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Promoting dialogue and cooperation between African nations regarding democratic governing

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Introduction

The power of people, democracy. Democracy is a super form of government adopted by hundreds of nations around the globe. In spite of its global popularity and, in some cases, success, the rates of democracy within the African continent remain considerably low. Few nations are considered by third-party organizations as 'full democracies.' Additionally, multiple democracy indices are measured based on a country's economy, and many are concerned that heavy foreign investment such as China's could be having a big impact on the governments of African countries. Recent violent conflicts, like civil wars and coups d'état, have shown discontent and instability with current governments, and many have the aim of changing or reforming governments within their nation.

Definition of Key Terms

Democracy

Democracy can be thought of as the "power of the people." It is a government system in which the population elects representatives to make decisions, policies, laws, and other matters according to national law. Democratic processes must have free and fair elections for "all adults who are subject to the binding collective decisions of society" (Coglianese).

Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SGD 16)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of targets with the purpose of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and protecting the planet. The two SDGs relevant to the issue are No. 3: Good health and well-being, which aims to ensure healthy lives for everyone regardless of age, and No. 8: Decent work and economic growth, which aims to promote inclusive, productive employment.

Multilateral Collaboration

Multilateral collaboration involves cooperation and discussion from multiple parties. Multilateral collaboration usually aims to meet the needs of most or all the involved parties and is generally concerned with the overall well-being of everyone.

Diplomacy Index (The Economist)

The diplomacy index by the economist measures the level of democracy within a country's government. They are based on 60 different indicators, which are grouped into five major categories:

V- Dem

The V-Dem measure of democracy ranks the governments of different nations based on five levels: electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian (V-Dem Institute). This is a global ranking by an external organization of the measured levels of democracy within a country, which is widely recognized and has been considered an accurate measure.

Authoritarian Regime

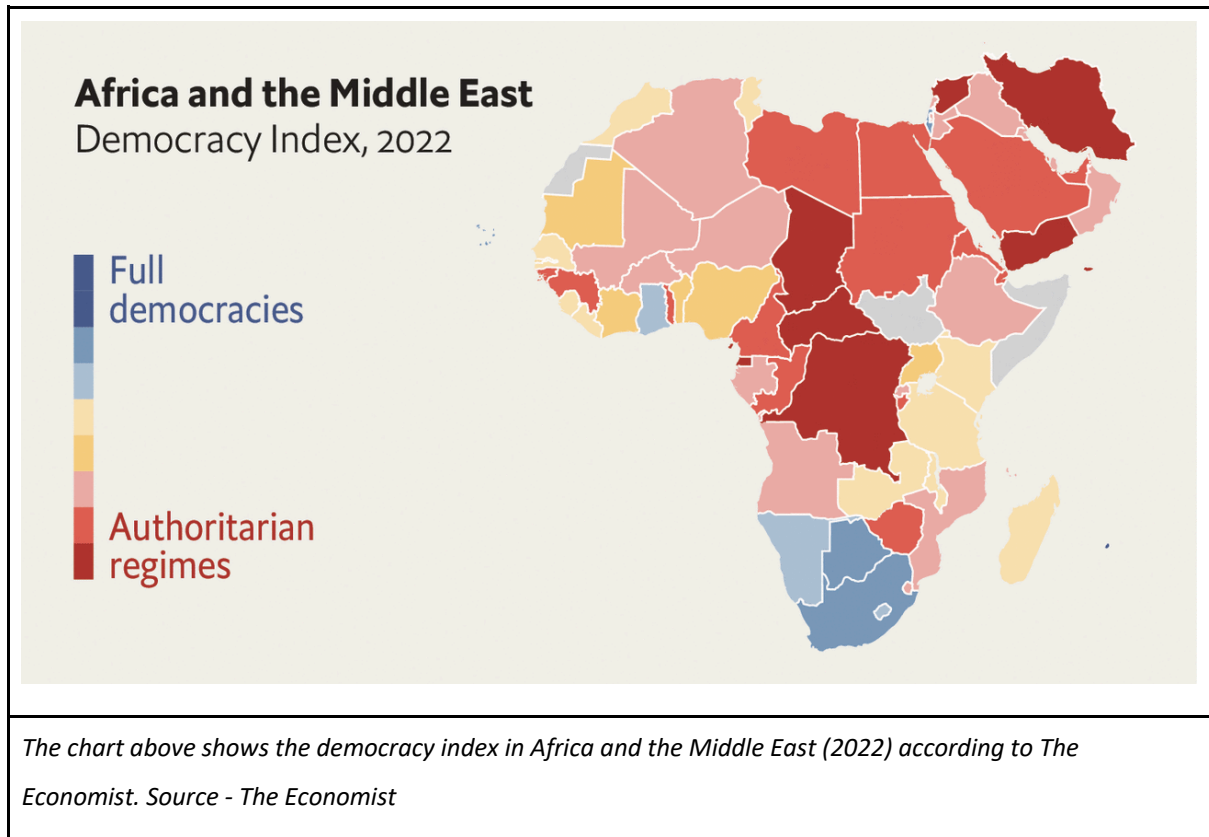
Authoritarian regimes favor the control and distribution of power to a single individual or specified group of people. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an authoritarian regime is "favoring a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people." (Merriam-Webster).

General Overview

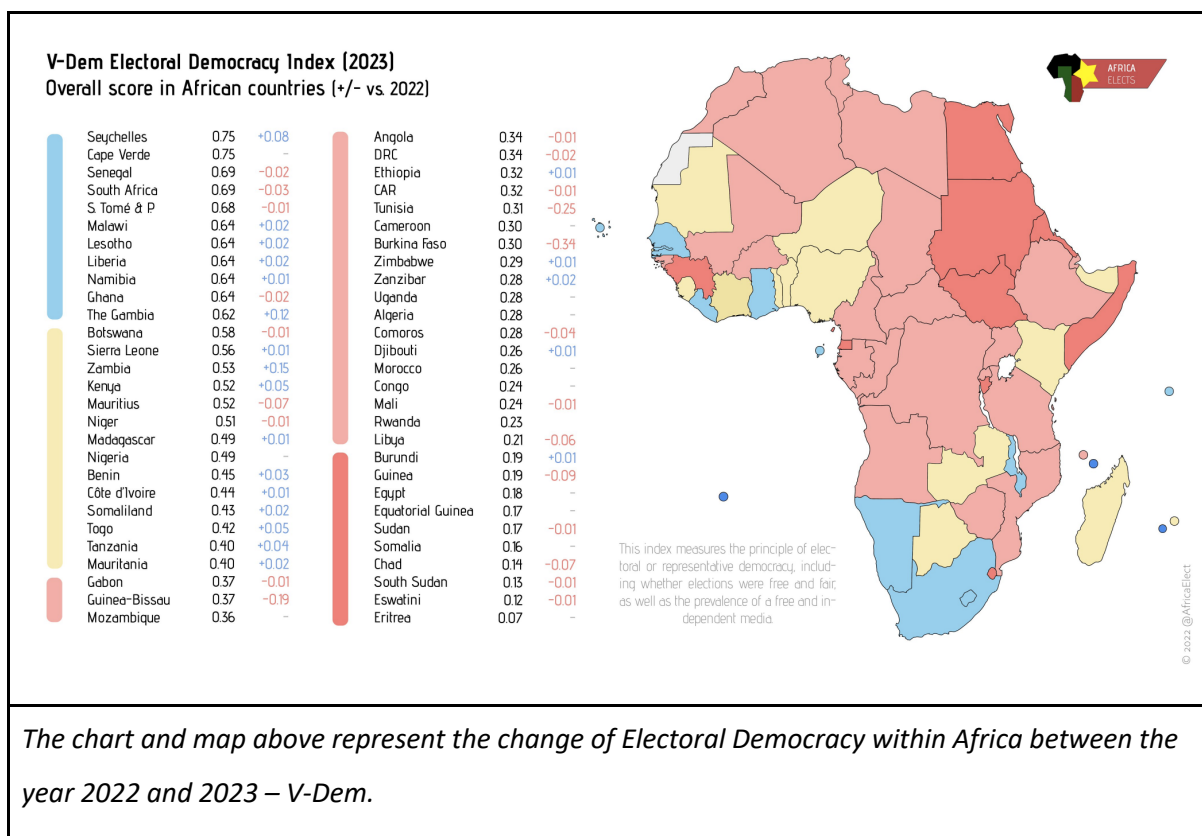
Democracy in the African country has greatly changed over the last couple of years. Some countries saw significant growth in the democracy ratings within the country, while others remained relatively the same, and certain countries' measures of democracy decreased, showing them as more authoritarian states. These measures of democracy are taken by third parties to be partial and obtain the actual results. There are many different democracy indices, like the *Economist's* Diplomacy Index or V-Dem (detailed explanation above in key terms).

According to the Democracy Index measured by The Economist, a large portion of the African continent is under an authoritarian or hybrid regime. The chart below shows the ranking of each African nation. Countries like Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Equatorial Guinea are considered countries with the most Authoritarian Regimes. Madagascar, Senegal, and Tanzania have

a hybrid government, and countries like South Africa and Botswana are considered the most democratic republics, although they still do not rank as full democracies. These rankings have evolved throughout the years, yet they tend to maintain a fairly stable position, showing little change in the government type of these nations.



Another measure of democracy is the V-Dem, which ranks countries very similar to the chart from the Economist but makes less harsh distinctions. The chart below shows the V-Dem Electoral democracy index of 2023, with the difference from 2022. As can be seen, the growth and decrease of democracy were balanced between nations. 21 countries saw a slight increase in their democracy measures, with the most growth being made by Zambia, with a 0.15 increase. On the other hand, 22 countries saw a decline in their democracy levels, with the largest decrease being made by Guinea-Bissau, with 0.19. 13 Countries did not see any change in their democracy levels. A chart and map representing the change in Electoral Democracy within Africa between the years 2022 and 2023 can be seen below.



The Economy

Democratic growth and development have often been interlinked with the country's economy. A common measure of a country's economy is Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which refers to the total gross value added by all resident producers in the economy. The GDP around the African country is very varied, with nations having a high GDP like South Africa with a GDP (per capita) of 6006 USD (Trading Economics), or nations being at the lowest like Burundi, with a GPD (per capita) of 237 USD (manhood). However, the average growth of GDP of African nations has seen a decline over the last few years. In 2022, the real GDP growth rate was an estimated 3.7%, a significant decrease from the 4.8% increase in 2021. It is predicted that the continent's GDP will maintain stable growth between the years of 2023 and 2027 (Galal, "Africa: Real GDP Growth Rate 2010-2027").

The African economy is supported by multiple industries varying between the countries. However, due to its large abundance of natural resources, a lot of the economy is largely generated through agriculture and mining. The farming industry actively engages over 60% of the African population (Kröner and John Innes Clarke), providing millions of jobs and supporting families all across the 54 countries of the continent. In 2019, the country exported almost one billion tons of natural resources and minerals, bringing an income of 406 billion USD (Al Jazeera).

A large factor that negatively impacted countries' GDPs was the Covid-19 outbreak in 2019. The incredibly deadly disease saw a massive spread around the continent, with every country reporting cases and having a sum of at least 12,423,000 reported infections and 256,000 reported deaths caused by COVID-19 across the continent up until July 2022 (Reuters). Due to the mass spread of the disease and the lack of a vaccine or a cure, many countries were forced to go into lockdowns, ensuring all citizens stayed within the confinement of their homes and were exposed to the virus to the minimum. Because of the lockdown, many economies saw a significant decline. The country with the highest GDP, South Africa, saw an enormous decrease of 51% between the first three months and the second three months of 2020. Many aspects of the economy saw a steep decline, from merchandise to agricultural trade.

With a significant sector of democracy being measured upon the economies, it is important to note the countries that have a significant external impact on the economies of African nations. A major contributor for years is the People's Republic of China (PRC). For many years, China has been the biggest trade partner and foreign investor in the country. They have also provided multiple nations around the continent with loans, creating a sense of dependency on the Asian Republic. China's large investment in the nation generated over 135,000 jobs in 2019 and reached a substantial 5 billion USD in 2021 (China Africa Research Initiative). An estimated 16% of the continent's imports come from China. In addition to the investment, a large sector of the continent's exports, around 20%, goes directly to China (Chido Munyati). The large Chinese involvement in African economies and, consequently, the countries' politics has alarmed other nations, particularly the United States (US). The US has made enormous investments in Africa, since 2022, they have invested over 65 billion USD in the continent and plan to continue their investment. They are also extremely keen on maintaining the role and position of African nations in the G20 and the AU-P, with the belief of semi-directly supporting countries through their struggles whilst allowing them their own independence (House).

Recently, world politics has seen a large change, with many large countries, like the USA or France, opting for a more right-wing form of government. There have been multiple coups d'état across the entire continent, and multiple countries are facing armed conflicts within their own territory. Over a dozen African countries are currently involved in a violent conflict within their own nation. According to the *Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*, there are more than 35 non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) across the continent in countries like the

DRC, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, and Cameroon (Geneva Academy). These violent trends show discontent with the current forms of government, such as the evasion of term limits by heads of state or the significant decrease in credible elections (Global State of Democracy Initiative). As the AU-P, it must be stated that the frequency and extent of violence associated with such protests and presentations should be reduced and maintained only for a last-result effort.

In spite of all the negative events taking place within African nations, many seem hopeful and are participants in improving the governments and increasing their democracy. Nine African countries are in the top 50 in the world levels of participation, with many, such as Ghana, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, showing popular movements in combating authoritarian governments. The African Union has maintained an important role in the establishment and maintenance of democracy across Africa. "However, the inadequate compliance by member states has shown that there is no substitute for effective democratic institutions at the domestic level." (Global State of Democracy Initiative).

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
14 of November 1884	The Berlin Conference: set out division how much territory (and which) European powers (such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) would obtain from Africa in the form of colonies
28 of February 1922	Independence of Egypt from the United Kingdom: First independence in Africa
4 of May 1990	The end of apartheid (country's harsh, institutionalized system of racial segregation) in Africa (as recognized by the USA).
9 of July 2011	Independence of South Sudan: Last independence in Africa
July 2002	Creation of the African Union
14 of February 2020	The Minister of Health and Population of Egypt, Dr Hala Zayed, confirmed the first case of the COVID-19 in the country, the first in Africa.

Major Parties Involved

South Africa

South Africa is the richest country in the African continent. They have a GDP, as explained above, with an average GDP per capita of 6006 USD (Trading Economics). They are ranked as one of the most democratic countries in the continent, with a V-Dem index of 0.69 (V-Dem). It is also one of the most populated in Africa, being the sixth in the continent and having around 64 million citizens (2024). This means that their democratic government is one of the largest in the entire continent, and millions are being affected (positively or negatively) by the adaptation of this new government.

Burundi

Burundi is the poorest country in Africa. They have a significantly low GDP per capita, being 237 USD (mahnoor), which in many cases is not enough to sustain an entire family. With this, Burundi has seen very low rankings of democracy, having a V-Dem score of 0.19 (V-Dem). Burundi is also a highly populated country, having a registered population of around 14 million people. Of these 14 million, it is believed that over 62% of the entire population is living or heavily affected by poverty (World Bank).

Seychelles

The Seychelles, as considered by many organizations, is one of the most (according to V-Dem) democratic nations in Africa. They have a significantly high democracy rating of 0.75. In perspective, they are 0.05 points behind Austria and are ranked as higher democracies than other European countries like Poland or Hungary (Blerta Begisholli). The Seychelles is tied with Cape Verde for the most democratic country, according to V-Dem in 2023. However, they saw a more substantial growth, which shows they are on their way to increasing democracy in the nation. Cape Verde had no growth or decline between the democracy index of 2022 and 2023, whereas the Seychelles saw a 0.08 growth. They have a population of around 131,000 people, in comparison to the 540,000 of Cape Verde.

Eritrea

As ranked by V-Dem in 2023, Eritrea is the least democratic country in Africa. They have a score of 0.07, which is considerably low, one of the lowest in the entire world. The democracy rating

of Eritrea is more than ten times less than the rating of Seychelles, the highest-ranking country in Africa. Eritrea has a population of around 3.5 million people and a GDP per capita of 626 USD (International Monetary Fund).

China

A non-African country that has a significant impact on African economies and governments is China. As explained above, they are extremely participative in the development of the economies, as they provide multiple investments and make a large sector of the imports and exports of the continent. This large contribution has created a sense of dependency on China, as the take back or reduction of these contributions could result in drastic negative changes to the country's economic status and development.

USA

Concerned with the level of Chinese investment and dependency in African countries, the USA aims to increase its involvement and reduce that of China. At the moment, they are one of Africa's biggest financial contributors, investing millions and creating many plans to continue these investments. With this, they hope to reduce Chinese dependency and spread American tendencies and government trends. They hope to bring democracy and higher government development to all 54 African nations.

Possible Solutions

The African Peace Union (AU-P), with the goal of establishing, increasing, and stabilizing democracy within African Nations and the continent itself, must create solutions that bring benefit to most parties and the general well-being of everyone in the country. Without the need, all solutions that involve violent methods are frowned upon and should only be used as a last-resource tool.

Possible solutions to increase democracy rates involve:

- Established and predetermined meetings to navigate and control democracy within the continent
- Establishing regulations as to the amount of foreign investment and capital that is allowed to ensure there is no external political influence in African politics
- Allowing third-party organizations to conduct deep research and analysis to measure democracy within a country and suggest possible areas for improvement.

As always, these solutions should be discussed by the committee as a whole and should be agreed upon by the majority. They should focus on the cooperation and dialogue of promoting democratic government and must listen and attend to the needs that each nation presents.

Further Reading

Apart from a large Chinese influence in Africa, there has been substantial growth in the involvement and influence of Africa in recent years. This has also become significantly alarming for many countries, considering the ongoing Russia and Ukraine war and the large impact that African support could have on the conflict. Because of this large alarm, the US has spoken about the potential dangers and threats that this involvement could pose. ["Senior US general warns about Russia's growing influence in Africa."](#)

Other resources that can provide further understanding of the situation of democracy in Africa can be seen below:

- [The state of democracy in Africa](#)
- [Africa's coup epidemic: Has democracy failed the continent?](#)

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