, which may undermine the effectiveness of individual agencies' accountability, combines with the 'many hands' problem. In such a shared administrative space, responsibility is diluted, and informational asymmetries that obstruct public scrutiny are particularly difficult to overcome in multilevel settings (Bach, Ruffing and Yesikagit, 2015; Egeberg and Trondal, 2009; Posner and Vermeule, 2011; Pollitt and Hupe, 2011; Brummel, 2021; Schillemans, 2011; Brummel, 2021; Apaydin and Jordana, 2020; Boer, 2022).

The accountability activity of agencies is said to be more intense than expected, and the monitoring activity of forums is lower than expected. First, agency management may opt to engage proactively in accountability activities. Depending on the type of audience, this may happen because managers believe they have a moral obligation to be held accountable or because they consider this useful for learning purposes, but management can also be animated by a consequentialist logic. Thus, agency managers cultivate a calculated use of voluntary forms of accountability for strategic purposes as part of reputation management, credit claiming and the creation of constituency support (Busuioc and Lodge, 2016 & 2017; Karsten, 2015; Koop, 2014; Christou and Simpson, 2006; Nguyen, Rawat and Morris, 2020).

Koop and Lodge (2020) found that economic regulation in the United Kingdom became increasingly politicized in the aftermath of the financial crisis, being subject to more critical media attention, parliamentary scrutiny and governmental interventionism. British economic regulators in the fields of financial markets, competition, and utilities responded by extending their communication to broader audiences – using a wider range of tools and less specialist language- and by seeking to widen consumer engagement. Proactive accountability contributes to a good reputation, which is in turn a firewall that shields from criticism, including when reputation is undeserved. Staging 'showcase accountability' discourages critical scrutiny as revealed by experimental evidence that 'promotional symbols' compensate for poor performance by shaping citizens' attitudes (Brummel, 2021; Alon-Barkat and Gilad, 2017; Hameleers, Bos, and de Vreese, 2019; Sager, Thomann and Hupe, 2020; Plattner, Diamond, and Walker, 2016; Maggetti and Papadopoulos, 2022). Forums may find it misplaced to criticize an organization or an individual that is highly regarded by the forum itself and in all likelihood by other socially significant audiences (Bertelli and Busuioc, 2021; Benjamin and Posner, 2018). The cause here is forum drift, which often relates to information gaps and paralysis due to goal conflict or to intentional inactivity because of limited time and attention and of other more pressing priorities. Policy salience seems to be necessary for forums to become active and what counts perhaps even more is the existence of exceptional focusing events that damage the reputation of agencies by subjecting them to 'emotionalized blame attribution' (Iyengar, 1991; Tetlock and Lerner, 1999; Cutler, 2008; O'Donnell, 1998; Halachmi, 2014). Parent ministries may not have the expertise to fully grasp the implications of the highly diverse and often technically, legally or operationally complex decisions made by agencies, or at least this is what agency managers tend to think (Koop, 2011; Wood, Mathews, Overman and Schillemans, 2022; Schilleman, Overman and Fawcett, 2021). These concerns are even more serious in the case of agencies because several among them, and many bureaucratic organizations and policy networks more generally, are much less visible to the public, notwithstanding their influence on decision-making. Overall, in view of the political role of bureaucracy, addressing issues related to the accountability thereof is necessary to capture the way the governmental process works in practice. Reform processes

have affected accountability relations in different directions, and the outcomes appear to be highly context-dependent and uncertain (Overman, Schillemans and Grimmelijsen, 2021; Lozano, Atkinson and Haizhen, 2021; Dalton, Cain and Scarrow, 2003). It triggers governmental responsiveness to the preferences of public opinion although studies of electoral accountability do not capture the intricacies of the input, output and feedback processes leading to these adjustments (Willems and Van Dooren, 2017; Dimova, 2020; Mulgan, 2000a; Mulgan, 2000b).

For centuries the world has debated the context and consequences associated with explosion and implosion. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the Cold War ended, the Soviet Empire collapsed, and neoliberalism did not fare well and continuous to all after the financial meltdown since 2007 that shook the notion that neoliberalism was the end of history. So, the paradigms of neoliberalism (imperialism of the West and East), socialism and communism still robustly engage the intellectualism, ideology, politics, and economics in addition to the social-cultural, ecological, and spiritual humanities. The Forum invoked radical paradigms in its mobilization, organization, and its broad radical intellectual pursuits. At some point particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, radical social democracy anchored in the paradigms of human rights and social justice was viewed as the basis of debating fundamental restructuring of societies (Papadopoulos, 2007; Busuioc and Lodge, 2016; Friedrich, 1937; Hasler, Kuebler and Marcinkowski, 2016).

Kenya is still dominated, exploited, and oppressed by foreign interests of the West and East. The racketeer unpartriotic comprador of the ruling class beholden to protecting foreign interests that given this ruling class of the elite, economic, social, political, and cultural protection from the resistance by the Kenyan people becomes a thing of the past. Corruption is said to germinate and thrive in a constitutional and legal system of the ruling class and by its political practice, makes non-restraining, hypocritical, rhetorical, and a continuous political diversion (Grube, 2019; Kuipers. and Brändström, 2020). In Kenya, as indeed in the rest of the Third World, the political nature of corruption rises from the political elite. Modern transformative constitutions are more detailed than the traditional liberal ones because they provide the requisite qualifications for judicial officers, and the process of their recruitment (Tidå, 2022; Rock, 2020; Power, 1999; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov, 2019; Pollitt, 2015). Public participation is a requirement in the recruitment of judges who in Kenya are appointed by the Judicial Service Commission (JSC). The Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice, the JSC forwards their names to the President for vetting by Parliament. The President swears in the judges of superior courts while the Chief Justice swears in the Magistrates who head the other subordinates courts. The Judiciary Fund is created under the Constitution to receive and manage funds for the Judiciary and the Judiciary is expected to account for the resources they hold in trust for the Kenyan people. The many members of the JSC appointed by various organs and chaired by the Chief-Justice is meant to guarantee its independence, accountability, transparency and fairness in its work. The JSC seeks integrity reports from the Law Society of Kenya, The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), the Universities (to confirm that the candidates have paid their University loans), the corporate sector (if the candidates indeed worked in the sector), and National Intelligence Service (NIS). The other pressures, duress and influences that interfere with the independence of the Judiciary internally some of which are invisible and external from other arms of government and include seduction of political and judicial power,

families and friends, vested corporate and civil society interests and the international community (a euphemism for economic, social, cultural and political foreign interests) (Bovens and Wille, 2021; Koenig-Archibugi, 2017).

Corruption in the Judiciary has been majorly on Procurement of goods and services in which the Judiciary is accused of buying goods and services it did not need and was buying low quality goods and services it needed by paying exorbitant and corrupt amounts (Busuioc and Lodge, 2017; Carpenter and Krause, 2015; Fabbrini, 2015). Additionally for the latter, additional expenditure would be paid to replace or repair the substandard goods and services. Corruption among clerical staff in the registries and those who have corrupted judicial officers affirmed the people's perception that justice is only available to those who can pay. Making files disappear so that matters are not heard, and fast tracking matters for priority hearing-both for bribes-made the cost of access to justice definitely higher. From the quest for political power, through electoral financing, to the capture, and maintenance of that power on the back of and with the support of the corrupt, it loses the ability, credibility, and appeal to fight the vice while in office. They get emasculated-victims of their own benefits and beneficiaries. This corrodes the power of the state to enforce ant-corruption laws or politics (Ingram and Schneider, 2016; Ossege, 2012; Koop and Lodge, 2020; Kuyper and Squatrito, 2017; Cristofoli, Douglas, Torfing and Trivellato, 2022).

The principles of governance as outlined in the 2010 Constitution are patriolism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people, human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized, popular participation in politics, integrity, and sustainable development. The fundamental values that anchore all these values and principles are human dignity, inclusiveness, equity, equality, non-discrimination, democracy, protection of the marginalized and participation of the people (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2014; Tu and Gong, 2022; Strom, 2000; Pierson, 1994) . The promulgation of the 2010 Constitution was momentous as it was dubbed the people's constitution imposed on the political elite by the Kenyan people (public). By making the 2010 constitution ordinary Kenyan citizens were able to reject and replace the then existing social order, as a precursor for a new social, economic, cultural and political reality in which people reclaimed their popular sovereignty. The 2010 Kenya Constitution resolved to reconstitute and reconfigure the Kenyan state from its former vertical, imperial, authoritative and unaccountable form to an accountable, horizontal, decentralized, democratized and responsive state. People would then be at the centre of power and the vision of nationhood would be promised on core norms including national unity, political integration, and diversity, democratisation and decentralization of the Executive; devolution; public service; popular sovereignty in which the state is a servant, not master, integrity in public leadership and a Bill of Rights (Breunig, Grossman and Hänni, 2022; Christopher, Sarens and Leung, 2009; König, Felfeli, Achtziger and Wenzelburger, 2022) that provides for economic, social and cultural rights to signal the creation of a human rights state and society in Kenya. The Constitution created new institutions and strengthened some existing ones as necessary devices that provide democratic checks and balances. The Kenyan people chose the route of transformation to end poverty and deprivation and regain dignity and sovereignty. The 2010 Constitution reflects the vision of the patriots who struggled and fought against domination

exploitation, and oppression by British colonialism and its successor regimes, institutions created by the 2010 Constitution such as the county governments, constitutional commissions, separation of powers, checks and balances, independence and principles of inter-dependence between state organs and equitable distribution of national resources. The very idea of a transformative constitution (such as those of India, Columbia, South Africa and Kenya) is that the constitutional superstructure is embedded on a theory that it will be an instrument for the transformation of society rather than a historical and social-political pact to preserve the status quo as the earlier Constitution did (de Wilde and Rauh, 2019; Schmidt, 2020; Potter, 2019; Dommett and Flinders, 2015; Hassenteufel and Genieys, 2021).

The research was pegged on three distinct theories: agency theory, the theory of inspired confidence, the Peacock and Wisman theory and the Legitimate Theory. The economic theory of agency can be traced back to Ross, while the institutional theory of agency can be traced back to Mitnick (Mitnick, 2011). Conversely, the agency dilemma appears whenever agents act in ways that are counter to the principals' interests. According to legitimacy theory, businesses have an obligation under the social compact to make public commitments that benefit their local communities and address issues raised by their constituents (Juhmani, 2014). According to the agency theory, principals, the owners of an organization's resources have a unique connection with the agents, the people hired to manage those resources in exchange for compensation (Salehi, 2011; de Wilde and Rauh, 2019). Limperg (1932), in his theory of Inspired Confidence, advocates for the involvement of external stakeholders in the affairs of the organization. According to Jachiet. *et al* (2019), this brings accountability to stakeholders who contribute resources towards the existence and survival of the organization. Herber (1989) makes a compelling case that the Peacock -Wiseman hypothesis of governmental spending and contends that prudent spending enhances public accountability. Theodore Limperg's Theory of Inspired Confidence which he established in the 1920s (Limperg, 1932) lends credence to the idea that the independence of governments is a crucial component of the quality of the services it provides.

Research Problem

Political accountability stands as a cornerstone of effective governance, fostering transparency, inclusiveness, and equitable development. When governments and public officials are held accountable for their actions, it builds public trust, enhances decision-making processes, and mitigates corruption. Accountability mechanisms, ranging from public audits to independent oversight bodies, play a crucial role in ensuring that governance remains transparent, responsive, and effective. Transparent government operations, facilitated by mechanisms such as open budgets and public audits, ensure that public resources are managed responsibly. Examples such as South Korea's Board of Audit and Indonesia's centralized service delivery portals demonstrate how transparency enhances decision-making and builds public confidence. The importance of holding officials accountable becomes evident in the reduction of corruption and the bolstering of institutional legitimacy. Corrupt leaders can manipulate systems to avoid scrutiny while lack of transparency in government makes it difficult for citizens to hold leaders accountable. Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and New Zealand's inclusive governance practices highlight the benefits of increased public confidence and legitimacy. In countries that embrace the parliamentary systems of governance, legislatures can be seen as the

principals and governments as their agents, this being the next element of the delegation chain after the voters, as the ultimate principals, have delegated their decision-making power to legislators. In that sense, ministerial accountability to the legislature is an element of the vertical accountability chain that runs in the reverse direction of the delegation chain, with accountability of the public administration to its political superiors being the next element in the chain.

The topics of openness and Accountability in business are growing in popularity and importance, but they are also receiving less attention from academics (Chipwa, 2005). Lack of transparency and Accountability wrapped within corporate solid governance standards has contributed to organizational failures despite existing business legislation, including legal framework and norms which control corporate operations (Katera, 2003; Lipsy, 2017). Many people are interested in openness, accountability, the judicial system and political governance. A large body of literature, according to some scholars, has focused on the idea that more openness might help cut down on corruption and better governance can mean the hard earned country resources are not put to waste (Blumkin & Gradstein, 2002; Lindstedt&Naurin, 2010; Peisakhin and Pinto, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2013). According to other scholars like Ekanayake (2004), the question of whether the assumptions, predictions, and prescriptions of agency theory are universally applicable is a crucial one in management since their applicability in diverse cultural settings is mostly unclear.

Academics have researched on auditor independence, financial statement transparency, independence of the judiciary and judicial integrity and governance systems including the electoral process in both developed and developing countries. Adeniyi and Mieseigha (2013) did a study and found a negative correlation between auditor experience and audit quality, even though this variable was not statistically significant. However, Zahmatkesh and Rezazadeh (2019) discovered that the auditor's professional competence, Accountability, and objectivity all impact audit quality. The relationship between political accountability and good governance is multifaceted. South Korea's Board of Audit and Inspection and Indonesia's centralized service delivery portals exemplify how transparency can enhance public trust and improve accountability. Moreover, holding officials accountable strengthens institutional credibility and reinforces adherence to the rule of law. The experiences of countries like Singapore and New Zealand highlight how measures aimed at reducing corruption and increasing responsiveness to citizen needs lead to more legitimate and credible governance structure (Svallfors, 2020). Similarly, Germany's robust legal framework underscores the importance of checks and balances in preventing abuse of power and promoting accountability. Participatory budgeting initiatives in Brazil and social audits conducted under India's MGNREGA program demonstrate how involving citizens in governance processes enhances resource management, service delivery, and public participation. From Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption to Canada's open data initiatives, examples abound of how accountability mechanisms deter unethical practices and promote good governance. The interpretation and the implementation of the Constitution, and the administration of justice, are political projects and all electorates are doing one, some or all of these projects however small. Judiciaries under transformative Constitutions are, indeed, at the crossroads. They either accept to be enslaved by the ruling elite and succumb to that class's seduction of power, or they join the forces that resist the rule of a class that with their foreign masters, are the root cause of corruption because arguably they consider associating with foreigners so that they can be funded for championing democracy (Willems, Van Dooren, 2017; Aleksovskaja, Schillemans, and Grimmeliikhuijsen, 2022). The

effectiveness of electoral accountability also depends on the institutional architecture of the political system. Judicial independence has been at the core of the world’s democratic and constitutional evolution. An independent judiciary fasttracks judicial reforms and institutional reforms that ensures that justice is administered, that the rule of law is followed and that the fight against corruption or the corruption war is not lost. The leadership of institution’s such as the collective leadership of the office of the Chief Justice, the Judiciary, Leadership Advisory Council, the Associations of Judges and Magistrates, and Judicial Staff must breathe life into the provisions of the Constitution and the law to eradicate corruption in addition to embracing other judicial reforms. Putting in place an expansive and effective anti-corruption infrastructure means that there is continued “visibility” of corruption in public institutions. In the fight against corruption in the public service in both the executive and administration arm of government, Cabinet Ministers (CMs) and accounting officers and top directors have been prosecuted in the courts of law. Some Governors have been impeached by their County Assemblies and subsequently by the Senate, many Cabinet Secretaries (CSs), Permanent Secretaries (PSs) and other senior government officers such as the Auditor General, the Controller of Budget, The Chief Inspector General of Police (IG), the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) boss, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Governor of the Central Bank and Vice Chancellors (VCs) of Public Universities and Heads of State Corporations among others have appeared before committees of Parliament and before the Senate to answer questions relating to their areas of responsibility particularly those relating to financial impropriety. This research sought to establish the influence of political accountability on governance in Kenya and to establish the effect of political governance and jurisprudence on governance in Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

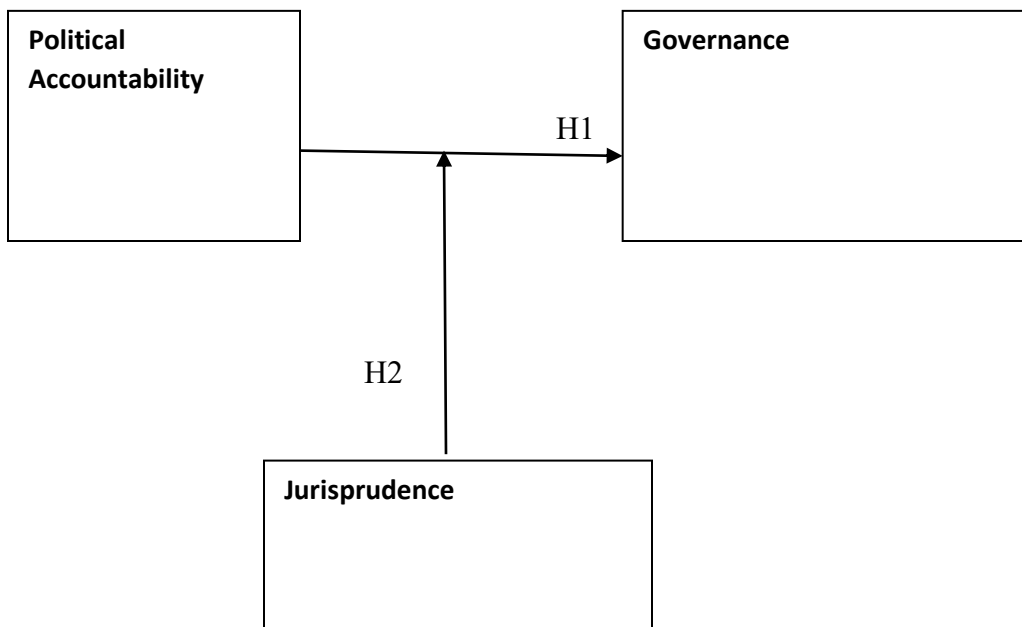


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Testing

H01 : There is no relationship between political accountability and governance in Kenya

H02: Political accountability and Jurisprudence donot influence governance in Kenya

Materials and Methods

The data values were measured on a 5-likert scale and means and standard deviations estimated. Tests of dispersion and measures of central tendency were estimated. Data was also ranked in order of priority. Data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. This approach of qualitative data analysis tools are recommended by Douglas, Taylor and Francis (2002). The analyzed data was displayed in tables. The following is the estimated model that was used to determine how the independent variable(s) impact on the dependent variable:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

Where:

Y = Governance

X_1 = Political accountability

X_2 = Jurisprudence

β_0 = Constant term

β_1 = regression coefficients for X_1

β_2 = regression coefficients for X_2

β_1 and β_2 are coefficients

ϵ = the error term

Two regression equations were estimated. The first regression was to establish the effect of political accountability on governance in Kenya as stated as follows.

$$\text{Govnce} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PolAcc} \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where, Govnce is governance and PolAcc is political accountability β_1 is the coefficient and β_0 is the constant term.

The second equation was estimated to determine the effect of political accountability and jurisprudence on governance in Kenya and was stated as follows.

$$\text{Govnce} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PolAcc} + \beta_2 \text{Jurispdce} \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where, Govnce is governance and PolAcc is political accountability, Jurispdce is jurisprudence, β_1 and β_2 , are coefficients and β_0 is the constant term.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Descriptive statistics

The variables of the study were political accountability, jurisprudence and governance. Every government is expected to be accountable to its citizens. Accountable governments and leaders produce happier citizens who are productive and who contribute to economic development. Good governance is a characteristic of stable governments in which citizens engage in productive activities and are able to spur their economy to higher levels in terms of development as measured using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at market prices. Different economies

embrace different accountability systems depending on the structure of government or (and) institutions and they may use democratic, administrative, professional, collaborative and consumer accountabilities. Jurisprudence has been viewed as improving efficiency of the judiciary and has tended to focus on judicial reforms and have encompassed the judicial independence, judicial integrity, judicial reforms, fight against corruption and rule of law. Good governance has been desired by both developing and developed countries and have been identified as those which embrace the parliamentary system, electoral system, national state governance, devolution, democratic state, dictatorship, the military state and the police state.

This study used the 5-Likert Scale measurement to rate the variables of the study, with its five discrete levels, which were used to qualitatively quantify the dependent and the independent variables. The dependent variable was governance while the independent variables were political accountability and jurisprudence. Accountable governments which adhere to rule of law are preferred not only by their own citizens but also by the international community. These governments are therefore said to adhere to good governance. The variables of the 5-likert scale were averaged and summarized in the table 1.

Table 1: Political Accountability, Jurisprudence and Governance

	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Governance	3.24	1.279	1.081	-0.878
Political Accountability	2.61	1.671	0.278	0.697
Jurisprudence	1.7	0.926	-0.575	0.756

Source: Researcher, 2026

Governance had a mean score of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 1.279 an indication of the importance of governance in Kenya. Kenyans prefer a country that is properly governed. The data on governance was normally distributed but skewed to the right. Political accountability had a mean score of 2.61 and had a low standard deviation. The high mean value of 2.61 is an indication that political accountability is important. The data observations were however skewed to the right and were normally distributed. Jurisprudence had a mean value of 1.7 which either indicates lack of understanding of Jurisprudence or low appreciation of it. The standard deviation of Jurisprudence was a low of 0.926 which shows low variation while the data was skewed to the left but was normally distributed. Essentially, governance is considered important, political accountability is valued and jurisprudence is desired.

Good governance was then evaluated as prescribed by international standards. Governments were described as being Parliamentary systems, Electoral systems, National state, Devolved governments, Dictatorships, Military states or Police state governments. Kenya was viewed as sliding to each of the named types of governance systems. Questions were asked electronically and answers were received and summarized. Ranking of the responses was done in terms of the preferences of the different types of governance systems. The ratings of the different governance systems were ranked and were discussed in the following section. The country was

viewed as being more of devolved state than any of the other states of governance. Parliamentarians were seen to focus on their own self interest and not on the interest of the electorate per-se. The electorates felt that after casting their votes everything about them was forgotten until the next date for general elections. Those put in office through the ballot were then there to reap benefits and perquisites for the entire five year period when they would seek re-election. Kenyans were shy to talk about dictatorship state, Military state and Police state but there was insinuation that there was a lot of Police brutality particularly observed during the Genzi Protests and subsequent Memorials. Democracy was viewed to have been slowly fading away for a country that was admired by the rest of the Globe as having met the international standards in terms of good governance.

Table 2: Governance

Governance	Rank
Parliamentary System	5
Electoral System	1
National State Governance	4
Devolved System (Devolution)	1
Democratic State	3
Dictatorship	6
Military State	7
Police State	8

Source: Researcher, 2026

Sequentially, the rankings in terms of preferences of the governance systems were according to the order of preference. The electoral system was most preferred where the electorates choose their leaders through the casting of the ballot. Devolution was also rated the same probably because in devolved systems of government, resources are trickled down to lower levels and leaders are given the mandate to manage resources at the County levels. County Assemblies have their own Legislative Arm of Governance and are able to decide who their leaders are including imposing checks and balances on them through the County Assemblies. County Governments are also given leeway to participate in generating their own resources. Democracy was ranked third as many citizens; particularly the elite prefer democratic states in which there is freedom of expression. Democratic Governments tend to attract a lot of Donor Funds as development partners tend to champion ideas that encourage freedom and participation of decision making pertaining to economic affairs.

National State governance was also preferred in which the country has a head of state and decisions are made at various levels of Government including the County Governments.

The Parliamentary system was viewed as that of being cherished by selfish individuals who would pass laws to benefit them. Parliamentarians are the elite who prefer policies that address their party interests and their political interests. Dictatorship was condemned as it was associated with the rule of the former Second President Daniel Arap Moi and the view was that the current dispensation does not tolerate dictatorship. Military State governance was looked at as being ‘gun-centric’ and too hard for Kenyans as the ‘Military Guys’ are none-nonsensical and commandeering. Reasoning is not within their domain as they leverage on giving orders which have to be followed. The Police State is not cherished by any developing country as they are the ‘rungu’ and ‘watu wa twanga twanga’ or people of ‘beating most probably using sticks’. The Police Force does not entertain reasoning either as their language is normally, “Utajua Ujui” literally translated as “You will know You do not Know” meaning they are the ones who know it all.

Governance measures were used and their means, standard deviations and skewness and kurtosis estimated. Governance measures were parliamentary system, electoral system, national state governance, devolved system, democratic state, dictatorship, military state and police state. The estimates are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Governance

Governance	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Parliamentary System	3.677	0.3641	-1.0256	2.9841
Electoral System	4.827	1.6359	0.2543	0.3785
National State Governance	2.735	1.3975	1.9847	-0.3356
Devolved State	4.278	2.8609	2.8942	1.0936
Democratic State	2.692	1.8531	-1.1453	-0.9638
Dictatorship	3.261	0.0282	1.2457	3.1288
Military State	1.328	0.3216	2.3398	1.8357
Police State	0.345	0.1235	-0.4687	-1.9375

Source: Research Data, 2026

The means, standard deviations and skewness and kurtosis of the descriptive statistics of the values of governance were calculated. The respondents rated the types of governance systems and the researcher calculated the descriptive statistics. The electoral system was most preferred with a mean of 4.827 while the devolved system was second on the line with a mean of 4.278. The parliamentary system and dictatorship followed in that order with a mean score of 3.667 and 3.261 respectively. National state and democratic state were fifth and sixth respectively with values of 2.692 and 1.328 respectively while military state and police state were least preferred by the respondents with 1.328 and 0.345 respectively. The standard deviations were generally low indicating little divergence of views of the respondents and ranged from 0.0282 at the lowest to a high of 2.8609. Data observations were skewed to the left and right and the data observations were not normally distributed except for the preferences for the electoral system, national state governance, devolved state and democratic state which were 0.3785, -0.3356, 1.0936 and -0.9638 in that order while the other values were all outside the range of -1.96 and +1.96.

As shown in table 4 political accountability is valued by the electorate as they expect their leaders to account for the financial and non-financial resources entrusted onto them. 5-likert scale was used to measure political accountability. Political accountability was categorized into democratic accountability, administrative accountability, professional accountability, collaborative accountability and consumer accountability. Leaders are expected to account for their democracy. Leaders are supposed to account for their actions and to serve the people who elected them. Democratic accountability had the highest mean of 4.219 with a standard deviation of 1.491 which shows a big mean and a low standard deviation which means low variation. The data observation of democratic accountability shows that the data is skewed to the right and that the data observations are normally distributed. Administrative accountability has a slightly above average mean of 2.387 with a low standard deviation of 0.758, skewed to the right and is normally distributed. Professional accountability has a low mean of 2.147 with low variation of

Table 4: Political Accountability

Source: Researcher, 2026

0.451 and the data observation is not normally distributed but skewed to the left. Collaborative accountability is considered important by development partners. This variable had a high mean of 3.239 with low variation as denoted by the standard deviation of 0.131 with data observations skewed to the left and not normally distributed. Consumer accountability had a low mean of 1.447 with low variation as denoted by the standard deviation of 0.084. This last consumer accountability had data observations that were skewed to the left with data observations normally distributed.

Political Accountability	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Democracy	4.219	1.491	1.063	0.764
Administrative	2.387	0.758	0.978	0.176
Professional	2.147	0.451	-1.759	-0.759
Collaborative	3.239	0.131	-1.147	-0.147
Consumer	1.447	0.084	-0.753	0.241

Table 5: Jurisprudence

Judiciary	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Judicial Independence	2.791	1.852	0.1845	1.0671
Judicial Integrity	1.967	0.893	0.9571	8.0853
Fight Against Corruption	0.576	0.008	-0.9638	7.3485
Rule of Law	0.135	0.175	-0.6482	2.1573
Judicial Reforms	1.286	1.137	0.8539	3.6538

Source: Researcher, 2026

The Judiciary requires independence so as to address the country’s court cases and to have oversight institutions that are supposed to oversee the country’s judicial system. Jurisprudence encompasses the broad aspects of judicial independence, judicial integrity, judicial reforms, fight against corruption and the rule of law. Jurisprudence was measured using the five aspects which were measured on a 5-likert scale as discussed in the paragraphs that follow. Judicial independence had a mean of 2.791 with a relatively low standard deviation of 1.852 with skewness to the right and normally distributed data observations. Judicial integrity is quite low with less than average mean of 1.967 which means that the respondents donot either understand the concept of judicial integrity or donot place a lot of importance to judicial integrity. The standard deviation is quite low at 0.893 with data observations skewed to the right and data observations which are normally distributed. Fight against corruption had a low mean of 0.576 with a low standard deviation of 0.008 and skewness to the left and data observations which are not normally distributed. The rule of law recorded a mean of 0.135 with data variations of a low of 0.175 and skewness to the left but not normally distributed. Judicial reforms reported a low average of 1.286 with a low mean of below average with observations skewed to the right and data that is not normally distributed.

Regression Results

The Effect of Political Accountability on Governance

Governance was regressed against political accountability and the regression results as outlined in table 5 are hereby discussed. The coefficient of correlation stood at 23.3% indicating that there is a positive relationship between political accountability and governance. The coefficient of determination of ($r=0.193$) is a testament that 19.3% of governance is explained by political accountability and this explanation is significant as given by the F-value of 35.451 and a significance p-value of 0.000 ($p=0.000$).

Table 6: Governance and Political Accountability

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square		Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.233 ^a	.193		.176		2.88626		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Governance								
ANOVA^a								
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
1	Regression	64.776	1	64.776	35.451	.000 ^b		
	Residual	27.635	32	2.083				
	Total	92.411	33					
a. Dependent Variable: Governance								
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Accountability								
Coefficients^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
		B	Std. Error			Beta	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		1	(Constant)	-1.0676			.4817	
Political Accountability (PolAcc)	15.745		2.573	.675	4.254	.000	11.027	21.785
a. Dependent Variable: Governance (Govnce)								

Source: Researcher, 2026

The constant term of -1.0676 is not significant. The constant value of 1.0676 means that 1.0676 of political accountability enhances governance by one unit or political accountability improves governance by 106.76% but not significantly because t-values and p-values denotes insignificance (t= -.154, p=value= .679).The coefficient term of 15.745 of political accountability infers that 15.745 units of politics accounts for only one unit of governance which means the biggest proportion of governance is explained by other factors outside political accountability. Essentially, 1574.5% of political accountability contributes to improvement in governance. However the coefficient value of political accountability of 15.745 is significant (t=4.254, p=.000). **‘The hypothesis that political accountability has no significant effect on governance is rejected.’**

The resulting equation of the linear regression model becomes;

$$\text{Govnce} = 15.745\text{PolAcc} - 1.0676$$

Where Govnce is governance and PolAcc is political accountability

The Effect of Political Accountability and Jurisprudence on Governance

Table 7: Political Accountability and Jurisprudence on Governance

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.127 ^a	.145	.107	12.5636		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Accountability, Jurisprudence						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.332	1	97.332	139.367	.000 ^b
	Residual	37.644	41	4.061		
	Total	133.978	42			
a. Dependent Variable: Governance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Accountability, Jurisprudence						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B

		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-1.369	.817		-.378	.579	2.442	1.476
	Political Accountability (PolAcc)	11.644	3.684	.643	3.376	.000	13.017	21.436
	Jurisprudence (Jurispdce)	19.287	5.189	.764	7.287	.000	14.141	27.254
a. Dependent Variable: Governance (Govnce)								

Source: Researcher, 2026

Political accountability and Jurisprudence were regressed against governance and their implications on governance evaluated. Political accountability and jurisprudence were found to explain 14.5% of governance and the explanation was significance as inferred by the F-value of 139.367 and p-value of .000. Governance of 83.5% was therefore explained by other factors other than political accountability and jurisprudence. The constant term of the regression was -1.369 which means that without political governance and jurisprudence, governance decreases by 1.369 (governance reduces by 136.9%) which was not significant as denoted by $t=-0.378$, $p=0.579$. Political accountability had a coefficient of 11.644 which was considered significant ($t=13.017$, $p=0.000$). In this respect political accountability significantly enhances governance with 11.644 units or political governance significantly enhances governance by 1164.4%. Jurisprudence produced a coefficient of 19.287 which was significant ($t=7.287$, $p=0.000$) meaning that 19.287 units of jurisprudence contributes to one unit of governance or jurisprudence increases governance by 19.287 units or improves governance by 1928.7%. The implication is that political accountability and jurisprudence are importance in positively influencing governance in Kenya. **The hypothesis that ‘political accountability and jurisprudence donot significantly influence governance is therefore rejected’.**

The regression equation from the regression model can be stated as;

$$\text{Govnce} = 11.644\text{PolAcc} + 19.287\text{Jurispdce} - 1.369$$

Where; Govnce is governance, PolAcc is political accountability and Jurispdce is jurisprudence. Collectively, 11.644 units of political accountability and 19.287 units of jurisprudence explain one unit of governance. The 11.644 coefficient of political accountability is significant ($t=3.376$, $p=.000$) and additionally, the 19.287 coefficient of jurisprudence is significant ($t=7.287$, $p=.000$). The constant value of -1.369 is not significant ($t=-.378$, $p=.579$).

Discussions

Political accountability stands as a cornerstone of good governance, promoting transparency, efficiency, and public trust. By implementing robust accountability mechanisms, governments can ensure the transparent management of resources, prevent corruption, and foster a culture of openness. Examples such as South Korea's Board of Audit and Indonesia's centralized service delivery portals demonstrate how transparency enhances decision-making and builds public confidence. The importance of holding officials accountable becomes evident in the reduction of corruption and the bolstering of institutional legitimacy. Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and New Zealand's inclusive governance practices highlight the benefits of increased public confidence and legitimacy. Efficient resource allocation and service delivery, as evidenced by Brazil's participatory budgeting and India's social audits, illustrate how accountability mechanisms lead to better outcomes and foster economic development. Accountability ensures adherence to the rule of law, preventing arbitrary decision-making and safeguarding human rights. Examples such as the United States Supreme Court's judicial review and South Africa's Public Prosecutor showcase the role of legal frameworks in enhancing governance. Moreover, accountability encourages citizen engagement, empowering communities and strengthening civil society, as seen in initiatives like Transparency International and the UN Freedom of Information Act. The role of media and civil society in holding governments accountable cannot be underestimated. Investigative journalism, exemplified by the Watergate scandal, and civil society monitoring have driven critical changes in governance. International cooperation also reinforces accountability through adherence to global standards, ensuring fair and transparent governance. In essence, fostering political accountability contributes to social equity, environmental responsibility, and economic growth, while safeguarding human rights and promoting democratic stability. As governments worldwide strive for better governance, sustained efforts in accountability, transparency, and inclusivity will pave the way for resilient and responsive institutions capable of addressing contemporary challenges. Political accountability is essential for a healthy democracy as it empowers citizens, promotes ethical governance, and strengthens trust in public institutions. Addressing the challenges to accountability is crucial for ensuring that leaders remain answerable to the people they serve. Equally reassuring from the democratic perspective on accountability is the fact that public opinion indeed operates as a 'thermostat' despite the limits of retrospective voting. This is likely because governments fear voters' discontent and usually care about the risk of sanctions, even if voters are not always well equipped to evaluate governments' actions. Popular control of the government may rely on misperceptions, and elections are not an optimal instrument of accountability due both to issue bundling (governments simultaneously conduct multiple policies on which they can be evaluated) and the difficulties of comparing actual governmental performance with the more or less credible pledges of challengers. Policy-making remains a black box, and it is unclear what kinds of tools decision-makers use to recognize the signals emerging from public opinion (or from narrower but more easily identifiable electoral clienteles) and to influence political demand. Research on politicians' perceptions and strategic moves would also benefit from empirical findings on reputation management by senior staff in public agencies and anti corruption commissions and additionally how social psychological research signals of experience of individuals accountability pressure.

Essentially, unpacking the black box often reveals actors other than authoritative government officials who influence the course of things without being held politically accountable as seen in the roles of experts, interest group representatives or even editorialists. A conception of democratic regimes that focuses on the citizens–elections–representatives triad is no doubt normatively attractive due to the direct line that it posits upwards from ‘we the people’ to the government and downwards from the government to society (Hupe and Edwards, 2012). Conclusively, competitive elections do not perform badly as the foremost channel of democratic accountability. However different lines of arguments arise out of this. Firstly, there is no agreement on whether voters can be considered as sufficiently well-equipped (or willing) to evaluate governments’ past performance and subsequently reward or sanction them since the capacity inbuilt in them is insufficient. Voters tend to use heuristics to help them in their evaluative tasks, but it is uncertain if such shortcuts may be misleading since these evaluations rarely give results to any impact. The evidence is also inconclusive regarding the institutional setup’s impact on voters’ capacity, including factors such as electoral and party systems, the composition of the executive, a divided government or the vertical separation of tasks across jurisdictions. Secondly, electoral accountability seems to work best when power is concentrated because this is associated with more clarity of responsibility. On the one hand, it may be embarrassing if it is difficult to reconcile democratic accountability with a pluralist power structure. On the other hand, it is reassuring if electoral accountability is an effective counterweight when power is concentrated (Olsen, 2017; World Bank, 2012; Nurriqiana, Handayani & Widiastuty, 2017).

Third, doctrines of power separation impose institutional checks on the exercise thereof, which should bring about (self) restraint and thus prevent abuses by office-holders. Hence, studies on inter-institutional accountability, particularly those on vertical accountability of the executive and its members to parliament and the horizontal accountability between institutions that are not in a delegation relationship and are relatively equal in terms of power have come up with different findings. Although there is no agreement on whether current trends in governance point towards a concentration of power in the hands of the executive or towards its fragmentation in polycentric networks of actors, it can be expected that both trends negatively impact – albeit for different reasons – on the capacity of parliaments to control the executive. ‘Deparliamentarization’ (which refers to the declining role of parliaments, including their executive oversight function) is much like the individual citizens and that parliamentary institutions may not be liable, or even willing, to perform their role as accountability forums, so accountability deficits may not be due to agents evading blame. Some parliaments have reacted to their loss of power, but the countertrend is not uniform. Even when parliaments ‘fight back’, they tend to hold the government accountable informally, with procedures of confidential accountability leading to inter-institutional bargaining that lacks transparency and undermines accountability to the public. Horizontal accountability may tame electoral accountability by design, as unelected forums derive their legitimacy from their independence from political interests. Moreover, they can convert their control power into influence on policy even when an institution is horizontally accountable to another institution whose consent is needed, it is incentivized to absorb the preferences of the latter, just as office-holders are incentivized to be responsive to citizens in vertical accountability. This happens most notably with the preferences of courts, whose role as accountability forums has substantially increased with the phenomenon of ‘judicialization’.

The empowerment of judges is a core dimension of the ‘rise of the unelected’, and adjudication draws its legitimacy from the judicial process having a reputation of being depoliticized, impartial and fair. The ‘law of anticipated reactions’ is also at work when executives and legislatures become accountable to the courts which they seek to reach decisions that are robust to court rulings without being too remote from their own initial preferences (de Vries and Solaz, 2017). Although judicialization is driven by concerns about unrestricted majority power and the need to protect fundamental rights, it remains controversial. Judges cannot claim to be representative, and they are unaccountable by design to safeguard their independence. Elected politicians are not powerless in the face of judicial activism because judges may also find it rational to internalize their preferences, and ‘government by judges’ is not unrestricted either. Upwards hierarchical accountability persists even when it is difficult to say if control from the top is more effective than control from down or vice versa. There is no clear indication that the stronger emphasis on accountability to target populations has produced the expected gains in performance and, indirectly, ‘output legitimacy’. This is hardly surprising considering that administrative reforms have often been animated by conflicting goals, rendering trade-offs unavoidable and ultimately, the empowerment of service users or ‘clients’ has been relative, and it becomes more difficult with the recent development of algorithmic decision-making which is the black box for outsiders. Their empowerment also remains controversial from a normative point of view, so it cannot be asserted that more participatory forms of accountability lead to genuine gains in terms of democratic policy-making (Tu and Gong, 2022; Vibert, 2007; Klenk and Cohen, 2019).

Collaborative forms of governance and the outsourcing or ‘coproduction’ of public services have grown in advanced democracies. On the one hand, such policy-making styles present epistemic advantages, especially in the face of wicked problems which may enhance policy acceptance and can be valued normatively for being pluralist and inclusive. From a democratic point of view, it is problematic when elected politicians are not strongly engaged in collaborative policy-making arenas and unelected actors are counted among the most powerful. The exercise of power is then divorced from democratic accountability, and when the key players are unseen, the correct allocation of responsibilities is hampered (Sørensen and Torfing, 2021). When policy-making is conducted through amorphous or informal channels, this leads to the ‘many hands’ problem, impeding public scrutiny. Moreover, even control by professional politicians becomes difficult when command lines are blurred and operators are dissociated from the hierarchical circuit. Additionally, some participants in networks face multiple expectations from accountability forums with conflicting preferences, and the simultaneous presence of ‘many eyes’ requires developing coping strategies to deal with dilemmas of the ‘360-degree feedback’ (Behn, 2001; de Vries and Solaz, 2017; Cairney, Heikkilä and Wood, 2019) which may lead to fuzziness and unpredictability.

A different facet of shifts in governance – and another dimension of the ‘rise of the unelected’ – is the diffusion of the agency phenomenon. The doctrine does not consider the relationship between independence and accountability straightforward because it finds them incompatible and may even advocate their combination, the picture of which is more complex, and notes that accountability may undermine independence and impartiality through the shadow of sanctions. In reality, agencies are accountable to different kinds of forums, but when their accountability web becomes too crowded, which can create problems of duplication or cross-pressure. Essentially, effective democratic control is not guaranteed because of lack of public awareness

about the role of agencies. Agencies should however not necessarily be incriminated for accountability gaps since they engage in accountability activities more actively than expected (namely, because they care about their reputations), but accountability forums are more passive than anticipated (among other reasons, because they trust agencies' reputations).

Knowing the role that the media plays as 'fire alarms', does accountability become stronger with the mediatization of politics and the advent of 'monitory' and 'audience' democracy, the effects of which are studied in accountability and in different forms of governance mechanisms. Governing actors which are made up of elected officials and increasingly top public managers, operate under the shadow of media criticism, and they seek to avoid or counteract the frequently negative bias in media coverage with presentational strategies of 'self-mediatization'. News management becomes more difficult with the growth of social media platforms, on which unchecked information easily becomes viral. Monitory democracy is mainly front-stage politics that lends itself to media 'dramaturgy' and is put under the public 'microscope', so mediatization does not penetrate the whole policy process. Essentially, what frequently and increasingly occurs is a decoupling between the political spectacle and the reality of policy development, which may lead to errors in the attribution of responsibility. In the case of routine policy-making but not for critical situations the perceptions that things went wrong dominate, policy-makers face more pressing demands for justification from official investigative bodies and strong claims for sanctions from opposition and stakeholder groups, with the media acting as catalysts. Policy-makers need to react quickly and creatively to manage stressful situations and reassure public opinion in the case of disasters as they are not easy to accept. Policy-makers do not necessarily opt for strategies that are most efficacious for their survival, and the outcome of their attempts is uncertain and context dependent. The same can be said about the long-term consequences of post crisis accountability regarding sanctions for failure and especially regarding the willingness and ability of policy-makers to learn from mishaps.

The advocates of the principal-agent theory stress the risk of accountability leading to bad policy out of conformism but, at the same time, envisage that accountable actors can just simulate conformity by gaming the system. Such a conclusion is confirmed by public administration research, which also warns that public servants tend to shield themselves in the face of accountability pressure by adopting defensive behaviour such as formalism. Additionally, too strong and too narrow an emphasis on accountability at the organizational level can cause prejudice to collective goal attainment. The fine-grained picture of the micro-foundations of accountable actors' cognitive and emotional states offered by experimental work in social and organizational psychology is most useful for the understanding of the complex processes of 'felt' accountability. This school of thought confirms that supervision felt as abusive may lead to defensive bolstering and even risks backfiring of whose outcome depends on a range of moderating factors, there being evidence that accountability induces actors to become more self-reflective and self-critical. Overall, the lessons learnt are that accountability has mostly positive effects on individual decision-making quality, contrasting, with some gloomy predictions of dysfunctions that derive from the principal-agent relationship framework. The understanding of how public managers feel about their accountability obligations reveals little about how politicians perceive them but ironically, it is assumed that people generally behave as politicians when they are held accountable, but how real-world politicians feel and act in such situations has not been studied in detail and are areas of further research.

Conclusions

Political accountability stands as a cornerstone of good governance, promoting transparency, efficiency, and public trust. By implementing robust accountability mechanisms, governments can ensure the transparent management of resources, prevent corruption, and foster a culture of openness. Judicial independence has been at the core of the world's democratic and constitutional evolution and the principles of "separation of powers" and "checks and balances" principles that govern the inter-branch relations within the state, and of which judicial independence is a conceptual derivative have been the holy grail of the modern liberal nation for centuries the world over. Judicial power which indeed is also political, must be exercised in the interests of the people it is derived from and essentially, the Judiciary needed to be a beacon of integrity for citizens and all institutions of governance. In parliamentary systems of government, legislatures can be seen as the principals and governments as their agents, this being the next element of the delegation chain after the voters, as the ultimate principals, have delegated their decision-making power to legislators. In that sense, ministerial accountability to the legislature is an element of the vertical accountability chain that runs in the reverse direction of the delegation chain, with accountability of the public administration to its political superiors being the next element in the chain. The governance systems in Kenya have been identified as diverse but they all call for political accountability to be embraced while recognizing the role of the Judiciary as an institution and as a state mechanism for justice and jurisprudence while not forgetting the Judicial Mechanism and its role in the fight against corruption.

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