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**Democracy, Citizen Participation and Peace Economics in Kenya:
Interrogating the Social Change Processes**

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While to a large extent many Africans come out to vote, in most cases, electoral periods have turned out to be the most significant threats to the stability of a country. This article interrogates the extent to which democratic practice in Kenya is meeting people's expectation and whether it contributes to the economic wellbeing and peace stability of the country. The research applied a cross-sectional research design and interviewed 102 respondents from 6 counties: Nairobi (capital city), Kisumu (western region), Uasin Gichu (Rift Valley region), Mombasa (coastal region), Turkana (northern region) and Kwale (coastal region). The study shows that most respondents appreciate the fact that the country has made good democratic progress over the years, particularly after the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution that institutes more freedoms and socio-political accountability. The majority of the respondents equally held the opinion that democratic processes have not been able to adequately improve the quality of their life. The study indicates that economic prosperity is closely linked to peace sustainability, and subsequent appreciation for democracy. However, there was a general appreciation for the economic progress that has been made so far. This finding is significant, particularly because respondents held high regard and expectation for the devolved system of governance instituted by the 2010 Constitution, which allowed for the formation of 47 counties that directly receive funds from the central government for regional development. There has been positive progress in the enhancement of economic wellbeing of the citizen through improved road networks, education and health services as well as diverse economic opportunities such as employment, businesses and agricultural projects at the county level. Besides, the fact that citizens were now able to choose their own county governors, senators and members of county assemblies (MCAs) meant that they had an upper leverage in deciding the destiny of their counties. The 2010 constitution equally demands citizen participation in all aspects of governance and development in the country. This has taken democratic progress to a different level. Hence, addressing corruption, economic integration and citizen prosperity, ethnicization of politics and transparency in electoral processes is key to the success of democracy in Kenya.

Key words: democracy, peace economics, peace sustainability, economic wellbeing, citizen participation

Is democracy in a crisis in Africa today? And are the aspirations of citizens being met by democratic processes? In a span of only 2 years Africa has witnessed 5 coups – Sudan, Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali. The irony of these coups is that, except for Sudan and Chad, many citizens came out in support of the military takeover, demonstrating the frustration of the citizens against their governments. There have also been coup attempts in Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Burundi. These events provoked me to conduct field research in Kenya in 2021-2022 to find out the extent to which citizens appreciated democratic processes and whether peace economics is a necessary ingredient for sustainability of democracy in Kenya. In other words, what makes democracy work? The research examined three key components of democratic progress: citizen participation, peace sustainability and peace economics, which is aimed at measuring the economic wellbeing of the citizens. The study applied a cross-sectional research design and interviewed 102 respondents from 6 counties: Nairobi (capital city), Kisumu (western region), Uasin Gichu (Rift Valley region),

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Mombasa (coastal region), Turkana (northern region) and Kwale (coastal region). The study shows that most respondents held the opinion that democratic processes have not been able to adequately improve the quality of their life economically.

The perceptions of respondents on the current system of democratic governance in Kenya indicates mixed opinions, with the majority holding more positive views that to a great extent the country has made some good strides in democracy since the promulgation of the 2010 constitution that expanded democratic space, introduced devolved system of governance that bring services and economic progress to the people in the 47 counties; decentralization of government services; and institutional independence between the different arms of government – executive, legislative and judiciary. Hence, the government has become more inclusive, power has been distributed among various government levels and structures. The rule of law has been strengthened and the Bill of Rights has been instituted, among other achievements. However, perceptions on lack of ideologically based political parties that ought to respond to the ethnic and personal politics, bad governance, corruption and violation of human rights were some of the factors that contribute to respondents' dissatisfaction with the current democratic practice in Kenya.

This research also found that holding free and fair elections remains a contentious issue. The majority of the respondents across all the counties held the view that political party membership is not well structured, selections of political party candidates for various competing positions are often held in a rather disorganized manner, and political party nominations are marred with corruption. During political campaigns, there is a tendency to 'colonize' specific regions for political control, which cannot but be construed as open disdain for free and fair campaigns. Although most respondents reported that voter registration and the voting process on elections day are easy and transparent, they believe that challenges remain with regard to counting, announcement and relaying of results.

Views on whether elections have contributed to uniting or dividing Kenyans were mixed across the counties. The relatively positive views point to the potential for elections to simultaneously unite and divide. Respondents across all the counties also indicated that most election-related conflicts are politically motivated, attributing the conflicts to the 'winner takes all' system that has characterized Kenyan elections since 1992, when the first multiparty elections were held.

Finally, in determining the extent to which the process of democratization has translated into tangible benefits to citizens, most respondents opined that through the current system of democracy there have been more opportunities for citizens with regard to employment, funds for investment and development, and infrastructural improvement, notwithstanding challenges.

This essay first conducts a global appraisal of democracy in the world, then analysis of the historical trend of democratic processes in Kenya, and ends with my research methodology and analysis of the research findings. The essay examines the current global and African situation of democracy, which indicates general citizen dissatisfaction. The field research findings open up debate on the extent of the relevance of democracy and whether Kenya, like many other countries, can consider alternative systems of governance or hybrid models that are more inclusive and less engrained in the 'winner take all' definition of the current practice of democracy in many countries.

Discontentment with Democracy

The discontentment with the dysfunctionality of democratic system have led to mass demonstrations and calls for resignation of presidents all over the world. This has been enhanced by the persistent disappointment with democratic systems that economically marginalize the majority of the population, making the rich richer and pressing down the poor to poverty. Mass demonstrations have been witnessed in Ecuador, Sudan, Bolivia and Chile against the rising cost of living and economic inequality between the rich and poor; Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq against corruption of top government officials while the majority of the citizens continue to suffer in poverty; in Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and Guinea against ‘dinosaur’ presidents who have been in power for many years, often rigging elections, and never caring much about the social-economic welfare of the population. There also were demonstrations calling for economic and political change in Sudan. Demonstrations led to the forced resignation of the presidents of Burkina Faso in 2014 and 2022, Sudan in 2019 and 2021, Mali in 2020, and Guinea in 2021 - all through coup d’états.

Even in old democracies like the United States, there has been a “sense of displacement, dislocation, and despair among large numbers of Americans who feel that the democratic system has grown increasingly unresponsive to their needs and that government is less willing to advocate for their interests” (Edel, 2019). In Hong Kong demonstrations were against a bill that would have had criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China. While the law was withdrawn, protests continued with protestors who further demanded for the investigation of police brutality and the release of imprisoned political activists; in Thailand demonstrations in 2020, largely by youth, against the government and monarchy, called for dissolution of parliament, ending of persistent government intimidation of the population, and the drafting of a new constitution that will increase people’s liberties; in United States the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement regained momentum following repeated police brutality incidences in 2020. The main trigger was the inhumane public choking of George Floyd, an African-American man, by a white policeman. The November 2020 elections, between the incumbent Donald Trump of the Republican Party and Joe Biden of the Democratic Party, were among the most divisive and politically charged elections in American history. Donald Trump lost the elections and rallied his supporters to reject the results of the elections, without success.

Democracy has been captured by the capitalist pursuit that is merciless on the majority of the population. The modelling of democracy has always been linked to liberal economic progress, which in other words translates to liberal capitalism. In 1991, Samuel Huntington a renowned political scientist wrote that “successive waves of democratization have washed over the shore of dictatorship. Buoyed by a rising tide of economic progress, each wave advanced further—and receded less—than its predecessor” (Huntington 2005). The economic ‘progress’ is often limited to capital and foreign income earnings, production and market performance, and hardly the improvement of people’s life conditions. Hence, such economic systems tend to favor just a few individuals or specific groups of individuals in the society.

In his book, *The Future of Capitalism*, Paul Collier (2018, p.53) states that “Modern capitalism has the potential to lift us all to unprecedented prosperity, but it is morally bankrupt and on track for tragedy.” Collier’s (2020) primary concern is that poverty has increased in the world and the economic divide has widened, while the world pretends to be making progress. In this article, democratic progress is intertwined with economic progress, and the two contribute to peace economics.

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Larry Diamond's (2020, p.40) new book, *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency* laments that democracy is on the decline and that illiberal populist regimes that are more dictatorial are taking over in the Philippines, Benin, Poland, Bolivia, Guatemala, Senegal, and Turkey, among other countries. While Diamond, a well-known political scientist and authority in democracy research, already predicted the decline of democracy a decade ago, studies by Freedom House (2018), a nongovernmental organization that produces regular updates on democracy and political freedom around the world, noted in 2018, that since 2006, 113 countries experienced a net decline in democratic freedoms, while in 2017 alone "(s)eventy-one countries suffered net declines in political rights and civil liberties, with only 35 registering gains." Similarly, according to the 2019 Economic Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index that measures democracy scores in 165 countries, 2019 marked the worst decline in democracy scores, with the global score falling from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44 in 2019. In the 2021 Economic Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (2022) less than half the world's population (45.7%) live in a democracy, a significant decline from 2020 when it stood at 49.4%. At the same time only 6.4% of the world's population live in 'full democracy'.

Crisis of Democracy in Africa

Like in many parts of the world, democracy in Africa is in a crisis, and politics has largely been sectarian. There are a number of African countries that have subjected democracy to mockery through constitutional coups that create life presidencies or political manipulation of electoral results to remain in power. Pope Francis (2020) laments that, "For many people today, politics is a distasteful word" (no.176) and the world is "suffering from grave structural deficiencies" (no. 176) that need to be addressed comprehensively through inclusive approaches that take into account the needs of all sectors of the society. Politicians have tended to use the masses as stooges, under a "free rein to ideologies" (no.41) aimed to advance political power, to the extent of inciting them to violence. In Africa there have been demonstrations and protests, largely by the youth, calling for political accountability, economic justice and respect for the rule of law. These demonstrations have been witnessed in Mali, Togo, Uganda, Nigeria, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia, among other countries..

In Mali, young protestors, in 2020, took to Bamako's Independence Square, blowing vuvuzela horns and calling for the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. The demonstrations were sparked by dissatisfaction over Mali's financial troubles, corruption and worsening security situation in the country, especially persistent terrorist attacks. Youth leaders within the so-called June 5 Opposition Movement, known also as M5-RFP, asked their supporters to demonstrate peacefully and demand the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. A coup d'état followed and Keita resigned hours after soldiers seized him from his home. The news of Keita's departure was met with jubilation by anti-government demonstrators, while leaders of the military coup said they would enact a political transition and stage elections within a "reasonable time" (Aljazeera, 2020). The resignation of the president was a clear victory to the youth, and they hoped that the new government would listen to their plea for jobs and better standards of living.

In Chad, the President Idriss Déby, who had been in power for more than 30 years, died in April 2021 from injuries sustained at the battlefield in the northern part of the country where he had gone to visit government soldiers fighting against a rebel group known as the Front for Change and Concord in Chad. His son, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno was appointed by the military to take over for 18 months after which he could organize elections. Mohamat appointed a 14-member transitional council made of army generals who will rule the country

for the transition period. The appointment of Derby's son was unconstitutional because the speaker of parliament, according to the constitution, should have taken over the ruling of the country during the transition period. Hence, the military coup was met with large demonstrations by civilians who demanded for the respect of the constitution and an end to the military coup. These protests were met with intense brutal force by the police and the military, leading to the withdrawal of the civilians from the streets.

In Uganda, demonstrators, mostly youth, held rallies in Kampala to protest the arrest of opposition politician Bobi Wine, officially known as Robert Kyagulanyi. There were clashes between the police and youth, degenerating into violent acts of aggression by the police. Following the arrest of Bobi Wine, Amnesty International called for his immediate release, with the regional director Seif Magango stating that: "The Ugandan authorities must immediately free Bobi Wine and stop misusing the law in a shameless attempt to silence him for criticizing the government" (Aljazeera, 2019). Intermittent protests have rocked Uganda since 2019, when the government amended the constitution to abolish presidential age limits, allowing President Yoweri Museveni to stay in power indefinitely (Solomon 2018). The main supporters of Bobi Wine are frustrated youth in search for jobs, education and employable skills. Most of these youth feel left out by the existing governance system that has focused on entrenching political interests of the ruling class while ignoring the economic perils of the majority of the population.

In Nigeria, thousands of youth began a protest in October 2020 against the hated police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) which had become a brutal force acting with impunity and killing civilians without any accountability. The SARS operated under the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID). Demonstrations against police brutality, organized on social media and powered by artists and musicians, drove thousands of youth on to the streets across the country (Ating, 2020). The SARS which was originally designed to fight criminal networks in the country, had ended up being an extortion machine, harassing and killing innocent civilians instead of protecting them. The SARS officials targeted young people using expensive phones and driving flashy cars, often harassing them and robbing them of their property. The unit also profiled young people with dreadlocks and tattoos. Through the social media and the use of the twitter hashtag #EndSARS which attracted 28 million tweets all over the world, the youth felt energized to express themselves on the streets; on 11 October 2020 the government announced the immediate disbandment of SARS. Although the protests started peacefully, they turned ugly when the Nigerian Army shot at unarmed protesters on 20 October 2020 at close range and many young protesters were killed, while at the same time thugs allegedly sponsored by politicians infiltrated and disrupted the protests (Ating, 2020). Protests also turned into a looting spree, leading to damage of properties and loss of lives. The above situation demonstrates the systematic marginalization of the youth, with the unemployment rate standing at 27.1%, which translates to 27.7 million people who remain unemployed (Oyekanmi, 2020).

In Guinea, clashes between police and protesters erupted in the capital city, Conakry, after Guinean President Alpha Conde filed papers before the Constitutional Court to run for a third term in October's 2020 elections. Tens of thousands of mostly young people, took to the streets to protest the third term decision which went against the constitution (Fisayo-Bambi, 2020). The demonstrations were mostly coordinated by the Guinean Organisation for the Defense of Human Rights, which was protesting the president's bid to adopt a reformed constitution that could extend his time in office beyond the end of his mandate in 2020. The police responded by launching teargas on the crowds and opening fire on them as well, leading to dozens of

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deaths and the destruction of property in the outskirts of Conakry. In a flawed referendum in March 2020, the 82-year-old president changed the constitution to run for the third term. Following the elections in October 2020 in which the incumbent won by 59.5 per cent of the vote, there were mass protests by opposition supporters claiming that the elections were rigged. Further protests followed, and again the police responded with brutality against civilians, leading to the deaths of dozens of people, mostly youth (Aljazeera, 2020). The end result was a coup d'état in October 2021.

Sudan, which was on a path to democracy after mass protests against President Omar al-Bashir led to his resignation and military takeover in April 2019, and later formation of a hybrid government between civilians and military, now faces a new challenge of building the country. On 25 October 2021 the military carried out a coup that brought an end to the transitional government that was meant to bridge the country to a full civilian rule. The transitional government was made up of a power sharing plan between Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) – made of civilians, and Transitional Military Council. The military take over continues to face enormous resistance from the civilians.

The latest entrant to the spree of coup d'état has been Burkina Faso. Following mass demonstrations against President Blaise Compaoré in 2014, political tensions became intense and the president resigned on October 31st 2014 and fled the country. The military took over and organized elections. However, the deteriorating security situation marked by constant terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group that left more than 2000 dead and 1.5 million displaced (UNHCR 2022) led to another coup d'état in January 2022. The ousting of President Roch Kaboré of Burkina Faso was the fourth coup in West Africa within 17 months, and was marked by jubilations by civilians who were frustrated by increased insecurity.

Ethiopia has had a difficult time holding the country together, with diverse regions of the country challenging the government and demonstrating on the streets to claim recognition, respect and an end to state brutality (Hussein, 2016). Historically, the country has been ruled by heavily authoritarian regimes that did not allow for freedom of speech and political association. President Ahmed Abiy, who took over the country in 2018, emerged as a liberal leader, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for ending more than 20 years of conflict with Eritrea and signing a peace deal, and he also freed political prisoners, opened up the media and allowed for freedom of speech. However, his legacy was disrupted with massive protests against the government, especially by the Oromia, Tigrayan and Amhara people who felt marginalized and targeted by the government. In July and October 2020, respectively, the protests led to inter-ethnic and religious clashes coupled with confrontation with police, incidences that resulted in deaths of dozens of people (Human Rights Watch 2020). There were random attacks on civilians by armed groups, largely associated with Tigrayans and Oromos. These attacks that took place in October-November 2020, further weakened the social cohesion in the country. On 4th November 2020 Ethiopia declared war on Tigrayan forces, leading to deaths of thousands of civilians and mass displacements of the population. Ethiopia will continue to face the challenge of national integration for a very long time.

The above events demonstrate that while there is great appreciation for democracy, its practice and implementation depend on many contextual variables anchored on political accountability and aspirations of the citizens. For democracy to function there has to be a political will aimed at respecting the rule of law in fairness to all citizens as well as working towards the economic prosperity of the citizens. As Mills, Obasanjo, Bit and Herbst (2019) state:

Making democracy work...relies on much more than having free and fair elections. It depends on what happens between elections. It relies on the systems and institutions of government. It also hinges on what politicians want to do with the power they acquire beyond the power itself.

Peace, security, stability and economic progress can only be achieved through functional institutions founded on social values of good governance and accountability.

Historical Background to Democracy in Kenya

Kenya, like many African countries, stumbled into independence without any prior preparation of what a nation should look like. The colonial system ensured that there were no political parties with a national outlook. In the 1961 elections prior to independence the country was divided along ethnic lines, given the divide and rule policy of the colonial government. As a result party representation was largely ethnic. By the 1961 General Elections, the smaller ethnic groups had formed their party in June 1960, known as the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya advocated and championed the interests of larger ethnic groups, mainly Kikuyu and Luo, under KANU. On the other hand Ronald Ngala, Masinde Muliro, and Daniel Arap Moi stood up for the smaller ethnic groups under KADU. This could also have been a colonial government plot to ensure that the divide and rule policy continued after independence, and that the nation was not strongly united. There was also a smaller political party, known as the African People's Party (APP), largely for the Kamba people of Eastern Kenya, led by veteran politician Paul Ngei. Numerous other ethnic based political parties also were formed.

At independence Jomo Kenyatta became the first president of Kenya. For most citizens, the colonial state was seen as powerful and intimidating. This meant that the citizens largely viewed the post-independence state in the same prism as the colonial state – powerful, under control and with expected full allegiance of the citizens to the state. At the same time Kenyatta had the difficult task of uniting 42 ethnic groups into one country.

The first immediate tension was between the elite leaders who negotiated for independence through dialogue and constitutional discussions, on the one hand, and the freedom fighters who wanted their land back; the landless squatters referred to in Kikuyu as *ahoi* and the new land owners; displaced families seeking to return to their original homes and the new African owners of the land previously grabbed by the colonialists (Wider 1993).

Kenyatta was more inclined to the elite and *nouveau riche* perceptions of maintaining the status quo that would only benefit a few and marginalize the majority of the population. It was the turn of the chosen few to rule, the elite. In fact, Kenyatta dismissed the Mau Mau freedom fighters who fought against the British Colonialists to reclaim the grabbed land as hooligans and did not listen to the land redistribution debate. He underscored that: “We are determined to have independence in peace, and we shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. We must have no hatred toward one another. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated and should never be remembered again” (Kenyatta, 1968, p.189).

Most Mau Mau fighters who were released after independence found that their land had been taken away from them by the loyalists. Most of the land had been redistributed amongst Kenyatta's cronies, yet many families from central province were still landless. One of the nationalist leaders, Josiah Kariuki (1963), warned against short-changing the original objective of the liberation struggle. He was emphatic that:

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leaders must realize that we have put them where they are not to satisfy their ambitions nor so that they can strut about in fine clothes and huge Cadillacs as ambassadors and ministers, but to create a new Kenya in which everyone will have an opportunity to educate himself. . . . Selfish power-seekers will have to go (p. 181).

The question of land would later become one of Kenya's most emotive issues that lead to perennial conflicts. Kenyatta later died in August 1978 and Daniel Arap Moi, the vice president, took over as interim president for 90 days and later as president after elections.

Many Kenyans believed that Daniel Arap Moi, as a young politician, was the solution to the tribalism and corruption that had affected the country since independence. This confidence in the person of Moi was also influenced by his action of releasing all twenty-six political detainees from different ethnic group who had been incarcerated by Jomo Kenyatta. Moi promised Kenyans that he would not tolerate tribalism and corruption. In the first years of his administration, corrupt civil servants were dismissed and many Kenyans believed this was the beginning of many good things to come. He went around the country promoting his philosophy of peace, love and unity.

However, Daniel Arap Moi later used the same tactics as his predecessor of suppressing the opposition. The initial concerns against corruption and human rights abuse soon faded and he focused on consolidating his power. Adar and Munyae (2002) state that Moi's "grand design turned out to be a strategy geared toward the achievement of specific objectives, namely, the control of the state, the consolidation of power, the legitimization of his leadership, and the broadening of his political base and popular support. It turned out this strategy called for little respect of human rights." Following the failed coup d'état in August 1982, Moi replayed the colonial government by reintroducing the detention laws in the constitution – allowing for state violence, especially against opposition groups. Under one-party rule, he began implementing a system that promoted state and structural violence, and centralized and personalized power by criminalizing any overt criticism to his leadership or formation of political parties. To enforce his draconian rules, he used the police and security intelligence to deal with those opposing his rule (Materu, 2015, p. 25). There were arbitrary arrests, detention chambers at government buildings, particularly - Nyayo House and Nyati House - in Nairobi, and in other parts of the country. After mounting pressure from the opposition, civil society groups and the international donor community Moi was forced in 1991 to repeal Section 2A of the Constitution that made it illegal for any other political party to exist except KANU. However, multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997 under his rule were marred with politically motivated ethnic violence.

After 24 years in power, President Moi stepped down in the 2002 general elections, when he fronted KANU candidate Uhuru Kenyatta, son of the first president, Jomo Kenyatta. At the presidential elections in 2002, Uhuru was defeated by Mwai Kibaki, a former minister in Moi's government. Kibaki ran for presidency under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) political party. The party was hurriedly put together a few months before elections, and was mainly led by Mwai Kibaki, and Raila Odinga, a seasoned politician and son of former vice president and opposition leader Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. Mwai Kibaki became Kenya's third president in a hope-filled election that brought an end to the 40-year rule of KANU.

The overwhelming victory of the opposition in the 2002 elections was a win for democracy. The subsequent smooth power transition from a ruling party that had been in power for close to four decades was a clear hope that Kenya was on the right path toward a full democracy.

NARC's victory was pegged among other things upon democratic reform promises they made to the electorate. Top among them was their commitment to revive the constitutional review process and steer it to conclusion within 100 days into power. NARC further promised to establish new institutions of governance, strengthen the existing ones and devolve excess powers from the presidency (Nasong'o & Murunga, 2007).

Mwai Kibaki's government was much more tolerant to the opposition and allowed freedom of speech. However, in 2005 after the Constitutional referendum in which the government lost to the internally generated opposition led by the opposition leader Raila Odinga, the Kibaki government banned planned rallies by the opposition (World Heritage Encyclopedia, n.d). The heightened tension between the government and opposition played out in 2007 general elections, which ended up in disputed election results and subsequent inter-ethnic and political violence that left more than 1,100 people dead and 300,000 displaced (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2014). The political tensions and insecurity brought the country to a standstill. After back and forth negotiations between incumbent President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga, led by Kofi Annan, then retired UN Secretary General, and his Panel of African Eminent Personalities from the African Union, the two principals agreed to sign a peace deal. This led to the formation of a coalition known as The Government of National Unity, in 2008. The coalition was faced with a lot of political upheavals and tensions between the two political divides, eventually leading to two parallel forces towards the next elections in 2013.

Mwai Kibaki ended his term in 2013 and Uhuru Kenyatta won controversial elections that were challenged in court by the opposition, but the Supreme Court upheld the results. Uhuru's government was initially seen to be unfriendly to certain democratic principles like freedom of media. The government introduced The Kenya Informational and Communication (Amendment) Act, 2013, that curtailed certain media freedoms and imposed hefty fines on journalists and media houses that did not comply. However, on 13 April 2017 President Uhuru signed a law that guaranteed freedom from torture, cruelty and punishment, an important initiative towards respect of human rights and enforcement of accountability on the part of security forces. The law also allowed the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC) to investigate any alleged acts of violation of human rights in relation to torture or any form of cruelty. In 2017 President Uhuru won his second term in a hotly contested election that was marred by violence, mainly carried out by the police. The opposition, led by Raila Odinga, went to court to contest the presidential election results, and as a result the Supreme Court nullified the presidential elections, forcing a re-run. But the opposition boycotted the second elections citing a trust deficit on the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC), and Uhuru Kenyatta was sworn in as president.

Elections and violence – *Undermining Democracy*

Elections in Africa have become very competitive, often used by the incumbent to extend and entrench their rule through a change of constitution, intimidation of the opponent, excess use of police force and in some cases assassinations. Taylor, Pevehouse, & Straus (2017) examined different elections in Africa between 1990-2008 and noted that in elections in which the incumbent has the opportunity to run for re-election, there is a high likelihood of violence. Such violence is mainly attributed to the desire to control power and clientelism in which those in power use violence to protect their candidates. In situations where the incumbent president is not running, then there is less likelihood for violence since politicians fear consequences in case a different government comes to power. Taylor, Pevehouse, & Straus also note that in many African countries, politicians often appeal to their supporters' historically unaddressed grievances to stir up violence in order to manipulate the elections in their favor.

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Kenya has had a fair share of elections marred by violence. This has strained the progress of democracy. Elections and voting are meant to be tools for democracy. The outcome of an election accords the electorates the democratic right of representation. Elections in a democratic system therefore are expected to be free, fair and peaceful. Electoral violence has the potential to impact negatively on democracy by breeding voter apathy. Democracy cannot come to fruition if citizens do not vote and as the cliché goes ‘bad leaders are voted in by those who fail to vote.’

The heightening of electoral violence has continued to pose a danger to democracy in Kenya. The pressure is often on the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) that manages electoral process, to ensure that the process is free and fair. Often this is not the case and every aftermath of the election is always inundated with court cases disputing the election results. Kanyinga, Okello, & Akech (2010) argue that with plural politics, there are expectations of fundamental changes in the electoral and political culture to create a democratic framework where leaders are elected through free, fair and honest elections. This has remained a big challenge in Kenya since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991 after the repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution.

As stated above, all general elections (with the exception of the 2002 elections) have been contentious and marred with violence. The climax of this horrendous trend was the 2007 post-election violence, where the loss of lives, livelihoods and the displacement of thousands of citizens were unfathomable. As stated above, the violence claimed more than 1,100 lives and internally displaced more than 300,000 persons (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2014). This called for the establishment of the commission to investigate the facts relating to the post-election violence.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) was established in 2008, chaired by Justice Philip Waki, a judge of the Kenya’s Court of Appeal, and two Commissioners, Gavin McFadyen and Pascal Kambale from New Zealand and the Democratic Republic of Congo, respectively (CIPEV, 2008). As a commission established under the Truth Justice and Reconciliation (TJRC) framework, the main purpose of the CIPEV was to investigate and establish the persons most responsible for the post-election violence. The commission made a comprehensive inquiry and prescribed some recommendation aimed at achieving justice for the victims. The CIPEV identified the list of 10 persons suspected to have been highly responsible for electoral violence. The commission however chose not to make public the suspects; instead they passed over the confidential list together with the supporting evidence to Kofi Annan, then retired UN Secretary General, and his Panel of African Eminent Personalities (CIPEV, 2008) from the African Union.

As a follow up, the commission recommended the establishment of a Special Tribunal. The tribunal was to seek accountability against persons on the list. The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation agreement by the principals of the government of national unity - President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga - signed off the recommendation and prepared ‘The Statute for the Special Tribunal’ Bill and submitted it to the National Assembly (The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2008). The CIPEV further recommended that failure to the establishment of the Special Tribunal or a breach to its functioning, the list of the suspects would be forwarded to the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor for further investigations with the view of prosecuting the suspects (CIPEV, 2008). The majority of the legislators preferred the ICC rather than a local Tribunal. Using the tagline “Don’t be vague, go

to The Hague”, the Bill to establish the Special Tribunal was shot down by the majority in the National Assembly, and the case was subsequently referred to the ICC.

On 9 July 2009, Kofi Annan handed over the confidential sealed envelope with names of the suspects, and supporting materials, to the ICC Prosecutor Louis Moreno Ocampo. The Prosecutor made his submission and the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber was convinced that there were elements of brutality that qualified the violence to have been categorized as crimes against humanity. The names of the suspects were unveiled, and they included Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, who were serving as Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Minister, respectively, in the Government of National Unity (GNU). The two were implicated for perpetuating these crimes in support of two opposing political alignments at the time. Uhuru was implicated for being aligned to President Kibaki and crimes committed by the Kikuyu community while Ruto was implicated for being aligned to Prime Minister Raila Odinga and crimes committed by the Kalenjin and Luo communities. Uhuru was charged alongside Francis Muthaura (former head of Civil Service in Kibaki’s administration) and Mohammed Hussein Ali (former Inspector General of police in Kibaki’s administration), while Ruto was charged alongside Henry Kiprono Kosgey (a Kalenjin politician, former Cabinet Minister and chairman of ODM prior to the 2007 elections) and Joshua Arap Sang (a journalist at a Kalenjin vernacular radio station). On 23 January 2012, ICC Judges declined to confirm the charges against Francis Muthaura, Mohammed Hussein Ali and Henry Kosgey, thus narrowing the case to the Uhuru, Ruto and Sang trio (ICC). However, the cases against these last three were equally dropped for lack of evidence.

The struggle for democracy in Kenya, as explained above, has largely been a struggle for nation building under diverse pressures ranging from bad governance, politicization of ethnic identities and ethnicization of politics as well corruption and weak institutions of governance. The link between democracy and quality of life has been dominated by the link between democratic processes and the drive for capture of political power. The great desire of many Kenyans is to see their quality of life improve through diverse socio-economic initiatives under the good governance. Hence democratic processes should be a vehicle to implementation of strong institutions that guarantee accountability, good leadership and economic prosperity. My field research aimed to find out the extent to which democracy could be linked to economic progress and peace stability, a concept referred to here as peace economics.

Research Methodology

The study applied a cross-sectional research design in order to collect diverse opinions from different sectors of the society at the same time. Hence, a semi-structured questionnaire was used to conduct key informant interviews and focused group discussions (FGD) with a range of actors, including members of civil society organizations, government officials, representatives from the private sector, community leaders, youth, women and religious leaders, as well as members of state bodies such as the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), National Steering Committee (NSC) and district peace committees. Respondents were selected through purposive and snowballing sampling methods. Of these there were 44 key informant interviews and 6 focused group discussions. In total 102 respondents participated in the study. The respondents were selected based on their understanding on democratic processes, experience of voting for a political candidate, running for a political office, conducting civic education or advocating for human rights. Secondary data was organized thematically, guided by research objectives and research questions.

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In order to capture the most frequently mentioned issues, data was isolated, filtered and sorted systematically at different stages. The findings of the research were then presented in the form of analyzed narratives and verbatim quotations which was triangulated with diverse views and secondary data. Double entry of the data was employed to minimize and check for errors. The verification and cleaning included checking missing values, outliers and questionnaire logic. Reference was also made to the primary data tools to make corrections of any inaccurate recordings of the collected data.

Data analysis adapted an iterative data collation and analysis process that permitted data collected and analyzed in each phase to inform the design and conduct of the next phase of the analysis. This made possible further in-depth analysis of the data findings. Final data aggregation and analysis segment allowed for the triangulation of data from all sources in each of the respective counties in order to extract common themes and categories around the issues under study. Specific trends that emerged in the data were collated and corroborated in order to draw conclusions from the findings.

Research Findings

One of the major concerns about the performance of democracy in Kenya, according to the respondents, has been electoral justice. In broader terms, electoral justice refers to fairness and transparency in all electoral processes from registration, voting, counting, announcing of results to adjudication of any disputes over election results. Most respondents held the view that there has not been adequate transparency in the management of the electoral processes. The Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) has often not delivered credible election results. This is evidenced by the high number of court cases that are often brought forward by the political candidates

In sharing their perceptions on the current system of democratic governance, respondents had mixed opinions, with a majority holding more positive views stating that, with the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, Kenya's political structure and system has evolved from a highly centralized to a decentralized system. One of the main concerns of the respondents was the lack of ideologically-based political parties that are issue-based and not under the control of regional and ethnic kingpins. In addition, bad governance, corruption and violation of human rights are some of the factors that contribute to respondents' dissatisfaction with the current democratic processes in Kenya.

Perceptions on the current system of democratic governance in Kenya

Kenya has made tremendous progress based on past political structures and systems. Kenya's political system has evolved over the years. Since independence from Britain in 1963, there have been 13 presidential elections (1969 -2017), two major constitutional reforms, and the political system has evolved from being a highly centralized to a more decentralized system (Nyadera, Maulani, & Agwanda, 2020). The latter is attributed to the promulgation of a new constitution (the constitution of Kenya 2010) that outlines a number political and legal reforms including the establishment of 47 counties within devolved system of governance, an improved bill of rights, and affirmative action for women and youth (Oxford Business Group, n.d.) as well as the strengthened application of the rule of law by giving more power and independence to the judiciary and parliament.

In order to interrogate the extent to which the current model of democratic practices in Kenya contributed to peace and economic stability, respondents were first asked to share their perceptions on the current practice of democracy in Kenya and the extent to which their

expectations of democracy have been met. Views on the existing system of democratic governance in Kenya were mixed across counties.

Both key informants and FGD respondents from Kwale, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Nairobi Siaya and Mombasa identified a range of perspectives to demonstrate the growth of democracy in Kenya. Respondents noted that prior to the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, the president had too much power – controlled the parliament, judiciary and different government arms, including the electoral commission that often favored the incumbent president. Voting irregularities were widespread and electoral processes were governed by repressive laws. As such, a trust deficit on free and fair elections was common, often evidenced by political and ethnic violence. Hence, election-related violence was witnessed in the 1992, 1997 and 2007 elections. A 52-year-old community leader from the coastal region of Kwale observed that:

During the one-party rule, we did not have an electoral commission. The DCs [district commissioners] were the returning officers. The president influenced who was to be elected. With the introduction of a multi-party system in 1991, we saw an improvement. Rigging was still an issue but the good thing was that people could now vie with other political parties. This brought a certain level of freedom.

The above sentiments were repeated by a respondent from the coastal region of Mombasa County who noted that with the various political and constitutional reforms, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary have become more autonomous and effective in executing their functions. Between 1982 and 2002, Kenya had only one legal political party and the executive, particularly the office of the president, had control over the legislature and the judiciary. In the 2010 constitution, the president no longer has full control over the appointment and dismissal of public servants such as the cabinet secretaries and judges in the judiciary, nor does he have the power to dissolve the parliamentⁱ.

The president requires the National Assembly's approval for the appointments of the cabinet secretaries, while the input of the Judicial Service Commission and that of the national assembly is required in the selection and appointments of the judges.ⁱⁱ Respondents believe that such reforms have contributed to the strengthening of the principle of separation of powers between the three arms of government. A civil society organization (CSO) representative from the coastal city of Mombasa stated: "...the Judiciary can now stand up for itself. There have been significant rulings against the government including the Building Bridges Initiative case that was thrown out by the High Court and the Court of Appeal." In addition, some respondents also mentioned the nullification of the 2017 presidential elections that led to a re-run. This was the first case in Africa where a court nullified the presidential election results of a sitting president. This demonstrates the autonomy of the judiciary in executing its oversight role on the executive, and acting independently from the other arms of government.

The appreciation for the progress made on democracy in Kenya was generally attributed to the new Constitution of Kenya (2010). Respondents acknowledged the view that it is only after the promulgation of the 2010 constitution that Kenya started witnessing real changes with regard to democracy. Respondents indicated that the establishment of the two parliamentary houses – the lower house (the National Assembly) and the upper house (Senate) opened avenues for more decision-making processes. The distribution of legislative power to the two houses provides more room for representation and oversight.

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Similarly, three women respondents from the coastal region of Kwale echoed the positive changes recorded with regard to women appointments to governance positions. According to them, male dominance in leadership positions has been the norm since Kenya got its independence in 1963. However, with the affirmative action laws and policies in the 2010 constitution, more women are elected or appointed to various leadership roles despite the failure of the legislature to institute a formula to effect the two-thirds gender ruleⁱⁱⁱ. The law requires that for any elective public positions a minimum of one-third ought to be women. However, this constitutional requirement is yet to be achieved. For instance, of the 349 members of the national assembly, 47 are women representatives elected to represent the various counties, whereas of the 67 members of the senate, only 12 are women, nominated by political parties. One business woman from Kwale said:

Since independence, leaders have been men. They believe that women cannot lead. They do not support women. When we get elected we do not have power. We are always considered as second class. Political parties are mostly led by men. With the 2010 constitution there are changes. We see women in elective positions running for different political posts.

Some respondents pointed out that during the one-party rule, information sources were limited to one radio and TV channel approved and run by the state. But with the growth of democracy, there has been alternative sources of information evidenced by the number of TV and radio channels allowed to operate. Additionally, various social media platforms have expanded information sharing. A retired civil servant from Siaya County reiterated that:

Introduction of the FM radio stations has expanded the citizens' democratic right to freedom of speech as well as direct political engagement. Citizens express their opinions without fear and can criticize the government in public or through the numerous radio and TV stations, as well as social media.

Freedom of speech was well appreciated by respondents as one of the major democratic achievements by the 2010 constitution. This is enshrined in the Bill Rights. Respondents pointed out that citizens have the freedom to associate, to express themselves freely and to participate in key decision-making processes such as budget making, development projects, public decisions and proposed laws. However, a teacher from Siaya County, at a focused group discussion, held a contrary opinion towards citizen engagement in government processes. She stated that the government is not always committed to engaging citizens as required in the constitution:

Although there is a window for citizens to participate in governance, leaders don't give their citizens room to exercise their democratic rights and where that happens, most of their contributions towards governance are always ignored, hence their participation is some sort of window dressing without being taken seriously by the authorities.

A number of respondents held the view that that the process of democratization was catalyzed by the horrific experiences of the 2007/8 post-election violence. Kenyans were sobered up by the violence and realized that there was need for a new constitutional dispensation that would expand democratic space and institute political accountability. These respondents noted that there is still a need to implement to the letter the 2010 constitution while emphasizing political accountability as a strategy for achieving a fully-fledged democracy.

Current Concerns on Democratic Processes in Kenya

Respondents were asked to highlight any specific concerns emerging from the way democracy is practiced in Kenya. Most respondents across the six counties believed that while progressive steps have been made towards the growth of democracy, there were still gaps to be addressed. Main concerns included the structural governance of political parties, lack of inclusivity in governance structures, voting irregularities, corruption, and inequality in distribution of national resource.

Structural governance of political parties: Respondents were concerned that Kenyan political parties were not driven by political ideologies, especially given that political parties are formed, merged or disbanded almost every electioneering period. The majority of the respondents across all the counties held the view that political party membership is not well structured; the selection of political party candidates for various competing positions are often held in a rather disorganized manner; and political party nominations are marred with corruption. The nomination of the political candidates is equally problematic. The normal practice is that party members would vote internally to identify the political candidate who would carry the flag of the party. Besides having to pay large sums of money to book a candidacy position, one has to compete with different candidates within the party. The main problem is that political parties in Kenya do not have organized official registry of their party members. In most cases, members of the public get recruited haphazardly to participate in the election of the party candidates for the various political positions. Equally, the management of the voting process at the party level often lacks transparency. There is often interference from the party leadership to the extent of rigging in preferred candidates.

During political campaigns, there is a tendency to ‘colonize’ specific regions for political control, which cannot but be construed as open disdain for free and fair campaigns. Although most respondents reported that voter registration and the voting process on elections day are easy and transparent, they believe that challenges remain with regard to counting, announcement and relaying of results.

Often, political candidates use regional dominant political parties to win elections; once elected, personal interests precede constituents’ needs. A youth leader informant from the coastal region of Mombasa stated:

... most political parties present their manifestos for formality, just to excite their followers and woo them for votes without fulfilling them once elected. For example, the current government under the Jubilee Party made a lot of promises to the citizens, yet even as they come to the end of their mandate they have hardly delivered a third of their promises

One political aspirant from the coastal region of Kwale observed that:

...once elected, leaders hardly go back to their constituents to fulfill their promises. The relationship between politicians and electorate seem to end after the candidate has won the elections.

The above sentiments demonstrate not only the lack of ideologically-based political parties but also the lack of issue-based politics. Respondents believe that negative ethnicity and personality-based politics have contributed to the divisions, conflict and violence witnessed during electioneering periods.

Lack of inclusivity in governance structures: Respondents identified lack of inclusion into the governance processes of political parties as a major issue of concern. Access to political leadership by youth, women and people living with disabilities is hindered by the self-interests of party leaders, thereby hampering youth and women participation in party and national politics. The 2010 Kenyan constitution requires that political parties nominate women, youth and people living with disability to various legislative positions, namely the senate and the national assembly. This has not been fully implemented by political parties.

Voting Irregularities. Respondents were also concerned with voting irregularities that take place during election. Generally, respondents appreciated the fact that the actual voting is never a problem. The challenge is always on the levels of transparency in the counting and announcement of votes. Common complaints include: manipulation of the total number of votes collated from the different voting centers; intimidation of the party officials during the counting process; and announcement of different electoral results between local polling stations and the national tallying center as a way of manipulating the results, among other complaints.

Some respondents stated that the ‘winner take all’ system has contributed to voter bribery and violence during the electioneering period. Politicians put in a lot of financial resources to win election with the hope that the money will be recovered once in power, in most cases through corruption.

One civil society activist stated:

The representative democracy in Kenya has been hijacked by the selfish and powerful individuals... Majority of the voters in Kenya are often ignorant and are easily manipulated by the politicians such that they vote for the person who gives out more money during campaigns and not the leader who is genuinely committed to serving the people and bring social change.

A youth leader from Nairobi was disappointed that democracy was not meeting the citizen’s expectation:

Now, we can’t say we have free and fair elections. The rule of law is not being respected. A lot of things defining democracy in a country are not being practiced. The democracy we expected to have is not there. It seems the most powerful and richest individuals always carry the day during elections.

The above sentiments were echoed by a County Official from Kisumu who was concerned about citizens’ understanding and participation in devolved system of governance:

Citizens do not understand what devolution is and the roles and functions of its structures and this knowledge gap hinders the implementation of projects and service delivery.

Corruption situation in the country: Leaders in political positions lack the integrity and leadership qualities outlined in the Kenyan constitution, such as accountability, embrace of right social ethics, not being corrupt, not being involved in criminal activities, commitment to leadership that changes people’s lives, etc. Many respondents lamented against corruption at different sectors of the government. In many cases, citizens have to pay bribes to receive

government services, while at the same time looting of national public resources has been on the increase. In fact, billions of shillings have been lost from the public coffers, with one corruption scandal after the other: the Goldenberg scandal in which selected individuals reaped off the government from the ‘sale’ of non-existent gold; the theft of pension money from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); the maize scandal in which maize was imported at exorbitant prices while the country had adequate maize in its storage; the National Youth Service (NYS) scandal in which millions of Kenya shillings meant to support youth employment were unaccounted for;^{iv} the COVID 19 related financial scandals leading to ‘Covid Billionaires’ – in which money meant to address the COVID 19 pandemic was diverted by some individuals in government, among other scandals. Despite these financial scandals, the culprits have hardly been fully held accountable. Most cases are still in court or not prosecuted at all.

Inequality in distribution of national resources: Respondents from both Kwale and Turkana counties, which are among the most marginalized counties in the country, were strongly concerned about distribution of opportunities and funds in the country. They claimed that opportunities for government jobs, and budgetary allocation for development projects and infrastructure development have largely been based on political patronage, cutting off certain regions from development. However, these respondents equally acknowledged that the devolved system of governance has largely contributed to improved quality of life in their counties. They noted the increased number of health and education facilities as well as improved road networks, largely due to efforts by the county government.

Violation of human rights. Concern over human rights violations also emerged. This includes police brutality, especially during election periods and recently during the enforcement of measures aimed to curb the spread of the COVID-19. In the 2017 elections police were accused of using excess force that in some cases led to deaths of civilians. One respondent from Kisumu observed that: “election period is field day for the police to commit all kinds of crimes against civilians with impunity. This needs to change. Police found to have committed human rights violations should be arrested and tried.” Similar sentiments were echoed by other respondents.

In summary, respondents tend to agree that Kenya has made commendable strides with regard to democracy. As stated above, free elections, freedom of speech, governance at different levels, accountability of the executive and the distribution of resources are some of the things that indicate some growth of democracy in Kenya despite the many challenges that the country has been facing.

Democracy and economic wellbeing

Respondents were asked to share their opinion on whether democracy has contributed to economic wellbeing of the citizens. Most respondents across the counties held the view that through the current system of democracy there has been more opportunities for citizens with regard to employment, economic investments and development. One political leader from the coastal region of Kwale opined that, “In Kwale, our people always dropped out of school to become beach boys. With devolution, we have more young people going to school, bursaries are available to motivate bright students to attend school and complete their educational carriers.”

The COVID-19 pandemic and issues of climate change emerged as matters of concern, particularly given the changing weather patterns that have diminished the farmers’ harvests. Respondents were of the view that the government needs to come up with innovative strategies

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to improve the country's food basket by giving loans to farmers, marketing farm produce locally and internationally, and mechanizing farming and building factories for the processing and preservation of fruits, vegetables, grains, meat and other animal products. This will ensure better management of these products and minimize the wastage that often comes with poor management of food resources.

Respondents noted positive progress in social services. Those from Lodwar, Kwale and Siaya, for instance, reiterated improved development at the grassroots levels, pointing out that electricity and running water were initially only available in major towns, while other areas (including institutions like boarding schools) relied on generators and borehole water. However, with the devolved system of governance, piped water and rural electrification have improved tremendously. One community leader from Lodwar, northern Kenya, observed that: "Everything good was a preserve of Nairobi. But with the devolution of government to the counties, we can now see development getting closer to the people".

Despite the progress mentioned above some respondents noted that corruption and nepotism remain an obstacle to the realization of the economic wellbeing of the citizens. One civil society activist asserted that:

This country has enough money to achieve development that would improve the wellbeing of the citizens . However, mismanagement of funds through corruption has denied many citizens this right to progressive development. There have been many corruption scandals involving billions of shillings, many of them by government officials who have never been prosecuted.

Another businessman from Lodwar added:

Funds have been devolved to the country. The challenge is implementation...development projects at the county level stall or delay to be completed. In Turkana west there is a World Bank funded project that focuses on improving socioeconomic status of the people. Community members were told to register groups with the ministry of social services, they were to be given grants worth Ksh 500, 000 (\$5000) each. However, government officials responsible for this project have favored their own relatives.

Of equal concern by some respondents was the question of the burgeoning debt burden. Kenya currently has an external debt of 8 trillion (\$8 billion) shillings (Mwita, 2022). Respondents raised concern over the failure of the legislative organs in regulating government's borrowing and ensuring that there is full accountability for the borrowed money. The borrowing spree was construed by some respondents as a ploy to generate more money for corrupt deals. However, other respondents were emphatic that there is evidence that most of the money has been used for development projects that can be witnessed across the country, especially given improved road networks, new railway lines, and improvements in the health and education sectors. Of major concern was the increasing cost of fuel and food commodities. Respondents lamented that the cost of living has increased exponentially and that the government has not done enough to cushion the citizens from the economic hardships, especially given the negative effects of the Covid 19 pandemic.

A youth leader from Nairobi expressed his disappointment with the current economic situation: "I believe that the government's constant increment of taxes, and the failure of the executive

and the parliament to curb the negative impact of economic hardship on Kenyans, imply there is no political will to improve the economic wellbeing of the citizens.”

Although respondents acknowledged government’s efforts to support its citizens through the various affirmative action funds, they equally pointed out that these initiatives are inaccessible to those most in need because of the complicated terms and conditions. Some Members of Parliament and County Assemblies were accused of issuing education bursaries based on their affiliation to the applicants rather prioritizing those most in need.

Conclusion

In this essay we have explored some of the challenges facing democracy throughout the world, especially in Africa with a focus on Kenya. Some of the problems generally facing democracy in Africa can be found in Kenya. My research explored Kenyan attitudes about democracy in Kenya and levels of satisfaction with the practice of democracy. Diverse opinions draw attention to the fact that contextual expectations on the success of democracy vary, but fundamentally democracy is meant to achieve better organization of the society through social cohesion and improvement of the quality of life.

Democracy in Kenya has in the past largely been linked to the electioneering period when citizens exercise their democratic right to vote. However, with the emergence of the 2010 constitution, there has been more civic awareness on democratic processes and demands for political accountability. With governance devolved to the 47 counties, citizen participation in democratic responsibilities has been brought closer to home, and there is evidence of social-economic progress evidenced by improved health and education services as well as employment opportunities, new infrastructural projects and access to financial aid.

The findings in this essay indicate that while Kenya has made some positive democratic progress, there are still many gaps as far as improving transparency and political accountability are concerned. Democratic progress ought to match economic progress, evidenced by improved quality of life. The assumption is that in order to achieve peace economics one will have to integrate democratic aspirations with commitment to the improvement of quality of life. This to a great extent guarantees peace sustainability. However, in order to achieve peace economics there has to be a political commitment to respect for the rule of law, social-economic and political accountability as well as respect for fundamental human rights founded on safeguarding of human dignity and the common good. The factor for success of democracy hence is social inclusion for citizen prosperity.

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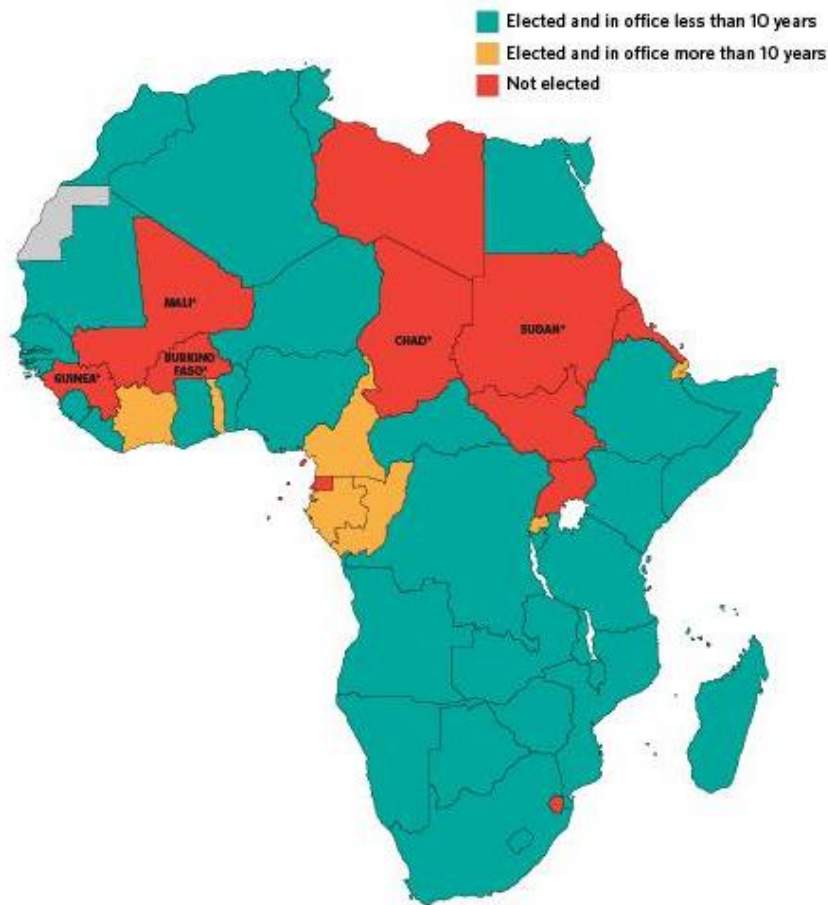
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ⁱ Cf. Constitution of Kenya 2010

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Chapter 4, Section 81b of the constitution of Kenya states that, "no more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender".

Status of Heads of Governments in Africa



*Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Sudan, and Mali experienced undemocratic transitions between 2021-2022.



NOTE: Color coding is based on how leaders initially came to power and their current status. Coding is not meant to legitimize elections in countries that may have been problematic

SOURCE: Carnegie Africa Program analysis drawing on publicly available sources as of March 2022.

From: "On Its Twentieth Anniversary, the African Union Grapples With Governance Challenges" by Ovigwe Eguegu, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace March 9, 2022.

https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/03/07/on-its-twentieth-anniversary-african-union-grapples-with-governance-challenges-pub-86581?mkt_tok=MDk1LVBQVi04MTMAAAGDDmH1DZ8pS2Jo9dXyxjXwoW5nanjsKWUIhDbL9sZfCT2sqB2HYHltpcqKRBzZrPVoA0SUWm0TPdA7KqEZA9jhtoO8xYfR0IVLvrmdJNl7x4