

**THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING
DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN
POST-CONFLICT STATES: A FOCUS ON
SOMALIA**

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by

MARIAN ABDULLAHI MOHAMED

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
list of abbreviations.....	VIII
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	X
ABSTRAK.....	XI
ABSTRACT	XIII
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Research Context: Somali Social structure and civil society.....	7
1.4 Problem Statement	9
1.5 Research Questions	11
1.6 Research Objectives	12
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	12
1.8 Scope of the Study.....	15
1.9 Definition of terms	16
1.10 Thesis Structure.....	17
CHAPTER 2 CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMERWORK.....	21
2.1 Introduction.....	21
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	22
2.2.1 Understanding civil society	22
2.2.2 Conceptualizing democratization	32
2.2.3 Conceptualizing post conflict States	36

2.3	Liberal Theories of Civil Society	38
2.4	The Relevance and Application of Liberal Theories to Post-Conflict Democratization	42
2.5	Democratization and challenges of post conflict states.....	45
2.5.1	Challenges of Corruption in Transition to Democracy	46
2.5.2	Challenges of Security Sector Reform in Transition to Democracy.....	48
2.6	Post-conflict democratization and liberal civil society theory: Case studies..	51
2.7	Critics of liberal theories on post conflict states	54
2.7.1	Critics of liberal support of civil society in post-conflict states	54
2.7.2	Critics of Liberal Theories in African Post-Conflict Contexts.....	57
2.8	Civil society analysis framework	59
2.8.1	Actor-oriented approaches	59
2.8.2	Functional approach.....	65
2.9	Summary of Literature Review and Gaps in the Literature.....	68
2.10	Conclusion	70
	CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	72
3.1	Introduction.....	72
3.2	Philosophical Assumptions.....	73
3.3	Qualitative Research Design.....	82
3.4	Qualitative Research Interview	89
3.5	Data Collection and Sampling Procedure.....	90
3.5.1	Sampling Procedure	90
3.5.2	Interviews	93
3.6	Data Analysis	97
3.7	Ethical Considerations	100
3.8	Conclusion	101

CHAPTER 4 CONTEXT.....	102
4.1 Introduction.....	102
4.2 Brief background of Somalia:	103
4.2.1 Pre-colonial.....	103
4.2.2 Colonial Era.....	106
4.2.3 Post-colonial and after independence	108
4.2.4 Civil war.....	111
4.2.4(a) Causes of the Civil War.....	111
4.2.4(b) Impact of the Civil War on Somali Society.....	113
4.2.4(c) The Role of Somali Civil Society During the Civil War.....	114
4.3 Post-Conflict State Building	115
4.3.1 Path to Reconciliation and State-Building	115
4.3.2 The Rise of the Federal System.....	117
4.4 Current Political and Social Context	119
4.5 Evolution, Opportunity and Challenges for Civil Society in Somalia	126
4.6 Conclusion	131
CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF NATURE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SOMALI CIVIL SOCIETY	133
5.1 Introduction.....	133
5.2 Somali Civil Society Actors in the Post -1990 Context	134
5.2.2 Specialized Organizations	136
5.2.1(a) Nongovernmental Organization.....	136
5.2.1(b) Independent Media.....	167
5.2.1(c) Think Tanks	172
5.2.2 Non-Specialized Organizations	177
5.2.2(a) Traditional Elders.....	177
5.2.2(b) Religious Leaders.....	182

5.2.2(c)	Member Based Organizations.....	189
5.3	Assessing Somali Civil Society’s Effectiveness in Government Policy	190
5.3.1	Public Service Delivery.....	191
5.3.2	Influencing Public Policy and Holding State Accountable	197
5.4	Discussion and Analysis	204
5.4.1	Discussion and analysis of actors of Somali civil society during the war and postwar democratization.....	206
5.4.2	Civil society functions after independence and during the war....	215
5.5	Conclusions.....	226
CHAPTER 6 AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF STRENGTHENING SOMALI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.....		229
6.1	Introduction.....	229
6.2	Strengthen nonwestern civil society organizations	230
6.2.1	Shifting donor policies and funding priorities	231
6.2.2	Re-conceptualizing civil society functions and actors.....	235
6.2.3	Improving Civil Society and Private Sector Co-operation.....	238
6.2.4	Improving Access to Public Information	242
6.2.5	Strengthening Political Competition.....	244
6.3	Conclusion	246
CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		248
7.1	Introduction and Thesis Statement	248
7.2	Summary of Findings	248
7.3	Theoretical Implications	250
7.4	Conclusion	258
7.5	Future Research.....	260
REFERENCES		262
APPENDICES		

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM	The African Union Mission in Somali
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil Society Organizations.
FESOJ	Federation of Somali Journalists
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
IAOs	International Assistance Organizations
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority for Development
LNGO	Local Non-governmental Organizations
MAP	Media Association of Puntland
MWN	Media Women’s Network
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SIMHA	Somali Independent Media Houses Association
SJS:	Somali Journalists Syndicate
SMSJ	Somali Mechanism for Safety Journalists
SNA	Somali National Army
SNGOs	Somali Non-governmental Organizations
SNM	Somali National Movement
SOMA	Somali Media Association
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSR:	Security Sector Reform
SWJO	Somalia Women Journalists Organization
TFG	Transitional Federal Government

TNG	Transitional National Government of Somalia
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission on Somalia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC	United Somali Congress

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A Interviewed Organizations
- Appendix B Semi Structured interview for Somali Civil Society Organizations

**PERANAN MASYARAKAT SIVIL DALAM MEMPROMOSIKAN
DEMOKRASI DAN TADBIR URUS YANG BAIK DI NEGARA PASCA-
KONFLIK: TUMPUAN KEPADA SOMALIA**

ABSTRAK

Kajian itu menganalisis peranan masyarakat sivil dalam usaha pembinaan negara pasca konflik Somalia dan keupayaannya untuk memupuk kerajaan demokratik di bawah pergantungan bantuan asing. Masyarakat sivil Somalia, yang merangkumi kedua-dua entiti undang-undang seperti NGO dan kumpulan tidak formal seperti ketua klan dan ketua agama, telah memainkan peranan penting dalam mengekalkan perpaduan sosial dan menyediakan perkhidmatan asas. Namun begitu, pergantungan kepada pembiayaan luar menghalang keberkesanan mereka dalam menggalakkan pembaharuan demokrasi dan mengalihkan perhatian mereka daripada advokasi kepada penyediaan perkhidmatan. Penyelidikan itu menekankan kepentingan bantuan asing, namun memberi amaran bahawa sokongan sedemikian sering mengakibatkan 'NGOisasi', apabila organisasi menjadi profesional, menjejaskan hubungan akar umbi dan keupayaan mereka untuk bertanding dengan pihak berkuasa kerajaan. Dokumen itu mencadangkan strategi untuk menangani cabaran ini, seperti mempelbagaikan sumber pembiayaan, termasuk pihak berkepentingan tidak formal ke dalam struktur tadbir urus, dan meningkatkan keupayaan advokasi. Tesis ini mengkaji model masyarakat sivil Barat dengan mengkaji peranan aktor tidak formal tempatan dalam konteks khusus Somalia. Ia mewakili pendekatan tadbir urus hibrid yang menggabungkan kedua-dua rangka kerja tradisional dan tidak formal. Penyelidikan ini membantu dalam meredakan perspektif tentang masyarakat sivil dengan menekankan

batasan penggunaan paradigma Barat di negara bukan Barat, pasca konflik. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan rangka kerja konstruktivis sosial interpretivis dan metodologi kualitatif untuk menjelaskan sumbangan, cabaran dan prospek masyarakat sivil Somalia dalam mempengaruhi pendemokrasian. Cadangan diakhiri dengan rayuan untuk memupuk masyarakat sivil yang berdaya tahan, inklusif dan berorientasikan komuniti yang boleh meningkatkan tadbir urus demokratik dan menggalakkan kestabilan jangka panjang di Somalia. Domain penyelidikan masa depan termasuk dinamik yang berkembang antara masyarakat sivil dan institusi negara, pengaruh berterusan masyarakat sivil terhadap transformasi demokrasi, dan penubuhan kaedah pembiayaan tempatan untuk mengurangkan pergantungan kepada bantuan. Konsep yang dibentangkan di sini memberikan hala tuju penting untuk pembinaan semula pasca konflik dan kemajuan demokrasi dalam kerajaan yang rapuh seperti Somalia.

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the role of civil society in Somalia's post-conflict state-building efforts and its capacity to foster democratic government under foreign aid dependency. Somali civil society, encompassing legal entities such as NGOs and informal groups like clan elders and religious leaders, has played a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and providing essential services. Nonetheless, reliance on external funding hinders their effectiveness in promoting democratic reforms and diverts their attention from advocacy to service provision. The research emphasizes the significance of foreign assistance, yet cautions that such support frequently results in 'NGOization', when organizations become professionalized, undermining their grassroots connections and capacity to contest governmental authority. The thesis proposes strategies to address these challenges, such as diversifying financing sources, including informal stakeholders into governance structures, and enhancing advocacy capabilities. The thesis examines civil society models by examining the role of local, informal actors within the specific context of Somalia. It represents a hybrid governance approach that incorporates both traditional and informal frameworks. The research aids in decolonizing perspectives on civil society by emphasizing the limitations of using Western paradigms in non-Western, post-conflict countries. The research employs an interpretive social constructivist framework and qualitative methodologies to elucidate Somali civil society's contributions, challenges, and

prospects in influencing democratization. The recommendations conclude with a plea to cultivate a resilient, inclusive, and community-oriented civil society that can enhance democratic governance and promote long-term stability in Somalia. Future research domains include the evolving dynamics between civil society and state institutions, the enduring influence of civil society on democratic transformations, and the establishment of local funding methods to mitigate reliance on aid. The concepts presented herein provide crucial direction for post-conflict reconstruction and democratic progress in fragile governments such as Somalia.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Since the late 20th century, there has been heightened global focus on the reconstruction of failing states. Frequent violent conflicts within states generate significant issues for international security, including poverty, human rights violations, and the risk of terrorism. Challenges related to state failure are apparent in nations with ineffective governance frameworks, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti, necessitating concerted intervention from the international community. These projects concentrate on reconstructing governance frameworks via constitutional norms, multiparty political systems, judicial independence, and equitable elections. The primary objective has been to transform these governments from failure to successful governance systems that satisfy both internal security needs and international standards (Barbara, 2008; Fukuyama, 2005).

The rehabilitation of political institutions and the restoration of community cohesion is a complex and frequently challenging process of democratizing post-conflict countries. Civil society organizations have significantly contributed to these measures, enhancing peacebuilding and the advancement of democratic governance. In post-conflict environments, the participation of civil society is crucial for fostering inclusive political processes, restoring confidence within communities, and promoting institutional development (Hadenius & Uggl, 1996; Maigari, 2022). Somalia has had persistent instabilities and governance challenges; yet, civil society has mobilized extensively to provide essential services, foster community involvement, and champion democratic advancement in the nation.

Civil society is essential for enhancing democratic government as it encourages citizens' active participation in public matters, hence fostering the democratic principles of tolerance, compromise, and free expression. Civil society serves as a formidable check on official authority, fostering transparency, enhancing accountability, and safeguarding civil and political rights (Diamond, 2006). Mercer (2002) asserts that liberal democratic philosophy posits civil society as essential for preventing state abuses and establishing a legitimate, rule-of-law state.

Since communism collapsed, there has been a global emphasis on democratization and peacebuilding, with a particular emphasis on civil society. Civil society is frequently perceived as a domain where the social compact between the government and its citizens can be revised and reaffirmed. The significance of civil society in advocacy, peace education, social cohesion, and service delivery is emphasized by international development institutions like the World Bank (Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013). Notwithstanding the increasing acknowledgment of civil society's significance, challenges persist, especially regarding the impact of international organizations and the risk of 'NGOisation': the professionalization of civil society organizations that compromises their grassroots connections and political independence (Chandler, 1998; Pouligny, 2005).

The democratic process in Somalia has garnered the attention of both local civil society organizations and international institutions, with both positive and negative implications. International support has been crucial in supplying funds and legitimacy to civil society efforts, resulting in tensions between donor aims and local needs. This tendency fosters a depoliticized civil society that prioritizes service delivery over advocating for systemic democratic reforms. Numerous efforts to apply Western civil society models have frequently proven incompatible with Somalia's distinct social and

political contexts, especially with clan-based networks and traditional governance structures.

This study examines the role of civil society in Somalia's democratic process, highlighting its challenges and prospects, encompassing both formal organizations like NGOs and informal entities such as clan elders and religious leaders. It seeks to elucidate the contributions of various actors to civil society's function in bolstering democratic governance in post-conflict nations like Somalia. This study will examine the effects of foreign aid on the independence and efficacy of Somali civil society organizations and propose strategies to enhance their potential for fostering democratic change.

This chapter will present the research the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and significance of the study. Furthermore, it will define the essential terms and specify the parameters of the investigation. This study seeks to address gaps in the literature regarding the dynamics of civil society in post-conflict contexts, particularly in Somalia, to enhance our comprehension of civil society's role in democratization and to guide the formulation of more effective strategies for bolstering democratic governance in fragile states.

1.2 Background of the Study

Viewing state failure as a threat to international security, the international community has recognized since the late 20th century that it is necessary to assist in restoring governments that have suffered from conflict and are in disarray (Barbara, 2008). The emergence of weak or failed states has led to a new conundrum that has resulted in poverty, human rights violations, refugees, and possibly terrorism in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti (Fukuyama 2005). The international community has responded by working to strengthen the legal and constitutional traditions of good governance, encourage the formation of multiparty systems, restructure the provisional police and military forces, create an impartial and active judiciary, and hold free and fair elections to address state failures. Each of these acts aims to turn a dysfunctional state into a functioning one (Brooks 2005). Therefore, the main goal of state-building initiatives is to reconstruct the institutions of collapsed states so that they can better meet the needs of their citizens for human security and those of other nations for global security.

Many social, political, and economic variables impact a complex and occasionally unpredictable process, democratization in post-conflict states. After a war, states have the difficult task of rebuilding their material resources, communities, and political systems. As a result, in countries affected by conflict, the role played by civil society organizations in democratization has become essential to state-building. CSOs are usually thought of as essential players in the process of democratization, especially in post-conflict environments. According to Hadenius and Ugglå (1996), the development of a democratic governance system depends on the civil society. Since civil society organizations can help unite people and promote dialogue, they should be

involved in peacebuilding (Maigari, 2022). In addition to providing essential services, Somali civil society has been actively participating, essential to social reconstruction and trust-building. Most academic studies contend that civil society is crucial to the emergence, upkeep, and expansion of democratic politics, especially those that embrace Tocquevillean principles (Mudhoffir, 2023).

From this point of view, developing a robust civil society seems to be a requirement for creating a framework for democratic governance. Civil society is strong when citizens are given the capacity to run the state. It provides a platform for citizens to take part in the management of public affairs, the accomplishment of collective goals, and the advancement of democratic values like freedom of speech, tolerance, and negotiation (Hadenius and Ugglå, 1996; Arthur, 2010; Baker, 2015; L. J. Hadenius and Ugglå (1996; Diamond, 1994).

Liberal democratic theory holds that CSOs should be allowed to exercise their civil and political rights freely and independently and that the state should support electoral democracy, accountable government, and credible and fair elections. In a state governed by the rule of law, civil society is essential to establishing legal authority and resisting state tyranny (Mercer, 2002).

Global efforts to achieve sustainable development, peace, and post-war reconstruction after communism collapsed often found that obstinate elites were the main obstacles to development. The consensus was that liberal institutional frameworks like the market and democracy could be established in order to overthrow these elites (Chandler, 2010; Hippler, 2008; Pouligny, 2005; Strasheim and Fjelde, 2014; Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013).

It was suggested that civil society include the marginalized to support this constructive perspective on conflict transformation. If successful, this could contribute to developing pluralistic political structures and processes. In turn, strengthened bodies would be able to resolve disputes between the various groups in a way that is both efficient and compliant with the law (Verkoren & Van Leeuwen, 2013). According to this viewpoint, a deeper comprehension of the primary factors that can contribute to the avoidance of violent conflict resolution is imperative for developing local civil society institutions. Expanding the range of individuals with whom external actors must engage in negotiations is another necessary step towards constructing a new society (Pouligny, 2005).

International development organizations operating in post-conflict zones have prioritized the consolidation or formation of civil society due to changes in perception and history. Because it provides a forum for revising and reinforcing a collapsing social compact, civil society is increasingly recognized as essential to restoring peace and democracy. Therefore, civil society's growth is seen as a crucial element of democratization and peace building initiatives. Civil society can change the state's and society's dynamic by advocating for trustworthy organizations that effectively resolve disputes (Van Leeuwen and Verkoren, 2012). Eight civil society roles are identified by the World Bank, for instance, in this context: advocacy, socialization, peace education, monitoring and early warning, protection, social cohesion, mediation, and service delivery.

In line with Tocqueville's definition of civil society, donors believe these organizations will shield them from repression by the state. With a few exceptions, every international donor acknowledges the influence of civil society on governmental choices. They stress the role that civil society plays as a catalyst for social, economic,

and political change, as well as the significance of civil society in establishing a democratic state. Additionally, they highlight the importance of civil society in public discourse regarding governmental matters (Spurk, 2008).

As a result, as part of a more significant push for democracy, foreign aid to civil society organizations has risen steadily over the past 20 years. Federal agency USAID in collaboration with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to support the operating costs of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the globe. These NGOs mainly worked on initiatives that supported human rights, judicial independence, and efficient local government (Sabatini 2002). Additionally, the USAID spent about \$92 million to support the development of civil society in the former Soviet Union between 1992 and 1998. Moreover, the US invested nearly \$1 billion in democracy and civil society assistance to twelve post-Soviet countries between 1992 and 2002 (Lang, 2012).

Many policies overlook that the growth of civil society affects the relationship between the state and society, despite the widespread belief to the contrary. In terms of politics and society, initiatives aimed at bolstering civil society usually view the role of civic actors through a Western lens (Sardamov, 2005; Van Leeuwen and Verkoren, 2012; Verkoren & Verkoren, 2013). Moreover, there may be contradictions in foreign players' roles in democratization. While foreign funding is vital for civil society, it can also demobilize these organizations by making them overly dependent on foreign funding and causing them to lose focus on regional objectives (Pouligny, 2005).

The primary way that foreign actors assist civil society is by founding or funding NGOs. This method is advised since these organizations are more professional and likely to follow the accepted global discourse. Donors have studied development

strategies and pushed for establishing more responsible and professional organizations. Donor expectations often need to be met by local civil society organizations already well-established in the community, such as religious organizations, councils of traditional leaders, and individual activists. Interveners create their own organizations or help existing groups become NGOs to satisfy donor demands (Chandler, 1998; Pouligny, 2005; Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013). In this regard, the objective of these non-governmental organizations is to support other facets of the democratic agenda, like election supervision, and to promote lasting peace by establishing a robust democratic system (Pouligny, 2005).

The term is frequently used randomly in today's civil society discourse, sometimes as a synonym for the industry of non-governmental organizations. According to Lang (2012), this idea suggests that NGOs must always act in the public interest. Sponsors avoid politically linked projects as they could compromise the impartiality of NGOs and their relationships with host governments. Because of this, the political aspect of NGOs operations in post-conflict states is disregarded, and structural problems and power dynamics inside and outside the state are rarely examined. Even if a NGOs has little local support, donors will still choose to support it because of similar values and characteristics. As a result, local NGOs have been established primarily because donor funds are readily available (Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013).

The actual effects of NGOs' engagement in development politics are less evident than those of the liberal democratic model, despite NGOs' growing recognition and potential to promote democracy (Mercer, 2002). Because NGOs rely on networks of favours and influence to function, holding non-Western political leaders accountable is challenging. Therefore, it is impossible to rely on these civic associations to bring about

change and establish a responsible, responsive, and transparent political framework; instead, such a structure is necessary for them to operate. Therefore, it is unlikely that non-Western NGOs will meet the high standards that academics, activists, and politicians have set (Sardamov, 2005).

Many scholars have started analysing the functions and goals of donor-financed civil society initiatives in response to these problems (Belloni, 2008; Bieber, 2002; Chahim and Prakash, 2014; Chandler, 1999; Englehart, 2011a; Kaldor, 2003; Malik & Rana, 2020; Van Leeuwen & Verkoren 2012). These academics contend that organizations primarily supported by elites and receive little support from the general public have benefited from international aid. For instance, Englehart (2011) raised serious doubts regarding civil society's ability to function as a self-organizing peace mechanism and called for more research, especially in countries where conflicts have occurred.

Even though the amount of research on democratization in post-war societies is growing, there are still significant theoretical gaps regarding the characteristics of civil society in these states. Most research concentrates on the structural democratization process, occasionally ignoring the social and cultural factors that influence civil society participation (Hippler, 2008). Understanding the relationship between civil society, clan loyalty, and regional customs is essential to comprehending Somalia's democratic transition. By concentrating on the role of civil society organizations in fragile states during the democratic transition—particularly in Somalia, where the state was dissolved in 1991, and significant international efforts have been made to rebuild democracy since the 2000s—this study aims to fill this gap.

1.3 Research Context: Somali Social structure and civil society

Somali society is intricately structured based on clan affiliation, culture, and a history of migration and forced displacement. The Dir, Isaaq, Darod, Hawiye, Digil, Mirifle, and Rahanweyn clans are among the clans that traditionally make up Somali society. These clans are further subdivided into smaller groups. Within pastoralism and nomadic culture, this clan system has shaped Somali social connections, politics, and ethnicity (Hassan, 2021; Leonard and Samantar, 2011).

In addition to offering social safety, the clan system affects politics and opinions about leadership, mainly when nations are being rebuilt after a conflict (Hassan, 2021; Leonard and Samantar, 2011). Clan affiliation is crucial for Somalia's communal integration, resource distribution, and dispute resolution. Additionally, genders have essential roles in Somali social institutions. Although women typically uphold cultural traditions and family ties, they regularly face barriers to accessing social services and healthcare in the nation (Gele et al., 2016; Pavlish et al., 2010). Somalis distinguish themselves according to gender, class, and clan, which complicate the social structure and calls for various approaches to social policy and community support (Alene et al., 2022; Addow, 2023).

On the civil aspect, Africa's colonial past and the ensuing liberation movements are closely connected to the continent's historical development of civil society. Local groups frequently developed as platforms for advocacy and resistance in response to the oppressive conditions imposed by colonial control (Okowa, 2015). A wide range of African countries imposed authoritarian regimes after gaining independence, which stifled civil society and led to the revival of grassroots movements in the 1980s and 1990s as part of a more significant push for democratization (Moon, 2002). The current

state of civil society is shaped by its historical background; organizations often face repression from the government and a lack of adequate civic space.

NGOs and foreign donors significantly impact the development of civil society in Africa. While external aid has contributed significantly to the resources and development of civil society organizations (CSOs), it has also depoliticized civil society by encouraging organizations to align their goals with their donors rather than the community's needs (Seckinelgin, 2002). The trend could make civil society less effective as a critical player in democratic governance and social justice reform.

Within the framework of African civil society, the foundation of Somalia's civil society has traditionally been the historical frameworks of clan formations, which have served as the primary means of social organization and governance. The clan system has created a basis for group dynamics and community cohesion, even though it sometimes encourages conflict. CSOs in a non-functioning state have developed from conventional structures, always reflecting local interests and clan affiliations (Lewis, 2002; Tiilikainen and Mohamed, 2013).

This is distinctive in that the clan-based civil society is reliant on informal networks to provide social cohesion and services, as the majority of official institutions have been demonstrated to be ineffective.

In the event of a government's collapse, it has been the responsibility of civil society organizations to provide essential services and assistance. Nevertheless, research has demonstrated the critical role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in providing essential services to vulnerable populations in the areas of health, education, and food security (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Mishra and Abdullahi, 2020). In regions that are substantially impacted by natural disasters or conflict, organizational collaboration is emphasized as a critical factor (Gele et al. 2017).

Collective power and practice within informal structures are indicative of the resilience of civil society in Somalia. Numerous civil society organizations are funded and supported by social capital, local knowledge, and social trust, as they operate outside of institutional frameworks. The unstructured engagement approach enables civil society to rapidly adapt to the changing circumstances and meet the specific demands of the community (Mlambo et al., 2020). The ability of civil society to capitalize on ties within the community and foster resilience is especially important in an environment marked by ongoing political unrest and instability.

Nevertheless, Somali civil society possesses significant potential; however, it is confronted with obstacles that stem from external influences. The civil society agenda, which is significantly influenced by local and international donors and NGOs, may be at odds with the genuine requirements and objectives of local civil society (Osaghae, 2006). This could potentially diminish the capacity of Somali civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence policy, as it would render them reliant on it. The potential for Western civil society models to underrepresent African communities makes it necessary to comprehend civil society in light of its varied forms across different African countries (Debusscher, 2013).

1.4 Problem Statement

The international community has focused on state-building in countries that have failed or dissolved due to war since the late 20th century. These obstacles might be overcome by the development of liberal institutional frameworks for the market and democracy (Chandler, 2010; Hippler, 2008). This upbeat viewpoint proposed that the marginalized were a part of civil society and that their empowerment would greatly aid in establishing democratic political structures and institutions. The strengthened

institutions were expected to fairly and successfully resolve the conflicts of interest between different parties (Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013).

However, international democratizing organizations support a civil society model that emphasizes the professionalism and organization of the sector, more in line with the Western standard (Sardamov, 2005; Van Leeuwen and Verkoren, 2012; Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013). This tactic could weaken it by presenting civil society as a service provider rather than a political force for change (Brass, 2021; Banks et al., 2015). Donor funding and assistance may make this worse because organizations may put the needs of foreign donors ahead of those of the local population. Most of the time, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been established with the assistance of international organizations.

Because of the evaluations of development practices, donors have pressured the creation of more competent and responsible entities. Frequently, local civil society organizations, comprising religious bodies, traditional councils, and individual advocates, must meet the standards set by funders. As a result, outside parties often establish new organizations, or local groups evolve into NGOs by complying with donor requirements (as discussed by Chandler in 1998, Pouligny in 2005, and Verkoren & van Leeuwen in 2013). The absence of thorough examination into structural problems and power imbalances is due to depoliticization happening at both local and global levels (Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013).

The dynamics of clans and local governance systems have impacted Somali civil society, which has frequently been disregarded in favour of Western models prioritizing organized crime and nongovernmental organizations. While the clan system has historically been linked to state collapse, Mishra and Abdullahi (2020) contend that combining it with contemporary civil society ideals may strengthen democratic

governance. This perspective is based on the urgent necessity for a comprehensive understanding of civil society that encompasses both the traditional and the modern in the context of conflicts such as those in Somalia.

The contempt for well-established civil society organizations, which are more likely to conform to local conditions and cultural contexts, is a significant impediment to successful governmental and social integration. 'Ngo-zation,' the increasing involvement of NGOs in governance and social services, and the severe limitations on civil society participation, are significant impediments to Somalia's democratic transition. This has resulted in the marginalization of traditional civil society frameworks, which are essential for the preservation of democratic norms and practices.

Little research has been conducted on the specific challenges that Somali civil society faces, despite the widespread consensus that civil society is essential for democratization. Previous research has primarily concentrated on civil society theoretical frameworks, without considering the unique socio-cultural dynamics of Somalia (Mlambo et al., 2020; Pirkkalainen, 2015). By investigating the relationship between regional frameworks for civil society and the outside influences of global democratizing forces, this research seeks to fill this gap. The main focus of this study is the insufficient understanding of the elements impeding civil society's ability to support democratic reforms in Somalia.

1.5 Research Questions

This study will improve understanding of the complexities of civil society in post-conflict settings by addressing theoretical and empirical gaps in the existing research. By analysing how global democratization efforts have affected the local civil society environment, this research will provide guidance for policies that will strengthen civil society's ability to advance democratic governance in Somalia.

1. Who are the main actors in Somali civil society?
2. To what extent can these actors help create a democratic administration in the post-conflict state of Somalia?
3. Given the current socio-political context, what strategies can civil society use to increase its influence on advancing democratic reforms in Somalia?

1.6 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to consider the effectiveness of civil society in Somalia in promoting and facilitating the country's democratic transition. The study sub-objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the primary actors in Somalia's civil society.
2. To examine the extent to which these actors can help create a democratic administration in the post-conflict state of Somalia.
3. To develop and suggest tactics that, taking into account the current political and socioeconomic climate in Somalia, could strengthen civil society's role in advancing democratic reforms.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Firstly, this research is significant because it can fill in knowledge gaps regarding how civil society can influence democratic governance in post-conflict settings. There has been much research on civil society's contribution to strengthening democracy, but little empirical work has been done on particular case studies like Somalia. This research aims to investigate the unique obstacles and prospects faced by

Somali civil society, offering significant perspectives on how civil society can foster democratic governance in settings where national institutions are weak.

Secondly, the study will examine how foreign assistance affects Somali civil society organizations' efficacy and degree of autonomy. The study will examine strategies to enhance the participation of civil society in Somalia's democratic reform efforts. This study argues that the marginalized informal civil society can be supported and integrated into the social and political framework to facilitate Somalia's democratic transition. Traditional authority sources, such as clans, elders, and religious leaders, exercise upward accountability within a constrained political framework due to their considerable legitimacy and coercive power (Herring et al., 2020). In specific contexts, the notion that solely formal civil society organizations can advance democratic norms and values is vigorously contested. Their involvement in democratization and post-conflict reconstruction efforts augments their ability to advance democracy in Somalia.

The study aims to provide significant insights for donors, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in democratic governance and post-conflict reconstruction. This research aims to assess several strategies for enhancing civil society in Somalia and improving government accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to public concerns. The objective is to establish a robust civil society that will uphold democratic ideals, enhance citizen engagement, and facilitate peaceful and progressive development in Somalia.

The reconstruction of civil society in non-Western countries is a recent development in the field of democratization. Critical studies of the connection between development assistance and civil society in fragile and developing nations are becoming increasingly common (Howell, 2000; Howell and Pearce, 2001; Pearce, 2000). This

research looks at how civil society has changed and evolved in response to outside efforts at democratization (Pouligny, 2005; Van Leeuwen & Verkoren, 2012; Verkoren & van Leeuwen, 2013). Several nations have been the subject of studies, including El Salvador (McIlwaine, 1998), Pakistan (Malik & Rana, 2020), Palestine (Arda & Banerjee, 2021), South Africa and Uganda (Robinson & Friedman, 2007), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Belloni, 2001), and Nicaragua (Chahim & Prakash, 2014).

Notably, there is a scarce of Studies on the importance of civil society to Somalia's ongoing democratic transition. A number past studies (Abdi & Madut, 2019; Ahmed, 2020; Farah, 2013; Hammond & Vaughan-Lee, 2012; Harvey, 1998; Jma et al., 2020; Le Sage & Majid, 2002; Menkhaus, 2010; Tiilikainen et al., 2013; Tsitrinbaum, 2012) demonstrate that most research has adopted a broad perspective on civil society in state-building, ignoring its critical role in the transition to democracy.

The main contribution of this thesis is to examine the role of civil society in the Somali context, an area that has yet to receive much attention in previous studies. Even with a wealth of research on civil society's role in democratization and development in various contexts, there is still a significant knowledge gap regarding civil society's role in social transformation in Somalia. This research aims to address this gap by carefully analyzing the Somali context and the relationship between democratization and civil society.

This study examines the function of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Somalia in fostering social development in unstable and conflict-affected areas through their experiences and methodologies. This research clarifies the dynamics of civil society in comparable contexts, such as Somalia, where frail state institutions, characterized by political instability, economic limitations, and security risks, hinder

societal advancement. The study emphasizes the necessity of comprehending the specific context in which civil society functions, interrogating idealized perceptions of it, acknowledging its political nature, and considering contextual aspects that may enhance its contributions.

The findings this study inform policies and practices in development and peacebuilding. Assistance in comprehending the causes and discussing solutions to depoliticize civil society during national turbulence leads to more successful policies for social fairness, democratic governance, and stability. This is the only thorough study of this phenomenon in Somalia conducted over a four-year period of detailed fieldwork. Consequently, an effective research methodology enhances the value of the study within its field by ensuring awareness and validity. This thesis offers actionable suggestions for promoting positive social change in analogous situations and enhances our comprehension of civil society dynamics within the Somali setting.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study will assess the current socio-political scene in Somalia following the conclusion of the civil war. This study aims to examine the potential and problems faced by Somali civil society. The study will explore the role of civil society in democracy from the early 1990s, when the central government began to disintegrate, until the present. This enables the analysis of the reciprocal relationship between civil society development and evolving political dynamics, as well as subsequent foreign interventions throughout history.

This study will examine the many participants in Somali civil society, their responsibilities, methods, challenges in advancing democratic governance, and their interactions with international organizations. Grahn and Lührmann (2020) emphasize

the necessity of comprehending the specific mechanisms via which civil society influences democratic processes. A crucial element of the research is to examine the influence of foreign aid on Somali civil society organizations. The research will examine the influence of reliance on external funds on the lobbying capacity, effectiveness, and autonomy of these organizations.

The research will investigate the larger significance of the findings for governments in post-conflict settings beyond Somalia. This research analyzes the Somali experience to enhance the understanding of effective strategies for promoting democratic governance in fragile nations and to contribute to the global conversation on civil society's role in democracy. This study will not evaluate the general political, economic, or security factors affecting Somalia. The role of civil society in promoting democratic transformation will be the main topic of discussion.

1.9 Definition of terms

1. **Civil society:** an independent, self-policing domain comprised of formal and informal organizations that function outside the market and government boundaries. They are integrated with the governmental and commercial processes to impact policy and promote the interests of the society.
2. **Democratization:** according to the UN Secretary-General, the organization's focus on democratization is relatively new. It addresses the political, humanitarian, social, cultural, and economic factors that lead to conflict and is acknowledged as an essential part of peace building. According to the UN, democratization is a broad approach that addresses several peace building priorities, including 'top-down'

measures to oversee international elections, institutional development, and economic governance, as well as 'bottom-up' efforts to promote a democratic political culture through the growth of civil society (Chandler, 1999, p. 110).

3. **Fragile state:** There isn't a clear definition of the term "fragile state" that everyone accepts in academic and developmental settings. Many academics and professionals have historically used phrases like "fragile states," "failed states," and "weak states" to describe countries that find it difficult to run their governments effectively. Although there is no agreement on which countries meet the requirements because there is no widely accepted meaning of these terms, the majority of experts argue that any country where the government fails to provide a substantial portion of the population with essential public services, such as security and territorial control, could be considered failing (Kaplan, 2008, 5).

1.10 Thesis Structure

Chapter One

The thesis comprises seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the research and provides the background information by establishing the conceptual framework and outlining the essential role of civil society in Somalia's democratic efforts. The chapter establishes a foundation for a broader examination of Somali civil society's challenges regarding foreign assistance dependency and NGOization by articulating the fundamental research issues and aims. This chapter comprehensively analyses the existing literature and the current circumstances in Somalia that it aims to address. This chapter presents the problem statement, research questions, objectives of the

study, significance, and scope. Finally, it presents an overview of the thesis's structure and organization.

Chapter Two

This chapter developed the theoretical groundwork for understanding the possibilities and restrictions of civil society in supporting democratization in post-conflict circumstances. It emphasized the necessity for a sophisticated strategy that accounts for historical, cultural, and local factors while critically evaluating liberal frameworks that may be inadequate for addressing the complexities of post-conflict communities. The subsequent chapters will examine the impact of civil society on democratization in Somalia, and this foundation underpins that study. It also contests the traditional conception of civil society by asserting that current frameworks must be re-evaluated to enhance comprehension of the dynamics within civil sectors in conflict-affected and non-Western fragile states such as Somalia.

This chapter contends that the conventional concept of civil society, articulated by Tocqueville, may not be relevant to the African environment, particularly in Somalia, due to its unique historical circumstances. It advocates contesting traditional paradigms to enhance the comprehension of civil spheres in conflict-affected, non-Western fragile states. This chapter outlines the conceptual and methodological framework for evaluating the impact of civil society on the transition to democracy in unstable nations.

Chapter Three

Chapter three outlines the methodological framework employed in this study, emphasizing the alignment between the philosophical assumptions of constructivism and interpretivism and the qualitative research design. This chapter highlighted using

semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection strategy, emphasizing the necessity of capturing the varied perspectives of Somali civil society actors. Ethical considerations have been recognized, and the sampling and data analysis methodologies have been clarified.

Chapter Four

This chapter contextualizes Somalia's socio-political history from the pre-civil war era. This chapter analyses the development of social and political aspects within Somali civil society by examining historical events across various periods and locales. It delineates the progression of civil society in the country from 1960 to the civil war's conclusion in 2001. Following independence, a military regime usurped the interactions between civil organizations and the government. Despite oppression, Somalia's civil society evolved into a politically active and, subsequently, a humanitarian organization.

Chapter Five

This chapter addresses study questions I and II, identifying Somalia's civil society and its influence on government policies. The analytical framework outlined in Chapter Two determines the many sorts of actors that have emerged and their adopted roles. This chapter examines the obstacles encountered by civil society organizations in Somalia, including insufficient financial resources, a shortage of qualified personnel, and a lack of governmental support. These impediments hinder the long-term democratic efforts pursued by civil society in Somalia.

The current state of Somali civil society needs to be made active. However, there has been a rise in focus and financial assistance for local civil society organizations during and immediately following the conflict. The chapter concludes that Civil Society

Organizations have progressively assumed the role of service providers. This phenomenon can be attributed to various factors: donors typically favour established formal organizations.

Chapter Six

Chapter six examines research questions that evaluate diverse measures to strengthen Somali civil society, enhancing government accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the populace's requirements. The central thesis of this chapter is the imperative for donors to refocus their efforts on enhancing and bolstering the capacities of grassroots organizations, particularly those benefiting from local support. The chapter contends that donors should collaborate with these entities instead of exclusively engaging with professional NGOs.

Chapter Seven

The conclusion chapter will cover the study's history, methodology, theoretical frameworks, the Somali context of civil society, and the analysis part. Furthermore, it will suggest and emphasize area requiring future research.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMERWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conceptual and analytical framework for analyzing the relationships between civil society, democratization, and post-conflict nations, with a particular emphasis on Somalia. The chapter opens by examining the concept of civil society, which is essential to political and social theory. It examines the historical growth and many perspectives of civil society, emphasizing its vital role in democratization and post-conflict healing. The chapter strives to clarify the sometimes ambiguous idea of civil society by examining various theoretical perspectives, particularly in non-Western nations with unique historical and geopolitical challenges.

The chapter examines Somalia's transition to democracy, filling gaps in current material that do not account for the country's major democratization issues. It contends that the broad application of this concept in post-conflict Sub-Saharan African countries is problematic, and that a comprehensive understanding of civil society necessitates contextualization. The chapter emphasizes the unique nature of fragile civil societies influenced by non-Western experiences and advocates for a more localized interpretation that takes into account the specificities of states like Somalia.

The chapter's primary sections address the complex relationship between civil society and democratization in weak post-conflict democracies. It critically investigates the limitations of donor-supported civil society activities, contending that international efforts frequently result in groups more receptive to foreign donors than to local communities. Furthermore, the chapter attacks liberal acceptance of civil society's democratizing potential, claiming that, while civil society is essential for peace and democracy, its development must be grounded in local realities.

In addition, the chapter examines Western philosophical perspectives on civil society and their conceptual difficulty when applied to non-Western contexts. It then follows the evolution of the concept in the African setting, attempting to reimagine civil society in terms of politically vulnerable African republics. By questioning traditional liberal philosophical assumptions, this approach advocates for a more appropriate framework that better reflects the diversity of African civil societies.

The theoretical framework is the first section of this chapter. It then discusses Liberal Theories of Civil Society, their relevance to and application in post-conflict democratization, and the challenges that post-conflict states face during the democratic transition. The relationship between post-conflict democratization and liberal civil society philosophy is studied using case studies. It also critiques liberal theories used in post-conflict states, particularly in Africa. The chapter finishes with a literature review and a remark on the research gap.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Understanding civil society

Civil society has been well-acknowledged in political science (Varty, 1997). Historical, political, and social forces have significantly influenced civil society's evolution throughout history. It is commonly characterized as the domain of civil society and non-governmental groups that operate autonomously from the state and the market and fulfil significant roles in democratization. The development of civil society may be traced back to several historical periods, particularly the mediaeval and early modern eras, when associations, guilds, and civic groups started to gain prominence as focal points of activity and communication.

The idea of civil society has been extensively debated within social sciences. However, a definitive consensus on its definition still needs to be discovered. Scholars categorize civil society concepts into three primary applications: as the most appropriate form of research for empirical investigation, as a practical term for strategic objectives, and as the normative notion of a 'good society' that addresses the deficiencies left by markets and governments (Buyse, 2018).

Civil society has been a topic of contention historically and currently, with philosophers and academics attributing alternative interpretations to the word. This is attributed to the ever-changing character of the interpretations linked to civil society throughout history and the lack of a universally accepted definition now. Nevertheless, resemblances in motifs and characteristics contribute to our discernment of it. The characterization and quantification of civil society provide challenges due to its intricate historical origins, diverse interpretations, and contemporary definitions, as highlighted by Heinrich (2005).

In early modernity, civil society was more firmly established in promoting civil liberties throughout the Enlightenment era. De Munck (2017) posits that contemporary civil society originated from 18th-century collectives in response to absolutism and religious persecution. This aligns with Van Dijck et al.'s (2017) assertion that civil society is primarily structured on volunteer organizations serving as middlemen between citizens and the government. They are organizations that promote democratic political culture and civic values. A significant transformation in the comprehension of civil society occurred as medieval brotherhoods, typically rooted in religious zeal, evolved into more secular and diverse forms of affiliation (De Munck, 2017).

The concept of civil society has been influenced by cultural, social, and political elements, rendering it a highly complex phenomenon. The notion of civil society is dynamic; its definition and significance will vary according to the context and the perspectives of many stakeholders. A comprehensive analysis and discussion are required to achieve a deep understanding of the complexities and particulars of civil society. The philosophies of ancient Greek and Roman thinkers have influenced the development of civic society. The present recognition of this concept can be attributed to the modern era, particularly to the writings of John Locke. Locke equated civil society with the state, given that a structured political society was equivalent to a civilized order essential for safeguarding rights and property from the state. The perspective above emphasizes the significance of civil society in promoting social order, protecting public freedoms, and implementing collective decisions (Bunyan, 2014).

Following Locke's view, Adam Smith also directed his attention towards civil society in the activities of individuals within markets, placing particular stress on the interactions among them as the cohesive and enduring strength of civil society. Adam Ferguson and renowned Scottish enlightenment historians Adam Smith and David Hume conducted a comprehensive examination of society's history and functioning to develop a moral leadership paradigm that would potentially enhance the management of society (Darr, 2011). Ferguson, in his 1767 publication "An Essay on the History of Civil Society," presented a theory centred on three fundamental concepts: the intrinsic social aspect of human nature, the pursuit of perfection that gave rise to legal systems, and the progression of societies governed by moral principles (Darr, 2011).

During early modernity, civil society was closely associated with the manifestation of individual rights and freedom, especially during the era of Enlightenment. According to De Munck (2017), contemporary civil society may be