



CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP MODELS IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Africa, like other developing regions, has experienced and continues to experience political changes of enormous proportions, especially in terms of governance systems. Since the 1980s, the models of governance and leadership have become the centre of debate for academics, decision-makers, civil society and, in particular, the international development agencies owing mainly to political instability and poor economic performance that have been recorded in most African countries since their political independence. Governance and leadership determine the rules and behaviour of actors in a polity, in particular political and administrative actors. As such, these have been viewed as key factors that may promote or inhibit the development process of a country. Developed countries and the multilateral lending agencies (the World Bank and IMF) have suggested that Africa's inability to develop economically is principally the consequence of bad governance and poor leadership. As a result, a series of reforms has been sought, and in some places introduced. These include democratization, decentralization, popular participation in policy-making, and public sector reforms. All of these have the objective of achieving an effective and efficient government that can facilitate sustainable development.

This chapter aims to present different major systems of governance that have been applied in Africa. Leadership and institutions of governance, and how these have interacted are explored. The study focuses on the post-independence era. However, pre-independence governance is also highlighted given its strong resonance on current leadership and governance systems. The purpose of the chapter is also to appraise the state of governance by highlighting key features that are said to impede the social and economic development in Africa. This information is used to determine the



obstacles or challenges the APRM is facing in addressing governance issues in Africa; hence, its significance in answering the research question.

The chapter begins by providing a general framework of political systems that exist in the world and how institutions and groups interact in each one. Then, the chapter presents and discusses political systems found on the African continent. The concept of political system defined as the model of how politics determines public policy is seen as a framework needed to understand the functioning and behaviour of governments. Thus, although a public administration research would be interested on those aspects of policy implementation and the organisation of government activities, the dynamics of the political system, which affect the bureaucratic machine and its workings, need to be understood. Furthermore, governance in Africa is analysed in the context of the globalised economy. The African response to globalisation and the challenges for governance and leadership are also highlighted.

MAJOR POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD

David Easton (1965:21) defines a political system as a set of interactions through which values and policies are authoritatively allocated for a society. Broadly, the political system is an open system subjected to influences from the external or international environment of which it forms a part. Narrowly, the political system is viewed as an intra-societal system, which encompasses institutions, structures, processes, and actors – such as the executives, the parliaments, courts, political parties, policy mandates, organizational structures, administrative rules and guidelines, and institutionalized rules and norms – which are interconnected in a process through which policies are initiated, decided and implemented. It is through understanding the dynamics among the various components of a political system that one can come to grasp the concept of leadership and governance and their relationship to public decisions.

There are various models of government in the world. These include liberal democracies, authoritarian models and communist systems. To compare and



classify the political systems across the world, political scientists have used various criteria, such as the mode of decision-making (for example consensual versus majoritarian decision-making), and economic organization (communism as opposed to capitalism) (Lijphart, 1984; Blondel, 1995). Blondel suggests five types of political systems which were classified in terms of the answers given to three sets of normative questions: “*who rules, in what way, and for what purpose*” (1995:29). The first question is concerned with the numbers and proportions of people who participate in the decision-making process. For this question, the focus is on who is entitled to take and who effectively takes decisions. In a democracy, as it was practised in ancient Athens, all the members of the polity participate in taking public decisions. Today, this form of democracy is impossible. Another extreme concerns monarchies in which only one person rules. It is also impossible to find this in any polity. Thus, in the real world, there exist various types of intermediate positions, which correspond to different types of “oligarchy” (Blondel, 1995:30).

The second question refers to how decisions are taken. What is being investigated here, is the levels of openness of the decision-making process. Are there restrictions on the discussion of alternatives with respect to policies and governance? To what extent do these restrictions exist? Answering these questions determines the extent to which a political system is liberal or authoritarian. Again, within this continuum, liberal to authoritarian, there is a series of political systems, which are hybrid or moderate.

Finally, the third normative principle concerns the purpose of public decisions that political systems pursue. All societies have a certain vision of what is the “good society”, which is promoted through policies that advance more or less equality in the society (Blondel, 1995:31). Here, the classification focuses on the substantive goals of policies that are being developed and implemented. Consequently, one may find two liberal democracies, which may differ in terms of actions taken with respect to property, social welfare, and education. For example, the liberal capitalist, on the one hand, advocates a limited government, and promotes individual and property rights, which leads the



capitalist class to draw the biggest share of benefits in comparison to the rest of society. The liberal socialist, on the other hand, intervenes in the public arena including the economic sphere, while protecting fundamental individual rights. This bargains for more equality in the society.

Thus, answers to these normative questions determine the type of political system that can be located at different points in the three-dimensional continuum defined by the norms. Furthermore, a cluster of political systems provides an image of structures (institutions and groups), which exist in these systems and within their relationships. Below are the five clusters of political systems proposed by Blondel namely, the liberal democratic, the egalitarian-authoritarian, traditional-inegalitarian, populist, and authoritarian-inegalitarian (Blondel, 1995). The structures, institutions and groups that make up these systems and the working relationships between them are also highlighted.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Liberal democratic political systems apply principally to the modern democracies of Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Israel (Blondel, 1995:36). Ancient Athens is the classic example of a direct democracy, in which citizens made decisions themselves without representative institutions. The essence of direct democracy was a “self-government” in which all adult citizens participated in shaping collective decisions in a context of equality and open deliberation (Hague, Harrop, and Breslin, 1998:20). In the modern state, however, the most common form of democracy is “representative democracy” in which the people elect their representatives, who make decisions on their behalf. These elected leaders operate within formal limits, often set out in the constitution. Such limits reflect the liberal goals of preserving individual rights and maximizing freedom of choice (Hague et al., 1998:21).

Diamond (1999:11) provides a list of characteristics and conditions that a regime has to meet to be considered a “liberal democracy”:

- Control of the state and its key decisions and allocations lies with



elected officials, in particular, the military is subordinate to the elected authority.

- Executive power is constrained by the autonomous power of other government institutions such as an independent judiciary and parliament, and other mechanisms of horizontal accountability.
- Electoral outcomes are uncertain with a significant opposition vote and the presumption of party alternation in government, and no group that adheres to constitutional principles is denied the right to form a party and contest elections.
- Cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups are not prohibited from expressing their political interests, speaking their language or practicing their culture.
- Beyond parties and elections, citizens have multiple ongoing channels for expression and representation of their interests and values, i.e. they can form and join diverse, independent associations and movements.
- There are alternative sources of information, including independent media, to which citizens have free access.
- Individuals also have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration and petition.
- Citizens are politically equal under the law.
- An independent, non-discriminatory judiciary, whose decisions are enforced and respected by other centres of power, effectively protects individual and group liberties.
- The rule of law protects citizens from unjustified detention, exile, terror, torture, and undue interference in their personal lives not only by the state but also by organized non-state or anti-state forces.



Thus, a liberal democracy is a system in which political authority is subjected to constitutional and legal limits; the rule of law is assured; and individual and minority rights are protected. Power, although acquired through elections, is constrained by various mechanisms of checks and balances. All liberal democracies are based on the principle of representative and limited government.

However, the weight given to these principles varies, which explains the variations that exist within liberal democratic political systems. Lijphart in his book "*Democracies*" built a typology of nine democratic political systems using two dimensions: "majoritarian" and "consensual" models of government. The majoritarian model is based on the principle of concentrating as much power as possible in the hands of the majority; and consensual type is based on the principle of sharing, dispersing, and limiting power in various ways (in Lijphart, 1990:71).

With respect to the three normative dimensions, liberal democracies are democratic and liberal, and their policies tend to be a compromise between the extremes of full equality and clumsy inequality (Blondel, 1995:36). This situation has been attributed to the liberal democratic formula, which allows people or groups to express themselves (freedom of expression) and to seek protection or support especially during elections, thus, allowing a certain balance to be reached in terms of purpose of policies. The system has proven to be a successful framework for the development of the market economy (Hague, et al., 1998:21).

In liberal democratic political systems, the configuration of institutions and groups is based mainly on constitutional arrangements deliberately designed to implement the norms of the political system (Blondel, 1995:41). Thus, the constitution clearly defines key institutions, the actors within them, and their relationships. This is the case for parliaments, courts, the executive and its bureaucracy, and other institutions, such as the Auditor General and ombudsman. Political parties, although not always mentioned in constitutions of liberal democratic political systems, play a primordial role in decision-



making. In these polities, political parties tend to dominate the executive and the parliament mainly because the elections occur along party lines and the vision of the government of the day will correspond to the decisions of the ruling party. Blondel (1995:42) argues that parties and groups are most influential in decision-making in liberal democratic regimes. Parties occupy the front stage and provide the direction in which the system moves, whereas the groups, although less visible in the day-to-day governance of the system, organize for definite purposes (cases of trade unions, women organisations, business associations, youth groups) and normally exercise pressure on and influence the parties.

Theoretically, the level of public participation in policy-making is high. However, in practice, only a small group of people happens to be actively involved in and to shape decisions for the society while the majority free ride on the actions of others. Hague and his colleagues argue that often voting in national elections is the only form of political participation, which involves a majority of the people. Anything beyond that, in most democratic systems, is the domain of the minority of activists (Hague, et al., 1998:81). Nonetheless, the system provides to citizens the political space to express their concerns, needs and wants, which is the cornerstone of liberal democracy.

EGALITARIAN-AUTHORITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The countries of this group fall within the communist system. Hence, some scholars refer to these countries as communist political systems (White and Nelson, 1986) or socialist political systems (Topornin, 1990). Based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology of socialist economy, socialism has been adopted by various countries around the world, including the former Soviet Union (USSR), the Eastern European countries (such as the former Yugoslavia, Czech Republic and Hungary), Asian countries such as China, North Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam as well as Cuba, Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia (Blondel, 1995:37). It is important to note that the fall of communism in the former Soviet bloc in the late 1980s led to the collapse of the system in many other polities. Now communism remains in few countries, such as North Korea,



Cuba, and China, which are now reforming.

The socialist political system is mainly characterized by the fact that political power is exercised, and the public affairs of the society as a whole are managed by the working class, through various political devices in the form of state power. All political systems under socialism have in common, at least in theory, a socialist system of economy and public ownership of the means of production. It is widely accepted that in communist constitutions, elections, legislative bodies, and other public institutions have generally played a minor if not negligible role in politics, and have remained subordinate to the directives and detailed guidance of the ruling communist party (Topornin, 1990:129).

The state in these systems appears as the main and most important instrument of social transformation. It is through the state that the working people headed by the communist party regulate social relations and ensure the accomplishment of building and improving socialism (Topornin, 1990:125). The communist party guides and coordinates the activities of all the structures of the political system and ensures that each element in the system fulfils its functions completely. Other groups and institutions, such as public organisations, trade unions, women's associations, youth leagues, and cooperatives, work under the leadership of the communist party.

TRADITIONAL INEGALITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Traditional inegalitarian political systems operate in countries that are absolutist; in which the head of state, usually a monarch, rules the nation by counting on the loyal support of the large majority of the population (Blondel, 1995:43). This type of regime is rare and is now confined to countries found in few areas of the world such as the Arabian Peninsula, the Himalayas and the kingdom of Swaziland in Southern Africa. The norms of these systems are traditional. They preserve social inequalities. Power and wealth are concentrated in fewer hands, and there is limited movement towards opening the political space. Many monarchs have been able to maintain their regimes through the introduction of some of the features of constitutional regimes and



developing the economy. This is the case in the Arabian Peninsula (Blondel, 1995).

Structural configurations in these systems contrast sharply with those of liberal democracies and communist systems, because they do not result from deliberate decisions, neither from imposition on existing structures. Traditional institutional configurations correspond more closely to the social structure. What is important in these systems, are the traditional groupings or tribes and the hierarchical positions which exist within and between these groupings whose unwavering support is the determinant for the maintenance of the regime. The political arena is not vibrant given the insignificant role of key institutions such as the parliament and political parties (Blondel, 1995:43). However, the globalisation of democracy has led to calls for more representative and responsive political systems. Opposition forces, civil society especially, human rights and labour unions are at the forefront, campaigning for change in these polities.

POPULIST POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Populist political systems refer to the newly independent African states of the 1950s and 1960s. The term “populism” was used in the late nineteenth century in America to refer to emancipation movements of black Americans against their political and social masters (Blondel, 1995:39). After World War II, this term has been applied to those newly independent regimes and leaders in the Third World who championed the slogan that “people shall govern”, while not giving the people the political power to govern. These systems have been characterized as being halfway between democracy and monarchy, between egalitarian and inegalitarian, and between liberalism and authoritarianism (Blondel, 1995:39). Despite the populist ideology of these systems, they converted into authoritarian regimes soon after independence (Jackson and Rosberg, 1998:21-32).

The structural configuration of populist political systems is hybrid, often characterized by a profound opposition between traditional institutions that were losing power and the new institutions of the modern state, such as



political parties, the bureaucracy and trade union organizations, between which uneasy compromises had to be ironed out (Blondel, 1995:44). In most of these societies, the friction led to the adoption of a single-party system in which powers were concentrated in a small group of elites accompanied by the removal of competitive elections and intolerance towards opposition. Given the challenging task for the leaders to unify the factions, only popular and charismatic leaders, such as Mwarimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, have been able to sustain such regimes (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997:80). Elsewhere, in the absence of these leaders, it has been difficult to maintain the system and this has led in many cases to the emergence of authoritarian-inegalitarian systems, such as in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. This is a significant system for Africa, as most regimes remain populists with autocratic characteristics although they claim to be democracies.

AUTHORITARIAN-INEGALITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Authoritarian regimes are mostly oppressive, often characterized by a single hegemonic party-system or military regime, for which the population must express full support and obedience to the leader and the regime. Linz (1964) cited in Morlino (1990:91) defines authoritarian regime as follows:

A political system with limited, non-responsible political pluralism without an elaborated and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive or intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or, occasionally, a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined, but actually quite predictable limits.

These systems have, in most cases, emerged as a reaction to the failure of or difficulties in the democratic political system. This has been the case in many of the liberal democracies of Central and Eastern Europe after World War I, especially in those countries that had been most affected by the war. Fascism and Nazism are examples of such a reaction. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, democratic populist regimes have been replaced by authoritarian-inegalitarian regimes often in the form of military rule (Blondel, 1995:39). Military leaders argued that the democratic



system failed to bring social cohesion, order and economic growth; thus some form of authoritarianism was crucial to restore discipline and security (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997:80). Policies in these political systems promote inequality in the society, because they are designed to defend the interests of the small ruling elite. Furthermore, these regimes have proven to be highly volatile given the social, economic and political imbalances they create in society (Blondel, 1995:45).

Today, of all the political systems discussed above, the liberal democracy has passed the test of time and achieved an international acclaim of being the model of governance generally acceptable. This is principally attributed to the triumph of the market economy and the imperatives of globalisation. Countries around the world, including former communist countries, are adopting reforms that aim to implement liberal democratic principles along with its market policies. African states, at varying degrees, are also adopting the system. These reforms are in line with the prevalent system of governance in the new global order. The section below reviews governance models applied in Africa from the pre-colonial to the post-independence period. The purpose is to highlight key features of governance and leadership in Africa and their relationship to Africa's development.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Pre-colonial African societies were organized in kingdoms based on lineage/kinship, a social system in which the exercise of power and authority did not rely on bureaucratic arrangements to carry out the political and social requirements of the communities. The analysis of the political structure and stability of pre-colonial African kingdoms reveals a combination of administrative configurations and leadership strategies, including the important role of democratic processes in traditional governance. For example, Godfrey Tangwa argues that traditional African leadership and authority systems might be understood somewhat paradoxically as the "harmonious marriage between autocratic dictatorship and popular



democracy” (1998:2). Specific formal practices (which varied between cultures) positioned the citizenry to authorize, critique, and sanction the ascension of their ruler, his/her continued reign and the selection and ascension of his/her successor.

These practices (rituals and procedures) are also described by Michael Tabuwe Aletum as “the exercise of democracy in traditional institutions, through checks and balances imposed by citizenry participation in the transition and maintenance of leadership” (Aletum, 2001:209). As an example, Aletum describes the Bafut kingdom of Bamenda in Cameroon, where, when the new ruler was installed, he had to be presented to the Bafut population for stoning. The ceremonial stoning may consist of tiny, harmless pebbles in the case of an approved and respected new leader, or of large, injurious rocks hurled to maim, chase off or kill the undesired incumbent. In either case, it reminds the new ruler what could happen if his rule became illegitimate (Aletum, 2001).

The choice of a leader was politically charged and if contestation arose, many traditional African cultures employed rituals of checks and balances for resolving conflicts, especially those relating to succession issues. The transfer of power had to follow the customs and traditions dictated by the ancestors. Some offices had categorical requirements of gender or age that narrowed the competition. In some cases, certain responsibilities fell to the eldest male or youngest female, or choices could be made between several people of approximately the same age. A prescribed inheritance pattern that connected certain classes or families was sometimes required.

Tangwa describes a particular strategy where the leader was chosen from a committee comprised of distinct gender and class representatives. There were also checks and balances among traditional administrators. While some top positions were lifetime appointments, other titles were graded whereby one could enter the kingdom in one administrative capacity but might hope, with time and good assessments, to be promoted. Chieftaincies could be graded according to status and population size. These grades were also politically



important and, dependent on their level of rank and popularity, chiefs could have lesser or greater influence on community life and resources. Noble status in pre-colonial African society thus often depended upon both, the fact of birth and some form of community approval (Tangwa, 1998).

The above descriptions point to the important place that people held in these societies. In fact, through the ritual acts, the king and chiefs swore allegiance to the people. The reign of a particular king, however loved or despised, was never more significant than the endurance of the kingdom itself. In this regard, Tangwa observes that when the ruler was perceived to be a political liability, in some traditional African kingdoms the King/Queen could even be quietly executed or asked to voluntarily drink poison if his/her continued reign was considered dangerous for the survival and/or well-being of the kingdom (Tangwa, 1998:3). Supportive institutions and authorities, often of a highly respected religious and/or elder status, such as the Queen-Mother, traditional councils, healers, shamans and secret societies, bestowed and/or removed kingship and continually advised the King in roles that mediated the rule of the kingdom.

Although the King or Queen generally appeared very powerful, because his/her word could frequently condemn anyone to death, there were nevertheless institutions and instruments of checks and balances of power that subjected the rule to very strict control. These include taboos, and also institutions and personalities of very high moral authority and integrity whose main preoccupation was the protection and safeguarding of the kingdom as distinguished from the King, the interests of the ordinary person, the land, the ancestors and the unborn (Tangwa, 1998:4). Thus, traditional African governance and leadership was characterised by a balance of authority and democracy. Several scholars of African politics argue that it is the various colonial administrations, which introduced pure dictatorships, that is, dictatorships without any checks and balances (Tangwa, 1998; Aletum, 2001; Gordon, 2001). Indeed, it is with the new authoritarian demands of colonisers, such as the widespread seizure of land and forced manual labour, as elaborated in the following section, that African people came into contact with



dictatorial rule.

GOVERNANCE DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Colonial rule started with the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1885. However, European contact with Africa through traders, missionaries and explorers, long preceded the establishment of European rule on the continent. The Portuguese began trading with the West Africa's coast in the fifteen century. Other Europeans (Dutch, French and British) had established a number of coastal points from which they conducted profitable trade in gold, ivory, and slaves since the seventeenth century (Tordoff, 2001:25). The partition of Africa was precipitated by imperial plans of King Leopold II of the Belgium to annex the whole of the Congo basin into a personal empire and the appropriation by Germany in 1883 of the Cameroons, East Africa, South West Africa and Togoland. This pushed other European powers especially France and Britain, which were already established in the areas of West Africa (France then occupied Senegal, whereas Britain ruled over areas of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast [now Ghana], and Nigeria), to extend their rule and influence in other regions (Tordoff, 2001:25).

Consequently, in 1885 at the Berlin Conference, the leaders of the various European powers (France, Britain, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Spain) came together and agreed on the rules for splitting up Africa. This division of Africa into territorial colonies was done arbitrarily, based largely on the economic and political strategies of European colonisers. Unrelated areas and peoples were just joined together with no regard to traditional allegiance and belongingness. Thus, tribes and ethnic groups found themselves separated and joined with other tribes and groups into colonial-set boundaries, a situation which today continues to create conflicts in Africa. Africans did not surrender without resistance. This is indicated by various fights and opposition throughout Africa, such as the Maji Maji (people of Tanzania) resistance against the Germans in 1905-1906; the Herero and Nama (of Namibia) warfare against Germany in 1904-1907; the Maninka, Tokolor, and Dahomey (of West Africa)'s resistance against the French in the



1890s, and the Asante people (of Ghana)'s fight against the British (O'Toole, 2001:47). In the end, however, the military superiority, logistics and resources of Europeans won the war.

Colonial rule was highly authoritarian with centralised administrative structures (Wunsch, 1990:5). However, given the vastness of the areas occupied and the diversity of African communities, the colonial rulers used Africans as intermediaries to assist them. Colonial rule has been classified into two types, the indirect and direct rule, with the British portrayed as indirect rulers and the French as direct rulers (O'Toole, 2001:48-49, Tordoff, 2001:27-36). In theory, indirect rule meant "little interference" so that Africans could advance along their own lines (O'Toole, 2001:49). For Britain, ruling through the traditional tribal chiefs was the most efficient and effective way to govern and extract revenues from its colonies. While the system allowed the maintenance of indigenous political and cultural values and structures, however, the powers of tribal authorities were decidedly circumscribed and whenever these local chiefs were not acceptable to the colonial power, they were removed and replaced by British appointees. The consequence was the absence of stable and long-term structures to institutionalise local development efforts (Wunsch, 1990:26).

The French, by contrast, imposed direct rule even though they also utilized the traditional authorities when it was necessary and advantageous. Direct and centralised rule was part and parcel of the policy of "assimilation", which sought to spread French culture in their colonies and thus make the citizens of the colonies an integral part of France (O'Toole, 2001:49). In this process, they attempted to reproduce in the colony the same institutions as existed at home to ensure the smooth functioning of a colonial administration dominated at senior levels by Frenchmen. More specifically, the French established administrative units that cut across traditional boundaries. They created trans-ethnic administrative elite and used the French language at all levels of administration (Tordoff, 2001:28). Ironically, the policy of assimilation could not work, because the French faced the dilemma of how to reconcile liberty that stresses equality for all French citizens regardless of origin and colour



with their imperialist ideology, which was the basis for colonising Africa. The consequence of assimilation was a disintegration of indigenous systems and values.

In other colonies mainly administered by Belgians and Portuguese, colonial rule was extremely centralized and brutal. For instance, the vast Congo basin was a colony under the personal control of King Leopold II of Belgium, who ruled the region with tyranny to extract the maximum resources. Similarly, Portugal's overseas possessions were not colonies but overseas provinces indissolubly linked with the metropole (Tordoff, 2001:32). Portugal held strongly onto its colonies because being an underdeveloped economy itself, it needed a cheap supply of raw materials to make its manufactured goods competitive in European market. Munslow (1983) quoted in Tordoff (2001:32) argues that Portugal took no steps to decolonise because unlike other European powers, it could not neocolonise; that is, Portugal an economically backward country could not be certain that it could exploit its ex-colonies economically after granting them political independence. This explains why it took time for Portuguese colonies (Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola) to obtain independence, which came later in the mid-1970s.

In any case, colonial rule was highly centralized and dictatorial. Not only did colonisation partition Africa into artificial boundaries separating peoples who were linked by the same culture, values and trade but it also exploited the continent leaving it impoverished. Africans were subjected to compulsory labour on which all the colonial powers relied for the extraction of minerals, construction and maintenance of roads and railways for the purposes of transport and trade with the metropolises. Governmental activity was minimal and the social and economic development of the colonies was almost ignored. Agricultural activities concentrated on cash crops destined for the European markets and not to develop local economies. Improvements in education and health services were mostly left to the missionaries. All these conditions created discontent among the people, especially among the growing number of unemployed young men educated by missionaries, farmers and traders,



nationalist leaders who resented the limitations on their civil rights.

INDEPENDENT AFRICA: NEOPATRIMONIAL REGIMES AND AUTHORITARIAN RULE

African states began to achieve independence in the early 1960s. For some however, freedom is more recent. The former Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola achieved independence in 1974-1975; the former French colony of Djibouti in 1977; Zimbabwe in 1980; and Namibia gained its independence in 1990 after years of fighting the colonialist South Africa (Gordon, 2001:61). South Africa, although not a colony, ended minority white rule and achieved political freedom in 1994. Thus, it can be argued that African states are very young and in the process of state building.

Political analysts have described the politics of postcolonial Africa as essentially authoritarian and neopatrimonial (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, Jackson and Rosberg, 1998; Joseph, 1998; Lewis, 1998). Max Weber who coined the term “patrimonial authority” used the concept to distinguish it from rational-legal authority. The basis of rational-legal authority is that individuals in public positions exercise state power in accordance with a legally defined structure in which the public sphere is carefully distinguished from the private sphere, with written laws and bureaucratic institutions to determine the exercise of authority and protect individuals and their property from the abuses of officials (Weber in Gerth and Mills, 1946:78). In contrast to rational authority, patrimonial authority is found in those traditional political systems in which the chief rules, by dint of prestige and power, over ordinary citizens who have no rights or privileges other than those granted by the ruler. The chief maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:61-62).

Thus, the concept of neo-patrimonialism was used to capture the system of hybrid regimes in which patrimonial practices coexist with modern bureaucratic institutions (Van de Walle, 2001:52). On the outside, these systems display the Weberian institutional configurations of legal-rationality with written laws and constitutional order. However, this official order is



frequently undermined by a patrimonial logic, by which office holders misuse public authority to achieve their own ends. Below is a brief revisit of African leadership after independence with the objective to determine its characteristics and the major factors that have contributed to the consolidation of authoritarian leadership and bad governance.

LEADERSHIP, POLITICAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The essence of leadership is the ability to persuade others to comply voluntarily with one's wishes (Cartwright, 1983:19). In Africa, the appeals to struggle for independence from colonial rule by freedom fighters, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela and others, illustrate the phenomenon of leadership. However, leadership does not only confine itself to heroic acts or special traits of individuals. It generally refers to the ability of the leader to obtain non-coerced compliance, which enables members of an organisation or citizens in society to achieve the goals that represent their shared values and aspirations. As Maxwell (1998:205) suggests leadership is about partnership between leaders and followers. Partnership happens when leaders, who ought to make decisions, shift their power towards shared decision-making. This enables leaders and followers to rally behind common strategic vision and collective goals.

Leadership is dynamic and subject to ideological, political and socio-economic changes (Mohiddin, 1998:10). Therefore, successful organisations are those whose leaders have the ability to anticipate these changes and pressures and to respond to them timeously and effectively. The phenomenon of globalisation has made leadership even more important for the survival of organisations and countries. The challenges of the globalised world economy require leaders worldwide to provide new styles of leadership that would protect and promote the welfare of their countrymen. Thus, effective leadership is connected not only with personality make-up but also with managerial competence based upon cognitive capability, values and knowledge and wisdom, which are all used with requisite procedures to



achieve predetermined goals.

Critics agree that African leadership has largely failed to respond to changes, challenges and opportunities in the domestic and global environments. The power structures and exercise of authority in Africa have led numerous analysts to conclude that the neo-patrimonial and clientelist character of African leadership has hindered the African state in operating as a neutral and impersonal arena for the resolution of social problems and the sustenance of the socio-economic development (Ake, 1996; Mohiddin, 1998; NEPAD, 2001; Van de Walle, 2001).

The first generation of African leaders were autocratic and restrictive, and were generally not accountable to their citizens (Lewis, 1998:13). The real norms that affect political and administrative leadership and action were not rooted in state institutions and organisations but in friendship, kinship, ethnic fellowship, and other similar norms that undermine state rules and regulations. Public officials occupied bureaucratic positions less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status (Jackson and Rosberg, 1998:21; van de Walle, 2001:115-128). This has resulted in inefficient and ineffective states and increased poverty. The resultant destitution and frustration of the masses have in many instances led to several civil conflicts and wars claiming millions of lives and displacing others. Despite the neo-patrimonial commonality, there have been significant variations in ways the political leadership and institutions have interacted with the citizenry, which are worth noting. Below are the political systems of post-independence Africa. These systems changed when the process of democratisation began in the 1990s.

TYPES OF AFRICAN POLITICAL REGIMES UNTIL THE DEMOCRATISATION ERA (1990)

Bratton and van de Walle (1997) provide a five modal classification of regimes that have evolved in different states of Africa since independence and up until 1989. The classification is based on two elements. First is the extent of political competition, which refers to the extent to which members of the political system were allowed to compete over elected positions; and second,



the degree of political participation, which is defined as the extent to which the population is allowed to or consulted in the making of public policies/decisions. Accordingly, there have been five types of regimes, namely, the plebiscitary one-party system, the military oligarchy, the competitive one-party system, the multiparty system, and the settler oligarchy (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997:68:82). The settler oligarchy falls outside the timeframe of this discussion as it relates to the territories of Namibia and South Africa that were still under white settler domination until 1990 and 1994 respectively.

Plebiscitary one-party system

This form of regime precluded political competition but encouraged a high degree of political participation (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:78). In this system, the people were mobilized and controlled through the single ruling party, often headed by the first-generation leader who brought independence or the military ruler who seized power during the first round of coups in the 1960s, such as Mobutu Sese Seko of former Zaire. The people were not given the opportunity to select their leader as the opposition parties were not allowed and only one individual from the official party appeared on the voting ballot. The electoral turnout rates and supportive votes for the president always exceeded 90 per cent of the votes, which indicated high popular participation. The countries that were plebiscitary one-party systems include Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Gabon, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Ethiopia and Congo.

Military oligarchy

First used as the guardian of national sovereignty and independence, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the military became a politically powerful entity. Between 1952, the date King Farouk of Egypt was overthrown by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, and 1984, seventy successful coups took place in thirty African countries (Gordon, 2001:77). Indeed, by the 1980s military rule had become the norm for most independent African countries. The military oligarchy was an exclusionary form of neopatrimonial rule with all



public decisions made by an elite clique of military officers, which often included civilian advisers and technocrats. The implementation of policies was carried out by a relatively professional civil service or military hierarchy (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:80). The military leaders often espoused a populist ideology. However, political participation was severely restricted given the banning of elections, political parties and most civic associations that characterised military regimes. The well-known military oligarchies include Nigeria, Sudan, Chad, Liberia, Algeria, Uganda, and Mauritania. The democratisation process of the 1990s ousted military regimes and crowned civilians. However, the military remains a powerful influential force of the political dynamics of several African countries, such as Nigeria and Algeria (Hammerstad, 2004:10).

Competitive one-party system

This system differs from the plebiscitary and military regime in the sense that it allowed some political competition in parliamentary elections. Voters were given electoral choice (although limited) among candidates of the ruling party with an established policy platform (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997:80). This allowed a certain degree of parliamentary accountability to voter concerns as contenders struggled to demonstrate to their constituencies their ability to bring home state resources. Barkan argues that, in Kenya, local elections amounted to deliberations on the ability of individual incumbents to secure state resources for their home areas. Incumbents were held accountable for their activities and forced to be attentive to the concerns of their constituents (Barkan, 1992:172). These political systems were regarded as relatively participative and stable. Countries, such as Cameroon, Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, and Malawi were regarded as competitive one-party systems.

Multiparty system

Multiparty regimes have allowed some degree of political participation and competition. In these regimes, people have enjoyed guarantees of universal rights, equality before the law, and a political pluralism that largely allows free



and open elections. Until 1989, only Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius, Senegal and Zimbabwe were categorized as multiparty systems. Although these systems have often been criticized for tampering with democratisation processes through for example, the intimidation of opposition supporters, multiparty democracies enjoyed a high degree of political stability compared to the rest (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997:82).

Below is a table in which African countries are classified according to the dominant governance model that has characterized a particular country until 1989. It should be noted that countries have often shifted from one regime type to another. Furthermore, the classification provided has significantly changed since 1990, as many African states embarked on the process of democratisation.

Table 4.1: Regime type of Sub-Saharan Africa until 1989

Plebiscitary One-party systems	Military Oligarchies	Competitive One-party systems	Multiparty systems
Angola	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Botswana
Benin	Burundi	Central African Republic	Gambia
Cape Verde	Chad	Cote d'Ivoire	Mauritius
Comoros	Guinea	Madagascar	Senegal
Congo	Lesotho	Mali	Zimbabwe
Djibouti	Liberia	Malawi	
Equatorial Guinea	Mauritania	Rwanda	
Ethiopia	Nigeria	Sao Tome	
Gabon	Sudan	Seychelles	
Guinea-Bissau	Uganda	Sierra Leone	
Kenya		Tanzania	
Mozambique		Togo	
Niger		Zambia	
Somalia			
Swaziland			
Zaire			

Source: Bratton and Van de Walle (1997:79)

Notwithstanding the diversity of political systems, the political governance of African states since independence has been characterized by strikingly similar patterns. Most of African states have had dictatorial rule, and have suppressed the voices of the opposition and civil society in general, thus inhibiting the development of effective political leadership and the framing of policy alternatives essential for sustainable development. The following are key characteristics of the post-colonial African state:

- replacement of competitive politics by one or no-party systems



allegedly dedicated to national unity;

- reliance upon unified bureaucratic structures exclusively accountable to the central government to define, organize, and manage the production of public goods and services along lines determined at all levels by a national plan;
- no legitimate significant role allowed for local government, including traditional, ethnically related groups as well as modern institutions of true local government;
- supremacy of the executive authority at the expense of such other institutions as the legislature, judiciary and regional governments;
- the national budget regarded as the primary source of funding for the development agenda, and to be raised out of the largest economic sectors, either agriculture or mineral extraction. (Wunsch and Olowu 1990:45)

But, what are the factors that have contributed to the development and consolidation of authoritarian, unaccountable and ineffective leadership and governance? Identification of these factors is clearly imperative to chart new ways for effective governance and to avoid the mistakes of the past.

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS FOR BAD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Colonialism and its political legacy

Today, scholars widely concur that colonialism has contributed to the emergence of the authoritarian state in post-independence Africa (Wunsch, 1990:43-68; Gordon, 2001:58-80). On philosophical grounds, the leadership and policy-making process of colonial regimes were essentially elitist, centrist, and absolutist (Crowder, 1968:165). In practice, the colonial state used force to control every aspect of the colonial economy to maintain its power and achieve the objectives of colonisation. This was clearly evident in forced labour policies and land evictions (Mbaku, 1998:73).



At independence, African states inherited an institutional apparatus that was designed to exploit the colonies and ill-equipped structures (manpower shortages and ineffective systems). The new leaders maintained these colonial institutions and systems. Centralisation and coercion became the weapon to obtain compliance and to legitimize their otherwise highly contested rule. Rubin and Weinstein (1974) quoted in Wunsch (1990:29) described governance of the newly independent African states as follows:

Statutes governing the civil service have rarely been altered significantly; the same salary scales and codes of behaviour have continued; administrative law books have not changed. The same elitist attitudes are absorbed, including a general disdain for elected officials and technicians, in spite of egalitarian socialist ideology.

The same observation is still applicable: African leaders have failed to adopt appropriate political, social and economic reforms that would build state institutions, maintain political stability and ensure economic development. Instead, they have kept the coercive state and its institutions, which promised to protect their rule. Civic movements, which were vibrant during the time of independence, were suppressed, thus depriving the society of a significant force of control and social emancipation.

Ethnic factor

The partition of Africa in colonial artificial boundaries and the “divide and rule” strategy of the colonialists heightened ethnic awareness and competition. Ethnic and tribal divisions and conflicts continued to characterise post-colonial politics because nationalist leaders, like European colonisers, used ethnic and tribal divisions as a method of winning support and legitimising their power. Political parties that assumed leadership were created along ethnic, tribal or regional lines (Gordon, 2001:67). For instance in Nigeria, there were three parties sharply divided along ethnic and regional lines: the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) in the predominantly Hausa-Fulani north, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, (NCNC) in the heavily Igbo east, and the Action Group in the mainly Yoruba west (Diamond, 1988:33-39).



At the same time, ethnicity/tribalism was also used to destroy multipartism in the newly independent African states. For the new leaders, what was needed, was the national unity which could only be achieved through a strong central government led by a single party. These leaders argued that political pluralism and competition would worsen ethnic and regional divisions, which had to be avoided in order to bring much needed social cohesion and unity. Thus, by the late 1960s, almost all independent states (with the exception of Botswana, Mauritius and Gambia) had moved away from the multiparty system they had at independence towards the single-party with power and wealth centralized in the hands of the party leader, who was also the president of the state. This strategy led to corruption and mismanagement of public resources. It also inhibited the development of competent, committed and visionary future leaders, as those outside the tribe of the ruling elite were kept at bay from politics and leadership. This situation has often led to coups and civil conflicts, which have haunted African states.

Ethnic divisions and conflicts in Africa are often debated as a legacy of colonialism to explain the immediate post-independence politics. However, ethnicity is still a very important factor in African governance, which impacts both on democracy and development. As Mohiddin (1998:22) correctly argues, in Africa the tendency to vote according to one's ethnic preference rather than policy options is still strong. And so is the allocation of economic and other social resources. The challenge for good governance and development is to have a leadership that transcends ethnic fellowship and acts in the interests of all the people.

Policies of central planning

The "central planning approach" to political order and development adopted in the early post-independence era has also contributed to the consolidation of a centralized and authoritarian state in Africa. The centralisation approach accords the state exclusive control of social organisation and planning and makes it the sole actor in the national socio-economic development (Wunsch and Oluwu, 1990:6). At independence, many African leaders argued that in



order to unify the various ethnic and social cleavages and provide rapid economic growth and development, single party and centralised government were imperative. These words echoed by President Julius Nyerere (1970) of Tanzania point to the strategic orientation for a strong central government.

To build and maintain socialism it is essential that all the major means of production and exchange in the nation are controlled and owned by peasants through the machinery of their Government. Further, it is essential that the ruling party should be a Party of peasants and workers. (in Wunsch and Olowu, 1990:44)

Former colonial powers also advocated a centralised approach to political governance and development. This approach offered the advantage of controlling the ruling group to serve and protect their neocolonial interests (Tangri, 1985:20-23; Ake, 1996:8). As a result, in virtually all African countries, centrist and coercive politics were used to weaken the opposition and bring parliamentarians, judicial authorities and senior public officials into the ruling party. Local institutions of self-governing states were supplanted with functional administrative agencies that were an extension of the ministries in the capital (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990:5). The pattern of concentration of power extended too in the area of civil society in general including private organizations, churches, cooperatives, universities, youth groups, unions, and the like, which had come in most of countries under government control (Haberson, 1990:180). The consequence of centralisation has been the shift of power from provinces to the capital, and the destitution of human and financial capacity in local institutions. Similarly, civic capacity, that is, the capacity of the population to engage in various collective activities that protect their rights and promote their welfare was severely strained by red tape and restrictive governments.

The problems of a centralised state were exacerbated by weak inherited state institutions, such as the parliament and the shortage of trained and experienced public officials, to control the development agenda and effectively plan and administer from the center (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990:16; Ake, 1996:18). Thus, a centralised approach to political order and policy-making resulted in the emergence of corrupt officials and wastage of resources on



poorly planned development projects.

Foreign policies

A close look at African international relations in the postcolonial period suggests dependent ties between African countries and their colonial masters, with the latter having greater control and influence on African governance systems. Since independence, it has been argued that the demise of colonialism did not mean the end of foreign domination, especially in the economic sphere, as independent African states largely remained controlled by their former colonial masters. The new form of relationships, the economic domination to which new independent states became subjected, has been referred to as “neo-colonialism”. As Nkrumah (1974:ix) argued:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.

Thus, the post-colonial period ushered in a new ideology based on neo-colonial relationships that permitted the continued external domination of the political life in Africa. The basis of neo-colonialism’s success was on its strategy of transferring power to an indigenous class created and supported by former colonial authorities. African leaders have maintained close ties with their colonial masters, and often look to them for survival and regime protection (Obasanjo, 1996:19). This has deepened Africa’s political and economic dependence and strengthened undemocratic rule on the continent.

Since the 1990s, however, (which corresponds to the end of the cold war), a new international order has led to dramatic changes about the involvement of Great Powers in Africa. One of the most notable changes in western foreign policy was the decline in military and economic aid (which some African states had enjoyed during the cold war) and a strong focus on democracy and human rights protection (Schraeder, 2001:163). By 1990, the US policy was aggressively promoting democratization and human rights protection. The address of the US Vice President, Dan Quayle, before the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva signalled the beginning of a new era in the relations



between the West and Africa. In his address, he stated: “The days when a government charged with human rights abuses could cite ‘sovereignty’ or ‘non-interference in internal affairs’ as a defence are gone (Quayle, 1992).

The French also followed the American move by emphasising political liberalisation as the new condition for aid. President Francois Mitterrand at the Franco-African Summit at La Baule, France in June 1990 warned his Afro-francophone counterparts that future aid will be conditional on the openness to genuine democratic change (Schraeder, 2001:167). This declaration by French authorities, which had so far supported autocratic regimes, could only be interpreted as a new direction in the relations between France and her Francophone protégés.

Despite the western call for democratization and good governance, the policies of the two powerful influential countries on the continent, France and the United States, have been inconsistent, and in most of the cases detrimental to the consolidation of democracy. In fact, as Schraeder aptly argues, foreign policies were designed to pursue more an economic agenda than to promote democracy.

The post-cold war era has contributed to the rise of Great Power economic competition throughout Africa, particularly in the highly lucrative petroleum, telecommunications, and transport industries. In the eyes of French policy makers, the penetration of the US and other Western companies constituted at best an intrusion and at worst an aggression into France’s *chasse gardée*. (Schraeder, 2001:166).

Thus, following the Baule speech on democracy, the French government instead increased their financial support to authoritarian regimes in Cameroon, Zaire and Togo, while Benin, which was the leading country in embracing democracy, saw a decline in aid (Gordon, 2001:92). Similarly, the US refused to impose comprehensive economic sanctions against the military coup of Sani Abacha, which would have affected the US access to Nigerian oil (Schraeder, 2001:169). The moves by President Museveni of Uganda for constitutional changes allowing him to remain in power have met little criticism from Washington, which sees Uganda as a success story for economic liberalization (Young, 1999:28). All the above examples point to double



standards from Western masters, which have only encouraged manipulative practices of authoritarian rulers to sustain their regimes and halt the democratisation process.

BEYOND AUTOCRACY: DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Since the beginning of the 90s, a wind of change, what Diamond (1998:263) called the “second African independence” blew across the continent. African people took to the streets to express discontent with political repression, corruption and mismanagement of public resources that have characterised African leadership and to demand democratic reforms. In the beginning, mass discontent was driven by the hardship of economic reforms (the structural adjustment programmes – SAP) introduced in the 1980s (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:100). SAP forced African governments to cut expenditures in key public services, especially in education, health and security in order to redress the fiscal imbalances and achieve macro economic stability (Ake, 1996:92-97). Thus, 1990 saw popular protests exploding across the continent spearheaded by students, workers, urban dwellers over policy measures that directly affected their wellbeing. For instance, in Gabon in January 1990, students demonstrated over poor educational facilities and shortage of instructors. In Zambia, from 1985 onwards, administrative and parastatal employees joined by nurses and doctors embarked on a wave of strikes in the public sector. In Guinea in early 1990, teachers struck over complaints of inadequate pay and bad working conditions. In Cote d’Ivoire in February 1990, university lecturers and public employees joined students in a strike against cuts in the public sector pay (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:101-107).

Gradually, the protests spread across Africa and demonstrations started to take a political tune. Between 1990 and 1993, a major breakthrough occurred especially in Francophone Africa (Benin, Chad, Comoros, former Zaire, Togo, Mali, Niger, Gabon and Congo) under what was known as the “national conference”. National conferences were national forums representing a wide range of groups and actors in civil society and often presided over by a church



leader, whose mandate was to debate and find solutions to the political and socio-economic crisis (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:111). The large size and broad representation of critical segments of the population gave the national conferences the advantage to declare their sovereignty. However, some leaders, such as Paul Biya of Cameroon, Andre Kolingba of Central African Republic, resisted the reformist national conferences; and others tried to twist the process to their advantage (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:112).

Nonetheless, the national conference waves set the stage for constitutional reforms in many African states. The constitutional reforms introduced two main elements in African politics: the reinstatement of competitive multiparty politics and the introduction of fixed terms for the president (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). Consequently, the number of registered political parties in sub-Saharan Africa rose from the single party to an average of 15.6 in 1993. Furthermore, the new constitutions attempted to formally limit the powers of the executive branch by establishing the constitutional separation of powers and introducing fixed terms for the office of the president. As a result, out of the 37 new constitutions that were in force by 1994, only four did not contain provisions for limited presidential terms (Bratton and Van de walle, 1997:113).

The movement for political liberalization was also pushed by donors and multilateral lending agencies, which pointed to the nature of politics for the poor economic performance in Africa. As the report of the World Bank “Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth” (1989) asserted, the prevalence of personalised politics, unaccountable government, arbitrary rule, and human rights abuses were responsible for creating an environment incapable of supporting a dynamic economy (1989:60). Since then, the donor community and international lending agencies made their development assistance conditional on competitive democracy and good governance by recipient countries. The combination of internal and external pressure gave African leaders little choice but to accept and embark on a path of political and economic reforms.



EXPERIENCES OF DEMOCRATISATION IN AFRICA

Democratisation is defined as a process of building participatory and competitive political institutions through political struggles over liberalization, and whose outcome is a freely elected government (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:194). A country becomes a democracy when democratic rules that entrench political and civil rights are firmly institutionalized and valued by all political actors. Democracy can be a source of political tension as its historical experience in Africa demonstrates. However, its benefits are said to be greater than its disadvantages, so that democratic governance has won a worldwide acclaim as the best form of governance. The former President of Botswana, Ketumile Masire explained the need for democratic governance in Africa as follows:

The establishment of multiparty governance in Africa is the best cure for the growing cancer of corruption which could destroy the expectation of a sustainable economic renaissance. We have ample proof that where multiparty governance is applied the supreme authority of the law is maintained, human rights are respected and social-economic growth is stimulated. (*Die Beeld*, 4 May 1998, in Malan and Smit, 2001:118).

The response to the call for democratic governance in Africa since 1990 has been impressive. While in the late 1980s many sub-Saharan African countries were military regimes or restrictive single-party states, and only three states were regarded as democracies, today the picture has changed significantly. The 2005 report of the Freedom House (which monitors and rates political rights and civil liberties in the world) rates 11 African countries namely, Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and South Africa as free, and 21 states as partly free (Freedom House, 2005:1-5). In these new democracies, not only political and civil rights are increasingly observed but also the idea of peaceful succession to the presidency is taking root. There has been successful and peaceful change of leadership in Mozambique and Namibia, among others, and even in countries from conflicts and civil wars, such as Rwanda, Burundi, and Liberia, citizens have peacefully chosen their leaders in what have been declared “free and fair” elections.

Thus, despite its tenuous status, competitive multiparty system has become, in Africa, the rule rather than the exception. Multiparty politics is only seriously challenged in a few war-torn countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Eritrea. However, although African states have embraced multiparty politics, this does not necessarily translate into democratic and good governance. Democracy in these countries tends to mean holding regular multiparty elections. The basic principles of democratic governance, which include the rule of law, respect and protection of freedoms and human rights against arbitrary state action, accountability of public officials, and transparency in governance are still constrained in many countries (Afrobarometer, 2002; Freedom House, 2005). Thus, while most African countries have held their multiparty elections, many of them are still rated as not free. The Freedom House classifies African states into three groups according to the degree of political freedom and civil rights afforded to citizens. The classification is provided:

Table 4.2: Democracy and political freedom in Africa

Free countries	Partly-free countries	Not free
Benin, Botswana	Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia,	Algeria, Angola, Cameroon
Cape Verde	Gabon, Gambia, Guinea Bissau,	Central Africa Republic
Ghana, Lesotho	Kenya, Liberia,	Chad, Cote d'Ivoire,
Mali, Mauritius	Madagascar, Malawi,	Democratic Republic of Congo,
Namibia	Morocco, Mozambique, Niger,	Egypt
Sao Tome and Principe	Nigeria, Seychelles	Equatorial Guinea
Senegal	Sierra Leone, Tanzania	Eritrea, Guinea, Libya
South Africa	Uganda and Zambia	Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland
		Togo, Tunisia, Zimbabwe

Source: Freedom House, 2005

The road towards democracy has not been and is not a smooth one. Since their independence, only two countries (Botswana and Mauritius) have maintained liberal democratic systems uninterrupted; and Gambia did so until



a military coup in 1994 (Diamond, 1999:264). It was in the 1990s that several African states reintroduced multiparty democracies. Scholars indicate that by 1994, there was not a single *de jure* one-party state remaining in Africa (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:8). However, the transition to competitive politics led in many instances to an escalation of tensions between the incumbent elites, making half concessions in a struggle to preserve their privileges, and the dissatisfied opposition. These few cases are illustrative. In Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida cancelled the country's transition to democracy by declaring the June 1993 presidential elections illegal, when it became apparent that Chief Moshood Abiola had won the elections (Ihonvbere, 1999:115). Progress towards democracy in Angola fell apart when Jonas Savimbi took his UNITA forces back to the bush, following his defeat from September 1992 polls as national president. In Burundi, the first democratically elected Hutu President was gunned down in 1993 by Tutsi military officers unwilling to cede power to a Hutu dominated government. This plunged the country into a civil war that lasted for 12 years. Similarly, in 1994 in Rwanda, scoundrel units from Habyarimana's presidential guard, joined by other Hutu from the army and the youth militia, sparked an anti-Tutsi carnage when it became evident that an ethnically integrated democratic regime was agreed on under the Arusha accord (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:212-216; Diamond, 1999:264). In many parts of Africa, the transition to democracy has been marked by abuses and severe infringements of political freedom and civil liberties that led, in some cases, to the most violent and destructive wars ever seen. Clearly, Africans have paid a heavy price for democracy and, in some countries the struggle is far from over.

In other countries, the dynamics of democratic transition have been relatively peaceful. Incumbents used all the tactics to divide the opposition, win donor support and grant half-hearted concessions by retaining the political rules that would protect their hold on power. In such countries, including Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Egypt, and Togo, the introduction of competitive politics did not bring substantial changes in terms of political power-sharing as elections have been consistently manipulated to keep incumbents in power



(Young, 1999:20). While the incumbent president may legitimately return to office in a “free and fair” election, the challenge lies in their ability to reform their regime and to apply the rules of good governance, which include participation, transparency and accountability. The experience of clientelist politics in Africa gives little hope but to doubt the ability of the leader to reform the rules that would disadvantage his supporters, on whom regime protection depends. This is why, for the reformists, the defeat of the incumbent is the ultimate sign of regime change.

The problem in Africa is that leaders exhibit a desire to rule in perpetuity. While the constitutional reforms introduced in the 1990s sought to limit the presidency office to two terms, later most leaders amended these provisions to allow themselves to remain in power. This is the case of Uganda, which has recently attracted a high level of attention among critics. Museveni, whose National Resistance Army (NRA) assumed power from Milton Obote in 1986, ending a long, violent civil war, was until recently the model of good governance in the West (Tindifa, 2001:6-7). Uganda has introduced a series of economic reforms and the country was hailed a success model in governance through its market policies and mechanisms to fight HIV and AIDS. However, since the 2001 presidential elections, criticism from donors, media and NGOs started mounting following Museveni’s statements showing little respect for the Ugandan Constitution. For example, Museveni has been quoted as stating:

I am not ready to hand over power to people or groups of people who have no ability to run a nation....why should I sentence Uganda to suicide by handing over power to people we fought and defeated? It is dangerous despite the fact that the constitution allows them to run against me.... At times the constitution may not be the best tool to direct us politically for it allows wrong and doubtful people to contest for power. (*Human Rights Watch*, March 2001, www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uganda/uganda0301.pdf).

President Museveni who has had 18 years rule, with two constitutional legitimate terms of five years, decided to run for re-election during the 2006 presidential elections (<http://www.ugandacan.org/item/714>). The 1995 Uganda Constitution stipulates two-term five-year limits for the President. Museveni’s attempts to amend the constitution are a common problem that afflicts many



African leaders, that is their unwillingness to uphold constitutional norms and to relinquish power. Uganda is not a case in isolation. In Gabon also, the President instigated the 2003 constitutional amendment to remove presidential term limits. The re-election of Omar Bongo in the November 2005 polls allowed yet another seven-year term, extending Bongo's reign to 45 years. Often these leaders justify their desire to remain in office as nothing other than the will of voters who are the masters of deciding regime change. In an interview with Radio France Internationale, President Bongo argues this point in this statement:

Africa's Western partners have inscribed alternance of power on their 'Tables of the Law of Democratization'. First of all, I have to underline that only the voters within the framework of an open pluralistic system as in Gabon, can be the masters of alternance (<http://www.african-geopolitics.org/show.aspx?ArticleId=3109>).

However, the argument that African peoples support the unlimited rule of their leaders is defective, because the constitutions, which express the will of the people, have explicitly limited the position of the president to two terms, as was the case in Gabon before the 2003 amendment. Oftentimes, the will of the people is ignored to suit the ruler's wishes. In countries where the ruling party holds the majority of seats in the parliament, as is the case in most African states, it becomes easy to amend the constitution. Given the history of political instability on the continent, Africans should hold debates on bold proposals for an effective system of governance that would stand the test of time. The idea of inscribing limited terms for the president in the constitution derives from the need to prevent the holder of that office from trespassing the boundaries of the law. Constitutional governance sets the rules, which limit the power and tenure of leaders in the public office. Holding power for too long, as experienced in Africa, runs the risk of the leader becoming a dogmatic, absolute ruler. History has shown that an extended term of office for the president has led to extreme arrogance and inflexibility to reforms.

While democratisation in Africa reveals a generally fraught process, not everything has been doom and gloom. On balance, there have been more benefits from the democratisation process than setbacks. In most of the



countries, basic freedoms, such as freedom of association, freedom of speech and political rights, have become more readily available since moves towards democratisation. Ordinary citizens are more engaged in political activities and less fearful of state power when this breaches their civil rights (Freedom House, 2005b:4). On the economic front, there have been attempts through policy reforms to break out of the vicious circle of poverty. Today, virtually all African countries have in place the “Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme” (PRSP), which outlines a series of policy objectives aimed at, among other things, improving governance, building infrastructure, promoting economic growth, and providing better education and health care.

Many countries have engaged in far-reaching policy and governance reforms, including tougher laws and mechanisms to curb corruption in a way that even the elites are not immune from prosecution if they are suspected of being involved in corrupt activities. For instance, on 14 June 2005, the South African President Thabo Mbeki released the Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, from his functions on the allegations of corruption (Government Information Communication System, June 2005). In a similar move, on 14 July 2005, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo sacked ten ministers and six special advisers from his cabinet on corruption charges (The Vanguard, 14 July, 2005 at www.allafrica.com). However, these positive political and economic experiments need to be deeply rooted in strong institutions to prevent reversal in the gains of democracy and ensure sustainability in good governance. Institution building is therefore imperative.

INSTITUTIONS AND THE SUSTAINING OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

There is no doubt that institutions are one of the cornerstones for democratic governance. Effective and legitimate institutions contribute to effective governance by performing important functions necessary to sustain democracy in modern, complex and diverse societies. Institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary, political parties, human rights institutions, and civil society in general, act as control mechanisms to improve the legality and fairness of government administration thereby ensuring public accountability.



They ensure that citizens' rights are protected, including the rights to peace and security, rights to better life and sustainable development. In a democracy, institutions ensure appropriate checks and balances in the governance system, thus preventing possible abuses of powers by the executive arm of government (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2000:3). This is referred to as the principle of "separation of powers" or the "*Trias Politica*" principle (Botes, 1997:268).

The principle of separation of powers was first introduced by Charles Louis Secondat, also known as Baron de Montesquieu, in his book "*L'Esprit de Lois*" (1748). He believed that total power corrupts absolutely (Hutchins, 1971:10). Montesquieu advocated the separation of the functions of the state into "legislative, executive and judicial" functions which, he believed, would create a balance between the three tiers of the state and hence limit the abuse of power by the ruler (the executive). Montesquieu argued:

To prevent the abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. A government may be so constituted, as no man shall be compelled to do things to which the law does not oblige him nor forced to abstain from things, which the laws permit. (in Botes, 1997:269)

Therefore, the separation of powers protects the freedoms and rights of the people and ensures public accountability. Most constitutions in the world have espoused this principle and state power is distributed among the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. In Africa, the challenge of "separation of powers" has been the tradition of concentration of power in the hands of a single person, the president, which resulted in the supremacy of the executive over the legislature and the judiciary (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:248). This has not only undermined the independence of these institutions vis-à-vis political pressures and executive orders, but it has weakened their capacity to drive a dynamic democratic process. The result has been various forms of power abuse, corruption and mismanagement of public resources. Thus, institutional development and strengthening are essential for consolidating democracy and development in Africa. Below is the review of key institutions, their functions and challenges.



Legislative institutions

Democracy and good governance presuppose the existence of an independent legislature capable of channelling and articulating the demands of the citizenry. Through its law-making and supervisory functions, the legislature ensures that the nation has at its disposal coherent and consistent laws that answer compelling problems, such as poverty, education and health. The legislature also has a cardinal function to decide and oversee public spending through the budget processes.

While there is considerable variation among legislatures and the powers they exercise in democratic states, the legislature performs three core functions, namely, representing the public, making laws, and exercising “oversight” (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999:4). In its first core function, the legislature is that branch of government to which complaints and demands of citizens are first articulated. This is so, because they are known to be the voice of the people, which explains why parliaments are diverse in their memberships designed to represent the diversity of constituencies and interests in society. Secondly, representing the public means more than articulating citizens’ preferences; it also involves having a say in translating preferences into policy through enacting legislation. The coexistence of the two functions, representation and law-making, is not easy, as it requires reconciling differences articulated on one hand, and environmental realities and pressures, on the other. The third function of the legislature is to monitor and exercise its supervisory role over the executive activities to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and consistency with policy intentions (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999: 4-10).

The degree to which legislatures perform their law-making and “oversight” functions depends on a number of factors. These are: the extent of its formal powers; the adequacy of the capacity provided by structural support; the amount of political space and discretion afforded by other power holders (executive and parties); and the political will of the members of the legislative bodies themselves (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999:10).



In Africa, the capacity of the legislature to perform its functions is severely constrained. This forms part of the elements that emerged during the Parliamentarians' Forum for good governance in Africa held in Berlin, in October 2004 (Terlinden, 2004 http://www.inwent.org/ef-texte/africa/rep_h.htm). Legislative institutions in most African countries lack the lubricants necessary to effectively perform law-making and supervisory functions. As African MPs who participated in the Parliamentarians' Forum in Berlin revealed, African legislatures face enormous challenges, the most pressing being capacity and political space or independence. Premnath Ramnah, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, explained that parliamentarians in his country had no offices, no assistants and no researchers at all. Norbert Mao member of Public Accounts Committee of the Ugandan Parliament, painted a similar picture. The conference also noted that insufficient funds inhibit the independence and freedom of expression of legislative bodies.

African parliaments face still tougher challenges when it comes to their "oversight" role. Special reference was made to the secrecy that often surrounds military spending. More often than not, information on military spending is classified, which prevents parliaments from playing an informed "oversight" role. According to Catherine Namugala, MP from Zambia, supervisory limitations result from flaws in many African constitutions, which she found not to provide for effective parliamentary supervision (Terlinden, 2004 http://www.inwent.org/ef-texte/africa/rep_h.htm). In addition, one could argue that the small representation of the opposition in the parliament hinders the effectiveness of parliamentary work. Indeed, in many African countries, the ruling party holds the majority of seats, as already stated, which makes it difficult for minority parties to pass their views. In this situation, the parliament becomes the rubber-stamp of government decisions.

Clearly, African legislative institutions need to be capacitated to be able to effectively perform their functions. Like other organizations, the parliament needs to be equipped with effective systems of human resources, financial management, and adequate information systems. Empowering legislative institutions includes reinforcing the whole legislative system from national to



local levels, including parliaments, local government councils, electoral institutions, and advocacy groups from civil society (UNECOSOC, 2002:5). These institutions are essential to the well functioning of parliaments and the sustaining of democracy for their contribution to civic education, independent and free electoral processes, and policy debates. In addition, the effectiveness of legislative institutions will depend on the political space and independence received from the executive. The African state must address the challenge of balance of power to achieve sustainable democratic governance.

Judicial institutions

The judiciary is essential for the survival and promotion of the civil and political rights guaranteed by democratic governance. Modern constitutions have been premised on the principle of separation of powers of the three arms of government (the legislature, executive and judiciary), so that each operates independently of the others (Stevens, 1999:3). In democratic states, judicial institutions are entrusted with the maintenance of the rule of law and the promotion of transparency and accountability of government. An effective and independent legal system is crucial to minimize the abuse of public power, which often leads to insecurity, distorts economic transactions, fosters rent-seeking activities, and discourages private capital investment, all of which undermine democracy and sustainable development (UNDP, 1997:10).

African constitutions derive their existence from the legal systems of their colonial masters, notably France and Britain. An extensive analysis of judicial institutions in Africa reveals that, as with Western constitutions, many constitutions proclaim the independence of the judiciary based on the principles of separation of powers and the rule of law (Akiwumi, 2004 at http://www.uneca.org/adf/documents/speeches_and_presentations/speech_a_kiwumi.htm). However, while constitutional provisions for an autonomous judiciary are essential, they are not in themselves sufficient to ensure an independent and effective judiciary. The experience of authoritarian rule in Africa has undermined the development of an independent and effective



judiciary, because the political regime has tended to co-opt the legal system and to subordinate it to the executive power. For example, in former Zaire, the court system was unambiguously subordinated to the Executive, and judges were handpicked for their loyalty to the regime and President Mobutu Sese Seko himself (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:248). Indeed, as long as judges are appointed, paid, promoted, or removed from office by persons or institutions controlled directly or indirectly by the Executive, the judiciary's independence may be more rhetoric than real.

Some constitutions, such as those in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa, make provision for such structures as Chief Justices, Presidents of Constitutional Courts, and the Judicial Service Commission to strengthen and enforce the independence of the judiciary. These positions, however, require someone who is eminently independent and who can put his/her mark on the image of the judiciary and the legal system (Akiwumi, 2004). Furthermore, the Judicial Service Commission, which recommends or nominates those to be appointed as judges by the executive, is intended to be impartial and free from the executive interference and influence. The problem is that this institution is not only composed of judges and members of the legal profession but there are also appointees from the executive (Akiwumi, 2004). This does not make such a body entirely free from political influence. Therefore, for judicial institutions to be effective guarantors of the rule of law, their independence must be respected and a professional ethical conduct promoted.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the challenge with the judiciary is not only about its independence. Many African countries have weak judicial systems: laws are outdated and out of tune with international norms and changing cultural, political and economic demands. The other challenge is the coexistence of formal legal systems with customary laws. In many cases, there is no legal connection between formal and customary systems of jurisprudence (UNECOSOC, 2002:6). In addition, judicial institutions in many African countries suffer from poor financial and human resources (Hammerstad, 200:9). An effective judicial system requires more than



ensuring its independence. African countries need a competent, efficient and hands-on judiciary. This requires law and judicial reforms that produce relevant regulations, well-trained judges, and modern technological support systems. Furthermore, building a healthy relationship and cooperation between the formal judicial systems and customary laws and institutions is essential for an effective judiciary and good governance.

Political parties

Political parties express the very *raison d'être* of democracy. Political parties are platforms that give voice to people's needs and concerns and channel these political demands to the legislature which, in essence, is the purpose of democracy. Political parties play an important role in political life. They are major vehicles for the recruitment of political leadership, the structuring of electoral choice and political competition, the framing of policy alternatives, and the monitoring of the performance of elected representatives (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:251). Therefore, political parties communicate and legitimate the system's political processes. A multiparty political system offers people the opportunity to choose among a variety of leaders and their policies from various political parties. This also ensures the accountability of those holding public office by informing their constituencies and the public in general of their performance. As such, political parties play a watchdog role in the governance system of a democratic country. However, the mere existence of political parties does not in itself ensure the institutionalization and sustainability of democratic politics. Sustainable democracy will depend on the ability of parties to discharge these functions. To be able to do so, two factors are critical: first, organizational and financial capacity, and, second, the nature and dynamics of the party system (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:251).

An analysis of political parties in Africa suggests that, apart from the ruling party, parties have generally been weak in terms of ideological stand, financial and organisational capacity (Ihonvbere, 1998). Political parties in Africa have remained fragile, because they have no structural connection with the people. Ideologically and politically, they are abstracted from the larger society



(Ihonvbere, 1998:228). Opposition parties have generally gathered a few frustrated notables held together more by aspirations to access state resources and less by desires to represent peoples (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:251). Even today when the continent is freer than it was a decade ago, new political parties are failing to effectively and decisively challenge autocratic patterns of politics (Ihonvbere and Mbaku, 1998:16). It can be argued that this failure has to do (at least in part) with lack of finances and the hunger for power and material benefits. The ruling party has used this weakness to manipulate the opposition through political and financial favours in an effort to prevent the development of strong opposition. In Kenya, for instance, President Daniel Arap Moi manipulated opposition elements preventing their coalition force to oust his regime (Ihonvbere and Mbaku, 1998:19). Generally, the ruling party in Africa has controlled the opposition, and has rigged electoral processes in the struggle to prolong its rule and legitimate its authority (Ihonvbere, 1999:106; Joseph, 1999:60-61; Young, 1999:35). Thus, multiparty politics, one of the tools of public accountability, has not in many cases served as the best tool of public control and accountability of politicians.

Another factor, which may promote or impede democratic governance, is the dynamics of the party system. This refers to the value system, which includes such values as probity, respect, tolerance, solidarity, and shared commitment to democratic development (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997:235). A cohesive value environment is essential in supporting governance systems and institutions to fulfil their ultimate role of sustaining democracy. Thus, the behaviour of political actors is equally important in the institutionalisation of sustainable democracy. Di Palma (1990:134) demonstrates how the support of the elites is crucial to promote and sustain democratic governance. He contends that if political elites are wedded to democracy insofar as it advances their power and interests, then the institutionalisation and legitimation of democracy becomes hardly possible. As a result, institutions and mechanisms of accountability and transparency continue to be thwarted, while widespread corruption and patronage undermine citizens' confidence in



democratic institutions leading to instability and possible return to authoritarian rule (Di Palma, 1990:134).

Recent political turmoil in Kenya supports Di Palma argument and reminds the fragility of democracy in Africa. Indeed, political players can promote or stall the democratic process. Since he ascended to power in 2002, the coalition government of Kenya led by President Kibaki has been fragmented and wracked by internal political disputes. This culminated in cabinet dissolution on 23 November 2005, after an overwhelming “no” vote of Kenyans to a Kibaki government-backed Constitution in the 21 November 2005 referendum (<http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke>). Democracy involves essential virtues of negotiation and consensus among various political actors; and these must be respected and fostered if the process is to be sustainable.

Civil society

Over the past two decades, the role of civil society in democratic governance and development has achieved prominence owing to successive waves of democratisation that begun in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and spread across Asia and Africa. Civil society has been defined as the arena of social interaction between the state and the economy composed of organized social movements (Cohen and Arato, 1992: ix). It represents many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests, and includes such organisations as church groups, women and youth associations, media, labour unions, human rights activists, community-based organisations, and disabled and minority groups. For civil society activists, civil society participation in governance should be seen as a democratic end in itself (Verwey, 2005:20). Salamon and Anheier (1997:60) believe that successful democratic government is only possible with a mutually supportive relationship among the civil society, the state, and the business community.

The role of civil society in sustaining democratic governance cannot be overemphasised. Civic movements, such as women’s organisations, bring together people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds through democratic values, such as toleration, respect, trust, and credible commitment



for the advancement of the common purpose (for instance, woman rights) (Mukamunana, 2002:40). Civil organisations can also improve transparency, much needed in promoting public accountability by disseminating information about policies within civil society. Furthermore, CSOs – human rights groups, in particular – can play a significant role in promoting social justice and the rule of law in the governance of a country. They do so by either pressing for the implementation of existing laws, or, advocating fresh legislative initiatives and institutional reforms to improve the functioning and accountability of state organs (Manor, 1999:9-11).

In many parts of the world, civil society groups have played a critical role in bringing their countries to democracy. In Africa and countries in democratic transition, civil society organisations have been involved in various political activities ranging from protesting authoritarian regimes and what they consider unjust or unwise policies, to public voter education and monitoring elections, protecting citizens from actions of repressive regimes, to opposing or even overthrowing dictatorial regimes (such as recently seen in the Ukraine) (Mukamunana and Brynard, 2005:5). For instance, the Oasis Forum, an influential civil society movement comprising church bodies and the Law Association of Zambia, played a pivotal role in destroying plans by certain sections in the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy to remove the two-term limitation on the presidency enshrined in the 1996 Zambian Constitution (Mulikita, 2003:110). In South Africa, labour movements, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), played a key role in the mobilization against the apartheid regime, and provided strong leadership during the negotiations that led to the establishment of a democratic South Africa in 1994 (<http://www.cosatu.org.za/aboutcos.htm>).

However, the concept of civil society and its role in Africa have met tough criticism from some analysts. Mule (2001:75-76) argues that civil society in the African context has meant non-governmental organizations, which are an amalgam of institutions with pressure from outside; and such organisations can never work, can never be sustainable. As originally theorized by Antonio Gramsci, it is true that civil society is a potential battleground (Bratton,



1994:54). Civil society in Africa is an arena in which not only powerful international donors attempt to influence the political and economic agendas of a particular country, but also the state uses it to diffuse the opposition (Hearn, 2001:43). Indeed, it is well documented how the state in Africa has controlled the media and other organised groups of civil society either to stifle freedom of expression or to make these groups instruments of protection of state elite interests (Alabi, 2001:16; Tettey, 2003:88-100).

Today, the triad partnership between the state, civil society and the market has become the required condition for the new development assistance approach. The UNDP (2005:110) argues that for effective implementation of the new MDG strategies, governments need dynamic civil society and private sector to ensure representation of diverse views and interests, and partnership in design, implementation and monitoring of these goals. Civil society can be a powerful tool to foster democracy and development in Africa. However, for civil society to play a meaningful role in these processes, conditions, including domestic and local legitimacy, transparency, adequate financial resources, and political independence must obtain (Ndegwa, 1996:1). Unfortunately, civil society in many African countries lacks most of these cardinal requisites. As Uvin (1998:174) argues, civil society organisations are all part of the society they exist in and, as such, they reflect its divisions, attitudes and ideologies. With the exception of a few countries, such as South Africa where the civil society is multi-faceted and solid, African civil society is weak for many reasons. First, civil society in many African countries is still caught up in the struggle of ethnic divisions, which undermines its ability to exercise control on the political power and advance democratic governance (Munro, 1997:138; Mukamunana, 2002:50). Secondly, civil society organisations have few resources (organisational, financial and personnel) at their disposal, a problem compounded by the fact that those operating in urban areas monopolise the small funding and information while very little percolates to the grassroots organisations (Mukamunana, 2002:50-51). Thus, the need for a civil society capable of dealing proactively with state action and sustaining democracy is evident. Civil society must realign its



ideology and action with the objectives of the development agenda in Africa, based on the promotion of peace, good governance and economic growth. Other institutions, such as the bureaucracy, are also crucial in the promotion of good governance and development, in particular, in ensuring effective and efficient policy implementation.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Bureaucracy and policy implementation

The bureaucracy or public service is the principal instrument of the state, used to implement public policies formulated by politicians and law-makers. Public administration plays a crucial role in the furtherance of principles and practices of good governance by strengthening the rule of law, establishing impartial bureaucratic processes, and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in executing and managing government activities. To discharge these functions, there is a need for professional, effective and efficient bureaucratic institutions. Empirical evidence confirms that better bureaucratic performance is associated with greater power and the autonomy of public institutions to formulate policies, good career opportunities in the public sector, good pay of public servants and little shifting between public and private employment (Court, Kristen and Weder, 1999:1).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a long-standing argument that bureaucratic institutions are weak, that is, they are unable to effectively and efficiently deliver public services and to drive socio-economic development (World Bank, 2000; Olowu and Saka, 2002; Sachs, 2005). A number of scholarly works have linked this weakness to the nature of the political regime, which has restrained sound governance and development in Africa. As Mutahaba (1989:117) notes, in the post-independence Africa, the bureaucracy has increasingly become the instrument for carrying out the policies of the chief executive and for supporting the system of clientelism of which it has become an important component. Political and/or ethnic affiliation has become the main criteria for the recruitment and appointment of civil servants. This has undermined the development and institutionalization of a competent,



professional and neutral civil service, based on legal-rational authority capable of devising effective policies for service delivery and development.

Poor bureaucratic performance in Africa is also attributed to lack of autonomy in the formulation of economic policies (Court, et al. 1999:8; Olukoshi, 2002:9). In Africa, the design of economic policies has been the exclusive domain of multilateral institutions (mainly the World Bank and IMF), in an effort to promote development of backward African economies. However, policy studies demonstrate that successful and effective policy implementation depends, to a certain extent, on the shared vision and goals of policy by implementers, which increases their commitment (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973:94). Thus, it can be argued that lack of participation of African bureaucrats in the design of economic policies has contributed to the failure of their implementation.

In brief, the pervasive use of ethnic and political criteria for recruitment, coupled with poor control mechanisms and irrational decision-making processes, have generated inefficiency, lack of accountability and widespread corruption often associated with public service in Africa. Corruption in many African countries is perceived to be the major problem affecting all sectors of society, in particular, the business sector. The survey by Court, Kristen and Weder (1999:11-12) conducted on African bureaucratic performance found that it was common practice in Africa for private firms to pay some “irregular additional payments” (bribes) to get things done. Bribery has become endemic in many African countries, especially in Kenya, Togo and Nigeria, and it now is perceived to almost double bureaucrats’ salaries.

Similarly, the 2005 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) deems most African countries highly corrupt, with a CPI rating of less than 3. The CPI reflects the perceptions of the degree of corruption in a country by business people and country analysts, and ranges these between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). The highly corrupt are: Benin, Gabon, Mali, Tanzania, Algeria, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Gambia, Swaziland, Eritrea, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Libya, Uganda, Niger, Sierra Leone,

Burundi, Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Congo Democratic Republic, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and Chad. It is important to note, however, that not all African countries are corrupt. Some administrations are considered "clean" or least corrupt and these include Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Tunisia (Transparency International, 2005 at <http://www.transparency.org>). To curb corruption and other administrative dysfunctions, a series of public service reforms have been launched.

Public administration reforms

The pursuit and implementation of structural adjustment programmes that began in the 1980s have been accompanied by the call for civil service reforms. Administrative reforms have covered a range of issues, including downsizing, meritocratic recruitment, pay reform, performance management systems, capacity building, and decentralisation (Mutahaba, 1989:45-65). The main objective of these reforms is to build efficient organisations, which would be characterised by professionalism, impartiality, honesty, and accountability. Consequently, many African governments have embarked on decentralisation policies and various bureaucratic reforms.

Decentralisation generally refers to the transfer of political, administrative and fiscal authority from the central government to local or subordinate units of government (Mutahaba, 1989:69). Political decentralisation transfers legal and political authority to directly elected local governments, thereby making elected officials accountable to citizens. Administrative decentralisation empowers local government to take administrative decisions, such as managing personnel without any reference to central government, which makes local staff accountable to local elected authorities. Fiscal decentralisation entrusts these governments with fiscal autonomy in their spheres of taxing and spending responsibilities (Gurgur and Shah, 2005:1).

Governments have applied decentralisation for its many benefits, which include organisational effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, responsiveness of public administration to citizens' needs, and promotion of



democracy and local development (Mutahaba, 1989:72; World Bank, 1989b:71). A decentralisation system allows authorities to locate services and facilities more effectively within communities. A decentralised bureaucracy adapts more easily to local realities and norms, which may increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of service delivery. In addition, decentralisation promotes public participation and, hence promotes democratic governance and accountability. Close interaction between government and the citizenry increases the transparency of the political process, and in this context, it may counteract corruption. It is also argued that a decentralised system affords political parties and minority groups the opportunity to influence politics (UNDP, 2004:47-72). This is particularly important in ethnically divided societies, where political exclusion can have seriously polarizing effects

However, the impact of decentralisation in mitigating the dysfunctions of public administration, such as corruption, inefficiency and abuse of power, has been a controversial debate. Gellar (1990:131) argues that decentralisation does not necessarily foster good “self-governance” if it simply creates smaller scale central authorities dominated by local elites or places more state agents with greater decision-making powers at the local level. In the same vein, Tanzi (1995:295-316) argues that decentralisation increases opportunities for corruption owing to greater increase of discretion available to local officials and closer contact with local citizens, which increases patronage. Despite efforts to increase public accountability and efficient public service, several impeding factors need to be addressed.

Challenges of administrative reforms in Africa

Studies of the impact of administrative reforms in Africa point to their dismal performance. The reasons attributed for the poor performance of these reforms are diverse. For example, decentralisation programmes have met the following challenges. According to multilateral development institutions, such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies, decentralisation has failed because of poor implementation of decentralisation programmes by the



central government. For this group, managerial fundamentals, such as organisational format, division of responsibilities, the levels of competence of local staff, and the level of resources available, have been poorly designed and inadequate for the decentralised administration to work effectively (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). According to this group, managerial and technical reasons have largely contributed to the dismal performance of decentralisation in Africa.

Other analysts link the failure of decentralisation reforms to three main factors: the political factor, meaning the effect of interferences from the central government, socio-economic factors, such as the differing resource bases of different regions of the country, and the elite/class factor (Mutahaba, 1989:74). The class approach argues that in developing countries, elites have used public office to strengthen their rule; hence, it becomes difficult to surrender the source of their dominance to local institutions (Olowu, 1990:86).

Similarly, bureaucratic reforms, which include downsizing, outsourcing and privatisation, have had a negative impact on public administration and its performance. Downsizing and market-like practices have affected the morale of employees, led to retrenchments and disruption in public service. The minimalist public administration has a drastic deterioration in service delivery, especially in those services where budget cuts were directed, such as in education and health, which in return have reduced human capital formation and depressed economies in general (Cheru, 2002:18). The problem is that within this context of minimalist and efficient government, the private sector, which was expected to provide goods and services, including those previously rendered by the state, failed in its new responsibilities. The UNCTAD highlights the issue in the agriculture sector as follows:

Policies aimed at reducing the role of the state in the commodity sector within the context of agricultural trade liberalization have not had the desired outcomes, and markets have not been able to fill the resulting institutional void. The public sector's role and capacity would need to be built up in African countries in order to meet the development challenges of commodity dependence, including the establishment of appropriate institutions. (UNCTAD, 2003:47-49)



In Africa, the challenge of accountability and efficiency is evident. African governments face the challenge of promoting managerial efficiency without compromising the principal role of the state, which is to protect the public and to ensure a better life for all its citizens. Nonetheless, building accountable, effective and efficient public service is imperative for African states to meet the challenges of poverty reduction and to effectively respond to the demands of a globalised economy. In this regard, regional cooperation and integration is pursued all over the world as a strategic tool to overcome various political, administrative and economic problems and challenges of states. How African states have used these tools constitutes the object of the section below.

REGIONALISM AND POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Regionalism began to take root in the early years of independence (circa 1960s) and was perceived largely as both an instrument to protect the newly acquired political freedom, and a strategy to facilitate economic development. The advocates of regionalism have argued that regional cooperation and integration provide many benefits to their members. In the economic arena, where such regional initiatives have often occurred, the proponents argue that integration provides larger markets and economies of scale and that the coordination of national economic policies enables more rational mobilisation and utilisation of factors of production and lead to an accelerated economic growth (Nye, 1968:288). Regionalism has been also used as a framework to enhance common administrative and socio-political interests and to manage conflicts among African states (Lee, 2003:9).

Integration and interstate treaties in Africa

The creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 marked the first attempt at regional cooperation and integration. However, despite the common heritage of colonialism and the desire for unity and economic development, African leaders could not agree on what form of cooperation to embrace and how it was to be achieved. Their major differences were whether the pan African organization, to which they all

aspired should be a political union of all African states, with significant implications for the economic and political sovereignty of individual African countries, or whether it should be a body based on cooperation and the voluntary participation of states. Three groups, the Casablanca, the Brazzaville and the Monrovia groups, emerged each with its own belief as to the nature and form of unity that was best suited to Africa (Gomes, 1996:37).

The Casablanca group, which was composed of Morocco, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Libya and Algeria, met in January 1961. It supported a United States of Africa based on the federal model of government. The group recommended the creation of an African political union, a joint African High Command and an African Common Market (Mathews, 1984:53). Kwame Nkrumah, the greatest advocate of pan-Africanism captured this ideal goal:

In my view, a united Africa, that is, the political and economic unification of the African continent, should seek three objectives. Firstly, we should have an overall economic planning on a continental basis, which would increase the industrial and economic power of Africa. So long as we remain disunited, so long as we remain balkanized regionally or territorially we shall be at the mercy of colonialism and imperialism... (in Anyang' Nyongo, 1990:4)

In contrast, the Brazzaville Conference (consisting of former French colonies) advocated a loose association of African states. The meeting which had been initially convened in Cote d'Ivoire in October 1960 wanted an approach that will ensure that individual countries within this group could continue their relations with France, on which its members depended for economic and military support. The third group, the Monrovia group was born from a conference in Monrovia in May 1961 that brought together the Brazzaville group members plus Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Togo and Ethiopia. The Monrovia group rejected any form of political integration stressing the principles of state sovereignty and political identity (Mathews, 1984:53).

The foundation of the OAU in 1963 was a compromise between the three groups, in favour of a weak and loose organisation. The Charter of the OAU was signed by 30 Heads of State and Government of the 32 then independent



African states. The remaining two, Morocco and Togo signed the treaty later in that year. Morocco withdrew its membership to the OAU in 1985 after admission of the Western Sahara. The member states agreed to adhere to the principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, which put an end to the prospects for a pan-African integrated political and economic unity.

The first attempts at regional cooperation and integration started at sub-regional level in the form of economic cooperation. It is said that by 1977, there were over 20 intergovernmental multisectoral economic cooperation organisations in Africa. These regional economic organisations were regarded as the stepping-stones towards African unity. However, many regional communities established in the 1960s, such as the Customs Union of West African States (UDEAO – Union Douanière et Economique de l’Afrique de l’Ouest) created in June 1966 and the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC – Union Douanière et Economique de l’Afrique Centrale) founded in January 1964, failed a decade later (Asante, 1997:35).

Several factors, internal as well as historical, contributed to the failure of these early regional initiatives. Internally, the new leaders were faced with the major task of building national unity among the various conflicting tribes. Thus, national issues had to be accorded higher priority often at the expense of regional cooperation. Furthermore, the political and economic heterogeneity of these states did not facilitate regional integration. Ideological differences and economic disparities were the major impediments to early integrationist efforts. As Asante (1997:37) observes, African countries entered into regional agreement only when integrative objectives were not in conflict with considerations of national security, prestige or economic advantage.

Since the mid 70s, however, there has been a renewed interest in regional integration owing mainly to the disappointing economic performance of African states in comparison to the rest of the Third World and the growing trend in regionalism (Asante, 1997:10; Adedeji, 2002:4). African states realised that they had to foster regional cooperation and integration as the only path



towards economic development. The first serious attempt at regional integration was the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in May 1975, which comprises 16 states. After the setting up of ECOWAS, other regions followed suit. In Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was founded in 1980 and changed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992. Also the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for Eastern and Southern African states was established in 1981, and later was expanded into the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA) in 1994. In 1983, countries in Central Africa established the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). And in 1989, Arab states in the North created the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

In addition to establishing regional communities, African leaders continued to strive for continental cooperation and development. In their efforts to integrate, several treaties and plans for continental development were adopted. They include the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) adopted by the extraordinary Summit of the OAU in 1980. Its purpose was to form, within 20 years, a united African economic bloc with common tariffs, parliament, and eventually a common currency. A decade later, in 1991, the plan was changed into the Abuja Treaty to form the African Economic Community (AEC). The Abuja Treaty, which came into force in 1994, provides for a gradual integration process, which would be achieved through coordination, harmonisation and progressive integration of the activities of existing regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa over a period of 34 years. In July 2000, in Togo, African leaders decided to dissolve the old OAU into a dynamic, effective and responsible organisation, the African Union. The African Union represents the ultimate quest for a pan-African renaissance as its member states recognise the need to do away with the 1963 compromise. By virtue of the Constitutive Act of 2000 of the AU, African leaders explicitly committed to strive for the creation of "A united and integrated Africa" (see also Vision of the AU, 2004:18). The New Partnership for Africa's Development, and the African Peer Review Mechanism, established in 2001 and 2003 respectively, demonstrate the



renewed interest of African states in regional integration, political stability and development.

But to what extent are African countries committed to implement these objectives of cooperation and integration? A survey of the literature on regional integration in Africa reveals that regional schemes have achieved disappointing results (Asante, 1997; Ojo, 1999; Cheru, 2002; Lee, 2003). In general, African economic regions have failed to meet the objectives of achieving faster economic growth and development as expressed in most of their founding treaties. Specifically, member states committed, in the treaties establishing these regional communities, to the following including:

- developing infrastructures that promote intra-regional trade;
- harmonising political and socio-economic policies and plans of member states;
- developing policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the peoples of the region among member states; and
- creating appropriate institutions and mechanisms for the mobilisation of requisite resources for the implementation of programmes and operations. (extract of the SADC' Treaty of 1992)

It is evident, however, that few of these commitments and objectives have been achieved. As development indicators show, unlike other regional groupings in the world, African regions are characterised by poor economic growth and low levels of intra-regional and global trade. For instance, ECOWAS member states showed a 2.5 per cent real GDP growth rate in 1999 (ECOWAS, 2000). In the COMESA region the average real GDP growth rate was 3.1 per cent in 2001 (COMESA, 2002). This growth performance falls far short of the estimated 7 per cent annual growth rate, which is required for Africa to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG), in particular, the goal of reducing by half the proportion of Africans living in



poverty by 2015. Similar poor performance in other areas, such as trade has been recorded. The participation of sub-Saharan African countries in world trade remains negligible. In 2002, Sub-Saharan Africa's share in world trade was estimated at 1.5 per cent. This compares to developing Asia's share of world trade of 24.3 per cent, and Latin America's 5.5 per cent (UNCTAD, 2003:3). This poor performance begs the higher order question. Why has regional integration failed in Africa? Several experts in economic integration argue that African regions have failed to reap the economic benefits of regional integration because they have adopted the European model of market integration without having the necessary conditions for its success (McCarthy, 1996; Asante, 1997; Harloov, 1997; Lee, 2003).

In addition to claims that African countries have pursued the wrong approach to regional integration, other factors have also contributed to the disappointing results of African regional schemes. The major impediments include a lack of political commitment to regional integration; lack of potential products to trade, political instability; weak infrastructures; and problems of distribution of costs and benefits of integration (Mukamunana and Moeti, 2005:95-98). Indeed, regional integration in Africa has been a matter of signing treaties, the business of politicians, ministers and top bureaucrats. Key stakeholders, in particular the business sector – formal as well as informal – have been left out which makes regional integration merely rhetorical. Furthermore, experience from advanced regional communities, such as the European Union, suggests that successful regional integration requires strong political commitment in a legally binding way that ensures the irreversibility of regional agreements (Asante, 1997:63). Unfortunately, African leaders have shown unwillingness to provide that kind of political commitment and, sacrifice perceived national political and economic interests over long-term regional benefits. Furthermore, political instability due to frequent civil conflicts and wars, and weak infrastructures, including roads, railways, air and shipping, and telecommunications have hindered regional integration efforts.



African efforts for peace and security

African leaders have since independence recognised that peace, security, and political stability constitute the preconditions and basis for the economic progress of their countries and their cooperation agenda. This concern is clear in the Charter, as one of the main objectives of the OAU was the defence of members' sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence (article II(C) of the charter of the OAU, 1963). Thus, the OAU was to assume the role of conflict management and resolution among its members. However, the OAU Charter did not contain any provision on mechanisms and instruments to effect this clause of collective security and protection. The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration envisaged as one of the principal organs of the OAU for peaceful solution of intra African conflicts never materialised. In practice, it is the Assembly of Heads of State and the Council of Ministers that has assumed the role of conflicts mediation and conciliation among member states of the OAU (Imobighe, 1980: 241-250).

Faced with a proliferation of armed and civil conflicts on the continent in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the 26th OAU Summit expressed its determination to work together to end the scourge of conflicts in Africa. In 1993, the 29th Summit of the OAU adopted the Declaration for the establishment within the OAU of a "Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution" in Cairo, Egypt. The main objective of the Mechanism, as its name suggests, was to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in Africa. Specifically, the Mechanism was responsible to the following:

- anticipating and preventing situations of potential conflict from developing into full-blown conflicts;
- undertaking peacemaking and peace-building efforts if full-blown conflicts arise; and
- undertaking peacemaking and peace building activities in post-conflict situations. (Article 15 of the AHG/DECL.3 (XXIX) at www.africa-



union.org)

The performance of the OAU in attempting to be the custodian of continental peace and security during its existence is mixed. On the positive side, the OAU can be applauded for having managed and resolved numerous border disputes that erupted in the immediate post-independence period. In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the OAU was successful in resolving a number of border disputes, including those between Algeria and Morocco, Mali and Burkina Faso, Somalia and Kenya, Kenya and Uganda, and Ethiopia and Somalia (Mathews, 1984:68-69). In addition, the OAU should be commended for its assiduous diplomatic efforts to help the countries of Southern Africa that were under white rule, namely Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, to achieve their independence in 1980, 1990, and 1994 respectively.

Despite these successes, however, the OAU failed to use the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. In general, OAU failed to stop civil wars in many countries, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. It is estimated that by 1993, there were 6.1 million refugees and 2 million internally displaced persons in Africa (UNHCR, 1994:4), plus an unknown figure of millions of deaths. Numerous factors, including the lack of political will, the non-interference clause that severely crippled the OAU, and the unwillingness to commit sufficient financial resources, account for the failure of the OAU to guarantee human security and peace in Africa (Mathews, 1983, 67-72).

With no financial resources, it became all but impossible for the OAU to carry out its peacekeeping mandate. For instance, the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was estimated at an annual cost of \$121 million. Of the countries that sent the troops to Burundi, namely South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique, only South Africa could fund its own participation. Thus, donors (mainly the USA, UK, and EU) had to step in to provide financial and logistical support (Boshoff and Francis, 2003:4). At the Maputo Summit, in 2003, the Heads of



State and Government of the AU and the EU came up with an innovative initiative of creating an “African Peace Facility”. The Peace Facility is an EU-funded African peacekeeping venture worth €250 million. This money is from funds allocated to African countries through the EU – Africa development cooperation agreements (European Commission, 2004 www.europa.eu.int). The Peace Facility, however, has a life span of three years, from 2004 its entry into force to 2006. Thereafter, new financial resources to fund peace support and enforcement operations in Africa must be found.

The AU is undertaking massive structural changes to meet the objectives of a stable and prosperous Africa, and thus be responsive to the aspirations of African peoples. Several institutions and mechanisms have been created in the architecture of the AU, and the most vital for peace and good governance include the Peace and Security Council, the Pan African Parliament, the African Court of Justice and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) is a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Article 2 (2) of the Protocol on the establishment of the Peace and Security Council within the AU stipulates that the Council be supported by a Panel of the Wise, a Continental Early Warning System, an Africa Standby Force, and a special Peace Fund. According to Article 5 of the same protocol, the PSC is composed of 15 members elected on the basis of equal rights. Five members are elected for a term of three years and ten others for a term of two years. The first serving team on the PSC is composed as follows: the five members are: South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Gabon. The rest of the group is Lesotho, Mozambique, Cameroon, Congo, Kenya, Sudan, Libya, Ghana, Senegal, and Togo. The PSC meets at least twice a month at the level of Permanent Representatives, and once a year at the level of Ministers and Heads of State and Government (African Union, 2005 www.africa-union.org).

The Pan African Parliament (PAP) is established by the protocol of the treaty establishing the AEC of 1991. The Protocol establishing the PAP came into force on 14 December 2003. The Parliament was inaugurated in Addis



Ababa where it held its first parliamentary session from 18-20 March 2004. The President of the PAP is Ms Gertrude Mongella from Tanzania. The PAP is a consultative body and has advisory powers only, but it is expected to evolve into an institution with full legislative and “oversight” powers, whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage (Article 2 (3) of the Protocol to the AEC Treaty). Furthermore, the Protocol to the PAP provides for an equal representation of five MPs per member state, at least one of whom must be a woman. In addition, the representation to the PAP must reflect the diversity of political opinions in each National Parliament. The PAP was inaugurated in 2004 and sits in Midrand, South Africa.

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established under the provision of Article 5 and 22 of the Constitutive Act of the AU to give effect to the African Charter on Popular Participation in Development and Transformation of 1990. According to the draft Statute for ECOSOCC, the Council will be composed of 150 Civil Society Organizations representing various social groups, such as women, the youth, the elderly and disabled persons. It will also include professional groups, such as doctors, lawyers, media and business organisations; NGOs and community-based organisations; organisations of workers and employers; and traditional leaders, academia, religious and cultural associations from Africa and the African Diaspora. Although the ECOSOCC is an advisory organ, it gives forum for the African civil society to influence the policies and evaluate the implementation of AU programmes.

The African Court of Justice (ACJ) is an integrated Court of the previous African Court on Human and People’s Rights and the Court of Justice of the AU. The Assembly of Heads of State of the AU decided to integrate the two Courts based on concerns for efficiency and for having an effective continental judicial system to uphold the rule of law and protect human dignity and human rights. The merging, however, has raised criticism, mainly, on issues of jurisdictional competences, who should stand before the Court, and the rules of procedures (http://www.interights.org/doc/integration1_doc).



As it stands, the Protocol to the ACJ allows only African governments and other organs of the AU authorized by the Assembly of Heads of State to bring cases before the Court. Initially, however, Article 5 (3) of the Protocol to the African Charter establishing the Court on Human and People's Rights allowed NGOs and individuals to be heard by the Court. As an adjustment to the issue, Article 18 (d) of the African Court of Justice provides for an additional declaration to be signed by a state party when it ratifies the Protocol, accepting the competence of the Court to receive cases from NGOs and individuals. To date, only Burkina Faso has made the declaration allowing individuals and NGOs direct access to the Court (Amnesty International/USA, 2005). The protocol to the African Court on Human and People's Rights entered into force on the 25 January 2004 after receiving 22 ratifications of the 15 required, while the Court of Justice of the AU is yet to enter into force. So far, only eight states out of the 15 needed have ratified the protocol. Addressing the issues raised above is imperative to ensure that the supreme goal of securing peace and human rights to the African people is achieved.

While these are excellent structures for the promotion of good governance, peace and stability in Africa, they require strong political leadership and financial support to operate to their full potential. In this regard, regional communities such as ECOWAS and some African states have played pivotal roles in supplementing OAU/AU efforts in ensuring peace and stability in Africa. ECOWAS has been instrumental in peace-making in West Africa, since the eruption of the Liberian civil war in December 1989. The community has helped restore order and peace in war-torn countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since 1990, ECOWAS mediation has led to the signing of nearly two dozen peace agreements to end destructive wars in West Africa (ECOWAS, 2005).

African states, especially Nigeria and South Africa, have provided sustained leadership and financial, military and logistical assistance in support of numerous peace deals and new African initiatives. For example, it is estimated that, in addition to losing over 1000 of its soldiers on peace-keeping duties in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Nigeria has also spent over US\$12 billion



on peace-keeping efforts in both countries (Bah, 2005:78). South Africa, especially under President Thabo Mbeki, who has led the country since its second democratic elections in 1999, has articulated a powerful commitment to assist the continent in its renaissance endeavours. Besides a number of AU institutions, such as the Pan African Parliament, the NEPAD and APRM secretariats hosted by South Africa, the South African government is playing a leading role in the restoration and maintenance of peace on the continent. It has, for instance, brokered a number of peace deals and helped to restore peace and security in countries, such as Burundi and Congo (DRC). In 2004, there were over 3000 South African troops deployed under the auspices of the UN, AU and SADC, in various African countries, including Eritrea and Ethiopia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan (South African Department of Defence Annual Report, 2004/05:xvi). These examples demonstrate the dynamics of regionalism and leadership in Africa.

Africa and the new global order: strategies and challenges

Globalisation is perhaps one of the most prominent phenomenon of the 21st century. While the term has no precise definition, it generally refers to processes that are worldwide in scope. Some writers define it as a complex and dynamic process, which entails the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural, the financial to the political (Held, McGrew, Goldbatt, and Perratton, 1999:2). The UNDP (2000:1) notes that globalisation is a process that integrates not only the economy, but also culture, technology and governance. However, the basic and underlying component of globalisation is the economic dimension. Economic globalisation denotes the intensification of international links and the free flows of trade, finance and direct investment, under conditions of overwhelming transnational corporate power underpinned by a system of world institutions, mainly the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Bond, 2001:135).

This ever-increasing integration of the economy, finance, trade and other affairs among the nations has brought all sorts of changes and challenges.



Economically, globalisation has expanded the world capitalist system to the global level with growing roles of transnational corporations and supranational economic areas (Newman and Klot, 2000:6). Indeed, by opening up to global operations of such industrial, financial and technological agencies, countries have been required to remove all sorts of impediments, especially regulatory terms and conditions, identified as distortions to free market business. These laws of market forces, called liberalism, are at the centre of the new global order. As Keet (1999:3) aptly puts it, globalisation is the substantive process of economic and technological expansion driving towards the opening up and integration of the entire world into one economic system; and liberalization provides the policy lubricants to guide the implementation of the process.

Analyses of the globalisation thesis point to its unequal distribution of benefits and losses (Keet, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002). Globalisation has led to polarisation between the few countries and groups that gain, and the many countries and groups in society that lose out. Investment resources, growth and modern technology are focused on a few countries (mainly North America, Europe, Japan, and the newly industrialised East Asia). Many developing countries are excluded from the process, or are participating in marginal ways that are often detrimental to their interests. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) captures the devastating effects of globalisation as follows:

Globalisation is splintering many societies and is doing little to eradicate poverty. Grudgingly, the international financial institutions have conceded that the neo-liberal model has harmful consequences. But, they prefer to mask the damage rather than to shift to more humane and more productive forms of development. (UNRISD, 2002:2)

Of all the regions of the world, Africa has been the worst hit by globalisation. While trade has been the key driver of economic growth and development over the last five decades, heavily commodity-dependent Africa has seen its share in world trade and global production of commodities declining during the past 20 years. Africa's share in world exports fell from about 6 per cent in 1980 to 2 per cent in 2002 (UNCTAD, 2003:1). Trade liberalisation policies imposed on African states since the 1980s have had a devastating impact on



African economies. Multilateral institutions (IMF, the World Bank and WTO) and Western countries that drive globalisation have pushed poor countries to liberalise their trade regimes arguing that this would bring unprecedented prosperity. Yet, rich countries kept their own barriers and other protectionist measures, preventing developing countries' products from getting access to developed markets (Stiglitz, 2002:6). This situation is evident from the most contested provisions of the GATT relating to agriculture and subsidies. Since the seven-year long Uruguay Round of trade talks, developed countries, the US, Europe and Japan have fought for and established special terms and timeframes for their economically vulnerable (e.g., textiles) or politically influential (e.g., agriculture) domestic sectors in the new global agreements now under the WTO. Such barriers have included escalating tariffs against commodity exports, manufactured or even processed commodity exports of developing countries. Quotas and voluntary export restrictions (VERs) are among the non-tariff barriers (NTBs) enforced on developing countries, especially in areas where their exports are competitive (Keet, 1999:7; Bond, 2001:137).

The Doha Round of trade negotiations launched in 2001 promised to put development at its centre and come up with agreements that would reduce distortions in global trade. Of special concern for developing countries is agriculture, in particular, the need to cut agricultural subsidies by developed countries (UNECA, 2005:2). However, at the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Hong-Kong, 13-18 December 2005, rich countries managed to advance only modestly towards a trade package that is beneficial to the poorest countries. "Overall, the outcome is disappointing. While it was good that talks did not break down, it is fair to say we wanted much more progress than we achieved," said the UK Trade and industry Secretary (*Guardian Unlimited*, 21 December 2005 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/wto/article/0,2763,1671813,00.html>).

In Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa presages few benefits for African countries under the current Doha proposals (UNECA, 2005:7). For UNECA, a successful Doha Round for Africa requires ambitious reforms in



agricultural trade, in particular with regard to sensitive products (e.g. cotton), and the need for the special and differential treatment of Africa, which will allow African countries to intensify the development of their agricultural sector while giving them better market access to developed markets (UNECA, 2005:9-10).

African governments are responding to the challenges and inequities posed by the world trading system through a number of strategies, which underlie the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In NEPAD, African leaders have recognized the commodity-dependence of African economies as a critical problem that requires urgent attention. Modernise agriculture, diversify into more market-dynamic sectors (such as manufacturing, tourism, services, and mining), and promote regional integration are some of the strategies envisaged in NEPAD to improve market access and trade performance (NEPAD, 2001:40-46). Other strategies include public-private partnerships (PPP), regulatory reforms and diplomatic engagements for more development assistance, debt relief, and foreign investment flows. NEPAD, however, is challenged for its heavy reliance on foreign assistance to achieve its goals, its position on the debt crisis, and its uncritical endorsement of WTO rules (Adedeji, 2002:4; Adejumobi, 2003:9). It is argued that NEPAD should insist on debt cancellation and trade policies reforms, whereby developing countries should be provided fair opportunities with regard to trade. While trade reform is decisive to the success of Africa's development agenda, it is also argued that without "external financial aid" many African countries will not have the necessary infrastructure and institutions to effectively participate in the global market (World Bank, 2005: viii). Thus, the new global system poses Africa with greater challenges, which require technical expertise, especially in the area of trade, and caution in policy decisions to ensure that Africa does not lose out in the globalisation process.

Politically, globalisation has increased the importance of worldwide governance regimes, with its contested effects of "hollowing out" of the nation state (Ohmae, 1995). A number of integrationist analysts argue that the creation of regional communities, such as the EU and the NAFTA, has



weakened the sovereignty of the nation-state (Ohmae, 1995; Vegeland, 2002; Demmke, 2002). In the context of European integration, Demmke (2002:1) argues that through the transposition of European law into national law, national legal systems have been Europeanised; this applies to national public law, administrative law, planning law, coordination obligations, as well as to information management systems and reporting obligations, to which all authorities at national level are subject. Indeed, the state, which used to be the most important macro unit of politico-economic organization, is no longer the only actor in the global system. Globalisation has opened the door to new actors in the global governance system. These include multilateral organisations, such as the WTO, with authority and strong enforcement mechanisms over economic activities of national governments; the Transnational Corporations (TNCs) with more economic powers than many states; and the global network of civil society organizations that transcend national boundaries.

In the face of the decreasing capacity to maximise the economic regulation functions, African states have put in place various strategies and mechanisms to deal with the effects of globalisation. The ratification (in order of 48 ratifications) of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), the NEPAD and the provision of good governance under the APRM underscore the determination of Africa to reposition itself and participate actively in the world economy and body politic. Already discussions are underway on how to reform the UN Security Council. The impetus for the UN Council reforms emerged out of the need to have global institutions that are democratic and largely representative of UN members. The AU proposes 26 members for the Council, with two permanent seats for African countries with all powers that the five permanent members of the Council (USA, UK, France, China, and Russia) enjoy. The long-awaited reforms of the UN, if passed, will indeed give the South, and, in particular, Africa, the necessary powers to influence the global agenda in favour of the poor.



CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed governance and leadership models and practices in Africa. It has been noted that colonial rule introduced autocracy and unaccountable leadership in Africa. The political independence of African states in the 1960s did not bring much change to the nature of the state. It remained centrist, coercive and largely clientelist. The politics of patronage and self-aggrandisement characteristic of post-independence Africa has impoverished African people and has led in many countries to civil conflicts and wars, which have claimed millions of human lives and displaced several others. Since the 1990s, African countries have embraced democracy. However, democratic governance is still fragile, and must contend with the political legacy of four decades of authoritarian rule, corruption, and lack of accountability. Collective efforts in the form of regional treaties and protocols are being initiated for political stability and the social and economic development of Africa. These include the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Peer Review Mechanism. The next chapter analyses the APRM, its challenges and opportunities in its mandate to promote democratic rule and peace, and to bolster economic development.