Evaluating the State of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current Trends and Future Directions

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Abstract— *The study examines the complexities related to genuine democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa, substantially relying on secondary data sources to analyze these problems adequately. The study employed an interdisciplinary methodology, incorporating historical research and content analysis, to investigate the complexities of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recommending a new approach for measurement. The study discovered empirical evidence supporting the argument that despite the widespread adoption of democratic frameworks across Africa, true democracy remains elusive. Sub-Saharan countries often fail to live up to the principles of democracy because of the unify standard, making them the least when measuring democracy. This intern has led to a range of governance issues and developmental setbacks. The research highlights critical issues that has immense to effect on SSA democracy such as corruption, as well as weak institutions. Additionally, the paper highlights the failure of the West to properly integrity democracy rule into SSA as one key component that hinders implementation. It recommend that the best way to understand SSA failure and success to democracy is to measure it with its unique standards.*

Keywords— *State of Democracy, Sub-Saharan Africa.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa presents a complex landscape for the evaluation of democracy. Despite significant strides in some countries, the region as a whole continues to grapple with a range of challenges that hinder the full realization of democracy governance. Since the early 90s, the wave of democratization in SSA has gained relevance, as it continue to strive to overcome authoritarian and indifference to democracies. Yet, the continent remains lowest when measuring countries with democratic rule.[1]

The (Democracy Index 2021) which is scored on a 0-10 scale based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties has shown SSA consistence decline in achieving full democracy[2]. Mauritius in SSA is the only country in Africa with a fully functioning democracy (Democracy index in Sub-Saharan Africa 2022, by country 2023). This paper aim to highlight a number of factors that have led to the delay of full democracy achievement in SSA. In practical terms, a liberal democracy is characterized by a regime where binding rules and policy decisions are made not by the entire community but by representatives accountable to the community (Kaina 2022). This accountability is mainly ensured through free, fair, and competitive elections in which virtually all adult men and women have the right to vote and run for office (Robert Fatton 1990). Additionally, citizens in a liberal democracy possess the inalienable right to express themselves without fear of severe punishment on a wide range of political matters, including criticisms of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the prevailing ideology. They also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including political parties and interest groups Zittel, T and Fuchs, D (2007). However, these ideals of liberal democracy encounter significant challenges in Africa, where political culture and the nature of social and economic processes differ markedly from those in Western democracies, where the concept of liberal democracy originated.

According to Edith Hall (2020), in her article "The sociology of Athenian tragedy", the concept of democracy as an ancient practice that has lingered since 507 BC. Additionally, many scholars and historians such as *(*Robert Dahl (1989), Samuel Huntington (1991), Seymour Martin Lipset (1987), & Giovanni Sartori (1962)) have contributed to the discourse ever since[3]. The American Dictionary define democracy as the belief in freedom and equality between people, a system of government which power is held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves. Since after the collapse of the Soviet Emperor and of the Bolshevik regime in the former Soviet Union[4], the concept of democracy has been on everybody lips, but the output has not yielded much for all

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[1] Democratic Index: Our World Data-
https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/democracy-index-eiu

[2] *Democracy index in Sub-Saharan Africa 2022, by country:*
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1204750/democracy-index-in-sub-saharan-africa-by-country/

[3] *In the year 507 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes introduced a system of political reforms that he called demokratia, or "rule by the people" (from demos, "the people," and kratos, or "power"). It was the first known democracy in the world.*
This system was comprised of three separate institutions: the ekklesia, a sovereign governing body that wrote laws and dictated foreign policy; the boule, a council of representatives from the ten Athenian tribes and the dikasteria, the popular courts in which citizens argued cases before a group of lottery-selected jurors. Although this Athenian democracy would survive for only two centuries, its invention by Cleisthenes, "The Father of Democracy," was one of ancient Greece's most enduring contributions to the modern world. The Greek system of direct democracy would pave the way for representative democracies across the globe. https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ancient-greece-democracy

[4] *"The Idea of Democracy in the Modern Era is an erudite, interdisciplinary work of great breadth and complexity that looks to the past in order to reframe the future. With its global overview and comparative insights, it will stimulate discussion of how democracy can survive—and thrive—in the coming era.* For more reference , you can read Ralph Ketcham, 2021 Book on " The Idea of Democracy in the Modern Era"

nations in the world. The democratic Charter of the United States considered very specific and essential tenets of what constitute democracy. These include respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; holding free and fair elections; a pluralistic system of political parties and organizations; separation of powers; independence of the branches of government; freedom of expression and of the press; and constitutional subordination of all state institutions to the legally constituted civilian authority[5]. Yet, according to the Democracy Report 2023 by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Mauritius remains the only liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan.

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the disadvantages and challenges associated with the practice of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the widespread adoption of democratic systems across the region, true democracy remains elusive, giving rise to various governance issues and developmental setbacks. The paper is developed into five sections. It firstly considered the background and concept of democracy in Africa traces back to colonial era when it was introduced and adopted, and the wide range of obstacles that have hindered the proper implementation since then. Secondly, the research examines the lack of transparency and accountability in African political system that have execrated poverty and underdevelopment on the continent.

It has been pointed out that democracy in Africa has been significantly hindered by the state's control of the economy. This control has meant that the primary path to wealth is through political office, exacerbating corruption and compelling leaders to cling to power. According to scholars such as Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz in their work *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (1999), this intertwining of economic control and political power creates a fertile ground for corruption, making democratic processes more challenging to implement and sustain. Joseph A. Schumpeter Theory of Democracy mentioned by Elliot J. ((1994) presents a bleak view of democracy in Africa. Although it may sound extreme, there is some truth to his assertion. According to the theory, the political and economic cultures in many African countries continue to show underdevelopment and instability; they lack essential conditions for establishing liberal democracy, such as a robust and independent middle class, a competitive party system, constitutionalism and the rule of law, a neutral bureaucracy, and strong market economies. In such an environment, constructing a liberal democracy is challenging. Whether SSA actually lack the ability to achieve full democracy, or maybe other contributing factors have contributed is what the study dive examines. The study employs a qualitative research design, using an interdisciplinary approach to examine the complexities related to genuine

democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. The primary focus is on content analysis of secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and limitations faced by democratic systems in the region. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a nuanced understanding of the "illusion of democracy" in the region and to offer recommendations for enhancing democratic governance to better serve the needs and aspirations of African populations.

II. Background and the Root Causes of the Problem

The historical context of democracy in Africa can be interpreted through the lens of the "third wave" of democratization, as analyzed by Samuel P. Huntington in Shaheen Mozaffar (1997) article entitle "Patterns of Electoral Governance in Africa's Emerging Democracies". Mozaffar identified three distinct waves of democratization worldwide. According to the concept, the first wave occurred between 1828 and 1926, extending from the intellectual roots of the American and French Revolutions to Western Europe and parts of Latin America; the second wave took place from 1942 to 1962, and the third wave began on April 25, 1974 (Huntington 1991). The introduction of democracy to Africa during the third wave marked a significant shift from the continent's traditional systems of governance. According to (Adeleke 2023), Africa's indigenous governance, systems were predominantly communal and consensus-based. These systems, while diverse and regionally varied, functioned effectively within their cultural contexts. As Robert L. Sklar (1993) noted in his book "The African Frontier," traditional African societies were often organized around kinship ties, chieftaincies, and kingdoms. Decentralized authority, where local chiefs or elders wielded significant power and decisions were made collectively through consensus. Governance was deeply rooted in indigenous customs and norms, emphasizing communalism, accountability, and social harmony. However, while these traditional systems were necessary and effective within their contexts, they had certain limitations, particularly regarding the incorporation of broader citizen participation. Decision-making processes were typically confined to the chiefs and council members, marginalizing the voices of the general populace (Afful 2015). This exclusion of wider citizen engagement created a governance gap that modern democratic frameworks sought to address. Worse of it is the inability of SSA to inculcate decentralization in to the governance system which has been one of the goal to democracy (Iwata 2018). Although decentralization has had a significant political impact in African countries, it has not been sufficiently explored in African political studies. Therefore, most governance remain

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[5] *On September 11, 2001, the OAS adopted the Inter-American Democratic Charter designed to strengthen and preserve representative democracy in the hemisphere. The Democratic Charter prescribes steps to be taken in the event of an unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order or the unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order of a member state.*
https://usoas.usmission.gov/our-relationship/policy-programs/democracy/#:~:text=The%20Democratic%20Charter%20defines%20the,independence%20of%20the%20branches%20of

Article 1 states: "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it." It also states that: "Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas."
https://usoas.usmission.gov/our-relationship/policy-programs/democracy/#:~:text=The%20Democratic%20Charter%20defines%20the,independence%20of%20the%20branches%20of

centralized as in the case of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone etc. (Cabral 2011).

On the one hand, majority of African countries on the Varieties of Democracy (2023)[6] are classified as "hybrid" regimes, which are neither fully democratic nor strictly authoritarian. Hybrid regimes are political systems that conduct regular elections, but the electoral processes or the governing practices fail to fully adhere to democratic principles. These regimes can be further divided into two categories. The first category includes countries such as Mauritania and Togo, which lean more towards authoritarianism. They are termed "moderate autocracies" by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2022)[7]. The second category consists of countries that are closer to democracy and can be described as "defective democracies." Countries such as Senegal and Sierra Leone fall into this group. Additionally, Kenya, Malawi, and especially Zambia can be seen as democratic hopefuls, if not already electoral democracies (Basedau 2023). To understand the fundamental reasons behind the pace at which democracy is developing in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), two key factors need to be examined. Firstly, the presence of various tribes and languages within a single region plays a significant role. The diverse ethnic and linguistic landscape can create challenges in achieving national unity and effective governance (Lloyd 2019). Secondly, the manner in which the concept of democracy was introduced also influences its implementation (Lloyd, The Effect of T ect of Tribalism on P ribalism on Political P olitical Parties 2019). Often imposed during the colonial and post-colonial periods, democracy was not always aligned with traditional governance structures and local contexts, leading to difficulties in its acceptance and practice

According to Uchendu in his Book, "the Igbo of South East Nigeria" a contributing Case Study to Anthropology, prior to colonial rule, Nigeria governance was characterized by a mix of centralized and decentralized systems (Uchendu 2019). The Yoruba people in the southwest had a highly organized kingdom with a centralized authority under the Ooni of Ife and other regional kings[8]. In contrast, the Igbo people in the southeast practiced a more decentralized system, where village councils made decisions collectively (Ayika 2023). The Hausa-Fulani in the north were governed by emirates, which were hierarchical and centralized, with Emirs holding significant power but also relying on councils of advisers (Umar 2023). With these diverse leadership style and system, the abrupt enforcement of liberal democracy could not achieved its purpose. This has emerged some of the key problems that hinders the effectiveness of institution. Though liberal democracy is widely regarded as a commendable form of government, its introduction and enforcement in Africa have been fraught with misunderstandings and implementation

challenges. This has led to significant gaps and loopholes in the practice of democracy across the continent.

When liberal democracy was introduced to Africa, it often did not take into account the unique socio-political and cultural contexts of African societies. The democratic frameworks imposed were largely modeled on Western paradigms, which did not always align with the indigenous governance structures and norms. This lack of contextualization resulted in a superficial adoption of democratic forms without the necessary underlying democratic culture and institutions (Gyimah-Boadi 2015)

As Radelet argues, "with the end of the Cold War and apartheid in the early 1990s, authoritarian leaders were increasingly forced to give way to democratically elected governments. The number of democracies in SSA (sub-Saharan Africa) jumped from three in 1989 to 23 in 2008, including emerging market economies. This massive political shift to a more democratic continent ushered in a new era for Africa that they are still struggling with. As of 2022 Democracy Report, Mauritius is recognized as the most democratic country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It achieved a democracy score of 8.14 points, distinguishing it as the only fully democratic nation on the entire continent. This ranking is based on several criteria, including the electoral process and pluralism, the functionality of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. In contrast, many political systems in sub-Saharan and North Africa are among the least democratic worldwide. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, is noted for having the most authoritarian regime in Africa and the fourth most authoritarian in the world, following North Korea. Other countries, such as Cabo Verde, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Ghana, and Lesotho, fall into the "hybrid regimes" category, with scores ranging from 6.3 to 7.65 points. These nations often face issues such as electoral irregularities, pervasive corruption, and harassment of journalists, but at least they are gradually ascending.

Using Mauritius as a case study, the case is different from other SSA countries. The Country has relatively homogeneous with mix of indo-Mauritians, Creoles, Sino-Mauritians, and Franco-Mauritians. Unlike many other SSA countries, does not have significant tribal divisions, which contributes to its cohesive national identity and stability (Nath 2013). The entire coastal area of Mauritius is suitable for international trade and marine economic activities. Since there are no immediate neighbors, the country does not need to spend on national defense, allowing more public resources to be allocated to economic and social development. Nigeria for example is extremely diverse with over 250 ethnic groups, leading to significant challenges in national unity and frequent ethnic conflicts (Okoli, Nebeife and Izang 2022). This means, the institution of democracy can be measured differently according

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[6] *While only Africans will make democracy work, external influences can make a difference here. Western countries need to avoid supporting authoritarian leaders and stop prioritising geopolitical interests over genuine support for democracy. Democratic governments and pro-democratic societal actors should be treated preferentially. It is also important to stress that "democracy" is not a concept imposed by the West but means freedom from oppression for all people.: https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/under-pressure-democratisation-trends-in-sub-saharan-africa*

[7] Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.)(2022): "Transformation Index BTI. Governance in International Comparison); https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/imported/leseprobe/1938_Leseprobe.pdf

[8] Yunusa Kehinde Salami (2006): https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA157591831&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=08886601&p=LitRC&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7E2ebed7fe&aty=open-web-entry

to region and location, but not necessarily a centralized instrument. The population of Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya for example cannot be compared to that of Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and Seychelles, likewise, the instruments that measure democracy performance as well. It is almost impossible for large countries in SSA be form part of countries that have achieved full democracy based on presence of diverse culture, religion, traditions and background. The concept of one-system fits all is clearly not applicable on the Africa continent. The relative homogeneity and absence of deep-rooted tribal divisions contribute to national unity and political stability. Therefore, the West must once again, develop a new strategy that will properly address governance issue, taking into account local problems.

III.   THE INTERNAL PROBLEM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Sub-Saharan Africa faces several internal challenges that significantly influence the development and sustainability of democracy in the region. These issues include ethnic diversity and conflict, weak institutions, corruption, economic instability, and limited civil society participation. Each of these factors plays a critical role in shaping the democratic landscape. According to the democracy meter of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), almost half of the world's population (45.4%) lives in some form of democracy, although only 7.8% live in a "full democracy" with a score above 8, 00 Instead, a significant portion of the world's population (39.4%) lives under authoritarian regimes[9]. Although countries in Sub-Saharan Africa began embracing democracy three decades ago, the region remains marked by a wide variety of political regimes. Fragile democracies face numerous challenges and shortcomings and often border some of the world's least democratic countries. Multi-party elections, almost non-existent in 1990, are now common, yet they rarely result in changes of power. The recent trend of democratic recession has also impacted Sub-Saharan Africa, but its effects vary across different countries. Despite a general decline in democracy, some unexpected democratic transitions have occurred simultaneously.

According to the European Parliament Briefing on the "State of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa Democratic progress at risk" written by Lonel Zamfir (2021), There are two distinct reasons behind the fragility of sub-Saharan African democracies - external and political and institutional frameworks. Accordingly, the Briefing highlights the first obstacles as the low socioeconomic development, conflict, and insecurity. In addition, the second concerns weak institutions, the independence of the judiciary, manipulation of electoral

laws and constitutional norms, and severe restrictions on civil and political rights. Accordingly, even though most SSA countries are similarly situated when measuring democracy, on the contrary there are big disparities. West Africa and South Africa were the most democratic subregions; Progress in East Africa has seen ups and downs, while Central Africa is still dominated by autocratic governments[10]. Local conditions vary greatly from region to region: According to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (STI), "nowhere in the world is governance more difficult than in West and Central Africa. Many societies in the region have the potential for ethnic conflict. SSA is noted for accommodating some of the longest presidents in the world. These include Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea (41 years), Paul Biya of Cameroon (38 years), Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo (37 years), Yoweri Museveni of Uganda (35 years), Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea (28 years), Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti (22 years), and Paul Kagame of Rwanda (21 years)[11]. This is at the result of suppression of term limits, manipulating elections, and preventing the opposition from participating in political life (Zemfir 2021). According to Freedom , House, "violent, fraudulent elections that extend the already long terms of current presidents" is a significant factor influencing the region's decline in freedom points[12]. Although elections are the cornerstone of democracy, their integrity is often compromised in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Electoral Integrity Index, established by the Electoral Integrity Project, indicates that local experts have unfavorable perceptions of electoral integrity in the majority of countries in the region (Holly Ann Garnett 2021).

Both globally and in Africa, many electoral processes are plagued by a lack of transparency, trust, and oversight. These deficiencies undermine the integrity of elections and erode public confidence in democratic institutions. According to Afro barometer, the number of citizens in Africa with little or no confidence in their national electoral commission rose from 41% to 55% between 2011/13 to 2021/23[13]. The mistrust in electoral processes is significantly influenced by how election management bodies (EMBs) are constituted. The appointment processes for these bodies often lack transparency and inclusivity, excluding opposition parties and other critical stakeholders[14]. This exclusion leads to widespread skepticism about the impartiality and effectiveness of these bodies, undermining the legitimacy of elections. In many SSA countries, the representation of women in politics remains significantly below desired levels, despite policies aimed at improving inclusion. For instance, in Liberia, a 30% quota

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[9] The Economist Group (February 2024);
https://www.economistgroup.com/group-news/economist-intelligence/eius-2023-democracy-index-conflict-and-polarisation-drive-a-new-low-for

[10] BTI Global Project Report (2024) for further reading "*Across West and Central Africa, the downward trajectory in political transformation continues. Autocratic governments now rule 16 out of the region's 22 countries. Just four years ago, democracies had been in the majority. This regression is resulting from military coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali and from autocratization in Benin and Guinea-Bissau. Weaknesses of representation, unfair elections, as well as the restriction of freedom of expression in many countries are structural barriers for democratic progress*

[11] *VOA on Africa (2022) 'Africa's Current Longest-Serving Leaders;*
https://www.voaafrica.com/a/africa-s-longest-serving-leaders-/6820897.html

[12] Freedom in the World (2024) https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2024/mounting-damage-flawed-elections-and-armed-conflict
[13] Institute for Security Studies (https://issafrica.org/iss-today/five-worrying-signs-of-africa-s-poor-election-quality
[14] https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/01/25/how-distrust-of-government-by-marginalized-people-fuels-conflict-in-africa

MOU for women's representation is signed ahead of elections[15]. However, only two political parties met this target in 2023 election[16]. Furthermore, the African Union's recent observations indicate that many elections across the continent suffer from similar issues of mistrust and inefficiency. According to the (Bertha Chiroro 2010), the major challenge to electoral democracy in Africa is that the rules and regulations that govern elections lead to conflict and a violent political culture. Accordingly, the political realities in Africa are those of a winner-takes-all political culture. This characterizes the electoral process and shapes the political institutions. The analysis in the report refer to Political office in SSA as a prized possession that gives access to resources – something that electoral assistance alone is not designed to break down.

a. Lack of Accountability and Transparency

The lack of accountability and transparency is pervasive problem on the continent that has undermines public trust in government institutions, fosters corruption and impunity, and hampers efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. Accountability means the duty of government officials and institutions to account for their actions, and use of public resources. It encompasses both answerability (the obligation to provide explanations) and enforceability (the consequences for wrongdoing). Transparency, on the other hand, refers to the openness and accessibility of government information and decision-making processes to the public. We can add that Colonial legacies contributed to the entrenched hierarchical power structures and centralized control, which persisted after independence and hindered the development of accountable and transparent governance systems. In post-independence Africa, many newly established democracies struggled to establish effective mechanisms for accountability and transparency. Weak institutions, political patronage, and limited civic engagement further exacerbated these challenges.

Mkawandawire , 2020 on South Africa asserted that though since apartheid, the country has made significant progress. Yet, Challenges related to corruption and lack of accountability persist. The "State Capture" scandal, which implicated former President Jacob Zuma and his associates in the misappropriation of state resources for personal gain, underscored the vulnerabilities in the country's governance system (Mkandawire, 2020). Similarly, Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who served as Liberia's president from 2006 to 2018, faced criticism for her handling of corruption and governance issues during her tenure. While she was credited with stabilizing the country and promoting economic growth, her administration was accused of failing to address systemic corruption and nepotism. In 2019, Sirleaf's former central bank governor, Milton Weeks, was arrested on charges of economic sabotage and money laundering, highlighting ongoing corruption challenges.

The lack of accountability and transparency has severe consequences for African democracies and their citizens. Firstly, it undermines public trust in government institutions and erodes confidence in the democratic process, leading to apathy, disillusionment, and political instability. When citizens perceive that their leaders are not answerable for their actions, they are less likely to participate in civic life and hold their governments accountable. Secondly, corruption and impunity perpetuate inequality, hinder economic development, and undermine social cohesion. Resources meant for public services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, are often diverted for private gain, exacerbating poverty and marginalization. Moreover, corruption undermines the rule of law and weakens institutions, making it difficult to address other governance challenges effectively. Thirdly, the lack of accountability and transparency undermines efforts to promote human rights, gender equality, and social justice. When government officials are not held accountable for human rights abuses, discrimination, or violence, marginalized groups, including women, children, and minorities, are disproportionately affected and denied access to justice and redress. While this analysis specifically mentioned few countries, other West African countries also grapple with similar issues related to accountability and transparency. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms, including strengthening institutions, enhancing transparency in decision-making processes, promoting civic engagement, and fostering a culture of accountability and integrity. By addressing governance deficits, West African countries can build more inclusive, responsive, and effective democratic systems that serve the interests of all citizens and contribute to sustainable development and social progress.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

Developing a democracy metric tailored to the diverse needs of Sub-Saharan African countries can help address the region's specific challenges. Given the variety in size, economic development, political history, and cultural contexts, a one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate. Instead, categorizing countries into zones based on their needs and providing solutions specific to each zone will enhance the effectiveness of democratic interventions. This research recommends that the origin of democracy to SSA be studied. Measuring democracy based on one standard seems biased and unrealistic. If this continue, many SSA countries might most never have full democracy. Here is what need to be done:

Democracy Metric for Sub-Saharan Africa

Categorization of SSA into Zones

Zone 1: Emerging Democracies	Zone 2: Fragile States	Zone 3: Authoritarian Regimes
Characteristics: Countries with recent democratic transitions, moderate levels of political participation, but still grappling with significant challenges	**Characteristics**: Countries with ongoing conflicts, severe political instability, and humanitarian crises. These countries often	**Characteristics**: Countries with long-standing authoritarian rule, limited political freedoms, and significant human

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[15] CMC Finland https://www.cmcfinland.fi/en/women-elections-and-politics-field-notes-from-liberia/

[16] Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) (2023) ; https://www.eisa.org/womens-political-participation-is-liberia-making-progress/

such as corruption and weak institutions. **Needs**: Strengthening institutions, improving electoral integrity, and enhancing political participation	experience frequent disruptions to governance and democracy. **Needs**: Conflict resolution, peacebuilding, institution-building, and basic governance structures	rights abuses. These countries often have entrenched leadership resistant to democratic reforms **Needs**: Promoting political freedoms, human rights advocacy, and incremental democratic reforms

The one-size fits all is only a myth. It is height time countries or region be measured according to their capacity. This will help understand mini progress in different localities.

Metric Components

Institutional Strength

Indicators: Independence of judiciary, effectiveness of parliament, and strength of anti-corruption bodies.

Zone 1: Judicial reforms, capacity building for parliamentarians, anti-corruption campaigns
Zone 2: Establish basic legal and judicial frameworks
Zone 3: Promote judicial independence through international pressure and support for civil society organizations
Electoral Integrity
Indicators: Transparency of electoral processes, presence of independent electoral commissions, and frequency of free and fair elections.
Solutions:
Zone 1: Strengthen electoral commissions, enhance voter education, deploy international observers
Zone 2: Establish basic electoral systems and frameworks, ensure security for voters
Zone 3: Advocate for electoral reforms, monitor elections rigorously, support opposition parties.
Political Participation
Indicators: Voter turnout, representation of women and minorities, freedom of the press.
Zone 1: Encourage political inclusivity, support media freedom, promote civil education
Zone 2: Facilitate basic political participation mechanisms, ensure safety for journalists.
Zone 3: Pressure for media freedoms, support underground or exiled media outlets, and promote international awareness.
Implementation Strategy
1. **Data Collection and Monitoring**
   o Utilize international databases (e.g., World Bank, Freedom House) and local surveys to gather data on the above indicators.
   o Regularly update and publish reports to track progress and identify areas needing attention.
2. **International Cooperation**
   o Engage with international organizations (e.g., African Union, United Nations) to provide technical and financial support tailored to each zone.
3. **Adaptive Approaches**
   o Flexible to adjust strategies based on evolving political and social contexts in each country.
   o Employ pilot projects in select areas before scaling up successful interventions.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the persistent challenges facing the realization of genuine democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite widespread adoption of democratic frameworks, the region struggles to adhere to democratic principles, resulting in significant governance issues and

developmental setbacks. Key factors hindering democratic progress include the lack of checks and balances, pervasive corruption, and weak institutions. Additionally, the imposition of Western-style governance structures has often been ineffective due to the complex socio-political landscape marked by numerous tribes, clans, and historical tensions.

The research suggests that for democracy to truly flourish in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is imperative to address these challenges through robust institutional reforms. This involves moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach and recognizing the need to classify the region into distinct categories, each treated as a standalone unit with tailored strategies.

Given the diverse political, social, and economic landscapes across Sub-Saharan Africa, it is unjust to hold all countries to the same democratic standards. Applying a universal standard for measuring democratic achievement does not account for the unique challenges faced by countries still struggling to stabilize. For instance, countries emerging from conflict or those with deeply rooted tribal and clan-based societal structures require different approaches compared to more politically stable nations. The study advocates for a differentiated metric to assess democratic progress that considers the unique circumstances of each country.

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