NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN AFRICA

Changes and Challenges

Edited by

Said Adejumobi

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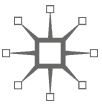

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Abdalla Bujra

Brother, friend, comrade, and mentor

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The experience of African countries in promoting democracy has varied in time and space. While some have attained some relative stability, continuity, and progress, a few have sunk into tension, crises, conflict, and instability, while the majority straddles the continuum. The experiences are rich and diverse, while the performances and outcomes vary remarkably. In spite of the fragility of Africa's democracy, intense engagements and struggles are unfolding at the national level that will influence the course and outcome of the democratic project. This book captures the national political encounters, struggles, reforms, and challenges in seven African countries—Ghana, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Uganda, drawn from three (of the five) sub-regions of the continent.

The main issues and questions that framed all the chapters of the book are;

1. How has democracy faired in African countries?
2. What is the performance of democratic regimes in terms of both consolidating democracy and improving the quality of life of the people?
3. What are the contradictions, opportunities, and challenges of democratic governance in African countries?
4. What does the future portend for the liberal democratic project and what are the possible political alternatives for African countries?

Knowledge is a collective enterprise. As such, I would like to thank my co-collaborators in this project that contributed chapters to the book and shared a common interest in reflecting on Africa's democratic trajectory in the last two decades.

As I put a close to this book, I lost my wife and partner, who had stood by me through my entire life's struggles. To my children, Tunde, Zainab, and Habib, with whom I have shared and borne the pains of this monumental loss, and who continue to support and provide a beacon of hope for me and urged me to carry on, I say a big thank you. My children remind me that I should always do what their mother would have loved to see me do—think through Africa's current condition in contributing to its development. My wife's mortality strengthens my conviction that the life of this world is but the comfort of illusion, and our role in it is to be agents of change in the process of social transformation. If this book adds to our knowledge or enriches our understanding in engineering social and political reforms, then my modest aim would have been fulfilled.

Said Adejumobi
Lusaka, Zambia

ABBREVIATIONS

AAPS	African Association of Political Science
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ACPCC	African Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ACS	American Colonization Society
AGR	African Governance Report
ANC	African National Congress
APC	All People's Congress
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASB	Association of Senegalese Bloggers
AU	African Union
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
CAO	Chief Administration Official
CAR	Central African Republic
CCRCCER	Civil Society Coordinating Committee on Electoral Reforms
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CDP	Citizens Democratic Party
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DP	Democratic Party
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
EES	Eastern Equatorial State
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPTP	First Past the Post
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GOS	Government of Sudan
GNU	Government of National Unity
HRR	High Council of the Republic
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISO	Internal Security Organization
ISU	Internal Security Unit
LAP	Liberian Action Party
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty
LP	Liberty Party
MACSS	Mauritius Council of Social Services
MAZ	Media Alliance of Zimbabwe
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MOJA	Movement for Justice in Africa
MMD	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
MMM	Mauritian Militant Movement
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MSM	Militant Socialiste Mauricien
NAC	National Advisory Council
NAP	National Action Party
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NCD	National Commission for Democracy
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NDP	National Democratic Party
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NEW	National Election Watch
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NIF	National Islamic Front
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUDP	National Union for Democratic Progress
NUP	National Unity Party
NUSS	National Union of Sierra Leone Students
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PA	Primitive Accumulation
PAL	Progressive Alliance of Liberia
PLP	Peace and Liberation Party
PMDC	People's Movement for Democratic Change
PMSD	Parti Mauricien Social Democrate
PMXD	Mauritian Party of Xavier Duval
PLP	Peace and Liberation Party
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PP	People's Party
PPOA	Political Parties and Organizations' Act
PPP	Progressive People's Party
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PRA	People's Redemption Army
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	Revolutionary United Front Party
SAA	Syndicat Agriculture Africain
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDR	Special Drawing Right
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLTU	Sierra Leone Teachers Union
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSD	Special Security Division
SSRRC	Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
TCRSS	Transitional Council of the Republic of South Sudan
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TWP	True Whig Party
UCP	United Congress Party

UDM	United Democratic Movement
UDP	United Democratic Party
UFF	Ugandan Freedom Fighter
UFM	Uganda Freedom Movement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNC	Uganda National Congress
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UP	Unity Party
UPC	Ugandan People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UNIP	United Independence Party
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNM	Uganda National Movement
UPU	Uganda's people's Union
WASU	West African Students Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBH	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holding
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZMC	Zimbabwe Media Commission

CHAPTER ONE

Democratic Performance in Africa: Uneven Progress, Faltering Hopes

Said Adejumobi

Introduction

The debate about democratic performance in Africa, as with elsewhere in the world, remains an unsettled one. The received wisdom and orthodoxy is that democratic politics tends to produce political systems that are "stable, wealthier, fairer, more innovative and better at respecting rights than available alternatives" (Gilley, 2009: 114; Halperin et al., 2005). In other words, democratic governance is perhaps the best form of political rule, consistent with Francis Fukuyama's (1992) "end of history" thesis. However, the nature of global democratic performance, in recent times, suggests that such conclusions may be rather hasty and farfetched—more of a liberal political dogma and ideology than an evidence-based political reality. In many parts of the world, democratic discontent is growing, with increasing discourse about "democratic recession," "democratic decline," "democratic rollback," or "democratic default," with some even questioning the desirability and feasibility of the liberal democratic project in spite of its apparent global triumphalism. Claude Ake (2000: 7) notes that "Africa is by no means the only part of the World where the prospect of democracy is in question. It is in question everywhere for democracy is in crisis all over the World." Larry Diamond (2008), on his part, argues that the celebration of democracy's triumphalism is rather premature, as many parts of the

world slip into what he refers to as "democratic rollback." According to him, "public confidence in many civilian constitutional regimes has been declining…where democracy survives, it often labours under serious difficulties" (ibid.: 2).

The narrative about democratic performance and prospects in Africa has taken three contrasting perspectives. First, there are those who perceive the current democratic trend as a fluke, a mere fallacy that will soon fizzle out with a clear return to political despotism. Democratic performance will be so thoroughly disappointing that it would either dissolve into or be supplanted by antidemocratic systems (e.g., Epstein, 2014; Collier, 2009; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). The characterization around illiberal, defective, or authoritarian democracy is not far from this. I classify this group as "Afro-pessimists." The second perspective is of those who focus on the bright side of the democratic equation in Africa and contend that Africa is witnessing its "third liberation" in spite of the challenges associated with it (e.g., Mills and Herbst, 2012). I regard this group as "Afro-optimists." The third perspective occupies the middle ground, and belongs to those who remain cautious, but not skeptical, about Africa's democratic performance and prospects. I classify this group as "Afro-indifference."

Whatever perspective or viewpoint is adopted, differing evidence abounds to support that argument. Democratic performance in Africa is mixed—with progress and setbacks—and limited successes and failures, all occurring at the same time. There are variations within and between countries and regions on the continent. But the challenges in the big countries like Nigeria[1], South Africa,[2] the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Egypt create a big democratic deficit, as a sizeable population of the continent is affected. Corruption, especially political corruption, remains a major albatross for democratic performance, as the capacity of the state for meaningful reforms, institution-building, and service delivery is compromised, thus negating the hopes and expectations of the people for tangible social goods and benefits to result from the democratic process. Micheal Bratton and Carloyn Logan (2014: 1) put it this way,

> Thus despite two decades of democratization across the Sub-Saharan African sub-continent, political executives in Africa continue to enjoy considerable room for decision making maneuvers with all opportunities for corruption and maladministration that such discretions allow.

Indeed, corruption remains toxic to Africa's democratic experiment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa,[3] making a mockery of the electoral process as elections are virtually dissociated from democratic or political accountability by the elected leadership. As will be demonstrated shortly, the dissatisfaction of citizens with democratic delivery, especially when it concerns public goods and services, is relatively high in many countries, a phenomenon largely impacted upon by an unacceptable dosage of corruption.

In this chapter, I shall do three things. First, provide a panoramic view of the pattern of democratic performance in Africa in a nuanced manner. Second, summarize the major issues and arguments contained in the subsequent chapters of the book. Third, offer some key policy recommendations toward promoting "a future that works" for democratic governance in Africa.

Uneven Progress, Faltering Hopes

Democratic performance is about how a democratic system institutionalizes itself and meets the expectations of the people by delivering tangible public goods to society, especially based on the programs and agendas the different political parties market to citizens. In other words, it is about how the liberal democratic system not only reinforces itself based on its foundational ideals, but also revitalizes the political market through incentives for the delivery of general—not sectarian or individual—public goods and services to the citizenry. There are therefore two indicators of democratic performance: the first is the quality and stability of the democratic system and the second is its capacity and actual performance in delivering tangible public goods and services to the citizens, which some refer to as democratic dividends.

In most African countries, the political and institutional infrastructure of liberal democracy is in place—parliament, executive, judiciary, electoral commission, and horizontal accountability bodies like human rights and anticorruption institutions, office of the Ombudsman, etc. For instance, in some countries like Sierra Leone, two major institutions are saddled with the electoral process—one that registers and moderates the affairs of political parties and another that conducts elections. In Nigeria, there are two anticorruption institutions.[4] Indeed, Africa is not bereft of, and has been quite innovative with, institutional crafting. However, institutions themselves are social artifacts; they require deliberate political actions, policy choices, and human management

to make them effective and functional. As Sunil Bastian and Robin Luckham (2003: 2–3) poignantly noted, "Democratic institutions and elected governments . . . may or may not open spaces for democratic politics; they may or may not be responsive to the political demands of the poor, women and minorities; they may or may not facilitate the management of conflicts." To be sure, the spread and establishment of democratic institutions may not necessarily mean the spread of democratic politics (ibid.: 14). In Africa, the content, output, and social relevance of democratic institutions vary across countries based on context, history, nature of social forces, and the relative strength and capacity of those institutions. But the pendulum tends to swing more toward the lower end in several African countries. Lacking adequate operational resources, limited autonomy, executive encroachment, and the scourge of corruption often empty those institutions of meaningful substance.

Beyond institutions, the procedural and behavioral components, which are core aspects of liberal democracy, have varying performances across the board. While in some countries like Mauritius and Botswana, both of which are one-party dominant democratic systems, the procedural and behavioral dimensions of liberal democracy, of adherence to political rules, values of tolerance, self-restraint, and accommodation of pluralism and diversity have tended to crystallize fairly well, the same cannot be said of some other African countries. In Nigeria for example, even within the same political parties, the level of political tolerance is very low; conflict, violence, political assassinations, and "high-wire" politics often characterize the political process. In South Africa, though we see relatively strong institutions, there is a crippling desecration of political rules, and political assassinations are emerging as a part of the political culture. In the newly independent country of South Sudan, political bickering and intolerance within the same liberation movement turned political party (SPLM—Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement) has led former "comrades at arms" to become "comrades at war," tragically, enveloping the young country in political strife and civil war. Politics is still a "zero sum game," where what an individual or group loses is what the other gains; hence the need to deploy all resources even in the most unconventional and brutal way. Politics assumes an end in itself rather than a means to a democratic end.

The verdict from most analyses of democratic practice in Africa is that, in spite of all the challenges, progress has been made, however limited it may be. This progress is uneven, variegated, and tenuous among countries (UNECA and UNDP, 2013; African Centre for Strategic

Studies, 2011; Lynch and Crawford, 2011). Lynch and Crawford (2011: 275), for instance, surmise that

> We conclude that steps forward remain greater than reversals and that typically, though not universally, sub-Saharan African countries are more democratic today than in the late 1980s. Simultaneously, we call for more meaningful processes of democratization that aim not only at securing civil and political rights, but also socio-economic rights and the physical security of African citizens.

The scorecard from the African Governance Report (2013) over a four-year period (2009–2013) is that there is generally only marginal progress made in governance, including with democracy indicators. According to the report, "overall, Africa has made progress with some indicators such as respect for human rights, and the rule of law, legislative capacity, civil society engagement and civil liberties generally increasing" (UNECA and UNDP, 2013: 6).

Indeed, signs of progress are palpable; more parties, regular elections, media explosion, civil society ascendance, vibrancy and activism, freer space for public expression, discourse, and negotiation. The deliberative part of democracy is alive and active, partly aided by the revolution in information technology. In an unprecedented way, "Africans are today interconnected, globally networked in ways not possible just a few years ago. This dramatic and rapidly emerging phenomenon is having profound social, economic and political impacts" (ACSS, 2011: 10).

However, institutional quality, leadership discretion, policy content and choices, and political outcomes remain suspect in many countries. For instance, elections have become more regular, but the value and quality are issues in question. As the African Governance Report (2013) noted, "elections differ in form, content and quality and greater regularity has not necessarily enhanced their value. Sectarian mobilization, intimidation, and violence are major features of some African countries' elections, which have become conflict triggers rather than instruments for resolving differences as in Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe" (UNECA and UNDP, 2013: 1). In its 2013 report, the Electoral Integrity Project noted that Africa scored poorly in terms of the quality and integrity of elections and did only slightly better than South East Asia, among all regions of the world. There are six African countries among the ten ranked in terms of the poorest level of electoral integrity in the world (Electoral Integrity Project, 2013).

Elections are about the control of political power and, as such, are sites of fierce political contestations. Hence, in societies with scarce resources and weak institutions coupled with a low civic culture of democratic restraint by political actors, elections are likely to descend into deadly political battles. Indeed, in Nigeria a new political phrase referred to as "stomach infrastructure," constitutes major election weaponry. It is a culture of vote buying by which politicians stash tons and tons of money, disregard or not undertake electoral campaigns, but instead use the accumulated funds to buy voting cards and the votes of the electorate, shortly before the elections, in a highly militarized context. In this milieu, elections therefore assume meaning only in form, not in content or substance; but this is not a uniform trend. In other countries like South Africa, Cape Verde, Malawi, Zambia, Mauritius, Botswana, and Namibia, the constitutive and regulative rules of elections still have varying but meaningful expressions.

The democratic delivery of public goods and government accountability largely lags behind citizens' expectations. In the survey done through the African Governance Report Project (2013) by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the findings are quite revealing (see figure 1.1).

Across 40 countries covered by the survey, it is only in 5 countries that 50 percent or more respondents consider their government to mostly or always act in a publicly accountable manner. These countries are Cape Verde, Rwanda, Algeria, Seychelles, and Benin. In the other 35 countries, the perception of the citizens is that government accountability is far below expectations. On the lower end are countries like Nigeria, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Kenya, with over 80 percent of the respondents considering government accountability to be very low (see figure 1.2).

As graph II indicates, it is only in three countries—Mauritius, Cape Verde, and Botswana that about 50 percent of the respondents regard their civil service to be fairly free from corruption. On the lower end of the ladder are countries like Egypt, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Chad, Nigeria, and Guinea Conakry, where only less than 20 percent of the respondents consider their civil service to be fairly free from corruption. The low rating of the public service on corruption by the citizens in many countries in Africa is reflected in the poor level of service delivery in those countries as captured by figure 1.3. Most democratic governments in Africa have been unable to create result-oriented public service as they were in the early post-independence era. The low

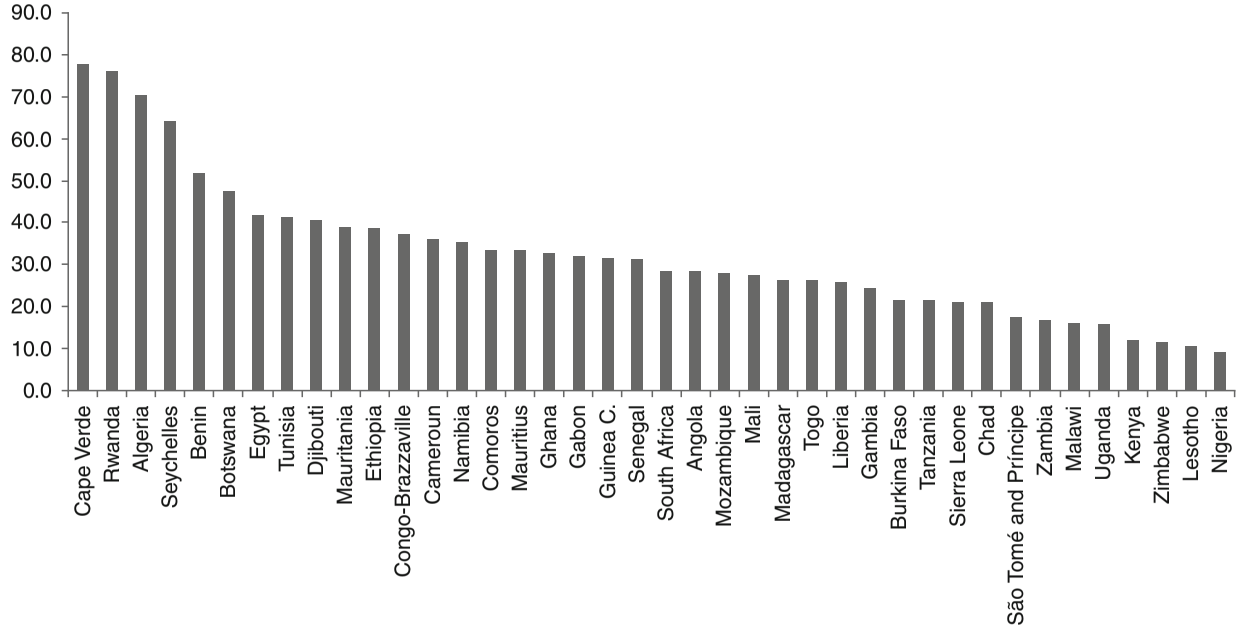

Figure 1.1 Government accountability—mostly or always acts in a publicly accountable manner.

Source: Expert Opinion Survey from the African Governance Report Project 2013 by the UNECA and UNDP.

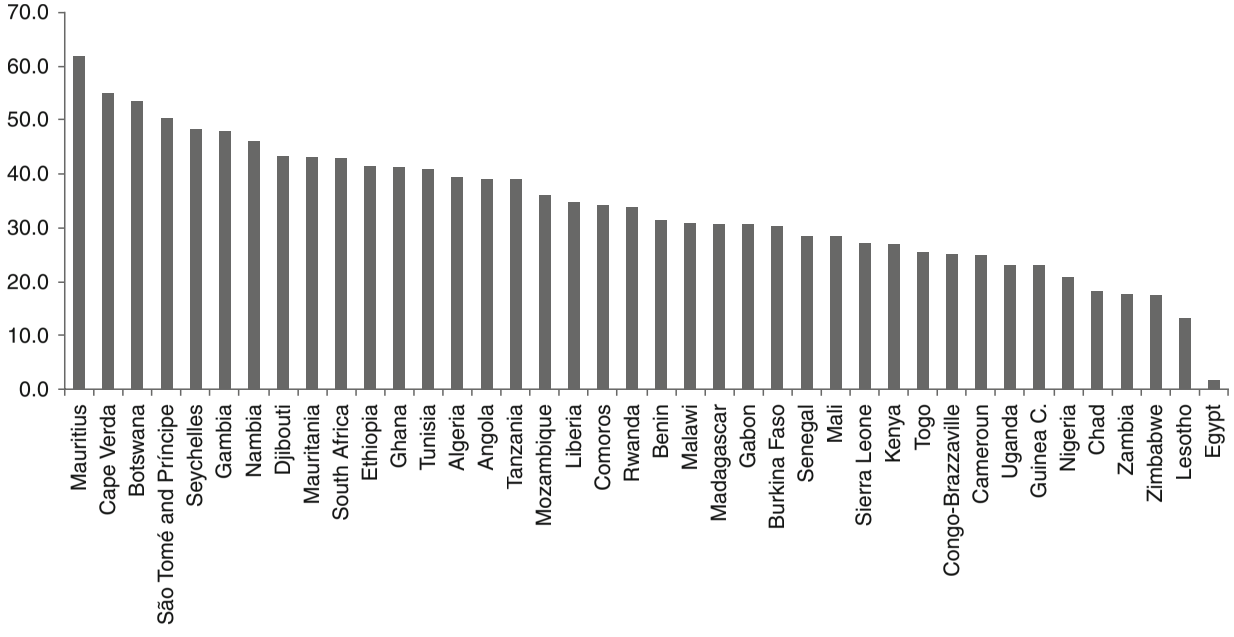

Figure 1.2 Civil service corruption—fairly free from corruption.

Source: Expert Opinion Survey from the African Governance Report Project 2013 by the UNECA and UNDP.

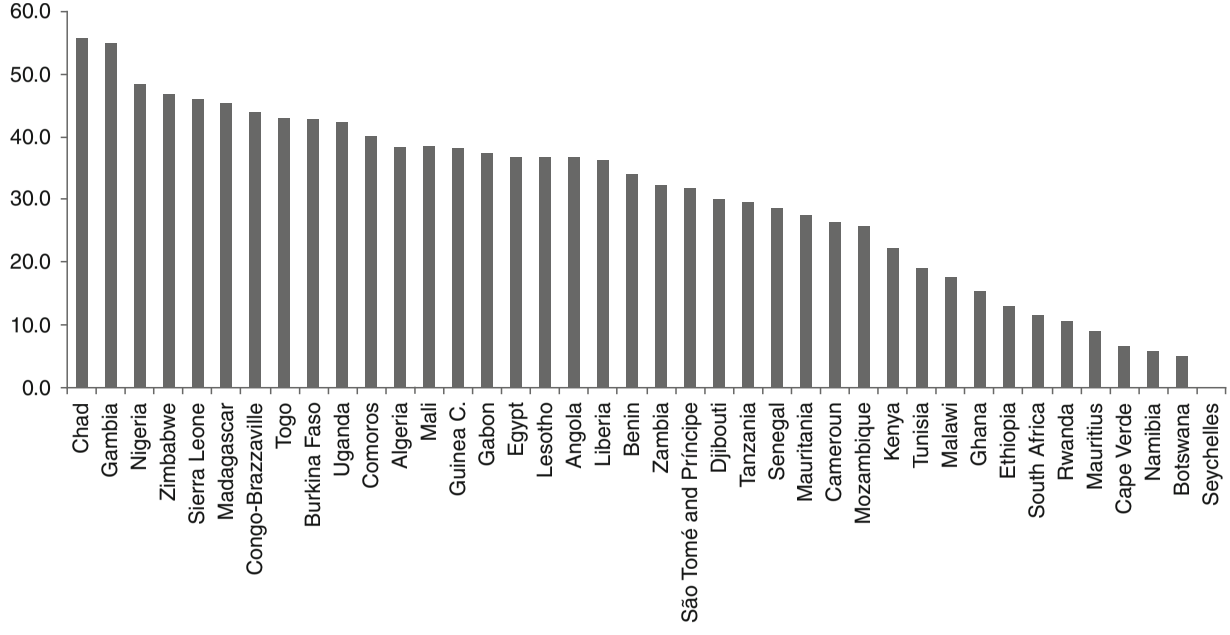

Figure 1.3 Access to government services—difficulty in accessing or very little access to government services.

Source: Expert Opinion Survey from the African Governance Report Project 2013 by the UNECA and UNDP.

remuneration of the public service and the uncertainty and instability that bedeviled it under adjustment reforms—with retrenchments and downsizing—affected morale, introduced a culture of moonlighting, and heightened corruption. Only a few democratic regimes have introduced meaningful reforms to reverse the trend. More often than not, the civil service remains a major site of political patronage and the sharing of the spoils of electoral victories.

As figure 1.3 indicates, in 23 countries, over 30 percent of the respondents regard the delivery of public services to be difficult and cumbersome to access, with Chad, Ghana, and Nigeria on the peak of it, while in countries like Seychelles, Botswana, Namibia, Cape Verde, and Mauritius, the citizens consider government services to be good and easily accessible. The implication is that the delivery of public goods and services by democratic governments is still far below the expectations of the citizens. Long years of neglect—especially under a structural adjustment regime—resource constraints, corruption, and limited state capacity are some the factors that account for this.

As the preceding analyses and data suggest, democratic accountability remains low, with seemingly high level of corruption, low service delivery, and a weak bureaucracy. While democratic rule remains an attractive option of political governance, as evidenced by the continued struggle of the people for it—as the political revolts in North Africa attest to and the agitation for constitutional reforms in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria indicate—paradoxically, democratic performance remains quite low; a wide gap between demand and supply in the democracy nexus.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 reviews the background, trajectory, progress, and challenges of democratization in Liberia especially under the current regime of President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. The chapter starts on a theoretical note, reviewing the literature on the discourse on democratization in Africa. According to the chapter, two major strands are discernible in the discourse. On the one hand are those who question the feasibility of liberal democracy in Africa. Claude Ake is a renowned voice in this regard, who argues that liberal democracy is the repudiation of the essence of democracy, which is popular power. On the other hand are those who argue that despite all the challenges of liberal democracy, the process is proceeding apace, and the progress is noteworthy

and encouraging. This perspective points to the fact that conflicts are receding in Africa, human rights are improving, and social welfare is on the ascendance. The chapter therefore seeks to situate the progress being made by Liberia in its democratization in this divergent theoretical context.

The chapter notes that a discussion of Liberia's democratization can only be situated in its history and political economy. The history of Liberia is one of settler colonialism, in which the American Colonization Society (ACS) sought to deploy freed black slaves for settlement in Africa. The process involved the subjugation of the local or indigenous population, land expropriation from them, and the reconstitution of the social structure. Class and racial differentiation assumed the hallmark of Liberia's political economy. On the top ladder were the white settlers, in the intermediate class were the repatriates and people of mixed races, while the indigenous population occupied the lower rung of the class structure. Although, independence was attained in 1847, the social structure was not, however, fundamentally altered. It was on a social base of inequality, domination, and control that the political architecture and state management were constructed, through which successive regimes ruled the country—Tubman, Doe, Taylor, and, currently, Sirleaf Johnson. For instance, the motto of the country and the highest national honor conferred has veneers of ethnic, racial, and class differentiation. The motto of the country, which remains unchanged till present is, "The love of Liberty brought us here." The motto privileges the settler population, discountenancing the local or indigenous people.

Against the background of this political economy, the chapter assesses the Ellen Sirleaf Johnson administration elected in 2005 but sworn in the following year. The chapter uses four major indicators for the assessment. These are the drive toward cultural and social equality and common citizenship; economic empowerment of the people; political freedom and civil liberties; and the elimination of corruption and political cronyism. The chapter argues that while there is progress and the regime could be considered as the best in the last three to four decades of the country's history, it falls far short of any major accomplishments. First, class and ethnic differentiation is still very deep, while common and substantive citizenship remains a myth, especially for the dominated groups in the country. "Some are more equal than others" in the country, based on origin and ethnic identity. Second, poverty looms large and corruption is very rife. Third, the political turf is dangerously being manipulated with a trend toward a one-party state, and

political cronyism is very pervasive. There is a family network constituted around power in Liberia, in which major and influential positions in government are parceled out to family members, including the children of the president.

The chapter therefore makes far-reaching recommendations in the social/cultural, economic, and political spheres on deepening Liberia's democratization and making it sustainable. A major recommendation at the ideational level is for the country to consider a social democratic model of governance that privileges the people in state management.

Chapter 3, focusing on Ghana, examines the challenges of liberal democracy under a condition of economic immersion, inequality, and poverty of the majority of the people. It argues that democratization in Ghana along the neoliberal path, which privileges political freedom at the expense of economic rights and empowerment of the people, produces a defective democracy disconnected from the daily lives of the people and unrepresentative of their economic and social wishes and aspirations.

Adopting a political economy perspective, the chapter makes two major arguments. (1) The political should not be disconnected from the economic in the conceptualization and practicalization of the democratic project. In other words, a social democratic framework is preferred and should be adopted. (2) Ghana's democratization, contrary to popular Western and liberal perspectives, is neither consolidating, nor does it empower citizens. Rather, it is fragile and superficial, based only on political rights denuded of economic and social rights for the people.

The chapter in a sense makes a case for the justiciability of economic rights for the people under a democratic system, which is more likely to be attained in a social democratic model.

Chapter 4 reflects on the challenges of nation-building in the newly created state of South Sudan. It argues that the twin problems of nation-building and democratization are logically interlinked and directly defined by the construction of identity and citizenship and the promotion of political inclusiveness, inter-group trust, and confidence building in the political and social processes of society. Historically, the politics of identity and citizenship have provoked political exclusion and marginalization, which has led to the struggle for self-determination by the South Sudanese; a phenomenon that remains unresolved even in the context of the new nation of South Sudan.

The chapter draws extensively from Mahmood Mamdani's anthropological analysis of Africa's political structure under colonialism,

predicated on state bifurcation between the central and local states premised on the logic of ethnic differentiation, segmentation, and antagonism. The politics of nativism—in which the "indigenes" appropriated the political space with exclusive control and ownership of the native authorities and treated immigrants and settlers as aliens—reified ethnic ideology and created deep ethnic tensions and conflicts. This approach, adopted in Sudan as in many other British colonial territories, toxified the political process and exacerbated the challenge of nation-building. Sudan was made worse by the politics of race, and religion, especially in the post-independence era. It was the denial of citizenship rights in the substantive sense and a long period of marginalization and persecution of the people of South Sudan that led to the struggle for self-determination and eventual independence. However, the same problem that provoked the breakaway of South Sudan remains an enduring challenge even in the newly created country. As such, the problem of conflicts, violence, and inter-group tension may not necessarily go away in the new country, except when the problem of citizenship is resolved. The chapter makes the interesting point that the problem of the disputed areas between Sudan and South Sudan, especially Abyei, is not so much about oil, but the demand for political rights in enabling representation in local governance, access to a tribal homeland, grazing land, and water for both pastoralists and sedentary agricultural communities.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Ugandan experience in the introduction and performance of liberal democracy. Adopting a largely historical perspective, the chapter examines how liberal democracy evolved in the country, the contours and challenges it has faced, and how successive governments have paid lip service to the practice of democracy in the country. The chapter notes that while competitive politics has produced positive gains in terms of offering alternative policies—thus according political space to diverse interests and offering some checks and balances—however, the tendency has been toward authoritarian practices and governance, in which dissent is often criminalized and ruthlessly suppressed, persistent abuse of civil and political rights takes place, and a predilection by the leadership for one-party monolithic culture is seen. The chapter shows that under the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) governments—and later, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime—commitment to and the promotion of liberal democratic ideals and practices have been more rhetorical than substantive, emptying the democratic process of meaning and essence with largely illiberal political conduct and behavior. The chapter illustrates this with the

stifling intimidation and harassment of opposition political parties and figures, the monetization of power and politics, allegations of high level corruption, and increasing pauperization of the people. Authoritarian political culture not only alienates the people, but increases the challenge of diversity management, which virtually all countries in Africa have to grapple with.

Chapter 6 examines the politics and discourses of human rights violations, including the violation of media rights in Zimbabwe, and the polarized political narrative undergirding those violations, in which the government perceives itself to be acting in defense of national sovereignty, describing those whose rights are being violated as "foreign agents," "imperialist stooges," and "regime change advocates" who are collaborating with outside forces in undermining the country's hard won independence. On the other hand, the opposition claims that it is involved in the struggle to reclaim the country's sovereignty from its internal oppressors, who have replaced the colonial rulers in denying basic rights to the people. The objective of the opposition forces, as they perceive it, is the construction of a liberal democratic system where rights are respected and civil liberties guaranteed.

The chapter notes that the discourse on human rights has created a dichotomy between civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic and social rights on the other. The government appropriates the latter to make a case, while the opposition insists on the former. The government argues that reclaiming land from the minority white settler population, and redistributing it, is a pathway to ensuring socioeconomic rights and liberation for the people. The government and its supporters regard civil and political rights as tertiary and superficial, of which without economic rights, the former will be hollow and unfulfilled. Conversely, the opposition, on its part, argues that civil and political rights are the precursors to socioeconomic rights and must be respected. The author seeks to bridge this divide in contending that both rights are equally important and should not be politicized in the polarized political environment existing in the country.

The chapter argues that in spite of Western vilification and portrayal of failure in Zimbabwe's contested political system, there is indeed remarkable progress. The Global Peace Agreement (GPA) and the Government of National Unity (GNU) have made it possible to consensually push through some important reforms, including the establishment of horizontal accountability bodies like the Human Rights Commission and the Media Commission, and thus, ensure some relative political stability and harmony in the country.

The chapter concludes that there is need for greater reforms, including security sector reforms and the liberalization of the media space and media freedom in order to improve the quality of democratic elections in the country.

Chapter 7 interrogates the notion of a "matured" democracy, often used to describe Mauritius in Africa, and argues that while Mauritius has maintained relative political stability, the alternation of power, and a civic culture supportive of democratic practice, there are enormous challenges that have to be addressed if the democratic project is not to founder. The author identifies five major challenges. First is the nature of the electoral system, which promotes a "winner takes all" mentality, poor representation, and lack of inclusivity. Worse still, is that the representation of women in the political and electoral processes is very poor and marginal. Second is the relative weakness of opposition parties, which constrain their capacity to challenge the ruling party and their poor funding sources in view of lack of state funding for political parties. The ruling party often has more resources through the patronage it exercises, and therefore dwarfs the smaller parties in competitive electoral politics. Third, while Mauritius is celebrated as a success story, there is little or no democratization at the local level in the country. Mauritius is a highly centralized polity, in which the mayors of the five municipalities in the country are political appointees. Fourth, is the narrow space for political elite inclusion and the reproduction of dynastic politics in the country. Those who populate the political process are "children" and "families" of old politicians, using their established political base, networks, and the resources they command to dominate the political arena, which prevents the injection of new personalities, ideas, and innovation into Mauritius' democratic process—necessary for its rejuvenation. Finally, is that the state building project in Mauritius is still a major challenge. Ethnic affiliation and identity remains profound in the country, to the extent that most people do not see themselves in terms of their national identity, but more in terms of their ethnic and racial affiliations: as either "Hindus," "Indians," "Chinese," "Creole," and so on. As such, forging a common political front and trans-ethnic political culture remains a major challenge.

Chapter 8 examines the genealogy of political conflicts in Sierra Leone and the attempt to use elections as an instrument of political mediation, regime legitimation, and democratic reconstruction of the country. The immediate background to conflict was the centralization and concentration of power by the immediate post-colonial political leadership and the ensuing corruption, nepotism, political misrule, and misgovernance in the country.

The colonial political infrastructure was not deconstructed; rather, post-independent leadership only cemented the colonial pattern of domination, skewed inequalities, and the deepening of poverty. This was the basis of the political resistance in the country that started among the youths, but was later to be hijacked by members of the political class.

The march toward civil war in 1990 paradoxically saw a major push toward democratization in the country. As the resistance gained ground and the songs of war resonated, the Momoh regime was forced to democratize and open up the political space for multi-party politics. A new constitution was also enacted in 1991. However, the political slide continued, while the rebels intensified their insurgency. The Momoh regime was overthrown in April 1992 by young military officers led by Valentine Strasser, who established the National Provisional Ruling Council as the governing body. The constitution was suspended and so were party politics. The military did not perform better than the civilian regime it overthrew—corruption and rights abuses increased. In the context of a civil war, the military junta was pressurized to democratize and return the country to civilian rule; hence, its announcement of a political transition program in 1994. The transition culminated in the general elections of 1996.

The 1996 elections, as the author argues, were meant to serve as a political settlement mechanism for achieving peace by encouraging all parties to shed their swords and engage in the electoral process. As the author noted, the elections were flawed in several respects. In his words, "the environment in which the polls were conducted was far from ideal. The timing too was inappropriate and so was the polls flawed in every conceivable way. The war was still raging in the country and many parts were inaccessible. No peace agreement or ceasefire had been agreed with the RUF and much of the country was insecure . . ." The polls saw the emergence of Tejan Kabbah as the new president of the country. However, in spite of civilian rule, the political crisis deepened. The Kabbah administration was overthrown in May 1997 by a junta led by Johnny Paul Koroma.

The 1996 elections, as the author noted, illustrates the problem of using elections as a conflict transformation and peace building mechanism. The elections neither achieved peace nor brought stability or reconciliation to the country. Rather, it "further weakened the capacity of the state to adequately respond to and manage the strains of conflict." Indeed, it did not take long before the whole nascent electoral edifice collapsed.