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Good Governance, Democracy and Development

Abstract In this chapter, Cilliers explores how democracy has swept across the globe to become the dominant form of governance. Africa, too, has become increasingly democratic, but often in name only: regular elections are often façades for corrupt, autocratic regimes. Cilliers explains how, in fact, competitive politics in poorly developed countries with weak political institutions may actually hinder development. However, public support for democracy has surged in Africa and it is critical that African countries protect and advance the strides they have made towards substantive democratic governance. The Fourth Wave scenario laid out in this chapter demonstrates how a more democratic Africa would impact on development.

Keywords Afrobarometer · Crests and troughs · Democracy · Neopatrimonialism · Polity IV Project · Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)

Learning Objectives

- Explain the historical cycles of democracy from a global perspective and its manifestations on the African continent;
- Identify the core challenges democratisation has faced in Africa and their causes
- Understand how different regime types bear upon development
- Understand the Varieties of Democracy and Polity IV Projects and how each categorise and measures democracy and regime types.

Over the last two centuries, democracy has advanced in three global waves. With each wave, its quality, depth and reach has peaked and ebbed in crests and troughs that have come to define the evolution of governance—and what it means to be governed. Each crest has raised the high-water mark left by its predecessor, granting momentum to the tide of democracy as it envelops increasingly larger shares of the world's population.¹

The first wave surged in the early nineteenth century particularly when the vote was granted to the white, male population of the USA, and ebbed in the turbulent years leading up to the Second World War. At the crest of this wave, democracies governed 29 states; at its trough at the height of the war in 1942, only 12 democracies remained.²

The end of the Second World War precipitated the second wave of democracy. As the number of independent states grew, so too did the number of democracies, rising to 36 internationally recognised democratic regimes in 1962 before falling modestly to 30 by the mid-1970s. During this wave, rapid decolonisation swept first across North Africa (following the defeat of Italy during the Second World War), affecting Eritrea, Ethiopia and Libya. Sudan gained independence from the United Kingdom and Egypt in 1956, followed by Tunisia and Morocco from France later that year. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana was first becoming independent in 1957, followed by numerous Anglophone, Francophone and Belgium colonies.

Burdened by its vast colonial empire, a stagnant economy and 48 years of authoritarian rule it was perhaps no surprise that the third wave of democracy began in Portugal in 1974, with the Carnation Revolution. The following year all of Portugal's colonies achieved independence, a hasty and chaotic affair that swept from Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, Angola to São Tomé and Príncipe.

The end of Portuguese colonial rule set off a train of events that would eventually result in a series of liberation wars and the end of colonial rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1980 and South West Africa (now Namibia) in 1990.

However, the key event that would eventually trigger large changes in the levels of democracy in Africa was the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. It ended a series of proxy wars in Africa and, as a result, also Western support for a number of unsavoury regimes that the West had instrumentalised to counter Soviet expansion. In 1990 it would also allow the start of a negotiated settlement process that witnessed Nelson Mandela elected as president

¹Waves don't mean that all countries become more democratic, simply that there is a generalised, sustained and significant increase.

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_in_1939.

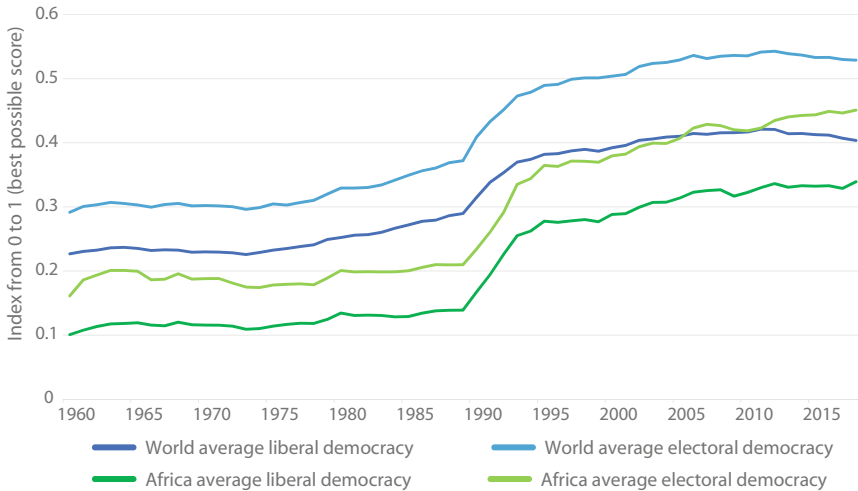


Fig. 13.1 Average levels of electoral and liberal democracy in the world and in Africa according to V-Dem: 1960–2018 (Source V-Dem v8)

of South Africa, then Africa's largest economy and with the most powerful military, four years later.

Also part of the third wave was a rash of democratic transitions in Latin America in the 1980s and shortly thereafter in several Asia-Pacific countries. The dissolution of the former Soviet Union further allowed a number of countries in eastern and central Europe to break away and establish representative systems of government.

These events all need to be borne in mind when considering Fig. 13.1, a line graph that uses data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) to present average levels of liberal and electoral democracy in Africa and the world from 1960 to 2018.³ V-Dem is a large and complex effort to conceptualise and measure democracy over time. It distinguishes between five types of democracy. In addition to liberal and electoral democracy, the two indices used in this chapter, it also measures participatory, deliberative and egalitarian democracy. It does so by providing a score, based on extensive subsidiary measures and expert opinion, of the extent to which each country in the dataset meets the ideal of the different types of democracy. Of the five types, liberal democracy is the most mature and developed where individual and

³See University of Gothenburg, 2019. *Varieties of Democracy*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.v-dem.net/en/>.

minority rights are protected against the tyranny of the majority⁴ while electoral democracy is the least substantive. The index on the left-hand y-axis in Fig. 13.1 ranges from 0 (complete absence of democracy) to 1 (full liberal or electoral democracy in all countries).

According to the V-Dem data presented in Fig. 13.1 neither average levels of electoral democracy nor levels of substantive democracy changed significantly in Africa until 1989. By contrast, global averages steadily improved. Then, in the five years from 1989 to 1993, levels of democracy in Africa and globally increased sharply, although the increase in electoral democracy is more pronounced than for liberal democracy.

This is to be expected, as governments can easily adopt the trappings of electoral democracy such as going through the motions of regular elections but without substantive accountability and protection of individual rights. Liberal democracy requires much greater effort and time to establish—to separate the powers of the executive, judiciary and legislature, a truly competitive political environment, a free media and independent oversight mechanisms that have some teeth.

In the years that followed 1993, the gap between levels of electoral and substantive democracy in Africa has widened. More African countries hold regular elections and provide varying degrees of civil liberties, but these changes are not always substantive.

The V-Dem data presented in Fig. 13.1 coincides with data from other sources, such as from Freedom House, which contends that while only 17 of the 50 African countries on which it reported could be classified as ‘free’ or ‘partly free’ in 1988, 32 of 54 African countries were either ‘free’ or ‘partly free’ in 2018.

Many analysts hailed the so-called Arab Spring of 2010 as either the start of a fourth wave of democratisation—since it originated in the region with the lowest levels of political and economic inclusion globally—or proof that the third wave had not yet fully run its course. Sadly, Libya, Egypt and a number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa have suffered devastating blows to peace and stability. To date, only Tunisia has emerged from this turmoil with substantially higher scores on the various measures of democracy.

In 2018 and 2019, a new wave of popular protests swept first across Ethiopia, followed by Sudan and Algeria as citizens challenged long-standing parties and rulers. These events indicate that democratisation in Africa is

⁴As used by V-Dem in their codebook v8, April 2018, pp. 38–39. Available at University of Gothenburg, 2018. *Varieties of Democracy Codebook v8*. [Online] Available at: www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/e0/7f/e07f672b-b91e-4e98-b9a3-78f8cd4de696/v-dem_codebook_v8.pdf.

indeed still on an upward trajectory. I pursue this line of reasoning in devising a subsequent scenario.

These trends in Africa stand in sharp contrast to developments elsewhere. Outside of Africa, democratic setbacks have affected countries as diverse as Brazil, Burundi, Hungary, Russia, Serbia and Turkey, a phenomenon evident in the decline in the average levels of liberal democracy globally from 2012 as can be seen in Fig. 13.1.

From a global perspective, the rise of terrorism, populism and the influence of an authoritarian China has turned the early optimism about a rising tide of democracy into a degree of democratic pessimism. In fact, a recent report by the global survey company Pew Research Centre⁵ refers to global dissatisfaction with democracy as anti-establishment leaders, parties and movements have emerged on both sides of the political spectrum.

The future of democracy in the developed world is apparently fragile. The 2016 democracy index by the Economist Intelligence Unit, another well-known index, described the rise of populism in the West (and elsewhere) and the extent to which democracy in the West has retreated. ‘An increased sense of personal and societal anxiety and insecurity in the face of diverse perceived risks and threats – economic, political, social and security – is undermining democracy, which depends on a steadfast commitment to upholding enlightenment values (liberty, equality, fraternity, reason, tolerance and free expression) ...’⁶

Roberto Foa and Yascha Mounk go so far as to question the durability of the world’s affluent, consolidated democracies. Writing in the *Journal of Democracy*⁷ they note that ‘trust in political institutions such as parliaments or the courts have precipitously declined ... as has voter turnout, party identification has weakened and party membership has declined’. In these societies today ‘voters increasingly endorse single-issue movements, vote for populist candidates, or support “anti system” parties ... Even in some of the richest and most politically stable regions in the world, it seems as though democracy is in a state of serious disrepair’.

⁵Wike, R., Laura, S., and Alexandra, C., 2019. *Many Across the Globe Are Dissatisfied With How Democracy Is Working*. [Online] Available at: https://www.pewglobal.org/2019/04/29/many-across-the-globe-are-dissatisfied-with-how-democracy-is-working/?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=089cb932c8-Global_2019_05_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-089cb932c8-399996073.

⁶The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015. *Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in an Age of Anxiety*. [Online] Available at: https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex2015.

⁷Ibid. Foa, R. S., and Mounk, Y., 2016. The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3), pp. 5–17.

Foa and Mounk refer to the 'structural problems in the functioning of liberal democracy'.⁸ Having no experience of life without democracy and no memory of the struggle to secure and sustain it, young voters in the industrial democracies of the West are not engaged in traditional party politics. Voter turnout is falling, political party membership has plummeted and support for unapologetically undemocratic regime types is on the rise. Instead of consolidating, the authors believe that democracy in the rich West may be under threat of 'deconsolidating'.⁹

Today the relative decline of the West has led to a commensurate weakening of the global impetus towards democratisation outside of Africa. As the leadership vacuum in established liberal democracies becomes evident, the USA in particular, in the face of challenges such as migration and globalisation, the example and influence of successful authoritarian development models such as China increases, backed by its rising economic muscle. In addition, Western influence within institutions such as the UN Security Council, the International Criminal Court and support for civil society and pro-democracy advocacy groups is declining in line with the reduction in Western economic dominance. Overt discord among previously unified Western nations is accelerating this trend.

On a positive note, by 2019 the Economist Intelligence Unit noted that 'for the first time in three years, the global score for democracy remained stable'.¹⁰ The Unit's 2019 report points to improvements in voter turnout and membership of political parties, but warns that 'the rise of engagement combined with a continued crackdown on civil liberties is a potentially volatile mix, and could be a recipe for instability and social unrest in 2019'.¹¹

The State of Democracy in Africa

The steady improvements in the levels of electoral and liberal democracy in Africa, particularly since 1989, means that democracy is now the dominant form of government on the continent. However, the quality of democracy

⁸Ibid., p. 6.

⁹They base their findings on survey data from the World Values Survey (conducted from 1995–2014) that finds a crisis of democratic legitimacy among younger generations of voters in North America and Europe that they argue, is much wider than previously appreciated.

¹⁰The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018. *Democracy Index 2018: Me Too? Political Participation, Protest and Democracy*. [Online] Available at: https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=Democracy2018, p. 4.

¹¹Ibid. pp. 3, 6.

is often weak and the associated procedures are regularly flaunted as incumbents cook the books to stay in power and use any of a host of legal tricks to undermine competitive politics.

Benin is an example of an African country where democracy has deteriorated significantly in recent years. When the country voted for a new parliament in April 2019 not a single opposition candidate could take part after electoral authorities ruled that only two parties, both loyal to President Patrice Talon, met the requirement to participate—and a new electoral law required that parties pay US\$424,000 to field a list for the 83-member parliament.¹²

Another way to measure democracy in Africa would be to classify countries as either (1) authoritarian (or non-democratic), (2) as electoral (or thin) democracies, or (3) as liberal (or substantive) democracies. Freedom House¹³ adopted this approach when it classified ten African states as ‘free’ (roughly equating to liberal democracy), 22 as ‘party free’ (roughly equating to electoral democracy) and the remaining 22 as ‘not free’ in its most recent data release for 2018.

The ten free countries are Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia, in total home to only 133 million people, or ten percent of Africa’s population. The 22 ‘partly free’ countries that meet the minimum criteria to be classified as electoral democracies represent an additional 47% of Africa’s population. The remainder, roughly 42%, of Africa’s total population live in countries that Freedom House consider to be ‘not free’.

Based on this analysis, 58% of Africans live in countries that could be considered democratic, even if the quality of that democracy is uneven. This finding is the basis of the introductory statement that democracy today is the dominant form of government in Africa, both in terms of the number of countries (32 out of 54) and the portion of total population (58%). Should Nigeria, with its 195 million people, move from being ‘partly free’ to ‘free’, the scales would tilt even more decisively in favour of democracy in Africa.

¹²Okello, C., 2019. *No Opposition, No Internet: Benin Election Raises Fears of Authoritarianism*. [Online] Available at: <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20190429-benin-parliamentary-election-no-opposition-no-internet-raises-fears-authoritarianism>.

¹³Freedom House uses 25 indicators, where each country and territory is assigned a score from zero to four, for an aggregate score of up to 100. These scores are used to determine two numerical ratings, for political rights and civil liberties, with a rating of one representing the most free conditions and seven the least free. It assigns the designation ‘electoral democracy’ to countries that score seven or better in the ‘electoral process’ subcategory (one of four subcategories that form part of the political rights indicators) and an overall political rights score of 20 or better. Source: Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2016*, and Freedom House, *Methodology: Freedom in the world 2016*.

These two measurements, by V-Dem and Freedom House, are imperfect, but nonetheless offer a useful way to understand the challenge of quantifying the depth and extent of democracy in Africa and how it has evolved over time.

A number of additional insights are also evident from the data presented in Fig. 13.1. The first is that the average levels of electoral democracy in Africa are slowly approaching (and even exceeding) the global mean. This convergence is occurring despite the fact that the average GDP per capita in Africa is much lower than and growing more slowly than the global average. In short, African nations are now transitioning to democracy at steadily lower levels of income than before.

Historically, the reason for this trend towards earlier democratisation is likely because of the dominance, until recently, of the liberal democratic West who provided significant amounts of development assistance to Africa (see Chapter 14). Furthermore, in an interconnected world citizens can compare their domestic conditions with other countries. The impact is to firmly establish democracy as the most desirable governance model. Proof of this support can be found in the data collected by the research organisation Afrobarometer, which has completed extensive and repeated surveys on attitudes to democracy in Africa over many years.¹⁴

The findings from Afrobarometer show that the demand for and support of democracy in Africa is strong and continues to expand. The push for greater democratisation in Africa comes from a citizenry who has endured decades of authoritarianism. Although electoral democracy has hardly delivered better developmental results, the process of being consulted and having the power to affect changes in leadership reshape the dynamics of power and the perception of accountability. Africans are tired of autocrats and big men.¹⁵

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 12, most African regimes are of a mixed (and hence unstable) nature. They are neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic, but rather include some democratic systems and practices that coexist with undemocratic systems and practices. These mixed regime types (or anocracies) are more susceptible to abrupt regime change and governance setbacks than countries that are either fully autocratic or consolidated liberal democracies.¹⁶

¹⁴Afrobarometer, n.d. [Online]. Available at: <http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis>.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶This analysis is largely taken from the Polity IV project. See Center for Systemic Peace, 2018. *The Polity Project*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

While regular elections in Africa are becoming increasingly frequent, the number of incumbents who cling to power and block executive rotation or replacement presents a worrying trend. President Dennis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Paul Kagame of Rwanda all recently amended their constitutions to allow for unlimited presidential incumbency. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, outgoing president Joseph Kabila and his party simply ignored the actual results of the December 2018 elections, which Martin Fayulu of the Lamuka coalition had clearly won. Kabila instead installed his own choice in the form of Felix Tshisekedi who was duly inaugurated as president on 24 January 2019.¹⁷ As in other regions, democratisation in Africa is turbulent and progress seldom linear.

Levels of democracy in Africa have however improved over time, despite the absence of many of the supposed preconditions for democratic consolidation. Nic Cheeseman understands these preconditions as ‘a coherent national identity, strong and autonomous political institutions, a developed and autonomous civil society, the rule of law, and a strong and well performing economy’.¹⁸

Taking a decidedly pessimistic view of democratisation in Africa, Cheeseman argues that since 1990, democratisation has taken place against the odds in a number of poor and unstable countries that have lacked these preconditions for democracy. According to him, democratisation in Africa essentially rests on weak foundations, opening the possibility of a regression to lower or more ‘appropriate’ levels, while a façade of regular elections hides the reality of no or little change in the balance of political and social power.¹⁹

Indeed, democracies generally operate better above certain minimum levels of income and education, when the web of institutions and the rule of law are able to constrain the misuse and abuse of state institutions.²⁰

Whatever the exact relationship between democracy, income and education, the indices tell an optimistic story of increased levels of democracy in

¹⁷To date CENI, the Commission Electorale Nationale Independante, has yet to release the results per polling station as required by law. The results announced by CENI was, among others, vastly at odds with the findings from the 40,000 observers deployed by the Catholic Church that established a large and comprehensive parallel compilation process.

¹⁸Cheeseman, N., 2015. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Also Cheeseman, N., 2015. *The State of Democracy in Africa*. [Online] Available at: <http://democracyinafrica.org/the-state-of-democracy-in-africa/>.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰The American social scientist Barrington Moore popularised the notion of ‘no bourgeois, no democracy’, meaning minimum levels of economic development were required for democracy. See Moore, B., 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press. For more recent work see Przeworski, A., and Limongi, F., 1993. Political Regimes and Economic Growth. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7(3), pp. 51–69.

Africa over time. This is certainly good news in Africa for, once established and in conjunction with minimum income levels and education, democracy is the most stable form of governance. Thus Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer find that:

Averaging across the starting years 1960, 1970 and 1980, the probability of a well-educated democracy remaining a democracy twenty years later is 95 percent. The probability of a well-educated dictatorship becoming a democracy within 20 years is 87 percent.²¹

But the essential question for this book is: is democracy improving the living conditions of Africans?

Is Democracy Making a Difference to Development Prospects in Africa?

Over the long term—that is, over several successive decades—the response to that question is positive, democracy improves livelihoods. Through elections, democracy provides a mechanism to hold the power of the elite or special interest groups in check, it ensures the separation of state powers into discrete branches of government and protects human rights and the rule of law. In turn, democracies engender confidence for the pursuit of long-term investments. In this line of reasoning democracy is often conflated with good governance as a force multiplier on all development aspects: African countries with stronger institutions and better governance indicators, particularly in terms of government effectiveness and regulatory quality, generally fare better. However, such substantive democracies (that V-Dem would term liberal democracies) require significant time and resources to mature.

But, democracy is not the answer to economic stagnation, inequality or corruption in poor countries. In fact, at low levels of development democracy may have a negligible impact or actually constrain economic growth. This is because democracy generally only contributes to growth at more advanced levels of development where a more competitive political system reinforces a competitive economic system. Instead, at low levels of development, the nature of the governing elite is much more important for economic growth than the institutional setting (democratic or not).

²¹Glaeser, E. L., Ponzetto, G., and Shleifer, A., 2006. Why Does Democracy Need Education? *NBER Working Paper No. 12128*. Tunisia would be a good example of the impetus that high levels of education provide to democratisation.

In fact, a number of countries have achieved remarkable development under an autocratic system where the governing elite displayed a strong commitment to development. In the 1960s, the initial conditions in the Southeast Asian countries (such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam) and African countries were similar in many respects—the population suffered from widespread poverty, hunger, poor infrastructure, bad health and poor quality of education. Despite having strong neopatrimonial political systems (i.e. politically corrupt patron–client relations), as was the case in many African countries, the Southeast Asian economies grew rapidly and achieved massive reductions in levels of extreme poverty. That was not the case in Africa.

At a global level, China's authoritarian post-1978 developmental model is often quoted as proof of a positive relationship between autocracy and development at low levels of income. Its track record is sometimes compared to the much poorer progress of India, the world's largest democracy, which has struggled to gain economic momentum. Meanwhile, the Asian Tiger economies (Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan) all experienced rapid progress without democracy—they only democratised after achieving middle-income status, further supporting the Chinese model.

In Africa, the most commonly quoted examples of successful authoritarian regimes are Rwanda and Ethiopia. In recent years, both countries have made more developmental progress than virtually any other African country. They benefited from very rapid growth in the size of their working-age population relative to dependants, improvements matched by solid, if unspectacular, advances in primary school education and literacy.

On both these measurements Rwanda comes off a higher base than Ethiopia, making the improvements in average levels of income of Ethiopians even more impressive. As discussed in Chapter 4, economic growth generally follows rapidly declining fertility rates and subsequent improvements in the portion of working age persons to dependants. In addition, the advancement of primary school and general literacy levels are important preconditions for turning this larger working force into productive human capital—areas where Ethiopia still faces many challenges.

These two countries are, however, exceptions in a sea of many poor-performing authoritarian countries. Their positive outcomes have been highly contingent on the nature of the governing elite and the personality of the president. In both countries, a national trauma has driven the burning desire to develop—the genocide of the Red Terror in Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam, which lasted until 1978, and the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

In the wake of these trauma, governing elites in the two countries intervened decisively in the economy in favour of productivity, often exerting considerable short-term pain for the sake of achieving long-term gain—policy choices that are much easier to implement in an autocratic than in a democratic setting. All have clear pro-growth policies and stick to them. In each of these countries a determined pro-development governing elite is united in their vision to escape debilitating poverty and underdevelopment.

At an average rate of nearly 10% per year over a recent decade, Ethiopia has achieved the most robust GDP growth of any country globally, surpassing countries like China, Qatar and Rwanda. Over that same period, average incomes in the country nearly tripled, and the proportion of the population who have access to electricity, for example, has doubled.²² But, the wheels eventually began to come off.

In 2015 Ethiopia held parliamentary elections, as well as elections for its regional assemblies. The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) gained 500 of the available 547 seats, but the process and the political environment fell short of being considered substantively free and fair. Shortly afterwards, the government announced its intention to expand the city limits of Addis Ababa into the surrounding Oromia province.

The plan triggered widespread resentment and suspicion that the EPRDF was aiming to enhance federal authority at the expense of the nation's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, who were poorly represented in government. Protests began in November 2015 in Ginchi, a small town in Oromia about 80 kilometres southwest of Addis Ababa. Although the government formally abandoned the plan to expand the capital in January 2016, tensions continued to simmer.

By October 2016 the crisis reached a tipping point. A heavy-handed response by the security forces during an annual cultural festival in Oromia on 2 October triggered a stampede that killed dozens, possibly hundreds, of people. Three days later, the government blocked mobile phone access to popular social media websites like Facebook and WhatsApp. On 9 October 2016, the government declared a nationwide state of emergency that restricted freedom of movement and assembly and access to social media and suspended due process for arrest and detention.²³

²²The World Bank, 2016. *Access to Electricity (% of Population)*. [Online] Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=ET>.

²³Human Rights Watch, n.d. *Ethiopian Protests*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/tag/ethiopian-protests>. Human Rights Watch, 2016. *Ethiopia Events of 2016*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/ethiopia>.

In the weeks and months that followed, Ethiopia's formidable security apparatus detained more than 10,000 opposition members, the majority of whom came from the Amhara and Oromia regions.²⁴ Tensions simmered throughout 2017, with armed clashes between ethnic groups becoming commonplace in several regions. By the end of 2017, Public Radio International reported that there were as many as 400,000 internally displaced persons in Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regions.²⁵ In February 2018 Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned in response to the escalating unrest.

This unrest continued until, in April 2018, Abiy Ahmed Ali, the chairman of the Oromo Democratic Party, was elected as chairman of the EPRDF and as prime minister. He launched a sweeping political, economic, social and foreign policy reform programme in an effort to undercut the discontent that had led to the violence, even changing the name and character of his party.

The experience of Ethiopia helps provide a possible answer to the democracy-development quandary. On the one hand Ethiopia ran into trouble due to the extent that a small group, the Tigrayans, were perceived to benefit from economic growth, pointing to the dangers of ethnic favouritism and the importance of balancing economic and political progress. Eventually rapid development required that Ethiopia expand the extent to which its political system too had to evolve but the sense of victimization by the Tigrayans would see the country under threat of civil war as this book went to print.

Today, liberal democracy is a prerequisite for growth in high-income countries. Since democracy in low-income countries is invariably of a low, procedural type (i.e. electoral, not liberal) it makes little contribution to improvements in well-being or even to the way in which the country is governed.

The challenge with many of Africa's democracies is their reliance on a single mechanism, elections, as a means to determine the 'will of the people', while the institutions required to translate that mechanism into practice are immature or missing. The result is a choice between violent and disruptive elections that are often a sham, or the continuation of the status quo that had given rise to the governance crisis in the first instance. No country demonstrates this challenge better than Somalia—Africa's pre-eminent failed state, and recently South Sudan.

²⁴Al Jazeera and Agencies, 2016. *Ethiopia State of Emergency Arrests Top 11,000*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/ethiopia-state-emergency-arrests-top-11000-161112191919319.html>.

²⁵Jeffrey, J., 2017. *Hundreds of Thousands of Displaced Ethiopians Are Caught Between Ethnic Violence and Shadowy Politics*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-15/hundreds-thousands-displaced-ethiopians-are-caught-between-ethnic-violence-and>.

In their study on the relationship between democracy and human development, Gerring et al. find that the electoral democracy–human development relationship is maximised when ‘(a) elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systemic irregularities, (b) the chief executive of a country is selected (directly or indirectly) through elections, (c) suffrage is extensive, (d) political and civil society organizations operate freely, and (e) there is freedom of expression, including access to alternative information’.²⁶ These five components interact with one another and the absence of any one of them severely mitigates impact on development prospects, although clean elections have the strongest correlation with positive outcomes on human development.²⁷ These five components lie at the heart of substantive, or liberal democracy.

The same sequence holds for so-called good governance, a general term that is difficult to operationalise objectively, but is often indistinguishable in much writing from broad notions of democracy. Many books have been written about exactly what is meant by good governance, but suffice to say that these definitions often share many of the characteristics of democracy and include reference to participation, the rule of law, equity and inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and responsiveness.²⁸

Good governance, like democracy, accompanies and generally follows, rather than precedes, development. Therefore, ‘the full set of institutional improvements associated with the idea of good governance becomes feasible for countries only *after* substantial economic transformation has occurred’.²⁹ Yet, in the eyes of many donors, policymakers and often the general public in Africa and the West, democracy, good governance and development all go together and should be pursued in that order, despite the fact that this reverses the historical developmental sequence.

Moreover, there is considerable evidence that the introduction of competitive politics and economic liberalisation in fragile settings can be costly in terms of violence and loss of human life.³⁰ This has been most evident in so-called post-conflict fragile states such as South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and others. In the absence of other mechanisms to make the government

²⁶Glaeser, E. L., Ponzetto, G., and Shleifer, A., 2006. Why Does Democracy Need Education? *NBER Working Paper No. 12128*. p. 16.

²⁷Ibid., p. 23. In line with standard democracy theory, the authors argue that public policies serve as the key causal mechanism that binds the elected to their electorate.

²⁸These are actually the eight principles listed by the UN. See, United Nations, n.d. *What Is Good Governance?* Bangkok: UNESCAP.

²⁹Booth, D., 2012. *Development as a Collective Action Problem: Addressing the Real Challenges of African Governance*. London: Africa Power and Politics Programme.

³⁰Ibid.

accountable to its citizens in the aftermath of conflict, civil society, regional organisations and the international community generally insisted on creating governments of national unity as part of every post-conflict process, and, shortly thereafter, scheduled competitive elections. The result is generally to undo much of the progress previously made in ending the conflict.

The problem is that we don't know how else to legitimise a government.

The Realities of Neopatrimonialism in Africa

Many academics have commented on the apparent resilience of neopatrimonialism as part of Africa's democratisation processes. The term is widely used to describe a system of politically corrupt patron–client relations that has dominated politics in Africa, particularly in 'not free' and 'partly free' countries. Neopatrimonialism can exist at the highest national level down to community level in small villages.

Pierre Englebert and Kevin Dunn find that the degree to which authoritarian neopatrimonial regimes have been able to adapt to the formal trappings of electoral democracy is one of the most remarkable characteristics of contemporary African politics. 'Thus, to a large extent, neopatrimonialism has proved compatible with democracy rather than having dissolved in it. It has endured and reproduced despite a generalized change in the formal rules of politics'.³¹

Cheeseman is one of many academics to accept the resilience and widespread occurrence of corruption and inappropriate patron–client relationships. He argues that 'patrimonialism itself is not the problem: what matters, is the type of patrimonialism that emerges'.³²

One approach is to distinguish between centrally managed patrimonial relations, so-called 'developmental patrimonialism',³³ and decentralised, competitive patrimonial systems. The former is evident in countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda. Here, elites provide coherence and order in the political system, take a longer, developmental view on public provision and generally provide better outcomes over the medium and long term.

³¹Englebert, P., and Dunn, K. C., 2013. *Inside African Politics*. Cape Town: UCT Press, p. 191.

³²Cheeseman, N., 2015. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 200.

³³Thus: 'Rent centralisation permitted the leadership in these countries to put some limits on rent seeking and to play a coordinating role, steering rent creation into areas with high economic potential, or to areas that must be resourced in the interests of political stability'. Booth, D., 2012. *Development as a collective action problem: Addressing the real challenges of African governance*, London: Africa Power and Politics Programme.

More decentralised or competitive neopatrimonial systems, such as Kenya and Nigeria, show the opposite outcomes. Here competition is about personal benefit, and politics is about who governs and not about policy or improved livelihoods. Issues around personality, affiliation and identity dominate. It is particularly damaging if the national constitutional dispensation is of the winner-takes-all variant, which gives the electoral victor wide discretionary powers to appoint, approve and reward.

While politics are exceptionally competitive and robust in Kenya and Nigeria, electoral democracy alone does not really deliver improved livelihoods. However the two countries may in due course reveal the potential of political experimentations to disperse power. Nigeria has a steadily expanding federal system while Kenya recently introduced a county system that provides for a significant devolution of power—an example now being copied in many African countries such as Mozambique, Angola and South Africa.

We do not yet have firm evidence of whether decentralised systems advance accountability or merely increase the opportunity for corruption, although recent findings from Ethiopia are promising,³⁴ but what is clear is much greater community activism is required to accompany such efforts. And it is crucial that the delimitation of municipalities or counties be primarily based on their potential towards financial viability and their capacity to manage those matters for which they are responsible. In Angola, for example, the government is embarking upon an ambitious decentralisation programme from the central government to its 164 municipalities (autarquia), largely bypassing its 18 provinces. The project is staggered with the first 70 municipalities to receive legal personality and considerable autonomy in 2020. The entire process is to be completed by 2035 but without significant efforts to build the technical capacity of these authorities it will struggle.

In the absence of civil war or some other calamity, it is almost inevitable that both Nigeria and Kenya will grow given the expansion of the working age population, rising levels of education and rapid rates of urbanisation. However, this growth is unlikely to promote sustainable, broad-based human development outcomes without a change in political culture or the emergence of decisive, forward-looking leadership.

The problem with the twofold distinction between centralised and decentralised patrimonialism systems is that countries with centralised patrimonial systems do not necessarily produce better outcomes. Other factors may come

³⁴See, for example, Faguet, J-P., Qaiser Khan, Q., and Kanth, D.P., 2019. Decentralization's Effects on Education and Health: Evidence from Ethiopia, Social Protection and Jobs. *Discussion Paper No. 1934*, World Bank Group, September 2019, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/128791568874876991/pdf/Decentralization-s-Effects-on-Education-and-Health-Evidence-from-Ethiopia.pdf>.

into play. In fact, a number of relatively recently liberated countries in Southern Africa, such as Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa, would probably fit into the category of a centralised patrimonial system, since former liberation parties still dominate politics, but generally with disappointing results. In South Africa, where the governing African National Congress (ANC) did not come to power through the extensive political indoctrination and associated broad-based people's war that took place in countries like Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, a liberal constitution, active civil society, entrenched Bill of Rights and independent judiciary have barely been able to constrain the ANC's neopatrimonial inclinations.

Eventually, the degree to which centralised patrimonial systems can advance development depends heavily on the quality of the top leadership. A strong, visionary leader such as Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Thabo Mbeki (South Africa) or Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia) can have a significant impact on development outcomes while they are in power. But there is no guarantee that he or she will not succumb to the attractions of office—as was the case with Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and eventually also Kagame. Both Museveni and Kagame are now seeking to extend their terms in the belief that their leadership is indispensable for their country's future. And in South Africa Thabo Mbeki tried to extend his leadership of the ruling party as a way to maintain his power beyond the two-term constitutional limit as president of the country.

Booth's view is that the centralised or developmental patrimonial states are the result of very specific conditions—and never of peaceful multi-party elections. He presents two examples of such conditions, namely (a) where the leadership consists of national liberation forces after war as still evident in many countries in Southern Africa; and (b) in the aftermath of a severe crisis or shock to the system involving large-scale violence such as experienced in Rwanda and Ethiopia.³⁵

Cheeseman comes to these issues from a slightly different perspective, namely the extent to which democracy in Africa is inclusive or competitive. He uses the examples of Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya to argue for the need for greater inclusion and cites Ghana and Senegal as two examples where political competition has driven progress.

Cheeseman notes that 'while elements of competition and inclusion strengthen multiparty systems, too much of either can be fatal to the process of democratization'.³⁶ The most notable examples of 'excessive inclusion' are

³⁵Ibid., p. 48. At a global level China is the most enduring example.

³⁶Cheeseman, N., 2015. *The State of Democracy in Africa*. [Online] Available at: <http://democracyinfrica.org/the-state-of-democracy-in-africa/>.

governments of national unity or where there are power-sharing arrangements. Since such governments are largely premised on the need for the political compromises associated with conflict management they are often unable to sustain or promote economic growth.

Following instances of electoral violence in Kenya and Zimbabwe in the mid-2000s, regional actors helped craft governments of national unity. While it produced a measure of political stability, it also engendered paralysis in governance and economic performance.³⁷ Lack of development in turn leads to social instability and in these circumstances a government of national unity sometimes unwittingly plants the seeds for the next crisis.

Cheeseman therefore argues that ‘excessive inclusion is therefore just as bad for democracy and development as excessive competition’.³⁸ But, the point at which inclusion becomes excessive remains unclear and highly subjective.

The Role of Leadership in Development

Our understanding of the relationship between democracy, development and governance is clearly still incomplete. As is the case with violence, specific national conditions determine actual outcomes.

What is clear, however, is that leadership, government capacity and intent are particularly important. It’s possible to argue that the winner of the August 2016 elections in Zambia or Gabon made little short or medium-term difference, since neither government has the capacity to deliver improved development outcomes due to an incapable civil service and a lack of policy space because of their dependence on single commodities—a function of the choices made by previous elites as well as the dictates of the global economy. Therefore, given Zambia and Gabon’s lack of government capacity, poor leadership and absence of a clear development goal, these two countries will likely bumble along. Burgeoning populations will push up the countries’ economic growth rates and the trickle-down of the wealth that accrues to a small political elite at the high table of patronage will improve living standards—but among a very small middle class.

³⁷Miguna, M., 2012. *Peeling Back the Mask: A Quest for Justice in Kenya*. Nairobi: Arrow Press. On Zimbabwe see Thys Hoekman, 2013. Testing Ties: Opposition and Power-Sharing Negotiations in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39(4), 903–920; Raftopoulos, B., 2012. Towards Another Stalemate in Zimbabwe, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), Report, October 2012.

³⁸Ibid.

Intent and leadership can make a major difference, both negatively and positively. A good example is President John Magufuli of Tanzania—nicknamed ‘The Bulldozer’—for his apparent no-nonsense’ approach to corruption and waste. However, the impact of his ‘government by gesture’, as *The Economist* magazine coined it, remains unimpressive.³⁹ ‘Mr Magufuli’s zeal may be admired, but his party, which has ruled Tanzania since independence, is thuggish and undemocratic: it suppressed dissent during the elections last year and then cancelled a vote held in Zanzibar after the opposition probably won it’, the magazine writes.⁴⁰

Recently, in a remarkable display of ignorance, Magufuli stated that Tanzania’s women should ‘give up contraceptive methods’ and that he sees ‘no reason to control births in Tanzania’.⁴¹ Actually, with a total fertility rate of almost five children per woman, Tanzania’s very high fertility rates preclude reasonable income growth.

This is a discussion that reverts to leadership, the unity and capacity of the ruling party and governments to deliver, rather than the extent to which they are inclusive or exclusive, elected or non-elected. Of course, as countries advance along the development trajectory the need for greater inclusion becomes a more important driver of future development. Diversified economies require innovation and knowledge production to sustain growth, which is quite different to the requirements of an undiversified, single-commodity-based economy largely dominated by informal activity.

Strong authoritarian leaders, as one finds in Rwanda and previously Ethiopia and who are at the helm of an organised party that has a firm grip on the country, politics and development (i.e. centralised patrimonial systems), are likely to deliver more rapid results in low-income countries. But most often the dependence on a single key figure more readily undoes progress once that leadership clings to power or is replaced by a flawed successor, as it has in Uganda, Angola, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Libya and Algeria.

It is easy to underestimate the challenges of governance in Africa and the time horizon required to improve development outcomes. It is also easy to overestimate the ability of political leaders or a particular system such as democracy to deliver improved livelihoods and poverty reduction.

³⁹*The Economist*, 2016. Government by Gesture: A President Who Looks Good But Governs Impulsively. [Online] Available at: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2016/05/26/government-by-gesture>.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹AFP, 2018. *Tanzanian President Seeks End to Contraception*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/tanzanian-president-seeks-end-to-contraception-20180910-2>.

Modelling the Impact of More Democracy: The Fourth Wave of Democracy Scenario

Whereas Western donor countries have historically pushed for democracy in Africa and beyond, Africans are now at the helm. Afrobarometer's findings on the strong support for democratisation on the continent reflect this trend. As we explored in Chapter 12, the trend is however, increasingly associated with more protests and violence as expectations steadily rise. 'Over the past decade, mass uprisings in Africa have accounted for one in three of the non-violent campaigns to topple dictatorships around the world', write Zoe Marks, Erica Chenoweth and Jide Okeke in *Foreign Affairs*.⁴² These mass uprisings are more successful in Africa than anywhere else, having effectively toppled autocratic leaders in countries as diverse as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia, and, most recently, Algeria and Sudan.

The likely development is that the next global waves of democratisation will be less pronounced than the previous three waves, although a regional wave in the Middle East, which is clearly headed for massive governance changes, seems inevitable. That reflects a trend where national and regional dynamics play a more important role than the previous stark East/West division did until 1990.

I model the continuation of a positive trend towards more democracy that I refer to as the Fourth Wave scenario, within the IFs forecasting platform using a measure of regime type originally developed by the Polity IV Project on regime types. The Polity measure roughly equates to the concept of 'thin' or electoral democracy also used by V-Dem.⁴³

The Fourth Wave, starts in 2010 with the Arab Spring and in the scenario lasts 10 years to 2020 before levelling off. In this scenario, a slow democratic regression will set in by 2030, and will endure until mid-century before the onset of the next (or fifth) wave of democracy, that, in turn, will last for a decade before plateauing.

⁴²Marks, Z., Chenoweth, E., and Okeke, J., 2019. *People Power Is Rising in Africa*. [Online] Available at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2019-04-25/people-power-rising-africa?utm_medium=newsletters&utm_source=twofa&utm_content=20190426&utm_campaign=TWOFa%2042619%20Hard%20Truths%20in%20Syria&utm_term=FA%20This%20Week%20-%201120177.

⁴³In 2014 the Pardee Center published a forecast on governance that includes additional detail on many of these aspects. See Hughes, B. B., Joshi, D. K., Moyer, J. D., Sisk, T. D., and Solórzano, J. R., 2014. *Strengthening Governance Globally: Forecasting the Next 50 Years*. 5 vol. New York: Routledge, Frederick S. Pardee, Center for International Futures, University of Denver. For additional information see International Futures at the Pardee Center, 2019. *International Futures Help System*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.du.edu/ifs/help/>.

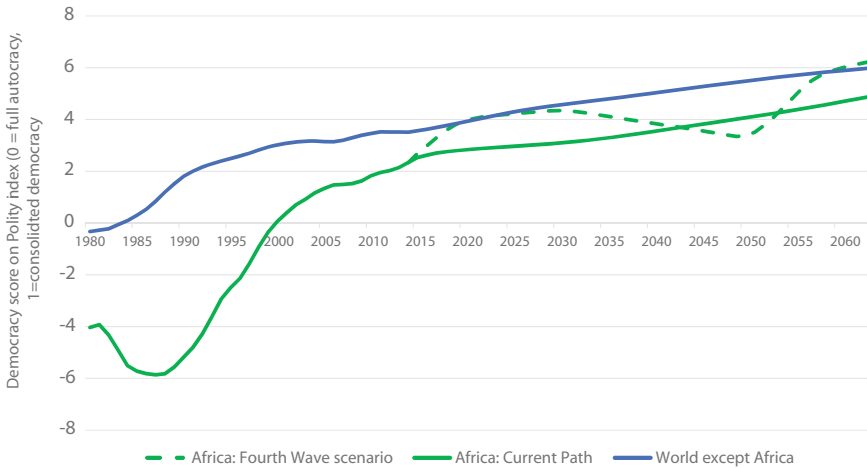


Fig. 13.2 Fourth Wave of electoral democracy scenario using Polity IV data (Source IFs version 7.45 initialising from Polity IV data using a 5-year moving average)

Figure 13.2 presents this forecast using data from the Polity IV Project, making a distinction between average levels of electoral democracy in Africa and in the rest of the world. From 2015 onward, the dashed green line represents the Fourth Wave scenario, while the solid green line represents the Current Path forecast. The forecast is to 2063, the final year of the African Union's Agenda 2063. Note that in spite of the fluctuating levels (or waves) the general trend towards steadily higher levels of average democratisation continues across the forecast horizon in line with the historical trend that has been consistent for more than a century.

The big outlier on democratisation is clearly China and for me the question is when—not if—China will adopt or succumb to greater political liberalisation to match the substantive economic liberalisation of the last four decades. Eventually a competitive economic system requires a more competitive political system particularly once a country gets to upper-middle-income status and it is unlikely that China will be able to defy gravity and escape its large democratic deficit forever. In the meanwhile the impact of China on Africa is likely to exert downward pressure on increased democracy, but since I believe domestic politics will triumph, will not be able to effectively counter steady democratisation.

As expected, the impact of a democratic regression from 2030 to mid-century is more pronounced and visible in Africa than in the rest of the world. Democratic backsliding is, however, more likely among low- and lower-middle-income countries and is unlikely to affect upper-middle-income countries that have more entrenched institutions and norms.

Because democracy advances accountability and transparency, low, lower-middle and upper-middle Africa countries all experience associated reductions in corruption, although modestly so. Coming off a low base, the modest improvement is most pronounced in low-income countries

The impact of democratisation on economic growth is small. By 2040, Africa's GDP would be about US\$85 billion larger (an increase of about one percent), translating into an increase in GDP per capita of about US\$50. In economic terms low-middle-income countries gain most from democratisation within the IFs forecasting platform.

Conclusion: Promoting Democracy, State Capacity and Human Development

Africa faces a unique challenge. It is generally more democratic when compared to the average for countries at similar levels of education and income and is democratising rapidly. The continent therefore faces the double challenge of development and democratisation.

Technically, what poor African countries need is not necessarily a democratic state, although that is highly desirable for many reasons, but a developmental state where the 'political and bureaucratic elite has the genuine developmental determination and autonomous capacity to define, pursue and implement developmental goals'.⁴⁴ The challenge is that this requires either a developmentally oriented governing elite or substantive democracy—ideally both. While the latter is a more desirable path than the former, it takes longer to achieve and is fragile at low levels of development.

The problem is the extent to which neopatrimonialism has been able to coexist with the processes of democratisation in Africa and to which incumbents have undermined the core notions of electoral democracy, such as clean elections and freedom of speech. It's not that Africans are more corrupt or self-serving than leadership elsewhere. The Trump presidency in the USA presents many of the features often associated with the negative characterisation associated with Africa rather than of an established, liberal democracy. Rather, the institutions that should serve as a check on the abuse of power in Africa are much weaker than in say, the USA. In some instances, traditions that place particular emphasis on respect for elders and traditional structures accentuate these negative trends in Africa. Only real progress towards substantive democracy is likely to undo this and even then the election of a flawed

⁴⁴Leftwich, A., 1993. Governance, Democracy and Development in the Third World. *Third World Quarterly*, 14(3), p. 620.

character to the highest office can do incalculable damage even to a mature and established polity such as in the USA.

Here modern technology is playing an important role in allowing for the establishment of parallel monitoring systems during elections. It is clear that civil society in Africa is better able to hold governments accountable, to monitor elections and guard against abuse with each passing year. In that way, illustrated recently by Sudan, Algeria and Ethiopia, Africans are taking it upon themselves to hold their leadership to account. In the meanwhile every effort needs to be made to hold on to the gains that have been achieved such as regular elections, ongoing electoral reform, establishing a tradition of robust election monitoring by locals and foreigners, and rigorous adherence to term limits.

In the absence of developmentally oriented elites, greater accountability can be facilitated using modern technology.

By itself democratisation in Africa has clearly not altered the conditions of most Africans. Many Africans still endure high poverty levels and social marginalisation. In addition, in key countries nominal democratisation has not resolved deep-seated divisions based on ethnicity, regionalism and class. These divisions will only be bridged with progress towards substantive democracy. Fortunately regular elections and the growing depth of civil society in Africa mean that progress towards substantive democracy is more probable than the reverse.

That said, democracy should be pursued as a common good in itself—for the contribution that it makes to individual and collective self-actualisation. It is the only regime type that allows for greater self and collective fulfilment for the citizens of states, irrespective of geography, religion or culture. According to the World Values Survey, the desire for free choice and autonomy 'is a universal human aspiration'.⁴⁵

As much as democracy, good governance and civic rights contribute to human well-being, the African continent does not exist in isolation. In fact, the continent has been buffeted by global shifts in power and influence, most recently by a sense of competition between the West and China. The way in which that contestation plays out may have important ramifications globally and the next chapter therefore looks at Africa's external relations.

⁴⁵WVSA, n.d. *The World Values Survey*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

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