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# **RESEARCH PAPER**

# Democratization in Africa: Case study Kenya and Ethiopia

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#### ABSTRACT

This study applied the mixed approach on primary data. It is comprative study of democratic system in Kenya and Ethiopia. The developed theoretical framework prism of the two third world African Countries. The study explored the modules of the democracy in these neighboring east African states. Both nations have same colonial legacies and political mindset. It investigated causes behind post elections conflicts in these African nations and its effects. This paper explores the Democratization in Kenya and Ethiopia as third world countries, and provides a better understanding of the practical implementation of democratic principles in both Countries. The continuing wave of, as well as civil agitation carries spillover effects. It carried SWAT analysisThis paper advocates several recommendations Focus on Transparency Increase transparency and accountability in resource allocation to reduce insecurity and rebuild public trust. Both Kenya and Ethiopia need to strengthen their democratic institutions such as the judiciary and the electoral commission. Economic development is important, but it should not come at the expense of democracy. Regional Cooperation Encourage collaboration between Kenya and Ethiopia, along with other African nations, to share best practices in democratic governance.

## **KEYWORDS** Democratization, Elections, Ethiopia, Kenya, Civil Agitation, Coups D'état. Policy Makers

#### Introduction

Kenya is a republic with three branches of government: an executive branch, led by a directly elected president, a bicameral parliament consisting of the Senate and the National Assembly and Judiciary. The Republic of Kenya is located in the Eastern Africa region. The population is approximately 54 million people according to UN estimates. Its capital city is Nairobi located in the South-central part of the country. Kenya is amongst large economies in sub- Saharan Africa after Nigeria and South Africa. It is bordered by South –Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the North, Somalia to the East, Uganda to the West, Tanzania to the South, the Indian Ocean is located to the Southeast. Kenya is the largest and most advanced economy in East and Central Africa. Its GDP account for more than 50 percent of the region is total and in terms of current market prices. Its economic growth prospects are supported by an emerging middle class and an increasing appetite for high value goods and services. While Ethiopia is a landlocked country located in Eastern Africa bordered by Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan. The government system is a federal republic, the chief of state is the president, and the head of government is the prime minister. Ethiopia has a traditional economic system in which the allocation of available resources is made on the basis of primitive methods, and many citizens engage in subsistence agriculture. Ethiopia is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Ethiopia is Africa oldest independent country and one of the fastest economies nowadays. Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with a population of over 115 million. The country succeeded in its economic development registering an annual economic growth rate of 10% over the past 15 years. Many African countries still are struggling to develop a democratic political system, as African leaders hold long history of political failure that stems from their traditions and culture. Democratic participation by countries, particularly African countries, can be essential to answer any economic and endemic political issue. The leaders in African nations refuse to exercise democratic practices and provide political rights to the citizens, destroying all the necessary efforts that are required to bring a political change in the country. In countries like Kenya and Ethiopia, where political liberty is practiced to certain limits and permits a certain degree of political freedom to the few political opponents. However, the resources of the state are mainly provided to the benefit of incumbent party and dominant political groups (Richard, 1998). One of the main obstacles in implementing a democratic structure is the regional tribal and multi-ethnic groups who tend to share power with the ruling party while restricting fair distribution of economic benefits and foundation of political parties (Fukui & Markakis, 1994), which keeps the power centralized. The two neighboring countries, Kenva and Ethiopia share an extended history of democratic governance. However, during the last decades their democratic trajectories appears to have shown certain degree of deviation as reported by the international and regional mass media due to the political setbacks (Mariam, 2001) such as crises in Ethiopia, and ethnic conflicts in Kenya (Kanyinga, 2014). However, Kenya has been making some progress in strengthening its democratic institution (Opongo, 2022). The current comparative study aims to critically analyze and compare the democracy in two African countries: Kenya and Ethiopia. The study will assess the actual experience of development situations and prospect an appropriate interpretation. As such, it allows a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing democratic governance in these African contexts. Through this research, it is anticipated that valuable insights will be gained, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the diverse democratic trajectories within the African continent and informing potential strategies for fostering democratic resilience and development in these nations.

Many African countries including Ethiopia and Kenya, the government has failed to develop an efficient democratic system. In Kenya and Ethiopia certain transitions emerged in the democratic landscape but they were aborted readily. Some scholars suggest that it is due to the political background prevailing in these countries for decades and lack of political willingness to bring change (Mariam, 2001). However, these political and democratic challenges have resulted in many other problems that have arisen from previous authoritarian regimes. The reports of World Bank showed that repression, poverty and rapidly increasing population pose a significant threat to democratization of the two countries. Moreover, failure to promote a democratic system also demonstrates lack of democratic political culture and traditional power interest in the region. The growing demand for a democratic system such as the breach of Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communist regimes in East Europe have recommended renewal of ideology in democratic demands, resulting in mass protests in Africa to demand multiparty and democratic political system. Due to these predicaments the demand in Ethiopia and Kenya has intensified to achieve civil liberties, achieve political rights and promote democracy. Therefore, these perspectives suggest drawing special attention to the democratic system of the two African countries: Ethiopia and Kenya, while gaining deeper insights into the similarities and differences in democracy practiced om both countries.

#### **Literature Review**

The study of democracy and its functions will be the focal point in political science studies. The topic gained massive significant attention due to the associated issues which give rise to the questions: what democracy in practice and theory is (Katz, 1997); what elements predict a democratic regime survival and longevity (Mainwaring, 1993); and how democracy came into being (Mainwaring, 1993). Some of the critical factors that have been widely cited as significant determinants of consolidation and survival of a democratic regime includes values and culture, socio-economic development (Epstein, Bates, Goldstone, Kristensen, & O'Halloram, 2006), forms of government (Linz, 1994) and legitimacy (Lipset, 1959). According to Morlino (2005), democracy involves six quality dimensions namely, (1) rule of law, (2) electoral accountability, (3) inter-institutional accountability, (4) equality, (5) freedom and (6) responsiveness to public services, citizen policy needs, provision of material good to voters, provision of symbolic goods and legitimacy of democratic institutions. He further added that the performance measure of a democratic regime in each dimension reflects the functionality of a country which shows the effectiveness of bureaucracy, degree of political participation, pre-authoritarian traditions and authoritarian legacies, international relations, natural resources and social structure (Morlino, Dressel, & Pelizzo, 2011) In East African countries, constitutions suggest that political parties play pivotal role in functional effectiveness of political systems. Citizens are being granted the right to join or form political parties (Pelizzo & Nwokora, 2017). Leaders and political parties influence democratic quality of a nation, as these are the central elements of integration, participation, expression, representation and aggregation and are needed to exist in plural for inter-party competition as they are necessary instruments of electoral accountability (Pelizzo & Nwokora, 2017). They facilitate translating demands from citizens into the public issues and political platforms and take measures to address the concerns and demands that align with electorate objectives. According to report by (Afro) Africa Regional Office, examined the main cause of political instability in Kenya, and was discovered that its due to lack of political participation as many citizens were denied this political right, meanwhile, the ethno-political dilemma in the country counted as backbone of this problem(CIC,2017). The commission for the implementation of the constitution. It further explained that the country has tasted a brutal violence in 2007 post-election crisis, which was eventually led to civil war in the country, started from December 2007 till February, 2008. As an International Relations scholar, I observed the importance of power sharing formula in Kenyan's domestic politics, and elimination of corruption, nepotism, god fathers, decentralization, etc. This will allow perfect political culture and conducting fair elections, will pave a way for the political stability, peaceful transition, strengthen the country economy, harmony. The universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),1948 provides equal rights and opportunities to all individuals to take part in his/ her country, it might be direct or indirect even by chosen representatives and freedom of expression. It further explained to provide equal rights to voting behavior.

History of democratic evolution in Kenya shows a turbulent journey, which has been shaped by ethnic divisions, colonial legacy and leadership of prominent figures such as Daniel Arap Moi and Jomo Kenyatta (Widner, 1993). Kenya's struggle for independence from legacy of colonialism was complicated. This colonial government of British laid the foundation of ethnic conflicts due to the "divide and rule" policies, which severely hampered the development of a unified national identity (Opongo, 2022). As such, the two ethnic-based political parties were popular in Kenya: the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) (Kenyatta, 1968). However, the British continued to retain control over the area by exploitation of ethnic tensions to ensure decentralization of power and fragmentation along ethnic lines (Widner, 1993). Jomo Kenyatta became the first president after independence of Kenya. He faced the challenging job of uniting a nation with severe ethnic conflicts and land issues. In this regard, Mau fighters struggled against British colonialists to regain their land and later found that the property was taken over by loyalists of the regime (Kenyatta, 1968). Kenyatta's approach reflected the interest of the elite, causing socioeconomic inequalities, which hindered the development of a more inclusive democracy. Daniel Arap Moi succeeded Kenyatta, who brought authoritarianism and suppression of opposition. His rule was marked by introduction of detention laws, violence and repression against opposition groups, and use of security forces to stifle dissent (Materu, 2015). His leadership progressively disregarded democratic principles (Adar & Munyae, 2002). Later in 1991, the growing pressure from civil society organizations and international donor community made him approve multiparty democracy in the country. However, the multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997 were still troubled due to politically motivated ethnic violence, which reflected deep-rooted divisions and a weak democratic system. In 2003, Mwai Kibaki was elected as the president as he made promises of democratic reforms, establishment of new governance institutions and decentralization of power (Opongo, 2022). His government allowed freedom of speech, tolerance towards opposition and mixed democratic progress. However, he lost in 2005 constitutional referendum and subsequently banned opposition rallies. The outcome of this political tension took rage in 2007 elections, which resulted in extreme political and inter-ethnic violence displacing about 300,000 people and 1,100 deaths. The political upheavals and insecurity brought the country to a standstill, necessitating negotiations and the eventual formation of a coalition government known as the Government of National Unity in 2008 (Opongo, 2022). Moreover, in recent years there has been a significant shift in the political landscape of Kenya.<sup>1</sup> Mwai Kibaki's term ended in 2013, and Uhuru Kenyatta was elected president. His government initially faced concerns regarding freedom of the media (Opongo, 2022). However, in 2017, President Uhuru signed a law that guaranteed freedom from torture, cruelty, and punishment, signaling an important step towards the protection of human rights and accountability for security forces. The law also empowered the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC) to investigate allegations of human rights violations related to torture or cruelty. The 2017 presidential elections were again characterized by violence. The opposition contested the results in court and the Supreme Court nullified the results and necessitated a re-run. The opposition boycotted the second elections, presenting distrust in the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC), and Uhuru Kenyatta was ultimately sworn in as president (Opongo, 2022). His government was accused of illegal activities such as corruption, embezzlement and human rights abuses.<sup>2</sup> In 2022 William Ruto was elected the president, who promised to strengthen the democratic system in Kenya by offering reconciliation with the opposition, crack downs on corruption and promotion of transparency in government. Ethiopian democratic history has been shaped by a range of factors such as internal conflicts, colonialism and geopolitical conflicts. Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian empires in East Africa, and confronted era of conflicts due to colonial powers such as Britain and Italy (Zartman, 1989). As such, severe conflicts within Ethiopian monarchy leadership were resulted due to geopolitical interest, causing loss of unity (Mariam, 2001). The failure to settle the Eritrean question in the 19th century, posed a significant obstacle to Ethiopian development which led to reduction of human and material resources. Despite Eritrean authorities gaining independence in 1993, they demonstrated aggressive practices against neighboring countries including Ethiopia (Lefebvre, 1996). Furthermore, the Battle of Adwa in 1896 is another significant victory which characterized Ethiopia as the only African nation to withstand colonialism by Italian invasion (Woodward & Forsyth,

1994) Ethiopia's national identity was historically anchored in the monarchy and the Orthodox Church. The monarchy served as both the head of the church and the government (Wagaw, 1990). However, attempts at modernization without altering traditional power structures created challenges in managing the diverse Ethiopian society (Woodward & Forsyth, 1994). Another main concern is ethnic and political diversity, which challenged unity of the country in secessionist movements (Mariam, 2001). Ethiopia has faced a hard time in sustaining the country together, as dominant countries continue challenging the government (Hussein, 2016). The history of Ethiopia showed that the country encountered heavy authoritarian regimes, restricting freedom of political associations and freedom of speech. The famous president, Ahmed Abiy, who sworn in 2018 as the president, emerged as a liberal leader, showed progressive improvements in sustaining peace and marked an end to the 20 years of conflict with Eritrea. In addition, he allowed freedom of speech, provided freedom to political prisoners and freedom of media. However, his government faced massive protests by the marginalized groups such as Oromia, Amhara and Tigrayans who experienced discrimination (Mariam, 2001). This protest led to severe religious disputes and interethnic clashes which coupled with confrontation with security forces and caused dozens of deaths (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Christopher. was critically discussed the challenges of democratization in Ethiopia, he believed that application of democracy I is the only perfect solutions to the challenges faces by Ethiopia's politics and managed to mention the biggest challenges in Ethiopia which includes: the challenges of history, meanwhile, the past never regulates the future. Few countries start as democracies and some (Germany, and Japan, for instance) have past thorough tough time and immature political system in its history but later enjoyed perfect democratic statues. then, structure challenges this denotes geographical location of a state can cause its problem she may faces some border problems with neighboring countries. Cultural dimension also helped Ethiopia as she has a rich culture that contributed to her successful democratic movement. Other country may have a great challenge and problem as a results of its inflexibility of culture. All these and many more will provide a range opportunity, economic grown, political stability, educational progress, political stability, civil-military perfect relations, mental health, women employment, and youth accommodative system etc. Random attack on civilians were reported which were associated with armed groups of Oromos and Tigrayans in 2020. As such, the social cohesion in the country was severely damaged. This led to the war between Ethiopia and Tigrayan forces which resulted in mass displacements and deaths of thousands of civilians. The country continues to face national integration issues. These events necessitate the appreciation for democracy, its implementation and practice depending upon a range of contextual elements such as aspirations of civilians and political accountability (Mariam, 2001). Data collection process will involve the use of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews through a systematic approach. As such, a self-administered questionnaire containing closed-ended questions aligned with the 5-pointer Likert scale will be utilized. Survey approach offers flexibility, increased accessibility, and ability to garner more responses in a time-efficient manner which are some of the notable advantages (Dawson, 2009). In addition, it offers respondents the chance to provide objective responses at their own pace, as they might hesitate in opening up during interviews (Sani, 2013). Despite these advantages, offer greater flexibility for in-depth exploration of respondents' perspectives that provides enhanced and rich data to the study (Green, et al., 2012). recognizing that utilization of the strengths of these methods can mitigate their potential limitations. A series of similar questions will be employed for both methods of data collection, while offering the option to participation to elaborate their opinion and experiences during interviews through illustrative examples and additional information on areas that extend beyond questionnaires. The process will initiate with questionnaire distribution, and

those willing to be interviewed will proceed to a separate form after completing the survey as such, the proposed study aims to compare the democracy in Kenya and Ethiopia, which indicates that the potential participants must be resident of these countries. In this way, the technique considered is random sampling which is type of probability sampling as it aligns with the objectives of the study (Rudolph, 2018). The analysis phase involves a systematic organization, examination, and interpretation of data, as suggested by Teo (2014). Quantitative data analysis will employ the statistical program SPSS to assess trends, patterns, and develop empirical relationships. Presentation of numerical findings will include tables, graphs and charts. For qualitative data analysis, following the methodology outlined by Creswell (2014), several key steps will be undertaken. Initially, recorded interview data will be transcribed. Subsequently, the transcribed data will be coded where key words will be identified to represent specific patterns or themes. Thematic analysis will be done on the coded data to organize and categorize it systematically into common themes. Finally, the themes developed will be interpreted and explained for improved understanding of the topic for the audience.

Literature shows that most of the studies on democracy in Ethiopia and Kenya has been conducted with focus on individual country (Kanyinga, 2014; Opongo, 2022). Various factors have been undertaken for comparative analysis between Kenya and Ethiopia but there is unlimited research that aims at analyzing comparison of the democracy in Kenya and Ethiopia, which necessitates the need to examine the differences and similarities between the two East African countries. Another interesting and underexplored area observed in literature is to compare the impact of democratic participation, implementation and practices adopted in both countries, as there is a significant difference in electoral system on democracy in both nations. Ethiopia has firstpast-the-post electoral system, while Kenya practices multi-party system with proportional electoral representation. In addition, studies and knowledge on the role of civil society and media in promoting democracy in these African countries remain scarce. Thus, this study aims to contribute to existing body of literature in the domain of democracy as sophisticated comparative analysis of democracy implemented and practiced in Kenya and Ethiopia.

### **Theoretical Framework**

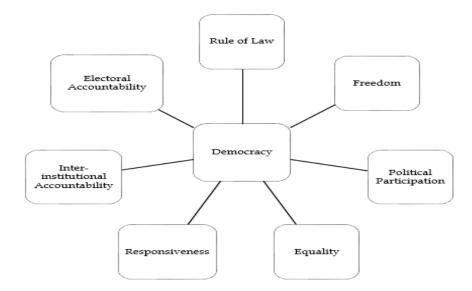


Figure 1: Theoretical Model (Morlino, 2009)

Theoretical framework of the study is the backbone of this article most of discussion lays von it, therefore, it's a phenomenon need to be addressed in the light of political system of each country. I would like to mention them again here: a. Rule of law, b. Electoral accountability c. Freedom d. Inter-institutional accountability e. Political participation f. Responsiveness and g. Equality. These seven phenomenon cab be discussed below:

- a. Rule of law: this denotes that all citizens are same in the eyes of the constitution or any other laws, irrespective of a post or position occupies by an individual, all are equal they should be treated equally in the eyes of law. But the case is different in the context of Kenya and Ethiopia as ruling class or elite people are not abiding by the state's laws in these two eastern Africa nations, which causes a lot of crisis.
- b. Electoral accountability: A true democratic state should observe a fair and perfect elections which will be free from any rigging, crisis, or any other irregularities, so that the masses will be able to elect the suitable /eligible candidates to the public post.
- c. Freedom: this is also one of fundamental human rights to allow citizens to express their rights and freedom of speech, media personals should be given upper hands to move on with their responsibilities, in providing a true and genuine news, with true spirit to safe the masses from their captivity, but unfortunately this is not implanted in both Kenya and Ethiopia.
- d. Inter-institutional accountability: We all know that the responsibility for the outcomes of decisions in representative democracy is traditionally attributed to politicians who are held accountable through regular elections, therefore , all should be accountable for their actions, behaviors , for instance: courts should take action against any politician who ever break the law and be held accountable under criminal or civil laws ,no one should be set free.

Political participation: this is one of a biggest challenge faces by democracies of both Kenya and Ethiopia as many were derailed and denial their rights of political participation, such as: casting their votes, choosing their candidates to contest for elections, to have rights of to political forces/ parties, where several parties should be allowed to run for elections.

Responsiveness: this is quality of response quickly to any domestic crisis and to look for solutions but both governments of Kenya and Ethiopia are not concerns or bothers or show seriousness towards some people problem for instance: water crisis, employment, security issues, inflation and educational challenges.

Equality: in accordance to fundamental rights in the constitutions of both countries equal rights are more needed to be addressed in all departments, in providing equal opportunities to all, in receptiveness of background, statues, religion, caste, color, etc.

Quantitative approach helps to identify trends, patterns, significance of relationships among the variables and many other insights from the numerical data (Sani, 2013). On the other hand, the qualitative approach provides detailed explanation of a phenomenon through subjective perspective of the reality which are mainly based on experiences, observations and opinions (Cohen, et al., 2011). The current research will employ mixed methods, combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, as it will

provide a holistic understanding and comparison of democracy in Kenya and Ethiopia through in-depth insights obtained from quantitative and qualitative data. As such, the quantitative methods will be employed first through a self-administered questionnaire to investigate the potential relationship between the research

constructs. Furthermore, a follow-up interview will be conducted to gain deeper understanding about the phenomenon and additional insights related to democracy in both countries. The study is descriptive in nature, as descriptive research provides a baseline understanding of the current state (Mariam, 2001). The current study aims to characterize and compare the democratic system in both countries, which includes describing the state of democracy in Kenya and Ethiopia in terms of the key elements of the theoretical model: rule of law, freedom, political participation, equality, responsiveness, inter-institutional accountability, and electoral accountability (Morlino, Dressel, & Pelizzo, 2011).

- 1- Universal declaration of human rights(UDHR), article 21, www.org/en/documents/udhrl.
- 2- International Convention on civil and political rights (ICCPR), -article 25, ww2.ohchr.org/English/law/ccpr.htm

### Conclusion

The governments of both Kenya and Ethiopia need to do more in implementation of true democratic system in these two Africa States. The resources should have allocated in a meaningful 1 manners manner; this can reduce danger of insecurity in these countries. Meanwhile, governments should open its foreign policy to allow more investments in these eastern Africa region, as many people are jobless. Furthermore, understanding of how democratic principles manifest in diverse cultural and regional settings. As such, valuable insights from examination of the strengths and weaknesses of democratic governance in these African nations can facilitate policymakers in drafting policies for the prosperity of the country. The findings will not only guide policy decisions but also contribute to the enhancement of governance structures, electoral processes, and citizen participation. This comparative study holds significance beyond national borders, offering insights for academic advancement and contributing to the broader promotion of democratic values in the African context. Policymakers in both Kenya and Ethiopia can benefit from the practical implications derived from this analysis, fostering more effective and culturally sensitive approaches to democratic governance. Moreover, the research contributes to regional insights, facilitating collaborative efforts to strengthen democratic institutions across Africa. The potential impact of this comparative analysis extends to areas such as governance practices, civic engagement, and international initiatives aimed at advancing democratic principles. The study serves as a valuable resource for promoting sustainable democratic development in the region and beyond by addressing the unique challenges and successes in each country.

The governments of these two east Africa states need to contribute more for the development of democracies and allow masses to enjoy political participation along with practicing fundamental rights for their citizens, so that they will be in the right position as a competent citizen. The governments should control insecurity, political instability, rampart of corruption, kidnapping for ransoms, inflation and other social challenges. There are other issues which will be examined and discussed in the next study

#### Recommendation

Despite the challenges, both Ethiopia and Kenya have the potential to develop strong democracies. In order to do so, they will need to address the following issues: Hold free and fair elections, Uphold the rule of law, Respect human rights Reduce Corruption Promote economic development as such, valuable insights from examination of the strengths and weaknesses of democratic governance in these African nations can facilitate policymakers in drafting policies for the prosperity of the country. Focus on specific policy areas like media freedom, economic development, or human rights and compare the different approaches taken by both countries. Did certain policies seem more effective in promoting democracy.

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