

African Democratic Montage

African Democratic Montage:

*Case Studies on Ghana,
Zimbabwe, Tanzania,
Ethiopia, and Kenya*

By

E. Ike Udogu

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Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya

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PREFACE

It is fortuitous that this volume is written at an epoch when history is repeating itself with respect to military coups in some African countries—i.e. Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, the Sudan, and attempted coups in Sierra-Leone and Guinea Bissau, with the probability of more coups due in part to inefficacious governance. The revival of military incursion into the politics of these states suggests that the democratic renaissance that gathered momentum following the collapse of communism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Eastern Europe is facing a reversal. This is the case, to a certain extent, because the political disposition of some members of the governing class are antithetical to the principles of good governance.

This development is illustrated by the anti-democratic tendencies that a few of the ruling elites display in their polities. Some of the anti-democratic proclivities are the following: lack of free and fair elections; failure to uphold the rule of law; lack of transparency and accountability in the governance structure; electoral violence; breaches of citizens' human rights; application of extra-constitutional powers; and so on. Currently, as a consequence of the violations of most of the preceding principles of democracy, many states in the continent are politically unstable. This observation is seen in the political violence and deaths that happen in electoral contestations in several African countries.

The fact, in the present circumstance, is that some autocratic leaders and their parties in Africa have, due to their self-interest, sagaciously commandeered the state and converted it into a corporation of sorts. These custodians of power commonly urged their fellow political entrepreneurs in party politics to invest in the political consortium—the state—for their personal and party benefits.

Moreover, some political leaders often offer lucrative business contracts, for major national and state development projects, to their powerful sponsors as *quid pro quo* for their electoral support. Paradoxically, by virtue of the massive wealth procured by these powerful business benefactors from their political clients, they have sometimes established a “rival reign within

the reign” in the nation-state. And, the philosophy of these wealthy political sponsors or “godfathers” is that democracy does not represent a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” according to President Abraham Lincoln’s explanation of democracy. Rather, democracy is construed as a “government of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.”

Thus, many of these private entrepreneurs and their political allies in government, in the politics of who gets what, when, and how, in much of Africa, use democracy as a mask for the purpose of enriching themselves, and their political disciples. This arrangement affords some custodians of the nation-state an advantage to govern their societies despotically in order to sustain and protect their wealth and prestige.

Today, the preceding presuppositions and developments, and the process of advancing democracy and democratization in Africa and elsewhere, continue to baffle and frustrate many scholars of democracy. Even so, arguably, democracy dies hard; it will survive every legal and extra-legal assault upon political and social liberty no matter the duration it would take to do so. This is the case because democracy, and its principles, which many students of democracy have contended, is a difficult but significant political technique for promoting good governance in societies—not least African polities at this historical juncture in the continent.

It is against the backdrop of the preceding postulations that this volume, that is aimed at deepening democracy and good governance in Africa in this century, is made up of a theoretical framework, and five case studies with useful appendices. Accordingly, this study, among other things, brings into sharp focus the intricacies and complexities in the practice of democracy; and, it suggests that the ultimate attainment of democratic consolidation in this millennium is a *sine qua non* for advancing political stability, good governance, peaceful coexistence, and a priori robust development in Africa. Indeed, to paraphrase a stimulating and appropriate proverb, it is hoped that “these politically hard times in African politics will create politically strong men and women, and these politically strong men and women will (learn from past mistakes) and create political and economic good times” in this century.

The foregoing assumptions notwithstanding, I do take cognizance of the historicity, cultural specificities, and characteristics of the countries under review. It is in view of these reflections or contemplations that the epistemological explorations, in my case studies, call for elasticity, and not

a one-size-fits-all approach, in the analysis of the odyssey toward democratic consolidation in each of the countries examined in this volume.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of writing a book is quite arduous even to many renowned veterans. Researchers in most instances conduct the research for their project/s, type their manuscripts, edit and re-edit the document before submitting the script for publication. In some cases, the written work is rejected; and, if accepted, the author is asked to explain why his or her volume is unique in his or her related disciplines. The author is further asked to assist the publisher in marketing the book. Despite some of these ordeals that authors have to go through, it is always refreshing to see the final product published.

The research work for this book was started following the advent of the once in a lifetime COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. It was a time that I needed support from my family and friends. It was remarkable and comforting that my immediate and extended family members were around, and so were my friends. To this end, I extend my heartfelt thanks to them for their unwavering support. This is especially the case with respect to Mr. Erick E. Watt-Udogu, Rutgers University, NJ., Professor Enoch Adogla, Francis Marion University, SC., Mr. Emmanuel O. George, PA., and Ms. Nomava Mfecane, SC.

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ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACT	Alliance for Change and Transparency
AD	Anno Domini
ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
ADC	Alliance for Democratic Change
AFFP	Alliance for African Farmers Party
AFP	Association of Farmers Party
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ANC	African National Congress
ASP	Afro-Shirazi Party
AU	African Union
BC	Before Christ
BCE	Before the Common Era
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi
CCU	Chama Cha Uma Party
CDD	Center for Democratic Development
CE	Common Era
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHADEMA	Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo/Party for Democracy and Development
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CMD	Complete Metamorphic Democracy
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CPP	Convention People's Party
CUF	Civic United Front
CUWU	Chama cha Ukombozi wa Umma
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DP	Democratic Party
EC	Electoral Commission
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Force

EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
HoPR	House of the People's Representatives
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IMD	Incomplete Metamorphic Democracy
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPPA	Inter Parties Parliamentary Agreement
IRI	International Republic Institute
JOC	Joint Operations Command
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KPP	Kenya Patriotic Party
KPTP	Kenya Patriotic Trust Party
KPU	Kenya People's Union
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MP	Member of Parliament
NAMA	National Movement of Amhara
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NCCR	National Convention for Construction and Reform
NCD	National Commission for Democracy
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEBE	National Election Board of Ethiopia
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NLC	National Liberation Council
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIP	National Independence Party
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRA	National Reconstruction Alliance
NRC	National Redemption Council
NASA	National Super Alliance
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
PHP	People's Heritage Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
PNC	People's National Convention
PNP	People's National Party

PNU	Party of National Unity
PP	Progress Party
RPK	Roots Party of Kenya
SEPDF	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front
SMC	Supreme Military Council
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SRANC	Southern Rhodesian African National Congress
SSA	Saba Saba Asili
SYU	Sauti ya Umma
TAA	Tanganyika African Association
TBC	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
TDA	Tanzania Democratic Alliance
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UMD	Union of Multiparty Democracy
UN	United Nations
UPDP	United People's Democratic Party
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCP	Workers Congress Party of Kenya
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union/Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe's Electoral Commission
ZNP	Zanzibar Nationalist Party
ZPPP	Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party

CHAPTER ONE

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: AN OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an overview of the general framework on which the chapters explored in this text rest. These are a brief review on 1. Constitution, 2. Human rights, 3. Election, 4. Democracy, and 5. Democratic consolidation. This approach to the case studies is aimed at providing a brief theoretical template, to guide the reader on the topics and issues examined, in this volume, on Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Finally, this chapter concludes with a succinct summary of each chapter.

Regrettably, many powerful African leaders have not regularly complied with constitutional provisions on human rights and rights dogmas contained in international human rights instruments. This evolution has in part given rise to the peculiar democratic practice in much of Africa.¹ The importance of implementing human rights provisions inserted in national constitutions, and international human rights contrivances that African leaders are signatories to is a *sine qua non* in the continent for furthering good governance. This is so because the application of rights doctrines is vital for advancing free and fair elections, democratic consolidation, good governance, peaceful coexistence and, *a priori*, robust development. This view is germane in a continent that is endowed with natural resources, and that has arrived at a critical historical juncture in the 21st century after several years of independence from former colonial powers.

¹ E. Ike Udogu, "National Constitutions and Human Rights Issues in Africa," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2003): 101.

CONSTITUTION

It is against the backdrop of the foregoing postulations that the organizational superstructure of this text reproduces subjectively selected and appropriate human rights principles in the constitution of countries under review. To shed some light on the study, this introductory chapter provides a concise and synergized theoretical dialogue on constitution, human rights, and democracy mined from different works on these matters. This approach is taken in part to lay out and present an outline of the nature of Africa's current unique democratic mosaic. Commonly, as noted earlier, African political leaders have been reluctant in fully implementing the tenets of their constitutions, not to mention the principles of human rights enshrined in national constitutions that work against their self-interests and those of the party.² The reproduction of excerpts from the constitution relating to human rights in this work is deliberate. It is intended to suggest, poignantly, the importance of respecting the rights and political liberties of citizens essential for promoting democratic consolidation, political stability, peaceful coexistence, national cohesion, and sustainable development as noted previously.

Operationally, a constitution may be defined as “a state's organic or fundamental law, which prescribes the basic organs of government and their operations, the distribution and use of power, and the relationship between the individual and the state. ...In all cases, the function of constitutions is to establish the norms by which the system operates”³. Elsewhere, Jack C. Plano and Milton Greenberg defined constitution as “a fundamental or ‘organic’ law that establishes the framework of government of a state, assigns the powers and duties of governmental agencies, and establishes the relationship between the people and the government [of a nation-state]”⁴. Jan-Erik Lane contends that a constitution is “a compact document that comprises a number of articles about the state, laying down the rules which state activities are supposed to follow. Whether these **rules are obeyed or implemented is another matter**.⁵” Additionally, it is defined as a

² E. Ike Udogu, “Human Rights and Minorities in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual Overview,” *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 87.

³ Jack Plano and Roy Olton, *The International Relations Dictionary* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC, Inc., 1982), p. 427.

⁴ Jack Plano and Milton Greenberg, *The American Political Dictionary* (Holt, New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1985), p. 33.

⁵ Jean-Erik Lane, *Constitution and Political Theory* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 5.

document that outlines the manner and nature of interactions between the government and the people. It also establishes the institutions and structures with which to govern—especially in a polity.⁶ It is true that a constitution may not depict the complete reality of any public, but it does provide a springboard from which to comprehend the basic reality of the system. Because individuals who write constitutions are human, often representing their particular interests or those of a group, these documents are not always flawless. Indeed, Donald S. Lutz opines:

In a sense, the entire idea of a constitution rests on an assumption of human fallibility, since, if humans were angels, there would be no need to erect, direct, and limit government through a constitution. ...A constitution, [therefore], was viewed as means not merely to make collective decisions in the most efficient way possible but to make the best possible decisions in pursuit of the common good under a condition of popular sovereignty. ...Popular sovereignty implies that all constitutional matters should be based upon some form of popular consent [e.g., national referendum], which in turn implies a formal, public [approval]...⁷

Unfortunately, what prevails in many African countries today is a constitution without constitutionalism. In other words, there are documents carefully written by experts or constitutionalists aimed at serving as legal contracts for governing a polity, but the tenets in these charters are often flouted. In some cases, these constitutions are ignored by the custodians of power in the governance of their societies. It is a given that for a state to be efficiently governed, however, it is imperative for its leaders to incorporate the philosophies of constitution and constitutionalism. Indeed, Carl Friedrich defined constitutionalism as:

an institutionalized system of effective regularized restraints on governmental action...such restraints may be extra-legal as well as legal, as, for example, regular and effective criticism and possible opposition by political parties, the press, or pressure groups.⁸

⁶ E. Ike Udogu (ed.), *Democracy and Democratization in Africa: Toward the 21st Century* (Leiden, the Netherlands, E. J. Brill Publishers, 1997), p. 2.

⁷ Donald S. Lutz, "Toward a Theory of Constitutional Amendments," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (1994): 427.

⁸ Carl Friedrich, "Theory of Constitutionalism—Comparative Government," in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (eds.), *Constitutionalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), p. 34.

Elsewhere, constitutionalism is defined as:

The political doctrine that claims that political authority should be bound by institutions that restrict the exercise of power. **Such institutions offer rules that bind both the persons in authority [...] as well as the organs of bodies that exercise political power.** Human rights are one central component [or appurtenance] of constitutionalism; another essential element is the separation of powers in government.⁹

Germane to the preceding references, definitions, and assumptions, Paul Sigmund affirms that “every constitution is continually changing and that the making of a constitution is a continuous process—but that an effective constitutionalism is institutionalized; it does prescribe certain regularized limits on conduct; and it has an effect on behavior, even if its component elements are undergoing substantial alteration overtime.¹⁰” If the notion of constitutionalism is to be efficacious, the need for an effective government or good governance is critical in any political system.¹¹ In Africa, however, because of the contemporary weak governance superstructures or institutions, and deficiencies in the adherence to the spirit of national constitutions, some nations have experienced military coups (e.g., Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Gabon) that corrupted the existing democratic dispensation. There were also failed *coup d’etat* attempts in Sierra-Leone and Guinea Bissau.

For instance, in Nigeria, a bellwether in Africa, the military produced her constitutions of which two (in 1979 and 1989) were hardly ever tested, let alone institutionalized. Even the 1979 constitution that was under operation from 1979 to 1983, and considered by some to be relatively adequate, was not institutionalized in the republic before a coup on December 31, 1983. Moreover, no efforts were made to educate the populace on its merits so that they could imbibe the central tenets of the constitution. The 1999 constitution was not approved in a national referendum, either; it created a constitutional crisis following the February 2023 presidential election.

The above problems are furthered and complicated by the fact that a constitution in and of itself cannot resolve the antinomies inherent in a political system. This is so because although political actors tend to agree

⁹ Lane, *Constitutions and Political Theory*, p. 2.

¹⁰ Lane, *Constitutions and Political Theory*, p. 35.

¹¹ E. Ike Udogu, “Military Politics and Constitutional Discourse: Toward Nigeria’s Forthcoming Republic,” *Makerere Political Science Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1997): 5-6.

on the need for a constitution and claim to support it, their interpretations of the canons of the document and other political issues related to it vary because of conflicting individual and group interests. This proposition is especially true in the struggle for power necessary for the authoritative allocation of values or in the politics of who gets what, when, and how.¹²

In any case, the character and context of an African constitution derive, to some extent, from the interaction of the colonial powers and indigenous African leaders. In fact, it was at the Berlin Conference of 1884/5 that the European powers mapped out the continent into their spheres of influence, and proceeded to govern their colonies *ad libitum*. Following the termination of colonialism, Britain, France, Portugal, and Belgium, mainly, contributed directly or indirectly to the drafting of the constitution with which their former African colonies were governed and these colonial powers made sure that these constitutions contained some of their political, social, and cultural specificities to enhance their imperialist interests.

For example, France's policies of *assimilation* and *mission civilisatrice* in Africa contributed to the texture of the constitution and behavior patterns of some francophone African states. In fact, historically, John M. Mbaku noted that: "The first constitution of the ...former French colony of Cameroon [or Republic du Cameroun] was basically a copy of that of the French Fifth Republic despite the fact that the two countries differ significantly culturally, geographically, economically, socially, and in many other ways."¹³ Ditto the above allusion to Nigeria's 1999 constitution and America's constitution of September 17, 1787.

Be that as it may, the content of a constitution can be complex or simple given the socio-cultural specificity and historicity of the milieu in which the legal document is crafted. Within this context, arguably, it might be difficult to write about a specific theory of constitutions. Accordingly, as Lane notes: "what there is a set of ideas, concepts and models drawn from various disciplines that refer to constitutions, either the constitutions of the many countries in the world or to some ideal constitution..."¹⁴ Although constitutional theory hardly possesses a core of established dogmas, it remains a subject of much inquiry and debate particularly since some

¹² Udogu, "Military Politics and Constitutional Discourse: Toward Nigeria's Forthcoming Republic," *Makerere Political Science Review*, p. 6.

¹³ John M. Mbaku, "Effective Constitutional Discourse as an Important First Step to Democratization in Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 31, Nos. 1-2 (1996): 102-103.

¹⁴ Lane, *Constitutions and Political Theory*, p. 1.

aspects of constitutional theory deal with the complexities and perplexities of how countries are governed given the different political and social environments.¹⁵

In sum, despite the foregoing conjectures, however, the use of constitutions to delineate how a state is to be governed to check on the malfeasance of officials of a government is often promoted in most systems of government. Even so, there is a paradox arising from the whole matter of constitutions because although they might be indispensable for the peaceful governance of a society, hypothetically speaking, they can also be tricky in their operation especially in the developing societies. The interpretative discrepancies, with respect to constitutional issues in many African states, flow from the fact that many constitutions "lack national legitimacy" partially because they are seldom seen by the citizens of these countries.

Moreover, a great number of the population in African societies cannot read and write, let alone comprehend some of the complex discursive and difficult legal lingo of the constitution. Thus, most of the citizens in African nation-states are governed with a document that is not easily accessible to the populace. And, what is more, the intricate and elite-driven constitution is seldom approved in a national referendum or by other forms of legitimation, to further this vital document's national appreciation and acceptance.¹⁶

The matters of a constitution and how it is promulgated in many African countries are complicated by the "absence" of constitutionalism—a condition generally exacerbated by the actions of some of the guardians of power, who attempt to manipulate the legal document by the application of extra-judicial means. In this practice, the power-brokers sometimes ignored the tenets of the document because provisions in it impinge upon their real or putative interests. Additionally, in the autocratic governance systems that are commonplace in much of Africa today, some leaders oftentimes behaved as though they have regal or "deistic" immunity to principles of the national

¹⁵ E. Ike Udogu, "National Constitutions and Human Rights Issues in Africa," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2003): 103.

¹⁶ Julius O. Ihonvbere, *Toward a New Constitutionalism in Africa* (London, UK: Center for Democracy and Development, 2000), pp. 1-103; Udogu, "National Constitutions and Human Rights Issues in Africa," *African and Asian Studies*, p. 104.

constitution—in a tradition analogous to that of Louis XIV of France and his imperious proclamation: *L'état c'est moi*.¹⁷

An epistemological approach and discussion in this volume, as suggested earlier, is that the inadequate practice of the tenets of constitution-*cum*-constitutionalism, and the poor execution of human rights precepts in many African societies—especially during elections—have produced the current democratic montage in Africa. In other words, notionally, Africa's contemporary democratic mosaic is informed in part by how differently political actors have lived up to human rights tenets contained in their national constitutions.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In view of the foregoing discourses, I shall take a bird's eye view of human rights issues, conjecturally, within the context of elections in Africa. This is done with the intention, as in the earlier argumentations on constitution, of linking rights observations to the contemporary complexion of democratic contests in my case studies.

Human rights concerns today, whether visualized from the right or left of the ideological spectrum, are a basically global philosophical, moral, legal, social, and political phenomenon. In truth, so universal has their scope and allure become within the contemporary global village that “condemnation of gross human rights infringements committed in the Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Pakistan, Nigeria, and China, for instance, are vocally rebuked in London, Washington, Paris, Johannesburg and elsewhere by governments and human rights NGOs distressed about its infractions.”¹⁸

But the irony, despite its attractiveness, is that not all people enjoy their rights equally in most polities. Nonetheless, conceptually and theologically, individuals are meant to have identical human rights. Lamentably, this has not always been the case. In a real sense, therefore, the clamor for human rights becomes a popular lingo among human rights activists, and serves as a rallying cry for those who suffer from victimization in their political, economic, social, religious, and cultural systems. The complaint of human rights violations by collectivities is intended to bring pressure to bear on the

¹⁷ Udogu, “National Constitutions and Human Rights Issue in Africa,” *African and Asian Studies*, p. 104.

¹⁸ Sambuddha Ghatak and E. Ike Udogu, “Human Rights Issues of Minorities in Contemporary India: A Concise Analysis,” *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2012): 203.

polity to change legally and politically those vices that tend to marginalize a group in the system so that in the final analysis, the call for human rights by the "victims" may be unnecessary. In a way, the possibility of realizing such a condition could further the legitimacy of the state, advance peaceful coexistence, and foster democratic consolidation, which are some of the primary mandates of the guardians of power.¹⁹

Although attempts have been made to highlight the problems of human rights globally, at least since 1948, the results have been mixed. For instance, the following declarations and covenants have been made to address human rights issues: The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and 1976; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and 1976; UN International Human Rights Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1981 and 1989; African Banjul Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981 and 1986.²⁰

Conceptually, the fundamental discourse regarding the issue of human rights rests on the character of a human being. That is to say, philosophically, what does it imply to be an individual or a human being? Are all persons equal and must *a priori* enjoy equal rights? Moralists may argue, theoretically, for such a utopia, insisting that this might be the only way to create an ideal society capable of promoting an ideal climate for democracy and peace. Realists, on the other hand, may argue that such a vision in society is only good on paper and contend that the argument on human equality is hollow and hogwash. Given the competitive claims of human beings on a society, there are bound to be anomalies in the allocation of goods and services which, invariably, impact on the social stratification of the society and engender conflict in its wake²¹ that could be observed in electoral contests. In other words, in Orwellian satire, "all animals are created equal but some animals are more equal than others."

Indeed, Jack Donnelly has argued that "an anthropological approach that seeks to ground human rights on cross-cultural consensus faces equally

¹⁹ E. Ike Udogu, "Human Rights and Minorities in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual Overview," *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 89.

²⁰ Udogu, "Human Rights and Minorities in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual Overview," *Journal of Third World Studies*, p. 88.

²¹ Udogu, "Human Rights and Minorities in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual Overview," *Journal of Third World Studies*, pp.89-90.

serious problems. History is replete with societies based on hierarchies of [race], birth, gender, and wealth.”²² This is the case in most societies, developed and developing nations, such as America, India, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and others.

Additionally, the above thesis is furthered by an argument that has been propounded elsewhere that in most societies there can only be rich folks if there are poor folks.²³ Therefore, the quest by the wealthy to perpetuate the *status quo* social order remains attractive and salient. In Africa, the infractions of the human rights of the subalterns are phenomenal because of the region’s political and economic instability.²⁴ Indisputably, the respect for the human rights of all citizens-especially the subaltern and poor citizens-is compulsory for the promotion of political stability, and economic revitalization in the odyssey toward consolidated democracy in the continent. The struggle to construct a successful genus of democracy in order to advance political stability and national cohesion in Africa has tasked the intellectual wits of virtually every scholar that has tackled the question. This assumption is true even as I wrestle with this intimidating issue.

The discursive debates on the values and practicality of human rights execution in Africa is worth referencing to the extent that it shines light on how it helps in explaining its relationship to electoral quagmires and to the development of democracy in Africa. The central argument rests on whether the African concept of human rights should contrast with that of Western traditions. As the argument goes, some of the Western institutions, cultures, and behavior patterns that were extended to the continent during the colonial period were alien to African cultures.

Thus, some Africanists who emphasize the cultural relativity case on human rights issues have contended that the trendy concept of human rights derives its roots from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and therefore it was and is not peculiar to “traditional” Africa. In fact, Issa G. Shivji was unceremonious when he noted that human rights, as a universal concept, did

²² Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 20-21.

²³ E. Ike Udogu, “The Allurement of Ethnonationalism in Nigerian Politics: The Contemporary Debate,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol, 29, Nos 3-4 (1994): 161.

²⁴ Samuel Zalanga, “Subaltern Voices and Implications for Nigerian Politics in the Fourth Republic: A Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis,” in E. Ike Udogu (ed.), *Nigeria in the Fourth Republic: Confronting the Contemporary Political, Economic, and Social Dilemmas* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022), pp. 147-162.

not exist in pre-colonial Africa. Accordingly, what are usually put forward as African human rights notions by its advocates are nothing more than convictions of human dignity and worth which have existed in all societies.²⁵ Extrapolating her views from the foregoing assumptions and similar argumentations on human rights, Rhoda Howard-Hassman asserted that:

There is no specifically African concept of human rights. The argument for such a concept is based on a philosophical confusion of human dignity with human rights, and on an inadequate understanding of structural organization and social changes in African society. Underlying this inadequate understanding, a number of assumptions regarding the meaning of culture are used to buttress the reliance on the assertion of “cultural relativity,” in order to argue that the allegedly “Western” concept of human rights cannot be applied to Africa.²⁶

It has been argued elsewhere, however, that theoretical and conceptual debates aside, the fact that African countries embraced human rights instruments and their principles as members of the United Nations is noteworthy. Moreover, Africa developed its own alluring covenant, *The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights*, and African countries include human rights principles in their constitutions, lending support to the obligation for the universal application of human rights doctrines throughout the continent.²⁷

In a broader context, though, there is a need for academics to critically examine some of the traditional customs of the African peoples and to relate them to human rights issues in the continent. This approach might help in explaining the conflicts inherent in human rights implementations and probably assist in the provision of solutions. In fact, in his essay on “Human Agency and Democratic Challenges in Africa,” Wisdom J. Tettey delved into certain cultural behaviors in Africa that tend to impede the development of democracy and, *a priori*, respect for human rights. Tettey alluded to the work of Maxwell Owusu, who observed that:

Given the pervasive influence (direct and indirect) of the highly resilient indigenous culture or custom and tradition on contemporary African politics

²⁵ Issa G. Shivji, *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA Publishers, 1989), p. 10.

²⁶ Rhoda Howard-Hassman, *Human Rights in Commonwealth Africa* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1986), p. 23.

²⁷ Udogu, “Human Rights and Minorities in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual Overview,” *Journal of Third World Studies*, pp. 87-104

and the universal attachment of Africans to their ancestral beliefs and practices, that is the very close implicit relationship between culture and politics, this relationship must obviously be the starting point of any inquiry into the nature and causes of contemporary political development in Africa, not least into the process of democratization, [and human rights practices], and its domestication.²⁸

Occasionally, the above characteristics are advanced by the general notion of gerontocratic and patriarchal infallibility on the continent that constitutes one of the most significant impediments to the establishment of human rights and democratic cultures. Frequently, the notion that a citizen should always submit to elders in disputes often truncates free expression and suffocates an individual's right to hold dissimilar opinions. Moreover, it becomes difficult after many years of being socialized to accept the faultlessness of those in authority, for citizens to suddenly [challenge these authorities even when the elders' views are anachronistic and represent an antithesis to the practice of human rights and democracy in the polity].²⁹ The population of much of Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, live in the countryside. The traditional and cultural practices, such as the roles of women in society and ethno-religious attachment to political parties in rural Africa, are very difficult to change. Sometimes the parochial character of the elders, and citizens in rustic Africa, exacerbate ethnic and religious antagonisms and electoral conflicts that are anathemas to democratic consolidation.

ELECTION AND THREE VOTING MODELS

The assumption in a democracy is that voters' behavior patterns inform the character of a democratic genre in a democratic society—whether unconsolidated or consolidated. So, what are some of the factors that influence how citizens vote in an electoral contest? Some scholars have explained the elements that motivate the electorate to vote one way or the other within the context of three templates or schools of thought. These are Sociological, Psychosocial, and Rational Choice models.

²⁸ Maxwell Owusu, "Domesticating Democracy: Culture, Civil Society, and Constitutionalism in Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (1997): 120-153.

²⁹ Wisdom Tettey, "Human Agency and Democratic Challenges in Africa," *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2000): 13-49; Udogu, "National Constitutions and Human Rights Issues in Africa," *African and Asian Studies*, pp. 117-118.

The brief discussions that follow on these prototypes are visualized generally within the constructs of democratic orientation, in the democratic systems and practice in the West, but are useful frameworks for examining African democracy, too. Nevertheless, given the cultural characteristic of African countries and its democratic traits at this point in the continent's political history, it would be safe to argue that while these are superb paradigms, unfortunately one size does not fit all. In other words, because of certain unique variables—such as the weaponization of ethnicity and religion in much of African contemporary politics—some of these unique guides might not apply neatly to African democracies as they would in the western context.

Even so, attempts will be made to expose some of the models' utility as pointers for overall analytic purpose, within the African political purview in the following brief reviews. In this regard the onus of my theoretical argumentation briefly shifts to the character of the key players in politics who, traditionally, determine the genus of democracy in their political milieus. These are those citizens whose votes, in a free and fair election, are meant to count and who by exercising their choices at the poll are invariably determining who will lead them. In this way, also, they determine the democratic disposition of that polity.

SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL

This model stresses how social factors in a society influence voter behavior.³⁰ Some of the early or pioneer studies on how sociological factors influence individual voting habits were: *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*,³¹ *Voting: a study of*

³⁰ Rui Antunes, "Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior," *Exedra*, Vol. 4 (2010): 170; Ransford Edward Van Gyampo, Emmanuel Graham, and Eric Yobo, "Ghana's 2016 General Elections: Accounting for the Monumental Defeat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)," *Journal of African Elections*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2017): 27.

³¹ P. F. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson, and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter makes up his mind in a presidential Campaign* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944); Antunes, "Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior," *Exedra*, p. 146; N. H. K. Mahsud and H. Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis," *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, Vol 3, Issue 3 (July-September, 2020): 65.

opinion formation in a presidential campaign,³² and *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*.³³

This sociological paradigm on individual voting deportment focuses on the social scene in which the individual finds himself or herself. The thrust of the analysis, among other things, stresses the importance and characteristics of the groups that exist in an environment and how such factors as social class, religion, language *et cetera* influence their political behavior.³⁴ Within such social spheres, it is suggested that voters learn their partisan preferences from the troupe to which they belong, be it social or religious, in their community.³⁵ In other words, the assumption is that the importance of environmental determinism should not be taken lightly in predicting an individual's voting habit.³⁶ Further, studies suggest that "the relationship between voting behavior and voters' social groups was so strong that voters' choices could be explained by just focusing on three major elements, viz. religion, socio-economic class or status, and place of residence."³⁷ In brief, these features help predict how a person might cast a vote at a polling unit.

Besides social groups, religion and family play vital roles as to whether an individual is inclined toward being a "gladiator, spectator and apathetic" in politics. In fact, the family exerts a major role in determining voting behavior in Africa. Justifiably, the family influence template asserts that the family has a profound impact on the political socialization of children such

³² B. R. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld & W. N. McPhee, *Voting: a study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1954); Antunes, "Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior," *Exedra*, p. 146; Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behavior: A Comparative Analysis," *Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, p.65.

³³ E. Katz and P. F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: the part played by people in the flow of mass communications* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955); Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behavior: A Comparative Analysis," *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, p. 65.

³⁴ V. L. Hutchings and H. J. Jefferson, "The Sociology and Socio-Psychological Approaches," in J. Fisher, E. Fieldhouse, M. N. Franklin, R. Gibson, M. Cantijoch, and C. Wlezien (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Elections, Voting Behavior, and Public Opinion* (Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 2018), pp. 21-29.

³⁵ J. Abia, "Reviewing the Theories of Voting Behavior," *Memoirs of Nara University*, No. 31 (2002): 283-304.

³⁶ E. Ike Udogu, *Politics and Society: An anecdote on Culture and Environmental Determinism* (Charleston, SC: Palmetto Publishing, 2021).

³⁷ Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behavior: A Comparative Analysis," *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, p. 66.

as by accompanying parents to campaign rallies and distributing political party literature. So, it is contended that:

According to the proponents of the [family influence model], the family has a deep impact on the political socialization of children and their attachment to a particular party... The impression created on the minds of offsprings by parents remains intact even after they no longer live with their parents. Research studies have established that the level of partisan similarity between [children] and parents remains fairly high and wears away slowly during offsprings' adult life...³⁸

PSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL

Overall, this template overlaps with the sociological model and perspective. A host of scholars are the originators and articulators of this framework.³⁹ The main thrust of this template of voting habit is partisanship that is related to psychological attachment; it is based on a durable relationship and bond with a political party ideology—either liberal or conservative, for instance. In the political chemistry between the individual and party affiliation, partisanship is gained through a socialization procedure. This course of action is nurtured by the ethics and behavior patterns of family and colleagues that is analogous to an emotional feeling that induces individuals to declare association with, and allegiance to, a faith and its doctrine.⁴⁰ In

³⁸ Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behavior," p. 66; see also E. Dinas "The Evolving Role of Partisanship," in K. Arzheimer, J. Evans, and M. S. Lewis-Beck (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behavior*, Vol. 1 (2017): 265-286; Clem Brooks, "Introduction: Voting Behavior and Elections in Context," *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Fall 2014): 587-595.

³⁹ A. Campbell, P. E. Converse, W. E. Miller, and D. E. Stokes, *The American Voter: Theoretical models of voting behavior* (New York: Wiley Publishers, 1960); R. K. Merton, and A. S. Kitt, "Contribution to the theory of reference group behavior," in R. K. Merton and P. F. Lazarsfeld (eds.), *Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Method of "The American Soldier"* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), pp. 40-105; W. E. Miller and J. M. Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); N. H. Nie, S. Verba, and J. R. Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

⁴⁰ Merton and Kitt, "Contribution to the theory of reference group behavior," in Merton and Lazarsfeld (eds.), *Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Method of "The American Soldier"*, pp. 40-105; see Antunes, "Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior," *Exedra*, p. 153; Hutchings and Jefferson "The sociological and social-psychological approaches," in Fisher, Fieldhouse, Franklin, Gibson, Cantijoch and Wlezien (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Elections, Voting Behavior, and Public Opinion*, pp. 21-29; Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches

this political calculation, it is assumed that partisanship is a real expression and acknowledgment of social identification. In this schema, the electorate has a durable feeling of what sort of individuals belong to different political factions and if they subscribe to the political ideology of one of these troupes—such as liberals and conservatives or evangelical.⁴¹ In other words, voters' choice in an election is determined by the congruence between the voter and candidate/s political ideology in an electoral contest. In such a scenario, the voter is likely to socialize more with political actors who share a similar or common religio-political doctrine.

THE RATIONAL CHOICE MODEL

This model is brilliantly articulated by scholars who argue that, overall, many voters cast their votes on the basis of the “law of self-interest”—especially economic interests.⁴² That notwithstanding, Anthony Downs and Kenneth Arrows's works on this matter⁴³ have received wide attention from scholars interested in the rational choice model.

Within the context of the preceding view, Downs asserts that:

Our main thesis is that [politicos] in democratic politics are analogous to [political] entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy [in a corporate state]. So, to attain their private end, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the most profits for the same reason. To examine the implications of the thesis, we have assumed that citizens behave rationally in politics.⁴⁴

to the Study of Voting Behavior: A Comparative Analysis,” *Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, p. 68;

⁴¹ D. Green, B. Palmquist and E. Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: political parties and the social identities of voters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), p. ix; Max Visser, “Voting: A Behavioral Analysis,” *Behavior and Social Issues*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 1996): 24.

⁴² A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1957); K. Arrows, “Rationality of Self and Others in the Economic System,” *The Journal of Business*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (1986): 385-399; Antunes, “Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior,” *Exedra*, pp. 157-158.

⁴³ K. J. Arrows, “Rationality of Self and Others in the Economic System,” *The Journal of Business*, pp. 385-399; K. J. Arrows, *Social Values and Individual Values* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1951).

⁴⁴ Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, pp.295-296.

Briefly, this framework that accentuates an economic view of voters' choices suggests that the electorate is a rational economic voter in a sense that he or she behaves like a consumer in the market. The voter in this political environment expresses his or her choices amongst the competing policies presented by political parties and actors seeking to capture the state at electoral campaigns and contests. In contrast to the previous models—sociological and psychosociological—rational choice theory suggests that an individual's vote is determined by the law of self-interest—i.e., not ideology per se. Put in another way, a voter's decision to support a political actor and faction at the poll is rooted on *quid-pro-quo* or transactional arrangement,⁴⁵ and the relationship between the electorate and a candidate, in an electoral contest, in the rational choice framework, is symbiotic (as in vote buying by some candidates in Africa).⁴⁶

The nuts and bolts of the preceding premise, with respect to the rational choice model, is that polling is undertaken rationally based on an individual's careful assessment of the possible negative and positive options available before making his or her choice generally ingrained in the citizen's self-interest. The issue, then, with respect to this volume is: How relevant are these frameworks and paradigms in executive elections and the current odyssey toward democratic consolidation in Africa?

AFRICA AND THE ELECTORAL MODELS: A CONCEPTUAL SYNOPSIS

In briefly discussing these models within the context of African democratic montage, it is critical to bear in mind the historicity and specificity of African democracies *vis a vis* the consolidated democracies in the Occident. In short, as noted earlier, the construction of the preceding models is based on the Western advanced democracies. Nevertheless, they are pertinent to the explications of voting behavior in democracies globally. Be that as it may, the importance of “cultural relativism” should be borne in mind in the African context.

As to the sociological model, the general assumptions of the effect of political socialization within a polity, and the influence of the family, are critical on how voters in Africa cast their poll. Yet, there are mediating

⁴⁵ Richard B. Antwi, “How Do Voters Decide? A Study of the Determinants of Voter Behavior in Ghana 2018,” p. 7. https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/etd_all (Retrieved 5/30/23).

⁴⁶ E. Ike Udogu, “The Issue of Political Leadership in the Third World: What is to be done? *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (2008): 17.

variables that cause problems in the African case, and some of these are the weaponization of religion and ethnicity/race, inadequate education, gender bias, political violence, and electoral malfeasance. These factors play a significant sociological role on whether citizens vote or not. For example, the relatively low level of education within the continent has been tricky with respect to voter participation at the polls. Indeed, since the literacy rate is comparatively low in much of Africa, this factor impacts on voter turnout. The hypothesis is that the more education citizens have, the more likely they would be to participate in the electoral system by way of political socialization. Conversely, the less education citizens have the less likely they will succumb to the agents of political socialization, and thus less likely to participate at the poll. And, my further presupposition is that citizen's level of education and political participation influence the trajectory and progress toward democratic consolidation in Africa. It should be noted, however, that the sociological model has an impact on citizens' voting patterns and violence within the context of the case studies in this work.

The impact of the psychosociological model on the voting behavior of the African electorate is minimal. Except for the core members of a political party, most individuals' mental orientation to the "ideology" of a political party in Africa is not as strong as in the Occident. This paradigm, moreover, points to some psychosocial elements that are likely to affect voters' decision-making. These features are: party identification, concern with issues, personal attachment to candidates, conformity to the group standard, sense of efficacy, and sense of civic obligation to vote. Arguably, party identification, concern with issues and attachment to candidates⁴⁷ generally apply in the African situation. For the efficacy of this model in African politics to fully materialize, however, voters may have to behave rationally in politics.⁴⁸

The rational choice model, among other factors, is based on the following assumptions. 1. All decisions that are made by the electorate and political parties are rational... 2. The democratic political system is consistent, predictable, and trustworthy by both the voters and political parties... 3. The democratic genre assumes...a measure of elasticity, enough to permit

⁴⁷ J. Aiba, "Reviving the Theory of Voting Behavior," *Memoirs of Nara University*, pp. 283-304; Mahsud and Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behavior: A Comparative Analysis," *Sir Syed Journal of Education and Social Research*, p. 68.

⁴⁸ Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, pp. 295-296.

divergent choices or alternatives.⁴⁹ However, due to the low level of education and political knowledge of a majority of the voters in African democracies the electorate do not as of yet fully embrace these elements in Africa's contemporary democratic metamorphosis.

Clearly, at this point in African politics, few parties truly comply with the preceding political ideology, let alone the electorate. For the most part, political actors participate in politics for the purpose of maximizing their personal interests and status. This is especially the case in countries and democracies where politicians have easy access to the national treasury and whose systems lack adequate transparency and accountability in their governance technique. Sadly, subjects' voting patterns in such democracies tend to be plastic and based on immediate self-interest. Thus, the rational choice model, as it relates to the voting behavior of individuals in African politics, is a peculiar framework as some scholars have postulated. This is so, in part, because it brings the issue of the rational choice theory to the fore for most Africans.⁵⁰ This supposition is predicated on the truism that vote buying, which is common in some African democratic praxis, is aimed more at the poor who seldom received substantial reward for selling their votes for pennies due partially to economic hardship during electoral contests.

DEMOCRACY

Overall, the thrust of the argument in this volume is on Africa's democracy and her voyage toward democratic consolidation in this century. This objective will further good governance, political stability and peaceful coexistence. Against this backdrop, it examines the slippery trajectory, at this juncture in the millennium, of Africa's political and democratic evolution.

Suffice it to say, however, that the historical, philosophical and pedagogical character of democracy from antiquity to the present is quite confounding—not least to many students of democracy. This is so because of the ways in which democracy and its practice have morphed and are currently imagined by scholars. For example, while not necessarily opposed to the philosophy of democracy, it is instructive that Plato and Aristotle, as members of the intelligentsia in ancient Greece, and Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Mill

⁴⁹ Antunes, "Theoretical Models of Voting Behavior," *Exedra*, p.158.

⁵⁰ See A. Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).