

Beyond the 4.5 clan quotas: evaluating the feasibility of a merit-based and inclusive federal power-sharing model in Somalia

Mohamed Bile Hashi, Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi & Yu Hock Oo

To cite this article: Mohamed Bile Hashi, Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi & Yu Hock Oo (2025) Beyond the 4.5 clan quotas: evaluating the feasibility of a merit-based and inclusive federal power-sharing model in Somalia, Cogent Social Sciences, 11:1, 2544066, DOI: [10.1080/23311886.2025.2544066](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2544066)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2544066>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



[View supplementary material](#)



Published online: 09 Aug 2025.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 3341



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 1 [View citing articles](#)

Beyond the 4.5 clan quotas: evaluating the feasibility of a merit-based and inclusive federal power-sharing model in Somalia

Mohamed Bile Hashi^a , Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi^{b,c} and Yu Hock Oo^d

^aCoordinator of Postgraduate Program & Research, Mogadishu University, Kismayo, Somalia; ^bFaculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration, Mogadishu University, Mogadishu, Somalia; ^cFaculty of Economics and Management, Somali National University, Mogadishu, Somalia; ^dSchool of Management (SOM), Asia e University (AeU), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This research examines the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing in Somalia, analyzing its evolution, strengths, potential risks associated with continued reliance on clan identity and alternative mechanisms for equitable power sharing. The results show that Somali armed clans seeking to hold onto power and the international community that funded peace conferences have encouraged Somalia's 4.5 system. The system is criticized for being a divisive, unsustainable tactic with weak administration, exclusion, and clan domination. Replacing it will necessitate tackling fundamental causes such as authoritarianism and inequality as well as embracing an inclusive approach founded on Islamic principles and a shared national identity. The study argues that a continued reliance on clan-based power sharing poses significant risks to Somalia's long-term stability and hinders the development of a truly inclusive polity. By examining the historical trajectory of the 4.5 system and its contemporary challenges, this research contributes to ongoing debates on political federal reform in Somalia, offering valuable insights for policymakers, civil society actors, and international partners seeking to promote sustainable peace, inclusive governance, and equitable development in this complex and fragile context.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 February

2025

Revised 5 June 2025

Accepted 31 July 2025

KEYWORDS

Political accommodation;
4.5 clan quotas;
merit-based; inclusive
federalism; power-sharing
model; clan affiliation

SUBJECTS

African Studies; Public
Administration &
Management; Political
Behavior and
Participation

Introduction

According to Mondey and Beeri (2024), clans are not just a holdover from earlier societies; they are an important part of modern political environments. Despite being frequently ignored in scholarly discourse, the clan has historically been one of the most important groups, according to Blum (2023). Clan structures have long been a fundamental component of Somali society, acting as the main vehicle for political power and social organization (Solomon, 2014). According to Lewis (1961), the Somali clan is an extended family that is divided into groups according to a male ancestor's genealogy. This lineage, which comprises 500–1,000 individuals who share a male ancestor spanning up to 15 generations, is the most important component of clan organization, he emphasized.

Although some previous studies recognized the historical importance of clan-based systems and their potential contribution to stability (Warsame, 2024; Zoppi, 2018), others recently discovered the drawbacks of this form of power sharing (Hashi, 2024). Power-sharing in divided societies can enhance stability by including major groups in governance (Bormann & Steinwand, 2020), but risks reinforcing ethnic divisions (Juon, 2025) and causing gridlock (Horowitz, 2014). Its effectiveness hinges on institutional flexibility. While consociational systems like Cyprus's failed model (Erkem, 2016) may prevent conflict, they often favor elite deals over broad participation (Bochsler & Juon, 2021). Even externally imposed frameworks (e.g. Kosovo, Macedonia) frequently fail to ensure inclusive democracy (Cukani, 2014), trading short-term peace for long-term polarization (Keil & Hulseley, 2025).

CONTACT Mohamed Bile Hashi  mbile@mu.edu.so; mohamedbile2016@gmail.com  Coordinator of Postgraduate Program & Research, Mogadishu University, Kismayo Office, Somalia

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2544066>.

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Nonetheless, there are five distinct research gaps in this field. First, there is a dearth of empirical study on why and how the 4.5 clan identity in Somalia federal system has evolved and its strengths, despite the fact that several studies have examined the theoretical underpinnings and early implementation of the system (Elmi, 2010; Menkhaus, 2016). Academic literature predominantly critiques Somalia's 4.5 system for reinforcing division (Menkhaus, 2014), while underemphasizing its temporary stabilizing role. During 2000–2012, it prevented major clan warfare through basic representation (Hashi & Barasa, 2022, 2023) and gave marginalized clans like Jareer and Gabooye nominal inclusion, potentially delaying fragmentation (Mukhtar, 2007). However, no studies rigorously compare its violence reduction to pre-federalism anarchy. Existing research also neglects urban youth's rejection of clan politics (Hashi, 2024). The 4.5 structure's broad categories (e.g. Darod, Hawiye) ignores sub-clan conflicts that weaken federal states in the regions (Hashi & Hock, 2024). Therefore, this study will fill this gap and offer a thorough examination of how the 4.5 system has evolved within the current federal system and its current strengths.

Second, although academics have expressed concerns regarding the constraints of clan-based power sharing (Hashi, 2024; Ugas, 2017; Warsame, 2024), there has not been a thorough evaluation of the particular hazards connected to its prolonged use in Somalia. Critics argue Somalia's 4.5 power-sharing system, established at the 2000 Arta Conference, entrenches exclusion and fuels conflict rather than serving as its intended temporary solution (Eno & Eno, 2009; Samatar, 2007). Persistent flaws—including the marginalization of minorities through the token '0.5' category (Hashi, 2024) and elite resistance to reform (Hashi & Hock, 2024)—remain unaddressed due to political stagnation and inadequate research. In this sense, this study will methodically examine the potential risks of continuing to rely on clan identity as a basis for power sharing in the Somalia's federal system.

Third, while scholars have proposed alternative governance models to replace Somalia's 4.5 clan system—including federalism (Hashi, 2024) and civic nationalism frameworks (Hashi, 2024; Hashi & Barasa, 2023)—no comprehensive evaluation of viable alternatives exists. These proposals have failed to gain political traction due to three key barriers: (1) resistance from elite powerbrokers who benefit from the status quo (Menkhaus, 2016), (2) the lack of strong state institutions to implement reforms (Hashi, 2023), and (3) international actors' tacit acceptance of the 4.5 system as a temporary stability measure (Hashi, 2024). Furthermore, incumbent leaders oppose structural changes that might threaten their influence (Menkhaus, 2014), while simultaneously fearing that abrupt transitions could reignite conflict. Despite these challenges, the specific obstacles preventing alternative systems from being adopted remain understudied in current literature. Therefore, this study aims to examine alternative mechanisms for complementing or replacing 4.5 clan-based system.

Fourth, secondary data and elite viewpoints are heavily cited in the literature currently available on the 4.5 system. The perspectives and viewpoints that ordinary citizens, such as women, young people, and marginalized groups, are rarely included in empirical research. Primary data gathering techniques, such as interviews with a broad range of participants, including politicians, civil society actors, traditional leaders, and ordinary people from various areas and backgrounds, are used in this study to encompass diverse perspectives. Lastly, although some research has documented the shortcomings of the 4.5 system (Elmi, 2010; Eno & Eno, 2009; Samatar, 2007), such research frequently fails to offer specific and implementable policy suggestions for change. Along with identifying the problems with the 4.5 system, this study will offer specific, doable policy suggestions for changing the existing power-sharing arrangements. These suggestions will be supported by a thorough examination of the system's advantages and disadvantages as well as a review of possible substitute mechanisms.

Two competing theories explain Somali clan identity. The primordialist view (Lewis, 1961) considers clans as biologically rooted, historically stable units resistant to modernization. In contrast, modernist theory (Samatar, 1992/2022) views identity as fluid, shaped by socioeconomic forces. While acknowledging clans' significance, modernists argue identities adapt to changing circumstances, suggesting conflict isn't inevitable and societal transformation is possible.

This study offers several key contributions. Firstly, while existing research often interprets clan identity solely through a tribal lens, emphasizing its divisive aspects, this study redefines clan identity by highlighting its potential as a source of power sharing and collective action, particularly within the context of federalism. Secondly, this study reconceptualizes power sharing and explores alternative models that move beyond clan-based quotas, promoting inclusivity and meritocracy. Thirdly, much of the current

research on federalism in Somalia focuses on institutional aspects, overlooking the critical role of identity politics, which this study focuses on. Fourthly, the lack of legitimacy poses a significant challenge for the Somali government (Hashi & Oo, 2024). This research explores how redefining clan identity and power-sharing mechanisms can enhance the government's legitimacy and foster public trust. Finally, deep-seated divisions along clan lines have obstructed national reconciliation efforts. This study examines how a reimagined understanding of clan identity can promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation among various groups.

Literature review

Evolution of 4.5 clan identity in Somalia federal system and its current strengths

In Somalia, the Hawiye, Dir, Darod, and Digil & Mirifle are the four biggest clans. Additionally, a coalition of smaller clans of Arabs, Baravans and Bantu people exists (Lewis, 1994). There is continuous discussion on the emergence of the 4.5 clan power-sharing formula in Somalia. While some claim it originated from internal Somali talks during the Arta peace conference, others credit it to the influence of the international community and neighboring countries. A third viewpoint contends that it was first developed during the Southern Conference in Ethiopia and then put into practice in Arta, Djibouti. However, Dahir and Ali (2024) revealed that after the 1991 military takeover and multiple failed attempts at reconciliation, Djibouti established a transitional government in 2000, in which for the first time, a '4.5' model of power sharing has been initiated, giving the four major clans equal political seats and reserving extra MPs for under-represented groups. Nevertheless, the efficiency of this power-sharing arrangement in federal institutions has not yet been investigated.

No matter where it came from, the 4.5 formula has had a big impact on Somali politics despite being highly contested and criticized. For example, Warsame (2024) states that the 4.5 system was developed in reaction to clan disputes with the goal of distributing power among the four main clans and the weaker clans, who are generally referred to as '0.5'. The 4.5 system was created to guarantee that minority clans were represented alongside the powerful clans, according to Ingiriis (2018) and Harun (2022). The objectives of this framework were to encourage national unity, prevent clan domination, and advance political accommodation. Studies conducted by Hashi & Barasa (2023) and Hashi & Oo (2024) demonstrate that clan-based federalism has frequently fallen short in averting inter-clan disputes and guaranteeing fair government. In addition to providing some political stability (Mukhtar, 2007), the 4.5 power-sharing formula, which was created to guarantee equitable representation (Hashi & Barasa, 2023), has also drawn criticism for leaving out women and minority groups (Eno & Eno, 2009; Samatar, 2007), making efforts to achieve inclusive governance more difficult.

Much debate has been sparked on the advantages and disadvantages of Somalia's 4.5 clan power-sharing model. Supporters contend that it guarantees representation for all major clans, fostering inclusivity, and preventing the domination of any one group. The 4.5 clan-based system makes local governance easier and enables communities to meet their own requirements; by offering a framework for resource sharing and conflict resolution, this system can also promote societal stability and cohesion (Mukhtar, 2007; Warsame, 2024). Given that clans have always been the main political groups in Somalia, Ingiriis (2018) highlights how their historical relevance helps with power dynamics negotiations. Nonetheless, research by Hashi and Oo (2024) found that some respondents think the 4.5 system has still permitted some representation in parliament, which is essential in a country where clan differences are deeply ingrained, despite concerns of injustice, favoritism, and discrimination. The main focus of this study is the 4.5 model's long-term viability and the lasting effects of clan identity inside the federal system, which are still up for debate despite the fact that academics like Menkhaus (2016) and Elmi (2010) see it as a temporary step towards more democratic administration.

Potential risks of continuing to rely on clan identity as a basis for power sharing in the Somalia federal system

Clan identities pose a problem to Somalia's nation-building, as the controversy around the 4.5 system demonstrates. Critics contend that the system hinders national identity and merit-based government by

strengthening clan divisions. As political appointments are frequently made based on clan affiliation rather than qualifications, they argue that it encourages corruption and clientelism. Effective governance may be hampered by strict adherence to clan quotas, which can also inhibit competent people from achieving positions of authority (Hashi, 2024; Hashi & Oo, 2024). In Somalia, though there are both major risks and advantages to depending on clan identity for power sharing, traditional clan-based government makes it more difficult to centralize power and guarantee inclusive representation in contemporary state-building initiatives (Warsame, 2024).

Thus, it is essential to comprehend how Somalia's 4.5 clan identity affects federal power sharing, particularly in light of the state structures' historical vulnerability. At the same time, the 4.5 formula underscores the enduring influence of Somalia's deeply rooted clan structures and highlights the complexities of transitioning from traditional governance systems to a modern, representative political framework (Abdullahi, 2007; De Waal, 2018). In addition, Somalia's lack of a precise definition of federalism leads to misunderstandings about the obligations of both the federal government and its constituent states. (Barre, 2024; Hashi & Barasa, 2023). Political instability persists in Somalia despite the adoption of federalism, and intergovernmental relations are frequently characterized by conflict rather than cooperation (Hashi, 2024; Hashi & Barasa, 2023).

The 4.5 model, according to some academics, offers a fundamental framework for power sharing (Mukhtar, 2007); however, others, such as Samatar (2007) and Eno and Eno (2009), argue that the 4.5 model is a 'compartmentalized political order', failing to fairly represent all clans and hence sustaining inequality and division in Somali society. They contend that societal hierarchies and biases may be strengthened by the 4.5 system, which separates four 'pure' clans from a variety of other clans deemed 'impure' or less Somali. Clan structures can improve social cohesion and local governance, but they also strengthen divisions and impede the formation of a single national identity. Reliance on clan identity may result in political fragmentation, which would undermine attempts to create a cohesive nation-state (Hashi, 2024; Ingiriis, 2018). Minority groups are often marginalized by clan favoritism, which intensifies tensions and conflicts (Waga, 2024); additionally, the emergence of digital platforms can exacerbate clan differences by elevating certain groups while marginalizing others, making state-building efforts more difficult (Norman, 2024). While the formula has been criticized for perpetuating inequalities, fostering corruption and contributing to political instability, it has also been acknowledged for its limitations in creating a genuinely representative political system (Affi, 2020).

The experiences of two ethnic groups—the Uyghurs and the Somali Bantu—are examined in new research by Said (2023), with a focus on their access to human rights and political representation. The study found that because of Somalia's prevailing clan-based political structure, the Somali Bantu are frequently marginalized. Another recent study discovered that the lack of cohesive government is the outcome of this system's institutionalization of clan politics, which leads politicians to put clan interests before national unity (Hashi & Barasa, 2023). Though the implementation of federalism without sufficient planning has impeded the development of a stable system of governance (Ugas, 2017), according to Barre (2024), the 4.5 system has eroded the federal framework, resulting in imprecise conceptions of federalism and inefficient dispute resolution procedures. State-building initiatives are further hampered by the imposition of Western-style government, which clashes with indigenous customs (Hashi & Barasa, 2023; Solomon, 2014).

Alternative mechanisms for complementing or replacing 4.5 clan-based system

Some contend that abandoning clan-based structures could result in a more inclusive national identity that promotes harmony and lessens disputes between clans. However, in order to prevent upsetting communities who depend on clan systems for administration and support, this shift needs to be handled carefully. While clan identity plays an important role in Somali politics, others contend that placing too much focus on clans could impede the formation of a unified national identity (Thompson & Matshanda, 2023). According to this viewpoint, promoting a more comprehensive sense of Somali unity may be crucial for long-term stability and governance, upending the deeply ingrained clan-based structures.

Integration can be used to control less-mobilized cleavages, which suggests that when societal divisions are not firmly established or politically mobilized, they can be addressed by including disparate

groups into common institutions. In order to minimize any conflict, this method entails making sure that every group is represented and has equal access to the political process. When social differences are well-established, widely acknowledged, and linked to particular geographical areas, it is more efficient to manage them by acknowledging and accommodating them in the structure of governmental institutions (Clapham, 2023). However, some academics contend that depending too much on clan-based systems could actually widen the rifts rather than bring people together, and that other forms of government might be investigated to improve national development and cohesion (Elmi, 2015; Ingiriis, 2018).

Several tactics that could support fair power distribution and political stability are revealed by investigating alternatives to Somalia's clan-based structure. These tactics place a strong emphasis on encouraging diversity, addressing the root causes of conflict, and fusing contemporary governance techniques with conventional frameworks. This concept has the potential to create a more inclusive political environment by empowering youth and marginalized groups, but it also runs the risk of widening clan tensions (Norman, 2024). A thorough reconciliation process was also proposed as an alternative that incorporates the viewpoints of both clans and elites and can address the underlying causes of conflict and promote stability. Using this participative strategy that blends traditional customs with contemporary governance might improve representation and legitimacy (Abdullahi, 2019). Other academics stated that stability can be enhanced and legitimacy issues can be lessened by carefully examining the federal structure to make sure it fits with local governance requirements and cultural settings (Zoppi, 2018). Both modern governance and traditional clan dynamics can have a substantial impact on Somalia's political stability, thus striking a balance between them is still a difficulty, even though these systems offer intriguing possibilities.

Methodology

This study reimagines if 4.5 clan identity can be utilized beyond tribalism for legitimate federal power sharing in Somalia. This research employed a qualitative approach to explore the complexities of clan identity and its role in Somalia's federal power-sharing system. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for this study as they allow for in-depth exploration of perceptions, experiences, and underlying meanings related to clan identity and power dynamics. A multiple-case study design was utilized, focusing on federal member states within Somalia with varying experiences with the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing system. This allows for an in-depth examination of stakeholders' diverse perspectives and experiences and the contextual factors shaping their views on power sharing. Oral informed consent was obtained from each interviewee. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to decline or withdraw from participation without any adverse repercussions. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Many of the study population, including drivers, guards, and traditional elders, had limited literacy; therefore, written informed consent forms may not have been fully understood or may have posed a participation barrier. In Somalia's cultural context, obtaining written signatures may not be the most appropriate consent method. Oral consent obtained through clear explanations and witnessed by a community member can be more culturally sensitive. The researcher(s) explained the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits to the potential participants in their local language. The oral consent process was witnessed by a community member (e.g. a respected elder or community leader) who could vouch for the participant's understanding and voluntary agreement. The researcher documented the date, time, and location of the consent process, along with the names of the researcher, the participant, and the witness. This documentation was stored in secure research files.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Somali Researchers Association (SRA) (approval number SRA/ETH/016/2024). The SRA was chosen for its expertise in research ethics in the Somali context. The study's focus on sensitive topics such as Somali clan dynamics and power-sharing necessitates careful ethical consideration, and the SRA's understanding of the local cultural and ethical landscape is crucial. This research involved collaborations with the authors from various institutions. Therefore, to ensure ethical oversight independent of individual university affiliations, seeking approval from the SRA, a recognized ethical review body in Somalia, was practical. This study involves working with sensitive

populations, including clan-based groups and communities affected by conflict and civil war. Given the specific ethical considerations and the SRA's expertise in reviewing research within the Somali context, obtaining ethical approval from the SRA was practicable. Data collection began in November 2024 and ended in January 2025.

To gain a comprehensive understanding, the study employed in-depth interviews and FGDs with 55 strategically selected key informants. This diverse group was carefully chosen to represent a wide spectrum of perspectives and experiences relevant to the research focus. Participants included: government officials at federal and state levels, traditional clan leaders, civil society, social activists, legal professionals, business community, former and current diplomats, media professionals, healthcare professionals, academics and researchers, marginalized voices and members of the general public from different regions and backgrounds. The study employed both individual interview and focus group discussions to data collection, based on participant roles and expertise. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with civil society representatives, social activists, journalists, academics, and members of the general public to capture collective perspectives and foster dynamic exchanges. Meanwhile, in-depth individual interviews were held with government officials, researchers, traditional clan leaders, legal professionals, business leaders, former diplomats, medical practitioners and representatives of marginalized groups to elicit detailed, role-specific insights.

The study employed a dual sampling strategy, comprising purposive and snowball sampling, to identify 55 participants across 12 stakeholder groups, thereby ensuring diverse perspectives on clan dynamics and federal power-sharing. Purposive sampling served as the primary method, targeting information-rich participants such as clan leaders with documented conflict resolution experience, while snowball sampling facilitated access to harder-to-reach groups, including marginalized communities, activists and former diplomats, where formal networks were scarce. To maintain representational balance, the selection criteria prioritized both gender diversity (male and female participants in each subgroup) and professional experience (minimum years of engagement in relevant fields). Initial outreach extended to 73 potential participants, with 55 agreeing to participate—a sample size that achieved thematic saturation, as no new insights emerged in later interviews. Detailed demographic characteristics of participants are provided in [Supplementary Appendix A, Table 1](#).

The focus group discussions (FGDs) were carefully structured to ensure robust and inclusive dialogue through four sessions of six to seven participants each, balancing diversity with manageability. Participants were strategically grouped by stakeholder type (e.g. journalists separate from activists) to enhance comfort and discussion relevance, while also incorporating factors such as gender, age and professional backgrounds where possible. Trained, neutral facilitators guided the sessions using predefined questions that allowed for flexible, open dialogue, conducted primarily in Somali and English. All discussions took place in secure, neutral venues, including university rooms, NGO offices, and private hotel meeting spaces to ensure participant safety. Interviews were conducted in Somali and English, depending on the participant's preference, and were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Detailed notes were taken with participant consent and transcribed within 24 hours to maintain accuracy and contextual integrity, with all identifiers removed from transcripts and pseudonyms implemented. Finally, FGD findings were systematically cross-verified with interview data to ensure consistency and reliability of results.

Relevant documents, including government policies, academic literature, media reports, and legal documents, were reviewed to provide a broader context for the research. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. This involved identifying, coding, and categorizing key themes and patterns related to perceptions of the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing system, experiences of exclusion and marginalization, alternative models for power sharing, factors that contribute to political stability and instability, and the role of clan identity in contemporary Somali politics.

Results

Evolution of 4.5 clan-based power-sharing model within the Somali federal system and its strengths

Regarding the 4.5 power-sharing model's genesis, respondents have differing opinions. The international community, which provided funding for the Arta conference, is thought to have introduced it in Ethiopia

at the SODERA conference for Somali warlords and then adopted it in Djibouti. The 4.5 model was considered a potential solution by the international community, which perceived the main conflict in Somalia as clan-based. As stated by one former diplomat:

'The 4.5 power-sharing formula was developed at the SODERA conference in Ethiopia and put into practice at the Arta conference in Djibouti and Djibouti government was heavily involved in this process.' (Former Diplomat, December 12, 2024, Mogadishu).

According to a media professional, the 4.5 method was developed by larger clans to preserve power and safeguard their political standing in the face of continuous conflicts by equitably allocating legislative seats while disregarding the rights of marginalized groups. However, according to some participants, many Somali clans are content with the present 4.5 power-sharing ratio because they were not given their full share of districts and regions during the former military regime. The study also discovered that the 4.5 model has given representation to under-represented groups, despite receiving a lot of criticism, especially from the 0.5 clans. These opinions, however, have not been sufficiently represented by federal member states, which has caused them to support central government. One respondent noted:

'If 0.5 groups had been distributed among large clans as they were prior to the 4.5 formula, they would have received nothing. As a result, they were lucky to have 0.5 representation, at least for the time being.' (Journalist, December 25, 2024, Galmudug).

Furthermore, the study found that although this power-sharing arrangement is politically unusual, it is in line with Somali customs, which give larger clans the lion's share of resources while smaller clans collectively receive their share, as demonstrated by customs such as Diya payments (compensation for wrongful killings). The present 4.5 structure, however, was first designed as a stopgap measure to put a halt to the ongoing conflict and establish the foundation for governance. A lecturer in Garowe emphasized this point:

'The goal of the 4.5 clan-based power sharing was accomplished when the Arta government was welcomed to Mogadishu; however, the question of how and who will be responsible for transitioning the nation to a universally accepted power-sharing formula remains a pressing concern and has yet to be addressed by subsequent leadership.' (University Lecturer, November 28, 2024, Puntland).

Somali clan dynamics experts from civil society contended that the fundamental problem lies not with clan identity per se, but with political manipulation of the federal system. Clan identity is a double-edged sword, they contend, and clan dynamics in the contemporary state have been poorly managed by inept political leadership. Even though the Somali clan system has its shortcomings, it was confined to cultural issues and historically featured set regulations, inherited leadership, and ethical considerations. The socialist military regime, Islamists and nationalists, however, have attacked it negatively, persuading the people that clan identity is a dangerous 'cancer' that has to be removed from Somalia. The breakdown of Somalia's social, cultural, and religious structures has resulted in a decline in the clan system. Today, sultans and clan leaders are appointed by politicians, but as a result, these individuals are not treated with true respect. Until colonial powers brought in new clan elders who demanded payment, the Somali people's capacity to live decent lives was not historically hampered by their clan affiliation. One clan conflicts expert argued:

'Clan is a social institution, and social institutions come in many different forms. Any entity that abuses its structure can be harmful, but an institution that is well-structured can also be advantageous. Somalis use clans as a means of identity and communication when discussing remittances. Similarly, Somali people have eleven grandfathers instead of eleven ID numbers; clan serves as a kind of insurance for Somalis above all else.' (Director of Research Institute, December 23, 2024, Somaliland).

A sizable portion of participants think that a power-sharing model based on 4.5 clans exists for three key reasons. First, the military regime in Somalia created provinces and districts based on lineage in an illegitimate manner, which cannot be used as a basis for power sharing. Second, several clans forcibly occupied other people's lands during the civil war and the state's eventual collapse, endangering the fair distribution of power. Third, every official and informal census since the country's

founding, including the most recent one in 2012, has been the subject of conflict between administrations and tribes. Since they are unable to participate fully in politics without maintaining their clan identity, certain clans run the risk of being eclipsed by more powerful clans. As one businessman put it:

'Since clan identity is crucial to political power sharing in Somalia and is one of the three primary traits Somalis use to define themselves, together with Islam and nationality, it is currently impossible to deny the clan model'. (Entrepreneur, November 30, 2024, Southwest).

Potential risks of continuing to rely on clan identity as a basis for power sharing in Somalia

Majority of participants thought clan-based power sharing was a deceptive and ugly strategy. According to their argument, clan-based power sharing has been a major contributing element to Somalia's breakdown since the country's statehood in 1960. These participants contend that such a system is ineffective at the federal level and is restricted to traditional, local concerns. It diminishes citizens' political competency, creates antagonistic political rivalries, and is incompatible with party systems and ideology-based politics, according to them. One government official expressed this opinion:

'The clan used to have its own region in a nomadic area, adhering to customs, but today there are cities where people live as communities and there are several clans in one city. Even if a society is homogeneous in terms of religion, language, and geography, clan-based politics are the worst thing that could ruin it since they hinder progress and drive clans to hell'. (Directorate, MOIA, December 16, 2024, Mogadishu).

Because clan elders and influential groups control the indirect election process and participate in clan-based politics, the study shows that young people have little representation and influence in the federalist system. This limited perspective of 4.5 power sharing makes it difficult for young people to navigate the system. According to one traditional clan leader:

'Clans see the state as a reflection of themselves and their clansmen, and they feel that inexperience with clan interests prevents young people from representing the clan effectively'. (Traditional Elder, December 2, 2024, Puntland).

The study found that although clans in the 4.5 system share power at the federal level, power-sharing dynamics are complicated at the state level when they split up into sub-clans. As a result, clan-based power sharing is more contentious at the state level than the federal one. According to one healthcare professional:

'Accepting 4.5 as the core identity of governmental institutions only serves to strengthen clannism by encouraging the community to value the number of clansmen in the system over the services provided to constituents. This is similar to going on the same path that got you lost or depending on the same prescription that didn't work for you yesterday. A sincere believer is not bitten twice in the same hole, according to the Prophet Muhammad'. (Medical Doctor, January 3, 2024, Galmudug).

According to the finding, certain clans killed more people than others in order to increase their political power share. Consequently, other clans might be tempted to imitate similar conduct and escalate their own violent actions. Therefore, it would be a grave political error to reinstate clan-based power sharing in the new federal structure, which would result in a national catastrophe and continue a dysfunctional paradigm that would impede efforts to construct a viable state. One activist argued:

'I don't view clan-based politics as a good power-sharing formula since it attracts unethical individuals, the incompetent, and those lacking the qualities necessary for political office; we see veterinary graduates taking security positions simply because clan affiliation is the standard'. (Social Worker, December 15, 2024, Jubbaland).

The study also demonstrated that most sub-clans are oppressed, marginalized, and subjected to discrimination as a result of clan-based power sharing, which predominantly favors a limited number of royal families within each clan. Because there is no defined procedure for choosing candidates, this system makes it difficult to establish a state and leads to arbitrary and unbridled clan interests. Additionally, because clans frequently reject women's participation in legislative and executive positions, the clan-based system does not advance gender equality. One academician stated:

'Clan-based power sharing benefits no one, not even the main clan, but only a few armed and strong sub-clan members. As a woman, I campaigned for parliament, but my clan elders rejected me and elected my cousin instead, saying I was already married to someone from another clan. The clan of my children likewise views me as belonging to a different clan. Even though I do not represent any tribe in politics, they come to me for assistance when the clan is impacted by floods or droughts.' (Researcher, December 8, 2024, Jubbaland).

Diplomats believe that because clans now have the power and authority that the federal system gave them, and because there are many rival clan elders inside each clan, the country has fallen victim to clannism. Some clans are closely integrated and share a shared identity, but the so-called 'Others or 0.5 Groups' (Jareer, Benadiri, Yaxar, Kulmis, and others) have nothing in common. This presents a serious problem to the 4.5 power-sharing formula. Additionally, a number of clans that were formerly a part of larger clans have separated and benefited from this. Despite the fact that larger clans have clan-based institutions, the 0.5 groups—which comprise communities such as farmers and fishermen—do not structure their lives around clan identities. This is another problem with the 4.5 formula. One diplomat remarked:

'Unlike other Somali clans, there is nothing in common between us, as 0.5 clans. For instance, the Bantu ethnic groups are diverse, and many of us are of other ethnic backgrounds, such as Persians and Arabs. However, we are all grouped together under an umbrella that has nothing to do with Somali history. Additionally, many of these '0.5' clans were associated with the four major clans prior to the establishment of the 4.5 formula.' (Current Diplomat, December 9, 2024, Mogadishu).

Lastly, the study highlights a serious weakness in Somalia's current federal structure: there is no clear framework for fair power distribution at all levels, which results in a lot of disputes. The executive branches at the federal and state levels are in constant conflict with one another. A single clan frequently controls power inside each state, while the current power-sharing arrangements favor only two clans (the Hawiye and Darod Duopoly) at the federal level. This pattern of power concentration impedes real decentralization and maintains an uneven distribution of power, which is frequently based on each clan's military might.

Alternative mechanisms for complementing or replacing 4.5 clan-based system

Upon investigating alternatives to the 4.5 power-sharing system, the study discovered that power sharing based on clans and regions is no longer effective. It also emphasized the necessity for a fresh strategy to uphold the Somali political system, promote harmony, and unite the populace. According to the research, there were times in Somali history when the clan system was momentarily marginalized as the populace came together under the winds of nationalism and Islam. The early years of civil administration, the early years of military rule, the Ahmed Gurey Islamic movement, the Somali Youth League, and the most recent Islamic Courts Union era are a few examples. However, no negotiated or agreed-upon power-sharing agreements were developed throughout these eras, which is why these encouraging times did not last.

Several alternatives surfaced from the study, which sought to collect ideas for resolving the 4.5 clan issue. First, majority of participants stated that until the reasons for the need for the 4.5 clan system—such as unfairness, clan supremacy, one-man rule, power abuse, and inadequate governance—are addressed, no other options could be acceptable. According to these respondents, clan-based power sharing could be replaced by a clearly defined Somalism and an Islamic system, although both would need a lot of work. They stated that rethinking how we interpret and use Islam and clan should be our first focus. It can be reinterpreted to better serve the needs of the populace and promote togetherness rather than trying to eradicate the clan via conflict. They contend that having a common goal is a workable substitute. Alongside this, a thorough constitution that represents the people's values and beliefs should be drafted. Under the direction of Islamic scholars, this constitution should be discussed and drafted by knowledgeable, morally ethical, and experienced governance professionals. One academician provided the following justification:

'Somalism and Islamhood allow Somalis to come together and create shared symbolic capital because they have a common language, region, flag, and religion. They can take inspiration from the Prophet (SAW), who brought the Ummah together by calming clan disputes without disregarding the clan itself.' (University Lecturer, December 26, 2024, Mogadishu).

By explicitly differentiating between clan and Tol (kinship ties), the second suggested option sought to increase the role of Tol while decreasing the impact of clan-based politics. This strategy necessitates that Somali leaders possess a broad perspective and the capacity to make effective future plans. Respondents underlined the necessity of a formula that fosters legitimacy, acceptance, justice, fairness, and inclusivity. They pointed out that they would only think about a substitute for the 4.5 system—which they might rename the constituency and representation formula—after trust had been rebuilt. One state official made this statement during an interview in Garowe:

'To address the perceived shortcomings of contemporary, Western-influenced power structures in Somalia, it is essential to reform traditional Somali and Islamic institutions and values. This reform should emphasize the unifying aspects of traditional kinship ties (Tol) while mitigating the negative consequences of clan-based interpretations'. (State Official, December 7, 2024, Puntland).

As the study indicated, the third option is that the country needs crisis and ethical leadership that is aware of the core issues and conflict sources, that can face and resolve these problems. Based on the results, this leadership approach should prioritize nation-building over institution-building in an effort to change the current political climate. In addition to establishing explicit political power sharing, residents should be urged to trust the state instead of depending only on tribal ties. One former diplomat stated:

'There are three optional ways to share power: 1. The creation of regulations and their execution can be delegated to the states. 2. The state will carry out initiatives like health care and education, while the federal government can establish the regulations or policies. 3. Alternatively, there can be a distinct division of authority where everything is identified and what belongs to each party'. (Federal Government, Advisor & Former Diplomat, December 22, 2024, Mogadishu).

The study offers a fourth alternative indicating a way for clan leadership to participate in the state system in an efficient manner without having their contributions overstated or undervalued. To do this, the lower house, which should hold power, should be organized according to population, while the upper house is given to the clans as an advisory body with less authority. Furthermore, the study discovered that justice could become the cornerstone of the state through ethical leadership and the equitable execution of the law. Security, stabilization, institution building, reconciliation, service delivery, peacebuilding, foreign relations, and resource mobilization are just a few of the important national issues that have not advanced due to the lack of agreement on a formal power-sharing paradigm, as the study found. According to one academician:

'We weren't destroyed by clan dynamics; instead, they were used as a means of abuse. Our decline has been caused by greed, weak leadership, unethical leadership behavior, and awful politics. Two nationalist parties that have risen above clan-based politics are SYL and SNL, which have garnered support from voters. Under the current leadership, nationalism cannot thrive if they do not accept it'. (University Professor, December 5, 2024, Mogadishu).

Ultimately, this analysis found that the 4.5 power-sharing arrangement cannot be successfully replaced by either a multi-party system or a one-person, one-vote election system because both have failed to work for Somalis because of clan rivalries. One legal professional noted:

'Since Somali independence, attempts at one-person, one-vote elections and multi-party systems have failed miserably. Voting does nothing when inept, clan-oriented candidates run for office; as we have seen in the past, it only results in death and devastation'. (Lawyer, December 11, 2024, Hirshabelle).

The study finally found that there are two main reasons why clan-based power sharing is common in Somalia:

1. Clan identity is strongly ingrained in society and upheld by unwritten customary rules.
2. Political elites avoid critical thinking and alternative options because they feel that clan-based power sharing best serves their interests and they lack alternative offerings, such as ideological frameworks.

Discussion

The 4.5 power-sharing model: evolution and strength

The study reveals a nuanced understanding among respondents regarding the origins and implications of the 4.5 power-sharing model in Somalia. Opinions on the model's inception were varied. While many believed it emerged from the SODERA conference and was later formalized by the international community in Djibouti, others pointed to its strategic implementation by larger clans to maintain their political dominance. This perspective highlights the potential for the model to be perceived as a tool of power consolidation rather than a genuine mechanism for inclusive governance. The study underscores the complex nature of 4.5 clan identity in Somali politics. While the 4.5 model, with its focus on clan representation, has provided a platform for marginalized and unarmed groups, its implementation has been marred by federal member states' failure to adequately represent these voices. This highlights the limitations of the model and the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to power sharing. Although our research diverges from Warsame (2024) in its assessment of the 4.5 system's impact on specific groups, we both share the critical concern that the current power-sharing arrangements require significant reform to address their inherent limitations.

Furthermore, the study challenges the prevailing narrative that clan identity is inherently negative. It acknowledges that while the traditional clan system had its flaws, it also contained inherent mechanisms for social cohesion and governance. However, the study emphasizes that the current misuse of clan identity by politicians, coupled with the erosion of traditional leadership structures, has exacerbated its negative consequences. The study suggests that the core issue lies not with 4.5 clan identity itself, but with the failure of political leadership to manage clan dynamics within the framework of a modern state. Incompetent leadership, political manipulation, and the erosion of traditional governance structures have contributed to the negative connotations associated with clan identity. The study calls for a critical re-evaluation of the 4.5 model and a focus on political reforms that address the root causes of conflict and exclusion. This may involve strengthening democratic institutions, promoting good governance, and fostering inclusive political participation beyond clan-based affiliations. Overall, the study provides a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on power sharing in Somalia. It highlights the complexities of clan identity, the limitations of the current model, and the need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to governance. This finding contradicts the conclusions of Harun (2022), who argued that the 4.5 system was specifically designed to ensure representation for minority clans alongside the dominant ones. Our research suggests that while the 4.5 system may have aimed to address the concerns of marginalized groups, in practice, it has often failed to achieve this objective. Instead, it has been exploited by powerful clans to maintain their dominance and perpetuate existing power imbalances.

The 4.5 model: a pragmatic solution in a fractured landscape

This finding reveals a nuanced perspective on the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing model in Somalia. While widely criticized, some respondents view it as a pragmatic solution to the country's deeply entrenched challenges. Participants recognize the historical complexities that undermine alternative power-sharing models. The arbitrary division of regions and districts during the military regime, coupled with the territorial displacements caused by the civil war, has created an uneven playing field. Moreover, the lack of a reliable and universally accepted census further exacerbates the issue, making it difficult to determine equitable representation based on population or other objective criteria. In this context, these respondents perceive the 4.5 model as a pragmatic compromise. They argue that, in the absence of a clear and accepted alternative, clan identity serves as a somewhat equitable, albeit imperfect, basis for political representation. This is especially true for marginalized clans who fear being further disadvantaged in a system based solely on territorial representation or population, given the historical injustices and ongoing political manipulations. While acknowledging the 4.5 model's potential benefits, respondents also recognize its limitations. They highlight the need for reforms to address its inherent flaws, such as the exclusion of marginalized groups and the potential for manipulation by dominant clans. This finding underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to political reform in Somalia. It highlights the

importance of addressing historical injustices, building trust among different clans, and developing a more equitable and inclusive system of governance that goes beyond clan-based power sharing while acknowledging its current role as a pragmatic reality. This finding supports the conclusions of recent studies (Hashi & Barasa, 2022, 2023; Hashi and Hock 2022, 2024), which advocate for a comprehensive approach to political reform in Somalia, emphasizing the need to move beyond clan-based power sharing and foster a more inclusive and equitable system of governance.

A critique of clan-based power sharing in Somalia

The study presents a strong critique of the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing model, highlighting its limitations and potential dangers. A majority of participants view it as an obstacle to national progress, arguing that it perpetuates division. Instead of fostering unity, the 4.5 system fuels inter-clan rivalries and hinders the development of a cohesive national identity. It prioritizes clan interests over national interests, leading to political gridlock and hindering effective governance.

It also undermines democratic principles as the system conflicts with the principles of democratic governance, such as party-based politics, meritocracy, and the equal rights of all citizens. It undermines the political competence of citizens by encouraging them to prioritize clan loyalty over national interest. This system also exacerbates inequality. While intended to ensure representation for all clans, the 4.5 model has resulted in power concentration in the hands of a few dominant clans, marginalizing smaller and weaker clans. It has also failed to address internal inequalities within clans, with power often concentrated within specific sub-clans and excluding the majority. These findings corroborate the conclusions of previous research by Hashi and Oo (2024) and Warsame (2024), which similarly demonstrated that the 4.5 power-sharing model has resulted in power concentration within a limited number of dominant clans, marginalizing smaller and less armed groups.

The system's focus on clan interests has hampered the development of strong and effective state institutions. It has led to a fragmented and decentralized power structure, with constant competition among clans for control, hindering national development and stability. The study highlights the potential for clan-based power sharing to incentivize violence. Clans may resort to violence to increase their political influence and gain a larger share of power, creating a cycle of violence and instability. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the limitations of the 4.5 model at both the federal and state levels. While it may provide some level of representation at the federal level, it often leads to further fragmentation and competition among sub-clans within states. The study provides a compelling argument against the continued reliance on clan-based power sharing in Somalia. It highlights the need for alternative models of governance that prioritize national unity, inclusivity, and the development of strong, democratic institutions. Moving beyond clan-based politics is crucial for overcoming the challenges facing Somalia and building a stable and prosperous future. This finding aligns with previous research by Samatar (2007) and Eno and Eno (2009), both of whom characterized the 4.5 model as a 'compartmentalized political order' that fails to ensure equitable representation for all clans, thereby perpetuating divisions and inequality within Somali society.

Moving beyond clan-based power sharing: exploring alternatives for Somalia

This research delves into the complexities of the 4.5 power-sharing model in Somalia, highlighting its limitations and exploring potential alternatives. While recognizing the historical context that necessitated its implementation, the study finds that the 4.5 system is no longer a viable solution for building a stable and prosperous nation. The study emphasizes that the 4.5 system, by prioritizing clan affiliations, has exacerbated inter-clan tensions and hindered the development of a cohesive national identity. It has fostered a culture of political competition based on clan interests rather than on merit and the common good. The focus on clan-based power sharing has undermined the development of strong, democratic institutions and hindered the emergence of competent and accountable leadership. It has created a system where political appointments are often based on clan affiliation rather than merit, hindering the development of a professional and effective civil service. The 4.5 system has not effectively addressed the needs of marginalized groups within and between clans. It has perpetuated existing power imbalances

and hindered the full participation of all segments of society in the political process. These findings substantiate the conclusions of Ingiriis (2018) and Hashi (2024), who asserted that the 4.5 system impedes the establishment of a genuine democracy in Somalia, and by prioritizing clan representation over merit and competence, the system hinders the development of robust, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

The study explores several potential alternatives to the 4.5 model, recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict and promotes national unity. Key themes emerging from the research include:

- 1. Redefining Clan Identity:** Rather than attempting to eliminate clan identity, the study suggests re-interpreting its role in Somali society. By emphasizing shared values, such as Islam and Somalism, and promoting a sense of national identity, clan identity can be reoriented to serve the common good.
- 2. Strengthening Institutions:** The study emphasizes the need to build strong, inclusive, and accountable institutions at all levels of government. This includes strengthening the rule of law, promoting good governance, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all citizens.
- 3. Fostering National Unity:** The study underscores the importance of fostering a sense of national unity and shared purpose among all Somalis. This requires addressing historical grievances, promoting reconciliation, and creating a shared vision for the future.

The study acknowledges the challenges involved in transitioning away from the 4.5 model. It highlights the need for strong leadership, inclusive dialogue, and a gradual and carefully planned process of reform. Building trust among different clans and fostering a sense of shared ownership in the new system will be crucial for its success. This finding aligns with Norman (2024) and Baadiyow (2019), who both argue that while intended to mitigate conflict, the 4.5 system has inadvertently entrenched clan-based politics, weakened political parties, and hindered the development of a vibrant civil society.

Practical implications

The study provides valuable insights for policymakers in Somalia, including recommendations for reforming the current power-sharing arrangements. This may involve exploring alternative mechanisms for representation, such as electoral reforms, strengthening political parties, and promoting inclusive political participation. The findings can inform peacebuilding efforts in Somalia by highlighting the need to address the root causes of conflict, including the exclusion and marginalization of certain groups. It emphasizes the importance of building trust and fostering dialogue among different clans and communities. The study contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen state-building in Somalia by highlighting the critical need for effective governance institutions, rule of law, and the promotion of a national identity that transcends clan affiliations. The research findings can guide future research on power-sharing mechanisms in other divided societies, providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with different approaches.

Conclusion

This study has examined the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing system in Somalia, analyzing its evolution within the federal system, assessing its current strengths and weaknesses, and exploring potential alternatives. Our findings reveal that while the 4.5 system has served as a crucial mechanism for political accommodation in the post-conflict context, it has also presented significant challenges. The continued reliance on clan identity as the primary basis for political representation poses significant risks. It perpetuates divisions, hinders the development of strong national institutions, and marginalizes certain segments of the population. Furthermore, the 4.5 system has proven to be susceptible to manipulation and has often failed to deliver equitable power sharing at the state and local levels. The study explores potential alternatives to the 4.5 system, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict and promotes inclusive governance. This may involve shifting the focus from clan representation to individual merit and competence, promoting the development of strong political parties, independent judiciaries, and accountable governance structures, ensuring the

equitable representation of all segments of society, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, and finally fostering a sense of shared national identity and civic responsibility beyond clan affiliations. The study recommends that it is crucial to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive national dialogue on the future of power sharing in Somalia. This dialogue should involve a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society, religious leaders, traditional elders, and youth representatives. The goal should be to develop a new political compact that reflects the aspirations of all Somalis and paves the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future.

This study contributes to the broader theoretical discourse on power-sharing in divided societies such as Somalia by critically engaging with the 4.5 system in Somalia. This study challenges the prevailing assumptions embedded in traditional clan-based power-sharing models, such as those articulated by Lewis (1961, 1994), by revealing their limitations in promoting equity and sustainable governance. These findings underscore the need for scholars and policymakers to rethink identity-based mechanisms and consider more inclusive merit-based alternatives that can foster stronger institutional resilience in post-war contexts. This study had certain limitations. Although effective at capturing in-depth insights, the qualitative approach used in this study involved a modest sample size, which may not fully represent the diversity of Somali perspectives. Moreover, the focus on clan identity, while central, may overlook intersecting political and social dynamics. Given Somalia's evolving political landscape, these findings should be revisited through future research using mixed methods and comparative analysis to better assess the long-term impact of the 4.5 system and explore more inclusive governance frameworks at both national and subnational levels.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Mohamed Bile Hashi**: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Project administration, Software, Writing – original draft; **Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi**: Methodology, Writing – review & editing; **Oo Yu Hock**: Methodology, Supervision, Validation.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

Mogadishu University supported this study through the MU Research Development Program.

About the authors

Dr. Mohamed Bile Hashi, originally from Kismayo University in Somalia, began his academic journey by obtaining a bachelor's degree in business administration in 2010. Motivated by his passion for public service, he decided to further his education and pursue a master's degree in public administration at the Islamic university in Uganda, which he completed in 2014. Mohamed earned his PhD in Social and Behavioral Science, focusing on African federalism, from Asia e University, further enhancing his expertise in African affairs. His research focuses on leadership, clan politics, political science intricacies, federalism dynamics, and the impact of public policy and public administration.

Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi is a scholar and lecturer in public administration with over ten years of experience in teaching, research, and academic leadership. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Mogadishu University and a Master's in Public Administration from the Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Public Administration at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. His research expertise spans governance, citizen trust, public participation, institutional performance, and community policing. He has authored multiple publications in respected peer-reviewed journals, contributing to academic and policy discussions in his field.

Professor Dr Yu Hock Oo, currently with Asia e University (AeU), graduated from and worked with University of Malaya (UM), is associated with his overseas alma mater, University of Southern California (SoCal), Los Angeles, and also with University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul, USA. The diversity of his multi-disciplinary education involvement is encapsulated in a Certificate in Education (TESEL and Physical Education Teacher), Bachelor of Arts (Hons – 2nd Upper Division) in Malay Studies (Sociology and Anthropology), Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master

of Science in Education (MSc Ed), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD in Public Administration). His academic commitments attest to more than five decades of his evolving personal and professional narratives and contributions that shape and reinforce his life-long career transformation as a secondary school teacher-cum-university professor, an academic researcher-cum-supervisor and examiner of graduate (Master degrees) and doctoral (PhD and DBA) students, writer-cum-coauthor with his successful local and international adult-working graduates, and occasional trainer-cum-consultant for both public and private sector interests including international schools.

ORCID

Mohamed Bile Hashi  <http://orcid.org/0009-0004-1123-2453>

Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

References

- Abdullahi, A. (2007). Women and traditional democracy in Somalia: Winning strategies for political ascendancy. *African Renaissance*, 4(3–4), 67–81. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC10277>.
- Abdullahi, A. B. (2019). Somali national reconciliation: Exploring a comprehensive approach. In M. Keating & M. Waldman (Eds.), *War and peace in Somalia: National grievances, local conflict and Al-Shabaab*. (Online ed.). Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190947910.003.0018>
- Affi, L. (2020). The old men who hold us back: Clan elders, elite bargaining and exclusionary politics. *Journal of Somali Studies*, 7(2), 125–145. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2056-5682/2020/7n2a6>
- Barre, G. S. (2024). Weaknesses of federalism in Somalia and required reforms. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.7.2.2152>
- Blum, M. (2023). The Wu-Tang clan, politics, and Black power. In *Black popular culture and social justice*, 125–141. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003308089-12>
- Bochsler, D., & Juon, A. (2021). Power-sharing and the quality of democracy. *European Political Science Review*, 13(4), 411–430. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773921000151>
- Bormann, N., & Steinwand, M. (2020). Power-Sharing Coalitions and Ethnic Armed Conflict. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/urmtg>
- Clapham, C. (2023). *State formation and decay*. Oxford University Press.
- Cukani, E. (2014). Consociational Power Sharing Arrangements as a Tool for Democracy: The Experiences of Macedonia and Kosovo, *EUNOMIA*, 3(1), 157–168. <https://doi.org/10.1285/122808949A3N1P157>
- Dahir, A., & Ali, Y. S. (2024). Federalism in post-conflict Somalia: A critical review of its reception and governance challenges. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 34(1), 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2021.1998005>
- De Waal, A. (2018). *The prairie fire that burned Mogadishu: The logic of clan formation in Somalia*. World Peace Foundation at The Fletcher School Tufts University. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100258/1/The_Prairie_Fire_that_burned_Mogadishu_final_1.pdf
- Elmi, A. A. (2010). *Understanding the Somalia conflagration: Identity, Islam and peacebuilding*. Pluto Press.
- Elmi, A. A. (2015). *Decentralized unitary system: A possible middle ground model for Somalia*. Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies.
- Eno, M. A., & Eno, O. A. (2009). Intellectualism amid ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 factor. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, 9, 137–145. <https://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/bildhaan/vol9/iss1/13>
- Erkem, P. (2016). *Ethnic nationalism and consociational democracy in Cyprus*, Beykent Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.18221/BUJSS.33634>
- Harun, I. (2022). Federalism in Somalia. In *Contemporary governance challenges in the Horn of Africa*. 194–225. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003265306-8>
- Hashi, M. B. (2024). *An analysis of political paradox in clan-based values and fragmented states in Somalia federalism formation* [Doctoral thesis]. Asia e University. Retrieved from <https://online.fliphtml5.com/sppgg/clur/?173579004>
- Hashi, M. B., & Barasa, T. (2022). Understanding what lies behind public bad leadership in the federal government of Somalia. *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 9(2), 142–155. <https://www.paperpublications.org/upload/book/UNDERSTANDING%20WHAT-10052022-4.pdf>
- Hashi, M. B., & Hock, O. Y. (2022). Crisis leadership in civic state building: The case of clan federalism in Somalia. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(10), 103–134. <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/12946>
- Hashi, M. B., & Hock, O. Y. (2024). Somalia's tripartite federalism oxymoron: Building democratic institutions and political legitimacy in a fragile federation. *Journal of Somali Studies: Research on Somalia and the Greater Horn of African Countries*, 11(1), 109–130. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_joss_v11_n1_a5

- Hashi, M. B., & Barasa, T. (2023). Enhancing federal inter-governmental relations and state building in Somalia. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 847. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02177-w>
- Horowitz, D. L. (2014). Ethnic power sharing: Three big problems. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(2), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2014.0020>
- Ingiriis, M. H. (2018). Building peace from the margins in Somalia: The case for political settlement with Al-Shabaab. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39(4), 512–536. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2018.1429751>
- Juon, A. (2025). The long-term consequences of power-sharing for ethnic salience. *Journal of Peace Research*, 62(3), 613–628. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433241227759>
- Keil, S., & Hulsey, J. (2025). Does democracy matter in consociational systems? *Southeastern Europe*, 48(2-3), 191–214. <https://doi.org/10.30965/18763332-48020002>
- Lewis, I. M. (1961). *A pastoral democracy: A study of pastoralism and politics among the northern Somali of the horn of Africa*. James Currey Publishers.
- Lewis, I. M. (1994). *Blood and bone: The call of kinship in Somali society*. Red Sea Press.
- Menkhaus, KEN. (2014). State Failure, State-Building, and Prospects for a “Functional Failed State” in Somalia. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 656(1), 154–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214547002>
- Menkhaus, K. (2016). *Non-state security providers and political formation in Somalia*. (CSG Papers 5). Centre for Security Governance.
- Mondey, A., & Beeri, I. (2024). The competing impact of network politics and hamula (clan) politics on perceived network performance: The case of minority networks. *Local Government Studies*, 50(1), 204–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2023.2185229>
- Mukhtar, M. H. (2007). *Somali reconciliation conferences: The unbeaten track*. Adonis & Abbey Publishers.
- Norman, J. (2024). Platform kinship and the reshaping of political order in the Somali territories. *International Affairs*, 100(4), 1431–1450. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiae134>
- Said, H. (2023). *Uyghur ethnic group and Somali Bantu: A comparative study*. Malmö University.
- Samatar, A. I. (2007). Somalia: Warlordism, Ethiopian invasion, dictatorship, & America's role Sudan Tribune. <https://sudantribune.com/article20646/>
- Samatar, A. I. (2022). *Framing Somalia: Beyond Africa's merchants of misery*. Red Sea Press.
- Solomon, H. (2014). Somalia's clans and the need to go beyond the nation-state. *Africa Insight*, 44(2), 181–196.
- Thompson, D. K., & Matshanda, N. T. (2023). Political identity as temporal collapse: Ethiopian federalism and contested Ogaden histories. *African Affairs*, 122(486), 119–145. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adad003>
- Ugas, K. H. (2017). Factors influencing power sharing system in Somali politics. *Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 4(4), 15–32. <https://doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v4i4.545>
- Waga, A. A. (2024). Navigating chaos: IGAD's efforts amidst Somalia's governance crisis. *Heliyon*, 10(18), e37941. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37941>
- Warsame, A. (2024). How the Somali modern governance works with the traditional governance system: Literature review. *Africana*, 4(2), 29–53. <https://doi.org/10.58851/africana.1457965>
- Zoppi, M. (2018). Somalia: Federating citizens or clans? Dilemmas in the quest for stability. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 36(1), 54–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2017.1414940>