DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT: A PROBLEM IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

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Abstract:

If a strong system of government can be essential to economic development in the African context where democratic culture is flickering, can development be achieved without democracy in presence of the complexity and anachronism of enlightened regimes? The issue of economic development shows that poor political and economic governance is the root cause of poverty, inequality and the delay in development in Africa.

Keywords: Democracy, Governance, Economic Development

Introduction.

Economic development is not a coincidence. It is founded on a number of social changes, which as a springboard, pushes the entire production system in a dynamic, sustainable growth. Also, during their history, African countries have recorded facts from which the exploitation would have been enough to ensure sustainable development and their entry into the concert of economically advanced nations of America, Europe and Asia.

Political independence is the first opportunity that those countries had. A territory under colonial rule objectively has no legitimacy to think and promote economic and social development. Everything is organized by the colonizing country for its own benefit. Economists believe that at the end of the struggle for independence, accession to national sovereignty of colonized countries is logically the starting point of a development project, which in the long term (twenty-five to thirty years) should normally provide countries with all the structures of a modern state.

Indeed, five years after independence in the 60s, most African countries had displayed double-digit growth rates. Twenty-five years after, growth rates were negative… The GDP of Cameroon in the 60s for example was clearly higher than that of South Korea. In addition, the illiteracy rate of that south Asian nation was about 95%. Today, no comparison can be made between those two economies. In South Korea two out three high school pupils go to college, which is the highest recorded rate in the world.

In addition, it was thought that the move from single to multi-party political system would be the end of the inexplicable contradiction that follows: after being colonized by capitalists and democratic countries from Western Europe, African countries have surprisingly opted for single party system of Eastern Europe.

Political change being considered as a by-product of development, we will first examine the link between democracy and development; next, we will analyze the missing link between democracy and development; last, we will open a discussion to show that promoting a democratic culture is a desirable in this part of the world.

I. The concepts of political governance and development.

A. The political governance.

First appeared in the 16th century, governance is a process of decision making. It is a policy which involves the necessary consensus for collective action facing special interests (Assogba, 2000). The notion of governance resurfaced in the early 1990s with the aim to revise the traditional process of political decision making taking into account the increasing number of actors to consider in a world that is changing.

In the African context, the concept of good governance or democratic governance was frequently in use in the late 90s thanks to the imposition of new conditionalities for aid allotted to developing countries by international financial institutions (Zacharias, 2004). They base their view
on studies indicating that the lack of governance whether political or economic is responsible for the entrenchment of poverty and delays in development.

Indeed, in the case of the European Union, reference to good governance as a legal condition for economic cooperation appeared for the first time in the LOME IV Convention. Article 5 of that Convention establishes that respect for democratic principles and respect for human rights are the foundations of cooperation ties. In the case of financial institutions, the concept includes management issues, corruption, law and democracy.

B. The concept of development and its evolution to that of sustainable development.

From 50-60 years of African independence, the concept of development has been the subject of much debate and interpretation. A large number of researchers and organizations have attempted to explain the causes of underdevelopment and development conditions in the Third World. According to Rist (1996), popularizing the concept of development stems from President Truman’s speech in 1949, who introduced the concept of underdevelopment by launching the idea of a "program that shares American scientific and industrial achievements with underdeveloped regions" named the Marshall Plan. This conception of development suggests a "possible change towards a final state, but more importantly, the opportunity to make this change" (Rist , 1996). Supported by the theory of modernization, this vision combines the development with the concept of progress conditioned by economic growth. The theory postulates that countries necessary pass through 4 different stages to achieve economic progress characterized by mass consumption: traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, takeoff and progress towards maturity (Rostow , 1960). That approach leaves room for government intervention and serves to justify investments and development projects of Northern countries in the South and later will lay the foundation for development aid which will initially come from public sources and for several years dedicated to the development of infrastructure (Iconzi and al ... 2000). Thus, during the 1960s, the international context favors increase in the indebtedness of poor countries: the rich countries are in search of opportunities for cash recycling of petrodollars that their banks possess. Interest rates are low and commodity prices high enough to guarantee repayment of loans received by the South.

The gradual appearance of the first signs of globalization accompanying economic crises will be a turning point in the understanding of development. Changes in economic policies in industrialized countries (a sharp rise of interest rates and in the value of the dollar), and cyclical swings in the late 1970s (falling commodity prices) will push countries that are heavily indebted countries into a crisis. In that environment, the use of international financial institutions to obtain funding becomes a prerequisite for developing countries (Iconzi et al 2000). The implementation of Structural adjustment programs are viewed as a means to blaster government policies which are blamed for causing economic and financial imbalances, and reaffirm the market as the best way to coordinate the actions of economic agents. On one hand, there is a need to reduce structural imbalances by favoring private investment through the privatization of state enterprises. On the other hand, we must curb budget deficits by raising revenue through taxes and cut spending by reducing losses created by public enterprises. Those policies also involve the reduction of the role of the State, especially its interventions in the economic environment by ceasing to support commodity prices, reducing expenditures in health, education and other public services. Finally, the adjustment policies also cover reduction in the number and wages of civil servants thereby weakening the internal market and hurting the social fabric. Those initiatives have resulted in: a deterioration of living conditions of vulnerable social groups, development of poverty and exclusion, and environmental degradation.

The concept of sustainable development was born from specific event such as the Global Strategy for Nature (1980) the Brundtland Report (1987) and the Rio Declaration (1992). It is defined as the necessity to respond to the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. If initially, sustainable development was concerned only in creating a close link between economic development and protection of natural capital, it currently incorporates environmental aspects along the precepts of a just and equitable society (intra and inter-generational equity), and an economic development that respects basic human needs: health, education and a decent salary.

Under these conditions, sustainable development must be understood as a hierarchical arrangement of three poles: economic, environmental, and social.
The objective here is to achieve social development. Economic development is seen as a means to achieve the objective. And respect for the environment is the condition for achieving it. Hence, there is a need to make a major overhaul of governance mechanisms at national and international level.

C. Democracy and development related and interactive concepts.

On a theoretical level, the link between governance and development was particularly studied by Sen (2000). For him, governance is part of a process of re-interpretating development. Indeed, governance is a warrant for political rights and freedoms which are a means of accessing to economic progress. Also, development is impossible in a political context that does not allow individual freedom, accountability system where managers of public offices are not subject to evaluation by service recipients through democratic elections, and where there is no active civil society that can affect the mode of government of the society.

Competition for power through elections or other democratic mechanisms objectively, makes administrators of public offices more willing to meet the aspirations of the populations. Democratic systems of government seem to manage conflicts better than authoritarian regimes because they allow opponents to argue their positions and make changes without destroying the system. Also, they would be able to prevent disasters and manage sudden reversals that threaten human life (famine, economic crisis, natural disasters ...) while authoritarian regimes, in the absence of opposition or public criticism, and the threat of being fired can rest on their laurels or act with impunity.

The United Nations considers democracy and development as mutually reinforcing and complementary concepts(UNESCO, 2002). The link between them is even stronger that it originates from the aspirations of individuals and peoples and their recognized rights. History shows that experiments in which democracy and development were dissociated had resulted in big failure.

Conversely, mixing democratization and development contributes in rooting one and the other over time. Indeed, if to consolidate itself political governance must find its extension in the economic and social policies that promote development, similarly, any development strategy that must be implemented, needs be validated and reinforced by democratic participation.

The interdependence between democracy, development and human rights is clearly mentioned in the Vienna Declaration of 1993. Indeed, to ensure that the human rights are guaranteed, and for democracy to work, not only communities and individuals, men and women must have access to justice, but upstream, they also should be aware of the laws and understand them.

Finally, democracy and development can contribute together to consolidate peace. Indeed, democracies often settle their internal disputes by peaceful means. Moreover, beyond this preventive role, the democratic framework has often proved effective for peaceful settlement of international disputes. Factor for peace, democracy therefore promotes development, which itself tends to consolidate the state of inner peace and therefore international peace, since many wars have their origin in internal conflicts.

D. Political governance: preliminary or absolute consequence to development.

According to Han Sung-Joo1, it is a mistake to make general statements like: "There can be no development or growth without democratic culture", or conversely "An authoritarian government is indispensable to economic development ". Those statements was made in connection to the economic development of Asian countries. As to the relationship between democracy and economic development, he distinguishes five stages of development, both politically, and economically.

1. Preindustrial stage: few countries in Asia, such as the Philippines and India have access to democracy before industrialization started.
2. The establishment of a plan for economic development by an authoritarian power: it occurred not only in Asia (Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia) but also in many countries.
3. Strengthening of authoritarian power through the economic growth and development because people have found that there were advantages to having an authoritarian government and were thus more likely to accept the maintenance of that power.

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1 Han Sung-Joo is Professor of Political Science, President of Korea University. Member of UNESCO panel on “The Interaction between Democracy and Development” in 2002.
4. The questioning of authoritarian power, as the economy grows: by further diversifying, the economy becomes more open to the outside world and society is moving inexorably toward democratization.

5. Coexistence between democracy and economic development.

Consequently, the question is not whether there should be democracy for economic development, but whether the coexistence between them is possible. Han Sung-Joo’s answer to the question is positive. He believes two considerations must be taken into account: first, the determination of the level of economic development a country has achieved and the level of authoritarian power that is acceptable or needed to trigger growth and economic development; second, the international context in which the country operates. The process of globalization has expanded rapidly. Goods, services, finance, are exchanged in a global scale today. In such a context, without democracy, accountability, or transparency, which is without respect for human rights, it would be difficult to maintain a high level of economic development.

II. Obstacles to democracy and development.

In Africa, the list of obstacles to democracy and development is limitless. We will restrict that list to obstacles that constitute a threat to democratic process and development: social and economic inequality, lack of justice, inadequate education.

A. Social and economic inequalities.

1. Area stuffed with difficulties for economists.

The field of inequalities is an area that economists approach with a lot of caution. In penetrating that field, economic Sciences indeed faces a triple challenge (J. Pisani-Ferry 2001). The first is methodological. Understanding inequality implies defining its nature and measuring its scope. Neither measuring the nature of inequality nor measuring its scope is an easy task for there are different types of inequality (income, wealth, consumption ...) and more than one way to measure dispersion. In comparison to measuring growth, employment, or inflation, there is no consensual technique for measuring inequality.

The second is analytical. Where do inequalities come from, and what are its effects? These questions have for so long been in the heart of economic debates, but so far have received no definite answer. New studies in recent years have attempted to evaluate the extent to which general factors such as globalization or technological change could cause changes in the distribution of income within our societies, as well as between them. Others have attempted to determine whether the egalitarian character of a society was either favorable or unfavorable to economic development. That area of research remains active and therefore controversial.

The third difficulty is philosophical. The classic economist tool box provides only very poor instruments to deal with issues of distributional equity. It does neither allow setting the standards on the degree of equality that would be desirable to achieve nor to say what should be at the margin the desirable distribution of the inequality.

2. From the traditional to the Rawlsian inequality theory.

It is interesting to note that in general, there is an observed gap between theory and practice on the measure of inequality (M. Fleurbaey 2001). Economic theory, in its traditional form, emphasizes on individuals’ situation across the life cycle. Empirical studies focus on measuring annual income inequality. The traditional theory focuses on the consequences in terms of individual utility, but in practice, we simply measure income. Finally, uncertainty about the theory generally gives priority to ex ante welfare of individuals (expected utility), while empirically, we rather measure ex post situations without considering uncertainty. In fact, the theory that is discussed here relies on ethical choices that are questionable. Most recent developments partially gives reason to practice. Indeed, the Rawlsian philosophies give more interest to resources rather than to collective welfare.

Rawls (1971) proposed to define social justice in terms of distribution of "primary goods" that is to say, basic resources (income, wealth, human rights ...) that everyone needs in order to live a successful life whatever its objectives and its own definition of a "successful life" . According to Rawels, the optimal distribution of primary goods should be as legal as possible, in the sense that inequality can be tolerated only if it operates through incentives such as the benefit of the poor. In other words, the optimal allocation is that which gives the maximum resources to those who have less.

Following Rawls, many authors have pursued the idea of striving for equality taking into account individual responsibilities. Note that the idea of not
just seeking a global social outcome, a well-being that is the sum of all individual units, but also be interested in the distribution of welfare, not sacrificing the minority in favor of the majority, represented a real progress compared to the utilitarian philosophy predominant among the Anglo-Saxons thinkers and economists. Similarly, the notion of individual responsibility reflects the common sense idea that social justice is not about mood swings, special ambitions, quirks, but respects the basic conditions in which individuals are placed to organize their lives.

3. Measuring social and economic inequalities.

- The Human Development Index (HDI).

Rawls's theory suggests measuring individual situations in terms of primary goods. Primary goods are generic in the sense that they are goods everyone wants, whatever the preferences of the person. Rawls proposes to define a single index of primary goods, in which the various quantities are aggregated in some way, but it does not indicate how to define the corresponding weights.

Resting on the work of Sen (1997), the Human Development Index (HDI) solves this problem. In its definition of development, Sen has indeed sought to enrich the monetary approach by the consumption by using not only on a scale of monetary outcomes, but also "capabilities. This approach highlights three key primary goods, though those goods are considered luxury goods in developing countries: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and decent standard of living. Each of these goods is evaluated by basic indicators. Life expectancy is used to measure long and healthy life; enrollment and literacy rates are used to measure knowledge; per capita income measured in purchasing power parity is used to measure the level of decent living. The formula for calculating the HDI component indicators is as follows:

\[
HDI = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{Min value}}{\text{Max value} - \text{Min value}}
\]

Where:
LEI = indicator of life expectancy;
ELI = indicator of the level of education;
GDP I = Indicator of Gross Domestic Product per capita.

The values of the indicators in the HDI are summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Maximum value</th>
<th>Minimum value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>85 years</td>
<td>25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment rate</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>$ 40,000</td>
<td>$ 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNDP.

- The human development index adjusted for inequality (IHDI).

The IHDI adjusts the HDI by taking into account the inequalities in the distribution of each primary product within the population. It is based on a class of composite indicators sensitive to distribution by Foster, Lopez-Calva and Széleky (2005), inspired by the family of Atkinson (1970) inequality measures. It is calculated as the geometric mean of geometric means, based on the total population, considering each dimension separately.
The IHDI reflects inequalities in HDI primary goods by reducing the inequalities value it shows. So, in theory, the IHDI equals the HDI when there is no inequality among individuals, but it decreases and gets further away from the HDI measure as inequality increases. In other words, the adjusted index represents the actual level of human development (taking into account the inequalities)

whereas an HDI can be considered as the potential Human Development Index that could be achieved in the absence of any inequality. The difference between the two indicators, expressed as a percentage indicates the loss (Table 2) experienced by the potential human development due to inequality.

### Table 2: Index of Inequality-adjusted Human Development per category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDI category</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>IHDI</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very high HDI</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High HDI</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average HDI</td>
<td>0.640</td>
<td>0.485</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low HDI</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: From the Human Development 2013 Report, UNDP.

And it is interesting to note that inequalities are stronger where the human development index is lower. In other words, human development leads to the reduction of economic and social inequalities. However, the persistence of inequality and their exacerbation heavily harm to human development process. That explains the rank of sub-Saharan African countries at the bottom of the table below (Table 3).

### B. The lack of justice.

The lack of justice directly undermines development, partly because it promotes bad management practices and corruption and secondly, because it discourages investment and trade.

Since the early 1980s, corruption is at the heart of international policy discussions and development. International organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Program for Development ... have put in place many initiatives to eradicate corruption. Furthermore, strategies developed at national, sub-regional or multilateral have created several commissions and partner with NGOs in the fight against corruption.

The analytical foundations of these programs against corruption are based on the assumption that corruption is an obstacle to development, slow down growth and reduces investment (Myrdal 1971) (Mauro 1995), Seligson, 2002).

The first statistics published by Transparency International shows that among the most corrupt countries, five (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon) are in sub-Saharan Africa. These rankings seem to be consistent with the precarious socio-economic situation of African countries over the same period. Per capita income of these countries, after rapid growth in the 1960s, declined after the oil shock of 1973-74. In 1980, GDP per capita fell by 1.3 points per year, or 5 points below the average level in other developing countries (Collier and Gunning, 1999). It continued to decline into the 1990s (Ndulu, O’Connell, 1999). At the same time, private investment accounted for 10.7% of GDP between 1981 and 1986 fell to 8% between 1986 and 1991 (Zeufack, 1996). Nevertheless, in the last ten years (1995-2004), most African countries have experienced resumption in the growth of per capita income. If we focus on the hypothesis of evil of corruption, we can conclude that the low level of development of African countries is partly attributed to their high level of corruption. Systematically, in parallel with institutional reforms, some African countries such

### Table 3: Human Development Index, adjusted for inequalities by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>IHDI</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: From the Human Development 2013 Report, UNDP.
as Ghana, Tanzania and Botswana have recorded growth n average growth of 1.2% (Ndulu al, 2007)

III. For a democratic culture.

Political culture is a necessity in the life of any political system. It is (Almond and Verba 1965 to 1980) a set of knowledge, beliefs, and norms, values which allow individuals to interact with power and groups, and identify themselves with the political system from the fundamental values of democracy. In other words, the democratic culture provides the individual with orientation models of its effective political behavior. It also provides the community a system of values and rational considerations that ensure consistency in the functioning of institutions and organizations.

According to Larry Diamond (1993), democratic culture requires a distinct set of values and orientations from the citizens: moderation, tolerance, civility, efficiency, knowledge, participation. Democratic culture is not homogeneous from one country to another. It is rather inserted within a story, in a system of social relations that influences it at the same time that it acts them as well.

A. The democratic culture in Africa: absence or inability?

Reflecting on democratic culture in Africa is not without association with the viability or non viability of the democratic process. The stereotype of the failure of democratization in the continent in general which is due to the absence of a democratic culture has spilled much ink. Sometimes democratic culture is considered absent in the political life of African states (Mbembe, 1992), sometimes it is believed that democratization in Africa is impossible because many consider it as an imported and artificial phenomenon.

We have already underlined that irrational attitude of sub-Saharan African states after independence to have adopted authoritarian cultures of Eastern Europe countries. According to Professor Sindjoun (1999), no country evolves linearly from the authoritarian culture to a democratic culture. The heterogeneity of the political culture of some states that experienced the transition from autocratic regimes to democracy leads us to view African democratic culture incrementally, as a playground of political actors evolving in a system full of incoherent situations and in which there is no absolute rationality. Indeed, that crystallization of authoritarianism takes the lead more because of the interaction between continuous and discontinuous than for disconnection. That is why democratic culture seems to remain to some extent a relative uncertainty in Africa. This is noticeable by:

- The dynamic continuity of the single party as the dominant party;
- Military means, that is, the use of force or violence to overthrow a government to cease power.

Private or public anger is constant in Africa. Generally apolitical, that anger was not openly directed against the political regime and its core values before the 90s. In contrast, in the 1990s, we witnessed a different kind of public anger, politically oriented and subversive which marked a break in the "political economy" of fear and submission. Figure #1 shows the popular protests in some African countries from November 1989 to November 1990. That subversive anger mainly originated and masterminded by students and civil servant, unionized groups, churches, and fled elites in that order.

Graphic 1: The sources of protest and their importance (1989-1990)
Source: Data from Bratton & Van de Walle (1993)

It would be even more interesting to note that everywhere in Africa where there has been a strong subversive anger, legislative and presidential elections involving many political parties were organized and conducted in a relatively short time. We also observed that the winners of presidential elections in most cases obtained the highest percentage of the total vote with a relatively low level of participation. Thus, the democratic culture turns out to become a process of building a particular regime, a trajectory for developing standards, values, or specific institutions. It is a framework for meaningful political action in the light of competition, political change or shift, human rights and tolerance.

B. Factors that promote the development of a democratic culture.

Democratic culture is not totally homogeneous from one country to another in the sense that it is part of the history of each country and blended in a system of social relations that influence it and is also influenced by it (Sindjoun 1999). However, this dynamic set of manners of doing things, of playing politics in a way that permit tolerance, compromise, contradiction, and respect for human being and human rights is contingent. Therefore, the process of democratic culture in Africa is struggling to take root because of some rigidities:

— The lack of the political alternation,
— The opacity of elections
— The Unconstitutional Changes of Government
— The unwarranted changes in the Fundamental Law.

To establish a democratic culture and political change in Africa, an institutionalization of transparency, accountability and participatory democracy is required. It would indeed strengthen public institutions that provide and support the promotion of democracy and the institutional order. The constitution should guarantee the independence and local autonomy or these institutions, and it would ensure that these institutions can report to the competent national bodies, by providing them with the means necessary to perform efficiently and effectively missions assigned to them.

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