

Democracy and Security

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdas20

Democracy and State Formation Nexus: Experiences in Somaliland

Barkhad M. Kaariye

To cite this article: Barkhad M. Kaariye (2021): Democracy and State Formation Nexus: Experiences in Somaliland, Democracy and Security, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2021.1871601

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2021.1871601

Published online: 23 Mar 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=fdas20

DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY
https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2021.1871601

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

Democracy and State Formation Nexus: Experiences in Somaliland

Barkhad M. Kaariye

ABSTRACT

For democracy to be implemented, there should be a peaceful, functioning, and defined sustem of governance. Though scholars have different perspectives on the nexus between state formation and democracy, this article uses Somaliland as a case. Somaliland, a former British Protectorate and now de facto state in the Horn of Africa, has adopted a hybrid system of governance—traditional, religious, and modern democratic systems of governance. The democratization process in Somaliland started decades back. As per the literature reviewed, most of the researchers have studied the peace-building process and the state formation processes separately. They did not specifically investigate the nexus between democracy and state formation in Somaliland. To fill that gap, this article examines the experiences of Somaliland's democratization process and its impact on state formation. It clarifies how a clan-based system of governance turned into a democratic multiparty system. The major findings of this article include that democracy has had a huge impact on Somaliland's state formation process. Not only that, it contributed to the peace-building process as well. Above all, the people of Somaliland were keen on building trust among themselves with democratic principles during the state formation. The application of democracy has permitted Somaliland people the right of accountability where they can change the leaders by casting votes in elections. The characteristics and principles of democracy had emerged in Somaliland's ruling systems even before it reclaimed its internationally fully recognized independence.

KEYWORDS

Somaliland; Somalia; democracy; state formation; Peace-building

Introduction

The first Somali flag was flown over the British Somaliland Protectorate territory—today's de facto state of Somaliland—on June 26, 1960, after it gained its independence from Britain, who had been ruling over the colony for 70 years. On July 1 in the same year, it united with Italian Somalia to form the great Somali Republic.[1] After nine years of civil administration in the Somali Republic—following the killing of president Abdirashid Ali Sharmaarke on October 15, 1969, by his bodyguard—a military regime led by Mohamed Siad Barre overthrew the elected government in a *coup d'état* on October 21, 1969. The Prime Minister of the Somali Republic, Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, was in the United States for an official visit when the president was assassinated.[2] Despite the work that had been

CONTACT Barkhad M. Kaariye bkaariye104@gmail.com Bole 03, Bole Medhanialem, Millennium Hall Road, St number; 682 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box: 26154

© 2021 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

done, the military regime committed war crimes, human rights abuse, and crimes against humanity.[3] The first military opposition in Somalia begun in 1977–78 after the Somalia-Ethiopia war. An attempted coup by military officers from the north-east of the country's regions failed in February 1978. Months later, in April 1978, the situation led to the formation of the first Somali military opposition, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, known as the SSDF.[4] After massive arrests, detentions, extrajudicial executions, confiscation of private property, and disappearance of civilians in the north (Somaliland) by the military regime, the second military opposition, the Somali National Movement (SNM), was established.[5] The Somali National Movement (SNM) was established in London on April 6, 1981, by scholars from the then-British Somaliland Protectorate.

After 10 years of armed struggles, the SNM defeated the military government in 1991 and took over the administration of the former British Somaliland Protectorate.[6] In the same year, the southern part of the ruined Somali Republic (Former Italian Somalia) descended into the chaos that prevailed in most of Somalia, which had been engulfed in warlordism and banditry ever since the collapse of the state.[7] In the former British Protectorate, the northern part of the united Somali Republic, the SNM held simultaneous clan conferences, including the Burao Conference in 1991. That conference was the beginning of the Somaliland rebirth, when they declared on May 18, 1991, that Somaliland's independence was reclaimed from Somalia. The withdrawal from the union was the result of three decades of unsuccessful attempts at creating a unified country with the latter. The SNM formed a government in Somaliland as a de facto state.[8]

Background of the study

The Somaliland democratization process had different stages with diverse situations. The International Crises Group[11] (2003) argues that the democratization process of the new Somaliland—after it declared the withdrawal from the union with Somalia—had several phases: the establishment of the Somali National Movement (SNM) administration, power transfer from the SNM to an inclusive civil administration, and a constitutional referendum, which paved the way for multiparty elections.

Although Somaliland was engulfed in chaos and civil war between 1993 and 1995, the conflict was managed and contained after massive reconciliation efforts by different local stakeholders, including the government, traditional leaders, women activists, among others. In 1997 a national reconciliation conference was held in Hargeisa that was attended by traditional leaders and clan representatives. The process of redemocratization had begun.[12]

A lack of political legitimacy and democracy is contributing to African instability. Most African problems are not resolved through homegrown and indigenous peace-making mechanisms. Rather, external intervention is always considered the noticeable factor that fuels the existing problems in the state.

As per the literature reviewed, most researchers have studied the peace-building process and the state formation processes separately. They have not specifically investigated the nexus between democracy and state formation in Somaliland. To fill that gap, this article examines the experiences of Somaliland's democratization process and its nexus with state formation. It clarifies how a clan-based system of governance turned into a democratic multiparty system. The major findings of this article include the fact that democracy has had a huge impact on Somaliland's contested state formation process. Not only that, it contributed to the peace-building process as well. Above all, Somaliland people were keen on building trust among themselves with democratic principles during the state formation. The application of democracy has permitted Somaliland people the right of accountability where they can change their leaders by casting votes in elections. It argues that the characteristics and principles of democracy had emerged in Somaliland's ruling systems even before it reclaimed its de facto status. It also shows that there is a nexus between state formation and democracy. It is also argued that political legitimacy in an African context depends on democracy.

Methodology

This article examines the nexus between democracy and state formation, illustrating the Somaliland case. Methodologically, this article is a qualitative and descriptive study and a purposive nonprobability sampling study. Both primary and secondary data were generated. Desk review, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions were employed. For the primary data, politicians, clan elders, political party leaders, parliamentarians, Somali National Movements (SNM) warriors, and other vital respondents were interviewed. For the secondary data, books, academic journals, government reports, and other documents were reviewed and analyzed.

Democracy: Conceptual clarity

The term *democracy* originated from two different Greek words with different meanings: *demos* ("people") and *kratos* ("rule"). In addition, the definition of democracy has been described as "rule by the people" (Sorensen, 1998:3).[13] Coppendge, Gerring, Altman, Bernhard, Fish, Hicken, and Teorrel summarized these six key models of democracy thusly:

> These may be summarized as electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian. Each represents a different way of understanding what "rule by the people" means. Thus, while no single conception can reasonably purport to embody all the meanings of democracy, these six conceptions (Table 1) taken together offer a fairly comprehensive accounting of the concept of democracy as it is employed today.[14]

Table 1. Conceptions of democracy.

Table 1
Conceptions of democracy

	Principles	Question	Institutions
I. Electoral (aka elite, minimal, realist, Schumpeterian)	Contestation, competition	Are government offices filled by free and fair multiparty elections?	Elections, political parties, competitiveness and turnover
II. Liberal (aka consensus, pluralist)	Limited government, multiple veto points, horizontal accountability, individual rights, civil liberties, transparency	Is political power decentralized & constrained?	Multiple, independent, and decentralized, with special focus on the role of the media, interest groups, the judiciary, and a written constitution with explicit guarantees
III. Majoritarian (aka responsible party government)	Majority rule, centralization, vertical accountability	Does the majority (or plurality) rule?	Consolidated and centralized, with special focus on the role of political parties
IV. Participatory	Government by the people	Do ordinary citizens participate in politics?	Election law, civil society, local government, direct democracy
V. Deliberative	Government by reason	Are political decisions the product of public deliberation?	Media, hearings, panels, other deliberative bodies
VI. Egalitarian	Political equality	Are all citizens equally empowered?	Designed to ensure equal participation, representation, protection, and politically relevant resources

Note. Source: Coppendge et al. (2011), 254.[9]

Somaliland's accomplishment in the democratic system

Somaliland declared its withdrawal from the union with Somalia, but it was not internationally recognized. It constitutes the territory of the former British protectorate, bordering with the Gulf of Aden to the north, Djibouti to the west, Somalia to the east, and Ethiopia to the west and south. It was delineated by international treaties between 1888 and 1897.[15]

Though it was under colonial rule and was not fully independent, Somaliland democracy had begun in 1935 with the establishment of the first Somali Party across the Somali Peninsula—the Somaliland National League (SNL),[16]—almost 25 years before independence. The League had its representatives from the district level to the national level. Its structure included a president, secretary, treasurer, and other members. Though the headquarters of the League was at Burao, it had different branches in Erigavo, Sheikh, Berbera, Hargeisa, Borama, and Odweine.[17]

On February 17, 1960, a British Somaliland legislative council election was held. Four main political parties—Somali National League (SNL), United Somali Party (USP), National United Front (NUF), and Somali Youth League (SYL)—took part in the elections, running for 33 seats.

Democracy in the jungle

Somaliland's democratic practices go back to armed struggle in Ethiopian jungles. Though the SNM was a rebellion movement, they were still adopting quasi-democratic practices. The SNM's political agenda was more democratic regarding elections. Their political charter and objectives—both long-term and short-term—were more democratic. There have been consistent conferences for electing the chair of the movement. The principle of power rotation was also one of its main tenets. Six different SNM conferences were held in different locations in Ethiopia, and several leaders were elected. The last conference was held in Balli-gubadle—a border town in Somaliland-Ethiopia—from March 31 to May 18, 1990. The constitution and the political charter of the SNM were also amended during the conference, and new leaders were elected. Their political charter was based on the principle of coexistence and avoiding dictatorship characteristics.[18] That permitted them to be one of the democratic movements in the East Africa region compared to other armed movements, including the United Somali Congress (USC) of Somalia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of Ethiopia—who later ruled the country for a long period of time—and other groups.[19]

As per article 1 of the SNM charter's short-term objectives, the SNM planned to overthrow Siad Barre's regime and establish a comprehensive and all-inclusive temporary democratic system that would combine all the Somali opposition movements. Article 5 of the same Charter granted the public a space and roles to be part of decision-making processes. To decentralize government, authorities up to the district level were also indicated in that article. The establishment of a temporary administration to rule the country within two years and transfer power to a civilian and elected government after the conflict was another SNM objective. In addition, per article 3 of the long-term objectives of the SNM charter, all political prisoners would be immediately released and any cases against them revoked, including those who were in exile and on the wanted list.

Table 2 shows the SNM assemblies, their dates, elected chairmen, and the venues where the assemblies were held.

Table 2. SNM assemblies.

No.	Assembly	Elected chairman	Date	Place of the conference
1	1st Congress	Ahmed Mohamed Guleid	April 6, 1981	London, UK
2	2nd Congress	Sheik Yusuf Ali Sh. Madar	April, 1982	Nazareth, Ethiopia
3	3rd Congress	Sheik Yusuf Ali (reelected)	July, 1983	Harar, Ethiopia
4	SNM's Central committee's Assembly	Abdikadir Kosar Abdi	Nov 1983	Jigjiga, Ethiopia
5	4th Congress	Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo	August 6, 1984	Jigjiga, Ethiopia
6	5th Congress	Ahmed Mohamed (reelected)	February 1987	Harar, Ethiopia
7	6th Congress	Abdirahman Ahmed Ali	March 31, 1990	Balligubadle, Somaliland-Ethiopia border town

Note. Source: www.dharaaro.net.

According to Table 2, from 1981 to 1984 the chairman's tenure was one year, and every year an election was held. All the SNM movement's members interviewed stressed that the legacy of the SNM includes "democracy." They argued that if their system was basically not democratic, they would have been in power two–three decades plus, like other armed groups in the region. They argued that the history of democracy in the new Somaliland goes back to the 1980s.

From rebellion to a republic

The aim of the SNM's struggles was not to get Somaliland to withdraw from the union with Somalia; it was to liberate the whole of the Somali Democratic Republic from Siad Barre's military regime. It helped and had cooperation with other Somali armed movements, including the United Somali Congress (USC) in the southern part of the Republic (former Italian Somalia). Despite that, Somaliland people were eagerly lobbying to question the consequences and the results of the Somaliland-Somalia union. There were other reasons for declaring Somaliland independence. One of the main reasons that Somaliland withdrew from the union was that when USC won the war against Siad Barre in Mogadishu and its suburbs, they declared a new government without consulting other movements, mainly the SNM.[20]

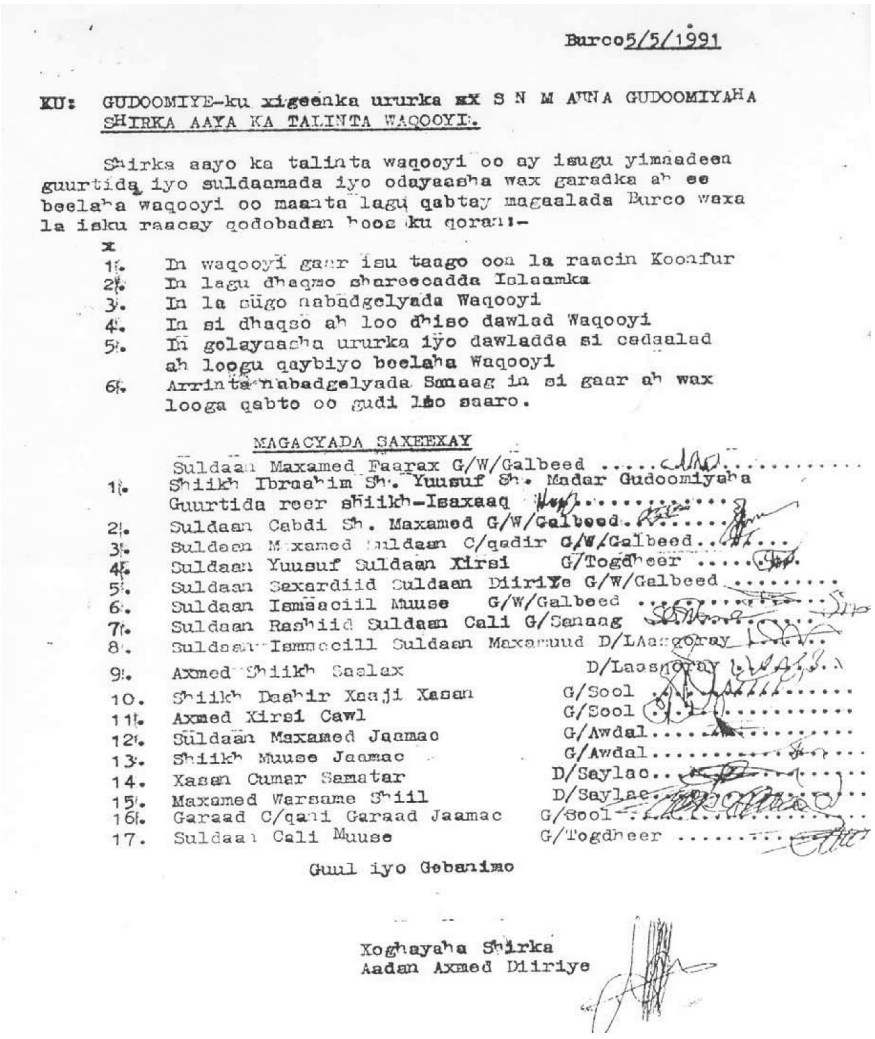
SNM leaders with the help of the traditional leaders from across the former British Somaliland Protectorate started peace conferences. The first peace conference in Somaliland was held on February 27, 1991, in Berbera. It aimed for reconciliation among the clans in those regions. According to Jiir (2013)[21], the declaration of the conference was basically to implement a full ceasefire in all Somaliland regions and to prepare for a grand and inclusive conference in Burao for all Somaliland elders, scholars, and clan leaders within two months.

In reference to Abokor, Brudbury, Hoyland, Kible, and Ossiya (2003)[22], from February 1991 to 1996 a total of 33 different peace conferences were held in Somaliland for the clans. On April 27, 1991, the planned grand peace conference was commenced in Burao for large delegations from across Somaliland regions. The conference lasted until May 15, 1991, and was called The Self-Determination Grand Conference for the North. It was perceived as the founding step of the new Somaliland and its rebirth.[23]

At the end of the conference, a new declaration was issued by the participants from all "The North" regions' delegates. Seventeen delegates signed the declaration and named it "The Burao Declaration."

It culminated in the declaration of Somaliland's withdrawal from the union with Somalia. According to the declaration in, the following objectives were announced:

(1) North [Somaliland] should not reunite with the south; it should be an independent state.
(2) Sharia Law should be implemented in the country.
(3) To process peace-building and sustain peace in the North.
(4) To immediately establish new government for the North.
(5) To give fair stakes of the governmental positions to the clans.
(6) To prepare a reconciliation conference for the clans in Sanaag region.



Burco5/5/1991

KU: GUDOOMIYE-ku xigeenka ururka xx S N M AUNA GUDOOMIYAHA
SHIRKA AAYA KA TALINTA WAQOOYI.

Shirka aayo ka talinta waqooyi oo ay isugu yimaadeen guurtida iyo suldaamada iyo odayaasha wax garadka ah ee beelaha waqooyi oo maanta lagu qabtay magaalada Burco waxa la isku raacay qodobadan hoos ku qoran:-

x

1. In waqooyi gaar isu taago oon la raacin Koonfur
2. In lagu dhaqmo shareecadda Islaamka
3. In la sugo nabadgelyada Waqooyi
4. In si dhaqso ah loo dhiso dawlad Waqooyi
5. In golayaasha ururka iyo dawladda si cadaalad ah loogu qaybiyo beelaha Waqooyi
6. Arrinta nabadgelyada Smaag in si gaar ah wax looga qabto oo gudi loo saaro.

MAGACYADA SAXEEXAY

Suldaan Maxamed Faarax G/W/Galbeed .....
1. Shiikh Ibraahim Sh. Yuusuf Sh. Madar Gudoomiyaha Guurtida reer shiikh-Isaxaaq .....
2. Suldaan Cabdi Sh. Maxamed G/W/Galbeed .....
3. Suldaan Maxamed Suldaan C/qadir G/W/Galbeed .....
4. Suldaan Yuusuf Suldaan Xirsi G/Togdheer .....
5. Suldaan Saxardiid Suldaan Diiriye G/W/Galbeed .....
6. Suldaan Ismaaciil Muuse G/W/Galbeed .....
7. Suldaan Rashiid Suldaan Cali G/Sanaag .....
8. Suldaan Ismaaciil Suldaan Maxamuud D/Laasqoray .....
9. Axmed Shiikh Saalax D/Laasqoray .....
10. Shiikh Daahir Xaaji Xasan G/Sool .....
11. Axmed Xirsi Cawl G/Sool .....
12. Suldaan Maxamed Jaamac G/Awdal .....
13. Shiikh Muuse Jaamac G/Awdal .....
14. Xasan Cumar Samatar D/Saylac .....
15. Maxamed Warsame Shiil D/Saylac .....
16. Garaad C/qani Garaad Jaamac G/Sool .....
17. Suldaan Cali Muuse G/Togdheer .....

Guul iyo Gebaniimo

Xoghayaha Shirka
Aadan Axmed Diiriye

The General Assembly of the SNM endorsed the declaration, and the chairman of the SNM, Abdirahman Ahmed Ali (Tuur), was elected as the president of the "Republic of Somaliland." Hassan Isse Jama, the vice chairman and a veteran SNM leader, was elected as the vice president. The central committee of the SNM, on the other hand, was recognized as the legislative organ of the new republic. The new president nominated an inclusive cabinet and built the new government. Though the conference was one of the founding conferences of Somaliland, it did not guarantee lasting peace for the new country. Following the Burao declaration, fresh civil wars erupted in Berbera and Burao cities. Therefore, to end the conflict, new simultaneous peace conferences started (Jiir, 2013).[24]

Somaliland has experienced many challenges due to interclan clashes and violent armed conflicts. Between 1992 and 1996, the country was twice embroiled in civil wars.[25] After two years in power with political and security unrest, the SNM's Central Committee—which held the legislative powers of the country—failed to set a date for its seventh congress, scheduled to be held in May 1993. The *Guurti* elder's council took the lead and proposed an interclan conference to be held in March 1993. It was named The Conference of Somaliland Clan Elders. Despite the SNM's purpose of fulfilling its mandate set by its political charter, the *Guurti* had been trying to keep the new and fragile state from experiencing a new wave of conflicts and civil war that could affect the lives of the people who already were victims of war. Therefore, another grand conference was held in Borama from January 24 to May 23, 1993.[26] The conference turned into a national conference where all issues related to the establishment of a functioning government were resolved (APD, 2004).[27] In 1993 more than 2,000 people attended the Borama conference. The 150 members of the *Guurti* constituted the voting delegates.[28] Following the conclusion of the conference, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal—a civilian leader—was elected president by an extensive majority, and Abdirahman Aw Ali Farah was declared vice president. A new declaration was issued in that conference, vowing:

(1) To complete and strengthen the reconciliation and the unity of Somaliland people.
(2) The SNM should transfer the power to the civilian administration led by the newly elected president in a peaceful way.
(3) To approve the national peace charter, which the new government should implement within two years.[29]

The impact of democracy on Somaliland's state formation

Although democratic characteristics have been a long-standing principle to the people of Somaliland, the SNM have had other unique political tenets

during their tenure in power. As per their political charter, they were keen to transfer power within two years. Though most of the SNM members and some of its leadership were not happy to do so, it was perceived as one of the main methods of giving space to civilians. In addition, collective forgiveness among the clans in the country was apparently needed as a peace-building initiating point.[30]

The *Guurti* (The Council of Elders) became the upper house of the Somaliland Parliament, and newly selected clan-based representatives became the lower house or House of Representatives of the Somaliland Parliament. Seventy-five members for each were nominated, though the number was later increased to 82 members. The combination of two different systems—modern and traditional—was the beginning of Somaliland's hybrid governance system—a House of Representatives as a modern democratic governance system and a House of Elders as a traditional, religious, and peace-building organ of government.[31]

Following the political and security challenges, the Parliament failed to develop a constitution per its mandate as their term and the government in office came to an end. Jiir (2013) stated that to avoid a new political conflict, another new conference—the National Rescue Conference—was held from April 2 to May 31, 1995, in Hargeisa. The main purpose of the conference was to extend the government's term—including the parliament and executive's terms—for up to 18 more months, which would end on November 4, 1996. The extended term also ended, and another grand conference was held in Hargeisa in the following year, from October 1996 to February 1997. The participants of the Hargeisa Conference included 315 delegates, including 150 elders who had previously attended the Borama Conference. As a resolution of the conference, the national charter was to be replaced by an interim constitution. President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal was reelected as president and Dahir Rayale Kahin as his vice president (Jiir 2013). The number of parliamentarians was increased to 164 members—82 members for each house, the House of Elders and the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives' tenure was set to be five years; the House of Elders' term is six years in office (Walls, 2014).[32] A joint constitution drafting committee by the executive and the parliament was established. In August 2000, the government distributed thousands of copies of the proposed constitution throughout Somaliland for consideration and review by the people. On May 31, 2001, the constitutional referendum was held. A total of 97% of those voting approved the constitution (IRI, 2001).[33] Abokor et al. (2003)[34] described the constitutional referendum in Somaliland as the first democratic vote for the Somali peninsula in more than three decades, and it was conducted almost entirely without external aid.

Though the government established its own party, on September18, 2001, the first opposition political organization was established by a group of

Somaliland diaspora. The process of political parties' establishment and competition followed.[35] The country has had different stages of political parties' registration, and different political parties were registered, but since article 9 of Somaliland's Constitution allows for only three political parties, the three that received the highest number of votes qualified as political parties entitled to put forward candidates for parliamentary and presidential elections.[36]

Between the years 1991 and 2002, Somaliland practiced "representative democracy," which contributed to the state formation process. In 2002, it experienced major systematic and political change from representative democracy to fully functioning modern democracy, including a multiparty system, drafting of a new constitution, and holding a nation-wide constitutional referendum, among other changes.[37] All of the state formation process in Somaliland would not have been achieved without any kind of democratic practices. Therefore, power rotation in the jungle by the SNM, a clan-based representation system in the simultaneous conferences in the different cities, and a multiparty system for voting experiences are perceived to be the foundations of the argument that democracy has had an impact on Somaliland's state formation process.

Decades of democratic exercise

In the past two decades, Somaliland has had different elections, which most of the national and international observers declared as free and fair elections. Regular power rotation among the leaders is the most vital step in Somaliland politics. Somaliland is a consolidated democracy (Pegg and Walls, 2018).[38]

Following is a summary of Somaliland's electoral rolls from 2001 to 2019.

Table 3. Somaliland's electoral roll in 2001–2012.

Date	Event
February 2001	President Egal announces the formation of Somaliland's first political organization—the United Democratic People's Party (UDUB). By the September 2001 deadline, five more organizations are formed—the Alliance for Salvation and Democracy (ASAD), Champions for Peace and Prosperity (Hormood), the Unity Party (Kulmiye), Somaliland Alliance for Islamic Democracy (SAHAN), and the Justice andWelfare Party (UCID).
December 18 2001	National Electoral Commission (NEC) created. Amid unrest and widespread discontent with President Egal's government, local elections are delayed for a year.
May 3, 2002	President Egal dies. Vice President Dahir Riyale Kahin succeeds him, as stipulated by the constitution.
December 15, 2002	The six political organizations contest local elections for 23 district councils. To gain registration as a political party, organizations have to win 20% of the vote in four of Somaliland's six regions—a requirement that fosters cross-clan alliances. More than 440,000 Somalilanders vote, although there is no electoral register. UDUB (41% of votes, 102 of the contested seats), Kulmiye (19% of votes, 67 seats), and UCID (11% of votes, 45 seats) become the three recognized political parties. International election observers judge the polls to have been carried out in a transparent and free manner.

(*Continued*)

Table 3. (Continued).

Date	Event
April 14, 2003	President Dahir Riyale Kahin (UDUB), Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" (Kulmiye), and Faisal Ali Farah "Waraabe" (UCID) compete in Somaliland's first popular presidential election. Dahir Riyale Kahin defeats Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" by 80 votes in a poll deemed "reasonably free and fair" by election observers. The result is contested in the Supreme Court.
May 16, 2003	Dahir Rayale Kahin is sworn in for a five-year term as president. After mediation, Kulmiye concedes defeat.
September 29, 2005–	246 candidates, of whom only seven are women, contest parliamentary elections for the 82-member House of Representatives. Constituencies are demarcated according to a system used in Somaliland's postindependence election in 1960. Hargeisa region is allocated 20 seats, Awdal 13, Sahil 10,Togdheer 15, Sanaag 12, and Sool 9. A total of 670,320 votes are cast at 985 polling stations. More than 60% of votes come from Somaliland's three western regions (Woqooyi Galbeed/Hargeisa, Awdal, and Sahil). UDUB wins 33 seats, Kulmiye 28 seats, and UCID 21 seats. International observers describe the elections as "reasonably free and fair."
April–June 2008	Guurti votes to extend President Riyale's term by one year. Local elections postponed indefinitely.
October 2008	One week after voter registration commences, public buildings in Hargeisa are the target of three suicide bombings that kill at least 25 people. Mogadishu-based Islamist group al-Shabaab is believed to have been responsible for the attacks.
2009	Political and constitutional crisis amid recriminations over widespread fraud in voter registration program and failure of NEC to ready itself for March 29 or September 27 polling dates. On September 30, the deadlock is broken with signing of a memorandum of understanding by all political parties agreeing to the appointment of a new NEC, a new election timetable, and use of a "refined" voter list.
June 26, 2010	Kulmiye party candidate Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" is elected president, having won 49.6% of the 538,246 votes cast. Incumbent Dahir Riyale Kahin polls 33.2% and UCID candidate Faisal Ali Farah "Waraabe" 17.2%. Somalilanders ignore a warning not to vote issued by al-Shabaab. Election is pronounced "a peaceful expression of popular will." During a peaceful transfer of power, President Silanyo praises his predecessor for his services to the country.
April 20, 2012	Six political associations—Wadani, Umadda, Haqsoor, Dalsan, Rays, and Nasiye (subsequently merged with Wadani)—approved to compete against the three existing political parties in local elections.
November 28, 2012	Following the demise of UDUB—the party of former President Egal and Rayale—local council elections contested by the two remaining political parties and five newly formed political associations. 2,368 candidates compete for 353 seats. Kulmiye (30.2% of votes), Wadani (20.2%), and UCID (13%) win—or retain—recognition as political parties.

Note. Source: Africa Research Institute; Edward Paice and Hannah Gibson (2013).[10]

On November 13, 2019, Somalilanders caste their vote for another presidential election. Muse Bihi Abdi of Kulmiye defeated Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi "Irro" of the Waddani party and Faisal Ali "Warabe" of the For Justice and Development (UCID) party. Bihi secured an outright majority with 55.1% (305,909 votes) to Irro's 40.7% (226,092 votes) and Warabe's 4.2% (23,141 votes).[39]

For the first time in world history, Somaliland used an iris-recognition biometric voting system.[40] In 2021, the elections of parliamentarians and local councilors are expected to be held at the same time. It is the first of its kind in Somaliland history. All others were held separately. When these elections are held, the number of elections in Somaliland will be eight since 2002.

Freedom of expression: The right path to democracy

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, as indicated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966, which came into force a decade later. Per article 19 of this declaration, everyone shall have the right to express his/her opinion without interference or hindrance.[41] Freedom of expression is also very important for democratic society and democratization processes, facilitating open debate, the proper consideration of diverse interests, and perspectives.[42]

Somaliland has a history of having the "first Somali-speaking radio in the world" in 1941. The first Somali radio was launched in the British Somaliland Protectorate by the British government in Hargeisa, the capital of the new Somaliland. Radio Kudu was established in Hargeisa and was renamed Radio Somali and then Radio Hargeisa.[43] In the print media, the first weekly Arabic-written newspaper was distributed in Hargeisa in 1950. *Al-Ummah* ("The Nation") was printed in Aden, South Yemen.

Following Somaliland's withdrawal from union with Somalia in 1991, new print media outlets started in 1993. Several newsletters were introduced as a source of information for the people of Somaliland in the postconflict situation with limited printing techniques. On November 2, 1995, the first offset version of the newspaper was installed by The National Printing Press (NPP). That is where formal and modern media outlets began in Somaliland. Hargeisa TV was the first Somaliland TV channel and was inaugurated in July 1997.[44]

Sixteen TV stations, 10 newspapers, and almost 60 websites are registered and operate now in Somaliland. They are all Somaliland-based and belong to Somalilanders and Somalis from the other Somali territories in the horn of Africa, including Djibouti.[45] They all focus on and follow political issues in the country. These media institutions, including the newspapers, regularly discuss very sensitive topics. This shows that freedom of speech is guaranteed in Somaliland. They also contribute to the public's right to know about and participate in elections in the country.[46]

Conclusion

The findings of this study include the fact that democracy has had a huge impact on Somaliland's state formation process. Not only that, it contributed to the peace-building process as well. Above all, the locals in Somaliland were keen on building trust among themselves with democratic principles during state formation. The application of democracy has permitted people living in Somaliland the right of accountability where they can change leaders by casting votes in elections. In Somaliland, democracy supports the state formation process that is still continuing. Democracy prevents conflict and armed techniques from becoming tools of power. Having democratic institutions like

the houses of parliament also enhances the role of oversight by the representatives elected by the people to the executive branch of the government.

Somalilanders also introduced a new approach of democracy application as they use tradition as a tool for democratic process. This form of democracy is called "hybrid democracy." In the Somaliland political context, democracy has been practiced for several decades with different styles of governance, including the traditional system. That makes the whole governmental organization in Somaliland a hybrid system. Per the findings of the study, without democratic practices in Somaliland, from the warriors in the jungle to the multiparty system, the state formation process would have been halted by enormous political, economic, and social challenges.

A lack of a democratic system along with the challenges of state formation are what some African countries are facing presently. The lessons learned from Somaliland's democratization process indicate that democracy could be adopted in African countries by sticking to the main principles of democracy. Therefore, this research recommends that indigenous African systems of governance together with modern democratic systems can help solve African governing problems.

Notes

1. International Crisis Group (ICG), "Somaliland: Democratization and Its Discontents," ICG, July 2003, last accessed September 25, 2014, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/66-somaliland-democratization-and-its-discontents.pdf.
2. MohamedRashid Sh. Hassan, *Somali History: 1960–1991 Islam, The Clan and the State in The Somali Context* (Hargeisa: Sagal Jet, 2011).
3. Human Rights Watch, *A Government at War with Its Own People: Testimonies about the Killings and the Conflicts in the North* (Washington: The Africa Watch Committee, 1990).
4. Lidwien Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
5. International Crisis Group (ICG), "Somaliland: Democratization and Its Discontents."
6. Sarah Phillips, "Political Settlements and State Formation: The Case of Somaliland" (Research Paper 23, The Developmental Leadership Program [DLP]), 23.
7. Patrick Gilkes, "Wars in the Horn of Africa and the Dismantling of the Somali State," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, June 1, 2002, last accessed May 1, 2019, http://journals.openedition.org/cea/1280 DOI: 10.4000/cea.1280.
8. Jean-Paul Azam, "A State Is Born: Transport Infrastructure and Democracy in Somaliland," Toulouse School of Economics, University of Toulouse, September 2010, last accessed January 15, 2015, http://idei.fr/sites/default/files/medias/doc/wp/2011/state_born.pdf.
9. "Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Altman, D., Bernhard, M., Fish, S., Hicken, A., Kroenig, M., Lindberg, S. I., McMann, K., Paxton, P., Semetko, H. A., Skaaning, S-E., Staton, J., & Teorell, J. (2011). Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach. Perspectives on Politics, 9(2), 247-267. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592711000880
10. Paice, E., and Gibson, H. After Borama: Consensus, Representation and Parliament in Somaliland. Policy Voices Series, Africa Research Institute, 2013.

11. *Somaliland: Democratisation and its Discontents*. (2003, July). International Crisis Group. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/somaliland-democratisation-and-its-discontents
12. *Ibid.*
13. Sorensen, G. (1998), Democracy and Democratization, Boulder: Westview Press.
14. Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Steven Fish, Allen Hicken, Matthew Kroenig, Staffan Lindberg, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Holli Semetko, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton and Jan Teorell, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach," *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 2 (2011), 247–67 at 253.
15. Adan Abokor, Steve Kibble, Mark Bradbury, Haroon Yusuf, and Georgina Barret, *Further Steps to Democracy: The Somaliland Parliamentary Elections* (London: Progressio, 2006), 5-6.
16. Ioan Lewis, "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland I," *Journal of the International African Institute* 28, no. 3 (July 1958), 244-61.
17. *Ibid*.
18. Interview with SNM founding member in Hargeisa, on December 2014.
19. Interview with former Somaliland Vice President and veteran SNM leadership in Hargeisa, December 2014.
20. Interview with former SNM members and long-term serving civil servants in Hargeisa, January 2015.
21. Jiir, Jamaal (2013). 'Dariiqii loo maray dib u heshiisiinta iyo dawladnimada Somaliland' Hargeisa. Asal Printing Press.
22. "Abokor, A., Brudbury, M, Hoyland, P., Kible, S., & Ossiya, D. (2003) 'Very much a Somaliland-run election'. Hargeisa. CIIR Publication.
23. Abokor et al., *Further Steps to Democracy*.
24. Jiir, Jamaal (2013). 'Dariiqii loo maray dib u heshiisiinta iyo dawladnimada Somaliland' Hargeisa. Asal Printing Press.
25. *Ibid*.
26. Interview with former SNM members and long-term serving civil servants in Hargeisa, January 2015.
27. APD, 2004, "The Somaliland Parliament: Case Study", unpublished report prepared by Academy for Peace and Development, Hargeisa, UNDP, New York.
28. Edward Paice and Hannah Gibson, "AFTER BORAMA Consensus, Representation and Parliament in Somaliland," Africa Research Institute, May 2013, last accessed April 27, 2020, https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PV-After-Borama-HR-for-website.pdf.
29. Interview with *Guurti* founding member and Borama Conference attendant in Hargeisa, January 2015.
30. Interview with SNM leadership and prominent politician in Hargeisa, December 2014.
31. *Ibid.*
32. "Michael Walls (2014),A Somali Nation-State: History, Culture and Somaliland's Political Transition, Pisa: Ponte Invisible, ISBN 9788888934440."
33. "Final Report of the Initiative & Referendum Institute's Election Monitoring Team. (2001, July). Initiative & Referendum Institute (IRI). http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Referendum_Report_2001.pdf"
34. Abokor, A., Brudbury, M, Hoyland, P., Kible, S., & Ossiya, D. (2003) 'Very much a Somaliland-run election'. Hargeisa. *CIIR Publication*.
35. Interview with political parties' founding member in Hargeisa on February, 2015.
36. Abokor et al., *Further Steps to Democracy*.

37. Interview with governance scholar and researcher in Hargeisa on February, 2015.
38. Scott Pegg and Michael Walls, "Back on Track? Somaliland after Its 2017 Presidential Election," Oxford University Press, April 5, 2018, last accessed April 23, 2020, https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article/117/467/326/4962155.
39. *Ibid*.
40. https://www.africanews.com/2017/11/14/somaliland-is-first-in-the-world-to-use-iris-biometric-voting-system-hi-tech/.
41. United Nations, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)," 2015, last accessed March 3, 2020, https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf.
42. Freedom House, "Freedom of Expression," (n.d.), https://freedomhouse.org/issues/freedom-expression.
43. Barkhad Kaariye, "The Role of Media in Radicalization: The Somali Context," *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* 10, no. 2 (2019), 25-43.
44. *Ibid*.
45. Interview with Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) leadership in Hargeisa, December, 2019.
46. Markus Hohne, "Newspapers in Hargeysa: Freedom of Speech in Post-Conflict Somaliland," *Africa Spectrum, Institute of African Affairs* 43, no. 1 (2008), 91-113.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.