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African Democratic Perspectives: Evaluative Essays on Africa Demos

edited by

Richard Joseph

African State and Democracy Program

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African Democratic Perspectives: Evaluative Essays on Africa Demos

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African State and Democracy Program
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Evaluating Africa Demos: An Introduction

Richard Joseph

An evaluation of this publication using survey methods was conducted by the Carter Center in 1995. To supplement that highly favorable report, I was asked to conduct a more qualitative evaluation. As the editor of the first twelve issues of the bulletin, 1990-1995, I could not directly evaluate a product for which I was the principal officer. After some reflection, I decided to conduct it in the spirit of Africa Demos by inviting a small group of African scholars and one journalist to write evaluative essays in which they would be free to take up the topics and concerns of most interest to them.

The results, as I anticipated, have been most enlightening. Most readers were comfortable with what Michael Chege describes as "a cross between an academic journal and a magazine." His judgment that it was "a readable product that could be used for teaching, debates and reference" is one that was reflected in the many requests received for permission to use it in some of these ways. Adigun Agbaje confirms the impact of the publication among "not just academics" but also mass media personnel, key public figures, and human rights and pro-democracy groups. Chege, who was the guest editor of the final issue of the bulletin in 1996, echoes Patrick Molutsi and Wilson Wanene in regretting its termination. Wanene suggests that it could be adapted today to the interactive facilities of the internet while Tessy Bakary suggests the need for a review that could publish more in-depth analyses.

As much as I am pleased with the positive comments of these reviewers, most of my remarks will concern the shortcomings of

the bulletin, and the project it represented, that they identified. These reviewers provide different readings of the same texts, in some cases highlighting as deficiencies what others saw as achievements. Pat Williams believes that the bulletin "let African leaders off lightly", treated them with "kid gloves", and tended to be prematurely "optimistic about African leaders sincerity." Williams, in what is a substantive essay in its own right, emphasizes the "dearth of real democratic efforts" and the "evolving political facade" in Africa. However, her fellow Nigerian, Agbaje, contends that Africa Demos "was one of the first to warn about the increasing trend of autocrats appropriating the language and symbols of democracy to frustrate democratization and deepen authoritarian rule."

Several of the contributors believe that insufficient attention was devoted to the economic dimension of the crisis in Africa, the impact of structural adjustment programs and the dominant role assumed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Pat Williams adds two specific charges: the inattention to religious issues, in contrast to those of ethnicity, and the absence of any articles specifically devoted to the subjugation and exclusion of women. While acknowledging that a fair representation was achieved of contributions by women, even their articles, she claimed, tended not to highlight issues of gender. These are certainly criticisms that would have been addressed had the bulletin continued. Among the subjects Tessy Bakary believes were inadequately covered, he identifies the media and human rights. However, he clearly has in mind a broader journal of democracy than the one envisaged by the editorial team of Africa Demos.

Most surprising of all is the sustained critique of Kwame Ninsin. Most of his arguments could be read as virtually the opposite of the interpretations and assessments provided by the other reviewers. Ninsin is uncomfortable with the various roles that Africa Demos sought to play. Since the bulletin sought to influence developments in Africa, he interprets this objective as seeking to be an "agent of change" which "should be part of the

struggle and act from within; not from outside". On this point, his attitude contrasts with that of Agbaje who acknowledges the impact of the bulletin and other publications of the African Governance Program in helping "define and shape the agenda of intellectual discourse on governance and democratization in Africa not only among Western academics but also among African academics located in and outside Africa." And Tessy Bakary, in the opposite vein to Ninsin, suggests that the bulletin should have done more to supply "ideas and strategies to political and social actors". The contrasting positions taken in these commentaries toward Africa Demos reflect a debate among African scholars themselves concerning the appropriate roles of external observers, commentators and supporters of democratization.

Michael Chege and others note the "unusually high rate of African contributors" and that, in the words of Patrick Molutsi, the bulletin was "fairly sensitive to an African perspective on the issues covered." Stephen Ndegwa also acknowledges the "more than ample representation of African thought and analysis on democracy and democratization" with the consequence that the contributions extended beyond the study of democracy and included "critical reflections within the democratization process itself." Ninsin accuses the bulletin of subscribing to "the conventional view that rights are rights only if they are political" and to the "promotion of democracy within its narrow liberal trajectory", a contention that would surprise most members of the editorial team as well as many readers.

The significant number of social democratic thinkers among the published African contributors could hardly be missed nor the articulation of viewpoints that transcend western liberalism: Neville Alexander, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Ruth Iyob, Achille Mbembe, Samuel Mushi, Nzongola Ntalaja and Zene Tadesse. In her review, Pat Williams raises the important question of the relationship between the introduction of liberal institutions and procedures, the pursuit of broader socio-economic objectives, and the investing of African creativity and originality in the new

structures. Despite Ninsin's rebuke about our reference to Richard Sklar's notion of Africa as a "workshop of democracy", we would surely have had to invent such a term to capture the vibrancy of African thought and action as reflected in the bulletin and in these reviews.

Celestin Monga's essay addresses the fact that "it is getting more and more difficult to really understand what is going on in those countries that were perceived as becoming democratic." To his credit, he takes a close and critical look at what the quality of democracy index, introduced in vol. II, no. 3, intended to be and what were its limitations. Similar to Bakary, Monga sometimes loses sight of the fact that Africa Demos was a bulletin that expanded to include more extended commentaries on the transitions taking place in Africa while adhering to its primary goal of presenting an accessible survey of the changes occurring. If Africa Demos had tried to be as comprehensive in its analyses as he suggests, it would have become a more purely academic publication. However, his points are noteworthy because they identify the many unmet needs in our understanding of the complex processes of political change in Africa during the first half of the 1990s. They also indirectly highlight the fact that, throughout this period, no other publication emerged to tackle what he acknowledges is the difficult task of devising a "rating scale to capture all the subtleties encapsulated in the idea of political progress."

Africa Demos aimed to be a forum for the vigorous exchange of views and as such inevitably provoked controversy. Ndegwa draws in his review from several contributions by African scholars and the nuances they provided "to the debates about African democratization which are typically dominated by western scholars". We never sought to substitute for African agency and African voices but to amplify them with the modest means at our disposal. Many western readers outside academic circles were confronted for the first time in the pages of this bulletin with what African intellectuals and activists such as Adu Boahen,

Nicolas Tiangaye and John Fru Ndi actually thought about the long struggle for democracy in their own countries. They also encountered the pronounced skepticism in some African intellectual circles about contemporary democratic "transitions" which, in the words of Achille Mbembe, were primarily efforts by authoritarian regimes to become "presentable in the eyes of the world". As Wilson Wanene contends, the bulletin even became a means by which African activists were able to reach wider circles of African readers, a point that was often conveyed to the editor in his visits to various African countries.

I have written a brief retrospective to provide further insights into the process by which the bulletin was conceived and produced. The 1995 quantitative survey conducted by the Carter Center is included in the appendices. I wish to thank the reviewers for their frank and insightful evaluations. These essays, in addressing the need to overcome what Bakary calls the "intellectual deficit" in planning for and reviewing these transitions, embrace the totality of the struggle for a democratic Africa. In this regard, they constitute a helpful contribution to the wider debate.

The last word is given to Ruth Iyob, who was asked to write a commentary on both Africa Demos as well as these review essays. In addition, she advances many pertinent suggestions based on her recent first-hand experiences in the Horn of Africa that have wide significance, for example, regarding the need to pay more attention to the nature and strategies of the opposition and its "dialectical relationship" with incumbent regimes. Her reference to one of the stated objectives of Africa Demos to "give voice to the African demos" prompts me to recall the final paragraph of my op-ed article, "Glasnost for Africa," published in the New York Times on December 28, 1989: "With the winding down of the cold war, there is less reason for the U.S. to continue its unconditional support of repressive regimes in Africa...Let us hear the true voice of the people. Let us hear more from Africa's silenced Lech Walesas and Vaclav Havels. Americans usually respond to such voices - but first they must be heard." Africa

Demos was an instrument which helped ensure that formerly muffled voices would now be clearly heard.

I take this opportunity to thank all the individuals who participated in various ways in the production of Africa Demos. Pat Williams considers that the task of trying to cover these developments in so many African countries would have been "herculean". In fact, we were often so inspired by the developments being covered that there were seldom complaints about the effort involved. In addition to the editorial team and researchers, thanks must be expressed to the production managers, Casie Hughes and Pam Auchmutey of the Carter Center, who always sought ways to enhance the quality and appearance of the bulletin. Sharon Gardner and Loretta Anderson, who maintained the ever-changing distribution lists, also must be thanked for their patience and diligence.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who was a strong supporter of the bulletin from its inaugural issue, led the way in providing the editor and his team complete freedom despite the early protests of African leaders who resented their regimes being portrayed as anything but progressive, democratic, developmental and peaceful. The Carnegie Corporation of New York is thanked for having sustained its interest and commitment throughout the life of the project, as well as in ensuring that these assessments, one quantitative and another qualitative, were conducted. The Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation provided core support for the African Governance Program of the Carter Center, one of whose major projects was the production of Africa Demos. My research assistants, Jessica Piombo and Natoschia Scruggs, were most helpful in the coordination of this evaluation project and Tobie Weiner helped us produce the final document.

An Evaluation of "Africa Demos": 1990-1996

Michael Chege

Africa Demos came to life with the onset of the popular upsurge in favor of democratic rule that characterized African politics after 1989. That was the year when the people of Benin, after months of demonstrations, got rid of the Kerekou military government, organized a national conference through the good offices of the church and began arrangements for the elections that saw Nicophore Soglo — a technocratic reformist — elected into office. Benin was a pace setter. Over a dozen African democratic governments came to power in the subsequent five years through more or less the same path, among them Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia, Burundi (1993), South Africa, Mozambique, Congo and Cape Verde.

Africa Demos published its last issue in mid-1996. This was shortly after the Soglo government was voted out of office by the party of Mathieu Kerekou, no less. Kerekou's victory came about as a result of divisions in the old pro-democracy alliance, and popular discontent with economic reforms that were pursued vigorously by the Soglo government with World Bank and IMF support. As the Benin example shows, the fortunes of democratic rule in that country (as well as in those states that made a success of peaceful transition through elections) have varied beyond all expectations when the process began in 1989. So have the fortunes of governments that resisted democratic change like Nigeria, Cameroon, Zaire and Kenya. These dictatorships have proved to be surprisingly resilient. All these multifaceted developments have been chronicled by Africa Demos which placed all the African states in four categories ranging from democratic to dictatorial.

It is a pity that Africa Demos will not be available to document this process as it continues to unfold into its many directions. The rest of this report explains the strengths as well as the weaknesses of Africa Demos between 1990 and 1996. It explains the role it has played in and out of Africa.

Evaluating Africa Demos

i) **Readability**: As a cross between an academic journal and a magazine, Africa Demos brought to the interested public in the US, Africa and elsewhere, timely, objective, and fact-packed analyses of the unfolding political events in Africa of the early 1990s. Lengthy interviews with actual participants in the democracy movement—like Peter Anyang' Nyong'o of Kenya (Vol 2 No 2, 1992), Masipula Sithole of Zimbabwe (Vol 3 No 1), John Fru Ndi (Cameroon, Vol 3 No 1) — brought a greater sense of realism to the articles than one commonly associates with the press. It was a readable product that could also be used for teaching, debates and reference.

ii) **Innovation in rankings**: The ranking of countries between dictatorships (or lawlessness) at one extreme, and functioning democracy on the other, was a useful innovation. As far as we know, it was also the first time that an independent publication with a strong input from African, African-American and US-Africanist intellectuals had attempted this type of scoring. In the previous years and especially during the Cold War, the rankings on "freedom" in Africa that came out of some US think tanks were suspect and did not always accord with the facts on the ground. Even if it is not foolproof and deserves much methodological improvement, the trend set here should be encouraged since — as we saw in the introduction — African states have shown much political variation since 1989, and this is likely to continue.

iii) **Targeting the right audience**: Africa Demos also got to be noticed by African governments, diplomats, lobbyists, and observers. The best evidence of this is to be found in the letters

that came to its editor, usually protesting the classification of countries under "authoritarian", "guided democracy", or "contested sovereignty" categories. The fact is that few if any African governments now publicly want to be exposed as being despotic. Through the rankings, Africa Demos served the purpose of breaking down the universal generalizations about African countries as if they were one state with common problems of political instability from East Coast to the West Coast. African governments (or their representatives) sought to explain why they should get a better ranking.

iv) **African Input**: Besides interviewing African leaders directly involved in the democratic process, Africa Demos has traditionally had an unusually high rate of African contributors. Examples include Samuel Mushi of Tanzania (Vol 2 No 3), Georges Nzongola Ntalaja of Zaire (Vol 2 No 1, and 3 No 5), Achille Mbembe of Cameroon (Vol 3 No 4), Guy Martin of Mali (Vol 3 No 4), and Sahr Kpundeh of Sierra Leone (Vol 3 No 3). Some of the writers were well established in their careers already, others — like Ruth Iyob (Eritrea), Patrick Molutsi (Botswana), Abdul Mohamed (Ethiopia) — were at the early stages of their professional or public service work. This mix was an extremely healthy one in providing continuity and a diversity in ideas coming from Africans.

v) **Balance within the US**: We need to remark also that among US specialists, Africa Demos tried to provide a balance between policy-makers (for example Herman Cohen, Vol 3 No 4) and US Africanists who do not always see eye to eye with the US government on its Africa policy (for example, William Minter, Vol 3 No 5). The contrasting views are what one expects from a top independent periodical of this kind. In addition, Africa Demos aimed for the right balance between male and female contributors in the US.

vi) **Country coverage**: The country coverage of Africa Demos was heavily biased towards English-speaking countries

of the continent. These include Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa and Ethiopia. True there were articles on Franco-phone Africa — especially Senegal, Congo, Mali, Zaire, Rwanda, Madagascar, Niger and Burkina Faso — but this left a whole lot of other significant ones that might have gotten more coverage. These include Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea, and with the benefit of hindsight also Rwanda. There are of course space and other limitations that one recognizes and shortage of experts also. Country-concentration of this kind in any event is something Africa Demos shares with African area studies generally.

vii) **Little-covered subjects**: Again, we need to say this comment is made with the benefit of hindsight. Some subjects received less treatment than they deserved. Three factors seem to have been quite significant in influencing the transition to democracy in Africa since 1989: economic reform (as we saw in Benin), military intervention (in Gambia, Niger, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Burundi), and the role of foreign powers, notably France (in Rwanda, Zaire, Togo, etc.), the British (in Kenya and Sierra Leone), or the donors generally (Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi). All these factors require more specific analysis in the future.

Conclusion

No periodical could have been expected in such a short period to have accomplished all of this. Africa Demos had a lifespan of six years. It is to the credit of the editor and publisher of Africa Demos that it was available as a forum of debate and as a register of events in these highly eventful years of African history. Africa Demos has set a high standard in bridging the worlds of academia and practical realities in Africa. This is evident in the attention that it received from government officials in Africa as well as from their critics. For that reason it will be sorely missed.

Africa Demos: An Evaluation Essay

Adigun Agbaje

This essay is in response to a request from Professor Richard Joseph, editor of Africa Demos, in the period in which he served as Fellow of the Carter Center. Professor Joseph brought into his job at the Center a deep and long-standing commitment, at the theoretical and policy/practical levels, to the pursuit of democratization and the strengthening of democracy in Africa in the context of good governance, that has for long been the hallmark of his career as a teacher, researcher and advocate.

In focusing on an aspect of that legacy, this essay reflects not only my own reading of the various issues of Africa Demos in the period under consideration, as well as my reading of other colleagues' perceptions (the negative inclusive) of the publication, but also draws on lessons from my own participation in the African Governance Program, and an assessment of the impact of the program in general and Africa Demos in particular on the intellectual climate of the period and beyond. Last, the essay also highlights matters arising from the result of a Carter Center survey evaluating the impact of Africa Demos.

Let me begin with the last point. The overall result of the survey is, no doubt, positive but it seems to me that there are aspects of the publication's achievements that were not captured by the survey, in part because they could not be captured through a survey. The rest of this essay seeks to throw more light on this area of the uncaptured. At this stage, however, it is important to make a few points of a general if preliminary nature.

There is a sense in which the Carter Center survey does not adequately capture the seminal nature of the depth, breadth and impact of what I consider to be the concept behind Africa Demos. The concept to my mind pointed in the direction of a platform

that would identify, propagate and monitor impulses supportive of democratization while providing "early warning systems" with regard to obstacles on the path of democracy and good governance on the African continent. The platform's unique strength lay also in its deliberate attempt to serve as rendezvous for serious academic contemplation and meaningful policy and practical intervention. Above all, the platform provided an opportunity for the dissemination of the views and experiences of Africans (ordinary folk, politicians, government officials, academics, civic groups) and friends of Africa throughout the African continent as well as in mainstream Western political and economic circles.

The Carter Center report shows the statistical extent to which Africa Demos has been popular among the academic community. To complement this, one needs to emphasize that Africa Demos along with other publications of the African Governance Program in the period under consideration, helped to define and shape the agenda of intellectual discourse on governance and democratization in Africa not only among Western academics but also among African academics located in and outside Africa. Africa Demos' "Map Tracking Democracy" has, for instance, been widely adopted, adapted, cited and commented upon by leading scholars in Africa, America and Europe, and the map has informed much of the discourse on the pages of CODESRIA Bulletin sparked off in the early 1990s by Mahmood Mamdani's reading of the Governance Program's work. It must also be emphasized that Africa Demos helped to successfully place governance on the top of the agenda of African and Africanist literature, and such subsequent volumes as the 1992 book by Hyden and Bratton on governance and politics in Africa are a rich harvest of the process initiated under the Carter Center Program.

Finally, it must be emphasized that evidence of use as contained in the Carter Center survey merely reflects the point that a majority of respondents were academics. In actual fact, and speaking specifically now of the experience in Nigeria, my own country, there is evidence that Africa Demos also informed the views

of the work of mass media personnel and key public figures, including retired Heads of government, oppositional figures and human rights and prodemocracy groups. The rest of this essay outlines a brief critique of Africa Demos in the areas of methodology, substantive reporting, editorial commentary and analysis.

Methodology

Perhaps the most serious of criticisms of the publication is that it portrays a picture of democratization as a unilineal movement along the path already taken by the West (and especially the United States), reminiscent of the preferences of the Modernization School of an earlier period, and that its perspectives have been ethnocentric, informed by neoliberal and neoclassical assumptions about the "proper" functioning of political economies. Critics along this line might be pursuing a valid line of argument, but I think it would be difficult to prosecute this charge successfully. Granted that the "checklist" approach adopted by the publication could open it to charges of attempting to reproduce in more acceptable form the tenets of the modernization school. However, the strength of the publication's methodological preferences lies precisely in its ability to express in the accessible form of a checklist those ingredients of democratization and governance that are universal in character while identifying those that could be culturally and historically specific, and then inviting grounded assessment informed by both reality and hope.

Perhaps the publication might explore the possibility of encouraging more dialogue and debate on traditional perceptions of the history and contemporary work-a-day meaning of democratization and democracy among the divergent cultures, peoples and countries of Africa with a view to contributing to a crystallization of African contributions to the idea and practice of democratization and democracy.

In addition, the publication needs to give equal methodological emphasis to the requirements for democratic consolidation even as it continues to strengthen its approach to the study and pursuit of democratization as a process.

Substantive Reporting

The publication in the period under review is rich in substantive reporting. In fact, meticulous reading of its pages provide more than adequate summary of developments at the continental, subcontinental and country levels. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in the Carter Center survey, many of the Africa Demos readers use their copies for country updates and for information on the state of democratization on the continent.

It does seem to me that there is, understandably, an overdependence on mass media sources for some of these reports. For countries and areas of the continent in which democratization has created openings for autonomous communication flow, this would not lead to distorted images passing on as reality. However, there are those countries such as Nigeria where autocratic regimes invest a lot of resources and energies to create the appearance of democratization in spite of the deepening in reality of undemocratic rule. In such circumstances, the publication needs to ensure that it does not pass on fiction as fact by interrogating media-vented information with information from other sources before passing on the same in its reports.

Moreover, as I emphasize below, the temptation to focus in this area on the "good" cases, that is, on countries successfully democratizing, and to give a low profile to the "basket cases", could actually do damage to the democratization process where foreign support and understanding is needed most. It must always be remembered that democratization cannot solely be about good news, and that reports that highlight reverses and problems in democratization could in the long run do more for the process than those fishing only for the "good news" of the moment.

Editorial Commentary

On the whole, Africa Demos in its editorial commentaries has reflected a salubrious mixture of information and advocacy presented more often than not in a timely manner. For the period under review, it faithfully reflected the currents of concerned opinion within and outside the continent and was one of the first

to warn about the increasing trend of autocrats appropriating the language and symbols of democracy to frustrate democratization and deepen authoritarian rule.

However, as I indicated above, the publication should continue to comment on the "bad cases" as it continues to review the expanding cases of good tidings from Africa.

Analysis

In this section, I focus specifically on issues pertaining to the level and format of analysis. The publication has utilized a careful blend of three levels of analysis, continental, subcontinental, and country specific, which is commendable and should be retained. It is my belief, however, that for the debate on and about the African experience in democratization and governance to be more meaningful, more effort should be made to bring out comparative experiences in a sensitive manner.

It is not, for instance, fully understood that authoritarian rule is not a constant, but that its form, manifestation and consequences vary from country to country. When the more recent Chilean experience is highlighted by those who see in the authoritarian path the way to economic development and, ultimately, democracy for Africa, it is not usually highlighted also that Chile has always (irrespective of governing regime) been a developmental state with an elite committed to development while the extent to which Pinochet depended on the "Chicago Boys", Chilean Ph.D.s from the Chicago School of Economics, for his economic blueprint and its implementation, is also not emphasized. There is thus the need to focus in a nuanced manner on extra-African experiences that could throw informed light on the paths taken by peoples in other continents, earlier periods, and contemporary times.

Finally, it seems to me that the unique strength of Africa Demos is that it has offered within a single issue academic and popular fare, and that the publication needs to sustain in the pages of its issues in the years ahead this rendezvous between theory

and action, for it is only in this meeting of "brains" and "brawn" that the future of Africa can be secure.

Democratization in Africa: African Voices in "Africa Demos"

Stephen N. Ndegwa

This brief paper explores three themes that are central and consistent in essays written by a number of African scholars and published in Africa Demos between 1990 and 1995. Many of the writings consulted appeared as thought pieces in the "Forum" section of the journal, while others were summaries of seminar presentations or interviews of African political activists visiting the African Governance Program at the Carter Center. All twelve issues of the journal were consulted and the essays examined here are representative of all parts of Africa, although the views of the authors are not necessarily representative of any particular organized perspective.

This synthesis and analysis of the political thought of Africans represented in Africa Demos is important in two ways. First, it provides us with a sense of how Africans have interpreted democracy and the democratization process. What is evident is that Africans have adopted elements from traditional western democratic precepts and married them to the material conditions of African societies. Such mixing constitutes a significant experiment in what Richard Sklar calls the "veritable workshop of democracy" that is post-colonial Africa. Second, this exercise is important in that it alerts us to the thought, values, and priorities of a coterie of Africans who are participants in shaping the democratic movement in their respective countries as leaders in opposition parties, advocates of constitutional reform, or as acknowledged opinion makers.

The Genesis of African Democratization

The first theme is fundamental in that it is about locating the genesis of the wave of democratization in Africa in the 1990s.

While recognizing the impact and relevance of external events and actors, these African authors are adamant that the struggle for democracy in Africa did not begin in 1989 and was not primarily a consequence of the democratic transitions that swept through the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the external pressure imposed by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Instead, as Adu Boahen most forcefully argues, the quest for democracy in Africa can be traced to the struggles for independence from colonial rule and subsequent debates on democracy in post-independence Africa. In the case of Ghana which Boahen uses to illustrate his argument, the post-independence democratic debate can be traced to 1966 following Kwame Nkrumah's overthrow by the military. At that time Ghanaians engaged in an open debate on what system of government they preferred to live under. This led to the establishment of a constitutional commission in 1967 which adopted a multi-party system, an interlude interrupted by the military in 1972.

Boahen's analysis is a significant departure from the usual interpretation of the long periods of military and/or authoritarian rule and short interludes of civilian and/or democratic rule that characterizes many African countries to mean that there was no discourse on democracy. Instead, Boahen asserts that underlying the string of authoritarianism is a consistent demand for democratic government; that Africans have been interested and have been struggling for democratic governance since independence and that the brutality of repressive regimes in Africa only underscores one part of the continual dialectic.

Boahen's point is echoed by other contributors such as Achille Mbembe, Zenebeworke Tadesse, and Peter Anyang' Nyong'o. Tadesse rejects the view of Africa as purely reactive to outside social movements: "the reality is that pro-democracy movements are not new to Africa. The tempo and intensity of Africa's democratization movements have varied in accordance with pressures from below and, to a lesser extent, the ability of the state to mobilize external intervention. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o also views

the African democratic struggle in the 1990s as the culmination of a long process from within. Indeed, Anyang' Nyong'o argues, "the central purpose of the nationalist struggles in Africa was to establish democratic societies . . . the idea of democracy is at the very foundation of recent African history, at the very foundation of the struggle for independence." Mbembe suggests that the widespread failure to comprehend the long gestation of democracy in Africa is tied to analysts inability to perceive "African societies in historical perspective (the longue duree) as well as failure to recognize Africans' own ability (indeed necessity) to reshape borrowed institutions to make governance structures which "are not simply acquisitions, or impositions, of elements drawn from western societies."

There is a conservative variation of this theme, albeit a minority, which views 'nation-building' as part of the process leading up to democracy. While he agrees with other analysts that the democratization process in Africa has been long in production, Samuel Mushi argues, with particular reference to the case of Tanzania, that "it is the one-party system which created the conditions for democratization" by successfully "creating a nation from a mosaic of tribal groupings." According to Mushi, building a nation — in essence, constructing a civic community — was a necessary step for democratization to take root. Mushi's argument is an after-the-fact version of the apology that most single-party states used to justify their monopoly on power. It is especially problematic in that he does not recognize that indeed in many places where the single-party was 'building' nations, it was actually creating privileged ethnic groups and classes and excluding and repressing others.

The significance of the argument that Africa's democratization in the 1990s is the culmination of a long internal historical process is not simply to assert that Africans are ultimately responsible for and are the primary determiners of their own fate. It is also to alert us to internal issues that have animated African politics since independence and to which democracy must respond. As Mbembe sums this up: "the form democracy takes

will derive from the underlying social struggles." Therefore African democracy, while still retaining the fundamental values of individual freedom and choice as well as alternation in governance, must adequately address issues that have animated governance questions and the quest for democracy in Africa such as ethnicity, the definition of political community, and the struggle for socio-economic progress. These concerns underlie what these analysts separately but consistently espouse as the preferred character democracy ought to take in Africa.

The Character of Democracy

The African authors writing in Africa Demos project a coherent set of common values and precepts that they view as essential to democracy in Africa. It is clear from these discussions that while Africans endeavor to reinstate fundamental values of a liberal society (such as individual liberties and freedoms of press, expression and association), they also emphasize the necessity for adaptations to Western democracy to respond to the historical conditions that have emerged in African states over the last four decades. This sensitivity to context is consistent with the prior claim that the democratic movement in Africa is fundamentally a 'home-grown' movement and not a reaction to outside events and pressures.

Three ideas occupy center stage in the characterization of democracy (or ideal democracy) put forth by these authors: liberalism, representation, and community. African scholars recognize and celebrate the restoration of liberal freedoms which they view as fundamental to any free society. Thus, Tadesse applauds the fact that the political transitions of the 1990s have broadened popular participation, restored fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly, expression, and association — which has led to the emergence of "a democratic sphere in which a polyphony of voices expressing a broad spectrum of interests can be heard."

For Neville Alexander the critical concern is representation and especially ensuring that elected representatives truly represent the wishes of the electorate as opposed to acting as (often

self-seeking) free agents. Drawing specifically on the lessons from the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, Alexander argues that the form of democracy that will eventually take hold in South Africa will have to respond to the culture of politics that emerged in the African communities as part of the struggle. The defining element of this culture was a proliferation of parallel but concomitant local interest groups undergirded by a fierce grassroot involvement which translated into accountable leadership in civil society. Thus any democracy emerging in post-apartheid South Africa will have to uphold the precedent of "grassroots direct democracy" in which citizens "insist . . . on the renewal of mandates, accountability, the reporting back on a regular basis and insist on the right of recall of elected delegates who fail to carry out their mandate."

The issue of representation bears a strong relevance to the question of community and the perennial goal of forging a cohesive political community in which citizens have confidence that democratic governance is the best guarantor of their freedom and of equitable power and their chance at wielding it. Alexander casts this problem as one of reconciling Rousseau's "ideal-typical notion of democracy . . . (of) a face-to-face community" (in this case ethnic groups) with the reality of the large-scale nation-state, in this case a multi-ethnic post-colonial state. For this reason, Alexander finds the guaranteed existence of a multiplicity of parties an absolute essential since "no single party can actually represent all the people." Alexander, however, is the only analyst who touches on the conundrum of representation in a divisive political community. None of the other authors provide an adequate response to the issue of ethnicity or how to maintain democratic accountability at the nation-state level when smaller communities (e.g. ethnic group or clans) are able to more effectively impose accountability.

The Democratic Dividend

From the perspective of the African authors writing in Africa Demos, democracy is a preferred model of governance not only because it inherently preserves individual rights better than

authoritarian systems, but also and perhaps most critically because it portends material benefits that are possible under governments managing national economic resources in accountable ways. For example, Anyang' Nyong'o asserts that Awe talks about democracy because it is a system of government and a system of social relations that is going to make a difference to development in Africa." Anyang ' Nyong'o goes on to argue that the struggle for political freedoms is inseparable from the struggle for economic progress: "people don't want political freedom first and then socioeconomic progress later. They want socioeconomic progress today and freedom also today." Yet, as Anyang' Nyong'o quotes a Zambian citizen during the October 1991 elections, Africans are likely to be more patient with democratic governments that they control when they do not radically improve their material conditions than they are with authoritarian systems that impose their mistakes on the populace.

By far the most consistent theme is what should not persist in terms of the existing patterns of social and power relations (such as militarism, corruption, elitism). While all the essays are hopeful that African governance will take a different form, they are also underlaid by a heavy skepticism that this transformation has been achieved. Mbembe, for example, asks how fundamental the current political transitions are or whether they reflect "merely a new consensus among 'elites' on the reallocation of prebends." Indeed, these authors are critical of opposition parties which continue to act in authoritarian fashion even as they seek to displace incumbent dictators. Writing on Ghana, Yusuf Bangura identifies one of the most common problems witnessed in almost all transition elections in Africa in which "each party believed it alone had the correct answers to the country's problems." This culture of zero-sum electoral calculations leads to unstable transitions because elections become "an act of war, in which losers are expected to suffer the full weight of governmental repression from winners." Tadesse questions whether the new opposition parties' commitment to democracy is contingent on opportunities to participate in the distribution of power and access to state resources." She expresses the sober view that

democratic consolidation in Africa will take long and will take more than the initial elections. Moreover, because "democratic consolidation reflects and arises from the significance and maturation of internal social forces" this process will inherently be uneven and inconsistent as it unfolds.

Relevance of African Voices in Africa Demos

The African scholars and democracy activists writing in Africa Demos between 1990 and 1995 provided readers with African perspectives regarding democracy and democratization in Africa. Since the majority of Africa Demos' readership were academics (62%), these views added needed nuance to the debates about African democratization which are typically dominated by Western scholars. It is no surprise that most academic readers of the journal regarded it as an important tool for enrichment on African issues or reference on democratization (71%) and found it highly or very useful (76%). Readers in policy fields with potential for direct impact on formulating policy supportive of democratization in Africa (NGOs and government officials) found the publication equally useful. The journal therefore provided an important outlet for African voices to be heard and to become relevant in academic and policy circles. This has the potential of aiding in the formulation of more appropriate models of studying democracy and democratization in Africa as well as of more appropriate policy to support democratic transitions and consolidation in Africa. To this end, the more than ample representation of African thought and analysis on democracy and democratization Africa Demos achieved is a very significant contribution not only to the study of democracy in Africa but also to critical reflection within the democratization process itself.

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Africa Demos: A Critical Evaluation

Patrick Molutsi

The birth of Africa Demos in 1990 was a welcome development and an important addition to a growing body of literature on African politics. Africa Demos was important in its specific focus on current political transition in Africa. Prior to the introduction of Africa Demos, most of the attention on democratic transition was on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Comparable political reforms in Africa were casually treated. The value of Africa Demos has therefore been to bring the African continent to the attention of the international community and scholars while at the same time disseminating useful general information on the different African countries. Many students of African politics appreciated the handy and sober analysis of Africa Demos. The lead essay in each issue, the billboard, the Carter Center Notes and reports on different countries were rich in information, deeper in analysis and generally critically objective. I therefore feel that the objectives of the Africa Demos as set out in the first issue were achieved.

Moreover, compared to many academic, semi-academic and journalist works published mainly from the Western World and in the recent past, Africa Demos was modest, less judgmental and fairly sensitive to an African perspective on the issues covered.

Geographical Coverage

Reporting over the five years was generally fair and relevant both regionally and in terms of individual countries. However, reports focused mainly on four of the five regions in Africa. The four were west, east, central and southern Africa. The northern region received the least coverage with only Algeria being the most frequently reported. Three other countries, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, received one report each over the five years. It may well be argued that comparatively speaking much less

was happening in this region. Indeed, west, east, central and southern Africa experienced more transition than the northern region during this period. Hence the most reported countries were Nigeria (west), Ghana (west), Cameroon (central), Zaire (central), Somalia (east), Tanzania (east) and South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and Angola in southern Africa. It can justifiably be argued further that these were the countries also most frequently in the news in the first part of the 1990s and that therefore Africa Demos followed the general news trend.

Another group including the countries of Guinea, Djibouti, Eritrea, Niger, Central African Republic, Mali, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda received fair, regular and continuous coverage. The consistent coverage ensured that events were followed up and concluded well. However, by limiting its objectives to democratic transition, Africa Demos neglected three important groups of countries. The first group comprising of Botswana, Mauritius, Senegal and Namibia often regarded as the only successful democracies in the continent. These were either given one report or completely ignored. A few of these were given limited coverage in the 1995 Volume III, Number 4 issue. Otherwise they were not covered by the previous three volumes of Africa Demos. It is the feeling of the author that covering developments in these could have provided insightful lesson for those in transition. Particularly Botswana and Mauritius with both successful political systems and record economic growth, seem to me to be worth detailed analysis which may provide lessons for new democracies in the rest of the continent.

The second group of countries completely neglected by the coverage over the five years of Africa Demos were non-democratic but stable political systems comprising of Libya, Egypt, Chad and Sudan. None of these four countries was covered during the period of publication the of Africa Demos. True, one could not cover every country and it was important to have continuity in coverage for most countries. However, here too, the mode of governance operative in these countries might have been

useful to countries in transition. Lastly, countries with undemocratic but extremely interesting and peculiar political systems such as Lesotho and Swaziland were completely ignored. Yet, especially Swaziland, with a fully fledged traditional political system articulated against the modern political institutions may have provided possible lessons of the strengths and weaknesses of traditional political systems.

Thematic Coverage

On the whole Africa Demos dealt with a number of key issues specific to what has been dubbed "the second wave of democratization in Africa" (Huntington,1995). These included capturing the social and political forces—the civil society as the lead sector in the negotiated transition; multipartyism versus democracy; the ethnic, racial, regional and religious questions, electoral process, armed conflict and democracy, dictatorship, interstate relations and the general institutional framework within which a sustainable democracy is normally expected to operate. These themes were discussed at length in the different issues of Africa Demos. One must add that these are themes that can not be exhausted by a simple and short journal such as Africa Demos. Indeed, a number of elaborate academic books among them Chazan, et al. (1992), Hyden (1992), and several others by African scholars have addressed these issues at length but provided no definitive conclusions.

However, Africa Demos fell short in two important areas. One was the failure to see democratization as a sequel of the general, deep seated problems of the political economy of Africa and the failure of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) to address these. Apart from one essay in Vol. II, No. 3 (1992) titled "Democracy and Economic Recovery" not enough attention was paid to this important and central topic. The current performance of the Chiluba government in Zambia and the Mulozi's in Malawi and the growing public dissatisfaction in these countries, demonstrate very clearly that the forces behind transition were more than just political in interest. They were reacting to deteriorating material conditions. Such conditions propelled changes in such

countries as South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya and Angola to mention but a few. The fundamental question, it appears to us, should be whether or not it is possible to sustain democracy under deteriorating economic conditions and declining opportunities for the majority of the population. This is of course an old question which applies to the situation in Africa as much as elsewhere. Recent reversive developments in Eastern Europe where the communists are resurrecting their lost glory and making a comeback in a number of countries seem to tell a story of democracy. That story, it seems to me, is that true democracy must deliver otherwise it is doomed.

Africa Demos also failed to address in depth the issue of the quality of democratic transitions in Africa. Although there were one or two essays on this, the specific aspects of the attitudes, commitment and coalitions of the forces of transition were not addressed. In this regard, one should recall the events in Zambia where not only do we see disintegration of the earlier democratic forces but also the most intolerant behavior by the Chiluba government. In Malawi and Kenya things are not getting any better after multi-party elections in those countries. The civil society in many recent democracies seem to have "gone back to bed." Trade unions, church organizations, civic groups and women's organizations earlier involved in the transition to democracy have been incorporated, emasculated [sic] and divided and quiet on their side.

Clearly, democracy is a costly business which requires investment in political education, strengthening opposition, defined rules of the game and a stable institutional framework. Many African governments do not seem to recognize this fact hence possible return to one-party regimes and dictatorships in many of the recently graduated democracies. Thus Africa Demos needs to address the issue of efforts of sustaining democracy. Perhaps the role of regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, as guardians of democracy could be addressed together with how countries such as the USA can support democratic development in Africa.

Conclusion

Africa Demos has played a crucial educational and political role for us in Africa. The information was relevant, objective and appropriate for immediate use in the classroom. Hence, notwithstanding a number of critical comments made above, I remain impressed by Africa Demos and wish it could be sustained for a much longer period.

An Evaluation of "Africa Demos"

Wilson Wanene

The first issue of Africa Demos appeared a year after I started freelance journalism. This was a difficult time in my life since freelancing, for most people, is extremely tough. I was immediately caught in the vexing position common to writers and artists: I had a dull and routine "day job" in order to pay my rent each month and, on the side, I tried to come up with story ideas which I proposed to newspaper editors— hoping they would let me turn them into articles. During this time, I was willing to write on anything for local papers. I did a profile on the first Soviet Nieman fellow to come to Harvard; reported on a lecture delivered by Kwame Toure, formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, at the University of Massachusetts at Boston; interviewed two leaders within the Ethiopian community in Boston who had differing views on Eritrea; and described some Boston choices for live wedding music. This was before I realized that in journalism, as with most endeavors, it helps to have a specialty.

When I picked up an African publication it was because, as a Kenyan, I hungered for news regarding the home scene. I was especially captivated by the possibility that with the political changes that had started taking place in Eastern Europe, Africa would somehow be affected. More specifically, I simply wanted to know whether President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya would loosen his stranglehold on the political system and allow for the formation of opposition parties which could openly compete with his ruling Kenya African National Union.

In Boston my best source for African news is Boston University's African Studies Library. The staff is friendly. Current African newspapers, magazines, and reference books are all conveniently consolidated on half a floor. And, most importantly, one does not need to be a BU student to gain access. I have been

a diligent visitor to this library ever since moving to Boston in 1987. Here I could read three major publications — a magazine and three daily newspapers — from Kenya: The Weekly Review, The Daily Nation, and The East African Standard.

It was at the African Studies Library that I first saw a copy of Demos. The publication immediately caught my attention because the tagline on the front page identified it as, "A Bulletin of the African Governance Program, The Carter Center of Emory University." Like many Africans, I was well aware of President Jimmy Carter's strong interest in Africa. I was therefore eager to know what the bulletin contained. The first page laid out — in a calm tone — the objectives of the new publication. It would track the political reforms that had started, in fits and starts, across Africa. The emergence of Demos would coincide with a period in which domestic and international pro-democracy advocates were becoming more insistent in their demands for single-party and military governments to end their monopolies on power throughout the continent.

One of its goals was "to produce a publication that fills the gap between articles in the academic journals and reports in newspapers and magazines." As if to underscore this, there was a map of Africa shaded in various patterns that showed where each state stood in terms of its commitment to democratization. There were five different ranges: "Strong," "Moderate," "Ambiguous," "Democratic," and "Persistently Authoritarian." I quickly checked where Kenya fitted. It was in the "Ambiguous" category which didn't surprise me. It no doubt must have been an embarrassment for pro-Moi officials to see a map that showed Kenya trailing its East African rivals, Uganda and Tanzania, which were considered "Moderate" states in their evolution toward a more open political environment. This was a far cry from the 1970s when Kenya basked in the praise it got from the West for being a stable one-party government while Uganda languished under the brutal, crazed leadership of General Idi Amin; and Tanzania suffered impoverishment under Julius Nyerere's well-meaning but misguided Ujamaa policies.

There was a handy reference section which in subsequent issues always appeared on the second last page and provided further details to the shaded Africa map on the front page. Kenya's "Ambiguous" status meant: "Ruling elite's commitment to democracy is at best precarious, at worst a ruse and at most times unclear. On the one hand, stated commitments are often suspended due to the exigencies of the moment. On the other hand, the construction of new democratic structures may suggest little more than political maneuvering." Uganda and Tanzania were in a situation in which, "Formal commitments to a democratic transition are accompanied by only measured, cautious and preliminary steps toward institutionalization of pluralism. Promises reflect a sense of democratic purpose, but deeds are not yet commensurate with pledges." Still, it was a more enviable position than that of Kenya. The page also contained the eight "Phases of Transition to Democracy" which ranged from "Decay" ("The government loses its ability to manage basic aspects of its agenda, such as personal security and economic welfare.") to "Consolidation" ("Democracy becomes 'consolidated' when there is widespread respect for fundamental constitutional provisions, especially the rules governing succession in office."). The page also had a section titled "African Political Systems" which divided the continent's governments into four categories: "Democratic," "Authoritarian," "Directed Democracy," and "Contested Sovereignty."

In the March 1995 issue of Demos, the final one, 15 nations qualified as democratic but none of them had reached the final "consolidation" stage. Four of them — Benin, Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia — made it to the next to last hurdle, "Legitimization" ("The legitimacy of the government as well as the constitutional democratic system generally is accepted. Challenge of particular policies, such as economic reforms and wage policies, do not automatically indicate a rejection of the democratic system."). Kenya had improved by a notch in terms of its commitment to democratization after it legalized opposition parties in 1991; it entered the "Moderate" camp.

Nigeria's democratization had earned the "Strong" tag in Demos' inaugural issue ("Government is solidly committed to the creation of a more democratic political system."). But long before the final issue went to press the country had plummeted to "Authoritarian." This was a result of the crisis caused by then President Ibrahim Babangida after he annulled the 1993 presidential elections, blocking Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner, from taking office. The election was widely considered the fairest in the country's history. The new classification meant that the current junta led by General Sani Abacha, imposed a political environment "with highly restricted opportunities for political mobilization." The point here is that Demos offered the vocabulary and basic analytical tools with which to describe a nation's position within the democracy debate.

If I have been roundabout in explaining how I discovered Demos, it is in order to show that the publication interested me not only for the fact that it dealt with democratization — a timely issue — but also because it came out at a time when I was groping my way through the "freelance" world. Demos, in addition to news reports filed by Jane Perlez, The New York Times East Africa correspondent, and coverage by the Kenyan press, enabled me to get a clearer picture of what was going on in Kenya. I was able to locate my country against the larger continental canvas. In May 1991 I published my first newspaper article on Kenya. It was an op-ed piece that appeared in the Cape Cod Times.

Demos became one of my reference sources for background information on Africa along with Africa Report, which ceased publication last year, Africa Confidential, Africa Research Bulletin, and a handful of other publications. At one point I decided that I had to have my own copies of Demos; I called the African Governance Program and requested to be placed on the mailing list.

It is a pity that one often realizes the full value of something after it has gone. When looking at back issues of Demos I am amazed at just how varied it was in its coverage of democratiza-

tion in Africa. Though most articles were by academics, there were pieces by journalists, politicians, and diplomats. In fact one sensed that there was room for anyone who had something constructive to contribute. Since much of African pro-democracy work takes place in meetings, Demos took time to write up summaries which no doubt were treasured by activists who could not attend. I sensed a serious and articulate dialogue on political issues that would have serious implications for the continent for many years to come. For autocratic leaders such as Moi or Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who no doubt would have liked all the talk about "multi-partyism," or "second liberation" to simply die away, Demos — if they read it — served only to remind them they would have to work harder to hold onto their jobs. It was getting trickier to resort to the old strategies of detention, expulsion from the sole authorized party, or assassination. More attention was now focused on their malpractice.

For me, Demos was always interesting reading for it not only carried single-country analyses but also pieces with a continental approach. In both categories there were writers who could crystallize the issues at hand. This was no easy task given the social diversity in individual states and Africa as a whole. Though the contributors were often writers who were certainly more comfortable writing op-ed type of pieces rather than human interest features, they could still present their views cogently for a general readership.

After the 1992 multiparty elections in Kenya there was much gloomy discussion about how Moi — who had resisted multiparty politics till the last moment — had been re-elected. Many observers knew that the opposition's infighting had contributed heavily to his victory. But Nelson Kasfir, a political science professor at Dartmouth College, put it best in the July-August 1993 issue: "President Moi and KANU [Kenya African National Union] officials insist they won because they were more popular than observers realized. On the other hand, they may have won because the opposition split into three major parties and six minor ones. The third, and most popular theory is that they won be-

cause they rigged the election process. There is something to be said for each argument." I was surprised to learn from Kasfir that Moi, who won a mere 36 percent of the presidential vote, got a large share of his votes from the Rift Valley, his home province. The province gave him a little over half his total vote. I missed this point in the reports I read elsewhere.

In examining democracy in Africa it is difficult to ignore a troubling but relevant issue, ethnicity. One of the most lucid and concise articles I've read on the subject is "Democracy and the Challenge of Ethnicity," by Marina Ottaway who in March 1995, when Demos published her piece, was a visiting professor of African Studies at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. "The real danger is not the possibility of the breakup of some African countries into new states — this would not necessarily be a problem — but the collapse of an increasing number of states into utter chaos and mass slaughter," she wrote. "The specter haunting Africa is not the possibility of new Eritreas but the likelihood of new Rwandas."

To Ottaway, Africa got off to a bad start after independence. Take the Organization of African Unity. She pointed out something that is often overlooked. The OAU's cardinal principle is that the borders inherited from colonial rule should not be altered. The line often given — which I grew up with — is that changing them would plunge Africa into chaos given the numerous ethnic groups. While there is no doubt some truth to this, Ottaway was able to introduce a consequent factor to this rationale. According to her, "It implied not only a renunciation by governments waging war on each other in the pursuit of territorial revendications but also a statement by the same governments to their people that they had no right to self-determination." African governments, she maintained, had to openly address the challenges of democracy in multiethnic societies.

Such articles appeared in what was called a bulletin. It was a shrewd move by Richard Joseph, the editor of Demos, and his colleagues, to present the publication as such. A bulletin meant

that it was following a development — something new — and would keep the reader posted. There was a sense of anticipation. But it also understated what it did. The 12 issues of Demos that appeared during its total run not only informed on political developments but started to create — I believe — a unique community. By reading the publication one discovered some of the different players who, in their various ways, were seriously concerned about Africa's political future. These activists and scholars were already forging a community of their own as they met in meetings such as those organized at the Carter Center.

However, the community building that I'm describing is the one between the ordinary reader and these activists. It is very frustrating to read a newspaper article about a Kenyan opposition rally in Nairobi that is canceled by Moi's government but supporters turn out anyway only to see security forces out in full force—determined to deal harshly with anyone denying the order. After riots break out and the smoke has cleared, 20 people are dead. This is what happened in July 1990. When reading the February 1992 issue of Demos I was reassured that there were Kenyans like Anyang' Nyong'o, later to become an opposition member of parliament, who were just as frustrated as I was. More importantly, through his long experience as an observer of the Kenya scene, Nyong'o could see greater dangers to such autocratic excesses. In an interview he stated: "People [in Africa] have reacted against authoritarianism by drawing back into ethnic movements, but not because they reject per se the nation-state. Rather it is because they reject the authoritarian character of the nation state."

In any publication there is always room for improvement. As a journalist I would have liked to have seen feature stories by fellow African journalists reporting from their countries. For example, it would have been fascinating to have a freelancer reporting on an opposition rally in rural Kenya. This would have been especially interesting because in writing for Demos the writer's angle would have been to look at issues such as the license application procedure needed to hold the rally; the restric-

tions, or lack of, in carrying out the rally after obtaining a permit; and the level of security against pro-government thugs. This would have been a bright complement to the theory-influenced pieces by academics that appeared regularly. But I do not know how much funding the Carnegie Foundation made available. Demos may have lacked the money to locate and pay journalists.

It would also have been interesting to see Demos on the Internet. The publication definitely deserved a web page where people could send e-mail with all kinds of suggestions and information. I am sure that it would have attracted numerous visitors from around the world and would have expanded its ability to be a forum and a community builder for people concerned about democracy in Africa.

The lasting impact Demos had on me was that not only did it make me a better informed writer but I also became a better citizen of the world. I now realize just how fortunate democratic nations are, especially in the West. They can take for granted that elections will be held and peaceful transitions of power will occur in cases where incumbent parties lose. While Africa has made great progress toward democracy, within a few years, great hurdles remain. The frailty of the continent was horrendously demonstrated by the Rwandan tragedy. As Richard Joseph sadly pointed out in the September 1994 issue, the U.S. equivalent of the half-million Rwandans who died, within the brief span of less than four months, is 15 million. Yet there was cause for encouragement elsewhere in Africa. The Rwandan killings took place in the same year that South African blacks were finally able to enter polling booths to freely vote in a national election.

I have learned that to think about democracy and governance in Africa is to confront a gamut of tough issues. For instance, one has to consider whether there is a danger in placing too much attention on "transitional elections." What if elections are only partially rigged? Should one accept them in the hope that the next ones will be fairer? While outside election observers are an important presence, aren't domestic monitoring groups more

important since they are local and broad-based? How should they be nurtured and protected from government harassment?

In the last issue of Demos, Michael Bratton, a professor of political science at Michigan State University, described most opposition parties in Africa as "spindly organizations with small memberships, limited funds and weak organizational capacities. They build followings along lines of personal loyalty rather than ideologically around policy platforms." How does this augur for Africa's political future? Who's responsibility is it to strengthen opposition parties? What can be considered a model opposition party in Africa if there is one?

In that same issue Achille Mbembe, an associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, warned that the "transitions to democracy" were merely one among other changes taking place on the continent. How then do scholars and activists keep the spotlight on the democracy issue while also paying adequate attention to other crucial problems such as health, education, and economic development? All these are difficult questions with no easy answers. And they spring from what I read in the pages of Demos. Though they are intimidating, I feel wiser to at least know that they are part of Africa's current challenge.

Africa Demos: Mission, Achievements, Failures

Kwame A. Ninsin

The maiden issue of Africa Demos set out the objectives of the newsletter as follows: "to identify the goals, accomplishments, constraints and setbacks to democratization in Africa; to make the relevant information available in a format that is instructive and moderately analytical; to produce a publication that fills the gap between articles in the academic journals and reports in newspapers and magazines; to encourage positive developments in African democratization and to indicate ways in which they can be supported; to give voice to the African demos, the people of the continent, who have often seen decades of authoritarian colonialism succeeded by the authoritarian governance of their rulers.; (and) to remain independent of all competing parties and interests, African and non-African, except for our general commitment to the universal principle of government of, by and for the people." In pursuit of these objectives the relevance of the bulletin was defined in terms of its contribution to the democratic aspirations of the Africa Demos; namely, the "dwellers of the countryside; the largest class of the population, rural and urban, distinguishable from the notables". Did the bulletin succeed in its mission? In what follows, I attempt a post-mortem of the bulletin based mainly on a content analysis of its issues.

Format

The bulletin was structured in a way that made it easier to read; and its content informative. Apart from its front-page commentaries, each issue carried in the forum column a critical essay which addressed one or the other issue in Africa's troubled political transitions. The essays in the forum column of the bulletin were either thematic or country-specific. In addition, there were extensive country-by-country reports, and also supplementary country reports which appeared in its Bulletin Board column.

The latter were basically verbatim reports of salient developments in randomly selected countries while the former was more narrative, descriptive and analytical reports of country developments.

Finally, there were incisive quotations in each issue. The quotations sought to dramatize various attributes of democratic government and politics, as well as highlight the dangers in alternative, non-democratic courses of action. There were also the Carter Center Notes; and the Letters column which featured occasionally. This format made it easier for the reader to cover the bulletin at a quick glance, selectively imbibing what may be considered relevant from his or her point of view.

Analysis

The mission of Africa Demos was summarized, again, in its maiden issue as "intended to serve the transitions to constitutional democracies that are now underway in many African countries". In the 12 issues of the bulletin which were published between 1990 and 1995, Africa Demos pursued this mission with zeal and consistency. Its front-page commentaries as well as the forum essays may be regarded as key features in that crusade. Through those columns the bulletin succeeded in identifying "the goals, accomplishments, constraints and setbacks" to the process. Major issues such as the fragility of nation-states and the destructive force of unbridled ethnic nationalism were highlighted and denounced while the value of elections to the democratic process, dialogue, tolerance, etc., in contrast to violence, intolerance and war, were glorified. Other issues in the transition politics which were addressed by the bulletin included the danger posed by policies that violate the basic social and economic rights of the people; the dire economic circumstances of African countries; the absence of the basic requirements for peace and security and the breakdown of the mechanisms for securing peace and pursuing development and democracy; the threat posed by the military to the success of the transition process; and the role of foreign powers in either expediting or hindering the process. The bulletin's message was clear: unless these and other tantalizing issues were tackled with rigour and commitment, and either

overcome or brought under control, the processes could be easily aborted or endangered.

On the other hand, the narratives and glossary of country-developments are very informative. Also they were a potential source of inspiration to those who needed a successful model, a pace-setter to emulate. Their inspirational value stemmed from the conscious effort to cite successful cases as a role-model and present unsuccessful and difficult ones with disapproval.

Comments

The main columns of the bulletin are of extreme value: they successfully captured the vicissitudes of the political transitions in Africa. As an academic and African I still find them quite informative - indeed revealing, as they provide a refreshing chronicle of the events that gave us hope for permanent changes in the internal political structure of numerous countries. They are also a vivid reminder of the heroic struggles of the masses of ordinary people for freedom and justice. At the same time, the bulletin through its key columns, is a constant reminder of the tenacity of authoritarian political structures, norms and practices which have defied, often with murderous results, the legitimate demands of the peoples of the continent. On grounds such as these the bulletin's record could be equalled by very few.

However, the ultimate value of the bulletin should be sought elsewhere - that is, in whether or not it succeeded in pursuing its mission, which was to facilitate the transitions currently in progress. As stated earlier, this mission was translated into 6 clear objectives. Did the bulletin succeed in achieving all or some of them? I would like to answer this question from three perspectives: (i) the logical demands of a movement for change; (ii) the environment of the struggle for change; and (iii) the bulletin's approach to the subject.

i. The struggle for democracy is a complex and far-reaching one, involving a variety of social forces. On the one hand, the social forces that become engaged in the struggle for political

change compete fiercely among themselves for supremacy; on the other hand, they struggle either in concert or separately against the state in a relentless bid to enhance the national political space and for the advancement of social, economic and political rights. Furthermore, the struggle for democracy entails constructing new institutions that would serve as the framework for practising democratic politics and safeguarding human rights, and promoting new commitments to the norms and attitudes that could sustain the institutional bases as well as the practice of democratic politics, as the lessons of the American Revolution clearly show, all of these are the product of that creative social genius which is released in the heat of the struggle for liberty, equality and fraternity. Invariably, then, the outcome of each struggle is dictated by its own internal impulses, which also determine its uniqueness - its form and content. Agency for such changes should of necessity be an integral part of the process: agency from outside a social movement is therefore illogical.

In this connection, the attempt by Africa Demos to serve the transition - which I interpret as INFLUENCE - may be described as ambitious. At best the bulletin could succeed only partially; that is, with respect to the first 3 objectives. But it could not encourage positive developments in the transition politics of African countries; nor could it "give voice to the African demos". Indeed, it lacked the moral and political claim to assume this decisive role.

Why should Africa Demos expect only partial success? The answer to this question is implied in the penultimate paragraphs. The logic of the struggles for democracy, as a movement for change, requires that the agent(s) of change should be part of the struggle and act from within; not from the outside. Yet Africa Demos could only act from outside the movement —- as an observer, reporter and commentator. Therefore the extent of its influence could only be assumed: it could not be real; and even if it was real, it must be marginal.

Second, even though the bulletin was conceived to be different from both the usual tabloid and academic journals it could not assume a position within the struggle such as would confer on it the role of the voice of the social forces which were actively spearheading the struggle. It did not occupy a position that could be remotely compared to that of the revolutionary journals and pamphlets of the American Revolution. This limitation stemmed from its origin, as well as physical location. In certain circumstances a spokesperson could emerge from outside a movement. But for it to succeed in the role of agency, the spokes-person should "commit a class suicide" and become an integral part of the movement in both the spiritual and structural sense; so that it would henceforth derive its raison d'être from the movement itself. It is at this conjuncture that the agent could be owned by he movement. In the case of the bulletin the limitations imposed by its origin and physical location were so severe it was incapable of making the movements for change OWN IT. Naturally therefore it was destined to remain a voice from exile. The destiny of the bulletin may be compared to that of the numerous publications which emanated from Africa's large community of exile politicians: it could only live on hope and not on actual victories.

ii. For an agent to be owned by a movement for change it must be seen and accepted as unambiguously embodying the genuine interest and aspirations of the actors. In its own way, Africa Demos could admirably capture the motive force of the millions who engaged in the struggle for freedom and democracy. In Volume I Number 2 of January 1991 the bulletin declared: "Democratization can bring renewed hope as well as new anxieties. Had the people of Africa seen steady improvements in their living standards instead of the sharp reduction in recent years, the call for political reforms would not be so insistent and widespread."(p. 1) In this statement Africa Demos was articulating the real essence of the struggle of the African people, which was a struggle for economic and social security rather than a struggle for the abstract liberal freedoms. As the bulletin rightly pointed out, the demand for social and economic rights of the

African majority cannot be satisfied unless the crippling economic crisis prevailing in the countries of the continent is arrested and efforts made to successfully stimulate economic growth and development.

Two questions arise from this in relation to the mission of Africa Demos: How could Africa Demos ensure that the masses of the people would realize economic and social security? How could the bulletin give voice to the voiceless masses in a struggle such as this? How practical could the bulletin's commitment to such an ideal be? These are fundamental questions.

Clearly the issue of the security and enjoyment of rights is central to the struggles for democracy. In the past there was the tendency to limit the definition of democratic rights to those which have been referred to as abstract laissez-faire rights which in fact pertain to various forms of political action. But as various UN Conventions and Protocols, as well as several modern constitutions, have affirmed rights including social, economic, and cultural rights. It could indeed be argued that the denial of such rights rather than the denial of political rights has underpinned much of the conflict that has afflicted African countries since independence. As various social groups — ethnic, religious, regional, class, clan, communal, occupational, etc. or permutations of any number of these — became conscious of their exclusion from the limited resources available for allocation, they became available for mobilization into the political process to press for their rights. And depending on the nature of their demands - whether it is negotiable or non-negotiable - the outcome of such political mobilization could be either peaceful resolution of the conflict arising from it or violence, as the case may be. This accounts for the multi-dimensional nature of Africa's conflicts which are extremely destabilizing; for it seems that conflicts pertaining to claims for autonomy (which arise from the unequal allocation of social, economic and cultural rights) tend to be non-negotiable and therefore violent. The pursuit of a democratic and just society is therefore intimately linked to peace and security. The same is true of the agenda for development. The postulate then is

that there can be no democracy and development if the human resources of the continent — the most precious and critical factor of production — are made to decay or, at best, left underdeveloped. Otherwise liberal democracy, will be at risk: it will have no advocates among Africa's demos, and its appeal will be limited. For the poor, the sick, the jobless and hungry citizenry have no use for the freedoms of liberal democracy. Rather they become expendable fodder for fascists.

The culprits in this calculated destruction of the social foundations of democracy and the abortion of people's legitimate struggle for equality and freedom are not just the continent's dictators. The World bank and the IMF have become key accomplices in this negation of history. Yet while it was possible for the bulletin to wage a sustained campaign against Africa's dictators, it either ignored the role of their accomplices — the World Bank and the IMF; or it simply felt helpless against the gigantic powers of these global economic conglomerates. This act of omission, neglect or helplessness could not have been accidental. Surely the bulletin subscribes to the conventional view that rights are rights only if they are political.

It is arguable that this predilection was dictated by the middle class inclinations of the bulletin, which is informed by the view that the middle class has been the bearer of democratic values throughout history and that they are the foremost guarantor of democratic culture and practice. This view of democracy is untenable because it denies other classes the capacity to subscribe to the norms and ideas of democracy. Above all, it contradicts the essence of the democratic revolution which is freedom and equality for all; and the fact that since the dawn of that revolution the goal of civilization has been the pursuit of the ideals of democracy which have inspired millions of peoples the world over, including the African masses to rise periodically to fight for their right to citizenship. Needless to say, the main impulse of recent outbursts against authoritarian political and economic regimes has been the same: the passionate desire to realize equality and justice.

The middle classes have a stake in these moving disequilibria. Their interest lies in the opportunity to maximize political advantage in the unstable correlation of social forces in the political struggles for elite access to the limited national resources. The discontent of the African demos is exploited and mobilized on the basis of ethnic, religious class, regional and other identities in the political arena. The question of social and economic rights may therefore be perceived at two levels - at the level of the masses and the elites. Unless the economies of African countries become strong enough to successfully cope with the demands of these classes the prospects for democracy would be dim indeed. This task was definitely beyond the pale of Africa Demos. Its limitations were compounded by its ideological inclinations. In the process, the African middle class became an easy substitute for the African demos.

iii. In the social sciences, the successful outcome of any social investigation is determined largely by how the problem of the study is conceptualized, as well as the methodology that is employed. Africa Demos declared its conception of the democracy project in Africa in quite explicit terms from the very outset. Quoting Sklar with unqualified approval, the bulletin announced that "democracy in Africa is an experimental process" — a "workshop for democracy". As such "Africa is ripe for creative experimentation with consociational variants of democracy." (Vol. 1 No. 3 March 1991) This conception of the democracy projects in Africa denies the actors in the process the role of agency and therefore the autonomy to create. Furthermore, it seems to repudiate the fact that the entire process is a creative social enterprise. Yet it seems to me that when the social forces engaged in the democracy movement in Benin, Mali, Niger, Togo, Zaire, and elsewhere convened at their respective national conferences they were not engaged in any kind of experimental politics; they did so as autonomous agents pursuing an independent social project which would respond to their own accumulated social history as well as demands. Second, they acted conscious of the fact that they were engaged in the making of a new society in

which new institutions had to be created. In this regard, the novelty of the very idea of a national conference is indeed remarkable. Admittedly, with few exceptions - like the case of Benin - most of those historic initiatives were aborted. But also the case of Zaire clearly shows, that the will of such agents of social change cannot be easily swept away with the wave of an autocrat's hand.

Quite apart from these heroic examples, the evidence regarding other forms of agency and social creativity abounds in other instances. A good example lies in the process of constitution-making which has characterized several of the transition politics. Here too autocratic regimes unwilling to relinquish power tried either to control, hijack or manipulate the process. Nonetheless, the constitutional assemblies that were convened to express the social will in the fundamental law of the land were not entirely bereft of autonomy and ingenuity. They succeeded in producing constitutional documents which could only be described as remarkable given the political environment in which they were produced; and which, if allowed to endure, could become a solid bedrock of a democratic order.

Africa Demos either ignored or missed these historic moments when the African demos seized the occasion to make their own history. The bulletin's attempt to develop a classificatory scheme - "a quality of democracy index (QDI)" reveals the distance between it and the reality of the Africa Demos as they unbottled their social genius to try and carve their own destiny out of the circumstances of their past and the present. Clearly, the liberal ideas that underpinned the QDI presumed to embody the good, the only reality that was feasible; and so it tended to dismiss the actual history of the people as it happened.

Conclusion

A movement for change is inevitably a creative force: it contains its own agents for change and produces its own ideas as well as social artifacts which are consistent with its own interest, goals and aspirations. The democracy movements in Africa, as

movements for change, contained forces which struggled for change, and at the same time acted as incubators of ideas that shaped the direction of the movement. Africa Demos sought to become part of these dynamic processes from the outside, a proposition that contradicts the logic of social movements. Clearly therefore the bulletin attempted an impossible project.

The present stage of the transition movements reveals the tantalising complexity of the struggle for democracy as a practical social project. Yet Africa Demos assumed that it could influence it primarily in the sphere of ideas. And not just that; but it hoped for practical results without actually being an integral part of the movement. Now it is evident that despite the writing of fine constitutions in which various rights and freedoms have been guaranteed and the potential for arbitrary government checked; despite the conduct of successful elections; etc. the goal of instituting a democratic order is far from attained. Surely there is no short-cut to freedom. Africa cannot accomplish within a decade what took others decades, and some a century, to realize. Above all, in the current historical conjuncture where political rights are inextricably linked to economic, social and cultural rights, the pursuit of the former without the latter is a definite invitation for failure, if not persistent crisis. Above all, the current African situation is ample vindication of the fact that the promotion of democracy within its narrow liberal trajectory, as the bulletin did, can only produce broken hopes.

Africa Demos: An Evaluation

Patricia Williams

The democratization process in Africa has been fraught with ambiguity and illusions, this makes its analysis difficult. Therefore, Africa Demos should be commended as well as sympathized with for taking on the herculean task of monitoring the democratization process in Africa. I will begin my comments by highlighting some postulations of some scholars on democracy or democratization process in Africa. For instance, some African scholars would want us to believe that democracy is no stranger to the African continent as Adu Bohen has contested that:

> Among the misconceptions concerning the democracy movement in Africa is the belief that the debate dates from events in Eastern Europe or from pressures of the World Bank and the IMF. Although this a widespread belief, it is totally erroneous. It reflects both ignorance and racist belief that Africans are incapable of initiating anything without outside assistance. The democratic debate in Africa actually began with the strugglefor independence in the 1940s. It continued through the 1960s and 1980s, especially following the change to one party rule and the intervention of the military in politics. The battle for democracy took place first in Africa and then in Eastern Europe, which is now throwing off its own experience of imperialism [emphasis mine] (vol. i, no. 2, 1991: 5).

Bohen thus conveniently ignored the fact that the democracy that existed, (that is, if it did exist), was gendered. Achille Mbembe's article: "Democratization and Social Movements in Africa" in vol. I, no. 1, is however, an appropriate caution on Adu Bohen's postulations.

In the same vein, many African scholars would prefer to trace the recent advent of democracy in Africa, even as a second coming, to the events in Eastern Europe in 1989. Using the 1989 date therefore, scholars, such as Okwudiba Nnoli, see 1989 as "a critical stage" in the struggle for democracy in Africa which has been in a stranglehold since the mid 1960s when the syndrome of military and civilian dictatorship began to permeate the continent. Nnoli is in agreement with those who pitched their tents with the 1989 date and he submits that the success of the democratic struggles in Eastern Europe greatly influenced the success of the struggle in Africa. If such reciprocal influence did exist then it could be assumed that democracy's present lack of lustre would negatively affect the democratic fortunes of Eastern Europe in the future? Be that as it may, the bone of contention is not what had been, but what is, and will be. There is no point in over-romanticising the past or crying over spilt milk, rather, there should be concern about what democratic future there is for Africans generally and for African women in particular. The fate of the latter has often been forgotten in the flurry of activities which engulfed the continent.

Next African scholars have debated the type of democratization occurring in Africa. They found fault with the fact that liberal democracy is being adopted by African states without taking into cognisance what informed this variant of democracy by the West. According to Claude Ake, "Liberal democracy was not so much a political morality as the political correlate of capitalism, the necessary political conditions for the sustainability and operational efficiency of the market" (1992: 1 & 2). For him, liberal democracy may have elements of democracy, but it is certainly not democracy because it repudiated "the essence of democracy which is popular power"(Ibid: 2). Furthermore, over the years the democratic contents of liberal democracy have been whittled down leaving just "consent of the governed, multiparty pluralism, electoral competition and guarantee of rights including the equality before the law..." (Ibid) There were other criticisms Ake laid against liberal democracy but the above will suffice.

Can it be said that the liberal democracy adopted by African states has a modicum of democracy which Ake disparagingly referred to as "'abstracizement' of persons" because "the celebrated rights of liberal democracy are... abstract rights" (Ibid) where poor people are denied of their rights? Yet, as Africa Demos opines in its maiden issue that: "Democracy is a universal yearning [and] the people should govern themselves, and those who act in their name should be regularly accountable to the governed". This is the crux of the matter. Accountability to the people is very essential. It is not only "popular power" as claimed by Ake that can be credible if all the rules are obeyed. Popular power, in itself, is only significant at election periods when the votes of the people are needed to put the rulers into power, since the people can neither govern themselves nor maintain a stable government all by themselves alone. Inevitably, that frightful word: oligarchy, must creep into their lexicon. It was already in place even in the days of Pericles when Demokratia, meaning "popular power" was visualized as an ideal, because it was impossible for everybody in the Athenian polis to govern. One agrees with Assisi Asobie therefore, when he submits that democracy

> should be seen as a concept of universal application. The basic principles which define it are catholic in nature. But the specific contents of democracy differ from one historical epoch to another. And the empirical manifestations of democracy vary from one socio-economic system to another (1995: 3).

Asobie notes that in Africa "two conceptions of democracy are in contention" namely liberal democracy (which is a dominant viewpoint) and "people oriented democracy". While the former is individualistic, the latter is collectivistic and it stresses equality before the law and advocates struggle, since democratic rights are neither gifts nor privileges. Democracy has to be struggled for and won from the oppressive ruling class (1995: 4-6). Asobie is of similar thinking with Claude Ake when he reviews the African political terrain thus:

> The dominant African perspective, the elite line, does not, in fact, represent an acceptance of democracy. It is, at best, a distortion of it. Democracy defined in this way by authoritarian rulers of Africa, or from their perspective, is bound to be a counterfeit of the true coinage. The authoritarian African rulers are not really interested in democracy, in the sense of popular power. Why should they? It is of little use to them. Without it, they are doing well enough for themselves. Among themselves, democracy of some sorts prevails: free access to national resources and freedom to use them any how they like; control and exercise of unlimited states power; freedom of association; freedom of speech; licence to kill. Absence of democracy may be a boon to African dictators and their cohorts, But authoritarianism is a bane to African peoples. It is a veritable nightmare (1995: 6-7).

Clearly what emerges from the above quotation is not the failure of liberal democracy but that some political leaders decidedly misused the tenets of liberal democracy to oppress the people and to perpetuate themselves in power. The failure here is not about liberal democracy and therefore, the success attributable to popular democracy can only be assumed. What has been consistent is that many African leaders have been themselves undemocratic in their governance. Therefore, they could only pretend to embark on democratization process while they remained autocratic in their political actions. African leaders could not perceive themselves as servants of the people.

Hence, the democratization process in present African States leaves much to be desired even in the so-called "superstars" or "democratic" African states namely, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal where there has been some consistencies in the democratization processes such as holding regular elections, and accepting outcome of these elections, the existence of fairly free press and an independent judiciary, to mention a few. Nonethe-

less, the democratic situation in these states, should not be presented as the ultimate. For all their efforts, the democratization process, was severely limited and gendered when compared with the older democracies of the West, where women have been able to make some modest break through politically. It certainly cannot be denied that African democratization process has refused to toe the classic terrain of democracy as it shall be shown below. Also, it is only in Africa that yesterday autocrats could have successfully donned the toga of democrats (by merely consented to multi-partyism) and still be hailed by the international community as examples of "good governance", e.g. Rawlings in Ghana, Kerekou in Benin Republic and Museveni in Uganda. Africa Demos let these off too lightly!

Africa Demos and African States

African States do not often feature in extant Western literature, thus to have a publication devoted mainly to monitoring African democratization efforts for five years is really commendable and an achievement of a feat. Perhaps, it was because democracy was such a scarce commodity in Africa that Africa Demos initially reported the minutest democratizing efforts there glowingly. The question is, was this style adopted to encourage Africans, leaders and followers alike - to learn and excel in the art of democratization? But has it not been the case that in spite of this "kid gloves'" handling, many African states failed to evolve democratically? African leaders did not live up to expectations, as the events on the continent consistently showed.

Right from inception, the editorial team attempted to highlight every country which had an agenda of democratization even though, as it must have been obvious later, more often than not they were merely a pretence to join the bandwagon of "democratizers" either as a result of international pressure, or because the dictators wished to find a more legitimate way to hold on to power and not because of a wholesale commitment to democratization. As the bulletin grew in stature however, it was able to show that it was only very few African leaders that were actually averse to the process of democratization.

Undoubtedly, the editorials were fair as they were initially intended to be. But, from the events in many African states, it became obvious that Africa Demos was prematurely optimistic about African leaders sincerity and fervour for democratization. Yet one should not judge the editorial team too severely, because their fairness was not always objectively accepted, and moreso, by the representatives of the African states in the US who felt that their states were not fairly categorized by the bulletin. This perceived poor rating of states could have adverse effect on their image in the West. A case in point was Djibouti which was categorized "authoritarian" in volume 1, number 3. The Djibouti ambassador in the US disputed the categorization and claimed that there was some form of democratization in place there. However in the subsequent (volume II, number 2), Africa Demos was vindicated as it was able to show that the Ambassador had spoken a little too soon. The Djibouti government of President Gouled was very unpopular and insurgents were calling for its replacement.

In essence then, in spite of Africa Demos' wish to be objective, it was criticized and faulted on this point of categorization. Since it is impossible to please the world, it is better to be objective in the evaluation of the states, no matter whose ox is gored. Africa Demos was initially cautious, perhaps, because of the level of the political development in Africa. But, this cautiousness was quickly jettisoned as many African leaders demonstrated clearly their insincerity about democratization and good governance. It is an irony that while by 1989/90 almost every African state wanted to be seen as democratizing, except for the plainly authoritarian ones such as Libya and Sudan, by 1995 many of the so-called promising states on course to a democratic system had fluttered or have failed outright in their bid. A glaring example is Nigeria, the so-called giant of Africa, which embarked on an extremely expensive transition to democratization program in 1987, but scuttled the process in 1993 and returned to autocratic military rule. It was categorized authoritarian alongside Libya and Sudan.

This reversal of Nigeria has a severe economic repercussion on the continent as a whole as it was alleged that some well-meaning Western countries shifted their attention elsewhere. Meanwhile, many former African states namely, Malawi, Swaziland, Zaire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Kenya, Somalia and Burundi have continued with their cosmetic movement in democratization, thereby generating a better credibility than Nigeria, despite their being variously described as democratic, directed democracy and contested sovereignty in the last edition of Africa Demos. Having made such general opening remarks, it is pertinent to next address more specific matters: Africa Demos itself.

Africa Demos and Its Format

In commenting on the series published as Africa Demos whose production spanned five years, with three volumes of twelve issues, I will focus on (i) the format/style and the topics covered and their relevance; and (ii) the relevance of the whole exercise. Of these two, the latter seemed easier to tackle. The relevance and according to the stated philosophy of the publishers was to monitor and report on the democratization processes in Africa.

> Africa Demos is intended to serve the transitions to constitutional democracies that are now underway in many African countries. It is for the African people, their societies, institutions and leaders to devise their new political systems and identify the desired steps to achieving them.

With this philosophy which was stated in the various Editorial comments, the bulletin attempted to measure the African democratization processes. Even the most severe critic cannot miss this point that was basically to encourage, however feeble or limited, the democratization efforts there. This however compelled Africa Demos to ignore some of the telling signs that African dictators/authoritarians were unwilling to let-go the reins of office in spite of their unpopularity. But apart from that, there is an

equivocal verdict that Africa Demos was indeed relevant: both political practitioners and students of Africa need to know what is happening in African States. Also, African states needed all the encouragement that could be garnered as they embarked on the democratization processes. Africa Demos successfully did just that.

On Format/ Style: The bulletin initially assumed the style of a news magazine. It reported events briefly and to the point, so that it was easy to read and was not too academic. However, if one was not conversant with the genesis of events in Africa, the individual might be overwhelmed by the rapidity of reports of events. Nonetheless, in the last three issues, the style changed with the bulletin featuring more detailed or in-depth essays on both the political and economic terrains. Therefore, between the first and the last editions, the bulletin grew from 5 to 36 pages.

A typical bulletin comprised the following sub-sections: i) Commentary or Editorial; ii) Letters to the Editor; iii) Case Studies; iv) Forum; v) News of Events in Brief/Milestone; vi) Opinion Page; vii) Carter Center Notes; and viii) Phases of Transition to Democracy/ Quality of Democracy Indicators. Each would be briefly highlighted and commented on.

i) *Commentary/Editorial*: This section conveyed succinct observations on the democratization processes and what was expected as future programs in Africa. There were serious attempts to give a fair and balanced commentary on every issue cited as part of the democratization drives in African states. Therefore, it attempted always to give balanced commentaries. Perhaps too balanced, thus it conveyed the impression that the editorial team did not want to give offense to African politicians. In the very first edition, the editor warned however, among other things that "this project is experimental and flexible. We are prepared to modify our approach as the situation demands. We welcome suggestions from our readers, especially in response to three preliminary issues..." True, the commentaries began on a cautious

note, but it is also true that as politicians came out in their true colors and behaved irresponsibly, thereafter, the editorials began to put some punch in their commentaries, making the objective reader heave a sigh of relief that Africa Demos was still committed to objective reportage.

ii) *Letters to the Editors*: These were very enlightening and served as feedback from readers. Some were theoretical and would want the events to conform with their own perceptions or to known/unknown typologies. Some were appreciative of the good work being done. Some were defensive of the less democratic practice occurring in their states. And from some, were cries for help or attention to the injustices happening in their countries. All told, letters to the editor were opportunities to assist in shaping the reportage of the democratization processes going on in the continent. The Africa Demos rose to the occasion either by accepting criticisms in good faith, and by explaining why certain states were categorized the way they were, and by further promising to take up pertinent enquiries in subsequent issues. By this method, Africa Demos showed itself to be susceptible to and amenable to genuine criticisms. Curiously however, in the last two issues, no letters to the editor were published. One wonders who was at fault: the readers or the bulletin.

iii) *Case Studies*: These were brief reports on the democratization processes in certain African countries which happened to have achieved a landmark or sometimes less than a land-mark. Sometimes, they were contributions from nationals who could then be writing from their own perception of events in their countries. Sometimes, they were view-points of scholars: African or Africanist. Nonetheless, these pieces could be very useful to people who needed on the spot reports of development situations of any democratizing African country.

iv) *Forum*: This served as area for debates on, or rejoinders to, certain opinions expressed about the various democratization processes occurring on the continent. So the pieces were usually

more scholarly than the usual style of the bulletin and to a large extent, enlightening about the topic they were focused on.

v) *News of Events in Brief/Milestones*: It gave panoramic information on the democratization processes of several countries under survey. This sub-section was particularly useful in that at a glance one could have a situation report on the democratization efforts in each of the state highlighted. Hence, viewed in its totality, a mosaic picture of the state of democratization in the continent emerged.

vi) *Opinion Page*: This was similar to the Forum except that it could also have been an abridged version of scholarly papers on democratization process in some parts of Africa or the continent as a whole, which were perceived relevant to its readers.

vii) *Carter Center Notes*: These were usually informative reports of the goings-on or activities of the Carter Center in some African States, whether they were democratizing or not. Also, Fellows of The African Governance use the pages to inform readers on events particularly those in which they were engaged or on that of the Center. Thus, there were reports on health, agriculture, human rights and peace-keeping missions projects.

viii) *Phases of Transition to Democracy/Quality of Democracy Indicators*: This sub-section was very important, yet difficult to analyze as it was problematic right from the inception of the bulletin. This was because it was on these that Africa Demos based its analysis and evaluations of the democratization processes in Africa. Many of the initial letters to the editor were on the measurement of the transition to democratization: how and why were African states categorized, and what accounted for the subsequent change from one position to another. It covers (a) phases of transition to democracy namely: decay, mobilization, decision, formulation, electoral contestation handover, legitimization and consolidation; (b) African political system has three parts: democratic, authoritarian, and directed democracy/ contested sovereignty; (c) regimes in transition, and again, there

are mainly three types: strongly committed, moderately committed and ambiguous.

These categorizations have similarities with Daniel Levine's and Samuel Huntington's. Levine speaks of two phases of democratization of which the first phase runs from decay of old regime and the inauguration of a new system after maturation. The second phase is the creation, nurture and the widening of egalitarian social relations and norms of leadership and authority (1988: 383). For Huntington, there are three dominant modes of democratization: transformation, replacement, and transplacement, and they mean that elites in power would initiate change, the elites in opposition would also initiate change and the final change would come as a result of negotiations between the two groups (1991: 192). Thus, for survival reasons they must find a meeting point. These categorizations referred to elites power negotiation in developed democracies.

The following pertinent questions arise: Are African politicians tolerant enough to acknowledge opposition, accommodate it and negotiate with it in order to ensure their survival and that of the nation? African elites engineering democratic transition prematurely sensed achievement when actually the first phase has not been fully and successfully transited before it was acclaimed a success. As soon as it embarked on the theatrically created multi-partyism, there were wild shouts of "hallelluia", "uhuru", etc. Since the other categories were not firmly in place, the circle was quickly negotiated. Collapse of such a regime precariously perched on fragile structures was inevitable. There were strong criticisms as to how Africa Demos measured and awarded its marks on the democratization efforts in Africa. Thus, some of the very early inquiries were in regard to the weighting of the phases, the evaluation of their strength of commitment. How can a political system be perceived as "democratic", "authoritarian", or regimes as "strong", "moderate", or "ambiguous" without any glaring differences among the states? These terms were therefore confusing when employed in relation to some African states

whose democratization processes were known to be stage-managed and whose leaders also excelled in the art of playing to the gallery for support of their sham democratization drives.

It was on the basis of these repeated criticisms that the editor explained to readers that a supplementary analytical framework would be formulated to assist in further evaluation of the quality of democratic transitions that were occurring. The result of that effort was published as Quality of Democratic Index (QDI) (see vol. ii no.3). Essentially, they are definitional explanations of events in the continent which either enhanced or impeded democratization in a state and consequently, its categorization. The QDI are the following: Access of Social Groups; Autonomy of Civic Associations; Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law; Electoral Process; Freedom of Assembly and Association; Freedom of Conscience and Expression; Human Rights; Judiciary; Media; Military. If African political leaders had regularly been acknowledging, accommodating, and negotiating with the opposition, these QDI would have differently controlled the outcome.

While it is gratifying that at last, Africa Demos acknowledged that "the democratic processes were trivialized in several countries" (see Africa Demos, 1992: 8, vol. ii., no. 3), it is nonetheless disheartening that no state could actually boast of having achieved enough positive scores for it to be acknowledged as democratizing. Definitely then, these additional indexes further underlined the submission that there was dearth of real democratic efforts. For it is only when there exists a fearless opposition, strong judiciary, strong press guaranteed freedoms of assembly, association, conscience and expression, human rights, the absence of a direct military involvement in politics, and a vibrant civil society, that the quality of the democratization occurring would be positively analyzed and measured.

With the introduction of the QDI the editorial team demonstrated that it was not its intention to give credence to the evolving political facade in Africa. It had promised that the indicators

would be employed in the weighting of African states in the subsequent issues and to some extent made good that promise in pungent articles titled "Democracy and the African Machtstaat" and "The United States and Democracy in Africa" in volume III and 2 & 3 respectively which succinctly demonstrated the frustrations of Africa Demos in its efforts to assist in establishing democratization in Africa. The dramatic re-categorization of many African states in not too favorable terms further underlined this. However, these developments were not clearly speltled out. They had to be gleaned out from the various write ups in the bulletin. Thus, unless one was conversant with the rapid changes occurring in the states, the sudden changes in the categorization of some African states might never be understood. Incidentally, between 1990 and 1995, many African states had traversed many of these categorizations but none attained the ultimate: "consolidation". They usually revolved around mobilization and legitimation because of the absence of transparent commitment to democratization.

Closing Remarks: Some Possible Explanations for the Failure of Democratization in Africa

From the foregoing, Africa Demos bulletins have their positive and negative aspects. It is important to note that democratization in Africa was highlighted in isolation of its socio-economic situation. One would think it would be difficult to democratize in an atmosphere of poverty, disease, insecurity and ignorance! This made it easy for autocrats with state funds at their disposal to keep themselves in power. Africa Demos made its categorizations and analysis without much consideration given to these problems. Majority of Africans are not literate and the same percentage live at the subsistence level. Progressive changes were being called for or expected from a continent that is suffering from overwhelming squalor, diseases, poverty, civil strife, etc. So, there is a tendency for a call for "popular democracy" as the immediate solution. But, how can anything meaningful emerge from such degradation even if popular democracy was introduced? In many African communities and families, there is hardly a modicum of

democratization in recognition of the role women. How can Africa be trusted to be democratic at the polity level? With popular democracy, the few would simply seize power and the fate of the generality of the people would be sealed. So much so for popular democracy and its advocates!

Similarly, it was believed that democratization was occurring with the introduction of multi-partyism, at the exit of one partyism and military dictatorship. But the question is: does democracy simply mean multi-partyism? Is multi-partyism the only means of measuring the viability or feasibility of democracy? Some scholars opined that because the various democratization efforts were championed by the West and Western institutions – World Bank and IMF — liberal democracy as advocated cannot succeed. This, by extension, means that they should opt for popular democracy as the panacea for Africa at this point in time. But the snag in this "fire-brigade solution" is that neither liberal nor popular democracy can succeed in Africa in its present situation, unless of course, they were indirectly advocating autocracy.

Autocracy would be established whether the government was military, single or multi-party system! The autocrat finds a way of getting round the system, like a leopard which cannot change its spots. It is difficult for an autocrat to metamorphose into a democrat. Thus, liberal democracy does not necessarily account for the inability of a vibrant economy to evolve. Most African economies are based on single products. Also, Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) introduced in the mid 1980s, has not helped matters. All the same, the rulers would not allow whatever gains generated through SAP to be ploughed back into the economy or to positively affect the lives of the ordinary people. This has been one significant impediment to African democratization efforts because nobody engages in democratization with an empty stomach. Another problem was the absence of dedicated leadership - statesmen. African states have not had statesmen, only rulers. The states who could have emerged have been effectively muffled.

Perhaps, a workable suggestion would be simply this: let African politicians honestly embark on a modicum of democratization process, yes, its liberal democratic variant first, thereby assuring the existence of accountability, rule of law, independent judiciary, free press and strong civil society, after which some form of "originality" or African democracy that is autochtonous (home-grown), could be introduced and which would guarantee happiness for everyone or at least, the majority. Undoubtedly, many people in Africa desire democracy, but there is a world of difference between desirability and feasibility of democracy. There also is need for peace and development. Democracy would ensure full liberation of creative energies of people in all facets of the society. Such a liberation pre-supposes the availability and the accessibility to all good things of life and rights such as right to work, food, education, health services, freedom of speech, assembly, movement, privacy and participation in decision making, particularly on issues which affect ones life. In absence of these, there will be no full participation in socio-political matters. This alienation means withdrawal of legitimacy from governmental authority. Conflict will inevitably ensure and peace will be shattered. Without peace there can be no development: political, social and economic.

While some economic development had been attained under authoritarian rule elsewhere, African authoritarians have not been able to develop their countries. Instead they milked dry without the least idea of replacing it. As Nnoli observed, it is important to note the worth of the sense of membership within the society, people's dignity and disposition towards humane values and action. All this can be guaranteed in a society which upholds human rights. Democracy is a precondition for human rights which so far has no meaning to African dictators who merely appended their signatures to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights (see Nnoli, 1994: 3 & 4).

One glaring shortcoming of Africa Demos was that it was gendered. Not a single article focused on the "Woman Question"

and its role in the democratization process. True, there were women contributors but none addressed women's problems. There are extant literature on the problem of women and the absence of women actively participating in the democratization process and that no eye-brows were raised in the twelve issues over a period of five years on this matter, highlights a serious sin of omission committed by the editorial team. Africa Demos was also guilty of the "people oriented" style, which believes that once the problem of the generality of the populace has been addressed, women would be positively affected thus effectively translating people's right to men's right and ignoring women.

It would have enhanced further the quality of bulletin if one or two articles had been devoted to women and measuring their fate particularly in those states designated democratic. It was a trifle disappointing that even known women scholars who contributed articles to the bulletin failed to focus on women and the woman's question either when discussing the state or the political society. It was indeed a serious lapse to have ignored a veritable half the population of Africa in a publication devoted to democratization in Africa. Africa Demos might want to defend itself by pointing to the few times women were mentioned in some articles such as this piece on Nigeria:

> Women remain highly under-represented in Nigerian politics: few party leaders are women and, of the 994 candidates sponsored by parties for the 1990 local elections, less than 5 percent were women. The small number of women appointed to national and state electoral commissions, the prohibitive deposits that candidates must provide, and the recent decision to forbid women's wings in the parties are just a few of the constraints which will continue to hamper meaningful political participation of Nigeria women (vol.ii no.1:5).

There are many issues here which should have been raised or articulated as viable topics on African women and their empowerment (political, social, and economic) in subsequent issues.

Also, in examining the cause for an unsuccessful democratization process, Africa Demos focused mainly on ethnicity as well as corruption but left out religion which has been used to frustrate democratic institutions. Religion, as a mode of intolerance and division, holds its own in most African states but very much so in the Sudan, Algeria, Libya and to a great extent Nigeria even though it was often loudly and consistently denied by the ruling junta of the latter during the period under review. It would have further enriched the contributions of Africa Demos if these had not been lost sight of in the monitoring of events in African states.

Apart from these few omissions, it must have been herculean monitoring African democratization processes with all the vicissitudes therein and particularly when democracy to the African politician is merely what Achille Mbembe refers to as "becoming...presentable in the eyes of the world" (vol.i no.i: 4). Certainly, Africa Demos has made relevant contributions to the contemporary African literature on democratization process.

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Africa Demos as an Educational Tool for Democracy

Tessy Bakary

My reading of the first issue of Africa Demos made me reflect upon an earlier project I had designed. I wanted to create a publication devoted to the development of democracy in Africa in the 1990s so I submitted the idea to a Benin-based NGO, Gerddes-Afrique. Lack of funding forced me to abandon the project but, some time later, a quarterly entitled, "Afrique Democratie et Developpement: Revue de science politique du Gerddes-Cirdd", emerged. Because of my earlier vision of a journal devoted to this subject, my approach to Africa Demos is that of an interested party.

It would be rather simple to try to assess the contents of Africa Demos over the years based on the objectives stated in the first issue of November 1990. I am sure that this type of exercise has been carried out in other evaluations. I have therefore decided to use a different basis for my assessment. Instead of a content analysis, this brief report will be an assessment of whether Africa Demos has been true to a conception of a publication whose goals are: 1) the installation and consolidation of democracy in Africa; 2) giving regular accounts of the unfolding of democratization processes and such issues as the anticipation and deepening of democracy issues, and 3) the use of policy makers, journalists specialized in politics and politicians, as contributors and editors.

Review devoted to the Building and Consolidation of Democracy in Africa

The pressing need for this type of review is related to two observations: intellectual shortcomings and the absence of a specialized publication in Africa.

Intellectual Shortcomings and the Cultural Deficit

The urgent need for a publication such as Africa Demos is a direct consequence of one of the main weaknesses of ongoing attempts to escape from authoritarian rule: the lack of intellectual and ideological preparation for democracy.

Indeed, major political changes in Africa have seldom, if ever, been preceded by substantial intellectual and cultural debate. It is not apparent that the types of postcolonial political regimes, the institutional design and implementation of the principles of freedom, equality and democracy for which many Africans have given their lives have been sufficiently discussed. Therefore, the daily management of the political systems inherited from the colonial powers, and from authoritarian or dictatorial leaders, has been deficient.

The breakdown of the more or less formal democratic regimes established by the colonial powers can partly be traced to the fact that postcolonialism was inadequately thought through by leaders and intellectuals. There has been a cultural deficit, a lack of serious preliminary thinking. Similarly, it seems that the rise of authoritarianism is characterized by the same intellectual, ideological and cultural deficit. Illustrations can be found, first of all, in the ad hoc adoption of constitutional and electoral devices and, secondly, in the resort to the rhetoric of the universalism of democracy and human rights by African intellectuals who overlook a compulsory exercise: the construction of democratic systems more attune to African realities. This failure of the intellectuals is, in large part, responsible for the emergence of "virtual reality" democracies, or at best, democracies by default.

Lack of a Specialized Publication on Democracy in Africa

There are many journals and scholarly publications dealing with politics in Africa. However, there is no publication entirely devoted to the comprehension, analysis and explanation of democratization processes. The invention of democratic political systems in Africa will take time and will be very complex and

painful. This exercise will require a sound intellectual, ideological and cultural foundation so that democratic routines are rooted in national political cultures.

By its mere existence, Africa Demos has tried to overcome this intellectual and cultural deficit and has therefore helped the installation and consolidation of democracy in Africa. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, it had to anticipate, supplement and deepen democratization processes by being a supplier of ideas. It also had to provide accounts of the advances and setbacks in building democracy in Africa.

Supplier of Ideas

In Africa, there does not exist an intellectual review as symbolized by Emmanuel Mounier's, "Esprit", Jean-Paul Sartre's, "Les Temps Modernes", "Le Débat", "Lignes" or one of the latest, Bernard Henri Levy's, "La Règle du Jeu". Without being such a review, i.e., dealing with any subject as the publications listed above, Africa Demos cannot help prepare for post-authoritarianism and the re-invention of politics.

As a supplier of ideas and strategies for the installation of democracy, Africa Demos could have supplemented and enhanced the political transition processes by opening its pages to real debates. It should have been a more democratic forum for the exchanges and confrontations between various conceptions and opinions regarding the building and strengthening of democracy. It could have put forward analyses of the best strategies and assessments of on-going experiences in different countries and publish innovative research and studies in the domain of democracy.

Despite some enlightening in-depth analyses, my general impression is that Africa Demos has been very weak on the specific point of supplying ideas and strategies to political and social actors. It has failed to be the much needed educational tool it could have been at a critical juncture in the history of African countries.

Review of the Topicality of Democracy

Giving accounts of democratization processes in Africa means publishing on a regular basis, studies of political parties, social movements, political clubs and associations and various forms of social organizations which are part of the day-to-day life of any democracy. A review devoted to the construction of democracy in Africa has to keep up with and assess its evolution with analyses of human rights issues, the media and its relationship with those in power, society and elections as central institutions.

Africa Demos has performed relatively well in this specific area. "Bulletin Board" and "Milestones" have been very informative and instructive. "Phases of Transition to Democracy", despite its lack of accuracy, gives a general map of the democratization process. It seems to me that the QDI (vol.2, no. 3, August 1992), has not been well used to update that survey. Country analyses (from Algeria to Zimbabwe) in various issues have provided relevant information on the evolution of the democratic process in different states.

However, I must add, regarding the breadth of coverage of issues related to democratization, some important issues have not received the attention they deserve, for example, elections (six specific contributions), media (no contribution), human rights (the issue is touched upon in different contributions), political parties (no specific contribution) and constitutional and electoral choices in two issues.

A Review of Expertise

The quality of the contributors to the publication (renowned scholars and new talents, journalists specializing in issues related to democracy, and politicians) determine whether the goals mentioned above are reached. This is an important factor that differentiates Africa Demos from other publications dealing with politics in Africa.

The speed and the complexities of the political and social upheaval, make it necessary to go beyond commentaries on current events and issues raised in newspaper headlines.

From Peter Anyang' Nyong'o to Crawford Young, policymakers and scholars with impressive credentials (see the list of recent contributors published in vol. 3, no. 1, February 1992) have contributed very effectively to Africa Demos. However, one would have preferred more contributions from colleagues, especially, francophone scholars, policymakers, journalists and politicians on the continent.

Assessing Political Progress in Africa: Reflections on Africa Demos' Project of a Q.D.I.

Célestin Monga

Political progress is all the rage for those working in the field of the evaluation of social changes. It is a theme that has dominated the debate over the so-called "Third Wave" of democratic transition (Huntington, 1991), especially in African studies (Robinson, 1994). Indeed, today, most scholars are profoundly divided as to whether the political changes which have been taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1990s have led to some positive changes. The recent re-election of Benin's former military dictator Mathieu Kerekou has aggravated the fears and doubts of those who were already disappointed with the positive popular reaction to the coup d'Etat in Niger, the civil war in Congo, the chaotic political evolution in Zambia, the hijacking of the resolutions of the National Conference in Chad and Zaire, and the normalization in Nigeria, and the renewal of dictatorship in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Togo, Kenya or Djibouti. What worries researchers is not the persistence of authoritarianism so much as the threat of popular discontent about democracy. In several countries where institutional changes occurred, little has changed in the domain of governance. Moreover, it is getting more and more difficult to really understand what is going on in those countries that where perceived as becoming democratic.

The QDI idea was an attempt to take up the challenge of clarifying the situation by providing a concrete rating scale of political changes. Neither the mathematical model and the formula used to compute the QDI, nor the results of the measurement exercise were eventually published. But the project attracted some attention in the Africanist community, raising expectations among scholars and policymakers who had been struggling for years to understand the magnitude, the meaning, and the direction of all the political changes spreading across the continent.

In the framework of the overall reassessment of the work carried out by the Africa Demos team at the Carter Center, it is worth revisiting the idea of the QDI. Section 2 of this memorandum briefly presents what the intention was, and deals with the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the project. Section 3 discusses the main assumptions of the framework that was chosen, underlying the problems of undertaking a comparative analysis of the democratic project with a single philosophical source. Section 4 emphasizes the need to reconcile the universalistic approach to democracy with the values of each given society.

What the Q.D.I. Intended to Be

Let us consider the QDI project both from a conceptual standpoint and from a theoretical perspective.

Conceptual Framework

Observing that the democratic process was being trivialized in several African countries where some single-party or military regimes were using tactics borrowed from the colonialists, the Africa Demos team attempted to develop a more sophisticated framework for assessing political changes. In August 1992, they announced they would soon publish on a regular basis the Quality of Democracy Index (QDI), a broader, more accurate indicator of political evolution in Sub-Saharan Africa. The new tool was designed to cover the main areas of the democratic challenge. Ten indicators were chosen in that regard:

- The access of social groups (the type of opportunities offered to historically disadvantaged social and economic groups, and the capacity of these groups to make claims on government and public resources);
- The autonomy of civic associations (the vitality of civil society and their freedom of action vis-à-vis the state);
- Constitutionalism and the rule of law (the attitude of political authorities towards the rules of the political game);
- The electoral process (equal opportunities to all political parties, provided for by the law and respected in practice, and transparency of the electoral process);

- Freedom of assembly and association guaranteed by law;
- Freedom of conscience and expression guaranteed by law;
- Respect of internationally recognized human rights;
- Independent judicial system (the system must be accessible to all citizens and dispense justice fairly and independently to any political force or institution);
- Independent and pluralistic media services (the media should be free from any governmental pressure, and represent a large range of opinion);
- The military forces should be under complete control of civilian authorities and refrain from intervention in political affairs.

Each of these ten indicators was to be rated on a regular basis with a three-point scale, by a team of experts based in the United States and in Africa. But because of the large scale of involvement which was necessary for its implementation, the project was never carried out in practice. Instead of going forward without all the organizational and financial means to sustain it, the Africa Demos team eventually chose to continue using their basic evaluative framework, which was much more subjective. The old framework classified countries they considered to be "established African political systems" into three categories:

- Democratic (usually countries like Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, and the Gambia);
- Authoritarian (Burundi, Djibouti, Libya, Mauritania, Somalia, etc.);
- Directed democracy (Egypt or Zimbabwe).

They also classified the "regimes in transition" according to the strength of their commitment to democracy. On this basis, they also created three categories:

- Strong (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Nigeria...);
- Moderate (Algeria, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Guinea, Mozambique, Niger, Tunisia, Tanzania, Zambia, etc.);

- Ambiguous (Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zaire, etc.).

The overall results of this basic framework were considered to be accurate by most researchers, even though the political trajectories of some of these countries —Côte d'Ivoire or Nigeria for instance— over the past few years suggest that the criteria used for their classification was rather subjective.

Epistemological Basis

The normative framework presented above was evidently designed under several assumptions. Let me mention only three of them. First, the Africa Demos team considered that by enumerating a limited set of criteria, they could come up with a monitoring tool complete enough to measure political progress on a comparative basis. They never assumed democratization to be a static process; but by enunciating a given and static number of indicators for assessing political change in Sub-Saharan Africa, they also answered implicitly the fundamental question raised by Held (1994:4): "Is democracy an essentially western project or is it something of wider, universal significance?" As clearly stated in the first issue of the Bulletin, "democracy is a universal yearning. It can take many institutional forms but the central theme is constant: the people should govern themselves, and those who act in their name should be regularly accountable to the governed." (Africa Demos 1990:1).

Second, they also recognized the complexity of the phenomenon, and the need to see some African imprint in the new structures that were taking shape: "It is for the African people, their societies, institutions and leaders to devise their new political systems and identify the desired steps to achieving them. We do not advocate any particular configuration of such systems." (Idem, p. 1). However, it is hard to reconcile this statement with the previous endorsement of a universalistic view of democracy, since whatever institutional arrangements are adopted, they must end up to the specific outcomes listed above in order to be seen as democratic. What if the political objectives of the African people,

institutions, and leaders, do not match those of the international community? Obviously, the other assumption made here by the QDI team was that one can identify those objectives, and that they are the same as those defined by elsewhere in the world. A rather strong assumption.

Finally, rationality was the philosophical basis of the whole Africa Demos project. This was pretty clear from the objectives stated in the first issue of their publication:

- to identify the goals, accomplishments, constraints and setbacks to democratization in Africa;
- to make the relevant information available in a format that is instructive and moderately analytical;
- to produce a publication that fills the gap between articles in the academic journals and reports in newspapers and magazines;
- to encourage positive developments in African democratization and to indicate ways in which they can be supported.

It is almost a tautology to insist here on the underlying assumptions of these objectives: in order to identify the goals of African political leaders, to define what is relevant information, and to encourage positive developments in the democratization process, one must rely on some sort of normativism and rationality. Moreover, the phases of transition to democracy subsequently defined for the project included eight steps, from decay (the authoritarian regime losing its ability to manage basic aspects of its agenda), to consolidation. In between, the model foresaw a preparatory phase, the decision, formulation, electoral contestation, handover, and legitimization. The linearity of such a theory also implied a heavy reliance on the principles of rational choice theory.

Some Suggestions for Improving the Idea of a Q.D.I.

Several issues could be raised here. I will limit my comments to the difficulties implied by the theoretical framework used for the QDI, and I will suggest some conceptual improvements that could be made to any similar project in the future.

Theoretical Issues (Words and Concepts)

By choosing ten indicators for rating political progress in Africa, the Africa Demos team tried to cover the main areas of human rights as enunciated by the international standards. Indeed, the Quality of Democracy Indicators match most of the requirements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are, therefore, in conformity with the provisions of international law — that is, consistent with the United Nations covenants ratified by most African countries. However, one can make the case that the non-Western perspective on human rights and democratization is somewhat missing from the picture, as reflected, for example, in the 1981 African Charter of Human and People's Rights. As Ake, one of the prominent African scholars working on democratization puts it: "Africa requires somewhat more than the crude variety of liberal democracy that is being foisted on it, and even more than the impoverished liberal democracy that prevails in the industrialized countries." (1996:129).

Clearly, one of the basic unresolved contradictions of democratic theory was not addressed by the QDI: most of its ten indicators simply draw upon the universalistic view of human rights, which itself merely actualize the Western idea of habeas corpus (See Monga 1996). In order to take fully into consideration the various possible conceptions of how people define political progress and the development of their collective political well-being, any measure of democratization should be more inclusive, that is, it must try to integrate not only the usual United Nations requirements, but also a grassroots perspective of what is going on in the political arena. Otherwise, one would have to bear the criticism of those who, rightly, advocate the existence of an "African" view of the subject. As Martin rightly puts it, "la culture politique ne saurait être posée autrement que comme une invention continue. Son mouvement est impulsé grâce à l'énergie dégagée par le jeu d'un certain nombre de couples de forces ou, si l'on veut, de dialectiques: dialectique du dedans et du dehors; dialectique de l'affectivité et de la rationalité; dialectique de la tradition et de l'innovation. It is therefore, necessary to aggre-

gate all the dynamics which are involved in the shaping of political culture — and which determine the course, path, and outcome of democratization processes (Diamond 1994).

Because there is a long history of disagreements over the very notion of democracy, its scope, actors, structure, and *finality,* the question of semantics need to be addressed before outlining any measuring framework. In a recent survey of the various uses of the term *democracy* (Collier and Levitsky, 1994) have identified hundreds of meanings, which shows how different the premises adopted by scholars working in that domain can be. Collier and Levitsky's work emphasizes the need for any rating scale to focus on limited issues, and to choose its basic concepts carefully. To paraphrase Lewis Carroll's hero (*Alice in Wonderland*), if one does not know where to go, then it does not matter which way one chooses.

Conceptual Issues (Processes and Dynamics)

The previous discussion of the philosophical foundations of the democratic idea immediately raises the question of the exact nature and scope of the process of political changes. Indeed, from a conceptual standpoint, there is the question of how one defines more precisely the path and the validity of the so-called *democratization process*. What do researchers try to measure exactly when they focus on democratic transitioning?

The basic problem to be addressed here by political scientists is known to historians as the issue of periodization (see Veyne, 1971). What specific period of time should be studied? How do we choose a reference-year for assessing democratic progress? How do we select "important" events, given the high degree of turbulence in African political arenas today? When building a rating scale for political performance, how do we take into account the famous dichotomy between *conjecture* and *structure*? What scientific basis do we give the various political decisions that we choose to emphasize? What scientific criteria do we use to assess the relevance of facts, decisions, or institutional changes,

etc. Which actors are to be considered decisive for the outcome of game — since the assessment of the distribution of real power is crucial to the evaluation of political progress? All these questions must be answered at the conceptual stage of any measurement index of democratization.

Furthermore, it is necessary to establish clear boundaries between the various processes evaluated in each country. The comparative nature of the QDI should have required more precision from Africa Demos' team about the set of events on which the country analyses had focused. For instance, the debate over the distinction between transition and democracy should be addressed. O'Donnell and Schmitter offered a good starting base for this: "Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative. It is characteristic of the transition that during it the rules of the political game are not defined." (1986:6)

Now, there is also an increasing body of literature attempting to desegregate the very idea of a transition to democracy. When analyzing the scope and magnitude of political changes in authoritarian countries, it is necessary to address several questions: does the particular way in which authoritarian regimes unravel have a consequence on the subsequent path followed by a country in its transition to freedom? What are the determinants of the positive changes which are occurring? What factors may impede or accelerate its sustainability? At what specific point do we know that a given country has achieved democratization?, etc. Of course, these reflections may suggest that democracy is nothing else than a utopian and unfinished journey, and that there is no way one could pretend to identify with certainty all the relevant factors determining its outcomes in all countries. They also suggest that it is very difficult to conceptualize distinctly the properties defining the various aspect of the overall democratization process in any country, at any time. In fact, even if one can distinguish the different phases of the process in the abstract, the

empirical evidence tend to show that they often overlap -- and one would then wonder if the so-called democratization normally follows a linear path. In spite of all these puzzling questions, researchers should try to address these difficulties when they design rating scales for social changes.

One useful framework for dealing with these questions is the three-step approach suggested by Gunther et al. (1995): first, there is the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, which leads to the beginning of the transition to democracy; second, there is the process of consolidation of democracy, which nornally takes time; finally, there is democratic persistence, that is, the end product of a long democratization process -- since the process of democratic consolidation should be conceived as reaching closure at one point in time or another. Such an approach, which implies to focus on the individual trajectory of each country, rather than relying on a normative and pre-conceived model of democratization, is very helpful -- more concise and usable than the eight-step approach elaborated by the Africa Demos team. It also highlights two possible routes for assessing political progress: the first is a prospective approach, which seeks to identify the characteristics of each country's transition, and to infer from there the nature, rhythm, and outcomes of the democratic process. The second is to move backward, using a structuralist methodology to identify and to assess the underlying factors which led to transition, consolidation, and democratic persistence. It seems that the Africa Demos team had intuitively all these issues in mind while designing their rating scale, which tends to use both frameworks. However, I think that the QDI project could have been more powerful, had it taken into account more extensively all the various working hypotheses expressed above, and made its assumptions more clearly.

Another conceptual way for evaluating political changes in Africa would be to use the intriguing idea of a two-phase framework suggested by O'Donnell (1992). According to O'Donnell, most Latin American countries have indeed been through two transitions: the first one occurred in the 1970s with the initial

stirrings of crisis under authoritarian rule. It ended with the establishment of a government elected, but it was punctuated with hardships and even some setbacks. The second one began with the inauguration of a democratic government in many countries in the late 1980s, and will end, hopefully, with the consolidation of democratic practices.

Anyone studying African politics would find such an idea very enlightening, since empirical evidence from many Sub-Saharan countries tend to confirm that it is right. There is obviously a certain degree of parallelism between the difficulties of democratic transitions we observe today in Zambia, Niger, or Congo, and what we witnessed in the 1970s and 1980s in Nicaragua, peru, or Paraguay. And if indeed it is the case that certain types of political market structures require a two-phase democratization, then we must rethink the basic conception of any rating scale designed to assess political progress in developing countries. Of course, the boundaries between the two transitions are never clear-cut, and may vary from a country to another.

Analytical Issues (Steps)

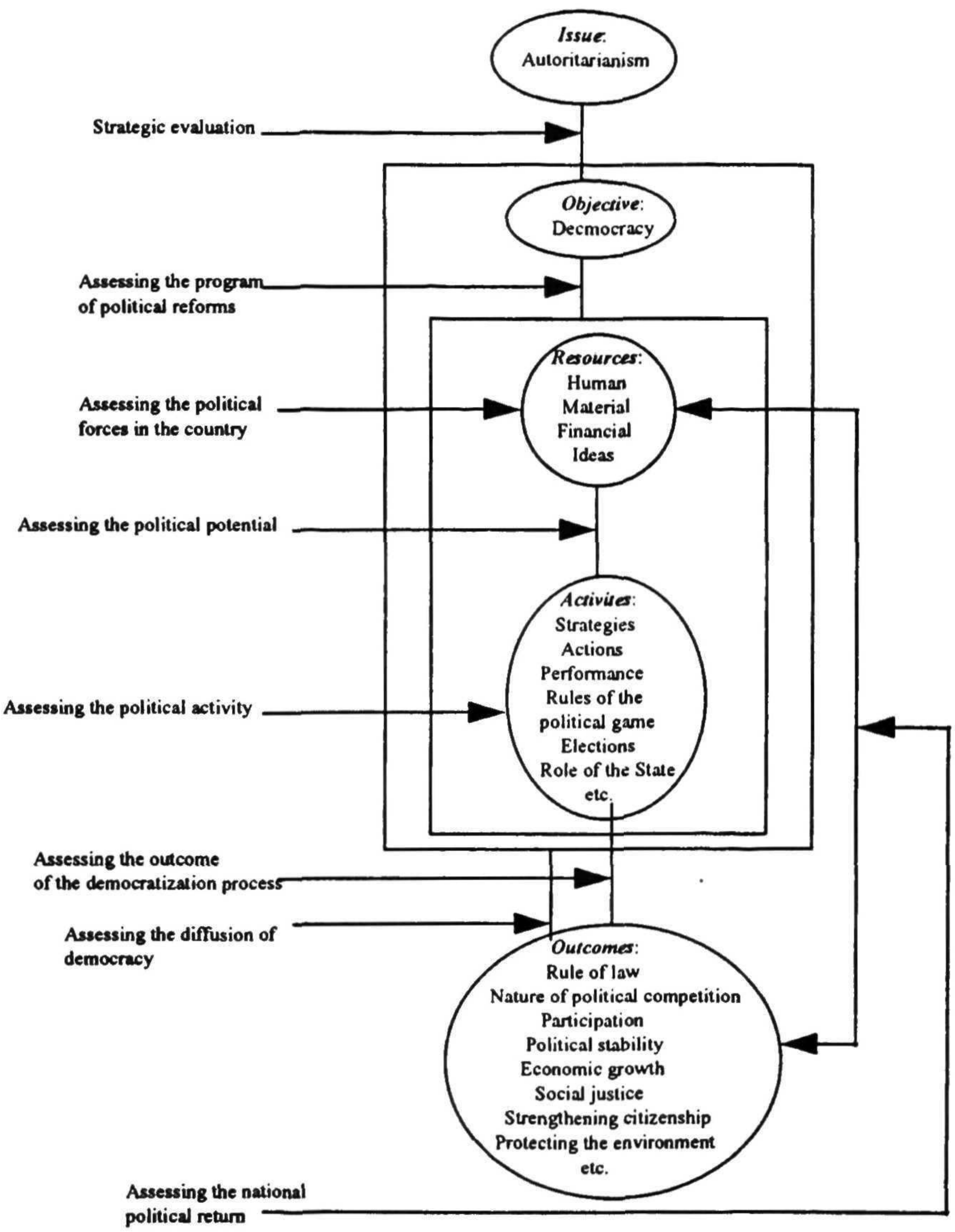
The previous comments on theory and concepts can only lead to the analysis of the various steps taken by researchers in order to evaluate these political changes. From economics and finance, we have learned that one needs to be very specific as to which particular aspect of any project is measured. Evaluation is an analytical framework with a number of different components. The democratic project, like any other project, may be evaluated according to:

- its objectives
- the resources used to achieve them
- the actions taken and/or activities undertaken to realize them
- and the effects or results of these actions

Let us assume that all preliminary, theoretical questions have been treated. Taking each of the four above-listed components in isolation from the others, one might attempt to confine the evalua-

tion of the democratic project to a single aspect of the process. The following diagram breaks down the different phases of the democratic project, applying a project analysis model to African political markets:

The diagram helps one frame several useful questions: just what was the QDI measuring in the end? The quality of the stated political objectives of the new actors in the political game? If so,



Source: Monga (1996)

how were they measured? If not, why not? It seems logical enough to assess the success of the democratic enterprise in terms of its objectives. Similarly, one might ask what the QDI indicators would have told us about each country's available resources and about the quality of the resources used to advance the project of political reform. What is the value of these resources and what strategies have been adopted to make optimal use of them and to achieve the desired objectives? Finally, what are the exact results of this process? What effects have been observed in each country that are due -- exclusively -- to the implementation of a democratization program? Is it even possible to assess, with a high level of precision, political phenomena?

These are tough questions, which simply show how difficult it is for any rating scale to capture all the subtleties encapsulated into the idea of political progress.

Conclusion

The project of a Quality of Democracy Index was certainly a very ambitious idea, and all the policymakers and researchers working on African issues would have welcomed its results. The current situation is confusing to many people, even to those who claim to be well informed. To date, there is no research institution that could really assess, with a consistent tool, the impact of the pro-democracy revolution that swept Africa at the start of the 1990s. The attempts by organizations like The Freedom House, the UNDP, or by human rights monitoring organizations like Africa Watch or Amnesty International are unable to provide a rigorous "accounting technique" of the way they rank African regimes. They did not clearly define the various concepts, processes, and steps that should be taken into account when one tries to measure on a comparative basis the scope of political changes occurring across the continent.

The conceptual map laid down by the Africa Demos team also gave little place to alternative values about how the democratization process should be designed and implemented. Predict-

ably, it would have suffered from criticisms by relativists, those who would have challenged the rationalist foundations of its core principles, or, to put it bluntly, its Western bias. This is not to say, however, that the relativist approach to freedom is *the* right one -- such an assumption would justify all the cruel rhetoric and techniques used by authoritarian regimes to legitimize their actions and to resist democratic change. Indeed, there is a need to reconcile the two approaches, and to design a measurement tool for democratization that would include both all the moral principles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and also the ethical values of different cultural spheres.

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Africa Demos: A Brief Retrospective

Richard Joseph

Africa Demos was a collective product. The idea for the bulletin was sown during the second seminar of the African Governance Program of the Carter Center held in March 1990. On the eve of the seminar, the ceremonies to mark the historic transfer of power in Namibia from South Africa to an elected Namibian government had taken place. Between the first seminar in February 1989 and its sequel, the USSR had disintegrated, transitions to more open and competitive systems throughout the former Eastern bloc had commenced, and demands for the overthrow of Africa's many authoritarian systems were on the upsurge.

The original Demos team consisted of three of my graduate students (Allison Calhoun, William Downs and Sarah Gill), two undergraduates (Monty Agarwal and Amy Poteete), and an assistant professor in my Department of Political Science at Emory University, Courtney Brown. We met regularly as a working group to create what was first called a comparative research project on African democracy. The students were given initial assignments to abstract from the academic literature on democratization the elements with which we would later construct an analytical framework for classifying African transitions.

We argued over virtually every word and the phrasing of every definition in the analytical schema which was reprinted in the bulletin with only minor adjustments during the next five years. Despite its inadequacies, the reason why this schema survived the explosion of political change in Africa during these years can be attributed to the careful effort that was invested in constructing it in the first place. Each participant brought a particular set of skills to the enterprise and, despite the vigor with which we debated each point, the group remained remarkably collegial and

united. Bill Downs brought a unique verbal facility which contributed to the elegant phrasing of some of the definitions, and Monty Agarwal provided the software from his geography lab with which the distinctive Africa Demos map was constructed.

Although the bulletin was eventually published by the African Governance Program of the Carter Center, it was designed in Emory's Institute of African Studies of which I was also the founding director. As soon as we prepared the analytical framework, we began monitoring the changes that were occurring with great rapidity in Africa. It was a logical step to publishing our findings along with case studies of particular countries. We agreed on a precise set of objectives that was published on the first page of the first issue and to which all the subsequent issues remained remarkably faithful. Adjustments were made from issue to issue but we never had to alter the original objectives and guiding principles. An early decision was also made, and sustained, to provide reports and commentaries of related activities of the Carter Center.

While it set out to monitor the process of transition to more democratic systems, Africa Demos inevitably became a part of that process itself. Wilson Wanene recognized this phenomenon when he writes that the bulletin "not only informed on political developments but started to create a unique community. By reading the publication, one discovered some of the different players who, in their various ways, were seriously concerned about Africa's political future. These activists and scholars were already forging a community of their own as they met in meetings such as those organized at the Carter Center." The contribution that this bulletin made by providing information and analyses to a wide spectrum of readers will perhaps never be fully appreciated.

As Michael Chege contends, the idea of ranking African governments according to their degree of democratization created an initial stir, especially among diplomatic representatives

of these governments. Eventually, however, the furor subsided and many governments, African and non-African, used the reports and rankings as an independent and authoritative source of information about these historic developments. Here again, the fact that the Demos team had provided a clear explanation of the basis on which these evaluations were conducted contributed significantly to the general acceptance of these rankings despite the awareness that they could only capture broad trends.

We were often able to make effective use of the criticisms we received, especially from official sources. Pat Williams has cited the case of the letter to the editor concerning the degree of democracy in Djibouti (vol. 1, no. 3) which we reprinted at length because it was typical of the kind of responses we were receiving from governments whose self-designations as "democratic" were coming under challenge. A similar defense by the Ambassador from Rwanda (vol II, no. 2) prompted a comprehensive rejoinder by one of our readers that was published in the subsequent issue. All governments engage in attempts to counter unfavorable external commentaries as can be seen in the letters published in vol. III, nos. 1 and 2 from the South African and Nigerian ambassadors. In the former case, the De Klerk government was pulling back the veil of oppression while in the latter the veil was thickening. In this regard, the bulletin can continue to serve as a reference source for the changes in attitudes during these critical years within opposition as well as government circles.

This is an appropriate moment to say a word about what was intended to be a major initiative of the Demos team, namely the Quality of Democracy Index or qdi (vol. II, no. 3) since that initiative is often not clearly understood. Although the analytical and classificatory framework devised by the initial team had proven useful, it obviously obscured many of the nuances of democratization. For several months in 1992, an expanded team worked to devise a more satisfactory approach. However, once the ten indicators were identified and explanations for each prepared, it was discovered that the systematic implementation of

the QDI was beyond our resources, both material and human. Our reach exceeded our grasp. We therefore had to settle, reluctantly, for publishing the QDI in the hope that others would be inspired to take up the challenge, or we would find a way to do so ourselves in a satisfactory manner. For subsequent issues of the bulletin, we continued using, with minor adjustments, what we regarded as an imperfect classificatory schema because it still served a generally useful purpose.

Michael Chege refers to an important facet of Africa Demos when he contends that it has set a high standard in bridging the world of academic and practical realities in Africa." The editorial team took on the challenge of reaching out to a diverse audience of academics, the community of policymakers, political activists and interested general readers. Based on the request for subscriptions and the oral or written responses from readers, it was apparent that we had succeeded in creating a format that appealed to these diverse groups. What we learned from our relative success is the extent to which the fundamental principles of democratization are widely shared. The questions that scholars pose about these processes could be addressed in ways that spark the interest of individuals more concerned with the practical day-to-day realities of transforming authoritarian systems. The small inaugural group of seven faculty members and students of Emory University in the summer of 1990, through Africa Demos, eventually connected with the wider community of which Wilson Wanene speaks.

In conclusion, the basic story of Africa Demos is one that is of universal relevance: a small group of individuals can make a significant difference if their purpose, reasoning and actions are consistent and transparent. The bulletin remained unique throughout its existence. Although other magazines and journals eventually began paying more attention to the accomplishments of, and setbacks to, democratization in Africa, none was able to speak with authority to the range of readers that constituted the Africa Demos constituency. Thanks to the support of a small number of

individual donors, and one institutional supporter, The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the bulletin was distributed free-of-charge to anyone who simply asked for it.

We will never know even the approximate number of persons who read it in an original or photocopied form. It tried to be what democracy ultimately is: a set of instruments that empower people ever anew to decide how, by whom, and for what ends they choose to be governed. We tried to include in each issue the names of many of the individuals who, usually for no or little remuneration, read numerous media reports to be distilled into a short readable paragraph and helped us decide whether a country was progressing, regressing or diverting from its self-appointed pathway to a more democratic future. They could not be present in these countries to assist directly the democratic forces. However, Africa Demos provided them the opportunity to bring these developments to the attention of others with the capacity to act. It is through such connections, tangible and intangible, that all democratic systems are eventually built. Even when they collapse or are pulled down, the ideas behind each of the blueprints can be preserved. This, ultimately, may be the lasting contribution of a bulletin given the name of those it ultimately sought to serve, the people of Africa.

A more comprehensive and rigorous publication could certainly be imagined. This one was not imagined and was therefore imperfect. Yet it was timely in its compilation and presentation of information and analyses that countered the prevailing skepticism regarding Africa's democratic prospects. The gap it aimed to fill widened as these processes unfolded and became more complex. Several different publications are now needed to address the many challenges of democratization in Africa, old and new. I am sure I speak for all who contributed to the production of Africa Demos in saying that it is an experience we will always treasure and which should be of lasting service to the universal pursuit of government of, by and for the people.

Africa Demos & Democratization: Divining the Prospects and Challenges

Ruth Iyob

Africa Demos is to be congratulated for surviving half a decade of the most exciting and turbulent period of Africa's political history. It covered events from the Cape to Algiers; from Ouagadougou to Berbera, no easy task. Demos, as its name intimates, relates to people and to their participation in the affairs of their respective states — a basic indicator of the existence of democracy. As a member of the editorial committee from 1992-1993 I witnessed the evolution of Demos from a newsletter on Africa to an academically-oriented yet accessible journal. Africa Demos reflected its diverse contributors and readers which included students, activists, civil servants and academics. This diversity lent it a realism lacking in most academic journals where dialogues tend to be theoretical and abstract.

In its six years of existence, Demos published numerous articles that reflected different views on democracy and democratization, transmitting the messages of proponents and critics of liberal democracy as well as incumbent regimes and their opponents. It was among the first to report on efforts of democratization and/or re-democratization in countries as diverse as Benin, Uganda, Algeria, Eritrea, Niger, Mauritius and South Africa. I was pleasantly surprised during my recent stay in Africa to discover that the wide circulation of Demos had created a forum which engaged different voices on the issues. Africa Demos should be credited with transmitting debates on the progress and reversal of democratization in an accessible manner in both Africa and the United States. Its simple style and format, as well as commentaries focusing on assessment of the democratic performance of African regimes, made it a useful supplement to courses on African Politics.

From 1990 - 1996 Africa Demos provided a key arena for lively debates on issues ranging from democratization and social movements[1] to the relations between elections and democracy.[2] When the time came to assess the achievements and failures of Africa Demos the evaluative essays reflected a diversity of views and visions. 3 All contributors agreed upon its readability as a major strength. Michael Chege sums up the six-year achievements of Demos as setting "a high standard in bridging the worlds of academia and practical realities in Africa." Adigun agbaje points out that although the use of the "checklist" as a methodology could be regarded as a weakness by some, it constitutes a strength due to "its ability to express...those ingredients of democratization and governance that are universal in character..." Stephen N. Ndegwa discusses the points of contention and consensus among African scholars about the "genesis," "character," and "dividends" of democracy. He argues that locating the impetus for democratization firmly within African societies and their respective historical legacies is a prerequisite for a better implementation of needed reform.

Patrick Molutsi tackles three important issues. The first is one of fair and equitable coverage of political development. He criticizes Africa Demos for de-linking the economic effects of SAPs from demands for democratization. Thirdly, he adds a crucial reminder that "...the attitudes, commitment and coalitions of the forces of transition were not addressed" thus leaving readers with a distorted view of the democratic character of the challengers to incumbent regimes. Wilson Wanene's piece introduces the importance of the character of the opposition, its actions during elections and the need for domestic monitoring groups that can be protected from harassment. Wanene echoes Molutsi when he brings up the case of the fragmented Kenyan opposition in which "infighting...contributed heavily to [Moi's] victory."

The above evaluators generally assessed Africa Demos positively while pointing out shortcomings. Kwame A. Ninsin, taking a different angle, questions the appropriateness of the six

objectives of the publication adopted by the editorial committee in November 1990. While the first three objectives are assessed as possible to fulfill, even if only partially, Ninsin's scholarly essay points out the overly ambitious and idealistic (possibly even paternalistic) tone inherent in the last three objectives, thus questioning the viability of Demos as an agent of change. Referring to one of the stated objectives, "to, give voice to the African demos, the people of the continent, who have often seen decades of authoritarian colonialism succeeded by the authoritarian governance of their own rulers," Ninsin asserts that Africa Demos located outside the arena of the actual struggle for democracy "...lacked the moral and political claim to assume this decisive role"4 Although admittedly rather severe in its castigation of the idealism of the first volume, Ninsin's view represents a point of view among Africans and Africanists that western-based publications cannot be free of ideological and methodological biases that ignore the harsh realities of the cycles of poverty and the continued disillusionment of Africans with post-colonial rule.

In contrast to Ninsin'd critique, Tessy Bakary starts from the standpoint that Africa Demos attempted to "overcome the intellectual and cultural deficits" lacking among Africans and "has helped the installation and consolidation of democracy." Bakary does not reject Demos's role as an external agent but goes so far as to place upon it the burden of acting as a "supplier of ideas and strategies for the installation of democracy." He also points out the need for more participation from Francophone Africa and for articles on neglected issues like the media and political parties. The contrasting views from Ninsin and Bakary reflect the different approaches to the role of external actors and their support for democratization.

Patricia Williams raises the issues of gender and religion in the context of the struggle for democracy in Africa. She points out that the subject of women's rights as citizens trail behind such debates as the merits of "people's democracy" vs. "liberal democracy." Williams aptly notes that Africa Demos was guilty

of assuming that once democratic rights were assured for the general population that "women would be positively affected thus effectively translating people's rights to men's rights and ignoring women." Williams also contends that more attention should have been given to the politicization of religion and the portrayal of "stage-managed" democratization.

Célestin Monga's evaluaţion of the QDI is by far the most theoretically sound and well presented essay of Africa Demos' most problematic component -- the conceptualization, design and application of this index. Monga is cognizant of the fact that Africa Demos' original QDI project "was never carried out in practice" and that the team reverted to a subjective evaluation of "established African political systems." He assesses the 8-phase transition as rooted in national choice theory. Monga points out the heavy influence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the absence of "a grassroots perspective of what is going on in the political arena." He reiterates the importance of all the factors that shape the political culture which in turn "determine the course, path, and outcome of the democratization process." He recommends that future designs of tools of measurement of democratization embrace the moral principles embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the "ethical values of different cultural spheres."

From the various evaluative essays presented in this volume it is obvious that despite Africa Demos' shortcomings the process of democratization was made accessible to a wide audience through the use of a system which presents the phases of transition to democracy. The publication of Africa Demos underscored the need for more rigorous and accurate "accounting techniques" of the process and outcome of democratization. I would like to take this opportunity to make some suggestions which take cognizance of the criticisms presented by the various contributors to this evaluative volume. I believe that the de-linking of three critical components have contributed to gaps in the study of democratization as presented in Africa Demos.

The existence and character of an opposition to the regime experimenting with democracy is crucial. Is the opposition's platform so articulated that dialogue is possible? Does the opposition represent a viable alternative to the incumbents or is it a case of old wine in new bottles (Kenya? Zaire?) Does the opposition speak for the majority of society or does it simply represent narrow religious and ethnic interests?

Secondly, the political culture of the society within which political and economic liberalization and democratization are taking place must be factored in. Is there a tradition of dialogue about governance? Is there a culture of public silence relegating political discourse to the grapevine or clandestine networks? Is there a culture of fear which militates against meaningful participation in elections or constitutionalism? Is there a gendered ethos which is intolerant of equal and meaningful participation of women in the political and socio-economic arenas?

Thirdly, the political economic status of the country undergoing transition or transformation is a crucial parameter which links socio-economic realities with the political expectations of polities in flux. Does the "transiting" country have or can it build the economic base on which to build new or reformed political institutions? Does it have a stable currency? Is it creditworthy? Is the regime overseeing the transition capable of generating resources domestically? Can it gain access to funds to deliver popular demands for basic services such as health care, infrastructure development and adequate salaries for civil servants?

The above comments are made with the benefits of hindsight after a two and half year sojourn in Africa where I witnessed first-hand the complexities of democratization. My experiences in the Horn (1993-1995) exposed me to a wide spectrum of political experiments ranging from the crafting of a reconstructed entity in Somaliland, to the emergence of a pluralist Eritrean nation and the establishment of a federalist Ethiopio seek-

ing to balance centralized governance with the exercise of self-determination. In these three countries, a crucial component to the understanding of political events is the dialectical relationship between the regimes in transition and their opposition.

The nature and pace of democratization in the Horn continues to unfold. Observers are presented with the positive contribution of clan-based leaders in Somaliland in contrast to the implosion of Somalia. The political legitimization of ethnic identity in Ethiopia is juxtaposed with the consolidation of a secular and unitary state in a traditionally cleavage-ridden Eritrea. All this in the shadow of an expansionist religious fundamentalism in the Sudan which threatens to unravel the fragile new institutions of its neighbors by exporting its militants across the borders. The various pieces of these puzzles which contain vivid examples of consensus-building as well as coercive tactics cannot be grasped without understanding the interaction between the incumbent regimes and their oppositions as well as among the opposition groups themselves.

The character of the opposition and its tactics determine its legitimacy in society. In Somaliland the divisions between northern clans were swiftly relegated to the back burner in the face of the greater danger of being swallowed in the abyss of Aideed's Somalia. In Somalia the Hobbesian nightmare continued and clan politics spawned a destructive anarchy. In Ethiopia, the opposition(s) continued to be overtly vocal about the dangers of ethnic federalism but their actions mainly resulted in the boycotting of elections which deprived their constituents of meaningful participation. In Eritrea, where the opposition is in self-imposed exile in Middle Eastern and European capitals, the refusal to participate in the referendum on independence eroded any semblance of legitimacy thereby leaving a vacuum. In the Sudan, a very vocal opposition finds itself confronting traditional religious and ethnic cleavages which pit the North against the South. The inability of the numerous opposition groups to transcend this divide has left the theocratic rulers - who revert to

jhadism to justify oppression and discrimination - as the sole players in the political arena.

The complicated narrative of democratization is incomplete without a clear picture of the economic and institutional wherewithal necessary for the implementation of stated goals. It is also dependent on the type of leadership at both the incumbent's and opposition's helms. Democracy is indeed a messy business and the study of processes does not fit well-meaning but elegant prescriptions. If we agree with Michael Chege's assessment of democracy as "...a continuous self-correcting process" and that the "...fundamental challenge...is the nurturing of gains made so far,"[5] then it is time to assess how we can gain a better understanding of the challenge of transition to democracy and the threats of regression towards autocracy in the 21st century. Thus, the half-decade of experience derives its importance as much from what we need to avoid as what we have yet to uncover in our quest to understand the process of democratization in the African context. The above comments are made in the sincere hope that rather than let the legacy of Africa Demos drift into oblivion we refine our dissections of the complexities and vicissitudes of the democratic experiment in Africa.

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Appendices

I. Comparative Research Project on African Democracy, 1990

II. Selections from Africa Demos, 1990 and 1995

III. Quality of Democracy Index, vol. II, no 3 (1992)

IV. Africa Demos Reader Survey and Evaluation, 1995

THE CARTER CENTER OF EMORY UNIVERSITY

African Governance Program

Comparative Research Project on African Democracy

The winds of political change have reached Africa, blowing southwards from the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and northwards from the liberation struggles in southern Africa. When Nelson Mandela emerged from the South African prison system after 27 years, he pushed open a door for all political detainees and dissidents in Africa.

In February 1989, the African Governance Program of the Carter Center of Emory University conducted a pathbreaking seminar that resulted in two seminal publications which identified the fundamental resources and avenues for political reform in Africa: Perestroika without Glasnost in Africa (seminar report) and Beyond Autocracy in Africa (working papers). A similar series of publications based on a March 1990 seminar on "African Governance in the 1990s: What can be done?" is currently in preparation.

The list of African governments that have indicated a willingness to liberalize their political system grows almost weekly. It includes Angola, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea and Mozambique. Weaker commitments have been made by Mali, Niger, Zaire and Zambia. Some other governments are resolute in resisting pressures for change, such as those of Cameroon and Kenya, while a few others, such as Robert Mugabe's in Zimbabwe, seem determined to take their country in a more authoritarian direction.

To meet the demands posed by these developments, the African Governance Program has created a Comparative Research Project on African Democracy. It is conducted by a team of Emory University faculty and graduate students, initially from the Political Science Department, and assisted by student interns from Emory and other U.S. universities. It's work is directed by Dr. Richard Joseph, Carter Center Fellow, in association with Dr. Courtney Brown and Mr. William Downs, recipients respectively of a summer faculty fellowship and re-

search assistantship funded by a grant to the Carter Center from the Hewlett Foundation.

The research team has set itself the following initial tasks:

- to collate in a systematic way relevant information about political transitions in Africa;
- to create computer-based models of the different processes of transition;
- to identify the major hurdles to political reform in African countries;
- to suggest ways in which these transitions can be assisted by external actors and agencies.

To facilitate the work of this project, we welcome information and ideas that are pertinent to the above tasks. Occasional bulletins will be published making known our findings and suggestions. Individuals and/or organizations wishing to be placed on our mailing list should send us their names and addresses. This project will also produce materials for consultations that will be held at the Carter Center and Emory University. In collaboration with other research and policy institutes, we hope eventually to serve as a clearinghouse for information and advice about these vital but precarious transitions to constitutional democracy.

Summer, 1990

Africa Demos Volume 1, Number 1

November 1990

> The Greek word, demos, acquired three successive meanings, all relevant to contemporary Africa; dwellers of the countryside; the largest class of the population,rural and urban, distinguishable from the notables; and the assembly of the citizenry for the conduct of public affairs.

Democracy is a universal yearning. It can take many institutional forms but the central theme is constant: the people should govern themselves, and those who act in their name should be regularly accountable to the governed. Most of the African continent was subjected to decades of authoritarian rule by European nations. The end of colonialism, however, did not initiate a golden age of self-rule. Instead, single parties, single rulers and military groups soon appropriated the instruments of government.

Africa Demos is intended to serve the transitions to constitutional democracies that are now underway in many African countries. It is for the African people, their societies, institutions and leaders to devise their new political systems and identify the desired steps to achieving them. We do not advocate any particular configuration of such systems. Developments elsewhere in the world, especially the ending of the Cold War geopolitics, have emboldened the struggle for democratic renewal in Africa.

We monitor these changes in all their variety and complexity. We have created a framework for classifying these transitions and the different degrees of commitment to them. This framework, initially derived from models found in the scholarly literature, has been adapted to reflect the African experience.

This project is experimental and flexible. We are prepared to modify our approach as the situation demands. We welcome suggestions from our readers, especially in response to the three preliminary issues. We then hope to begin publishing Africa Demos on a regular basis. What are our objectives?

- to identify the goals, accomplishments, constraints and set backs to democratization in Africa.

- to make the relevant information available in a format that is instructive and moderately analytical.

- to produce a publication that fills the gap between articles in the academic journals and reports in newspapers and magazines.

- to encourage positive developments in African democratization and to indicate ways in which they can be supported.

- to remain independent of all competing parties and interests, African and non-African, except for our general commitment to the universal principle of government of, by and for the people.

Africa Demos

Phases of Transition to Democracy

1. **Decay:** The government loses its ability to manage basic aspects of its agenda, such as personal security and economic welfare. Outward signs of decay may include the decline in economic growth, maldistribution of resources, financial and political scandal, and electoral fraud. The government is unable to produce minimally acceptable levels of effectiveness and legitimacy, and is confronted by external criticism and the demonstration effects of democratic transition.

2. **Mobilization:** Widespread demands for fundamental change are made by disparate sectors of society, such as students, labor, civil servants, and religious groups. Calls for new leadership and economic reform are prominent, as are those for a more democratic system.

3. **Decision:** In response to mounting pressure, political leaders agree to establish a more pluralistic system and to institutionalize important aspects of the democratic process, such as accountability, rule of law, and competitive elections. The decision is subject to three caveats: (1) the democratic content of the decision may be incidental to other substantive issues; (2) the decision may not resolve important questions about procedure; (3) where the decision is made by ruling elites, it still must be accepted by major political factions.

4. **Formulation:** Details of the transition to democracy are worked out. Procedures are established, and a schedule for the transition is set. Promulgation of a new electoral code accompanies constitutional revision or the drafting of a new constitution.

5. **Electoral Contestation:** The crux of transition entails unimpeded registration of voters and parties, campaigning, voting, and the declaration of winners.

6. **Handover:** After the elections, a peaceful transfer of power to a more democratic government
occurs.

7. **Legitimization:** The legitimacy of the government as well as the constitutional democratic system generally is accepted. Challenges of particular policies, such as economic reforms and wage policies, do not automatically indicate a rejection of the democratic system.

8. **Consolidation:** Democracy becomes "consolidated" when there is widespread respect for fundamental constitutional provisions, especially the rules governing succession of office.

African Political Systems

Democratic: A system enjoying wide competition between organized groups, numerous opportunities for popular participation in government, and elections that are regularly and fairly conducted. Constitutional guarantees of civil liberties and human rights are effectively enforced.

Authoritarian: A system with highly restricted opportunities for political mobilization. Power is exercised by a leader or small group of leaders who are not formally accountable to an electorate. There are no effective constitutional limits to the exercise of political power.

Directed Democracy: A system in which formal institutions and practices of constitutional democracy are present. In practice, however, the extensive powers of the ruler, party, or regime severely limit contestation by individuals, organized groups, legislative assemblies, and the judiciary.

REGIMES IN TRANSITION/ STRENGTH OF COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY

Strong: Government is solidly committed to the creation of a more democratic political system. The strength of commitment is demonstrated by substantive incorporation of democratic processes, by devolution of power, and by gradual or wholesale abandonment of party monopolies.

Moderate: Formal commitment to a democratic transition are accom-

panied by only measured , cautious, and preliminary steps toward institutionalization or pluralism. Promises reflect a sense of democratic purpose, but deeds are not yet commensurate with pledges.

Ambiguous: Ruling elite's commitment to democracy is at best precarious, at worse a ruse, and at most times unclear. On the one hand, stated commitments often are suspended due to exigencies of the moment. On the other hand, construction of elaborate democratic structures suggest little more than maneuvering.

The Quality of Democracy Index (August 1992)

In volume II, No. 2 of Africa Demos, we stated that a pause was being taken to develop a supplementary analytical framework to enable us to evaluate the quality of the democratic transitions that are taking place in many African countries. We are now ready to publish the first stage of this exercise.

It is readily observable that the democratic process is being trivialized in several countries. Borrowing a tactic from the colonialists, some single-party or military regimes are stimulating the emergence of numerous small parties to divide and weaken the opposition. In others, the electoral machinery is being manipulated to allow the opposition just enough seats in parliament to satisfy foreign creditors, thereby blunting external pressure for further political reforms.

The democratic movement in Africa risks giving birth to democracies that are facades behind which monopolistic and repressive practices continue to flourish. It was never the intention of Africa Demos to lend credibility to such deceptions. As a consequence, we have developed a quality of democracy index (QDI). In each issue beginning with Vol. II, No 4, we will give an increasing number of African countries a rating on the *QDI* irrespective of their classification on our basic schema.

A country's rating will depend on a formula that will also be published. We have made arrangements for African scholars based in Africa to assist us in this exercise. We welcome suggestions at every

stage from our readers on ways to improve the framework. In this issue we are publishing the list of indicators which, after careful review, appear most relevant to us. At a subsequent date, we may include indicators that relate to economic activity. As with our basic schema, which will continue to appear, we will make adjustments and additions as circumstances suggest.

Democracy is no longer just an option made available to the African peoples according to the whims of their rulers. It is a right that they must increasingly be allowed, and empowered, to exercise. Our role was initially one of encouraging the democratic openings that were beginning to appear throughout the continent. Today, the struggle has moved to a more complex stage. We have consequently refashioned our tools of analysis to meet the new challenges.

We anticipate that this exercise will prove relevant to other areas of the world undergoing democratization, including our own country whose democratic imperfections we must be equally prepared to acknowledge and correct.

Quality of Democracy Indicators

I. Access of Social Groups

a) Historically disadvantaged social and economic groups enjoy adequate opportunities to make claims on government and share equitably in public resources.

b) Historically disadvantaged social and economic groups enjoy opportunities to make claims on government although the channels of access and the distribution of public resources may not be equitable.

c) Historically disadvantaged social and economic groups are denied opportunities to make claims on government and their access to public resources are severely restricted.

II. Autonomy of Civic Associations

a) A wide range of civic associations exists with access to material resources. They enjoy considerable freedom to determine their policies and operations.

b) While diverse civic associations exist, they are sometimes hindered in their functioning by undue influence exercised by the government or more powerful associations.

c) The vitality of civil society is weakened by the difficulties placed on civic associations in their attempts to emerge, operate or influence government on behalf of their membership.

III. Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law

a) Constitutional provisions are respected by political authorities and governmental actions adhere in form and content to the legal code.

b) Constitutional provisions provide the framework for the conduct of government affairs but are occasionally overridden in practice. Extra-legal actions by political authorities and security personnel are known to take place.

c) Constitutional provisions are disregarded in the conduct of government affairs and the extra-legal actions of political authorities, especially security personnel, are prevalent.

IV. Electoral Process

a) The electoral code guarantees equal opportunities to all political parties to campaign freely and these provisions are respected. Procedures for casting and counting ballots are transparent, fair and effectively administered.

b) While legalized parties exist and have access to political resources, there are significant inequities in their freedom to campaign and in the reliability of electoral results.

c) The electoral system is disadvantageous to particular political parties or significant societal interests, for example, regarding access to material resources, freedom to campaign, the drawing of electoral constituencies or the nature of voting procedures.

V. Freedom of Assembly and Association

a) Freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, by statute, or by a bill of rights. Competing

interest groups—political parties, NGO's, professional associations—respect the rights of other groups to organize freely.

b) Freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, by statute, or by a bill of rights. However, the state does not apply these laws systematically or fairly. Competing interest groups demonstrate minimal respect for the rights of other groups to organize freely.

c) Freedom of assembly and association are not guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, by statute, or by a bill of rights. Competing interest groups demonstrate, through actions and words, contempt for the rights of other groups to organize freely.

VI. Freedom of Conscience and Expression

a) Freedom of conscience and expression are guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, a statute, or a bill of rights.

b) Freedom of conscience and expression are guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, a statute, or a bill of rights. However, the state does not apply these laws systematically or fairly. Competing interest groups show minimal respect for the rights of other groups to practice religion or express their moral/ethical views.

c) Freedom of conscience and expression are not guaranteed by law, whether by a written constitution, a statute, or a bill of rights. Competing interest groups show contempt for the rights of others to practice religion or express their moral/ethical views.

VII. Human Rights

a) Internationally recognized human rights are highly respected in the society and by the governing authorities, effective measures exist to communicate them to the populace, and abuses are quickly corrected when raised by monitoring organizations.

b) Human rights are generally respected by the governing authorities, although there may be significant lapses that are not corrected because of political exigencies or administrative ineffectiveness.

c) The human rights record of the government is poor. Abuses are often not corrected even when brought to the attention of the authorities.

VIII. Judiciary

a) The judicial system is generally accessible to all citizens and dispenses justice fairly and independently of any political force or institution.

b) The judicial system provides access to most citizens, it does not enjoy complete independence from the executive branch and is not fully effective in dispensing justice.

c) The judicial system is not a free and impartial dispenser of justice because of the excessive influence of other branches of the government or particular political forces or inadequate access to its facilities for many citizens. It may also be susceptible to corruption.

IX. Media

i) Media services exist that are independent of government control and are free to represent the range of political opinions without interference or penalty. Services that are government owned provide adequate opportunities for the opposition to communicate its views.

b) While independent media services exist, they are subjected to government interference and must observe certain restrictions in the range of opinions they can present. Government owned services provide insufficient opportunities to the opposition to communicate its views.

c) Media services are subjected to strict government supervision or are entirely owned or controlled by the government. Only views with which the government agrees are permitted to be aired by publicly or privately owned media.

X. Military

j) The military forces are under the complete control of civilian authorities and refrain from intervention in political affairs.

b) While the military establishment exercises influence on policy formation and resource allocation, final decision-making authority remains with the civilian leadership.

c) The military overtly or covertly exercises significant political power and civilian authority over the military forces is absent or deficient.

Africa Demos Reader Survey

This is the last issue of Africa Demos published under the direction of its distinguished editor, Dr. Richard Joseph. Dr. Joseph has returned to full-time teaching and The Carter Center will soon be interviewing candidates to replace him as head of the African Governance Program. We believe it is timely, therefore, to ask for our reader's views about the future direction of the publication. We ask that you complete this survey, prepared after Dr. Joseph's departure, and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Your input will help us and the new AGP Director ensure that Africa Demos continues to be relevant to your needs and interests.

1. Level of education:
   ____college student ___Bachelor's degree
   ___Master's degree ___Ph.D.

2. Profession:___undergraduate student
   ___graduate student ___academic
   ___business ___policy-maker
   ___other

3. How many people read your copy of Africa Demos?
   ___0-3 ___5-7

4. Do you live in the United States?____ If no, where?_____

5. Check all that apply. How is Africa Demos most helpful to you?
   ___as reference material
   ___as a teaching tool

___for personal enrichment about African issues
___to formulate policy on African issues
___other. Please
specify_____

6. Do you receive Africa Demos
___at home ___at the office

7. Are you affiliated with:
___a college or university
___public policy institute
___ government agency
___non-governmental organization
___ the media
___ the diplomatic community
___other. Please
specify_____

8. How would you like to receive Africa Demos?
___every four months
___every six months
___other. Please specify_____

9. Check the type of articles in Africa Demos which are most useful to you.
___in-depth analysis
___country updates
___democratization survey
___other. Please
specify_____

10. Indicate your overall rating of Africa Demos.

___highly useful ___very useful ___useful
___limited use ___not useful

11. Please provide any suggestions or comments that might help us to improve Africa Demos.

12. Please submit the names or individuals/organizations we can add to our mailing list.

Africa Demos Effectiveness Evaluation

In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of Africa Demos, a Carter Center publication, the African Governance program conducted a survey of its close to 2000 subscribers. From this population, a sample size of 196 subscribers (10%) completed the survey. The following are the results from the survey.

Profession

The majority of those sampled are academics (62%). Students comprise of just 6% tied with business professionals. Added with the number of policy makers (7%), and these professions make a fraction of the Africa Demos readers.

Education

Sixty-nine percent of those surveyed have their doctorates. Of those Ph.D's, 39% find their subscription highly useful and 32% very useful.

Nineteen percent have their master's degree. Sixty-one percent educated with master's find Africa Demos very useful and 31% find it highly useful. None found it not useful or having limited use.

The eleven percent of bachelor degrees find the magazine less exciting. With 24% ranking the document not useful and 5% having limited use. Still, 33% rate it very useful and 19% highly useful.

These results suggest that Africa Demos has a more powerful impact on the higher educated.

Number of Readers

The majority of subscribers have 0-3 readers (75%) per issue. Some professors who share the periodical with students, professionals who share with colleagues, and libraries answered (5-7 readers, 24%) that their issue is read by many more.

Citizens

Most readers are located in the US (89%). Of the eleven percent remaining, the following countries were represented in the survey: Zambia, Nigeria, Tunisia, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Benin, Canada, Uganda, Switzerland, UK and Finland.

Use

Enrichment about African issues (32%) and reference (39%) were the popular answers to how they use Africa Demos. Seventeen percent use the publication as a teaching tool with eight percent using it for formulating policy. Four percent find some other use in reading their copy.

Affiliation

Most professionals receive their copy at the office (79%). They are generally affiliated with a college or university (57%). These individuals view Africa Demos very (35%) or highly (42%) useful.

Fifteen percent represent non-governmental organizations. The majority of these representatives rank the publication as useful (68%).

Government agencies and public policy institutes both represent 5% of those sampled. More than 3/4 of these representatives find their subscription to be more than useful. The diplomatic community and the media comprise less than 10% of those surveyed. Twelve percent said they are affiliated with some organization not given in their list of choices.

Frequency

Fifty-five percent would like to receive their issue every four months. Some prefer Africa Demos bi-annually (16%) and others want it "as available."(4%). Twenty-five percent want the periodical at some other frequency (25%), with quarterly being a common comment.

Interest of Readers

The reasons for reading Africa Demos is well distributed. Thirty-three percent enjoy the in-depth analysis. Thirty-six percent use their copy for country updates with twenty-seven percent for the democratization surveys. Four percent say they read if for some other reason.

Overall Rating

The overall rating by subscribers is very good. Seventy-four percent rank the magazine very (38%) to highly (36%) useful. Some find the periodical useful (21%), not useful (1%) or with limited use (4%). These individuals represent less than a third of those sampled.

CONCLUSION

The document is read for its country updates (36%), democratization surveys (27%), and in-depth analysis (33%). Read mostly by Ph.D's (69%) in an academic setting (62%), Africa Demos is primarily used for the purpose of enrichment (32%), reference (39%0, and as a teaching tool (17%). Readers request the issues every four months (55%), with some commenting they would like to receive Africa Demos quarterly. Of those who replied to the survey, they represented thirteen countries other than the United States. Those countries include, African nations, European nations and Canada. Overall, readers rank the publication valuable with 74% ranking the periodical very (38%) to highly (36%) useful.

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