POLICY BRIEF

The power of demonstration: To increase resilience, democracy must be shown to work

Ken O. Opalo

African states have made considerable democratic progress in recent decades, but the quality and impact of elections still leave much to be desired.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the early 1990s, African states have made significant gains toward the institutionalization of electoral politics. Nearly all countries in the region hold regular general elections, a number of countries have consolidated norms of presidential term limits, and instances of unconstitutional transfer of power are at an all-time low. However, both the quality and impact of elections in the region remain wanting. In most countries, elections are seldom free and fair—with incumbent parties enjoying almost insurmountable advantages on account of their access to state resources for targeted clientelistic benefits, vote buying, and manipulation of electoral management bodies. At the same time, state weakness in much of the region limits politicians' ability to implement programmatic policies that yield tangible benefits to voters. As such, elections in many African states tend to be fought on the basis of personalities, identity politics, and short-term clientelistic benefits.

With case studies from Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, this policy brief examines the state of electoral democracy in Africa. Overall, the biggest threat to electoral democracy in the region is the disconnect between elections and the lived experiences of voters. The failure of electoral politics to produce tangible improvements in living standards risks pushing voters in the region to consider alternative forms of government. This quest for alternatives is taking place in the midst of a global democratic recession. Buffeted by populist politics at home, Western states no longer have the ability to serve as examples of democratic governance that works for citizens. At the same time, China's economic success is increasingly challenging the claim that only accountable democratic government can deliver sustainable improvements in citizens' living standards.

In the main, the future of electoral democracy in Africa will depend on governments' ability to improve living standards in the region. This has important implications for the design and implementation of Western democracy promotion programs. Such efforts must not only focus on improvements in the conduct of elections and governance, but also on the strengthening of states' capacity to govern and to provide vital public goods and services. Only then will both citizens and elites see the value of defending electoral democracy at all costs.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, electoral democracy has become entrenched in sub-Saharan Africa. All of the region's states, with the exception of Eritrea, hold regular general elections. Irregular transfers of power (through coups or violent rebellions) are at an all-time low. And in a number of countries, executive term limits are entrenched. Overall, the general trend is one of increasing institutionalization of democratic politics in the region.[1]

At the same time, African states are far from the ideal state of liberal democracy. Most of the region's elections are not free and fair. And while the region's legislative elections are marked by high turnover, they are yet to deliver meaningful levels of political accountability. Presidents still remain largely unaccountable—in part due to the continued weakness of the region's political parties, legislatures, and judiciaries. And perhaps most importantly, for most Africans, elections remain divorced from service delivery. Instead of yielding programmatic policy benefits, elections in most of the region's states tend to be fought on the basis of personalities, ethnicity, or the ability to deliver short-term clientelistic benefits.

Current global trends may exacerbate these challenges. First, as more Western democracies succumb to the pressures of populist authoritarian politics, Africa's political elites may feel less constrained by the demands of electoral politics and the need to adhere to still-nascent democratic norms. Second, over the last decade, a number of African states (such as Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Sudan) have found themselves on the frontlines of the global efforts to counter violent extremism (CVE). Involvement in CVE poses the risk of democratic erosion in these countries, as leaders exploit the international cover to abuse power (e.g., through corruption) and violate basic human rights.[2] And finally, China's economic forays into Africa have significantly altered the incentives for adhering to democratic norms from the perspective of African leaders. These developments raise two important questions: What are the prospects for further democratic consolidation in Africa through deeper institutionalization of electoral politics in the region? And how can African elections become mechanisms through which citizens can hold leaders accountable for the delivery of public goods and services?

This policy brief examines what recent global political trends portend for the prospects of democratic consolidation in Africa. With focused analyses of three bellwether states—Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa—it will provide a schematic summary of the state of electoral democracy in the region. Kenya is an important economic and political power in the wider Eastern African region[3] whose nascent democratic institutions are faced with increasing pressure from fractious ethnic politics, high levels of unemployment, corruption and general ineffectiveness of the public sector, and security challenges posed by the al-Shabaab terror group. In West Africa, Nigeria (Africa's most populous state) faces similar challenges. Anemic economic growth, corruption and mismanagement of its oil wealth, and insecurity challenges posed by Boko Haram continue to test the viability of Nigerian electoral democracy and its ability to serve as an effective anchor of regional stability. The viability of Nigeria's democracy will have an important demonstration effect within the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Finally, how South Africa deals with the contradictions of its internal political economy will have a far-reaching impact in the wider Southern Africa region. After more than two decades of post-apartheid black majority rule, South Africans have become disillusioned with the idea of a "rainbow democracy." The country has one of the most unequal societies in the world (largely along racial lines). In addition, entrenched corruption in government has eroded the legitimacy of the African National Congress (ANC). This has opened up opportunities for populist politicians to emerge, with ever more aggressive forms of redistributive politics. How South Africa handles these challenges will provide a model for dealing with entrenched economic inequality in countries such as Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. South Africa's political stability will also have implications for its ability to influence the behavior of political leaders in the 16-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) bloc.

MAKING ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY WORK IN AFRICA

According to both the Polity II (see Figure I) and Varieties of Democracy Report (2018), the state of electoral democracy in Africa is bucking the global trend of erosion of democratic norms.[4] On average, the region's electoral democracies are getting stronger—albeit from a low base. However, elections alone do not make a democracy. And across the region, electoral politics take place under three main institutional backgrounds. In the first group are competitive electoral democracies—like Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, and Senegal—that have vibrant multiparty politics in which opposition parties compete with a credible chance of winning executive power. The second group comprises hegemonic party states—such as Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania—where ruling parties dominate the state, with little chance of losing executive power to opposition parties at the ballot box. Finally, a number of electoral autocracies—such as Cameroon, Gabon, Togo, and Uganda—still remain in the region under the leadership of effective life presidents that are unchecked by opposition parties or established term limits.

A significant gap exists in the region between the promise of electoral democracy and the actual experience of citizens. While recent research shows promising signs that electoral democracy has created incentives for programmatic policymaking in Africa, there is still widespread dissatisfaction with government performance in the region's states.[5] For example, according to Afrobarometer data, (Round 7), while 67 percent of Africans support democratic forms of government, only 32 percent approve of their respective governments' performance in improving living standards for the poor.[6] The widespread discontent with government performance in the region is often manifested in high electoral turnover but without accountability—with implications for the development of institutions of accountability such as legislatures. High turnover in legislative elections partially contributes to legislative weakness and the continued prevalence of unchecked presidents in the region.[7] This reality has left many African states in a suboptimal equilibrium in which poor government performance is accompanied by high electoral turnover, but without any resultant improvements in the quality of public goods and services provided by governments.

FIGURE 1: ADJUSTED HISTORICAL TRENDS IN POLITY 2 SCORES ON DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Sub-Saharan Africa adjusted — World adjusted
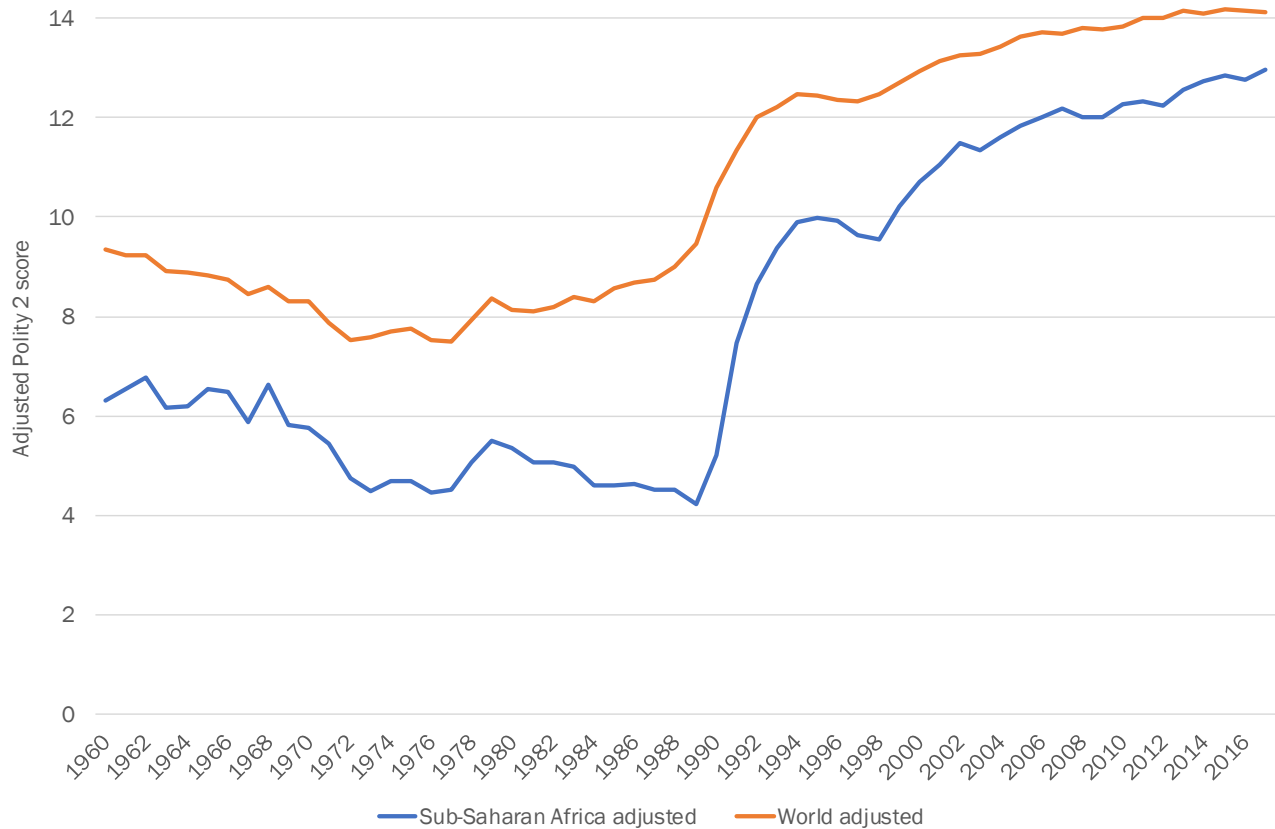
A new player is changing this dynamic in conflicting ways. The injection of Chinese aid and visible public projects backed by Beijing have significantly moved the needle with regard to the provision of public goods and services. For the first time in a long time, several African towns and cities have been able to witness the design and timely completion of large-scale infrastructure projects. These projects have contributed to the positive view of China in the region. In six countries surveyed in 2017, an average of 58 percent of respondents had a favorable view of China (with a high of 72 percent in Nigeria and a low of 45 percent in South Africa).[8] At the same time, Chinese aid and projects in Africa typically come with no conditionality on the quality of governance and are generally perceived to provide opportunities for mega-corruption.[9] Instead, China has been promoting its brand of hegemonic single-party rule by building strong institutional relationships between the Chinese Communist Party and ruling parties in African states.[10] How African elites and

their populations navigate the conflicting effects of China's forays in Africa will have a strong influence on public perceptions and support for accountable democratic forms of government that deliver on citizens' demands for public goods and services.[11]

China's emergence as a source of much-needed capital poses serious questions about the continued ability of the West and Western-dominated multilateral organizations to leverage their economic power to nudge African states toward greater democratic consolidation. The West's waning influence in the region has been further exacerbated by two factors. First, by focusing attention on domestic issues, populist pressure in Europe and the United States has dampened Western leaders' appetite for continued promotion of governance reforms in African states. Second, the need to deal with migrant flows as well as security and economic challenges in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa has made Western

leaders willing to both engage in and ignore human rights abuses by their African counterparts.[12] Efforts to counter violent extremism in the region have emboldened several autocratic African leaders to securitize ever more elements of public life. Anti-terror laws have targeted government critics and given presidents the power to shut down internet connectivity at critical times in several countries in the region. The next section looks at the three cases of Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa in more detail.

POTENTIAL REGIONAL ANCHORS OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

Kenya's electoral democracy remains precarious. Despite being the most entrenched electoral democracy in the wider Eastern African region, there is still a yawning gap between citizens' aspirations and the realized effects of competitive politics. Constitutional reforms instituted in 2010 have failed to tame the Kenyan imperial presidency or to dampen the corrosive impact of the country's fractious ethnic politics. As such, ethnicity remains the principal organizing principle in politics and the distribution of important public offices continues to follow patterns of ethnic exclusion. The recent 2017 election was no exception. The high-stakes nature of ethnic politics generated significant levels of electoral violence, with Human Rights Watch reporting at least 104 deaths.[13]

Two key factors continue to limit the prospects of democratic consolidation in Kenya. First, despite repeated attempts, the country has failed to comprehensively address historical injustices, abuse of human rights, and the systematic exclusion from the public sector of significant sections of the population (along ethnic, political, religious, and geographic lines).[14] Kenya's historical legacy of exclusionary and violent autocracy continues to hamper efforts at nation-building and the creation of a more (ethnically) inclusive political environment. Second, the persistence of political impunity throughout the

public administration fuels corruption and general government ineffectiveness.[15] The failure of Kenya's institutions—including the legislature, judiciary, and independent commissions—to check public officials (including the president) significantly contributes to the erosion of public trust in state officials and institutions. Fifty-three percent of Kenyans disapprove of the government's performance in improving the lives of the poor, while 71 percent disapprove of the incumbent government's handling of the fight against corruption.[16]

Kenya's strategic importance in Eastern Africa cannot be overstated. The country is the diplomatic, transportation, and economic hub of the region—with its capital Nairobi hosting several important international missions and the regional headquarters of international firms. Kenya is also an important troop contributing country to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and a significant player in efforts to stabilize South Sudan. In addition, due to the its influence within the East African Community (EAC), trends in Kenyan politics provide a strong demonstration effect in the region. For these reasons, the current state of Kenyan politics should raise alarms. The country's inability to hold credible presidential elections, unchecked grand corruption in the public sector, widespread and well-documented human rights abuses by security forces (including extrajudicial killings), and entrenched impunity among political elites have negative demonstration effects in the region.[17] These challenges also limit Kenya's ability to influence less democratic countries in the region. For example, Kenya (like other EAC members) was largely silent in 2015 when Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza abolished term limits and proceeded to implement a violent crackdown against the opposition.[18]

Subnational governments provide perhaps the best hope of consolidating democratic governance in Kenya, with potential for replication in other countries in the region. Since 2013, the country has had 47 counties, with elected governors and

assemblies and guaranteed fiscal transfers from the national government (at least 15 percent of audited national revenue). The idea behind these units was to bring policymaking, fiscal resources, and accountability relationships closer to the people. And while many of the 47 counties remained hobbled by weak administrative capacity and human capital constraints, a number of them have emerged as bastions of locally-driven development planning and accountability. In this manner, Kenya's county governments could provide the foundation for a more accountable and results-oriented politics at the national level.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous state and biggest economy, held an election in February 2019, as this paper went to press. This is the first democratic election under the All Progressives Congress (APC), with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) having governed Nigeria for 16 of the last 19 years (1999-2015) under electoral democracy. The election will largely be fought along personal lines, with incumbent Muhammadu Buhari of the APC contesting against long-time opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar of the PDP. The two parties are practically indistinguishable with regard to ideology or programmatic policies. Indeed, a salient feature of the 2019 election has been high-level party switching (mostly from the APC to the PDP), as politicians jostle to build winning coalitions.[19] Beyond the personality politics, the election will have important implications for Nigeria's anemic economy, the country's security, and the fight against corruption. Over the last three years, economic growth has averaged less than one percent annually.[20] Terror attacks in the northeast by Boko Haram and communal violence in the Middle Belt have cost hundreds of lives.[21] Finally, the current administration, like most before it, has failed to curb corruption in the public sector.[22]

While the challenges identified above are important, a fundamental impediment to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is the gap between citizens' expectations and government performance. Sixty percent of Nigerians consider the economy to be in a fairly bad or very bad condition, while 62 percent consider the country to be headed in the wrong direction.[23] The disconnect between politics and outcomes is partially driven by the country's weak fiscal pact (tax collection as a basis of government spending on public goods and services). Because of its high dependence on oil revenue, in 2017 the Nigerian state's gross revenue amounted to a paltry 6.4 percent of GDP. Total government expenditures in the same year (federal, state, and local) added up to a mere 7.3 percent of GDP.[24] The comparable average figures for all of sub-Saharan Africa are about 20 percent and 16 percent, respectively. Nigeria's low rates of revenue generation and public spending are short-circuiting the accountability loop that links elections and government performance.

It follows that strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria will necessarily require investments in the state's bureaucratic capacity and increasing the rates of both state revenue mobilization and expenditures in public goods and services—both at the national and the subnational levels.[25] Such investments should be geared not merely toward increasing the size of government, but also in improving service delivery by street-level bureaucrats.

Nigeria's ability to make electoral democracy work has implications for regional stability in West Africa. Greater levels of democratic accountability and respect for human rights will be critical in the quest to end communal violence and in the fight against Boko Haram—with demonstration effects in the wider region (including in Sahelian states that face terror threats). Despite its internal military weakness, Nigeria is the only ECOWAS country with the capacity to project significant levels of military force beyond its borders. This capability has proven useful in peacekeeping missions as well as in the promotion of democracy in the region.[26] A stable Nigeria is therefore a likely regional "first responder" in cases of political crises or significant threats to state stability in the region. The obverse is also true.

An ineffective and unaccountable Nigerian state is likely to export its domestic insecurity and economic problems to the wider region. In this regard, the case of Boko Haram is illustrative. Historical marginalization, corruption in the military, and blatant human rights abuses partially contributed to the group's initial successes in winning support from local communities in northeastern Nigeria.[27] The failure to decisively deal with Boko Haram exported the security problem to Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

Ongoing global trends will likely not create the necessary incentives for the reforms needed to strengthen the fiscal pact and state capacity to deliver public goods and services, and to boost electoral accountability in Nigeria. Security concerns in the Sahel and economic investments and trade (some of it to counter China's regional influence) are likely to dominate relationships between Nigeria and established Western democracies and Western-dominated multilateral institutions.[28] The focus on security and trade will likely crowd out support for democratic norms, respect for human rights, and good governance in Nigeria and the wider region.

South Africa, too, has elections scheduled in 2019. These elections will be the toughest yet for the ruling ANC. South Africans are increasingly becoming dissatisfied with the party's performance—especially with regard to the management of the economy and job creation, security, and addressing (racial) income inequality.[29] Dissatisfaction with the ANC has spawned a populist party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by Julius Malema, a former ANC youth leader. While the EFF stands little chance of gaining power (it currently holds a mere 6 percent of legislative seats), its populist rhetoric has forced the ANC to recalibrate its policy positions, most recently by adopting a law empowering the government to expropriate land owned by white South Africans without compensation. Black South Africans account for 80 percent of the population, but own only 4 percent of private land.[30] South Africa is presently one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 63 (as of 2014).[31] The ANC's economic failures have been exacerbated by entrenched corruption in government. Former president Jacob Zuma had to resign in 2018 in the face of public pressure over state capture by a clique of well-connected families and business associates of the president.[32]

Bright spots for continued democratic consolidation in South Africa are its strong institutions (especially the courts and the ombudsman's office) and system of subnational governments. In addition to fighting corruption at the highest levels of government, the court system has advanced social justice and the provision of public goods and services through its rulings on rights-based cases.[33] The justice system thus provides an avenue through which South Africans can compel their government to perform its duties. In addition, the country's nine provinces create opportunities for opposition parties to showcase their capabilities as viable alternatives to the ANC. For example, the Democratic Alliance (DA), South Africa's main opposition party, currently administers one province (Western Cape) and 33 municipalities comprising almost one-third of South Africa's population.[34]

As the regional political and economic powerhouse, South Africa's internal politics has profound effects in the wider Southern African region. For example, high levels of (racial) land inequality in the country made it impossible for South Africa to intervene in Zimbabwe as President Robert Mugabe implemented a disastrous land reform program and cracked down on the opposition. In the same vein, how South Africa navigates the political minefields of land and economic inequality will likely influence Namibia's handling of the same issues. And in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zuma's personal economic interests may have influenced his willingness to confront President Joseph Kabila over his decision to flout term limits, delay the presidential election, and suppress the opposition.[35] For these reasons, South Africa's 2019 election will have far-reaching consequences beyond its borders.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Global democratic resiliency will remain dependent on the lived experience of citizens in the world's emerging electoral democracies. To this end, making democracies work for voters is the best way to ensure a robust liberal international order. In Africa, this is far from reality. Most of the region's electoral democracies are yet to begin delivering programmatic policies to lift their citizens out of poverty, provide critical public goods and services, and provide meaningful political inclusion for their diverse populations. The result is increasing frustration with electoral democracy, and a willingness to try "alternative" models of government that "deliver."

China is one such model. Through its infrastructure projects across the region, China has redefined what is possible as far as public goods and services are concerned. This development will likely create ever greater demands for more public goods, thereby strengthening the link between electoral politics and the lived experiences of Africans. At the same time, China has made African states less dependent on Western (bilateral and multilateral) financial support. This has weakened the West's leverage and ability to incentivize African leaders to adhere to democratic norms. The balance of these competing influences will determine the net effect of Chinese economic forays in Africa.

Despite the many challenges they currently face, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa are important potential regional models of accountable democratic governance that delivers for average citizens. Due to their subregional influences, these three countries have the potential to provide powerful demonstration effects for their neighbors on how to make electoral democracy work. This is a case for targeted international investment in democratic consolidation in these countries, even as they continue to remain important players in their respective neighborhoods' security hotspots or in the West's quest to balance China's growing economic influence in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above observations about the state of democracy in African states—including in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa—point to a number of position interventions:

1. **Early investments to strengthen electoral management:** Citizens' belief in the sanctity of the ballot is the cornerstone of electoral democracy. Unfortunately, the quality of elections in Africa remains wanting. For example, disputed elections in 2007, 2013, and 2017 in Kenya led to the loss of thousands of lives. For this reason, investments in electoral management—in a timely and sustained fashion—would contribute significantly to citizen trust in elections and their ability to serve as a mechanism for vertical accountability. _However, for these investments to make a difference, they must be made early and throughout the electoral cycle—and not just in the few months before elections_.

2. **Strengthening the public sectors in African states:** Elections are a means of aligning government priorities with those of citizens. For this accountability relationship to work, governments must have a minimum level of _capacity to get things done_. Otherwise, citizens will be dis-incentivized to keep leaders accountable, rationally calculating that their programmatic promises are incredible because they lack the capacity to implement them. Under such conditions, citizens are more likely to support leaders that can credibly provide targeted clientelistic benefits (like co-ethnics), rather than those with strong policy platforms. Such investments in _operational capacity-building_ ought to focus on _street-level bureaucrats in key sectors—such as agricultural extension services, education, and healthcare_. Only when citizens perceive governments to work would they be incentivized to invest in holding them accountable.

3. **Supporting high-performing subnational governments:** Subnational governments hold the promise of providing _powerful demonstration effects of the virtues of democratic governance_. By supporting high-performing subnational governments in Africa, the international community can help shape norms of democratic governance by showcasing what is possible to citizens and elites alike. In line with the previous observation, such support should be focused on street-level bureaucrats and geared toward sectors that touch citizens in their everyday lives. Experience with high-quality public goods and services are likely to boost citizens' sense of civic efficacy and willingness to support democratic governance.

4. **Work along the grain in solving global problems:** As noted above, security challenges across Africa are providing ruling elites with the cover to violate human rights and democratic norms. In order to strengthen democracy in Africa, international actors—including the United States and the European Union—must not sidestep African democratic institutions in attempts to meet global security challenges. Budgets for African armies must pass through normal legislative appropriation channels and human rights laws must not be ignored in the pursuit of suspected terrorists. Only then will security be achieved in the region in a manner that is sustainable in the long-run and that is compatible with democratic norms.

5. **Economic support:** As noted above, China will continue to provide a stiff challenge to Western models of political economy (which arguably are more democratic). However, it is not enough to champion democracy without addressing economic challenges facing many African states. Clean elections are meaningless if they do not generate reliable public goods and services. As such, in addition to providing political models for African states, the West must also invest in economic development in the region. Only then will citizens see the material value of liberal democracy.

REFERENCES

1 Daniel N. Posner and Daniel J. Young, "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 3 (2007): 126-140, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/institutionalization-political-power-africa; and Ken O. Opalo, "The Long Road to Institutionalization: The Kenyan Legislature and the 2013 Elections," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 63-77, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17531055.2013.869009.

2 Cameroon is a glaring example in this regard. Paul Biya's government is a key player in the war against Boko Haram in Nigeria, and receives significant military assistance from both the United States and the European Union. At the same time, Biya's government has been engaged in well-documented human rights abuses in the Anglophone regions of the country that have been rocked by separatist violence (with over 400 dead). Biya held an election on October 7, 2018 whose outcome was a foregone conclusion and for which the president barely campaigned. See Samira Daoud, "Cameroon: Next Government must tackle human rights crises in violence-hit regions," (Dakar, Senegal: Amnesty International, October 2018), https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/cameroon-next-government-must-tackle-human-rights-crises/.

3 The wider region encompasses the six-member East African Community (EAC) and eight-member Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

4 Monty G. Marshall, Ted R. Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, "Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2017," (Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace 2018), http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

5 These include in the education sector with the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) across the region, improvement in agricultural extension services and subsidies, and the provision of health care services in the region. See Robin Harding and David Stasavage, "What democracy does (and doesn't do) for basic services: school fees, school inputs, and African elections," *Journal of Politics* 76, no. 1 (2014): 229-245, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1017/s0022381613001254; and Kim Yi Dionne and Jeremy Horowitz, "The Political Effects of Agricultural Subsidies in Africa: Evidence from Malawi," *World Development* 87, (2016): 215-226, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750X16304028.

6 "The online data analysis tool," Afrobarometer, 2018, http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online.

7 Ken O. Opalo, "Legislative Strength and Incumbency Effects in Africa: Evidence From Parliamentary Elections in Kenya, 1963-2007," 2017, working paper.

8 "Global Indicators Database," Pew Research Center, 2017, http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/24/group/5/.

9 Salem Solomon and Casey Frechette, "Corruption is Wasting Chinese Money in Africa," *Foreign Policy*, September 13, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/13/corruption-is-wasting-chinese-money-in-africa/.

10 Moses Nyamori, "China's Communist Party to train Uhuru's Jubilee on democracy," *The Standard*, January 26, 2018, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001267330/china-s-communist-party-to-train-president-uhuru-s-jubilee-on-democracy.

11 Ben Blanchard and Christian Shepherd, "China says its funding helps Africa develop, not stack up debt," *Reuters*, September 4, 2016, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-africa/china-says-its-funding-helps-africa-develop-not-stack-up-debt-idUSKCN1LK0J6.

12 "Germany, Sudan sign for refugee projects worth €28 mln," *Radio Dabanga*, August 10, 2018, https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/germany-sudan-sign-for-refugee-projects-worth-28-mln.

13 Ken O. Opalo, "Another Disputed Election Batters Kenya's Institutions," *Current History* 117, no. 799 (2018): 187-193, http://www.currenthistory.com/pdf_org_files/117_799_187.pdf.

14 Gabrielle Lynch, *Performances of Injustice: The Politics of Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Kenya* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 7-29.

15 Mwangi wa Githinji, "Reform and Political Impunity in Kenya: Transparency Without Accountability," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 1 (2012): 53-74, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-studies-review/article/reform-and-political-impunity-in-kenya-transparency-without-accountability/CEB6962DB8C864DADD1561FF287CF4AB.

16 "The online data analysis tool," Afrobarometer.

17 Joshua Mutisya, "Worrying trend in police killings points to slow progress in reforms," *Daily Nation*, October 7, 2018, https://www.nation.co.ke/newsplex/deadlyforce3/2718262-4793714-ctvv1sz/index.html.

18 Ismail Kushkush, "Burundi Court Backs President's Bid for Third Term," *The New York Times*, May 5, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/06/world/africa/burundi-court-backs-third-term-for-president-pierre-nkurunziza.html.

19 Matthew T. Page and Sola Tayo, "Countdown to February 2019: A Look Ahead at Nigeria's Elections," (London: Chatham House, 2018), https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/countdown-february-2019-look-ahead-nigeria-elections.

20 "Nigeria Biannual Economic Update: Connecting to Complete," (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2018), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29787?locale-attribute=en.

21 "Nigeria: Rising Toll of Middle-Belt Violence," Human Rights Watch, June 28, 2018, https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/28/nigeria-rising-toll-middle-belt-violence.

22 Felix Onuah, "Nigeria's Buhari meets oil minister after NNPC corruption allegations," *Reuters*, October 6, 2017, https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1CB1HO-OZATP.

23 "The online data analysis tool," Afrobarometer.

24 "Annual Statistical Bulletin," Central Bank of Nigeria, https://www.cbn.gov.ng/documents/Statbulletin.asp.

25 The state of affairs at the subnational level (in Nigeria's 36 states and 774 local government areas, LGAs) is no different. With the exception of Lagos, Nigeria's states and LGAs accrue very little independently generated revenue (IGR), instead relying on fiscal transfers from the federal government. See Paul Adams, "State(s) of Crisis: Subnational Government in Nigeria," (London: Africa Research Institute, 2016), https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ARI_Nigeria_BN_final.pdf.

26 John L. Hirsch and Michael R. Snyder, "Gambian Gamble: Rare Intervention a Win for African Democracy," *IPI Global Observatory*, January 25, 2017, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/01/gambia-jammeh-ecowas-barrow-election/.

27 Mirren Gidda, "Boko Haram is Growing Stronger in Nigeria Thanks for Corruption in the Military," *Newsweek*, May 19, 2017, https://www.newsweek.com/nigeria-defense-spending-corruption-boko-haram-611685.

28 Olivier J. Walther, "Wars a Conflicts in the Sahara-Sahel," (Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2017), https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/wars-and-conflicts-in-the-sahara-sahel_8bbc5813-en#page4.

29 Joseph Cotterill, "South Africa Falls into Recession in Second Quarter," *Financial Times*, September 4, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/b92f4b38-b026-11e8-8d14-6f049d06439c; Norimitsu Onishi and Selam Gebrekidan, "Hit men and power: South Africa's leaders are killing one another," *The New York Times*, September 30, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/30/world/africa/south-africa-anc-killings.html.

30 Ed Stoddad, "Explainer: South Africa aims to expropriate land without compensation," *Reuters*, March 14, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-land-explainer/explainer-south-africa-aims-to-expropriate-land-without-compensation-idUSKCN1GQ280.

31 Caelainn Barr, "Inequality Index: Where are the world's most unequal countries?" *The Guardian*, April 26, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/datablog/2017/apr/26/inequality-index-where-are-the-worlds-most-unequal-countries.

32 "The Guptas and their links to South Africa's Jacob Zuma", *BBC*, February 4, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22513410.

33 Marius Pieterse, *Rights-Based Litigation, Urban Governance and Social Justice in South Africa, Right to Joburg* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), Chapter 1.

34 "We work every day to improve people's lives," *The Democratic Alliance*, https://www.da.org.za/where-we-govern.

35 Simon Allison, "Can Southern Africa save the DRC?" *Mail & Guardian*, April 13, 2018, https://mg.co.za/article/2018-04-13-00-can-southern-africa-save-the-drc.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken Opalo is an assistant professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. His research interests include the political economy of development, legislative politics, and electoral politics in Africa. Opalo's current research projects include studies of political reform in Ethiopia, the politics of education sector reform in Tanzania, and electoral accountability under multi-tier government in Kenya. His works have been published in the *British Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Democracy*, and the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*. His first book, titled *Legislative Development in Africa: Politics and Post-Colonial Legacies* (Cambridge University Press), is scheduled for release in July 2019. Opalo earned his B.A. from Yale University and Ph.D. from Stanford University.