



The Effect of Corrupt Practices on Electoral Participation, Campaign Activities, and the Performance of the Democratic Transition in Somalia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the nexus between electoral corruption and political participation, such as voting and campaign activities, and the performance of the democratic transition in Somalia. Corruption has become endemic in political systems and democratic practices, leading to a global crisis. In particular, fraud, meddling, clannishness, and unsuccessful transitions marred Somalia's electoral past, which contributed to a dysfunctional state. This study used a qualitative method to interview 18 people from different professions. The findings of the study shed light on the pervasive corruption that has plagued recent indirect elections. The study observes that candidates have been threatened, election lists have been altered, votes have been purchased, and results have been manipulated, all of which have discouraged voters. The author finds that since clan representatives and traditional elders are compensated, the decision on who to vote for is also affected. The paper argues that much work remains to protect Somalia's fledgling democracy, achieve political participation, implement anti-corruption and accountability measures, and enact election campaign legislation.

Keywords: *Corruption; Campaign; Democratic; Somalia*

Introduction

Recent corruption-related events are making it increasingly difficult to deny that corruption exists. It does not appear to have slowed down gradually and lawfully. Only through offensive speech has it revealed the flaws of democracy (Maciel, 2016). Although the conventional method of combating corruption has long been discussed in the literature, for instance, Klitgaard (1988) has extensively researched the phenomenon. His early philosophical insights on corruption are still relevant and valuable today, especially in helping us comprehend contemporary corruption. Mény and Sousa (2001) investigated the Aristotelian and Platonic Views of the Greek Tradition. Following Aristotle's forms of government, they stated that the correct type of government governs for the benefit of all. Instead of corrupt or degenerate, those who rule for "their own good" are oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy. According to Aristotle, the most corrupt type of government is democracy. Aristotle summarized the view of "boss politics" and said that the proper forms of government are those in which the one, few, and many rule with an idea for the common interest. Governments, on the other hand, that exercise a notion of individual control, whether from one, a select few, or several people, cause distortions (Aristotle & B. Jowett, translated 1999:5).

Several studies have shown that corruption has been around for a long time and is not a new thing. For the first time, corruption was seen as a "specific field of research" that needs to look at both causes and effects. Then, the subject gradually became an academic field with reliable scientific research. Corruption changed its position and no longer appeared as an insignificant aspect but as a crucial concept to be studied, explained, and evaluated (Farrales, 2018). By and large, the central problem of corruption has begun to be seen not only as a social phenomenon but as an endemic and public problem with systemic negative influences on political legitimacy (Porta & Vannuci, 1997). In other words, the problem of political corruption is absent from democratic theory. Most recent evidence shows that the adverse effects of corruption cause declining democracies (Porta & Vannuci, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Warren, 2004). Even though corrupt societies are associated with a pre-democratic legacy and weak reforms, politicians often abuse their power (Nicolescu-Waggoner, 2012). Duris (2020) noted that political corruption could take many forms, ranging from unresolved conflicts of interest and crooked political financing to the distribution of misappropriated funds, extensive patronage networks, the misuse of state resources, and ultimately the capture of the state.

As Nye (1967) stated, "corruption is endemic throughout governments." While Nye and others sought to advance the discourse, they noted that corruption hinders the process of democratization and development, especially in less developed countries. Scott (1972) believes that the prevalence of illegal political campaign finance among government agencies has increased significantly on many practical issues but not on theoretical ones. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to view legislative corruption as a short-circuit of those factors that have influenced the democratic process. Consequently, Mulgan (2012) points out that participation in politics does not guarantee that everyone will advocate for their interests or hurt the public interest (Mulgan, 2012).

Democratization has been alarming and discouraging to most African nations, even though countries had the opportunity to transition from a colonial system to a democratic government (Amusan, Jegede, & Lsaka, 2017). The criteria of democratization can be judged by the extent to which the country meets the minimalist theory of democracy. One of the critical problems that dominated the twentieth century was political corruption. That may be related to the fact that, for example, the most stable democracies in the world, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have struggled with political corruption, particularly campaign finance (Heywood, 1997:417). To illustrate this, former U.S. President Bill Clinton committed irregularities in both the Whitewater scandal and his 1996 re-election campaign.

Similarly, less developed democratic nations, such as former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, have rejected corruption allegations after President F. Leghari was accused of undermining the independence of the country's judiciary and being involved in numerous corruption cases. In March 1997, it was reported that former Russian President Yeltsin said that corruption was one of the biggest mistakes made by Russian officials (Heywood, 1997). In this regard, history teaches us that corruption is a universal phenomenon that every country has experienced to some extent. It can be said that the problem is not corruption itself, but how the states deal with different types of corruption.

On the other side, corruption has had a particularly pronounced impact in Africa. According to Lumumba (2011), some of the most egregious examples of corruption can be found in African nations. These instances include a poor colonial heritage, ineffective leadership, "politics of the underworld," selfishness, avarice, and nepotism, all of which foster cronyism. Additionally, he highlights the absence of widespread participation, bad governance, a lack of accountability, and transparency. Transparency International (2010) argues that corruption hurts underprivileged populations and leads to the waste of resources.

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the relationship between corruption and democratization (Harris-White & White, 1996; Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates, & Gleditsch, 2001). They all

agreed that democratization in countries frequently involves difficult periods of political change. Harris-White and White (1996) said that there has been a conflict between corruption and democratization over the last ten years. In the short and medium term, democratization can make things better, but it can also make the causes and effects of political corruption much worse. Political corruption represents a guide and cruel disloyalty of public trust in public institutions (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003). According to an IMF report, sub-Saharan Africa benefits economically more than any other region from reducing corruption (Hammadi et al., 2019:6). Most African countries followed the policy initiatives of their former colonial masters in the post-independence era. They used the political pattern that worked in the western colonial state. Similarly, Somalia's adopted western model of the two colonial systems, Italy, and Britain, has struggled with corruption as its main problem.

In the past few years, Somalia has been the most corrupt country in the world, and the government hasn't been able to enforce anti-corruption laws well. Still, officials involved in corruption go unpunished. A weak public institution, a dysfunctional government, and rapid corruption in the electoral process have devastated and affected the country's social, economic, and political life. The President of Somalia (Farmajo) signed the anti-corruption laws in September 2019 after both houses of the federal parliament approved them recently. The report presented by Integrity (2017) highlighted high-ranking officials implicated in corruption allegations and the misappropriation of foreign aid. In Somalia, after the civilian government became less effective, a military coup occurred in 1969, and the democratization process in Somalia went in the opposite direction. The authoritarian regime took power and stalled the process, ruling the country for almost 21 years and liberating itself through military confrontation. Then the country fell into a protracted civil war between clan militias. Over the past 20 years, Somalia has struggled to make a successful transition to democracy. Overshadowing this transition has been rampant political corruption and a lack of equal political participation. Consequently, the purpose of this probe is to determine how corrupt practices affect Somalia's electoral participation, campaign activities, and democratic transition performance.

Review of Literature

Several authors have written extensively on this subject and made significant contributions to the literature. The philosophical argument is immense: corruption threatens a smooth political transition and makes it harder for everyone to be involved. It also makes it harder for people to trust their elected officials. Warren (2004) showed that as corruption gets worse, people's faith in the political process goes down. As a result, corruption has frequently hampered political participation. Moreover, democratic legitimacy is undermined as citizens are excluded from political decision-making. Olsson's conclusion confirms that corruption negatively impacts political participation, with voter turnout being lowest in states with higher rates of corruption. He considers that the most harmful effects of corruption—the most destructive effects—may be the attitudes and feelings of citizens towards the democratic process and political system (Olsson, 2014). A recent study on how corruption affects democratization shows that it takes longer for a country to become a democracy when there is political corruption. It also hurts "the consolidation of democracy," which Waggoner (2020) says is caused by corrupt senior politicians who steal public money for their own gain.

Political corruption has a direct or indirect influence on democratization and political participation. Notably, the first stage of democratization in many countries has featured high levels of corruption. The following pages provide a general understanding of the existing narrative of corruption. Practices, campaign activities, and the performance of democratic transition. These are important areas where this study makes an original contribution to the knowledge in this research paper.

Voting Turnout on Indirect Election

In liberal democracies, voters decide which party wins the election. Politicians who support clans have significant influence over a party, and existing local polarization can reinforce this power in the community, allowing parties to win votes. In Somalia, identifying clan groups is a complicated task, and it is practically unlikely to obtain accurate facts. The clan-based political system has been practiced in Somalia since the 2000s, and elections have been conducted through indirect voting. Of importance, it is necessary to understand the clan-based political system, where only a few clan delegates and clan elders decide which candidate wins the parliamentary election. Additionally, numerous pervasive forms of corruption have clouded this indirect process. Schram & Klarita (2007) found that elites seek to dominate the election process and persist in their interests. In Somalia, there are four main clans and small clans (Hawiye, Darood, Digil & Mirifle, Dir, and minority groups). These are referred to as the "4.5 clan political structure" and serve to share power in all public institutions: for example, over the past two decades, when the modern state was re-established, it adopted an indirect election model and a 4.5 clan-based political system that recognizes only traditional elders and clan delegates to participate (by voting) in the election of members of the House of the People. Historically, the Somali clan structure was built without regard to the political complexities that challenged the Somali state (Bincof, 2021). Clan politics will never completely disappear from Somali political life; clans are the fundamental elements of Somali society.

The country has held five indirect elections using the model (4.5) clan system. Sadly, this resulted in numerous candidates offering bribes to clan delegates and elders during voting, and many critics believed that the candidate with the most money or who was bribed won the election. In the late 2017 election, for example, over 14000 clan delegates and 135 traditional elders voted for parliamentarians. Many reports indicated that the election involved massive corruption, and the candidate who paid more money won the election. In Kismayo, in Jubbaland state, and in Baidoa, in southwestern Somalia, many delegates were forcibly detained, threatened, and excluded from the electoral process. Somalia's top financial comptroller said clan delegates were threatened; some withdrew out of fear. Others were not allowed to vote and were locked out of polling stations, unlike others who were allowed to vote under their names. It was noted that some seats were more expensive than others or that some candidates are businessmen and influential people who believe that participation in the legislative assembly provides protection and immunity, and elected representatives use their seats as a shelter (Maruf, 2016).

In spite of this, Somalia's clan-based political system (indirect election) faces obstacles. Consequently, the simple aggregation of voter interests is lost when electoral bribery is introduced into the political process. In this context, interviewees were asked if bribery reduces voter participation in Somalia (e.g., in parliamentary and presidential elections). In Somalia, electoral bribery has produced numerous individuals who advocate for their own interests, are disqualified, are incompetent politicians, and lack personal integrity.

Political Campaign Contributors

Political campaigns have close ties to lobbying organizations and political parties. Parliaments all over the world enact campaign finance regulations to regulate the small and large amounts of money spent on campaign activities. In addition, the electoral commission and other independent bodies are expected to monitor campaign financing. However, in Somalia, campaign activities are closely linked to political brokers who bring money from inside and outside the country to bribe clan leaders, clan delegates, and legislators. Addressing voters in parliamentary and presidential elections is crucial and has cost many millions of dollars in Somalia. In many democratic systems, there are restrictions on government subsidies to respond to financial mismanagement (scandals). Social pressure also helps to stop corruption by limiting unnecessary and unbalanced influence on candidates and parties (Walecki,

2003). The Horn of Africa country has no campaign finance law; millions of campaign funds come from abroad, and in return, contributing countries have the absolute power to decide who becomes the presidential candidate or wins the election.

Schwartz, the former U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, said that the head of the country's national intelligence security agency acts as a political commander (broker) and a conduit for secret funds from the State of Qatar to Somalia (Schwartz, 2020). He argued that the state of Qatar funded incumbent President Farmajo in the 2017 election. It has been reported that individuals shared confidential and sensitive information about the timing and location of bribes with Somali parliamentarians who cast their votes. There is not enough literature on the role of campaign financing in political activities in Somalia, so it is important to note that the use of illegal money for political campaigns is widespread in Somalia; the more money one pays, the greater the chance of winning elections; the less money one has, the less one participates in political activities. Based on the above discussions, the interviewer has asked participants this question: How do foreign countries provide illegal financial support to political elites to exploit political campaigns and bribe voters?

Performance of Democratic Transition

The concept of the democratization process has gone through three different levels: a) the "liberalization" period, when the former autocratic regime collapses or is exposed; b) the transition period, when often the first competitive elections have taken place, and c) the "consolidation" period, when democratic institutions have reached a level of stability and are accepted by most of the actors concerned (Linz and Stepan, 1996). explain and consider the first and second phases of democratization, which are most related to Somalia's democratization process. Treisman (2007) states that a democracy that provides high values could expect low observed levels of corruption and assume that democracy could eliminate corruption. Huntington mentioned that achieving a successful transition to democracy has become an essential means of changing the corrupt political system in many countries worldwide. Significantly, the "third wave of democratization" has contributed to massive revolutions in Central Europe (Huntington, 1997). Similarly, Somalia faces the challenge of achieving a successful transition. The government has experienced complex, corrupt clan politics that have hindered the achievement of a successful democratic transition. Scholars Omotola and Onuoha concluded that promoting democracy on the African continent requires strengthening public institutions, holding free and fair national elections, and developing structures that formulate a non-violent political transition.

The term "democratic transition" generally refers to the evolution from one limited democratic system to another liberal democratic government. Two types are often distinguished in transitions to democracy, including upper and lower transitions. (Omotola and Onuoha, 2018). We believe that the clan based political system and rampant corruption in the electoral process play a negative role in achieving a successful transition to democracy. After the collapse of the military regime in early 1990, the international community and the United Nations made massive efforts to rebuild democracy in Somalia. In the nearly 20 years of transition, procedural democracy did not develop. However, the indirect electoral model was practiced in the election, meaning that only a few clan representatives and traditional elders participated in the parliamentary elections, resulting in rampant corruption.

Notably, democratic transitions entail competitive elections. This has not occurred in Somalia due to its clan-based political system, which has the potential to halt the democratization process. In this aspect, interview participants were asked. How does corruption delay the process of democratization? (Or would a successful transition to true democracy reduce political corruption in Somalia, and would fair and free elections reduce political corruption in Somalia? Previous studies have focused only on corruption in

democratic values: very little is known about the impact of electoral corruption on democratization and participation in Somalia. This paper aims to fill this gap, add to the academic

research, and shed new light on the main question of how electoral corruption affects participation, campaign activities, and the success of the democratic transition in Somalia.

Methods

The study used purposive maximum variation sampling to gain more insight into a phenomenon by studying it from multiple perspectives and to help the investigator discover fundamental problems that are apparent in the entire sample. In this respect, the author selected different participants, including public and private employees, intellectuals, and legislators, who contributed to the study according to their perceptions and experiences.

Instrument

Data for this study were collected using a semi-structured interview with 18 participants. The qualitative analysis aims to develop meaningful research objectives and to understand the phenomena more deeply. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), it should analyze the collected interviews and write notes that will eventually comprise a narrative report. All interview questions were designed to gain an in-depth knowledge of the views and perceptions of the study participants. The interview protocol, which is only two pages long, contains several important components, including the participant's personal information, an introduction, the substantive interview questions with study, the participant's responses, and a conclusion.

Data Analysis and Results

As Bazeley (2009) said, the goal of analysis in qualitative research is often to find themes. In general, this qualitative analysis's thematic analysis is made up of six main themes that I found by carefully reviewing and analyzing the data. The study used verification procedures, namely triangulation and member checking. The qualitative data analysis in this study used thematic analysis, where the data was coded, categorized, and developed into themes that were consistent with or reflected the study objectives. The entire collected data was carefully examined during the (first reading), the text was divided into parts with coded data, and themes were developed that were finally compared to the other themes. The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to present summary information about the sample characteristics of the interview participants according to the qualitative methodology of the study.

Table 1. Profile of the interview respondents

Profile of the respondents		
	Frequency	Valid %
Sex		
Female	3	17%
Male	15	83%
Age Group		
20-29	1	5.6%
30-39	13	72.3%
40-49	2	11.1%
50+	2	11 %
Mean		

Std. Deviation	6.323	
Employment Sector		
Public Service/employees	5	27.8 %
Private sector employees	8	44.4 %
Independent/Intellectual.	2	11.1 %
Senator for the upper house	1	5.6 %
Members of the lower house	2	11.1 %
Experience		
2-5	4	22 %
7-10	9	50.1%
11-20	3	16.8%
25	2	11.1%
Level of Education		
Bachelor	3	16.7%
Master	15	83.3%
Marital Status		
Single	4	22.2%
Married	13	72.2%
Divorced	1	5.6%

Source: Primary Date (2021)

Summary of the Participants' Demographic Characteristic Information

83% of the interview participants were male and only 17% were female; this shows that Somali society is male dominated in both the public and private sectors. Most of the respondents (15) interviewed were men. Of the respondents approached, 72% were married, which means that 13 respondents had a family, 22% were single; only four participants were not married; and 6% were divorced, which means that one respondent had separated after marriage. an indication that the survey mainly targeted married people. As shown earlier, participants were on average 37 years old, and culturally, most people above this age are married in Somali culture.

Of the participants interviewed, the overall average age was 37; the maximum age of respondents was 69; the minimum age was 27; and the average age was 33. This confirms the UNFPA and Somali government population survey estimates that more than 75 percent of Somalia's population is under the age of 30. That shows that the youth in Somalia form the main base of the Somali population. Consequently, most of the participants in the interview are young. The Somali National Youth Policy has recognized Somali youth between the ages of 15 and 35. 27% of employees work for the government, while 44% work for the private sector. 11% targeted the self-employed and intellectuals. 7% were senators for the upper house, and 11% were members of the lower house. Experience: respondents had an average of 10 years of experience, which means that most respondents had enough experience to answer the interview questions. They had at least two years of experience, and the highest was 25 years. 83% had master's degrees, while 17% had bachelor's degrees.

Discussions and Findings

This section presents the findings and results of the qualitative analysis by focusing on the following six themes, which are listed below: Corrupt practices in elections and campaign financing, Engagement Political corruption deeply inhibits the democratization process; more political elites receive financial support from abroad; challenges in implementing universal suffrage, factors contributing to the rise of corruption in Somalia; and embezzlement undermine citizens' trust in government. At the outset, the central question of the guiding qualitative part of this study is: how do corrupt practices affect voter

turnout, campaign financing, the performance of the transition to democracy, and citizens' attitudes towards the government according to the perceptions of the respondents working in the public and private sectors?

a) Corrupt Practice in Elections and Campaign Financing

In the last few decades, corruption in politics has been studied in many different fields, including the growing field of campaign finance. Many people have investigated how money is used in new political processes and elections. Nonetheless, the underlying suspicion of increasing individual donors and arranged trading activities and precisely unlawful institutions has often been discussed since political leaders came to power. A growing number of abuses have led to an increased distrust of elections in various countries. Even though campaign finance is generally considered to be free money or cash, hidden interests frequently use it to dominate the political scene. In weak public institutions, complicated processes create opportunities for political corruption. However, it was noted in Rose-Ackerman (1999; Key (1963) that when campaign finance is relatively high, it has been reported that it could permeate public authority in decision-making processes. That is the reason why elected government officials use their power and control to compensate their campaign contributors. That may include, for example, appointments to senior positions, supportive or friendly legislation, the awarding of contracts, and various types of compensation given solely in return for the financial support provided.

Apart from illegal money entanglements with political leaders and campaign contributors, however, campaign finance is a legal business that many nations have assigned institutions to regulate. That dual relationship generates critical discussion of financial-political contributions in elections as either an unlawful act or an aspect of individual respect or ideological endorsement (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). It has already been noted that resources are an issue in a democracy, as many pro-democracy political activities cannot occur without funding. Some scholars have claimed that in established democracies, rules for political financing are associated with greater integrity, accountability, and equity for the financial framework of politics. By the end of the 19th century, most democracies had succeeded in abolishing vote-buying and related approaches to electoral bribery. Nonetheless, several different challenges related to money in politics remained unresolved in these government systems (Walecki, 2003).

Some believed that in an emerging democracy, equality of opportunity and resources for all citizens was jeopardized, so electoral bribery continued to undermine political participation's inclusiveness. At the same time, those with less or no money have little opportunity to participate in politics, which ultimately undermines democracy. That is compounded by the abuse of political power and the promotion of private interests for personal gain. In recent years, the electoral process in Somalia has been undermined by vote-buying, a non-transparent electoral process, or illegal campaign financing.

On the other hand, bribery in elections has reached levels that have never been seen before. Most of the people who answered the survey were worried that candidates who pay bribes are more likely to be elected in Somalia. It has been noted that indirect parliamentary elections are conducted by clan delegates and traditional elders, who often demand money from MPs in exchange for their votes. In presidential elections, candidates resort to bribing MPs to win the presidency.

For many years, bribery in Somalia made it hard for people to vote, which hurt the process of democratization. Even though campaign finance is an integral part of political activities, black money can produce incompetent and ineffective leaders because they are elected based on their money rather than their experience, knowledge, and leadership skills. That was illustrated by Honorable Senator Osman, a member of the Upper House, by saying, "There is no doubt about the existence of political corruption in Somalia." He expressed the view that bribery in political participation should be curtailed entirely and mentioned that most politicians worldwide regularly run political campaigns through legitimate means.

However, many politicians use illegal money for a political campaign in Somalia and even try to bribe the voters (Respondent 01).

In the same way, Hon. Haji Ali, a member of the lower house of Somalia's Federal Parliament, said that funding political campaigns is important in every country in the world because parties can't compete in the political process without money. He said, "Somalia needs the campaign finance law to set the rules for running the country." The lack of rules about campaign finance is a big problem in the Somali election process, and it has led to more bribery. That has allowed many politicians to efficiently use illegal money to bribe voters to win elections (Interviewee 02). In 2016, over 14000 clan delegates took part in national indirect elections, electing 275 members to the lower house of Somalia's Federal Parliament.

To show this, Somalia's former Auditor General, Mr. Farah, told VoA Somali News that the parliamentary elections held in several states could not be trusted because of rampant corruption, which included buying votes, being dishonest, and making threats. Further, he argued, "Some votes for legislative seats were bought with \$5,000, some with \$10,000, and some with \$20,000 or \$30,000. However, not all seats were equal. Some wealthy and powerful candidates competed, spending a lot of money to win their seats. The two most contested (and valuable) seats cost \$1.3 million each, according to the report. The report documented that one of these seats was won in Galmudug and the other in Hir Shabelle (Maruf, 2016). A senior academic administrator named Mr. Abdifatah said that "bribery hurts good people who don't want to pay illegal money to compete in politics" (Interviewee, 15).

One interviewee spoke about obstacles related to corruption, pointing out that "bribery limits inclusive political participation, especially when it comes to voting, and informed traditional leaders and MPs often demand illegal money from candidates to cast their votes" (Interviewee, 19). An exciting view was expressed by a respondent (11) who said that voters and influencers often demand bribes during election campaigns. That shows that politicians are willing to pay bribes, but the electoral process (participants) were also involved in corruption practices. Moreover, a senior government advisor argued that "when bribery is introduced into the political process, the simple aggregation of voter interests is lost. Those who have money to bribe but not necessarily the best policies are elected, leading to voter apathy.

In this case, the voice of the citizen is drowned out by voter bribery. He mentioned that the Somali people perceive the international community, consisting of the UN, US, UK, EU, and AMISOM, as the "sixth clan in the country." They support the peace process in Somalia; on the other hand, many foreign diplomats, mainly from Qatar and the UAE, directly or indirectly influence the decisions of the political leadership; they bring too much illegal money to bribe politicians or opposition groups. In comparison, Hon. Ahmed, a member of the lower house of the federal parliament of Somalia, expressed his view that individual skills and qualifications are irrelevant to the political process. He also noted that lack of resources is a significant issue that prevents citizens from participating in elections and contesting for elected positions such as legislative seats, ministerial positions, and the presidency (Respondent, 03).

b) Voting Participation

Participation in political activities usually requires resources (money) to promote the party's vision. Andrews and Inman (2009:6) found a strong influence of corruption on participation. Several experts have cited corruption as the main factor limiting political participation in Africa (Lemarchand, 1972; Andrews & Inman, 2009). Andrews & Inman (2009:3) conclude that corruption severely impacts the economy when the economic situation is inadequate. That is confirmed by most interview participants who agree with the statement of the primary factors contributing to the rise in the level of corruption in Somalia: economic hardship, a lack of jobs, and insecurity.

Apart from this, voter turnout is crucial and faces many challenges in Somalia's elections. For

example, in Kismayo in Jubbaland state and Baidoa in southwestern Somalia, many delegates have been forcibly restricted, threatened, and excluded from the process. Somalia's top auditor said clan delegates were threatened; some had withdrawn due to fear. Others were not allowed to vote and were locked out of polling stations, unlike others who used their names to vote. Further classifying why some seats were more expensive than others or those candidates who believe that participation in the legislative assembly provides protection and immunity, and elected representatives use their seats as a refuge (Maruf, 2016).

The U.S. State Department report said that the election process for Somalia's legislative assembly was generally flawed and full of corruption. The statement listed many examples of corruption, restrictions on political participation, and illegal arrests made for political reasons (U.S. State, Dep., 2019). According to Transparency International (2020), Somalia is considered the most corrupt country globally. Most political candidates in Somalia use bribery to maintain their political authority and protect their best interests at the expense of the rest of the people. In Somalia, "there are two groups: the first group enters politics to protect their business (private) interests, while the second group enters politics to enrich themselves. "Perhaps the first group uses illegal money to stay in power" (Interviewee, 02).

c) More Political Elites Receive Financial Support from Abroad

Since the 2000s, the international community (foreign countries) has shown its interest in Somalia's internal affairs. mainly from Gulf countries, Western countries, and neighboring countries. However, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have played an indispensable role in the rise of political corruption and bribery in the electoral process to influence government decisions and the power of political leaders. Surprisingly, there is an outstanding outcome of Over half of the respondents said that Qatar and the UAE are the most influential countries in the current political process and play a significant role in government decisions related to domestic and foreign policy. Few respondents indicated that European countries might also be involved in political corruption in Somalia. One respondent argued that Somalia is in a strategic location where international and regional powers fight for influence over Somalia's internal affairs. That confirmed that participants broadly showed that Gulf states (UAE, QATAR, and KSA) financially support Somalia's political leaders, especially during parliamentary and presidential elections.

The International Crisis Group reported that many factions within the government manage the country's highest public institutions, which are massive, complicated, and downright sprawling across the country's borders. The lack of accountability (punishment), the work of their members, and control over the system to support their greed is extraordinary. They are not fit to hold public positions and need to be pressured, sanctioned, and isolated (ICG, 2011: i). An exciting finding from the interview discussion revealed that many foreign countries are involved in the political process and political corruption.

On the other hand, different people have said that the EU is helping Somalia become more democratic and giving humanitarian aid so that the country's natural resources can be used. The UN and the US also played an essential role in the peacebuilding process and had hidden agendas. People were worried about the role of other countries and often backed a certain politician who could set their political agenda. In response to election bribery, Mr. M. Hassan said, "The first tools the politician uses are bribery and tribalism to promote his or her political agenda." Every citizen knows that without corruption, most of the political elites would not carry out political activities. Moreover, clan leaders do not consider the skills and abilities of candidates and instead support people who have money or pay bribes. (Interviewee, 09). It was suggested that political elites use any means to stay in power or bribe voters to get elected. noted, "That in the case of Somalia is not an exception; we see that some MPs have been in power for almost 20 years, and they are still in power without fear of losing their position, which

indicates that they manage to protect their interests." (Respondent, 02). A few respondents indicated that most political elites use false methods, including bribery, to protect their interests while seeking public office.

Bribing voters to keep power is common in Somalia; large sums of money are sometimes visible exchanged within election halls. It is common to see today that numerous political elites have been in power for many years; it is believed that the only way to stay in power is to pay bribes to clan leaders, who are the gatekeepers at elections. As a result, in Somalia, the politician's interests come first and not the publics. Bribe money replaces the role of the public in freely electing their representatives.

According to the report (ICG 2018), the Gulf state has done a lot to make the situation unstable and dangerous. The last fight between the Gulf States was very bad for the small country of Somalia, which is right in the middle of the competing goals of Qatar and the UAE. The rivalry has so far muddled the intra-Somali political conflict. Somali officials recently seized millions of dollars from an Emirati plane that had landed in Mogadishu, claiming the cash was evidence of UAE interference in domestic politics. However, the Emirati government has denied the allegation, arguing that the money was intended to pay the salary of the Somali national army. The money was returned to the UAE in 2022 when a new president took office.

Also, the UN Somalia Monitoring Group found that the recent crises in the Gulf had more effects on Somalia and the surrounding area. The link between the two states also made problems between the federal government and regional governments worse (UNSC, 2018). Turning now to the speech of the prominent opposition leader, Mr. Shakur spoke about political corruption, stating that it is flourishing in public institutions, primarily through lobbying and vote-buying. Farmajo's administration has massively targeted and eliminated senior positions in the bureaucracy and hired new civil servants who show their loyalty to the leadership, promoting political partisanship and nepotism.

He added that "when the government appoints senior government officials, such as a military commander, ambassador, or director general, they are not considered based on their competence and qualifications." Shakur mentioned that only high-level positions are given to those who have the support of their deputies "in exchange for their legitimate power (or to compromise their oversight role)" (Shakur, 2020); he claimed that the government abuses its power through corruption. He explained that when the government wants to pass a motion, it bribes MPs to influence their decisions, noting that most of the money used comes from Gulf countries. Citizens are losing their confidence in the government, and the federal parliament has lost public trust and the value of parliamentary immunity (Shakur, 2020).

There is widespread concern about corrupt political funds threatening democratic governance. Political corruption has compromised democratic principles, reduced voters' political participation, fostered distrust of public officials, and reinforced authoritarian patterns. Citizens understand campaign finance and party misconduct from a broader perspective that dominates distrust of the processes of politics and public institutions. In numerous democratic systems, new restrictions and significant government subsidies have been initiated to respond to financial mismanagement (scandals) and social pressures to stop corruption by limiting undue and disproportionate influence over candidates and parties (Walecki, 2003).

Recently, Mr. Schwartz, the former U.S. ambassador to Somalia, said that Fahad, the head of Somalia's national intelligence agency, is a political leader and a way for secret money to get into the country. Schwartz also said that the man has a lot of power over the federal government and the country's leader, which makes it hard for Somalia to make political decisions. No rule defines the type of contributions that political parties or candidates can legally receive, and no regulation restricts illicit money in the country. Also, the country lacks the transparency and accountability measures to investigate the sources of political funding and lacks mandatory financial disclosure and reporting. In

summary, most participants agreed that corrupt elections and illegal political campaigns are commonly practiced by political actors and candidates seeking public office in Somalia. Due to this fact, all actors, including clan delegates and traditional leaders, demanded bribes from legislative candidates, and elected parliamentarians demanded bribes from presidential candidates.

d) Engagement Political Corruption Deeply Inhibits the Democratization Process

Many scholars widely discuss the relationship between corruption and democratization. Indeed, Mondo's (2014) study concludes that corruption is linked to democratization or democracy in many of its broad concepts. Rose-Ackerman (1975) argues that there is a personal profit motive in which numerous actors cooperate to increase their earnings through a system beyond the law. In other words, Gambetta's views suggested that political corruption is a rent-seeking action in which individuals seek to realign government policy and work for individual gain. For Gambetta, the classified types of political corruption are favoritism, bribery, and dishonesty (extortion) (Gambettas, 2002).

In addition, Jain (1998) showed that corruption involves the use of criminal procedures, while rent-seeking individuals address the rule to benefit their interests. Scholarly publications on the causes of corruption concluded that developed and consolidated democracies have a close relationship with the minimum level of corruption (Pellegata, 2012; Serra, 2004; Treisman, 2000; 2007). Moreover, the organizational-institutional literature has highlighted democratization as an essential role that society plays to achieve lower corruption and greater stability.

Most of the basic assumptions that have been looked at in the literature say that democratization should reduce corruption, which means that it has a direct negative effect on corruption (Mondo, 2014). Unlike Sandholtz and Koetzle (2000:44), the influence of prolonged democratization on corruption has been negatively associated with corruption in democratic governments. That was in relation to the debate that, in the long run, democratization necessitates the consolidation of democratic principles that promote widespread rejection of corruption, thereby strengthening social oversight of government.

The most recent evidence points to a non-direct impact of democratization on corruption. Where corruption is most likely to increase in the very short to medium term, considering the democratic transition, a decrease in the level of corruption can only be observed in the long term. According to the previous study, the shorter attribute associated with such a relationship, particularly the specific extent of democratization consolidation, can take a long time, affecting corruption (Mondo, 2014). The federal government of Somalia has failed to complete the draft constitution, build a strong national army, and carry out comprehensive national reconciliation. On the contrary, the government is trying to interfere in parliamentary affairs by dominating the legislative process by taking more MPs into the cabinet. Ultimately, the role of parliament in exercising oversight and accountability is compromised and undermined (Shakur, 2020).

From a logical point of view, no country will be able to become more democratic unless it improves national security, boosts economic growth, and lowers unemployment. For example, one interviewee said, "Underdeveloped countries in Africa are generally plagued by deep hunger and extreme poverty; therefore, democracy is not the priority for them, and democratization as such will only be a second priority. For example, most Somali political leaders come to power to make money; even those who have money or businesses seek power to protect their private interests and increase their income. The interviewee said that if the country develops its economy, political corruption will automatically decrease (Interviewee, 02).

A decade of civil war and political squabbling has contributed to Somalia's status as one of Africa's poorest countries. Almost 7 out of 10 Somalis are affected by poverty (Pape & Karamba, 2019). On the other hand, there are many reasons why political corruption has delayed Somalia's

democratization process. These can be linked to the inadequate legal framework, lack of political commitment and resources, rampant political corruption, constant political instability between the federal government and federal member states, political actors, and lack of conflict resolution mechanisms, which remain significant challenges to a successful transition to democracy.

As one interviewee commented, "Bribery is a significant obstacle to Somalia's successful democratization process and is influenced by all forms of political corruption that hinder the achievement of a successful general election" (Interviewee, 09). The interviewee put it this way: "Those in power and controlling state resources will seek to hold on to power by corrupting the democratic process." That will lead to delays in the critical steps necessary for full democratization, including holding fair and free elections, establishing an independent judiciary, and applying the law in an equal manner. "For this reason, and because corruption will be the primary tool of those in power, it is always the main obstacle to the democratization process" (Respondent, 11).

One respondent said, "In Somalia, corrupt leaders don't have to answer to the public, which goes against the principles of democracy and makes it harder to reach full democracy." He also noted that corruption delays the democratization process. Participants revealed that corruption hinders successful democratization in Somalia because politicians came to power for a long time through money, which prevented the rest of the people from participating in the political process. The prevalent view among respondents was that it had created more political elites who try to stay in power through bribery and embezzlement; they agreed that political corruption delays the democratization process and prevents the inclusive participation of those who have the competence, skills, and knowledge to lead elected positions.

Most participants agreed that buying votes from clan delegates and traditional leaders for parliamentary seats has damaged citizens' trust in the legislature, which is expected to represent the will of the people, as many critics claimed that Somalia's political leaders have never attempted to take the necessary steps to achieve the one-person, one-vote system. One participant commented, "Political corruption is the key problem hindering the achievement of universal suffrage in Somalia." It also has negative consequences, which satisfies the requirements of true democracy. Moreover, bribery, bias, and mismanagement have destroyed Somalia's democratization process (Respondent, 14). Another interviewee alluded to the fact that incumbents try to retain their seats and be re-elected in every election so that the status quo remains unchanged. He further argues that corruption and democracy are incompatible. The clan delegates and traditional leaders select candidates to bribe and buy their votes (Respondent, 17).

People had different ideas about how corruption in Somalia's government really slows down the process of democratization. Some believe that the Somali government has failed to promote the democratization process, fight political corruption, and build strong public institutions. Fighting was very bad, people had to move around inside the country, there wasn't enough food, there were humanitarian crises, and the government didn't work. Still, it was important to remember that in the 20 years that indirect elections had been held, there had been at least one peaceful change of power from one government to the next. Most of the people who took part agreed that political corruption in Somalia has hurt and slowed down the country's efforts to become a democracy.

e) Challenges in Implementing Universal Suffrage

Treisman (2007) said that a democracy that gets high scores is likely to get a low score for corruption that is seen. A clan-based political system that only permits a small number of clan representatives and traditional elders to participate in elections has replaced democracy in Somalia, which has resulted in electoral fraud, restrictions on political participation, and vote buying. With this respect, interview respondents were asked this question: "If Somalia introduces universal suffrage, the

rampant political corruption can be reduced."

Half of the people who answered agreed that giving everyone the right to vote would make Somalia less corrupt. They argued that both candidates (MPs and presidential candidates) could not afford to bribe all citizens or voters to win the election. They suggested that this will also reduce political inequality as more people will get a chance to participate in the electoral process. This way, citizens can vote for the best politician/party that serves the will of the people instead of money. However, universal suffrage will only go so far in taming political corruption in Somalia. In an interview, it was said, "Universal suffrage will increase the cost of corruption for those who seek power because it will be harder to bribe the entire population." "Strong institutions that monitor the electoral process and enforce the laws will equally tame political corruption" (Respondent, 11).

Having identified several problems, they agreed that the implementation of universal suffrage could reduce political corruption; every citizen should have the right to vote without fear of intimidation, corruption, or exclusion. One interview discussed this issue differently. He pointed out that "corruption remains even if individual corruption is eliminated because political corruption advances to the second level as political parties use the money to win elections." "Historically, political corruption has existed in Somalia since independence and has used the most powerful parties to win elections" (Interviewee, 02). For example, in recent years, Somalia has had indirect elections with 51 clan delegates, often bribed by candidates. It is believed that in confronting and controlling corruption, the government needs to practically address these issues, such as improving law enforcement and building strong public institutions, thereby significantly reducing political corruption in Somalia.

f) Factors Contributing to Rise of Corruption in Somalia

In a recent study by Kaufmann & Mastruzzi (2009), it was found that various countries are less focused on fighting corruption, while only a few countries have significantly improved and fought corruption cases in the last decade. As the Corruption Perception Index shows, the level of corruption in Somalia has gone through various stages and is currently at its highest. A previous study found that economic development could reduce the need for bribes, although developed countries characterized by well-established liberal democracies, freedom of the press, and more women in public institutions are considered less corrupt (Treisman, 2007).

The level of corruption in government institutions significantly increased, according to the ICG report (2011: i), and many domestic and international observers believe that the previous governments became the most corrupt since the string of unsuccessful transitions in 2000. All of the people who were interviewed said that corruption in Somalia was caused by a lack of good laws and weak law enforcement. High unemployment, clan-based politics, and the lack of anti-corruption, accountability, and freedom of expression policies have also contributed to an increase in corruption in Somalia. A study conducted by Freedom House (2019) has found that freedom of expression in Somalia is often disrupted, illegally arrested, and coerced by the government and non-state actors. One interview stated that "the lack of an adequate legal framework and weak law enforcement agencies have contributed to the level of corruption in Somalia" (Respondent, 11).

Rahman (2017) recently found that some of the leading causes of corruption in Somalia are high poverty levels, the non-existent efficiency of the government recruitment system. In addition, there is widespread unemployment, a lack of an anti-corruption system or prevention, weak law enforcement, and limited socio-economic justice. One interviewee argued that the key factor contributing to corruption in Somalia is the lack of a justice system and noted that some people seek justice from al-Shabaab (terrorist group). He added that the lack of a functioning government and weak public institutions, especially law enforcement, and the failure of anti-corruption policies (Respondent, 01) were to blame.

Also, it was said that few clan representatives and traditional leaders took part in Somalia's parliamentary elections, which meant that most politicians had to pay people to vote for them. It claimed that "the private sector must not use corruption practices to get a contract from the government" (Respondent, 10). For example, one respondent talked about the problem of increasing corruption being insecurity and argued that "if the country has better security and active law enforcement agencies, then all public officials who commit corruption could be quickly arrested and charged" (Respondent, 12). Overall, these results show that the current government is trying to stop small-scale corruption, especially among public officials. On the other hand, many people believe that corruption is rampant at the highest levels of government. Most high-ranking political leaders seek financial support from abroad to stay in power, promote their political influence, and buy electoral votes.

Conclusion

The key findings suggested that vote-buying undermines holistic political participation. At the same time, those with little or no money have minimal opportunity to participate in political activities because they are excluded from the process. That ultimately undermines the achievement of full democracy. Additionally, the prevailing view among respondents was that political elites are trying to remain in power by embezzling and preventing the electoral participation of those who have the competence to advance Somalia's democratization process. Regarding qualitative outcomes, abolishing clan-based federalism and adopting procedural democracy would allow citizens to participate equally in the political process, reduce electoral corruption, and promote successful democratization in Somalia.

The results from the observation respondents show that Somalians don't trust their government very much. It was also found that most elected positions were won through bribery. It is difficult to build public trust that is assumed to serve the best interests of citizens. The empirical findings of this study provide a new understanding that the lack of public services, the lack of public participation in the decision-making process, and the widespread self-serving exploitation of government positions reduce citizens' trust in government services in Somalia. **The result is that in Somalia, the politician's interests come first and not the interests of the public.** An exciting discovery showed that political actors vying for national legislative seats and the presidency frequently engaged in and accepted illegal political campaigning.

The study found that many political elites have been in power for many years and that the only way to stay in power is to pay bribes to the clan chiefs, who are the gatekeepers in elections. Those in power who control state resources will try to stay in power by corrupting the democratic process and delaying important steps toward democracy, such as holding fair and free elections and setting up an independent judiciary. The results of this study shed new light on bribery in the election process, which hurts political participation. At the same time, those with little or no money will have minimal opportunities to participate in politics, as they will be locked out of the process. that ultimately undermine the achievement of full democracy.

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