

Multiparty Democracy, Social Cohesion, and Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

This paper proposes some assumptions regarding the complex relationship between multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development in Sub-Saharan Africa. A conceptual framework was used to map out this relationship. We assumed that because multiparty democracy is relatively new in Africa and increasingly challenging for most countries, its relationship with human development may neither be proximal, nor positive. With respect to social cohesion, we assumed that a socially cohesive society is more likely than a non-cohesive one to promote human development. Further, we assumed that although multiparty democracy is susceptible to exerting a negative or weak effect on human development, the relationship may be mitigated by the level of social cohesion. The immediate implication of this assumption is that multiparty democracy is likely to improve the well-being of the populations of sub-Saharan Africa if the degree of social cohesion is relatively high. The proffered assumptions may be of great interest for practitioners and researchers in human development studies and other relevant fields.

Keywords: human development, multiparty democracy, social cohesion, Sub-Saharan Africa, conceptual framework

1. Introduction

In a study titled “The quest for good governance and development in Sub-Saharan Africa,” Chabal (2002) cited the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) alleging that quality governance, institutional consolidation, the rule of law, peace, and socio-political stability are crucial for investment and economic growth. The NEPAD further declared that the forenamed growth factors can only stem from a democratic system. Yet, such a perception of democracy has been met with blunt criticism. It is public knowledge today that popular governance or democracy as it should be called, has neither helped achieve peace and political stability, nor better institutions and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. This vantage point was shared by Easterly et al. (2006), who used thorough substantiations to explicate how social equity and cohesion are more likely than democracy to induce quality institutions and growth. To shore up their stance, Easterly et al. reaffirmed that reinforcing cohesion within a society by crafting and maintaining good institutions that benefit all members and lower structural inequalities is mandatory for countries struggling with growth (2006). Social cohesion is thus crucial and highly compulsory for gathering the level of civic virtue required to fulfill large structural changes (Easterly et al., 2006).

In the present contribution we assume that multiparty democracy does not necessarily lead to human development. Three decades have passed since the introduction of democracy in SSA, and the region is still lagging as far as improved governance and quality of life are concerned. Obviously, an ill-informed observer may judge as significant the political development that has materialized in SSA in the past thirty years or so. He or she may view that most countries in the region now indulge in multiparty systems and that some state leaders have been voted out through regular elections. The same kind of observer may also think that nowadays there is much more freedom than there used to be some decades earlier under the totalitarian one-party and party-less regimes. It is equally easy to claim that the wave of democratization in SSA had brought in a broader approach to governance that has helped to move away the central attention of public service reforms from a shallow perspective to a significant one that includes the more audacious policies of fostering government responsiveness and accountability (Alence, 2004).

However, with the exception of a handful of countries such as Botswana, Cape Verde, and Mauritius, it is difficult to clearly show that the promotion of multiparty systems in SSA has brought about more responsive or accountable governance (Alence, 2004).

The assumption of this paper makes it clear that, for multiparty democracy or any other political system to lead to human development in the Sub-Saharan African region, it ought to be either preceded or followed by social cohesion, which in turn would lead to better institutions, economic growth, and eventually human development (Easterly et al., 2006). Prior to the inception of democracy in SSA, there was low-level cohesion among the ethnic groups. So, the prime role of multiparty democracy in the region should have been to foster social cohesion among the different ethnic groups to improve their living conditions. The existing literature on democracy and human development in Africa has failed to cover this aspect. The present paper offers a theoretical model of democratic process implementation which may have better chance of yielding progress and development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The proposed model does not prioritize or favor a specific political system; rather, it calls for certain initial condition to be met prior to engaging in some efforts to improve institutional quality and human development in the Sub-Saharan African region. The rest of this paper is laid out as follows. Section 2 critically reviews the literature on multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development in the SSA region, with a focus on the relationship between the three concepts. Section 3 lays down the methodology utilized to draw the concepts and the relationship among them. Section 4 proposes a conceptual framework for the relationship between the concepts of interest. And section 5 culminates the study with several recommendations and policy implications.

2. Review of Related Literature

This section critically reviews the literature on multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development with a focus on possible relationships between the three concepts.

2.1 Human Development: A Conceptual Overview

Human development as a concept, means different things to different people. To avoid possible meaning ambivalence, the present paper describes it in the technical terms of the United Nations Development Program. Therefrom, “human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices that enable them to live a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living” (UNDP, 1990, p. 10). Based on this definition, three ideas seem to be central to the concept of human development: people, opportunities, and choices.

Human development also implies allowing people to have the kind of life they value. In other words, this would mean developing people’s abilities and giving them the chance and the opportunity to exercise them. Finally, human development should provide people with more opportunities, rather than just requesting that they make use of them (Human Development Report, 2020). Today, human development has become a central societal goal and a leading priority in national policies across the world. For a while now, the concept has supplanted the idea of wealth as the premier goal of societal development to become one of the most dominant and broadly utilized conceptual frameworks for assessing the well-being of a community (Berger-Schmitt, 2002). A specific abbreviation of the human development index (HDI) is used to refer to the achievement of countries in education, personal income, and longevity (see Figure 1). The classifications of these indices are premised on established measures, which are obtained from the quartiles of distributions of human development component indices. Those fixed measures are an HDI below 0.550, which indicates low human development; an HDI of the interval of 0.550 and 0.699, which stands for medium human development; an HDI of 0.700 to 0.799 representing relatively high human development; and an HDI of 0.800 and above which suggests very high human development.

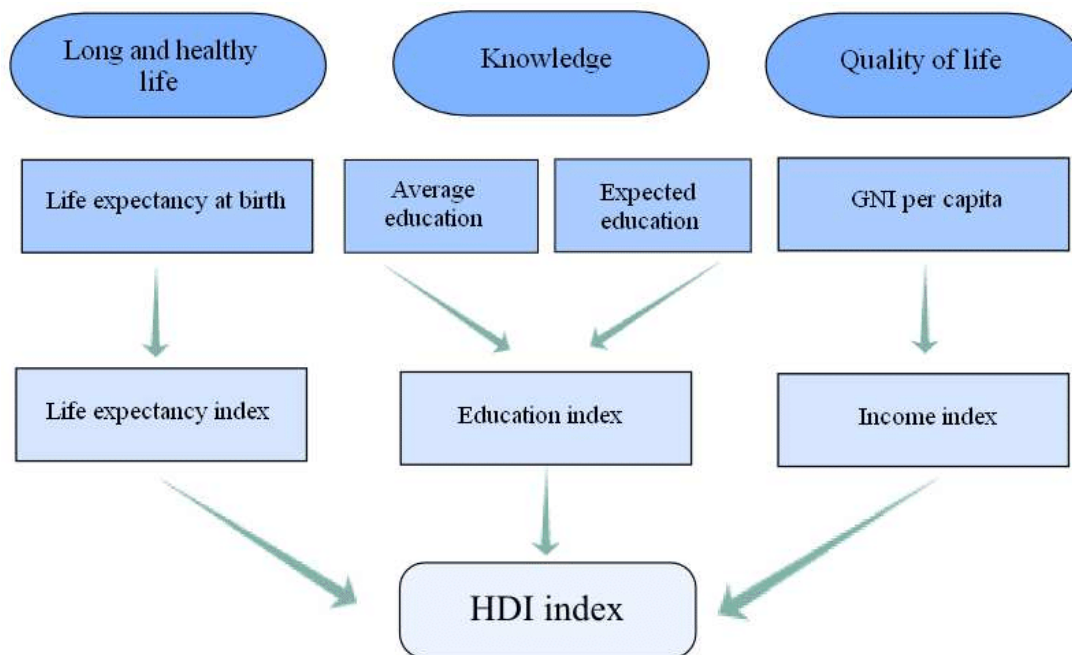


Figure 1. Human development index, dimensions, and indicator

Adapted with permission from “The Changes of the Human Development on Micro-Regional and Settlement Levels” by K. Lipták, 2015, *DETUROPE*.

In bids to measure the performance of African countries regarding human development over the long term and to compare them with similar countries in the rest of the world, de la Escosura (2013) has observed an improvement in human development scores, though the continent’s well-being has fallen behind that recorded in other developing regions such as South-East Asia or Latin America. Amelioration in well-being in Africa since the mid-20s, as stated by de la Escosura (2013), is positively correlated with countries’ natural endowment, their geographical position, and access to the sea. However, amelioration was found to be inversely correlated with social, economic, and political turmoil (2013). For him, education was behind the achievements in human development in Africa in that lapse of time. As for life longevity, it was found to have stagnated because of the spread of HIV, persistent malaria, and slow growth, which was largely brought about by economic mishandling, political disorder, and civil unrest (de la Escosura, 2013). This unfortunate situation has made improvements in human development practically reliant on education performance since 1990. The situation has also helped to explain Africa’s setback in terms of human development (de la Escosura, 2013). Another observation by de la Escosura was that, within the African continent, the Sub-Saharan region was lagging the northern area despite the occurrence of some conditional convergence mechanisms over the last five decades (2013).

Recently, the UNDP report 2021/2022 has shown that only eight (8) countries in Africa have made overall improvements in human development from 2019 to 2021, whereas forty (40) have declined (Africa Data Hub, 2022). In addition, the average human development index for SSA countries is 0.55 in 2021 which is a low score (UNDP report 2021/2022).

2.2 Multiparty Democracy

As stated in the Online Etymology Dictionary (2021), the term democracy originated from the Greek *dēmokratia*, meaning popular government: with *demos* signifying “common people,” and *kratos*, “rule” or “strength.” These days, the concept of democracy is commonly defined as the government of the people by the people, that is, a type of government where the supreme and absolute power belong to the people who use it directly or through the officials they vote in (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). Thus, democracy suggests empowering the people to choose their own leaders and to secure their “rights” against the government.

Regarding the concept of multiparty democracy, it is defined as a system of governance in which different parties across the political circle run for national elections with an equal chance to gain control over government offices, individually or in a coalition (Education, 2020). In principle, in a typical multiparty system, political parties are

permitted to emerge on their own, without constitutional directives that determine their number or nature (Lindberg, 2007; Sartori, 1976; Schattschneider, 1942).

Multiparty systems are viewed as the most relevant political systems for the acquisition and institutionalization of democracy (Lindberg, 2007). Decades of political events revealed that no democracy has ever survived without a pluralistic system in which citizens are empowered to organize themselves into distinct political factions (Kumar, 2014; Sartori, 1976). Successful multiparty systems rely on the respect of opposition parties and vice-versa for the wish of the people as clearly expressed in polls, and the understanding that ruling parties may soon be in the opposition (Kumar, 2014).

Multiparty democracy is also characterized by its diversity of variants which represent the chronicle of the various struggles for democracy in different countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the tendency is for countries to copy the model of democracy in use in the colonial power they are associated with or at least borrow much of the essence of their political system from there. However, despite all the apparent advantages that good democratic systems entail, they are often criticized for generating partisan conflicts, political standoffs, and eventually political gridlock. Yet, the level of partisan patterns is strongly related to countries' electoral framework. As stated in Freedom House typologies of democracy (Freedom House, 2021), to be deemed an "electoral democracy" a country should meet the following criteria: (1) achieving a pluralistic, competing government system; (2) granting all mature citizens the right to vote; (3) holding regular, inclusive, and fair ballots that is acceptable to all parties; and (4) granting all major political parties the right to equal access to voters and the public media. And to determine the achievement of a country regarding these criteria, the median value of each set of scores on "civil liberties" and "political rights" is computed. Hence, are deemed "Free" all countries that score between 1.0 and 2.5. "Partially Free" countries score between 3.0 and 5.0, and "Not Free" countries are those that score between 5.5 and 7.0 (Freedom House, 2021). In definitive, only "free countries" are deemed "electoral and liberal democracies." "Partly free countries" in contrast are considered as "electoral" but not "liberal democracies."

Tackling the issue of political development and mainly that of the democratic progress in Africa since the establishment of multiparty systems in the earlier 90s, Matlosa et al. (2017, pp. 4-5) observed that democratic progress on the continent reveals a "mixed picture." While real improvement is believed to have been achieved, serious drawbacks continue to linger concerning the amelioration and consolidation of quality democratic governance (2017). Other than the military coups and the unlawful extension of presidential terms, there is a major problem regarding the nature of democracy, which is rather more procedural than substantive (Matlosa et al., 2017). The procedural nature of most democracies in Africa entails the presence of institutions barely, such as elections that are held regularly while the substantive nature pertains to results that are generated by regularly elected government bodies and the quality or level of civic participation (Burchard, 2014; Matlosa et al., 2017).

The procedural aspect of the African democracy may explain why multiparty democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa has failed to yield tangible development. Rather, it exhibits a decline in quality democratic institutions, with the preponderance of the executive branches in decision-making. Moreover, the political party structures are relatively weak, and so are the legislatures; and there are no political commitments to electoral reform. Some experts affirmed that Sub-Saharan African democracy and the democracy on the continent, in general, are evolutionary democracies as opposed to the revolutionary approach. Political party structures and national institutions are still weak while party leaders are strong. In short, political parties and state leaders are above the institutions and there is no sign this will soon stop. The situation is exasperated by the fact that there is virtually no legal procedure that permits every party member to contest for a leadership position, or to strive for succession. The actual president of Cameroon, Paul Biya, and his Equatorial Guinean counterpart have been in power for over 40 years each. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has been ruling Uganda for 36 years and Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo for a cumulative period of 30 years, while Idriss Deby of Chad was the head of the ruling party and the head of state from 1990 until his death in 2021. The list is not exhaustive; many more heads of state and opposition leaders have been at the political apex for decades.

In a nutshell, according to the Brookings African Growth Initiative (2020), Sub-Saharan Africa has seen significant democratic progress since the 1980s with 19 democracies in 2018 compared to 5 in 1980. However, democratic progress has stagnated since the 2000s. Another major development is that there has been an even greater decline in autocratic regimes as some countries have moved from autocracies to anocracies (see Figure 2 below).

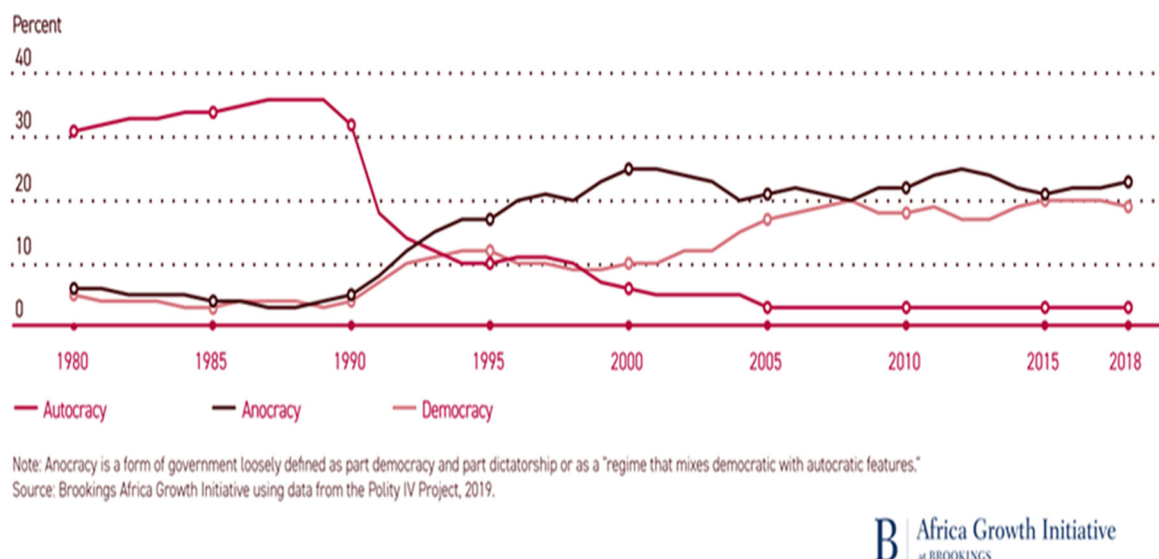


Figure 2. Democratic progress in SSA from 1980-2018

Note. The data are from "Good and inclusive governance is imperative for Africa's future", by J. Mbaku, 2020, *Brookings Africa Growth Initiative*. Copyright 2020 by the Brookings Institutions

2.3 Social Cohesion

When we talk about the level or degree of social integration, or the level of inter-connectedness and mutual solidarity within a community and a society in general, we allude to social cohesion. Social cohesion is found in groups and societies where people are inclined to get together and follow social norms regardless of their cultural differences. In the present paper, we define social cohesion as the nature and degree of socioeconomic divisions within a society (Easterly et al., 2006). These fragmentations, as voiced by Easterly et al., are vectors of considerable social unrest (2006). Put simply, the more, citizens or society members are socially and economically treated on equal footing, the more unified and mutually solidary they are.

The concept of social cohesion rests on several assumptions. First, countries with less ethnic diversity and a higher revenue shared among middle-income classes are assumed to grow faster than countries with greater ethnic heterogeneity and income inequality. Second, it is assumed that ethnic fractionalization hampers "institution-building." In the absence of strong national cohesion, politicians can exploit people's divisions and that may impede potential political desires to construct higher institutions. Third, countries with higher institutional quality are related to higher economic growth and lower levels of inequality. Fourth, it is presumed that one of the main reasons why even good politicians in countries struggling with their economies, often implement bad action plans is that they encounter considerable social obstacles in their bids to carry out reforms. These obstacles are determined by the degree of cohesiveness within their respective societies or countries. Fifth, social cohesion rests on the assumption that strengthening cohesiveness by erecting and preserving effective institutions, and lowering economic and social divisions, is essential for countries struggling with development. Finally, the more a country's community and institutions are inclusive, the greater the cohesion it builds. Broad ethnic cleavages hamper policy reforms regardless of how well they are planned and executed. As we can see, a socially cohesive society is one that has fewer personal advantages or power that individuals could utilize to exacerbate social dividing lines that split the society into homogenous subgroups (Easterly et al., 2006).

Generally speaking, the existing literature on multiparty democracy in Africa ascribes the continent's disheartening growth performance to ethnicity and neo-patrimonial politics (Hopper, 2017). Because they are insecure, the failing African governments are tempted to satisfy the immediate interests of politically threatening groups (Alence, 2004). As a result, the state's institutions weaken and some economically unsound policies are made (Alence, 2004; Hopper, 2017). However, ethnicity and neopatrimonialism are not the only causes of slow human development in Africa. Easterly et al. (2006) and Seyoum (2020) found that a lack of social cohesion also generates a lack of successful institutions which oftentimes impede the fair distribution of public wealth (Easterly et al., 2006; Seyoum, 2020). In short, the causes of the low-level human development in SSA have largely been attributed to a lack of

economic growth, a lack of quality institutions, a high population growth rate, a lack of social cohesion, and a lack of political stability.

3. Methodology

This paper uses a literature-based analysis to draw concepts from multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development. Based on the relationship between these concepts, some assumptions are made on how democracy and social cohesion influence human development.

4. A Practical Framework for the Relationship between Multiparty Democracy, Social Cohesion, and Human Development

This section aims to develop a simple conceptual framework on the relationship between multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development. The purpose here is to provide insight for subsequent researchers and practitioners in the field of human development on this relationship. The analysis of the existing literature on multiparty democracy and human development helped identify several concepts and ultimately several variables of interest: one dependent variable (human development growth); two independent variables (multiparty democracy and social cohesion); and four constants (institutional quality, political stability, population growth, and GDP per capita). The following conceptual framework shows the relationship between multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development. It is divided into three different equations based on the extant literature on the effects of multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and the interaction of the two variables on human development.

The first equation shows the effects of multiparty democracy on human development. The second relates to the effect of social cohesion on human development, and the third equation indicates the effect of the interaction between multiparty democracy and social cohesion on human development.

$$HD_GR_{it} = \beta_1 \text{democ}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{iq}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{gdppc}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{pgr}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{ps}_{it}, \quad (1)$$

$$HD_GR_{it} = \beta_1 \text{sc}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{iq}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{gdppc}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{pgr}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{ps}_{it}, \quad (2)$$

$$HD_GR_{it} = \beta_1 \text{democ}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{sc}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{demosc}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{iq}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{gdppc}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{pgr}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{ps}_{it}, \quad (3)$$

HD_GR symbolizes human development growth; the subscript *i* denotes the entities (Sub-Saharan African countries), and *t* refers to the time or year.

Democ stands for multiparty democracy

SC stands for social cohesion

DemocSC stands for the interaction between multiparty democracy and social cohesion

IQ stands for institutional quality

GDPPC stands for per capita GDP

PGR stands for population growth

PS stands for political stability

and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6$, and β_7 are the coefficients of the different variables.

The literature on democracy and development in Africa has failed to address specifically the issue of multiparty democracy, which seems to be one of the main causes of underdevelopment in the SSA region. Few authors (e.g., Alesina et al. 2003; Dowd & Driessen, 2008; Easterly & Levine, 1997) have realized that the real problem is not democracy itself, but the fact of having several political parties contending for power in settings where tribal, ethnic, and regional considerations prevail. The easiest illustration would be Lesotho. This southern African country has implemented a political reform called “party switching,” or Mixed Member Proportional election system (MMP) to get to regulate political disputes and insure stability. In other countries such as Uganda, multiparty democracy was banned from 1986 to 2005 to curve sectorial tensions; and Swaziland enjoyed only ten years of multiparty democracy (1968-1978) before it returned to a party-less system and ended up in a form of monarchical democracy. The literature has thus failed to identify the real key to development in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is social cohesion and political stability, without which no progress is possible. To push the analysis a little further, we decided to incorporate the concept of social cohesion to the existing literature and studies on multiparty democracy and human development and used a series of cogent hypotheses, including an interaction term between multiparty democracy and social cohesion in order to check whether the latter (social cohesion) could dampen the negative impact of multiparty democracy on human development.

4.1 Multiparty Democracy and Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Multiparty systems are viewed as the most relevant political systems for the acquisition and institutionalization of democracy. They are central to the tradition of modern liberal democracy. They permit the coexistence of opposing people or views on how social and political matters should be handled without “suffocating” minor opinions or rights. Multiparty democracy is the political system that Western donors imposed on Sub-Saharan African countries in the early 90s in a bid, they said, to develop the region. Three decades have passed since its reintroduction in SSA, and the region is still in pursuit of coherent and viable modes of governance and a clear-cut itinerary for social and economic development.

While it seems that democracy does not necessarily lead to well-being, one can possibly argue that fully established democracies are better destined to cling to equitable development with respect for human rights than authoritarian regimes. This issue was specially addressed by Sen, who has made of freedom the prerequisite and main driver of any form of development. In clearer terms, for Sen, if democracy is to lead to human development, a prescriptive way to the promotion of democracy should emphasize the relevance of civil and political rights to individual freedom (1999).

The question here is to determine whether multiparty democracy influences human development. The current literature on democracy and development in SSA reveals contradictory pictures about the effects that multiparty democracy may possibly exert on the well-being of African populations. Lately, the accepted view in that regard has been that democracy influences human development (Gerring et al., 2015; Gerring et al., 2012). This view has surfaced in numerous studies (Altman & Castiglioni, 2009; Blaydes & Kayser, 2011; Brown & Mobarak, 2009; Deacon, 2009; Diori & NaRanong, 2022; Eterovic & Sweet, 2014; Haggard & Kaufman, 2008; Hanson, 2015; Kudamatsu, 2012; Liotti et al., 2018; McGuire, 2013; Miller, 2015; Tsai, 2006; etc.) and was grounded on the assumption that people’s participation in government would empower them and, in consequence leads governments to be increasingly liable to popular interests (Gerring et al., 2015). Such a vantage point was also stressed by Aristotle, Madison, and some contemporaneous economists for whom democracy caters for distribution and thence for the well-being of populations (Ross, 2006).

In recent times however, the claim according to which democracy exerts a positive effect on human development has been fiercely attacked and multitudinous big samples qualitative and quantitative investigations were carried out to substantiate the lack of a linear positive relationship between quality of life and government-type (Aikins, 2022; Annaka & Higashijima, 2017; Gerring et al., 2021; Gerring et al., 2015; Gerring et al., 2012; McGuire, 2006; Ross, 2006; Shandra et al., 2004; Sima & Hunag, 2023). Thanks to the aforementioned studies, we now know that parts of the most conspicuous ameliorations in people’s well-being throughout the course of the twentieth century have occurred under the tenure of some authoritarian leaders in many parts of the world, including SSA, while many democratic societies in the developing world, in general, have been imbued by unrelenting discrepancies in wealth and rampant poverty (Gerring et al., 2012). Moreover, considering recent findings on the relationship between human development and democracy, most substantiations in favor of the claim of a positive association are questionable. Although many people opine that democracy provokes high social expending which, as a result, would ameliorate the lives of the poor, the research findings indicated that there is hardly any association between government social expenditure and the standard of life of the citizens beyond the sphere of OECD countries (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999; McGuire, 2006). Further, as Gerring et al. (2012) observed, “the stipulated mechanisms of the welfare state do not lead, at least not in any consistent fashion, to an improvement in social welfare as measured by mortality, literacy, and other human development outcomes” (p. 1-2).

In attempts to accommodate the two claims on the relationship between democracy and human development, and to look deeper into the relationship, Gerring et al. (2012) proposed the probability that the impact of democracy on human development may be distal rather immediate. Thence, they suggested that prospective studies test the association between the two concepts by taking into account the time lag of the model. Finally, thanks to further investigations with infant morbidity rate as the prime indicator of human development, Gerring et al. (2012) found that a country’s contemporaneous level of democracy has less effect on human development, while its historical experience with democracy presents a close relationship with human development. Therefore, they deduced that democracy could only exert positive effects on well-being if it is regarded in terms of “stock”. Put differently, this would mean that if a democratic system of governance is sustained over a long period in a country, its impact on well-being will be remarkable. A country’s current human development level depends essentially on cumulative years of democratic experience the country enjoys (Gerring et al., 2012). This line of reasoning suggests that the relationship between multiparty democracy and human development may be non-linear. Based on the arguments of both sides the following hypotheses can be adopted:

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between multiparty democracy and human development.

H2: The relationship between multiparty democracy and human development is distal.

These hypotheses are in line with the existing literature on democracy and human development where a proximal and a distal relationship between the two concepts are observed. An easy substantiation would be post-electoral government's incentives and other handovers or the immediate implementation of certain human development policies that have been required by voters. In both observations, democracy is likely to exert a proximal effect on human development.

On the other hand, regarding the distal relationship between multiparty democracy and human development, this can be seen in contexts where the economy grows substantially and causes higher per capita shares within the country, and higher achievement in healthcare and education, for instance. In this case, it is possible to declare that the effects of democracy on human development are not proximal, instead they occur in the long term. A country or territory needs to achieve economic growth first before living standards improve.

4.2 Social Cohesion and Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Unlike the literature on democracy and human development, that on social cohesion and well-being has not been abundant. Till date, few attempts have been made to set up a linkage between social cohesion and the standard of life of a country's populations. In a study intended to uncover possible effects of social cohesion on human development, Seyoum (2020) observe that social cohesiveness exerts some effects on people's development. Owing to data from 180 countries in tandem with the indicators of state fragility as a proxy of social cohesion, Seyoum found that several aspects of a socially cohesive country have significant effects on poverty elimination and steady development (2020). On the other, a dearth of social cohesion was shown to induce unsuccessful institutions, which, in a failing state, are distinguished by rules and regulations that constantly compromise equitable redistribution of public wealth (Easterly et al., 2006; Seyoum, 2020). Resources may abound in a failing state, yet they are scarcely utilized to address the immediate needs of the population. Thence, the repercussion of state failure may be sensed in the education sector for instance, with shoddy school systems, facilities, and teaching materials. State failure may also result in poor healthcare system and income redistribution (unfair redistribution of per capita GDP among income groups and uneven access to state resources). Clearly, these findings suggest that the state's incapacity to cater for their citizens is likely to exert negative effects on economic growth and thus, on well-being (Amate-Fortes et al., 2017).

A similar study by Rotberg (2010) found that whenever a state fails, its population will disperse, the human capital will be drained, and the total production and per capita incomes will dwindle. The study further found that, state failure causes governments' inability to account for their people and to put in place sound policies that are likely to eradicate poverty and improve well-being (Rotberg, 2010).

Furthermore, an OECD report of the year 2018 found that state failure is essentially derived from ethnic fractionalization and a paucity of social cohesion. In the absence of groups' cohesion, said the report, leaders who are expected to build the country, frequently behave otherwise and in complete disregard for the interests of the people they are supposed to represent.

Another great contribution of the literature in terms of social cohesion and human development comes from Easterly et al. (2006). This study indicated that aspects of the lack of cohesion within a country, such as ethnic fractionalization and income inequity, endogenously influence the quality of its institutions, which in turn shapes economic growth. With the knowledge that economic growth fosters human development, the study of Easterly et al. appears to prove an indirect effect of social cohesion on human development (2006).

Given the rampant discrepancy between rich and poor, structural inequalities, and ethnic divisions are the main obstacles in Sub-Saharan Africa today. Fractionalizations and inequality of any kind are canals by which significant social turmoil breaks out (Easterly et al., 2006).

In sum, social cohesion is imperative for SSA countries to get to develop. Failure to achieve cohesion may result in dreadful social uncertainty that may not only impact the economic, but also the livelihood of the society in general. Today, it is largely perceived that for human development to be obtained, tremendous social and economic consensus must be met. From this discussion, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between social cohesion and human development.

H4: The relationship between social cohesion and human development is distal rather than immediate.

In these hypotheses, the empirical substantiation suggested by the current literature shows a distant rather than

proximal association between social cohesion and living standard. This is achievable through the attainment of institutional quality first, then economic growth, and finally, amelioration of living conditions.

4.3 Does the Level of Social Cohesion Moderate the Effect of Multiparty Democracy on Human Development?

Though multiparty democracy and social cohesion exert independent effects on human development outcomes, it is possible that the two concepts interact, and that the impact of one varies with the strength of the other. The net effect of this interaction on human development can be explained based on their key convergent features.

One crucial assumption of social cohesion that resonates very well with democracy is the lowering of economic and social divisions, and the building of effective institutions (Easterly et al., 2006). Nonetheless, some scholars (Amate-Fortes et al., 2017; Rotberg, 2010; Seyoum, 2020) arguably posit that although multiparty democracy thrives on the spread of quality institutions and the attainment of human development, its net effect is contingent on the level of social cohesion. Thus, in countries with fewer social and economic divisions and a higher revenue shared among income classes, inequalities decrease, and populations live better (Easterly et al., 2006). Even in countries where the government's accountability is limited, but the institutions are inclusive, political leaders will not face tremendous social obstacles in carrying out some relevant reforms. Citizens in a well-developed democratic institution are likely to have a higher level of trust in the government and its functions which will likely engender a positive interactive effect between social cohesion and democracy (Easterly et al., 2006). From this theoretical underpinning, the quality of social cohesion is likely to dampen the negative effect of multiparty democracy on human development. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: There is likely to be a positive relationship between multiparty democracy and human development in SSA if the level of social cohesion is sufficiently high.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the extant literature, this paper makes some implicit assumptions on the complex relationship between multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development. The proposed framework extrapolates the following urgent policy implications toward the achievement of sustained human development in SSA. From a democratic vantage point, the fact that many countries in SSA remain poor and incapable to insure economic and human welfare for themselves despite their democratic achievements does not attest that multiparty systems as regime type are unable to mitigate poverty and foster quality life standard. However, for human development in SSA to be sustainable, power must truly be in the hand of the people. It is only when people are empowered to engage in governance activities that responsibility can be reinforced, resources can be fairly redistributed, and inequality among income groups curtailed. Therefore, it is necessary for countries in the SSA region to guarantee more political and civil rights for their people. To enhance the quality of Sub-Saharan Africa's democracy, tremendous institutional changes are to occur, and the neo-patrimonial and ethnic nature of the democracy addressed. As an illustration, to tackle the ethnic nature of African democracy, other sorts of governance such as the one-party rule or party-less systems, should be explored. These two forms of government are susceptible to unifying the populace around political ideologies or party leaders, disrespectful for their regional or ethno-linguistic considerations. To cope with neopatrimonialism in SSA democracy then, party structure and state institutions, in general, should transcend leadership. Also, ballots should be organized regionally, and each region should choose and expedite its representatives to the central entity. And the business of the federal or central government should be to collect, synchronize, and implement the decisions made by the regional or lower-level entities. Besides the conclusion regarding ethnicity and neo-patrimonial problems, some fundamental amendments need to be made concerning the essential state establishments that are the state itself, the rule of law, and accountability (Fukuyama, 2015; Matlosa et al., 2017). Despite the fact that they are separate, these institutions are incapable of guaranteeing stability (both social and political), an even-handed justice system, and accountability (Fukuyama, 2015; Matlosa et al., 2017).

As for social cohesion, some important policy guidelines are offered in bids to accomplish sustained human development in SSA. For countries of the region to improve the well-being of their people, considerable efforts need to be deployed to assure quality institutions that would bring about peace, socio-political stability, and security. Political engagement should mainly strive to ameliorate governance, guarantee fair and equitable GDP share among income groups, and ensure political stability. Regarding institutional quality, governments in SSA should spend more resources to improve the goods and services delivery through the enhancement of the civil service capacities. This kind of amelioration will enable public bureaucracy to formulate and accomplish effective policies that can eliminate poverty and expand the prospect of better standards of life. Even though Bretton Wood Institutions, in conjunction with donors' community exhort emerging countries to rely on free market economy for efficiency, this paper strongly suggests a state-led policy to boost economic and human development in SSA.

Under the free market economy, many governments in Africa were carried away from their own policy space. In consequence, they lost the ability to implement homemade strategies that incarnate African values and norms. Sub-Saharan African countries must improve their governance practices through the accomplishment of what works best for Africa rather than wildly reproducing Western styles of governance. In sum, policymaking may have standard procedures, however, such procedures must be carried out in accordance with African values and norms. This paper farther advises more efficient public policy reforms in SSA, including promotions with merit and fairness. Therefore, popular work practices in which leaders control the civil service and routinely indulge in favoritism should be banned.

While offering some assumptions about the tangled relationship between multiparty democracy, social cohesion, and human development, this paper calls for further investigations. For instance, future studies are needed to estimate the effect of democracy and social cohesion on human development, which cannot adequately be accomplished via non-empirical research. In addition, the paper's claim of a positive effect of the interaction between multiparty democracy and social cohesion, on human development leaves room for more elucidation. Mixed-methods analyses or quantitative studies that provide thorough explanation about country-specific characteristics are likely to be conclusive. Finally, given the social, economic, and political disorder in most countries in SSA, understanding regime type, social cohesion, and their impact on well-being remains critical to understanding the region's likelihood of progress.

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