

**Citizen Participation in Somalia's Hybrid Governance System: The Case of
Democratization in Puntland State**

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Glossary and Abbreviations

SSDF (Somali Salvation Democratic Front)

PEC (Puntland Electoral Committee)

NABADOON (Peace-Seeker, a lower rank in the Somali Traditional authorities)

ISSIMO (The highest rank in the Somali Traditional authorities)

XEER (Somali tribal legal codes)

PUNSAA (Puntland Non-State Actors Association)

PYAN (Puntland Youth Association Network)

Abstract

In the aftermath of Somalia's state collapse in the late 1990s, people in the northeastern regions came together in a tribal conference and formed “PUNTLAND STATE,” a semi-autonomous polity in northeastern Somalia. They opted for a bottom-up state-building approach, instrumentalizing the existing tribal and communal informal institutions and integrating them with formal institutions. This combination of formal and informal successfully worked for them and created relative stability, development, and, most importantly, legitimacy for the state. However, unintentionally, the hybridity empowered tribal institutions as it granted tribal leaders very huge political powers of selecting and endorsing candidates at local and state levels. And that halted the “citizen participation”, which was the aim of the establishment of the Puntland State. Thus, to boost citizen participation, Puntland has decided to abolish its tribal/clan-based hybrid electoral system. And transform it into a fully democratic state. This study explores the processes of democratization in the Puntland State of Somalia, and how various pro-democratic social groups collaborated during the transition period.

Keywords: Participation, Hybrid governance, Electoral systems, Universal suffrage, Democracy, Election, Puntland, Somalia.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Hybrid Governance in Somalia

Hybrid governance is an arrangement in which different non-state actors perform functions that are traditionally performed solely by the State (Francesco Colona & Rivke Jaffe, 2016). This could be the provision of public service or infrastructure such as education, electricity, or security. Since the British colonial indirect rule in Africa, hybrid governance has existed in different forms (Kate Meager et al., 2012). Historically, the most popular hybrid governance arrangement is autonomous and self-governance of the tribal lands. Traditional institutions such as chiefs and clan elders have some authority in governing their communities. They perform various cultural and governance functions, including arbitrating inter-tribal conflicts and managing grazing lands. Politically, they negotiate with the government on issues concerning their communities.

In the context of Somalia, tribal chiefs have significant roles in governance (Eric Herring et al.). The Somali tribal structures provide security and have legal functions through tribal laws known as “Xeer” in Somalia. Every tribe/clan has its own tribal laws, which are legally binding within the tribe. And a set of principles that guide their relations with other tribes in the surrounding areas (Marleen Renders, 2007, p. 443). They use these tribal laws to settle all matters, including homicide, property, marriage, and business. The tribal laws are implemented by a council of elders and enforced by the tribal councils with the collaboration of the police and other relevant government bodies. The government recognizes the tribal legal system as an alternative justice system for settling disputes.

Tribal chiefs also have enormous political powers, as they are the source of legitimacy in the political system in Somalia (Eric Herring et al.). Thus, a combination of informal tribal and formal institutions, both at local and national levels, form the political system in Somalia. For instance, in the electoral system, which is the main focus of this study, tribal leaders are the most important actors in the electoral processes in Somalia. The tribal chiefs select delegates from their communities to elect the representatives at the local and national levels (Eric Herring et al.). Moreover, the political representation is based on tribal/clan arrangements of power-sharing (Menkhaus, 2017). However, the power-sharing between different tribes is not fair. This is also problematic because more powerful tribes get more seats in the parliament as they get closer to the resources and critical positions in the government. This reproduces injustice and marginalization of certain social groups in the country.

In 2000 Somalia adopted a tribal-based political system after years of statelessness and conflicts. The government formally define the system as a hybrid clan-based political system. The idea behind this was to rebuild trust among different communities in the country. It was intended to be transitional. However, it lasted longer and turned out to be the official political system in the country. That longevity

created unintended consequences such as exclusion, marginalization, and state dysfunctionality. Because a few powerful tribal chiefs and the political elite dominate the whole system, it does not work for everybody in the country. This pushed a lot of people out of the system since they do not have meaningful representation at the local and national levels. In recent years, there have been diverse social groups, including women, civil society, youth, and political parties, who are critical of the continuation of this political system. They repeatedly appeal to abolish the hybrid system and transition into democracy.

The international developmental partners are also very critical of the electoral system in Somalia. Democratic elections are seen as a milestone for the state rebuilding and as an indicator of the completion of the transition period. Given the continuation of the hybrid governance system, the government faces a lot of critical voices from the key partners. Some of them, such as the EU, not only promote democratic elections but also condition their aid contributions on holding one-person-one-vote elections (Richard Youngs, 2007). In a sense, this fits well with David Van Reybrouck's concept of "*electoral fundamentalism*", which refers to the idea that democratic elections solve everything, such as corruption, bad governance, etc. From that perspective, some donors instrumentalize the aid as a pressure tool to hold direct elections.

In response to both domestic and external pressure to democratize the electoral systems, Somalia made crucial reforms to the hybrid electoral system. For instance, in the 2021 federal parliament elections, the number of electoral delegates that could elect a parliamentarian was substantially increased 2. Similarly, a 30% quota was allocated for women (UN, 2021) 3. However, all these reforms were not enough to reduce the number of critical voices in the country's electoral system.

1.2 Puntland State of Somalia

In 2021, Puntland State, which is relatively stable in the northeastern part of Somalia, conducted its local government elections. The aim was to abolish the clan-based hybrid electoral system in the Puntland State. And transition into a democratic state within Somalia. A study (Heritage, 2022) emphasizes that democratization in Puntland's municipalities is intended to enhance the political system's legitimacy in that State. It is also a beginning for all other states at the national level in Somalia to conduct similar elections in the future. Both national and state constitutions stipulate the end of the clan-based hybrid electoral systems and the transition into democracy. Based on that, authorities in Puntland decided to implement the one-person, one-vote elections. This is something that people waited for a long time. Article 44 of the Puntland State Constitution clearly indicates that democratic elections the political regime of the Puntland state is democratic, and every citizen has a right to vote.

MAP of autonomous Putland State- Northeastern of Somalia.



Source: Wikipedia

I selected a case study in the Puntland State of Somalia for this study. It is an autonomous state that is a relatively stable region in terms of security. The state is in transition to democracy, endeavouring to end the prevalent hybrid electoral system in Somalia. This is a unique case because most local governments in the country use a clan-based hybrid electoral system, and people do not elect their representatives directly. Instead, the States and the Federal government of Somalia use a very long and complex electoral system in which tribal chiefs select electoral colleges/ delegates from their communities. Then, the selected delegates by the tribal chiefs select the representatives at local and national levels. All politicians get elected through that process. It is the same procedure whether a mayor, a parliamentarian, or a state governor. (Menkhuas, 2017), Argues that the electoral system in Somalia is very complex, long, and prone to corruption, as vote buying is rampant. The elections are not also inclusive, so it is hard for women, youth, and minority groups to get elected.

The democratic transition in Puntland officially starts in 2021 after the end of the pandemic. However, Puntland has a bad history of falling into crises whenever it tries to transform into a democratic state (Amina, 2018). The government wanted to make sure they were committed at this time to abolishing the clan-based electoral system. Thus, they organized a pilot election in three districts, namely (Eyl, Qardho, and Ufeyn). The process was very successful as local elections in these districts demonstrated

the societal demands from the bottom and the institutional capacities of the Puntland State government to deliver elections in the other districts in the state.

According to the Puntland Electoral Committee (PEC) report in 2021, all necessary legal procedures and guidelines for the local elections were completed before the prelude elections. By July 2021, PEC had already completed voter registration in the three experimental districts and then, after verifications, distributed voter cards to the citizens. Thus, the elections in three experimental districts (Eyl, Qardho, Ufeyn) occurred in October 2021. PEC annual report states that 46,839 received the voting cards in the experimental elections, and 37,578 voted on election day. 50.5% of them were women, and 49.5% were men (Somali Public Agenda, 2021).

After the successful completion of the first-ever one-person-one-vote elections in Puntland in the three districts of (Eyl, Qardho, Ufeyn). The government and other stakeholders in Puntland agreed to continue the democratization process in the Puntland State. They agreed on the timeline for the Statewide local municipal elections and then parliamentary elections in which the major party form the government of the state. Thus, Puntland officially wanted to abolish the clan-based hybrid electoral system and transform itself into a fully democratic State within Somalia.

The next municipal elections for all remaining districts occurred on 25 May 2023 (PEC, 2023). The elections were held on time in accordance with the election schedule in all 33 districts. According to the PDRC report, in 2023, 401,000 voters registered in the elections, and 387,094 voted on election day. 50.3% of them were male, and 49.7% were women (PEC, 2023). These elections were the first state-wide one-person-one-vote elections in Puntland. Thus, this study focuses on this transition period in which Puntland State tries to abolish its clan-based electoral system and move on into a democratic state. And how hybrid political and administrative institutions of formal and informal (tribal, NGOs,) provided a space for citizens to participate in the political system. The study also tries to capture how political actors within Puntland collaborated, negotiated, and participated in the democratization process. And what the motive behind each actor's involvement in the democratization process was. The study heavily focuses on the roles played by specific groups such as women, youth, civil societies and minorities. The reason is that these groups were marginalized under the clan-based hybrid electoral system.

1.3 Puntland as the first Cornerstone for the Somali state Rebuilding processes

A series of community-based conferences in 1998 between Darood sub-clans of Leelkasse and Awrtable and Harti clan factions Majeerteen, Dhulbahante, Warsengeli, and Deshiishe resulted in the establishment of a semi-autonomous Puntland state in the north (Amina, 2018). Warsengeli is Seasonal rhythms, and interclan pacts like the Harti xeer give these tribes semi-exclusive territorial rights to avoid war. Puntland's Charter and constitution promote coexistence, unlike these ancient covenants.

Adam (2018), Argues that following the collapse of the state in Somalia in 1991. the Darood clans withdrew to their native territories in the northeast and south of Somalia. Clan leaders resurrected the Somali, Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) as the region's political and defence organization while the country was in a full-scale civil war. Customary procedures were brought back to oversee civil matters and prevent clan conflicts. When efforts at national reconciliation proved unsuccessful, officials decided to implement a decentralization model, which is a “bottom-up” and supported by the EU (Amina, 2018). The goal of this plan was to rebuild the state from the bottom. This ambition was accomplished in 1998 with the "Garowe declaration," in which traditional elders called a summit to expand the SSDF's administration to include all Harti and nearby Darood clans and the northeast. A 66-member unicameral parliament representing Darood sub-clans was established following protracted negotiations. In August 1998, they elected leaders, drafted a temporary constitution, and created the Puntland State of Somalia.

Puntland's 1998 transition to democracy from clan-based governance marked a shift toward more significant representation. Researchers studied how Puntland transitioned from clan rule to democracy. (Muhammad, 2022) and (Abdullahi, 2021) have shown how social contracts promote peace and state-building. The 1998 Puntland Transitional Charter emphasizes national unity and shared government, granting tribal institutions solely to settle community-based disputes. This charter established a hybrid electoral system to form the district councils. However, it was mentioned that the hybrid electoral system is temporary, and within a period of three years, Puntland must organize one-person-one-vote elections.

Warsame (2023), Argues that Puntland State asserted that Puntland has been democratizing since 2008, starting with UN-supported municipal councils and clan-elder-led parliamentary elections in 2005. Despite hurdles, the Constitutional Review Committee under President Abdirahman Farole and political association registration in 2012 were notable achievements for the region. Presidents Farole and Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas ratified the constitution in 2012 and established the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission in 2016. President Said Deni's 2019 election revived democratization, including district demarcation and election law improvements (Warsame, 2023).

According to the IPRD Institute (2023), Puntland's democratization process requires legal and institutional frameworks for democracy. However, this shift has been difficult. The conflict between political elites and citizens has been a major issue. Elites have shaped democratization, frequently against popular expectations. Despite solid democratic institutions, citizen participation in decision-making is limited due to clan-based politics that sometimes overshadow public objectives (Johnson, 2008; Gundel, 2006). Recent municipal elections show how democratization affects local governance and community engagement. These elections are considered crucial for Puntland and Somalia's democratic development (Hesse, 2010; Johnson, 2008). They have stressed citizen participation in democratic processes and given citizens a voice to hold elected authorities responsible. Political groups

have driven these advances, providing policy platforms for public criticism and strengthening the government-governed social compact. Democratization in Puntland has been difficult. Civic education is lacking, limiting citizens' comprehension of their democratic duties. Additionally, political associations/parties' ineffective democratic participation is concerning (IPRD Institute, 2023). Sociocultural constraints hinder women and minority involvement, complicating the democratization narrative.

1.4 Research Question

How do citizens participate in the hybrid political system in the Puntland State of Somalia?

Sub Questions

- Why did Puntland decide to abolish the clan-based electoral system and transition to universal suffrage?
- What were the roles and motives of pro-democratic groups in the transition period?
- How does hybrid governance function in Puntland State? And what role do tribal chiefs play in the governance system, particularly in elections?
- What were the challenges and opportunities for democratization in Puntland State?

1.5 Organization of Research Paper

The research paper is divided into seven (7) Chapters. The first chapter is an Introduction that attempts to provide a brief background about hybrid governance and how it functions in the context of Somalia. The second Chapter is about research methodology, including research methods, data collection techniques, study participants, and positionality. The third Chapter presents the study's conceptual framework; it stresses two main concepts operationalized in this study: citizen participation and Hybrid governance. The fourth Chapter discusses why and how Puntland state in Somalia abolished the clan-based hybrid electoral system and transformed it into a democratic state within Somalia. The Fifth Chapter explores the actors and individuals involved in the democratization processes in the Puntland State, as well as their roles, motives, and functions during the transition period. The Sixth Chapter analyses how state and non-state informal institutions collaborate in governing Puntland State. Finally, the Seventh Chapter presents the study's findings and conclusions.

Chapter II: Research Methodology & Research Methods

2.1 Methodology

This research is interested in citizen participation in governance in the Puntland State of Somalia, which is considered a fragile State. State institutions have limited capacities and power to deliver services to citizens. Thus, the State collaborates with various non-state actors, such as NGOs and private and tribal institutions, to deliver basic services to citizens. Thus, the governments and non-state actors partake in Puntland State governance. As a result, the non-state actors, particularly the tribal structures, have gained enormous power to influence the political decisions in the Puntland state. And that left a very limited space for the citizens to participate in the political systems directly. This research uses the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews and secondary data (PEC annual report) to explore citizen participation in the Puntland state of Somalia.

Besides the interviews and the reports, during the study, I also engaged and participated in around twenty (10) political debates organized by Puntland media outlets and activists. Some of them were intense political debates between opposing groups of pro-universal suffrage and supporters of the continuation of the clan-based hybrid electoral system. On some occasions, I had an opportunity to ask them questions. However, most of the time, I listen, observe, and take notes. I wanted to observe the political environment in the Puntland State of Somalia.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Primary Data

To conduct this research, I had no choice other than to collect primary data. Because the local government elections in Puntland State had just concluded, there is very limited secondary data about the topic. The methods employed to collect the data were semi-structured interviews. However, I tried hard to engage informally with all the study participants to connect with them deeply and try to understand their stories and how they ended up involving democratization processes in the Puntland State. The interviews took place between 6th October 2023, to 25th October 2023, and all of them were via Zoom and WhatsApp. Everything was in Somali language, and after the conclusion of every interview, I translated it into English. Therefore, it took me longer than expected to conclude the data collection exercises because the translation and transcribing needed extra time.

There are two main reasons that I opted for semi-structured interviews to collect the primary data. Firstly, interviews give the researchers flexibility as I could conduct them remotely. At the time of the data collection, I was in the Netherlands, and travelling to Somalia for field research was impossible. And secondly, I wanted to capture the stories of the real people that involved in the democratization processes in Puntland State. As a researcher, I was very interested in citizen participation in the transition period. Thus, I wanted to talk with the actual people who are directly involved in the process.

2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

This was the only method employed to obtain primary data for the study, and the aim was to explore more about how citizens participate in hybrid governance systems. The method was based on my deep interest in capturing the stories of the people involved in the democratization process. The study explores how different social groups in Puntland state work together to democratize the Puntland State. Additionally, the study attempted to determine whether the whole process was inclusive and if the government, particularly the ruling party and the incumbent president, were genuinely interested in collaborating with other stakeholders at every step. To capture all these different perspectives, the study targeted interviewing nine (9) persons directly involved in the process of democratization in the Puntland State of Somalia. All the study respondents held critical roles in the transition period. They have firsthand experiences and information about the whole process.

2.4 Respondents Selection

I employed the purposive sampling method to select the right persons for the study, which involves selecting a knowledgeable and experienced group for the research topic (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Fortunately, I find enough people available and willing to participate in the study. In the beginning, I was worried about finding women to interview for the study. Thus, I spent a lot of time getting someone to interview, luckily my networking worked this time, And I found many politically active women in Puntland. It was the biggest surprise for the whole process. Because women tend to be politically inactive even in more gender-equal countries. Although I was not expecting, in the end, approximately 44% of the participants were women. Most importantly, women with different backgrounds, one of them being elected officials in the local elections.

Purposive sampling was also useful because I wanted to interview a very limited number of experienced and knowledgeable people about the topic. The main criteria in my mind were That they must have been in a position of power at the time of the elections and that the participants of the study should be articulate and knowledgeable about the topic. Moreover, the participants should be available and willing to participate in the study voluntarily.

Table 1.1: Respondents

No	Name	Profession	Gender
1	Mohamed Cirdey	District Electoral commissioner	Male
2	Abdirahman Abdirizak	Civil society leader	Male
3	Maria Hasan	Civil Society Leader	Female
4	Ruun Ali	Youth Activist	Female
5	Aisha Khadar	Local Councilor	Female

6	Nabadoon Dahir	Tribal Chief	Male
7	Zamzam Mohamed	Women's Right Activist	Female
8	Hussein Muse	Political party member	Male
9	Mowlid Farah	Minority clan member	Male

*All participants in the study give their full consent to use their names and titles in the text. They are all happy to be mentioned in the research paper.

2.5 Limitations and Scope of the Study

The main challenge in this study was the absence of previous academic work on the topic. Even the existing few published scholarly works on democratization and elections focused widely on Somalia, not Puntland state specifically. Therefore, the study mainly relied on policy papers and reports by UN agencies and INGOs operating in Somalia. Another notable problem was that at the time of conducting this study, the political situation in Puntland was quite tense. It was election season. It was a period in which Puntland state moved towards universal suffrage of one person, one vote. The governments, several other political parties, and some of the tribal authorities agreed to move forward and continue the democratization process. They decided to abolish the hybrid electoral system in the Puntland State fully. However, that needed constitutional amendments, broader societal participation in negotiations, and social consensus. The government wanted to deliver the elections immediately, particularly the ruling party and the president.

2.6 Positionality and Research Ethics

I strongly believe in democracy, which is better than hybrid political systems. That is one of the reasons that I was very excited and interested in studying this topic. In this regard, my personal views could lead to bias. However, I strictly followed the research procedures and protocols during the interviews to keep neutrality and impartiality. I also ensured that my research participants were selected based on specific criteria. Firstly, each participant must have been directly involved in the democratization processes in Puntland State. Secondly, the person must hold a position of influence during the processes and engage the tough political negotiations during the transition period. Finally, the participant in the study must be willing to participate voluntarily and with full consent.

2.7 Secondary Data

Besides the primary data, the study also used secondary data from various sources, including published academic works related to the topic and unpublished documents shared by some participants. And official documents such as the constitution of Puntland, electoral laws, and voting procedures and protocols. I also frequently visited the official website of the Puntland Electoral Committee (PEC), which helped to get crucial information and data about the elections in Puntland.

Chapter III: Literature Review

This chapter comprehensively reviews the literature and what we already know about the topic. The concept of citizen participation is presented in the review, especially regarding the hybrid governance system in Somalia, specifically in Puntland. The central concepts for the study are; *Citizen participation and hybrid governance*. There is a huge literature on both concepts. However, this study attempts to deeply focus on how these concepts have been used and function in the context of the Puntland State of Somalia. In this study, hybridity means various actors and institutions govern together. (Herring et al., 2020) states that although these structures collaborate in governance, they also clash and create uncertainty in Somalia. More narrowly, this study examines how citizens participate in the political system in this context.

3.1 The Concept of Citizen Participation

Gaventa and Valderrama (1999; 2) argue that participation can be political and social. For them, political participation, which is the focus of this study, “*involves the interactions of the individual or organised groups with the state, and which often focus more on mechanisms of indirect participation*” (Gaventa & Valderrama 1992). For them, political participation is mainly a process in which citizens influence the decisions of public officials. According to Chen and Liu (2022), citizen participation is the engagement of the public in all activities to the effect that citizens influence civic life and public policy. It is a series of behaviors that citizens engage in to influence government decision-making activities by participating in the political system. From the definition given by Chen and Liu (2022), citizen participation has key tenets that include the existence of participation channels and mechanisms for citizens to participate, the citizens having the ability to impact public affairs and policy systems, and the participation being a positive behavioural activity. The healthy engagement of citizens during elections and even between electoral cycles is critical in democratic societies (Opongo, 2022; Vrydagh, 2022). Many scholars consider citizen participation to be a key element of democracy, especially in the policy-making processes (Holum, 2022; Kurkela et al., 2023).

Various mechanisms exist for citizen participation, including voting, lobbying, and grassroots movements (Chen & Liu, 2022). Citizens' participation helps politicians meet community needs and legitimizes decision-making by ensuring that those affected by policies have a say in them (Holum, 2022). According to Osman (2018, p.67), “participatory development is the most important recipe to ensure inclusive and sustainable development across the world.” Participation implies “empowering people to mobilize their capacities, be social actors, rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives” (Osman, (2018, p.67).

Paxton & Hughes, (2014), Note that the three forms of representation are substantive, descriptive, and formal. They emphasize that 'Participation' spans various areas; including political, social, and economic, and can manifest in different forms. For them, descriptive representation means that elected

bodies and persons should be reflected in terms of gender, class, etc, to their communities. for instance, if youth constitute half of the population in a district, then half the elected officials in that district should be young persons. Substantive representation emphasizes meaningful representation and prioritisation of the needs and interests of the electorates (Ory Siow, 2023). The belief in wider participation is based on the assumption that the eagerness to participate is common, suggesting that a more open government could foster a democracy that better represents its citizens (Mohamed, 2023). Similarly, (Kassa, 2015) argues that equal participation of women and men in politics ensures a societal balance, enhancing the legitimacy and responsiveness of political processes to all societal views, thereby making democracy more effective and inclusive.

3.2 Citizen Participation in Somalia

Somalia is a country in the Horn of Africa. The country is monoethnic, which is different from the situation in many other Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The country has four major clan families: the Digil, the Rahanwein, the Hawiye, the Dir, the Isaaq, and the Darod. Clan families share a common ancestry and are connected by intricate webs of social ties that span clan regions inside the national territory that have ill-defined borders (I.M Lewis, 1963). Understanding one's ancestry from multiple generations is crucial for both the individual and the clan community as a point of identification.

According to (Ssereo, 2003), the clan served as a social and political unit of organization and governance in traditional Somali culture. As in many African multiethnic cultures, a council of elders presided over each clan. The land was community property, and ideas of power, religion, and clan (the extended family) all had a role in how it was managed. However, the old understanding of land and power was significantly altered by the modernization processes that followed independence. In modern Somalia, clans and social and political order coexist. The clan elders' cultural and social status was preserved, but a national judiciary and constitutional legislation supplanted the traditional clan institutions that provided a framework for identification, conflict resolution, and communal security (Ssereo, 2003).

Ssereo, (2003), notes that community leaders and tribal chiefs maintained harmony, defined member rights and responsibilities, and set boundaries for clan contact in traditional clan communities. These leaders also developed customary war laws, captive help, injury treatment, and hospitality conventions. However, modernization changed their roles, giving many of these duties to modern courts. This change affected peacekeeping and clan leaders, creating a gap between traditional and modern conflict resolution. International peace efforts were hampered in Somalia, where clan protection and integration clashed with the modern state's approach, which included a national army and the International Red Cross (Elmi, 2021). In the 1970s, the Socialist government in Somalia attempted to abolish clan affiliations and organize society in a more nationalized identity based on being a Somali citizen (Lewis, 1999). They even tried to replace clan-based titles in-to the leftist term of “comradeship” which is based

on political ideology rather than cultural values. In the end, the government failed to re-configure the society.

3.3 The Concept of Hybrid Governance in the context of Puntland

A hybrid system of governance is a mix of traditional and modern political authority systems. Fragmented governance and hybridity are frequently associated because hybridity can result in competing and parallel systems of authority (Herring et al., 2020). Effective governance allows political leaders to address coalition demands and implement policies for inclusive growth, while fragmented governance impedes this process. According to political settlement theory, coherent governance may still effectively suppress broader group demands even in a context where elites lack a developmental vision or derive support from a narrow base. According to Albrecht (2018), hybrid political systems challenge the failed state rhetoric by blurring the distinction between modern and traditional modalities of political ordering (Lemay-Hébert and Freedman, 2017; Visoka, 2017). This approach deconstructs peacebuilding analysis from basic notions of order and disorder in the global South. Hybridity considers agency and institutions as dynamic processes that continuously establish authority.

(Herring et al., 2020) explored the fragmented hybrid governance system in Somalia. They noted that the political system is highly fragmented and has many lines of fracture. Somalia has a hybrid political system with traditional (clan, Islam, elders) and modern (executive, legislature, judiciary) authorities. (Herring et al., 2020) further explained that government involves several state and non-state actors, distributing power and authority across levels. The conventional government model uses centralized political authority and governmental coercion at every level. (Krasner and Risse, 2014) Argue that statehood, as they call it, is only found in some parts of the world. A sovereign state often wields lawful power decisively, coercing all inside its borders (Herring et al., 2020).

Ingiriis (2018), explained that Somali politics is a "limited access order," with exclusivity, spoil-sharing, and personalization. In the spring of 2006, the Islamic Courts Union dominated, demonstrating elite "purposive coordination" toward a common goal. The division among elites in Somalia led to instability and persistent political violence between various armed fronts. For (Ingriis 2018), Elites prioritize power above growth, making inclusive development difficult. By backing Somali factions, outside stakeholders contribute to this political landscape's achievements and failures. A political standoff between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS) over power distribution persists (Herring et al., 2020). In 2017, Federal State governors, established the Council of Inter-State Cooperation to engage with the FGS or prevent its meddling amid continuous conflict and Al-Shabaab's exploits. After a significant political figure was arrested in 2018, political tensions rose, leading to violent clashes despite some consensus on governance and development goals. Somalia's inclusive growth necessitates understanding governance issues like legitimacy problems and institutional competition. Krasner and Risse propose that local players' legitimacy and robust

institutional frameworks can help transnational governance efforts cohere. This approach examines hybrid governance in Somalia to identify opportunities for Somalis and international partners to promote inclusive development, emphasizing the importance of political authority's coherence and accountability in governance dynamics (Herring et al., 2020).

Traditional clan dynamics and customary law coexist with institutional state structures in Puntland, creating a hybrid political regime (Sheikh, 2018). This system of family and blood-compensation underlies social, economic, and political relations, resolving conflicts and uniting communities. Traditional elders' role in state-building and governance, which contributed to Puntland's stability and peace, shows their influence. Modernization and democratization have weakened elders' political decision-making role, yet their authority is vital to social cohesiveness and dispute mediation. Traditional and modern governance institutions in Puntland provide a complicated yet functional, hybrid political landscape that highlights the importance of traditional structures in maintaining societal order and stability during state-building (Albrecht, 2018).

(Sheikh, 2018) explained that local initiatives drive institutional change and growth in Puntland and seldom require international intervention. This and other sub-state bodies were founded to maintain regional safety, order, and basic services, becoming the most visible and legitimate forms of governance. Alongside formal frameworks, a complex network of informal authorities, including religious leaders and civil society, governs society (Albrecht, 2018). These multinational organizations, NGOs, business professionals, and diaspora help solve social problems where government governance fails. The state shares authority, legitimacy, and capacity with formal and informal entities in this hybrid political arrangement. The combination of traditional and modern governing methods creates a unique, complex political scene in Puntland, reflecting unstable state trends.

3.4 Democratization in the Puntland State of Somalia

Puntland state, in the northern part of Somalia, uses a hybrid political order that combines Weberian legal-rational and traditional forms of authority. The state and traditional authorities coexist, overlap, and interact (Boege et al., 2009, p.17). Weigand (2015) claims that hybridity leads to a state's downfall. (Adam, 2018) explains Somaliland and Puntland, two hybrid states formed after Somalia's state breakdown. Somaliland wants independence with a legal hybrid system, while Puntland is a federal unit within Somalia with an informal hybrid setup. According to (Ssereo,2003), Somali society is class-based, and clan identities are politicized during conflicts.

3.5 Women's Participation in Puntland Politics

According to (Osman, 2018), women are not just recipients of development projects but now considered important stakeholders. Communities can address intergenerational development concerns and mobilize resources by implementing inclusive development initiatives. Programs for inclusive development may draw development assistance to a region. Since the UN hosted the first women's summit in the 1970s,

involving women in decision-making has been a major area of concentration (Osman, 2018, p. 67). Many nations restrict women's participation in development and policy-making, despite global attempts to empower and involve them in local government and development. Poverty, illiteracy, bad health, violence, discrimination, and inequality in leadership, employment, legal affairs, education, and resource ownership are all results of the systematic exclusion of women from development. Globally, the average number of female lawmakers is as follows: Europe has 31%; the Americas have 32.8%; Asia has 20.5%; the Arab states have 16%; the Pacific has 21%; and sub-Saharan Africa has 25.8% (Mohamed, 2023).

In Somalia, gender inequality exists in power-sharing, resource access, and decision-making. Somali women are underrepresented in administration and have less opportunities to participate in politics and economic activities in the country (Abdi & Muturi, 2016). Although women are respected as peacebuilders and activists, they are often excluded from peace conferences, save as observers (Osman, 2018). According to a study on Somali women's political participation, women are discouraged from pursuing political leadership due to the patriarchal structures of tribal politics and religious groups (Samah, 2016). However, things have gotten better. They have been motivated to fight for their rights and participate in local, state, and federal decision-making. This has been made possible by the Sixth Clan Somali women's political group, the first established and supported by Somali women. Despite their accomplishments, women in politics continue to face discrimination and obstacles (Abdi & Muturi, 2016).

According to (Affi and Hassan 2022), women achieved 20% representation in the House of the People during the 2021–2022 election cycle, winning 54 out of 275 seats. This is still lower than the 30% quota allocated for women in politics at the national level. In Puntland, the data shows that in the district councils of Puntland, women constitute only 14% (Osman, 2018).

(Mohammed, 2023) highlights that before the 2019 electoral process, the legislature was comprised solely of one female member of parliament (MP) in Puntland. This figure marginally increased to two female MPs out of 66 following the disqualification of eight male MPs amid political unrest in mid-2020. This development reflects the enduring bias of a traditional political system that predominantly advantages men, sidelining women from leadership roles. The exclusion of women is further exacerbated by the clan-based political framework, where women's affiliations are ambiguous due to non-membership in their father's or husband's clans. Consequently, women find themselves alienated, belonging to neither side, as clan elders and male politicians actively work to circumvent the gender quota. (Affi, 2020) and (Mohammed, 2023) both identify the resistance from traditional leaders as the critical obstacle to women's political participation in Puntland.

(Mohamed, 2023) further explained that, since they choose who is chosen for political positions, the traditional leaders believe they are the rulers and determinants of politics. Because they feel that women

are not permitted to speak to males in a cultural context, the more conservative traditional leaders are unable to endorse the idea of women in leadership roles. (Herring et al., 2020) explained that women are not allowed to be chosen as elders or to formally take part in the selection process in the elections at any level. In actuality, women are typically left out of all clan governing arrangements in Somalia. Because of this, women's ability to demand things from tribal elders is severely limited; frequently, the only way they can accomplish this is through their husbands, brothers, or relatives.

Despite these disparities, the Puntland government has made efforts to adopt gender-responsive policies to support the inclusion of women in governance. Women's participation in local administration and politics in Puntland is improving compared to before. They are more politically active and involved than ever before. In Puntland, women are banding together in forums and networks, working closely across geographical boundaries (Abdi & Muturi, 2016). Additionally, they are forming political and social movements in Portland and NGOs dedicated to women's empowerment (Osman, 2018).

(Affi, 2020) addresses the lack of representation of women in Somali politics, highlighting the role of male elders as barriers to women's political participation through a reading of Hawa Jibril's poetry. In her poetry from 1962, Jibril condemns the way male elders impede the advancement of women. (According to Ali & Noah 2022), clan chiefs, who are powerful in Somali politics, frequently discriminate against women.

Legal frameworks that support gender equality and women's inclusion in all national institutions, such as the Puntland Constitution of 2009 and the Somalia Provisional Constitution of 2012, have not yet been completely implemented. In response to pressure from women's organizations and international advocacy, efforts to increase women's political participation resulted in the implementation of a gender quota, which was first set at 20% and then raised to 30% after the Garowe Principles agreement. This was a significant step toward integrating women into Somalia's political framework during the country's 2012 transition to a federal system (Mohamed, 2023).

3.6 Youth Participation

Out of the world's 1.8 billion youth, 87% of them live in developing countries. Africa is the most youthful Continent, with more than 65% of its population being young (Sheikhdon, 2020). However, participation in decision-making in many countries is very low. Nearly half of the population is under the age of 15, and over 75% of the total population is under the age of 30. Somalia has one of the youngest populations in the world today (Hassan, 2018). Political participation among Somali youth can be analyzed on three levels. The first level examines young engagement in political governance and public works. The second level examines participating in elections, such as voting, lobbying, and campaigning. The third examines platforms for youth engagement and their impact at community levels (Hassan, 2018).

In Puntland, a lot of positive steps have been taken to mainstream the youth into politics. For instance, there is an active youth group in each city and a state-level network for youth in Puntland. Additionally, the government established the Ministry of Labor, Youth, and Sports. All these entities aim to address the challenges that the youth face. Also, there is a strong representation of the youth in the Constituent Assembly. However, the youth face economic and social problems such as unemployment (Ibraidm, 2016). They are underemployed and lack sufficient education. According to a DFID report, low education levels, participation, and employment are linked to migration abroad, including crossing the Red Sea and Libyan Sahara, which can lead to fatalities and violent conflict among Puntland youth. This is evident in recruiting adolescents by political, criminal, and non-state armed groups in groups.

Chapter IV: Transitioning to a Democratic Government

Analyzing themes such as electoral models, voting systems, and legalities of the elections in Puntland. This chapter uncovers why the government of Puntland and other stakeholders pushed for abolishing the clan-based electoral system and adopting universal suffrage. Therefore, this chapter attempts to answer the “first sub-question, which is... Why did Puntland decide to abolish the clan-based electoral system and adopt one-person-one-vote? The analysis presented in this chapter is mainly based on the interviews.

4.1 Abolishing The Clan-Based Electoral System

Right after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Puntland state of Somalia decided to officially abolish the clan-based electoral system, which persisted since the establishment of the state in 1998. It was a time of uncertainty, and the governments in several countries opted to ignore democratic values (J. Lewkowicz et al., 2022). This disrupted democratic processes on a global level, as there were frequent violations of the core principles of the democratic system; lockdowns, shrinking civic liberties and more seriously neglecting the rule of law (Ibid, 2)—this critical period Puntland state in Somalia inverted the global trend and democratised its electoral system.

There are several reasons pushed for Puntland to replace its electoral system with a one-person-one-vote electoral system aiming to transition into a fully democratic state within Somalia (PEC, 2023). Abdirahman who is a leader for the biggest civil society umbrella in Puntland argues that the main reason that necessitated Puntland to abandon the clan-based electoral system was to ensure inclusive politics. Because the existing clan-based system created unequal representation among communities in Puntland. For him, the clan-based electoral system marginalizes some communities while allowing others to get more representation. That created unfair economic and social power dynamics in Puntland. Similarly, (Hussein) who is a political party member mentioned that some communities had no representatives at the local and state levels in Puntland. He emphasizes that the clan-based electoral system deliberately discriminates against some groups. Precisely, the minority tribes, women and youth.

Secondly, the constitution of Puntland state explicitly commands democratic transition (Mohamed, Interview). The clan-based electoral system was a temporary arrangement in the post-conflict setting, it was intended to restore the trust between different tribes and to ensure political stability in Puntland. However, it has not been designed to last for that long. Thus, since 2012, the Puntland government attempted to implement universal suffrage elections but it was not successful each time, as the local tribal structure resisted transitioning into a one-person-one-vote system (Interview). These groups opposed the government abolishing the clan-based electoral system because of cultural, political and economic reasons (Hussien, Interview). They see that giving voting rights to everybody in Puntland will threaten their tribal identities. Since the electoral laws grant equal rights to all citizens in Puntland.

As observed throughout the study and in the online debates, these groups were also very concerned about the disruption of power dynamics in Puntland, and the possibility of the concentration of power in the Puntland presidential place. They trust more on the tribal leaders than the government and politicians. Thus, they see without a powerful judicial system in Puntland plus the enduring corruption within the political system in Puntland it is not possible to move into democratic elections.

Lastly, the majority of the citizens in Puntland couldn't participate in the political process because of the persistent clan-based electoral system. This particularly, weakened the legitimacy of the government in the society. Thus, the government also endeavoured to open up the political system and to enable wider participation for all citizens in the political system. Thus, the government wanted to expand its sphere of influence in society, and also ensure inclusivity in Puntland.

4.2 Electoral Systems in PUNTLAND

4.2.1. Hybrid system/ Clan-Based electoral system

Clan-based electoral system existed in Puntland since the establishment of the state in 1998. This system is formally known as a hybrid electoral system in Puntland. The government denies that the system is purely a clan-based system; therefore, to make it more acceptable to large segments of the society they call it "a hybrid". Another reason for not calling it a tribal system explicitly is because the constitution prohibits clan-based political activities (Hussein, Interview). Thus, the whole system is clan-based where each community or tribe has been allocated to some representatives at local and state levels. Yet, Puntland state formally, rejects institutionalizing the electoral system and always wanted to transform it into democratic elections. Essentially, the clan-based or hybrid electoral system is intended to be a transitional framework in which the state collaborated with informal structures namely the tribal chiefs to assist the elections at local and state levels. However, over time these informal traditional leaders emerged as a powerful source of legitimacy in Puntland. And because they got the power to select the electorates they transformed into kind of local kingmakers (Hussein, Interview). Therefore, politicians hesitate to have a clash with them and keep good relations with the traditional leaders. That was delayed several times implementation of one-person-one-vote elections in Puntland. Hussein summarizes how this system works by saying that the tribal chiefs in each locality have the sole power to decide who is going to participate in the elections...After the tribal elders appoint the electorates, the Puntland Electoral Committee (PEC), checks for vetting and whether they are selected in compliance with the electoral procedures. Once PEC confirms that they have been granted a voting card, those people are solely eligible to vote in the elections. This electoral model is based on tribal loyalty and only those who get the required approvals from the tribal leader can participate in the process. Thus, it is not sufficient to be a member of the tribe, but to have deep relations with the tribal elders and complex

networks of local political brokers within the tribal system. These influences by the tribal leaders lead certain people to get elected easily. Because they are the ones who select the electorates.

All participants in the study agree that one of the problems of the hybrid electoral system in Puntland is that it produced exclusive politics and deepened corruption within the political system in Puntland. In this case, clan allegiances may be more powerful than merit when choosing leaders. Zamzam points out that women constitute the biggest victims of the clan-based electoral system. The clans do not select women electorates, which creates gender imbalance in the elections. She also shared with me her own experience as a local council in the city. Because of the patriarchal nature of the clan/tribal culture, women face enormous constraints to be able to get involved in the decision-making process.

From a broader perspective, Mohamed, who is a district commissioner for the state electoral committee, notes that the people in Puntland had no space to influence the clan-based electoral processes. That's the reason the majority of them supported the current democratisation process.

4.3. One-person-one-vote Electoral Model

Unlike the clan-based electoral system, democratic elections provide huge opportunities in terms of representation for the different groups in society. It also enhanced inclusivity in politics as elections provided a space for the citizens to participate in the country's political system. Aisha, an elected local councillor, describes the process as a “big step to a democratic transition”. It was a dramatic change because the one-person-one-vote electoral system provided all citizens to become relevant politically in Puntland as their votes matter in the elections. Inversely, the roles of the traditional elders were shrinking.

Under the one-person-one-vote model, the roles of the tribal leaders are no longer in a position to dominate the elections. They are still performing some functions within society such as assisting local administration on issues related to peacebuilding, community services, and safety (Mohamud, Interview). They also help the government with mobilization activities so that people can register and vote on election day (Aisha, interviewee). Similarly, Mohamed highlights that democratic elections allow citizens to freely practice their conditional rights without any intermediate elements such as tribal, cultural or religious leaders. They have a right to vote who they want in their localities. However, the view of “Nabadoon”, the only Tribal Chief in the study, admits that voting in elections grants people their full political rights. However, he emphasizes that the tribal leaders still have some influence in the elections. For instance, the people in politics still need our endorsements to get elected to office, whether it is a mayoral position or a state-level political position. We “tribal leaders” also negotiate with political parties on behalf of the community to know more on what's their policies and plans for our locality.

For him, although the state officially abolished the clan-based electoral system yet, clan politics will remain in place. And that necessitates tribal elders to be involved in politics. The tribal elder was also very concerned about the political finances in the democratic elections, as he was worried if that could lead to vote buying in the elections. He emphasized that in the old system, we knew whoever got elected was one of us, one of our community members. However, in democratic elections, parties decide who is going to be their candidate in our city, and rich persons control the parties.

4.4 Universal suffrage: A Constitutional mandate

Public participation in the election is a constitutional obligation, and the government has to deliver the elections. This is one of the cornerstones provided by Puntland's 2012 constitution, which was adopted during the Constituent Assembly Convention. Several articles in Puntland's constitution explicitly, government to conduct one-person-one-vote elections. For instance, Article 12 states that illegalities should be avoided and fairness in the elections should be ensured. The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 14 while Article 17 recognizes voters' education as an essential requirement towards making informed choices at polls. Furthermore, Article 16 encourages participation in state-level and federal-level elections in Somalia.

The constitution guarantees equal access to the political and social life for all citizens in Puntland. and encourages citizens to participate in the electoral process. Being born in Puntland or residing in Puntland for five years is enough to qualify for the elections in the state. Article 40 requires that any individual must vote and register during the election season to enjoy voting rights. In addition, the article has provisions about complaint filing while. Article 41, on the other hand, addresses suffrage, formation, and running of political parties. Puntland's constitution and electoral laws embrace political pluralism and multi-multiparty democracy. Thus, all existing legal systems prohibit clan-based politics and hybrid electoral systems. However, in practice, the practised modal of elections for so long in Puntland is the clan-based system. This demonstrates a huge contradiction between the essence of the persistent legalities and the practised electoral modalities in the Puntland state.

4.5 Electoral Laws and Procedures

4.5.1 Voter Registration

Voter registration was initially aimed at ensuring that voters could cast votes genuinely. Registering voters in Puntland has been a contested issue between the government and opposition parties, as they needed to agree on an estimated number to register in the first elections (Abdirahman, Interview). The issue was that a significant number of the people did not have a national ID. Thus, the government wanted to launch voter registration campaigns, but other stakeholders to have some influence in the registration process. Hussein, who is a party leader, clarifies that the reason is that it is the first time that the state would have a direct election, and political parties wanted to participate and negotiate each step in the process.

Hussein confirms that biometric voter registration was suggested as a measure to protect the integrity of elections within the prescribed time frame. All parties agreed that the best timing and method for this was a few months before the day of the elections, and citizens had to be provided a voting card with a chip containing the basic info of the cardholder.

However, getting enough voters for each party in all districts was not that fair, as some parties succeeded in mobilizing their electorates to register themselves before the deadlines. To get enough electorates on the election day and to increase their chances of their candidates. According to (IPRD, 2023), there were some logistical challenges, such as poor infrastructure, unnecessary vetting, and delays caused by the PEC and security agencies. These challenges led to people's mistrust of the new electoral system.

4.6 Campaigning and Lobbying in the Elections

The public discourse, media, and electoral campaign atmosphere were very peaceful. Citizens come out and attend rallies and meetings without fear (Hussein, interviewee). Puntland had a failed attempt or organizing elections in late 2013. In the latest elections, it seems the political parties gained experience in organising themselves and negotiating with the government to get some influence in the democratization process. Even small political parties performed well at this time, and they could attract more voters and organize themselves and supporters to get more people to vote for them; some even went further by conducting door-to-door campaigns (Hussein, Interviewee).

The next chapter continues the analysis and attempts to uncover the main actors and individuals who participated in the processes of the transition from a clan-based hybrid electoral system into universal suffrage.

Chapter V: Roles & Motives of Each Group Participating in the Transition Period

This chapter explores the motives behind the pro-democratic groups involved in democratizing local governments in the Puntland State of Somalia. It also investigates the roles played by each institution, actor, and individual during the transition period. This chapter tries to answer the second sub-question, which emphasizes the roles and motives of each group and the reason behind their involvement in the democratization process in the Puntland State of Somalia. The analysis accentuates more on women and youth since they are the most pro-universal suffrage two groups in Puntland. One reason is that women, youth and minorities were excluded and felt marginalized under the previous clan-based hybrid electoral system. It also sheds on light the roles of international donors, civil societies, tribal leaders and political parties.

5.1 Role of Informal Structures in Puntland's Elections

5.1.1. Clans/Tribal Leaders

During the elections, the governments instrumentalized the tribal chiefs to help the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) in the voter registration exercise (Mohamed, Interview). On this particular occasion, tribal elders collaborate with the government to assist in the process of registrations and verifications if the person does not have an ID card (Interview). Similarly, tribal chiefs are instrumental elements for the police forces to keep order and maintain peace between communities, particularly in rural areas. During the election season, they assist police and electoral bodies to verify whether the person resides in the area since all citizens in Puntland do not have national ID cards. The clan/tribal elders also partake in mobilization campaigns to encourage their people to register in the elections to be able to vote on election day (Mohamed). Though they do not favour democratization, they realize that engaging at all could result in a power loss for their tribes. Most of the participants in the study mentioned that clan-based politics continued behind closed doors. Political parties, tribal elders, and communities, especially in the rural areas, negotiated candidates and who was going to be a mayor in the city. Hussein emphasizes that traditional local structures are essential elements in the governing system of the Puntland. They are very effective in settling communal disputes (Hussein, Interview).

Nabadoon, who is a tribal leader, pointed out that tribal/clan elders in Puntland are bedrock in the society, and that they have deep cultural meaning embedded within the social values in the Somali society. In Puntland, they occupy the highest position within the social structure, so they are the sole reference in both social and political affairs. He emphasizes that Tribal chiefs are the founders of the Puntland, *“we (the tribal leaders) have legitimacy and respect within the society, sometimes more than*

even the government.” This a very bold statement demonstrating the significance of the tribal leaders in Puntland. He added that we, “ the tribal leaders”, have been living here together and governing the society even before the establishment of the Puntland state (Nabadoon, Interview). This highlights that the tribal chiefs see themselves as more legitimate than the government and that the citizens trust them more than the government.

5.2 Role of Civil Societies in the Elections

In the period of transitioning from a clan-based electoral system to a universal suffrage. Three main civil society organizations are involved in the processes: (1) Puntland Non-State Actor Association (PUNSAA), Puntland Development Research Centre (PDRC), And Puntlad Youth Association Network (PYAN). The study interviewed persons who represent these organizations in the negotiation processes. Although they performed several functions during the transition period, their main role was advocacy lobbying, and defending political rights for the people in Puntland.

PUNSAA (Puntland Non-State Actor Association), which is the largest umbrella for non-state actors in Puntland, has managed to mobilize all of its members and seek their support for the democratic transition in Puntland (Abdirahman, PUNSAA CEO, Interview). These groups directly participated in the process in which they negotiated with the governmental agencies mandated to implement one-person-one-vote elections as well as the donors who are very interested in the democratic transition (TPEC, 2021). The government considered them as representatives of the people, so they were included in every step related to the democratization process; such as regulations, electoral laws and protocols. The civil societies also mobilized enough resources to conduct advocacy and awareness sessions and reached out to the wider society to exercise their political rights through voting on election days. As Maria, a researcher at the PDRC, pointed out the civil societies in Puntland exist in the form of professional associations, advocacy groups and community-based organizations. All these groups worked together in the transition period to reach out to wider society and keep them informed about the process. Some of these groups operate at the district level and solely represent the interests of their localities or specific segments of society. While others are more focused on all people in Puntland. They know people very well and who does what in each locality. And how that person could be useful for the democratic transition in our state. Maria mentioned also that PDRC which is the main umbrella acted as an advocacy and awareness platform for the democratic elections. It also empowered women and minorities.

Puntland Youth Association Network (PYAN) was another important actor in the transition period. Their target was mobilizing young people, especially in the voter registration stage. PYAN is structurally more different than the other two entities. They are decentralized and have representatives in every city in Puntland. So, they were locally active and negotiated with political parties at the district level. Their

main objective is to have more elected young people in the elections. So, they are more interested in getting power than the fairness of the process. Thus, they advocate for young candidates to get elected in the elections. Ruun, who is a Puntland Youth Network chairperson, emphasizes that youth constitute 70% of the Population in Puntland. And they have nearly no representation within the political system in Puntland. It is because the whole system was dominated by elders. Thus, they wanted to change the prevalent pattern. She added that for many years, youth groups were demanding a transition to universal suffrage. For Ruun, the reason is so obvious: voting rights are the only way that the youth can participate in politics.

The study participants, who are from civil societies, disclose that international donors and NGOs from outside of Somalia assist them to have the necessary capacities to negotiate with the government and tribal structures to move together into a democratic electoral model in Puntland. Abdirahman pointed out that “civil societies in Puntland mainly rely on their partners in the financing, knowledge sharing, and capacitating to implement their activities in Puntland”. This helped the civil society organization in Puntland to be more effective and capable of engaging in the negotiation processes in Puntland politics. However, the study also found that this international assistance negatively influenced their legitimacy in the eyes of some citizens. It cultivated a negative perception that local NGOs collaborate with foreign embassies to implement their agendas in Puntland. This causes repercussions and civil societies to frequently confront the pro-clan-based electoral system politicians and their electoral bases.

5.3 Role of the International Donors

Donors have played a significant role in the democratization process in the Puntland state of Somalia. Except for the tribal chief, all other participants in the study were very positive about the roles of the donors in the democratization process in Puntland. They regarded the donor countries as very important stakeholders in the process. The donors provided financial, and technical support, and actively engaged in the process through diplomacy, advocacy and sometimes mediating between different groups participated in the process (TPEC, 2023). Mohamed, a district electoral commissioner, emphasizes that the state government of Puntland covered only 40% of the electoral funds whereas the remaining 60% was covered by donor countries (Mohamed, Interview). The TPEC report also shows that the main contributors to the democratization process in Puntland are the Danish, Norwegian and Swiss Embassies, the EU mission in Somalia, the Sweden and Interpeace an NGO that supports peace and democracy. All of these stakeholders provided huge support to the Puntland government to implement universal suffrage. The support included capacitating the main institutions, equipment, training and expertise, and most importantly financing.

The donors have strong relations with the civil societies in Puntland, and they allocated huge funds to participate actively in the democratic process (Interview). Since they engaged in Puntland politics for

so long, they have traditional allies and they prefer to support them usually (Abdirahman, Interview). Mohamed highlights that donors support more than any other group to women, youth groups and some political groups that claim they represent progressive ideas of human rights and freedom. The group that the donors do not prefer to collaborate with are the tribal chiefs (Mohamed). It's because the traditional chiefs favour preserving the existing electoral system in Puntland, and do not fully support the democratization process. Nabadoon, who is a clan elder, confirmed that the donor organizations have a negative perception of the tribal structures and never wanted to collaborate with them during the transition period. Surprisingly, he also emphasizes that the government distanced itself from the tribal elders in this particular issue. Potentially, the government assumed that it would be difficult to include traditional elders in the process. probably, due to their perspectives on the democratic elections, and because of previous experiences. The government wanted this time to appeal to ordinary citizens, civil societies and international partners.

5.4 Role of Youth

Young people in Puntland were another social force that played a pivotal role in the democratization process in Puntland. Ruun a leader of the biggest youth network in Puntland emphasizes that there are many reasons behind this, firstly, the clan-based hybrid electoral system was based on seniority and tribal affiliations. Precisely, these two things systematically restrict the participation of youth in politics in the context of Puntland. The clan-based electoral system granted political rights solely to the tribal chiefs, who inherently favour old politicians over youth. Therefore, even nepotism within the clan doesn't work for the young people (Ruun, Interview). Thus, youth in Puntland were involved heavily in the democratization process, they were represented by local youth networks and movements. In addition to that, they were very active in social media demanding the abolishment of the persistent clan-based system.

Nevertheless, the person-one-vote electoral system provided a space for young people to participate in politics. The youth in Puntland themselves were very interested in local politics as they waited so long for this transition. The likes of the Puntland Youth Network helped many young people organize themselves and get elected in the mayoral positions of the major cities. Ruun, emphasizes that because of the organization and consciousness of youth, the political parties not only wanted to get young people's votes but also invited a lot of them to politics (Ruun, Interview). Youth constitute the largest sociological group that is somehow neutral politically, the political parties wanted to attract more people. Thus, the youth got the political opportunity to join parties aligned with their political preferences and views. In terms of the voters, the PEC report demonstrates that 60.61% of the registered voters in the Puntland local elections were younger than 31 years old. And 18.8% are people younger than 41 years old. This shows a high level of participation for youth in elections.

Despite all these positive developments in favour of youth participation under the one-person-one-voter electoral system in Puntland. Yet, there are still significant challenges for the youth to effectively partake in the major political decisions in Puntland. Ruun highlights the perpetuation of tribal politics even after the transition to democracy. It is clear that people continue to be loyal to their clans, and that influenced the voting patterns, campaigning and political alliance between parties. Youth are not exceptional in this matter, they also favour their tribal politician over others, even if that party or political group represent more on their demands (Ruun, Interview). Zamzam and Aisha also mentioned that tribal loyalties and clan-based identities cause divisions within the young women and that prevent them from uniting under one entity to advocate for women's political rights during the processes.

5.5 Role of Women

Women's organizations are another important in the transition period. In some locations they operate separately, and mostly function within the civil society groups. Throughout the election periods, the women in Puntland organized several rallies and gatherings demanding to adoption of a more just electoral system in Puntland (Interview). For them, the one-person-one-vote model is the only option. For the last couple of years, the women in Puntland have been seeking gender equality and justice. Both of the two women interviewed in the study agreed that still they have not reached the level they wanted in Puntland politics. However, they were in consensus that solely through democratization and free elections would foster the inclusion of women in politics. For Aisha the 30% quota system for women which existed under the clan-based electoral system was ineffective. The main reason is that the whole electoral system grants powers to a few tribal leaders and politicians, and that led to practically no women's representation in Puntland. The few women who get into the executive are ineffective because they were appointed based on political loyalty, not merit (Aisha, Interview). Therefore, they were incapable of representing women's problems or making any meaningful impacts at policy levels. Zamzam emphasized the existence of deep cultural norms that limit women's participation in social life. Thus, unlike Aisha, she strongly believes that the 30% for women is a hard-earned political gain that ensures that there will be female representatives in the elected bodies. For her quality and meaningful representation certainly is needed, but the quota system will allow women to get elected, and protect them from systematic marginalization. Therefore, her organization wants to preservation of the 30% quota for women within the democratic system.

5.5.1 In-effectiveness of Women's Quota in Puntland

All the women interviewed in this study were concerned about the ineffectiveness of the quota system, which seems to be unimplementable by the state. The quota system does not work because "the decision to select the electorates was held by traditional leaders who do not favour women. The 30% is rarely met because there's no strong enforcement, and it's not reflected in the federal or PL constitutions, so when a regional authority, in collaboration with the clan-based electoral committees, submits elected

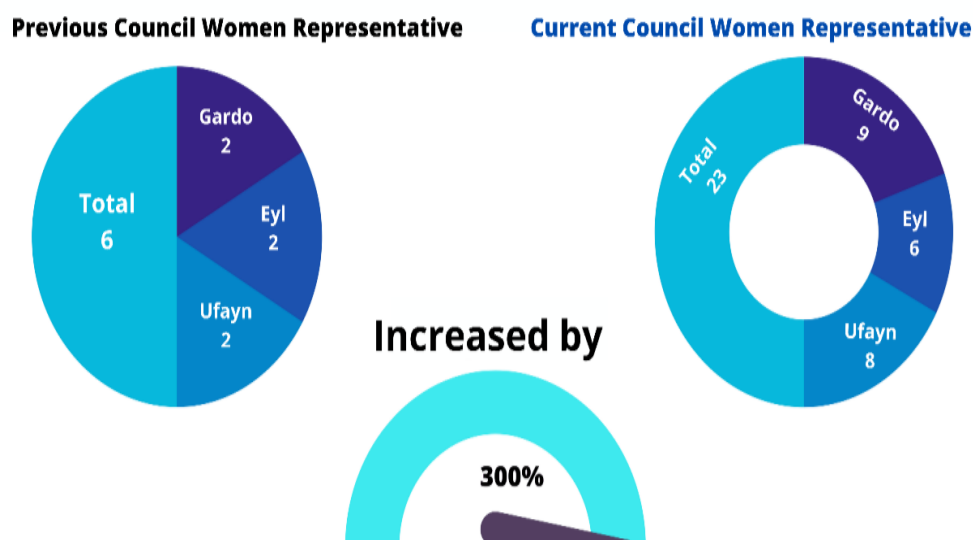
local councils without meeting the quota, it's not rejected by the PEC. Which is in charge of ensuring that a 30% quota for women is mandatory. This is also affected by the often troublesome and contested nature of elections in Somalia, where politicians seek endorsements from tribal leaders who oppose the 30% quota. This causes politicians to ignore the women's quota to get the much-needed support from the tribal leaders.

5.5.2 Universal suffrage boosts women's participation in Puntland

Under the clan-based electoral system, women's participation in politics in Puntland was very limited. It is because of a combination of cultural, legal and political restrictions (Zamzam, Interview). These systematic constraints limited women's involvement in politics in Puntland. For instance, there is only one female in the state parliament. And very few of them are in some city councils, and much less number in appointed positions, with no meaningful authority (Interview). Thus, the democratization process provides to women a political opportunity to freely participate in the political system. All of the women interviewed in the study were very excited about the democratic process. Although their experiences differed, they shared their support for the ongoing democratization unanimously. Their main argument is that the one-person-one-vote electoral system could grant women's political participation in the context of Puntland. It seems, that they were extremely frustrated with the clan-based system. And convinced that regardless of what they do the outcome will be the same, no meaningful representation of women. Because the tribal chiefs who were in charge of selecting who would participate in the elections didn't prefer girls. Zamzam, who is a women's organization leader and an advocate for women's rights in Puntland, says, “ *Under the clan-based electoral system it was very difficult for women to get elected since most of the communities did not send them to the parliament, or include enough number of women in the electorates who are eligible to elect representatives in the district level...this has to do with a deeply ingrained cultural belief surrounding gendered norms in the public sphere.*”

Another significant observation during the study was without universal suffrage it is impractical to implement the 30% quota policy for women in Puntland. It was a recurrent query in which the study tried to capture whether it worked or not. The responses were very similar in every interview, and women see it as not working at all. Even in the debates, and other discussions that I participated in throughout the study, women advocates were very antagonistic to the policy, they extensively expressed the shortcomings of the women's quota policy in the context of Puntland. All the participants in the study highlighted that the enormous opposition from the tribal chiefs hindered the effective implementation of the policy in every election (Maria Hassan, Interview). All tribes dislike a woman to represent their constituency. The reasons could be either a cultural or political preference or a combination of both. Consequently, it was apparent that one-person-one-vote and democratization

improved a lot of women's involvement in politics in Puntland. Aisha says “*One person, one vote equalized competition for women so they can get elected for public positions.*” The secondary data confirms that more women get elected through a one-person-one-vote electoral system.



This Pie chart shows a significant increase in women councillors elected in the first three districts in 2021

Source: (PEC report, 2021)

5.5.3 The barriers to women's participation in politics in Puntland

Although democratic elections have provided unprecedented opportunities to women in terms of political participation in Puntland. Yet, there is still a long way to go. Zamzam notes that it is not only because of patriarchalism and tribal and cultural norms denying women to participate in politics but also that problems exist within women groups in Puntland. For, is weak organization, and lack of trust within women in politics. Again, Aisha queries the qualities and competencies of female councillors in the districts. She points out that most of the elected females were never involved in women's rights groups. So, they are coming from grassroots feminism. Thus, they are more party-centered than pro-women rights. Moreover, the cultural and political norms limit women's engagements in the public sphere in Puntland. Therefore, there is still a confluence of socioeconomic, political and institutional constraints in place that will limit the active political participation of women in Puntland. Additionally, women are more poor in comparison to men. They struggle with deep social inequalities in terms of education, employment and health care (Zamzam, Interview).

Even after the democratic transition in Puntlad. The perception of political parties and the electoral modalities are not yet in favour of women. For instance, the newly adopted electoral model in Puntland is based on closed-list modelling, which is also problematic. Because it grants political parties to select the candidate they prefer most on the top of the list. Again, this is a disadvantage for women. Because the parties decide which candidate they will put the top on the lists, they submit the lists a few hours

before the deadlines. Therefore, candidates have nowhere to complain (Zamzam, interview). This was a tactic employed by several parties in the elections, to deliberately eliminate some of their candidates from women, minority tribes and youth (Interview).

5.6 Minorities (IDPs and smaller minority clans)

Smaller tribes and internally displaced populations in Puntland are considered as minorities. These groups are also pro-democratic, but not organized well compared to women and youth. In the latest elections, they have demonstrated their vivid support for the democratic elections. Mowlid, who is an internally displaced person who is also elected as a local council in a district, states that “ *the main reason that IDP persons supported this kind of elections overwhelmingly is that it is the only model that grants to them a political right in the Puntland State*” He was very enthusiastic and positive about the whole processes. The secondary data also shows that a significant number of the voters in the elections lived in internally displaced settlements (PEC, 2021). Puntland’s constitution grants all Somali persons residing in the Puntland state should have equal political and social rights. Similarly, the electoral laws and procedures allow for people to vote in the elections at local and state levels once they are proven that they have been living in Puntland for five years.

In the previous electoral system, minority tribes had no representatives (Abdirahman, Interview). However, because of the neo-patrimonial practices in Puntland the state presidents always accommodate the social demands and find ways to convince them, and allocate some critical positions within the government, bureaucracy etc. Thus, they were excluded from the Puntland’s representative council, they were always included in the executive branch of the government (Interview). The IDPs were the only group that had no representation at all both at the executive and in the parliament of Puntland (Mowlid, Interview). Thus, they were pro-democratization more than all other tribes in Puntland, because of two things; first, they are large in number and the constitution allows them to vote in the elections, and most importantly have the right to get elected. secondly, the tribal system considers them as outsiders, so they could not get other arrangements similar to the local minority tribes. In the interviews and other debates during the study, it was perceptible that in the last couple of years, IDPs communities too attempted to negotiate with the tribal networks, and the state to get some form of representation within the government, but not successful.

Chapter VI: Hybrid Governance in Puntland

Unlike the previous two chapters; this relies on both interviews and secondary data. The chapter explores how hybrid governance systems work in Puntland and how different actors share power and collaborate to deliver basic services to the citizens. This chapter attempts to answer the third sub-question, which is “How does hybrid governance function in the Puntland State?” It is quite interesting because it looks both at the nature of hybridity in Puntland and how it works. The chapter also sheds light on the centralizing policies of the Puntland State in the last few years. It asks whether the state's increased capacity for regulation and expansion of its capacities in governance is linked to attempts to abolish the clan-based hybrid electoral system.

6.1 The Hybrid Governance Systems

6.1.1 Traditional Authorities

“Issimaddu waa Marjaca ugu weyn ee dawladnimadda Puntlad”

“Issims are the most important reference in Puntland”

Interview

The traditional institutions in Puntland exist in the form of tribal Chiefs known as *Issimo and Nabadoono (peace-seeker)*. In Puntland, society is organized into tribes, and each tribe has its leader-which is the tribal chief (Interview). Depending on the situation, the tribal chiefs may have different names because of culture, geographical area, and the size of the tribe. However, their functions and powers remain the same, as they are the most powerful figures in society. They are the state's founders and the source of legitimacy in the political system (Gundel, 2006). The traditional institutions in Puntland perform some important governance functions, such as administrating tribal lands, maintaining peace at the community level, and settling political disagreements.

The tribal Chiefs in Puntland can be categorized into two levels (Issim and Nabadoono). Each tribe/clan has one main “Islam”, which is symbolic and represents the tribe (Gundel 2006; Amina 2018). He represents the tribe at the local and national level. Usually, the “Issims” are in the highest position in the tribal system and they perform a function that resembles that of the ceremonial head of the state in the parliamentary political systems. They are very few in number, seven (7) or nine (9) in the whole of Puntland (Interview). It is not clear because tribes exist in quite a complex way and because some tribes live in between borders. So, they may have kinsmen living outside of the Puntland’s geographical borders. (Issims) is usually an inherited position. However, in some cases, clans elect from the inherited family in an open meeting to all (Lewis, 1999). After the coronation, the elected “Issim” usually delegates his powers to the Council of Elders to administrate tribal issues.

Nabadoono (Peace-seeker) is functional and more active in the governing of the tribe. They organize clan meetings, settle disputes, and work with the government (Interview). Thus, “Nabadoono” is vital in the traditional Somali institution, as he performs the most important functions in governance. He judges, executes, and legislates (Gundel, 2006). The “Nabadoono” does not inherit the position but is elected. It is a position open to all clansmen. However, once elected they serve a lifetime. In Puntland, the Nabadoono works closely with the government, particularly the Ministry of the Interior (Interview). Besides, they are useful instruments for the government in maintaining peace and order. They also administer the grazing lands and water sources and report to the government for all matters happening in their localities.

6.2 State& Citizen Relationship in the presence of multiple governing actors.

Since the establishment of Puntland state in 1998, the relationship between the government of Puntland and the citizens has been indirect. The government provides basic services to the citizens through a complex network of collaborating with non-state structures such as tribal institutions and the private sector (Hussein Interviewee). The government acts as a regulator and arbiter but has very limited daily interaction with the people. For instance, until recently, most primary education was controlled by private networks and NGO clusters, and the government has had a very limited role in regulation and service provision for the schools. Similarly, other social services are delivered through partnerships between state and non-state actors or are delivered by either private entities or community-based entities.

For the last few years, the state has been striving to centralize the whole governing structure in Puntland, and it is partially successful in centralizing the whole system. Nevertheless, because of limited financial and institutional capacities, the government in Puntland continued to collaborate with community-based structures to deliver services to the citizens. During the interviews, I asked all participants why the government wanted to limit the power of private entities and NGOs in governance while tolerating so much with the community-based structures. Which exist in the form of tribal institutions. I found out that it was because non-state entities other than community-based structures were perceived as profit-seeking or that they would have consolidated some power and posed a threat to the government. On the contrary, community-based entities are more collaborative and never challenge the government’s policies and regulations.

6. 3 Towards Centralized Authority

6.3.1 Seeking Legitimacy from Universal Suffrage

As statehood in Puntland got stronger, the government moderately succeeded in centralizing the governing structures in the region. The next crucial step was to open up the political system and allow citizens to participate in the elections. Though Puntland attempted to deliver the democratic elections

several times, it still couldn't deliver universal suffrage. Most of the participants in the study believed that without a genuine move to democratic elections, the statehood in Puntland is incomplete. And citizens expected the government to deliver open participation in elections more than any other service. This perception originates because of the repeated failure of the government in Puntland and successive leaders not to deliver democratic elections in Puntland.

Most of the participants in this study described the hybrid electoral system as "exclusive" and "retrogressive," in which a few persons, namely politicians and tribal leaders, dominate the elections through special arrangements and the power to select who participates and who does not. They also perceive the hybrid electoral system as a model in which vote buying and corruption are inevitable. For Aisha, under the hybrid system, citizens do not have equal rights and opportunities for political participation, and that is a constitutional violation. Because, the Puntland constitution grants all citizens to have equal rights, politically, economically, and socially. However, much has changed since the last election. People gained some of their political rights, but of course not enough yet (Aisha, interview). Wider participation in politics through the one-person-one-vote model also helped to narrow the gap between the state and citizenry in Puntland.

For Aisha, another negative factor of the clan-based electoral system was that it discriminates against and denies political rights to some segments of society, in particular women and minority groups. Because they did not have enough electorates, the government tried to allocate a quota for each group in the previous elections, but the tribal elders did not implement the policy perfectly.

Fortunately, democratic elections enabled women to be represented and involved in public offices. Politically active women like Aisha unconditionally supported the one-person-one-vote elections in Puntland. They argue that democracy creates space for fair competition amongst all genders, which could lead to more women getting elected in political positions at local levels. Aisha, commenting on the transition, said “ *One-person-one-vote electoral system is way better than the clan-based system because it removed the restrictions on women*”. And that enables them to get involved in the political processes.

Another key element that played a crucial in democratization was the demands of the young people. Ruun, who is a youth activist highlighted that the young people constitute the largest sociological group in Puntland and that provided a lot of support for the youth activists to increase their demands in transitioning to a one-person-one-vote system. During the study, it was also observable in the online discussions that for the last few years the level of political consciousness among the young people in Puntland has developed, as they are involved actively in the grassroots movements demanding a lot of socio-economic and political rights. It is evident that the level of unemployment among youth is very high, they are also very highly connected to global issues, use actively on the internet and most of them

are very hostile to the existing clan-based system. It appears that all these factors could be the reason they have wanted the change. It is also observable in the speeches of the Puntland state president that the government apprehended the demands from various social groups to move on to the democratic transition. And that forced them to speed up the process.

6.4 Perceptions Towards Democratization

Tribal structures in Puntland are very anxious about the sudden move toward democratic elections. Nabadoon, who is a tribal leader, emphasized that he and other traditional leaders principally support universal suffrage. And also acknowledges that all citizens should have an equal vote and be able to have a choice in the political system. However, he assessed that the incumbent president may have some hidden agendas for moving too fast toward democratic elections. He continued that for real democratic transition Puntland should implement some crucial political, economic, and social reforms. For him, the government needs to capacitate the existing state institutions to deliver the reforms quickly.

Except for the tribal chief, all other participants in the study have had a strongly negative perception of the tribal structures, as they see that the tribal system is an obstacle to the democratic transition. They fiercely criticize the tribal leaders and see them as corrupted entities that want to safeguard the status quo. Women and youth groups are more critical in comparison to other participants. They see the tribal chiefs as anti-democratic and want to maintain their exclusive authority in selecting electorates.

Abdirahman, who is a civil society leader, emphasized that tribal institutions are deeply rooted within the culture of Puntland. For a long time, they were instrumental in settling political disputes and had the power to select the representatives. Therefore, abandoning them all at once may not be possible". Thus, civil societies are interested in a democratic system but also desire the government to ensure peaceful transitioning. And to accommodate all the people who opposed the first phase of democratization and include them in the processes.

6.5 Safety & challenges and opportunities

6.5.1 Violence in Elections

Both the interviews and the secondary data indicate that the safety of the elections was very effective. Except 3 out of the 37 districts elections occurred peacefully without any incidence (PEC, 2023). It was because the state security apparatus collaborated well with the informal structures including tribal chiefs and community organisations, which are very active in democratisation spirit of collaboration between formal and informal institutions is engrained within Puntland's political and administrative tradition (Mohamed, Interview). The collaborations between state agencies and the informal institutions in Puntland are something entrenched in the administrative practices in Puntland. However, the nature of these collaborations is a bit ambiguous. Except for a constitutional article that mentions that tribal chiefs

have a role in the peacemaking process solely in the tribal-based conflicts in their localities. It is not legally clear the administrative function of the tribal structures. It seems that in Puntland, there is an ongoing debate on the role of tribal institutions in governance. This was very obvious in all interviews and other discussions that the pro-democratization groups are striving to completely abolish the role of the tribal chiefs in the governance of Puntland, while tribal structures and their supporters resist that.

In practice, frequently collaborate with the informal tribal institutions in various areas including safety and security. As they use them as an instrumental element in settling disputes, they also assist law enforcement in crime prevention. In the elections, the tribal chiefs assisted police and other forces in maintaining peace and order during the campaign period and election day (Nabadoon, Interview). To maintain safety the police also engaged with civil societies and the Puntland Election Committee (PEC). Mohamed also highlights that the electoral committee works with police and traditional authorities to settle any dispute associated with the elections. And that has never posed a safety problem for the staff. However, considering that the state authority is limited, and doesn't function well in most of the rural areas. The electoral committee and all other state institutions instrumentalize tribal authorities to settle the disputes in the villages.

In some cases, if the safety problems were beyond the police, the electoral committee had the power to suspend the voting in that district. Again Mohamed highlights that one incident happened in the Nugaal region where the (PEC) postponed the election in three districts because of security reasons. This was a stronghold region for politicians who wanted the continuation of the clan-based electoral system. In the subsequent period, the elections happened in those districts also after the government intervened and solved their concerns.

The PEC election report which is this study also relies on highlights that the government of Puntland put in place strict security measures to ensure the safety of the election. Not only on the election day but during the whole process. There was security sector reform and capacitating the police force to be able to handle professionally the elections. They provided tailored training on ensuring public safety strictly, but also allowing citizens to freely express their concerns. In the context of Puntland, this was new to the police forces who usually tend to use excessive force in demonstrations (Abdirahman, Interview). This policy was part of the democratization package, they wanted the police to maintain order but also be somehow neutral, and comply with the laws to protect all citizens regardless of their political views.

The PEC report also underscores that multiple actors of formal and informal institutions are involved in maintaining peace and order in the election days. It mentions that the informal actors such as tribal chiefs, civil societies and media assisted the police forces to ensure public safety. Therefore, the overall

safety and security situation in the elections in Puntland was very satisfactory. It does not mention any security incidents that happened during the whole process.

6.7 Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization in Puntland

This section tries to answer the last sub-question, “What are the opportunities and challenges for democratization in Puntland?” The democratization process in Puntland is ongoing and has not yet been completed. The study seeks to know whether the social, political, and institutional dynamics in Puntland favour the continuation of the process or oppose it. This section also looks at the possibility of enhancing democratic culture and institutional capability in Puntland to deliver one-person-one-vote in the upcoming state legislature elections.

6.7.1 Challenges

The main challenge in Puntland is institutional capability and trust. The majority of the participants in the study highlighted that state institutions in Puntland are not still at a level that can transform the state into a fully democratic one (Interviews). They have no expertise or impartiality to deliver the best for the people. For Hussein, the main actors in the processes are the PEC (Puntland electoral committee, Puntland constitutional court, Puntland state parliament house, political parties, and civil societies, and it is very difficult but not impossible to get a consensus and create a collaborative spirit for the democratic transition in the Puntland State.

Another issue that most of the participants in the study stressed was the lack of a fully independent judicial system in Puntland. The political interference in the judicial processes is a big concern, unless reformed it will not be able to mediate the electoral disputes in the state. Another problem mentioned by a significant number of participants in the study is a structural challenge of economic problems, poverty, and social norms. Mohamed, a district electoral commissioner, argues that one of the main problems is the absence of the government's exclusive coercive power. He argues that people in Puntland still have access to all kinds of arms, and each tribe has weapons and militias in some localities. It is very risky if all actors in the political arena and parties do not accept the electoral results. In such scenarios, Puntland may end up in intercommunal violence. Similarly, Abdirahman, who is the chairperson for the largest civil society umbrella in Puntland (PUNSAA), has also a safety and security concern if the government fails to deliver a fair and free election. He also states that Puntland doesn't have a monopoly over the use of violence at its borders.

Furthermore, Puntland's political culture is embedded with tribal politics, and different tribes/clans in the state have established norms to maintain power-sharing. Now that being disrupted by the democratic transition, it will be inevitable for some of them to lose positions in the government. And that could lead to political instability. This is one of the reasons that the tribal chiefs wanted to preserve the clan-based electoral systems because it creates relative stability in Puntland state. Hussein, argues that tribal

leaders view democratization as a threat to their position in society and a loss of power. Tribal elders see that voting in elections is not for everybody in the state. Because, some tribes see themselves as natives of the land, while others are outsiders. He also pointed out that these sensitivities are vulnerable and open to manipulation by political leaders if they feel they are not winning the elections, and that can lead to political violence.

Political institutionalisation is also problematic and weak because the whole process is very new. Hussein, again, is more concerned with the lack of strong political parties with organizational capabilities and well-defined ideologies. He points out, that political parties contested in the election have no clear ideological stands that guide their policies on major social and economic issues. Thus, to some extent, most of the existing political parties in Puntland are personalistic and centred around a single powerful political figure. That political leader heavily influences the decision-making processes within the party.

Another important challenge is also sustainable finance. Mohamed and Aisha agree that the government has not allocated sufficient funds for the democratic elections in Puntland. So, the funds heavily come from the donor countries. Mohamed and Aisha agree that there is no money for democratic elections in the government budget. Instead, elections mainly depend on donor funds from abroad. This shows an extreme dependence on foreign donors. The findings from the interviews, online discussions and also reports demonstrate that there are huge sums of funds provided by the donors, especially the EU mission in Somalia, and several European embassies. Zamzam highlights that this could have grave repercussions for the entire process not only in financing but also in discouraging citizens to participate in the process. If the people feel that the whole process is hijacked by a few people and some foreigners they may resist and that may result in the return to the old clan-based hybrid electoral systems (Zamzam, Interview). In Puntland, although the people wanted the one-person-one-vote system, it is evident the elite (government, politicians & civil society leaders) negotiated and agreed on everything in the election including the rules, procedures and electoral laws.

6.7.2 Opportunities

The findings demonstrate that there are more opportunities than constraints in the democratisation process in Puntland. Firstly, there is a growing societal demand to move on and transition into a fully democratic state within Somalia. The participants in the study and the secondary data both indicate that there is a societal demand to abolish the clan-based electoral system. And a substantial number of the people in Puntland state want the government to continue the democratization in Puntland. For Zamzam, Aisha, and Abdirahman citizens in Puntland demand a more representative and accountable government.

The active involvement of young people in the last elections is another opportunity for the democratisation process to continue. The youth constitute a significant portion of the people in Puntland and their demand for democratic transition is linked to socioeconomic problems that the clan-based electoral systems failed to improve. Thus, they see democratic elections will provide them a space to get involved in the political system (Ruun, Interview). Moreover, democratic elections may enhance effectiveness in governance, and create more jobs to tackle the increasing inequalities in Puntland (Ruun, Interview).

Finally, stability allows for Puntland to conduct elections smoothly. Abdirahman, emphasizes that in the big cities' the government has no problem organizing elections. They are capable of controlling it. However, the problem is in the far rural areas, which are mostly controlled by tribal structures, and the government instrumentalized them for a long period to govern themselves and maintain peace and order by themselves in their localities. it is unclear whether the government delegates the tribal leader to keep peace and order in the tribal lands. They do not have a defined role in the security governance in Puntland state. There is no single legal or administrative procedure that explicitly describes the legal authorities of the tribal elders. Uniquely, article 108 of the Puntland constitution recognizes the existence of traditional authorities in Puntland. As it grants them the power to settle the disputes within their communities.

The relative stability in Puntland state has largely contributed to the state's capability to conduct democratic elections. It is a very big positive step because this would not be possible in the other parts of Somalia. In this context, the absence of conflict has been a positive factor for preparations to hold free and fair elections in the Puntland State of Somalia. Moreover, it is worth noting, that a significant number of participants in the study mentioned that urbanization and economic growth for the last couple of years in Puntland have also aided Puntland to move into a democratic state within Somalia. That also attracted a lot of donor countries that support democratization and work with Somalia to enhance democratic practices in Africa.

Chapter VII: Findings, Conclusion & Policy Recommendations

This is the final chapter of the research paper. It contains only two main sections: the first highlights the research's main findings, and the second contains conclusions and recommendations for future researchers.

7.1 Universal suffrage in Puntland fosters Political participation

In Puntland State, there has been an incredible change towards a one-person-one-vote election from a clan-based hybrid electoral system. That significantly increased people's participation in the political life in Puntland. This transformation brought about new political landscapes, as disclosed by the main findings of this study. Old tribal politics were replaced with a new system that is more representative. People hope that the elected local governments. There a high expectations that the newly elected mayors will perform much better than previous ones (Interviews). There was a common thread of realization amongst the participants in the study regarding how much they trust the government to transition to being fully democratic. Furthermore, are they prepared to get involved again in such processes? Most of the participants responded; that the registration process made them understand why they needed to have some voice at the state and local level of politics. They are more convinced that citizens can participate in political processes, thus making them cast their votes and demand accountability from their leaders.

Secondly, the "one person, one vote" voting allowed more people to take part in politics. For example, women and young people from marginalized groups were able to secure political power and control positions, unlike in the hybrid system where they are left behind. Notably, individuals from minority groups were incorporated into the political process, thanks to the democratic transition. Additionally, in Puntland, political debates became more credible and trustworthy since the democratic system provides a pluralism of opinions.

Another significant outcome mentioned by most of the participants in the study is that using a one-man-one-vote system was a highly competitive environment within the political arena. All candidates had to run individual campaigns, thus engaging with constituents about their ideas and platforms. Politicians believed they needed to compete if they wanted to retain their positions in the government. This involved winning or losing public confidence by fulfilling campaign promises made during elections. When elected officials are accountable directly to the citizens, they will likely be more responsive and care about the needs of the citizens. This creates an accountable government, which is accountable to the citizens and prioritizes their needs.

Furthermore, the voting systems propelled specific political factions and their ideologies. That is why in Puntland State from the previous elections. Currently, the political landscape comprises diverse groups with different views. Equally important, it effectively introduced more inclusive democratic

debates and policy dialogues beyond tribal fracture and clan politics that could not produce good policies for the citizens. It also helped Puntland to have a reputation in national politics.

The 30% women quota policy aimed at promoting equality in the electoral process, also worked under this system. However, still there is much to do. A significant number of the participants in the study revealed that major obstacles still exist, including tribalism, financial constraints, and security problems.

7.2 Competing political actors in Puntland

7.2.1 Democratization, modernity, and traditional systems

The findings in this study also demonstrate the complexity of the political setting in the Puntland state of Somalia. There is ongoing competition between different actors within Puntland after the municipal elections, intensified as the government pushed hard to continue the democratization processes. On the other hand, most of the traditional authorities, and some powerful politicians wanted the one-person-one-vote model to be applied only at the local governments. While state-level legislation and the presidential elections continue to be used in the clan-based hybrid system for one more term.

Besides the interviews and the secondary data, I also attentively followed the political debates in Puntland state throughout the study. Thus, I have noticed that there is an important segment within Puntland society that supports the continuation of a hybrid clan-based electoral system with some modifications. The reason is that they see that their tribal system and community-based institutions function well in Puntland, and work for them. Furthermore, they are a bit critical of democratic institutions. and the ambiguities it may bring to their lives. For them, casting a vote may not bring a better government.

The tribal and community-based institutions are not only political entities but also cultural and historical. Thus, their supporters want to be preserved and respected. Most of them consider these institutions as unique Indigenous structures that have a cultural meaning, as well as politically important. Therefore, most indigenous peoples had a negative attitude towards democracy but welcomed a reformed version of the old clan-based hybrid system.

7.3 A failed dream of a fully democratic state in Somalia

In the post-election period, the government wanted to speed up the democratization. The main political motive was the rise of the popularity of the incumbent president and his party; he wanted to exploit that opportunity for re-elections. Thus, the government proposed a series of constitutional reforms to organize state-level parliamentary and presidential elections, which would have abolished the hybrid electoral system in Puntland.

Moreover, according to the tribal leaders, the “one person, one vote” system would lead to more polarization in the communities. To avoid this situation and protect the effectiveness and stability of the

Puntland State government must stick firmly to democratic principles and institution building. Eventually, disapproval of state-wide democratic elections demonstrates the power of tribal structures in Puntland. Their biggest worry was that the one-person-one-vote from the government would result in a loss of control over the tribal lands. Increased citizen participation in the electoral processes could have resulted in a total dismissal of the tribal structures in Puntland.

Another group that opposed the state-level democratic elections was some political parties and political lobbyist groups who have been involved the Puntland politics for a decade. They demanded that the government has to seek consensus and negotiate with all political stakeholders in Puntland before moving into elections. From their perspective, a state-level democratic election is simply a form of exploitation by the incumbent president and his party to take power away from traditional elders to select electorates, who elect the parliaments in each constituency.

7.4 Clan-based electoral system led to Elite domination in local politics.

For the last 25 years, the hybrid electoral system, which is a clan-based selection system, empowered the clan elders and politicians. That created an elite political class of politicians and tribal elders to concentrate the power and dominate the whole political process in the Puntland State (Interview). Both the interviews and the secondary data in the study demonstrate that the political class in Puntland State is very small in numbers but has enormous powers to control the whole political system in the state. The selection processes in the clan-based electoral system allow inter-elite negotiation, which finally leads to who will be elected at the local and state levels. This is one of the reasons that all participants in this study were very critical of the clan-based electoral system. Moreover, overwhelmingly supported universal suffrage. The women, youth, and minority clan members in the study were more hostile and fiercely critiquing the hybrid system than others. They emphasized that the previous clan-based electoral system institutionalized and preserved the dominance of certain people in the Puntland State. And that was deepening after every election. It was a dominance of powerful, old men from certain clans. And because women, culturally, can never be a tribal leader, they are excluded from the selection processes, and so are minority tribes. Thus, they wanted to feel equal for all those years. Therefore, the transition to universal suffrage in Puntland has class and cultural dimensions.

7.5 Universal suffrage reduced Vote buying and Corruption in Politics

In the clan-based hybrid electoral system, the vote buying is persistent (Abdirahman, Interview). It became a norm for both the electorates and the candidates to negotiate on the price of each vote, which is the same at local or state levels. People not only vote for the highest bidder but also negotiate with each candidate on what he/she will offer after getting elected. That could be employment in the government, nepotism, or cronyism. On the contrary, the one-person-one-vote electoral system is more transparent and less corrupt than Puntland's hybrid clan-based electoral system. The participants in the

study emphasize that with democratization people vote for their favorite parties and candidates without expecting anything other than better service and representation. Universal suffrage decreased vote buying, allowing candidates and parties with less financial capabilities to get elected easily.

7.6 One person-vote electoral model fostered state-citizen relationships in Puntland.

Democratization in Puntland contributed to building a new social contract between citizens and the state. The gap between the elected official and the citizen narrowed. People are very conscious about their citizenry duties. They demand more and to participate in their localities' decision-making process and governance. Hussein, the political party leader, emphasized that citizens in his locality now threaten that they will not vote for his party again if they fail to deliver all their promises during the election campaign. He also mentioned that people now feel a sense of ownership of the local municipality. Under the previous system, the relationship between the citizens and the government was non-existent because citizens did not feel that the selected officials under the hybrid system represented them.

7.7 The presence of relatively strong civil societies in Puntland

During the transition period from a clan-based hybrid electoral system to universal suffrage in local elections, civil society organizations (CSOs) in Puntland performed well in promoting democratic values, they pressured the government to implement the process in compliance with the laws and procedures. Some organizations like PDRC and PUNSAA acted as platforms to inform the people on various issues, such as election timelines, how to vote and also documenting the stories throughout the transition period.

7.8 Conclusion

The study concludes that the democratic transition in Puntland is at the beginning stages. Numerous obstacles to democratic transition have been encountered in Puntland. One of the major hurdles to political institutionalization during the democratization process of Puntland State is the lack of genuine and strong political parties. There was no structure or party ideology in a multi-party system. It also reinforces competitive democracies within individuals themselves. Thus, problems like patronage politics and personality-driven election campaigns call for more organized party systems, such as efficient governance and issue-based conversations in Puntland.

Similarly, this study demonstrated perfectly that tribal politics hinder democratization in Puntland. First, political dynamics are so heavily influenced by tribal relationships that they outweigh democratic values. The government, on its part, aggravates social disintegration and hampers the gradual development of representative governance in Puntland. The government's main drive for democratization was to score political points and get re-elected in the next elections.

Tribalism is so prevalent that it erodes national unity, democracy and social cohesion. Therefore, to confront this phenomenon, government and political parties need to prioritize community participation over clan-based politics. Nonetheless, the study confirms how political tribal connections are embedded at local levels and often supersede public interests. Thus, it implies that tribalism created ruptures within the social fabric in Puntland and led to mistrust between different communities and tribes in Puntland. This has impeded democratic processes and undermined the smooth transition into democratic government.

Another major issue that has harmed the democratization processes in Puntland is the absence of a fully independent judiciary system. This has also undermined democratic elections because there was low trust in the State's judicial system. All other political parties other than the ruling party complained a lot about the legalities of the elections. They had filed a legal complaint against the government and the PEC. However, the Constitutional Court deliberated and delayed listening to their case (Interview).

In Puntland, citizens have less trust in the neutrality and impartiality of the state's justice systems. The interviews demonstrated that the existing judicial system cannot settle the political settlements. And that jeopardizes the democratic transition in Puntland. Thus, immediate steps are necessary to enable Puntland State to realize its goal of establishing an autonomous, accountable justice system.

7.9 Recommendations

The study recommends the significance of inclusivity for representative democracy and demonstrates a deliberate attempt to incorporate citizen participation in the Puntland State of Somalia. The adoption of legal frameworks, such as the Puntland Constitution and Puntland electoral laws, represents a critical first step in guaranteeing gender parity and expanding the political domain. Despite these initiatives, there are still large gaps, especially when putting policy into practice, and women and young people face structural obstacles to full involvement. The body of research highlights a contradiction between the requirements of the law on inclusivity and the actual political landscape, where traditional clan dynamics frequently take precedence over democratic ideals. Moreover, there is a conspicuous deficiency of all-encompassing approaches to tackle the socio-cultural and economic obstacles impeding efficient citizen participation at the state-level politics. An empirical study is needed to examine how the post-municipal elections in Puntland regulations and constitutional amendments affect real participation rates, the efficacy of gender quotas, and how young people might participate more actively in political processes in the future.

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