

21st Century of Democratic Practice in Africa; Challenges and Solutions

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Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/rjhlsid.v6.i1.07

Abstract

The objective of this research is to examine the 21st Century of Democratic Practice in Africa: Challenges and Solutions. The paper addressed three basic concerns: the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa, the challenges of democratic practice in Africa, and the solutions to the challenges of democratic practice in Africa. The researcher adopted the secondary method of data collection via books, journals, articles, and newspapers in order to understand the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa and the challenges and solutions. The study findings on the challenges of 21st century democratic practice in Africa, including digital authoritarianism, third-termism, electoral violence, corruption, and power abuse. To address these issues, African leaders should adopt exemplary practices, uphold the rule of law, hold free, fair elections, and enhance state institutions. They should focus on removing cronyism and following the constitutional term limit culture. Instead of limiting competition, encourage diverse opinions and tolerance, allowing residents to actively engage in decision-making. Free online and offline speech is essential for this. Digital resource recognition and protection are crucial for civic engagement and capacity development. Leaders should be held accountable and eliminate corruption and power abuse. The African Union must condemn military coups and establish institutions to extend democracy and prosperity across the continent. Democracy will prosper in Africa if Africans learn to reject politicians who think voters can be deceived into giving up their rights and votes.

Keywords: *Africa, Democracy, Democratisation, Practice, African Union, Coup d'état*

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Background to the Study

The state of democracy on a global scale is perpetually confronted with pessimistic challenges. Democratic backsliding (Bermeo, 2016; Karolewski, 2021), democratic rollback (Diamond, 2008), democratic reversal (Anderson, 2019), democratic erosion (Hartmann & Thiery, 2022; Silva-Leander, 2021), and democratic recession (Diamond, 2015; Loanda, 2010; Zamfir, 2021) are some of the terms used to describe this phenomenon. These terms all indicate a distinct degree of democratic decline and the rise of autocratization, regardless of the terminology employed. It delineates a series of challenges within one or more of the principles and indicators of the democratic system. Democratic recession is a global phenomenon that does not discriminate against any particular region or country.

Undoubtedly, Africa is witnessing a resurgence of authoritarianism and illiberal democracy (Salih, 2021; EIU, 2022). The degree to which democratic recession occurs on a global scale is debatable (Anderson, 2019). Regrettably, African governments have encountered the challenge of suspended liberal democracy in recent times, despite their noteworthy efforts to institutionalise democratic reforms and reject autocracy and military rule in their quest for second independence. This is demonstrated by the following, according to Tar (2010): an identity-based political culture, a feeble civil society, repeated military intervention, a lack of viable opposition, and the absence of regime transition.

Akinyetun and Bakare (2020) analyse the ongoing conflicts, emphasising the significance of ethnic, religious, and cultural divisions. When elites promote primordial identification among antagonistic and opposing groups, political instability is exacerbated and democratic consolidation is harmed. Simultaneously, communities that lack sufficient democratic institutions exhibit greater divisions along lines of identity (Diamond, 2015). As per the findings of Loanda (2010), numerous countries have come to regard the democratic process as a mere formality, attributing its inability to effect substantial change to the pervasive corruption, deception, and violence that permeates the electoral system. In light of Africa's historical experience under authoritarian rule, it appears that the widespread zeal for the democratisation movement across the continent was exaggerated. Given the circumstances, Gyimah-Boadi (2021:6) argues that remnants of authoritarianism continued to exist, notably in Togo, Guinea-Bissau, and the Gambia. The reason for this is that democratic politics in the region continue to be influenced negatively by the "divide and conquer" strategy of colonial rule, which had calamitous effects on nations such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia.

Aim of the Study

To examine the 21st century of Democratic practice in Africa; Challenges and Solutions.

Research Questions

- i. What is the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa?
- ii. What are the challenges of democratic practice in Africa?
- iii. What are the solutions to challenges of democratic practice in Africa?

Methodology of the Study

The study used a qualitative methodology to gather data and achieve its objectives. Secondary sources play a crucial role in the qualitative data gathering methodology. It involves examining a completely unrelated topic utilising data that was previously collected for a different researcher. This research field has the potential to provide new and unique insights on the original objective or additional goals of the study. The data sources include a variety of materials such as artefacts, observations, journals, books, reports, newspapers, published documents, focus group, artifact, case studies, recordings and libraries.

Review of Literature

i. Democracy

From the Greek terms DEMOS (people) and CRATOS (power) or CRATEIN (power) derives the word democracy. Thus, democracy is fundamentally understood as the power of the people (Buccola, 2016). The fundamental source of the initial misunderstanding is as follows. Are you aware of the power that people possess? Should we maintain the notion that people hold power, or is it more practical to acknowledge that power ultimately resides with individuals?

By "people's power," we refer to a form of government in which the interests and concerns of the people are truly represented. It is evident that the people have a say in significant decisions in a democracy. In other words, the people choose their leaders voluntarily and submit to them; they also choose their laws voluntarily and choose to abide by them. For democracy to exist is not to absolve oneself of responsibility; on the contrary, it is a regulation that must be upheld. Only in this context can the significance of the contract as stated by Rousseau in the SOCIAL CONTRACT (Medina, 1986) be comprehended. Democracy is the maturation of people who self-discipline, (Rousseau, More, Bacon, and Campanella, 1901).

We refer to the period in which governance is based on the will of the people as a democracy. A state that protects the rights of its minority people while encouraging greater participation of the majority in state governance. Democracy is the greatest option if we want more people to have an opinion on how their state is governed, as demonstrated by the definition above.

Rather than merely a political system or a collection of laws, democracy is a way of life based on the conviction that human beings are inherently decent and capable of making logical decisions when presented with favourable conditions. In order to reside in a democracy, one must have faith in the capacity to resolve disputes through nonviolent means.

Instead of being "something external and institutional," as Dewey (1916) contends, democracy is an individual way of life. To live in a democracy, we must have rights protections and the conviction that disagreements can be resolved amicably. To put it another way, a democratic environment should be created in which communication is unimpeded and a "cooperative undertaking" is pursued, as opposed to one group repressing the other through overt or covert violence or intimidation.

ii. Democratization

The transition from an authoritarian to a democratic political system is referred to as "democratisation" in many situations. Building a long-lasting democracy and overthrowing authoritarian control are the main goals of this transition. As stated by Nwabueze (1993), the goal of democratisation is to instill a belief in social justice, freedom, and democracy in the people. Nwabueze (1993) provided more detail by outlining twelve factors that must be present for a democracy to take root:

- (i) A system of multiple parties based on a democratic constitution;
- (ii) A total overhaul of the guards and the exclusion of specific groups from democratic politics and governance;
- (iii) Real and substantial public engagement in these areas;
- (iv) A robust civil society;
- (v) A society characterised by democracy;
- (vi) Freedom;
- (vii) Justice; and
- (viii) The rule of law.

The process of democratisation is defined by Osaghae (1999) as the strengthening, expansion, or growth of democratic ideals, institutions, and systems. Another perspective is offered by Potter (2000) who defines democratisation as "a political progression from governments that are less accountable to those that are more accountable; from elections that are less competitive or non-existent to those that are more comprehensive and equitable in nature; and from limited or non-existent civil and political organisations to more extensive and continuous organisations in civil society." Democratisation refers to the process by which democracy is developed. Based on these ideas, democratisation is moving towards a transitional or stable democracy. Whether or not democratisation succeeds depends on how well it builds these characteristics; it's crucial to remember that the goal of democratisation is to create a democratic government. An empire's transition from a military or authoritarian rule to a democratically elected one is known as democraisation.

iii. Democratic Governance

According to Bevir (2006), Ingrams (2019), and Strebel et al. (2019), democratic governance occurs when the state and citizens or civil society collaborate to establish partnerships, networks, coordinate, negotiate, compromise, reach a consensus, and involve everyone in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

In recent years, a substantial amount of scholarly literature has surfaced, exploring democratic governance through a multitude of theoretical and methodological lenses. Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between democratic governance and different political concepts, such as the state, organisations, regimes, elections, and democracy (Petracca, 1989; Cohen & Rogers, 1992; Bohman, 1999; Pottie, 2001; Bevir, 2006; Tusalem & Pe-Aguirre, 2013; Aliye, 2020). The technical implications of information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence, big data, and geographic information systems in relation to democratic governance have been emphasised by scholars such as

Haque (2001), Kakabadse et al. (2003), Falch (2006), Flyverbom et al. (2019), and Clarke & Dubois (2020). Scholars in the domain of public administration, including Coston (1998), Terry (1999), S. E. Clarke (2001), Ayee (2013), Vecchione & Parkhurst (2015), and Bamidele & Ayodele (2018), have underscored the importance of public policy, public administration, and public management in the context of democratic governance. Additionally, there are ties between democracy research in Indonesia and the nation's politics, regional development, and technological progress. In his study, Winengan (2018) investigated dimensions of democracy that concern power, legitimacy, authority, and democratic governance. Modern democratic society, according to Utami (2019), is afflicted by the dissemination of false information facilitated by social media. Based on a study by Kusumasari et al. (2018), the integration of ICT and effective governance has the potential to improve health-related public services. Indroyono et al. (2018) present a vision for community unity governance to assist people in rural areas in enhancing their economic situation and safeguarding the environment.

Despite this, conceptual maps of literature on democratic governance are rarely compiled by scholars. Democracy, theory, epistemology, and democracy were the topics of Haque's (2016) investigation into democratic governance. Chan (2016) endeavoured to formulate the notion of democratic governance through the lens of modernist and interpretive social science. A regulatory and legal examination of politics, institutions, multiculturalism, and democracy was conducted by Schuck (2018).

21st century of Democratic Practice in Africa

A political system in which citizens are afforded the opportunity to express their viewpoints and collaborate for the collective good through the democratic process is one definition of democracy (Loada, 2010). Election-based governance and majority authority are frequently misconstrued to imply democracy. Holding people accountable, defending human rights, and abiding by the law are all part of it. Repucci and Slipowitz (2022) posit that a democratic system permits internal and external balances in addition to safeguarding the autonomy of the media and civil society. The success of a democracy is rarely guaranteed through the mere conduct of elections. Authoritarian states have worked out how to conduct elections without actually instituting democracy. As Diamond (2008) more effectively put it, elections are confrontations between parties that are corrupt and clientelistic. Municipal and parliamentary administrations do not provide services to substantial populations. Constitutions and constitutionalism are not synonymous in existence.

A tide of democratisation swept across Africa in 1990, when President Mathieu Kerekou was compelled to convene a sovereign national convention in response to a demonstration by Benin's students and members of civic society. From 1990 to 1993, sovereign national conferences were convened in the neighbouring countries of Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Togo, all of which were influenced by the pro-democracy demonstrations. In order to accommodate the opposition, the Cote d'Ivoirean government amended its constitution; Ghana, meanwhile, implemented multiparty democracy (Gyimah-Boadi, 2021).

Several African nations, including Sierra Leone, Cabo Verde, and Nigeria, had implemented democratic constitutions and undergone democratic transitions by the turn of the 21st century. Despite undergoing significant transitions that brought about improvements such as increased parliamentary powers, freedom, peace, economic performance, and social development, Africa has experienced a recent period marked by an asymmetric trend in which authoritarianism has gained ground and democracy has declined (Zamfir, 2021).

The state is unable to uphold democratic principles such as the rule of law, free and fair elections, the legitimacy of the state, the rights of minorities, fundamental human rights, and press freedom during a democratic recession. According to Bermeo (2016:5), it is "the debilitation or eradication of the political institutions that support an established democracy through state-led means." Such a dysfunctional state of democracy, according to Salih (2021), is indicative of cronyism within the government and corrupt politicians supported by a similarly corrupt political elite. State institutions are shackled by elected officials who frequently support the state's superiors instead of the people who elected them and do not heed to their constituents. The decline of democracy can be seen as an indication of an underlying crisis in the legitimacy of the state (Salih, 2021). According to Jinadu (2010), some of the challenges that African democracies face in the 21st century include: a lack of faith in electoral bodies to hold fair elections; abuse of power by incumbents; manipulation of electoral processes; falsification of results; manipulation of the electoral process; and electoral violence.

Controlling corruption and abuse of power is the greatest practice confronting the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa, (Diamond, 2015). Without a doubt, the abuse of power hinders democratic advancement. The main reasons why democratic progress is being turned back are diminished political freedom, an unclear division of powers, and a weakened rule of law (Hartmann & Thiery, 2022).

Zamfir (2021) identifies insufficient socioeconomic development and instability, alongside inadequate institutions, as the primary factors contributing to democratic recession in confronting the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa. Loanda (2010) is the originator of the notion that the democratic recession in Africa can be attributed to both internal and external factors. Internal forces originate in the mechanisms of the government and economy. In the wake of the democratic revolutions of the early 1990s, a hybrid regime devoid of an independent press and separation of powers came into existence.

Illiberal democracy is a system distinguished by its authoritarian environment and provocation of political challenges. Proximity for progress, pervasive corruption, and the pursuit of usurp state resources obstruct democratic development, hinder effective governance, and contribute to the economic challenges. The contends that economic and political undercurrents underlie the external variables. Constraints over the democratic processes of other countries spread constitutional anarchy, which has a contagious political effect throughout the continent. The success of a constitutional coup in one country is directly proportional to the likelihood that such a coup will occur in another country. From an

economic standpoint, the resource-grabbing ambitions of powerful foreign countries present challenges to democratic practice in Africa. Many people believe that corruption and inefficiency are the root causes of the democratic recession. Hartmann and Thiery (2022) provide support for the notion that corruption impedes the evolution of democracy and the enhancement of governance. Conversely, corruption and despotism are inextricably linked to the 21st century of democratic practice in Africa.

The predominance of flawed democracies also contributes to the dwindling democracy in Africa. There are several forms of flawed democracy, which Wolfgang (2004) discussed at length. Unrooted democracies fail to provide citizens with opportunities to participate, hold their government accountable, exercise their civil freedoms, and choose their representatives. The other side of the coin is democracies that fail to uphold the Constitution. Patrimonial and post-autocratic nations are more likely to have democracies that aren't perfect. They are influenced by the aforementioned elements, which include economic trends, civil society, nation-building, political institutions, social capital, the degree and trajectory of modernization, and the sort of authoritarian government that came before them. In her analysis of flawed democracies, Merkel identifies four main types: exclusive democracy, illiberal democracy, delegative democracy, and illiberal democracy. These forms can be further classified as domestic democracy, illiberal democracy, and delegative democracy. On one hand, devolutionism and veto power are used to weaken the authority of democratically elected representatives, guerrillas, the military, and the government. On the other hand, the freedom of the people, legal systems, and the judiciary are undermined when used in opposition to or outmoded by devolutionism and veto power, respectively. On the other hand, according to Merkel (2004), the flawed type of democracy that is most common is illiberal democracy.

Worldwide, military coups, executive degradation, human rights violations, acts of violence, military rebellions, political instability, election fraud, executive abuse, parliamentary suspensions, a decline in adherence to the rule of law, and breakdowns in electoral processes are among the numerous manifestations of democracy breakdown identified (Diamond, 2015).

The challenges that the Coronavirus epidemic undoubtedly presented were also those to democracy. Voter participation was inadequate in the countries that held elections; in Ethiopia, elections were even rescheduled. Electoral violence experienced a notable surge in Guinea and the Central African Republic, while the concomitant limitations imposed by the pandemic further complicated matters regarding the Burundi election (Alizada et al., 2021). Undoubtedly, the epidemic amplified the prevalence of autocratization through the reduction of public spaces (Silva-Leander, 2021).

Challenges of Democratic Practice in Africa

Democracy was confronted with a variety of challenges in this 21st century, some of which were long-standing issues and others that were more recent.

i. Coup d'état and Third-term Virus

Many African rulers have shown a complete and utter lack of respect for the limitations placed on presidential terms. In an effort to stay in power for as long as possible, some African rulers have attempted or admitted to attempting to rig elections or weaken democratic institutions. The leaders of Guinea, Mali, Togo, Tanzania, and Côte d'Ivoire are all present. September 2021 saw a military coup as President Alpha Conde sought to alter the constitution to grant himself a third term. Many scholars have argued that the rise in human rights violations in Guinea has turned the nation from partially free to non-free (Gyimah-Boadi, 2021; Hartmann and Thiery, 2022; Repucci and Slipowitz, 2022). A growing number of individuals are participating in what David Landau terms "abusive constitutionalism," an effort to undermine democracy via constitutional change, namely through modification and replacement (Landau, 2013). It is possible that totalitarian control has become less harsh and noticeable in different parts of the world. There are ongoing worries about the rise of military coups and the ways authoritarian governments exploit constitutional revisions to strengthen their grip on power and weaken democracy (Zamfir, 2021).

It has been usual practice for purportedly democratic governments to include authoritarian measures into their institutions in order to create hybrid regimes that are either electoral autocracy or competitive authoritarianism (Landau, 2013).

In order to legitimise the government and provide the illusion of democracy, some African countries' constitutions were amended in a way that is anti-democratic. To put that in perspective, the Egyptian constitution was crafted. Under this constitution, Egypt has become a competitive authoritarian state where elections do not ensure a shift in power. In 2021, President Kai'ed Sai'ed suspended parliament, annulled portions of the constitution, and instituted rule by decree and new judicial powers; as a result, Tunisia fell into a partially free democratic status, despite the country's attempts to establish a secure democracy (Hartmann and Thiery, 2022; Repucci and Slipowitz, 2022). On March 30, 2022, due to what he termed as a "unprecedented failed coup attempt," former law professor Kai Sai'ed dissolved parliament, charging its members of "conspiring against state security" (Deutsche, 2022).

According to the data presented by Siegle and Cook (2021), sixteen African presidents have removed term limits. The heads of state are as follows: Museveni, Conte (Guinea, 2001), Eyadema, Bongo, Museveni, Uganda (2005), Deby, Chad (2005), Biya, Cameroon (2008), Bouteflika, Algeria (2008), Guelleh, Djibouti (2010), Nkurunziza, Burundi (2015), Kagame, Rwanda (2015), Nguesso, Republic of the Congo (2015), Kiir, South Sudan (2015), Kabila, Democratic Republic of the Congo (2016), Azali, Comoros (2018), Sisi, Egypt (2019), Akinyetun, (2022). Regardless, Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia, Eswatini, Morocco, Libya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Lesotho are among the eight states that do not have a constitution. Because of this, corruption is more likely to occur throughout the continent and the efficacy of government is threatened.

The problem of sit-tightism, in which presidents serve consecutive terms in office, is relevant here. The longest reign a king has been in power in Africa is 43 years. This, according to Reuters (2021) includes Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea who has spent about 43 years

in office; Paul Biya (Cameroon; 39 years), Denis Sassou Nguesso (Congo Republic; 38 years); Yoweri Museveni (Uganda; 36 years), King Mswati III (eSwatini; 36 years); Idriss Deby (Chad; 31 years); Isaias Afwerki (Eritrea; 28 years); Ismail Omar Guelleh (Djibouti; 22 years); King Mohammed VI (Morocco; 22 years); and Paul Kagame (Rwanda; 22 years) (Akinyetun, 2022). Currently, elections are being conducted in a number of these countries in a very undemocratic manner, if they are held at all.

In contrast, two family dynasties have ruled for almost half a century, and ten presidents have served terms of twenty years or more (Siegle & Cook, 2021). Among the persons currently holding the office of short-term president are Paul Kagame, Ismail Omar Guelleh, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Yoweri Museveni, Paul Biya, Idriss Deby, King Mswati III, Teodore Obiang, Isaias Afwerki, and King Mohammed VI (Siegle & Cook, 2021).

ii. Military Coup

The enduring threat of military coups must be considered in any global effort to advance democracy. During the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the military ruled all Latin American nations with the exception of two (Landau, 2013). The democratic progress that had been made in West Africa in 2021 was promptly reversed. The current upsurge in military coups throughout Africa heralds a new era defined by coup culture. The number of coup attempts in 2021 was higher than in the preceding decade. After the military took over Myanmar in 2020 via rigged elections in November, the coup d'état swiftly moved to Sudan in 2021, where the military proclaimed a state of emergency and suggested that fresh elections wouldn't be conducted until 2023.

In April 2021, following the demise of Idriss Deby, the military took over governance of Chad (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2022). Additionally, a coup attempt transpired in Niger in March 2021 (Zamfir, 2021). On the contrary, Mali has experienced two coups within the past decade. Malian military forces reclaim power in May 2021, subsequent to the withdrawal of troops from numerous strategic offices by the civilian authorities of an interim government. Less than a year after the overthrow of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's government, the president and prime minister selected by an interim government were removed from office. Both coups were orchestrated by Colonel Assimi Goita, the president of the transition government (Gyimah-Boadi, 2021). Fears of a new surge of coups in the region were exacerbated by coups that occurred in Guinea and Sudan as well (EIU, 2022).

In contrast to Burkina Faso, which experienced two military coups in 2022 (in February and September) (Africa News, 2022), Mohamed Bazoum, the president of Niger, was deposed on July 26, 2023, by members of the presidential security. In 2021, Bazoum was elected to office. General Abdourahamane Tiani currently serves as the leader of the presidential security (Africa News, 2023).

iii. Technocratic Domination

The internet has played an essential part in democratisation, that much is certain. The impact of social media on political rallies in the US during #BlackLivesMatter,

#Istandwithhongkong, OccupyWallStreet, Zimbabwe, and the Endsars protests in Nigeria, when youths denounced police brutality and bad leadership, is evident. We can't ignore the critical role that internet technologies play in bringing people together for political conversation, campaigns, action, and participation. A lot of people are worried that the government is trying to use technology to foster digital authoritarianism (Zamfir, 2021).

This has been rationalised in an attempt to decrease the occurrence of violent threats, polarisation, misinformation, and rumours. Suppressing both independent and conventional media, spreading misinformation via digital platforms, and polarising political opponents are common tactics used by governments to undermine democracy and promote autocracy (Alizada et al., 2021). It is becoming more and more clear that the government is using digital technology for censorship and monitoring. Gyimah-Boadi (2021) claims that Nigeria, Ghana, and Benin are all involved. In order to keep tabs on journalist Ignace Soussou, who was supposedly seen as a rival to the president of Benin, the authorities allegedly used spyware. The purchase of Pegasus, an Israeli spyware capable of surveilling a mobile device's microphone and camera, led to the conviction of three former high-ranking Ghanaian government officials. It has been alleged in the interim that the Nigerian government plotted to weaken the #EndSARS demonstrators via the coercion of their systems through malware penetration.

Recent times have seen an increase in authoritarian governments' attempts to control social media. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of protests and elections, which has led to more frequent internet disruptions. The Republic of the Congo, Chad, Burundi, Gabon, and Uganda are mostly responsible for internet disruptions in Africa. In one case, Chad had a 16-month social media ban. Internet access and major social media sites like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter were also restricted by the governments of the Republic of the Congo and Uganda, respectively, in the lead-up to the January 2021 and March 2021 elections.

Furthermore, some African countries have implemented complex regulations that limit online dissent and freedom of expression. As an example, taxes controls social media use in Uganda, content providers are required to have a licence in Tanzania, and law criminalises criticism of the government in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Egypt (Cheeseman, 2018; Zamfir, 2021). President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria as of June 1, 2021, Twitter ban went into effect. The ban, according to Anyim (2021), is a sign of growing digital authoritarianism in the nation and a barrier to people's ability to freely express themselves online and use the internet for other purposes.

iv. Electoral Violence

Elections are necessary for a democracy to operate, and they must occur. This platform enables the people to take part in the democratic process and choose their own leaders. Election quality is declining (Gyimah-Boadi, 2021) in every African country. There is evidence to suggest that African elections are seen as little more than regular exercises to preserve the state's legitimacy and democratic appearance, and as competitions in which the

winner takes it all. According to Loanda (2010), during African elections, there is a lot of hatred and vitriol aimed at destroying the opponent. African elections are characterised by a lack of a democratic culture and an independent electoral administration body.

Still, political groups would rather use violence than go to court to settle their differences, and the public has little faith in the legal system. Political turmoil has marred every election in Nigeria since the country gained its independence. Elements of these elections include conspiracies including deceit, intimidation, harassment, and property destruction. Elections with a winner-takes-all mentality are often marred by widespread violence and arbitrary behaviour. Akinyetun (2021) reports that the elections have been followed by bloodshed and prolonged instability. It is far more common for the present leader in Africa to arrest anyone who oppose them. Three prime examples are the Bobi Wine from Uganda, the Hama Amadou from Niger, and the Ousmane Sonko from Senegal. Uncertainty and fear surrounding prominent opposition personalities in the Tigray area impacted the June 2021 elections in Ethiopia (Silva-Leander, 2021; Zamfir, 2021).

v. Problems with the Economy and Society

The African people must enjoy great economic prosperity if the improvements gained in the practice of democratic governance are to continue. Economic change based on demonstrable leadership talents must immediately replace such internal and foreign mismanagement or the economy would collapse again, as happened to many African countries in the first 30 years after independence. Economic independence and self-reliance are the main challenges to achieving this economic goal, according to Rawlins (2008). Many African countries became consumer societies and economic shackles to a select few wealthy nations as soon as they gained political independence, completely ignoring their prior experiences.

The second economic and social obstacle to the emergence of democracy in Africa is the lack or inadequate social and economic infrastructure. Building power plants, water systems, roads, railroads, and communication networks is an integral part of the continental agenda for infrastructure development. There is a severe lack of human capital as well as the economic and technical know-how that would allow the continent to negotiate fair trade terms with more developed countries.

Lastly, the failure to decisively empower certain powerful economic players across African nations is a major economic obstacle to the long-term viability of democracy across the continent. The mass of the population is still mired in poverty, illiteracy, hunger, and misery, which makes the establishment and maintenance of democracy and economic development seem like a mirage, as it does in many African states. The only way to give people economic power is to invest directly in their production and marketing capabilities as a collective. African countries must guarantee the survival of a larger portion of their population by the implementation of efficient healthcare, economic, and administrative policies.

Solutions to Challenges of Democratic practice in Africa

i. Condemn and Oppose any Alterations to the Constitution.

By demanding that governments only change via established democratic procedures, the African Union (AU) supports democracy and good governance throughout the continent, which will help to overcome challenges to democracy.

A successful democracy requires swift ratification of papers, political will to follow conventions, and the ability to reelect governments in accordance with the constitution. Consider what would happen if the African Union's institutions worked together more effectively and vehemently opposed any attempt to change their constitutions in order to provide officials with longer terms of office.

ii. Democracy needs to fulfil its promises

Democracies must be able to follow through on their promises of development and other changes if they want to succeed, as International IDEA has discovered via its support of global democracy efforts since 1996. Beyond the basic ability to cast a ballot every five or four years, people have high expectations of democracy. Being able to meet the aspirations of the people is what gives a democracy its strength and longevity.

iii. Make human development inclusive and sustainable for all

Unfortunately, only a few African countries with strong economic growth have achieved inclusive and sustained human development. Certain development strategies have been criticised of prioritising economic growth over democratic values and sustainable progress. Long-term implications of that policy include environmental deterioration and civil upheaval as people seek more from democracies than economic growth. People want democracy in countries without it despite economic growth. The growth of social movements is an indication of development in nations where people have democracies but lack development.

iv. Reduce poverty and promote inclusive, representative politics.

Extreme poverty is one of the oldest and most archaic challenges to democracy. The struggle against poverty should involve proactive development, gender equality, and global market access. Political democracy assures underrepresented groups' participation in decision-making and policymaking at all levels to achieve a fairer distribution of resources and power. Increased democratic representation and engagement might empower ordinary people to change and make a living. Conflict-torn nations are not exempt.

However, socioeconomic gaps might hinder people's ability to hold decision-makers responsible. The democratic process is damaged when political actors fail to address the root causes of political, economic, social, and political inequality and reflect the people's needs.

Conclusion

Many democratic challenges were discussed in this paper. The first is digital authoritarianism; the second is third-termism, in which leaders change the constitution to enable a third-term coup or gain an extended term; and the third is electoral violence, which is common in Nigeria

and involves animosity, rigging, ballot box snatching, bloodshed, and property destruction. Based on this research, African leaders should adopt the following Exemplary Practices. Civic development and democratic sustainability are hindered by the political system's lack of public interaction, rights, and inclusion. These conditions make good governance the only way to stop Africa's democratic decline. Governance mechanisms must uphold the rule of law, public involvement, rights, and inclusiveness, and legislative oversight and legitimacy must be allowed time to take effect. We must hold free, fair, credible elections and accept their outcomes. We should enhance state institutions like the legislature and courts, not create cult figures or elevate the executive branch. These institutions must emphasise cronyism removal to restore governmental legitimacy and follow the constitutional term limit culture.

Instead of limiting or eliminating competition, it's important to foster an environment that encourages many opinions and tolerance so residents may actively engage in decision-making. For such an open and participatory role, online and offline speech must be free. Civic engagement, capacity development, and action depend on digital resource recognition and protection. Internet freedom matters most here. To hold leaders accountable, we must eliminate corruption and power abuse. The African Union must condemn the rise of military coups throughout the continent.

African governments must establish institutions to extend democracy and prosperity across the continent. Reforming and strengthening the civil service, parliament, and judiciary will make it tougher for politicians and political leaders to damage our laws and institutions. African nations require better anti-corruption and justice systems. Africans must rethink their view of underperforming leaders. The people must reject leaders' dishonesty and lawlessness. Democracy will prosper in Africa until African people learn to reject politicians who think voters can be duped into giving up their rights and votes. Leaders will influence elections, steal from the public money, and commit fraud.

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