Forum: General Assembly 2

Issue: Methods to promote the development of democratic institutions in Africa

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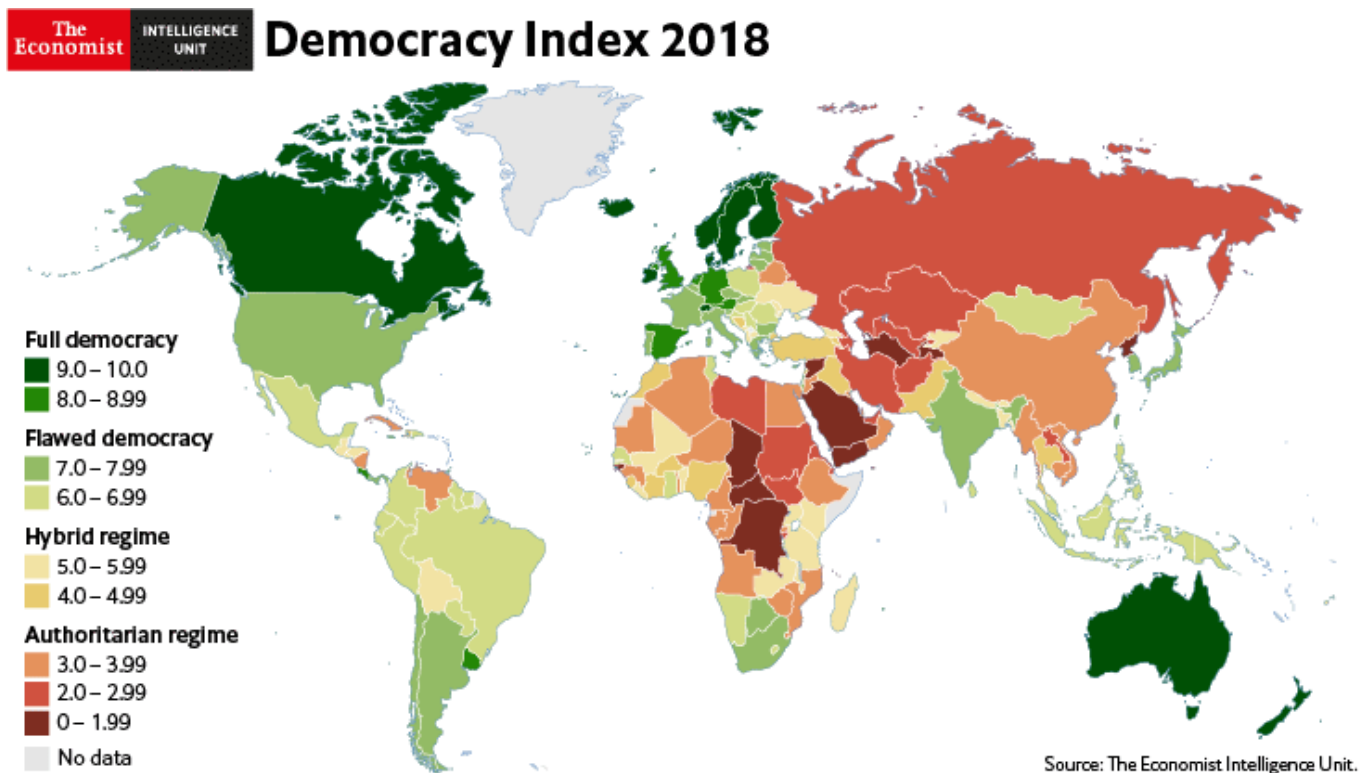
Introduction

Figure 1: The world democracy index 2018

Politics play an important part of shaping our world, countries, and citizens. It links to power and authority, and along with that, there are many different ways of governing a country—each and every nation has different political structures and backgrounds. Although there are many cases in which a nation has effective, efficient, and transparent government, yet there still are political problems existing in parts of our world today. Out of the many major and minor political issues we face, Africa is facing an issue in order to most adequately promote the development of democratic institutions in Africa.

In terms of solving this issue, it's vital to keep in consideration of the national sovereignties nations have, and their rights to decide of their own political structures and government. However, the demand and support of the development of democratic institutions in Africa has been rising. Based on Afrobarometer surveys, more than 67% Africans responded that they support and prefer democracy. Regardless of the demand, the actions and supplies of democracy still lags behind, having only 42% of the Africans being at least 'fairly satisfied' with how democracy is working in their country. With the lack of economic and

political stability, it clearly signified the problem of democracy in Africa. This means that there must be clear methods in order to improve the supply of democracy and acknowledge the situation.

On top of this, according to reports by the Freedom House, ever since 2005, the global freedom rate has been declining. Although there were certain developments and progress made in several nations in Africa in the areas of democratization, it was unbalanced throughout Africa—meaning that in spite of the fact that some nations were quite successful, many have failed to have their government developed to a full democratic one. The Freedom House also added that less than 11% of Africans currently reside in countries in which the Freedom House considers free. The indicators of freedom includes citizens' clear voices for democracy and their rights.

Because the political structure and the way of governance of a nation influences many other factors such as the economy, society, and security, it's important for a nation to develop democratic institutions. With this, it has come to the attention of the General Assembly to address and come up with reliable and realistic solutions to this issue.

Definition of Key Terms

Democratic Institutions

Democracy is a governmental system in which the population of the nation are eligible members of the state, usually through a number of elected representatives; thus, a democratic institution is a democratic political system. According to the Action Programme for peace by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), it points out that democratic institutions and

Democracy across the regions

	No. of countries	Democracy index average	Full democracies	Flawed democracies	Hybrid regimes	Authoritarian regimes
North America						
2018	2	8.56	1	1	0	0
2017	2	8.56	1	1	0	0
Western Europe						
2018	21	8.35	14	6	1	0
2017	21	8.38	14	6	1	0
Eastern Europe						
2018	28	5.42	0	12	9	7
2017	28	5.40	0	12	9	7
Latin America & the Caribbean						
2018	24	6.24	2	14	5	3
2017	24	6.26	1	16	5	2
Asia & Australasia						
2018	28	5.67	2	13	6	7
2017	28	5.63	2	13	6	7
Middle East & North Africa						
2018	20	3.54	0	2	4	14
2017	20	3.54	0	2	4	14
Sub-Saharan Africa						
2018	44	4.36	1	7	14	22
2017	44	4.35	1	7	14	22
Total						
2018	167	5.48	20	55	39	53
2017	167	5.48	19	57	39	52

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Figure 2: Democracy index and type of government across regions

judicial systems can exist only under "egalitarian co-existence expressed through relations of tolerance,

willingness to compromise, respect for the difference between public and private life, and participatory opportunities in all institutions of the state and civil society".

Full Democracy

Full democracy is a democratic system in which all the democratic principles are clearly and correctly upheld. This means that the civil and political rights of citizens are protected, and the political structure supports democracy to be flourished in the country. Moreover, the population should be satisfied with how the government functions, while also having a variety of different medias which are independent. For a country with full democracy, it mostly poses positive impacts, having political and economic stability.

Flawed Democracy

In contrast to full democracy, flawed democracy is a system of democracy where the elections are fair and fair, and fundamental civil rights are protected, yet still faces some problems, such as restricting and controlling the media to some extent. In addition, there may be issues in the areas of governance, political culture, and political participation.

Hybrid

In terms of the type of regime, hybrid is where there are substantial problems and issues during elections, which doesn't always make it fair and free. Governments may often commonly apply pressure on opposition groups and parties in order to gain political dominance. On top of this, the nation with this regime may face more problems than in a flawed democracy, and corruption would be prevalent, as the laws wouldn't be strict. Again, the media would be controlled more strictly by the government, which may mean that there would be harassments and pressures faced by journalists.

Authoritarian

As the name itself suggests, authoritarian government is where they prioritize authority and power, and this also includes dictatorship and nominal democracy. Authoritarian is most like the opposite of full democracy. In a country under authoritarian regime, regardless of whether or not there are some formal democratic institutions, those would have very little substance in politics and governance. Elections are unlikely to occur; however, if they do occur, elections are neither free nor fair. Furthermore, abuses of civil rights are disregarded, and media are typically owned by the state, with censorship.

General Overview

History of African political structures

The history of African political structures goes back to colonial times, followed by the Cold War. As a consequence of colonialism and the war, there were oppressive and authoritarian governments institutionalized, yet with a very unstable structure. Power was held in dominance by the older and wealthier men, and this led to a more extensive bureaucracy and power struggles. Moreover, the governments were corrupted as well; elections were manipulated and not free or fair. Free and fair elections constitute of reflection of the expression and will of people, and citizens' rights to vote are protected accordingly. David Anderson, a professor of the African Studies Centre at Oxford University, said "in almost every single colony the British attempted to manipulate the result to their advantage". As a consequence of colonialism, and with continuous authoritarian regimes in Africa, rules of law were broken down, there was corruption, and some people even started antiliberal movements.

According to *Democratization in Africa: African Views, African Voices*, one of the reasons is due to both internal and external pressures which were posed from the past to African societies. On top of this, the rise of citizens' demand increased based on their economic decline. It added that this made people more critical in viewing their country's government, their laws and policies.

In the past, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had its major focus on decolonization. However, currently, the OAU has been shifting its focus and emphasis to economic recovery as well as good and stable governance of nations. Additionally, the Sub-Saharan African countries have also changed their aim to reforming their institutions and introducing elections as well as a variety of political parties. On 1990, in the 26th OAU summit, the Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim made a speech remarking his opinion in favor of the development of democratic institutions. He said, "Africa could not ignore the global consensus on the value of democracy; but democracy must be home-grown." He expressed his stance, however still emphasized that Africa shouldn't just wait for others to help them but also should work themselves to improve their government system and democratization. Many others followed on this and were in favor of democratization, yet still expressed concern in solving problems leading up to democratization, such as restructuring the economy, and many more. They also said, "democracy is not only an attractive option but a rational one". When it comes to democracy, a crucial factor which the governments are lacking are the civil rights, government functions, political participation, transparency and stability, and the election process.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the nations which has experienced drastic transformation in their political structure. Even until 2015, Ethiopia's parliaments and government seemed to be corrupted. From the parliamentary elections, every seat was taken by those from the dominant ruling political party and their associates. However, in 2016, a protest began, and it continued on until the year of 2018. Due to this, as a result, the

dominant ruling party stepped down from regime, and Abiy Ahmed became the new Prime Minister of Ethiopia. He clearly saw the problems in Ethiopia, and from this, he opened up more opportunities for political discussions, released a large number of political prisoners, and did many more to improve the situation.

Nigeria

In the past, for many years, many people expressed concern about the Nigerian president's leadership and his government. However, after the new election took place in 2015, changes and improvements were gradually made. Although the new president wasn't as dynamic as many hoped, the vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, has made lots of progress in developing the democratic institutions in Nigeria. Based on what he had taken in from the citizens' opinions, he decided to devalue the naira, the monetary unit of Nigeria, in order to solve the problems regarding exchange rates and black-market rates. The political situation and status in Nigeria started to improve here as well.

Angola

Angola was another country with an authoritarian regime. The former ruler of the country, José Eduardo dos Santos, ruled Angola for almost 40 years, and he used his power and authority to steal the nation's substantial oil revenues in order to enrich and benefit his own families and others affiliated. However, due to health reasons, he decided to step down and announced that his successor is João Lorenço, a former defense minister. As Lorenço rose to power, unlike how everyone thought, he defied people's expectations that he would be like dos Santos and work only for his individual profit. Having acknowledged of the citizens' wants and needs, the political structure in Angola is changing, and now, many view Angola as a nation with a high potential to succeed in shifting and reforming their institutions and political regimes.

Uganda

Although some nations were successful in reforming their governmental systems and political structures, some nations are still struggling to do so, and one of them includes Uganda. The president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, has been in office for 32 years; however, even with the strong demand of developing democratic institutions, he still continuously clung to power and authority. With the abuse of his power and authority, he removed the age cap from the constitution in order to allow himself to run for a sixth term, in which the election happens in 2021. Not only that, the Museveni administration implemented new surveillance systems and instituted a regressive tax on the use of social media, which is a clear representation of an authoritarian regime.

Tanzania

Tanzania is another nation facing continuous problems. In Tanzania, the government, based on the authoritarian regime, arrested many of the prominent opposition leaders, in order to keep their authorities and power in place. Moreover, they stifled anti-government protests, and pushed for laws and policies to further strengthen their power in politics domestically. Again, Tanzania clearly is a country under authoritarian regime, as there is no substantial power of any democratic institutions, and abuses of civil rights are simply disregarded.

The second wave of liberation in Africa

The first wave of liberation in Africa is widely known due to serious problems in relation to slavery and their independence. This first wave was established and aimed on freeing the Africans from the influence of colonization of Europe, such as the political, economic and military dominance.

However, as explained previously, even after their independence, with the recent issue Africa is facing with political structure, it is said that this is the second wave of liberation in Africa. The Democracy In Africa (DIA) said, "African democracies are distinctive not because they face so many challenges, but because they have managed to make so much progress despite the absence of many of the supposed 'pre-conditions' of democratic consolidation." On top of this, another reason why it's hard to simply grant democracy in each and every nation is because it cannot be done only through international and external factors. There definitely are factors which play a positive role in help to push for democracy, simultaneously, there are factors which stops and negatively impacts it. Although the political structure and situation can be shaped through both external and internal factors, yet the domestic situation, decisions and context are more important in terms of democratization of a nation.

Need for democratic institutions

A critical part of solving this issue is to firstly understand why democratic institutions should be promoted and developed in Africa, and how it would be effective in solving the problems at hand due to corrupt and ineffective political system. This is significant in solving the issue, as the impact politics and governance can pose in the society ranges from small, minor problems to serious and major problems. Some of these problems in relation to the development of democratic institutions and political regime includes economic decline, fundamental human rights and many more.

While also finding the best methods to promote the development of democratic institutions in Africa and helping those nations to do so, it's also important to respect the national sovereign a country has in terms of their political and governmental decisions. Thomas R. Pickering, a former U.S. ambassador who was a permanent representative to the United Nations said, "It is not our role to decide who governs any country,

but we will use our influence to encourage governments to get their people to make that decision for themselves."

Economic decline

According to the African Union, Africa loses more than $148 billion annually due to corruption. Not only is this a matter of government transparency and trust, but this also ties a heavy connection to the economies. Other than this, poverty and unemployment also lead to economic decline. Under an authoritarian regime, a nation is most likely to have a very domestic political economy, meaning that the dominant sector of the economy is the government. This is because along with politics, the economy is also controlled by certain group of people, causing unbalance and instability.

Another reason why the economy is crucial is because it can lead to other useful and positive developments within the country. The growing economic potential of a nation would help them improve any present economic issues and increases the possibility of reforming and integrating new ways. Furthermore, public service and its use also impacts the economy. According to the Afrobarometer, their data showed that one in four people paid bribes in order to access public services. For instance, Ghana alone lost about GhC 13.5 billion due to corruption and citizens having to pay bribes in order to access the basic public services.

Fundamental human rights

In addition to the impact democratization poses on the economy, the fundamental human rights are also influenced by this. The Freedom House mentions, "Populist politicians' appeals to "unique" or "traditional" national values in democracies threaten the protection of individual rights as a universal value, which allows authoritarian states to justify much more egregious human rights violations". With democracy, human rights are protected, as it allows citizens have a voice, and express their wills and needs.

Protests

With the ongoing conflict of democratization in several nations in Africa, it often leads to protests, which is a way for the citizens to express their strong opinions. Just like how it happened in Ethiopia, continuous opposition and confrontation of two completely different sides results in a never-ending conflict. However, clinging to power and simply because of the desire to enrich their individual wealth and authority is only for one self's individual benefit, while trying to improve the political situations and solve problems through the development of democratic institutions is for the country and society as a whole.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations actively supports democracy through various ways, including the promotion of human rights, development, peace and security. The UN officially states, "The UN promotes good governance, monitors elections, supports the civil society to strengthen democratic institutions and accountability, ensures self-determination in decolonized countries, and assists in the drafting of new constitutions in post-conflict nations."

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) is to cover and solve the problems in these areas: media and freedom of information, gender equality, community activism, rule of law and human rights, youth engagement, strengthening civil society interaction with government, tools for knowledge, and support for electoral processes. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Office for High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are also relevant United Nations departments and organizations in relation to the development of democratic institutions.

Ever since 1988, the UN General Assembly adopted at least one resolution annually, mentioning some aspects, ideas and concepts of democracy. A/RES/62/7 states that nations are encouraged to strengthen their national programs which are devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy. This resolution also encourages regional and intergovernmental organizations to share the experiences in the field of promoting democracy. On top of that, member states are also asked to raise public awareness and also to ensure that the civil society and the public has opportunities to be involved and contribute. Another resolution that mentions about democracy is A/RES/62/150. This resolution focuses on strengthening the role of the UN in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization.

Furthermore, this issue also connects to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To be more specific, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities, and SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions links back to democratization in Africa and its shift in political structure and systems.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1870-1990	Between these years, Africa was colonized by the Europeans, who had political, economic and military dominance over them.

1947-1991	The period of Cold War—a period of geopolitical tension and war, mainly between the Soviet Union with its satellite states, and the United States with its allied nations.
1990	The 26th annual summit of the Organization of African Unity was held, and the Secretary General said, "Africa could not ignore the global consensus on the value of democracy; but democracy must be home-grown".
March 1992	A workshop was held in Benin by the National Research Council's Panel on Issues in Democratization, involving participants from over 40 different African countries. The workshop was to better understand the democratic movements happening and to share ideas on effective ways to encourage democracy.
2005	The global freedom rate started to decline.
2015	According to data collected by the Freedom House, less than 20% of sub-Saharan African countries were considered to be "free".
March 28-29, 2015	In Nigeria, a new election took place, and the vice-president started to improve the situation and solve problems regarding political structure and system.
August 5, 2016	A protest began in Ethiopia, with the citizens' high demand of a new Prime Minister. The protest continued for 3 years, until the former Prime Minister decided to step down.

Possible Solutions

As mentioned previously, an important part of finding adequate methods to promote the development of democratic institutions in Africa is making sure that the international influences and domestic opposition are balanced and works in unity to an extent in which makes democratization in a nation effective and successful. This is because neither international support and influence nor domestic opposition can independently work to solve the issue at hand; therefore, it's crucial to find the fair and right balance of the two factors.

Going back to the basics of democracy, it's vital to give citizens chances and opportunities to share and express their opinions to the government. This means that their opinions should be represented by the elected representatives, and therefore should be able to play the role of democracy. Meanwhile, the fundamental human rights should be respected and protected, meaning that the governments shouldn't violate their rights and restrict them from it. This can be seen through the election results, and how well the government accepts and listens to the citizens' voices.

In addition, it's important to promote democratization in a variety of ways. Raising public awareness also falls under this, as citizens should understand and acknowledge the positive impacts democratic regime has on their countries. As democracy is where the citizens' opinions are heard and represented, it's crucial to make sure that the public are aware of what they're able to do and how to do so.

Other than domestic opposition, again, it's important to have some international influences. Other nations with a fair and free government system, such as full democracy can set a great example for other nations to follow and develop their own democratic institutions. Not only that, some successful cases of other African nations in terms of democratization could be very helpful as well.

Nations may also come up with ways to ensure safe, fair and free election, considering the fact that there should be no corruption. By doing this, it would clearly and effectively ensure the transparency of the government. Moreover, there could be solutions regarding how to prevent any potential problems caused by those who are against democratization. Considering the amount of power and authority a former authoritarian leader and/or their families and associates have may be important as well, in order to make sure that the democratic institutions are able to develop well, and the nation is not put in any type of danger due to that. Furthermore, the laws and policies must be clarified so that there are no further conflicts made due to breaking the rules, which are supposed to be followed and respected.

Bearing in mind of the fact that solutions to the political conflicts and concerns in government structures and regimes in Africa is in significant need, and also keeping in mind of the numerous positive potential impacts it can pose on many factors, nations must try in the best ways to find the most adequate methods to develop the democratic institutions in Africa.

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