

## **Democracy as an Impediment to Progress in Developing Countries: Social Constructs versus Realities in Kenya**

**Frank Ojwang**

University of Nairobi, Kenya

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### **ABSTRACT**

The question as to whether democracy is succeeding or failing in Sub-Saharan Africa since it was introduced by colonial masters and the West requires further interrogation and critical analysis. The enforcement of democracy is paradoxically observed in the tactfully woven governance system led by surrogate ‘whitened’ African colonialists that extend the colonial mission. The fruits of democracy remain elusive to the developing countries like Kenya, with only a handful of privileged Kenyans benefiting in reality. This paper analyses the social constructs of democracy in developing countries like Kenya using content analysis of 66 open access SCOPUS indexed journals between 1961-2023 and deconstructs the nuances of democracy using bibliometric analysis of 381 SCOPUS indexed articles to illuminate the hidden but harsh realities of the failing democracy as implemented in Kenya. This is a phenomenological analysis that seeks to relay perspectives and behaviors based on the experiences and observation by the researcher. A section of African researchers have questioned the efficacy of democracy as a form of governance in Kenya. The researcher analyses the Kenyan historical epochs from 1900 to 2022 using historical analysis method and as a basis for proving that democracy as implemented is ineffective and inefficient for achieving statehood and equitable development. The paper uses qualitative methods to debunk the fallacy that democracy works in developing countries like Kenya using facts and realities. The article argues that the epistemological injustice presents the systemic research gap as knowledge continues to be a reserve for the knowers that form the majority that set the standards for education globally. This paper uses democratic theory and secondary data sources to analyse whether democracy is the right foundation of the governance system for developing countries in Sub Sahara Africa where the countries have multiethnic societies that have historically had different cultural practices.

**Key words:** Democracy, Ethnography, Governance, Kenya, Reality, Social constructs

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The African continent is the second-fastest growing economy according to the African Development Bank (African Development Bank, 2023) but the lives of the African people at the individual level is in an economic coma. Some African countries like Kenya are in the midst of a demographic bulge courtesy of a tactfully concocted but subtle extension of colonisation. Since the 1880s, Sub Saharan Africa has been synonymous with poverty and primitivity as perceived by the developed countries in the global north, and these perceptions have been the outcomes of historical political and governance systems and processes (Jones, 2005). Historically having been diverse and used different forms of governance for different ethnic groups, the statehood has come with difficulty to break down the old ways that informed governance, and replace it with nationhood and new forms of governance. In just close to one century, Africa has gradually but incrementally continued to transform into a capitalist continent struggling in reality with democracy as a form of

governance, and a blind embrace of western civilization, assimilation and modernity (Bartlett, 1990). History continues to repeat itself in Africa as democracy is constantly on trial with realities clearly indicating efficacy of colonialism for Sub Saharan African countries.

Democracy existed in Africa, but the context then enabled democracy to thrive because democracy worked for a group of people in the same context, with the same values and culture, and at the same level of knowledge for a better part. Today, African countries have diverse communities with different profiles based on colonial influence on a community's socio-economic, cultural, ways. Democracy as I argue, requires that a fair level of semblance be achieved on the population, for it to deliver impactful outcomes.

The democracy research in Sub Saharan Africa is dominated by the majority and knowers as compared with the minority researchers (Gwaravanda, 2020). Democracy research is more visible in foreign journals, by foreign authors and skewed towards a western epistemic narrative based on the SCOPUS indexed articles. This stems from epistemological injustice that has reserved knowledge for knowers, restricting the accepted new knowledge as the ones considered by the knowers with minority perspective denied visibility on epistemologically defined basis. African researchers also use the epistemic foundation set by the majority, making the dominant school of thought in principle biased and western. This makes debating critical issues such as democracy as an impediment to socio-economic growth and development in Sub Saharan Africa futile.

Democracy has been questioned by scholars citing its complexities that are compounded by the question of whether democracy is a colonial imposition (Cheeseman & Sishuwa, 2021). There is a thin line separating colonialism from democracy (Olsson, 2009), with the intersection linked to the poor quality of education complimented by the religious fanaticism, all institutionalised through colonialism or colonial surrogates. Colonialism is not synonymous with democracy, but democracy is linked to and stems from colonialism.

Implementation of democracy continues to experience challenges in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Menocal;Fritz;& Lakner, 2008). Democracy as a form of governance has not favoured the poor African countries to develop equitably and thrive economically where micro-level is in tandem with the micro-level because the will of the majority poor is always controlled by the minority wealthy politicians. Whereas this may be the case in the western democracies, the dynamics are different in Kenya as the people still grapple with basic challenges such as access to water, electricity, livelihood, healthcare and infrastructure. The democratic form of governance's failure is exacerbated by its disconnection from the historical diverse forms of governance systems in the Kenyan ethnic communities, with the deviation from African identity and socio-cultural beliefs slackening the total assimilation and turnaround of colonial agenda.

Across Africa, the period before 1900 was dominated by mobile people, borderless but autonomous societies that lived in harmony under different forms of governance and systems including patriarchal or matriarchal. Land was the primary factor of production and that earned the people livelihood. The arrival of missionaries and colonial administrators around 1900s became the game changer in Africa up until the 1960s when African countries started being given, and not earning their independence from the colonial masters. The missionaries however stayed on and continued to institutionalise the system of education and expanding religion. Was this to serve the colonial masters' greater longer-term interest in Africa? Scholarly speaking, the western researchers have more reliable information and records about African history than African scholars. This gives them a head start with every strategy that they have for Africa most of which is exploitation of its natural

resources and minerals. The original researchers gathered data and information as missionaries or with the assistance of missionaries. The information in the hands of the western researchers plays a key role in the epistemic direction to influence democracy as the best governance system. This further explains why the democracy form of government is being pushed down the throat of Africans however much it is recording failure after failure by delaying the pace of socio-political and economic growth and development across Sub Sahara Africa.

Democracy is socially constructed as a peoples' form of government for the people, by the people (Merriam, 1941). The ancient Greek defined democracy as a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate and decide legislation or to choose governing officials. Democracy definitions are rooted in the western concept of governance. In reality, poor disadvantaged, marginalised and poorly educated-using-indoctrinating-curriculum citizens cannot make informed decision that benefits the majority. History has repeated itself across Sub Saharan Africa since the introduction of multiparty democracy in all the countries, that democracy is not the best form of governance with the interest of the vulnerable and marginalized majority, but it serves the interest of the few wealthy individuals, but even more, serves the interest of colonial masters.

Other socially constructed benefits of democracy such as the safeguards for people's interest, promotion of equality, political stability, peace, good citizens, power sharing and joint decision making are all but illusion and fallacies. In reality, democracy polarizes and achieves the opposite of what is touted as its benefits in Sub Saharan Africa where countries are still poor. Democracy works best in systems where the citizens are socio-economically empowered and knowledgeable. In the absence of socio-economic empowerment and knowledge, citizens do not make informed decisions that have the interest of the majority, and thus alternative forms of government should be considered.

All elections in Africa are marred by almost similar pre and post electoral malpractices (Olawole;Adewunmi;& Oluwole, 2013), most common being lack of free, fair and credible elections, violence, voter bribery and manipulation. Democracy and election are not synonymous but elections is one of the primary determinants for democracy (US government, 2022). The US puts election as the central institution for a democracy and a democratic society. In addition, the role of observers remains colonial and the need to prefect an election by outsiders needs more interrogation. In 2017 when the election results were nullified by the Supreme court of Kenya, the electoral observers had endorsed the election process as credible, free and fair. Observers have for a better part, agreed with the final tally during the electoral process. Researchers question the need for observers during elections (Louw-Vaudran, 2023). Sub Saharan African countries that held presidential elections in 2022 include Angola, Djibouti, Kenya, Mali, Somaliland (autonomous), and Sudan. In 2021, thirteen African countries went to the polls including Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia in the Horn of East Africa.

The analysis from the 66 articles analyzed from the SCOPUS indexed articles paint democracy in Kenya as having been under review by the majority from the west and a handful of minority researchers from Africa who mostly are always collaborating with the counterparts in the west in their articles. The independence when the west and south engage in scholarly discourse has always been tilted in favour of the west, thus taking away the independent minority scientific opinion. This paper builds the argument from a pre-colonial trend analysis from 1900 to 2022. The paper illuminates the consequences of western influence and control of the Kenyan education, history, gods, politics, economy, and its connection to neo-colonialism and bad governance that stem out of democracy.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Africa has undergone a slow but steady and consistent assimilation from the 1900s to date. The assimilation has been enabled by the education system complimented with religion. African countries that embraced Christianity have been hardest hit by neo-colonialism and its subtle destructive consequences. Through Slavery and colonization, Africa is gradually losing its language, history, religion, culture and economic activities in very small tactfully crafted epochs. The two ways for control – frightening and demoralising people have worked well through the intersection of education and religion. Democracy recognises that educated, healthy and confident people are hard to govern, and thus the subtle support by the west for a failing system of governance that gives them nuanced control of African resources.

The intersectionality between religion and education plays a key role in the lack of cultural awareness, dwindling religious freedom, absence of political and economic independence.

In Uganda, the president has been in office since 1986 winning his sixth term in 2021 (Electoral Commission of Uganda, 2022). In 2006, the parliament of Uganda amended the constitution to remove presidential term limit after the term of the president was drawing towards the end (Makara, 2020). This is a case of misuse of democracy where the president and his allies orchestrated a successful political campaign using a legal avenue to amend the constitution in his selfish interest. The move also removed the age limit that would have hindered his candidacy in 2021. Democracy was on trial as it did not deliver on the tenets of democracy as envisioned by the democracy principles on term limits.

Rwanda, a small country in East Africa recovering from a genocide, is not left out despite the president having gained admiration for his efforts to restore political stability, law and order. In 2015, Rwanda altered the two-term limit to allow its incumbent president to seek presidency for a third term (Corigan, 2023). The president went on to win the election raising the question of how democratic is democracy in developing countries. This joins the growing number of states that modified constitutionally determined presidential term limits or adopted a flexible interpretation of relevant constitutional provisions to allow incumbent leaders additional terms in the highest office (Wiebusch & Murray, 2019).

In Tanzania, the 2020 Tanzania elections were blamed on the late president John Magufuli's perceived authoritarian regime, with the leading party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) accused of going against democracy principles during the election (Cheeseman, Matfess, & Amani, Tanzania: The Roots of Repression, 2021). All the electoral malpractices and grievances by opponents are raised by the opposition and civil societies, but observers including the African Union have little to do on issues of democracy for sovereign countries in Africa.

Other countries in Sub Sahara Africa grapple with similar challenges where incumbents try to find ways for extending their presidential term limit through their loyal associates. In Kenya, every president's term has been riddled with attempt to remove the presidential term limit. Kenya has invested immensely in the electoral system in order to achieve a free, fair and credible elections (Kaburu, 2022). The obsession with technology as a driver for achieving democratic electoral processes has also been questions by researchers (Barkan, 2013). The use of money in political activities has adversely affected the nature of public policy, governance, competition, the rule of law, transparency, equity and democracy (Muna & Otieno, 2020). Researchers also raise questions as to the usefulness of election observers as the watchdogs of democracy and democratic processes (Chan, 2019).

The decades of democratic transition in Kenya do not seem to have experienced consolidation. The majority of Kenyans are not happy with the country's democratisation, which has not brought about significant benefits to them (Kivuva, 2023). The colonial masters' hands continue to be seen by researchers in the democratisation process, with focus being on the processes than the people that need the processes to transform their lives. The manifestation of ethnicity in Kenyan politics and its impact on Kenya's democratic path and development continues to be a constituent of all electoral and democratic processes. The salience of ethnicity in Kenyan politics have their traces in pre-independent Kenya, and the origin of ethnic consciousness clearly linked to the colonial era (Kisaka & Nyadera, 2019).

Democracy is analysed positively from a thing's perspective such as infrastructure, technology rollout, and such indicators of wealth, but African researchers have been negated in their critique when analysing the benefits of democracy in the lives of the vulnerable and marginalised people. The epistemic reflections between indigenous traditions and academic texts, and between popular and professional philosophical expression, trigger minority scholars to re-think the important questions of what it means to philosophize and who philosophizes issues such as democracy in Africa.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative approach by using secondary sources of information from 1900 to 2022 and adopts the ethnography method to critically analyse the intersection between education and religion in Kenya as enablers for bad governance. The researcher uses bibliometric analysis to critically analyse from 381 most recent articles published in SCOPUS indexed journal on democracy in Kenya, to deduce conclusions in this paper. The documents are selected as the most recent publications existing and accessible freely, and arranged using typologies that form the basis of the socially constructed themes in the section 4.1. The paper outlines the social constructs alluded to the secondary data and deconstruct them against the realities of what is nuanced and subtle, and usually go unnoticed. The paper alludes to the notion that the foundation for bad governance is rooted in colonisation and that bad governance is enabled by democracy through a tactful combination of poor quality of education and indoctrination by religion. The researcher uses historical records from the 1900-2022, national events related to democracy from 1992-2022 and observation method from 1992-2022 to illuminate the connection between education and religion in enabling failed democracy, the pathway for bad governance.

The research questions that this paper attempts to answer are:

1. Is democracy as a form of governance ideal for developing countries with multiethnic communities that experience socio-economic inequalities like Kenya?
2. Do poor citizens regardless of their education status, have the capacity to make informed decision through democratic processes?

This paper fills in the research gap that education, legal, political, sociologists and historian scholars grapple with in their disciplinary silos. The researcher acknowledges that majority of researchers have been hell-bent on promoting democracy as the only solution that must work in order to cure the challenges that bedevil Kenya and other poor African countries. This paper pokes the scholars about considering other basis for achieving good governance outside of democracy until the people's economic independence is built, and capacity is built to know good from bad

through quality relevant education. This paper also grapples with insufficient Afro-centric research by Africans as nine out of ten top authors on governance and democracy are non-Africans.

### **3.1 Research design and article selection**

The researcher conducted a desk review through analyses of Kenyan historical news from 1900 to 2023 divided in 4 epochs, and using themes drawn from 66 open access documents out of the 381 documents indexed in the SCOPUS index, and using deductive method, generated the social constructs against realities of democracy. The paper uses historical analysis method to paint the past and builds arguments using the typologies from the selected 66 articles. The 66 articles undergo a lexicological analysis to evaluate the core themes of democracy arguments and counter the arguments that are socially constructed with the lived and observed realities in Kenya.

#### **3.1.1 Historical Epoch Analysis Summary**

##### **Epoch 1. Kenya Before 1900**

The period before 1900 in Kenya is characterised by absence of formal education system for native Kenyans and for a better part, no structured religious institutions accessed by or to which native Kenyans belong, and among African population (Beck, 1966). The period has free movement in a borderless Africa to support the economic and livelihood activities of the natives up until late 1880s. The socially constructed narrative about this epoch is that the people were primitive and backward. This is true when analysed from the perspective of the western development metrics. In reality, the native Kenyan people lived in harmony within their social welfare system and while the healthcare and infrastructural system may have been poor, they were equally and fairly accessible and affordable to all native communities. Poverty was not known in the way it is defined today and unemployment was not a phenomenon as most if not all Africans owned land and were engaged in various economic activities such as farming, fishing, nomadic economic activities with animals and other economic activities. African identity was strongest in this epoch.

##### **Epoch 2- Kenya 1900-1963**

This epoch sees the introduction of formal education and rollout and embrace of Christian religion especially in the inland Kenya, especially by the selected privileged few, often the household of chiefs. This saw the first episodes of divide and rule in this epoch. Education was built by the colonial administration to raise a workforce for the white settlers and colonial administration. The Kenyan education system since then has not been tied to the development agenda for the benefit of Kenyans (Mackatiani;Imbovah;Imbova;& Gakungai, 2016). This is the epoch that ruins Kenyan socio-cultural, political and economic agenda by tactfully withdrawing the diverse ethnic communities from their way of life, into a united approach of governance and nation building. This epoch designs an education system that inspires the rural-urban migration and the change from agriculture as a form of livelihood to white collar jobs. This is the epoch that is use to nurture zombies and followers that do not question authority or think independently, but churns out a generation that follows the instructions laid before them. The religious arm uses the fear and scare tactic to keep the Kenyans obedient and desirous of going to heaven, an imaginary place in the sky where there is no suffering and where a poor lifestyle is rewarded. This is the epoch that births the resilience and makes it sound like a good virtue.

In this epoch, most of the facilitators are dominantly white and the white facilitators build a whitened group of black individuals that continue with their mission and vision. The early

missionaries were white, by 1963, traces of black missionaries start to emerge. The early governance system representatives were all white, by 1963, traces of black administrators are gradually spreading across Kenya. Healthcare facilities and schools were led by white settlers, by 1963, a handful of black healthcare workers and teachers were being seen. These are the initial seeds of camouflaged mission of colonialism that cascaded in the subsequent years using the same principles in Kenyan identity and governance system applied across the nation.

### **Epoch 3. Kenya 1963-1992**

This is the epoch of the post-independent Kenya. The first cohort of the formally educated Africans are assigned positions where their loyalty to the colonial master is tested. Additionally, this cohort sets the pace for the Kenyan employment way of life and the relationship between African employees and the employers. The epoch amplifies competition and winning where individual employees that achieve the most and rise in positions and accumulate more wealth. This is the epoch that births and sees the creation of narratives and building of social constructs. The social constructs are enshrined in the education curriculum and religious denominations rolled out across Kenya since the 1900s. This is the epoch that begins to battle with statehood and grapples with the challenges of multiethnicity and diversity in Kenya. This is the epoch where the genesis of western philosophies take shape and outputs become visible. This epoch marks the beginning of an end game unknown to the Kenyan thinktanks if at all the thinktanks exists. This is the epoch that sees the rural-urban migration become the goal of every rural child growing up. This is the epoch that drops farming as an economic activity and job seeking becomes the goal at the tail end of education.

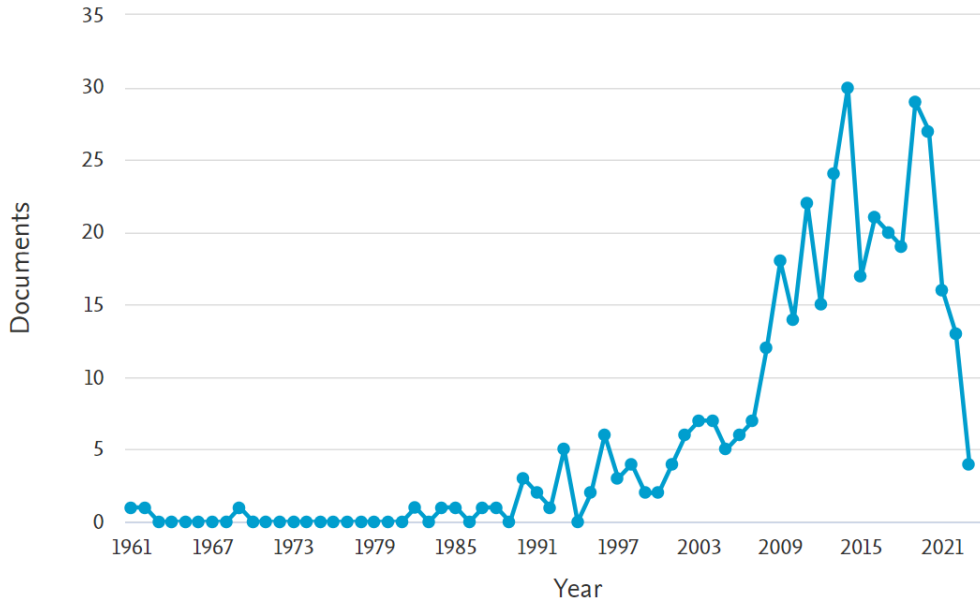
### **Epoch 4. Kenya 1992-2022**

The fourth epoch marks the success of the third epoch in wiping out an old generation and their history and replacing it with a semi-whitened generation through education and religion for a better part. More than 50% of the African population adopts the western education and religion in Kenya with synonyms such as smartness, beauty and knowledgeability being linked to whiteness. The epoch also increases desire for lighter skins linkage to beauty, and more ladies aspire to have lighter skin with beauty products designed and promoted to achieve lighter skin. This generation has also been the most synonymous with greed and selfishness under a democracy and espouses capitalism fully. This generation reveals the social constructs of democracy and democratic processes in Kenya. The outcomes and impact of the first three epochs materialize as the fourth epoch exhibits indicators of the failures of democracy. It is in the fourth epoch that the socially constructed realities have become clearly visible and triggered the need to unearth the realities in the socially constructed beliefs linked to democracy.

#### **3.1.2 Bibliometric Analysis**

##### **Publication trends of democracy articles in Kenya**

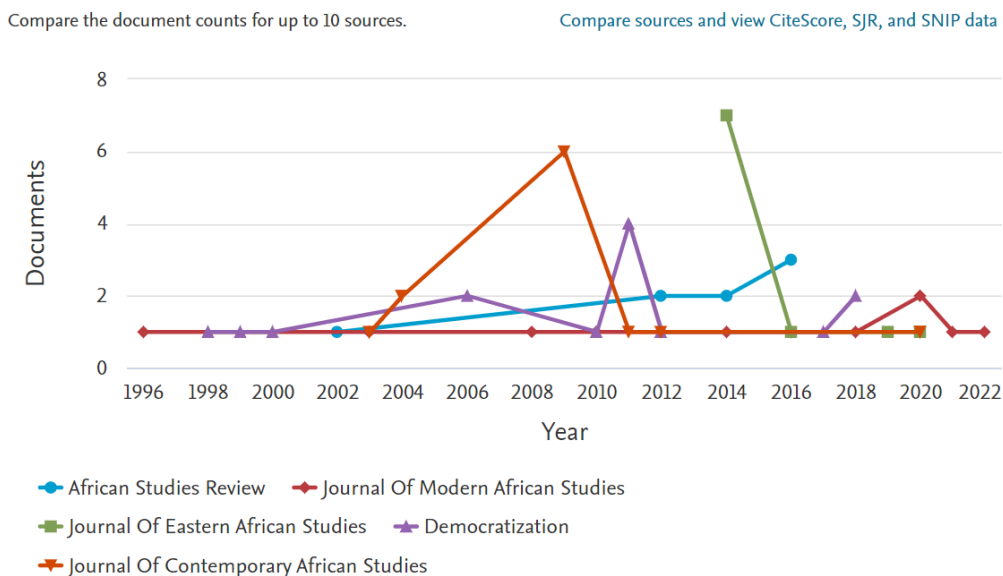
Democracy was less studied in Kenya until 1991 when the interest in democracy rose. This can be attributed to the clamour for multiparty democracy in Kenya in the early 1990s. Since then, more and more research has been conducted on democracy before and after elections. The pattern reveals an increasing interest as Kenya grows in the democracy space and as elections continue to be very critical factor for governance form in Kenya. This trend also shows that researchers are interested in the democracy and democratic space in Kenya, and how this links with development and growth.



**Fig. 1 Democracy publications in Kenya**

**Documents by Source**

The documentation sources are dominantly western with the top journals being affiliated to the US and UK. The journal of contemporary African studies is published by Routledge in the UK. Epistemologically anchored on the western philosophy, the journal reviews and accepts articles that align with the western episteme. There is no African epistemological philosophy used for publishing African research. This presents epistemological injustices for arguments that may contradict or counter the pro-democracy as a form of governance that works when it doesn't. There is an increase in democracy research after every general election in Kenya and this can be seen in the journals as they receive more articles from Kenya after elections, the highest having been observed in the last three recent elections of 2007 and 2013 when second terms have been emotive and hotly contested.

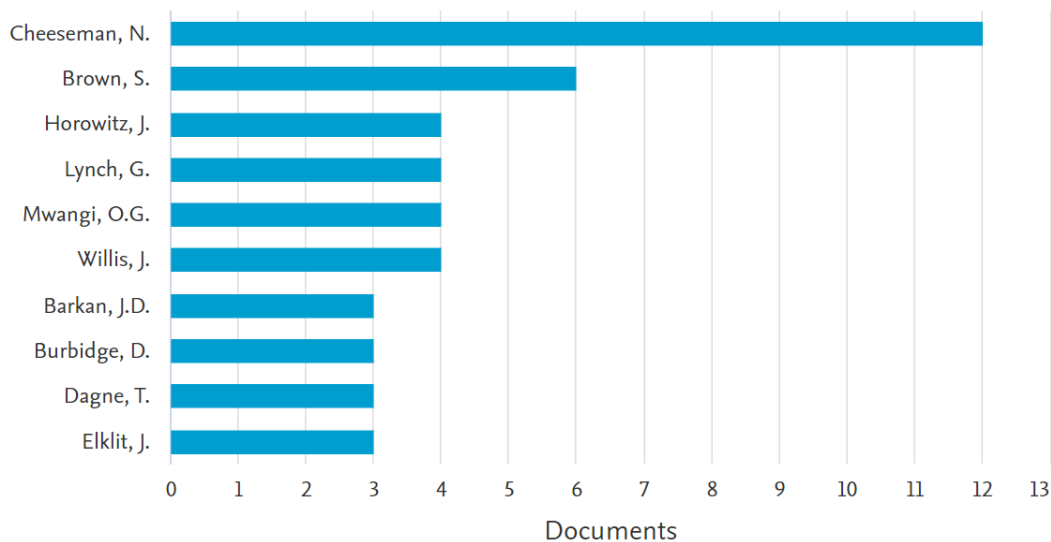


**Fig. 2 Documents per year by source**



### Analysis by Author

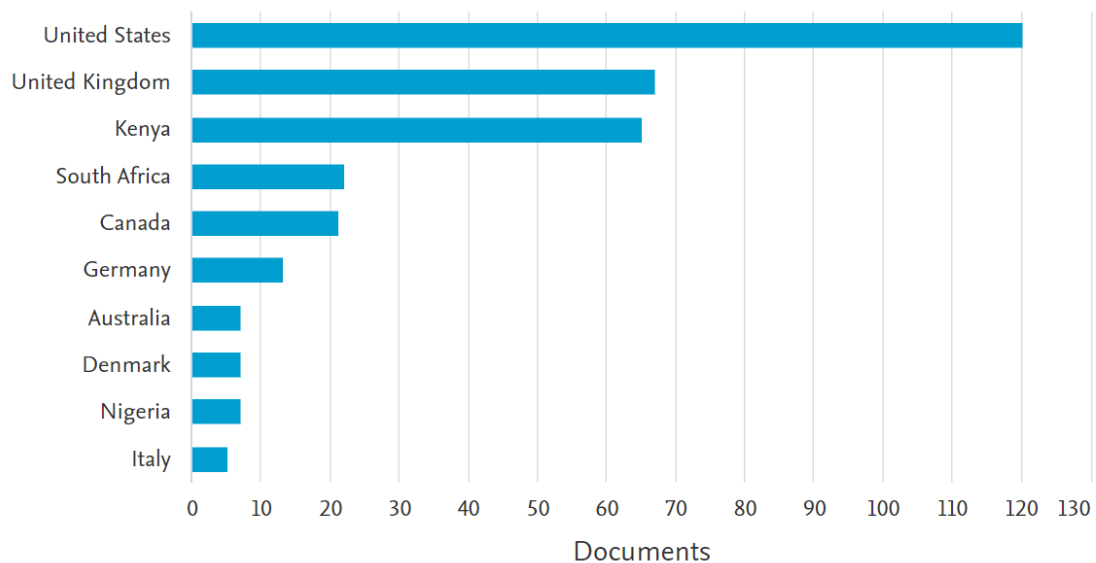
The top author with most documents and contribution in democracy work is Cheeseman with 12 articles on democracy in Kenya and the region. The Kenyan and African with the highest publications is Mwangi who is not using the open access. One Kenyan features in the top ten authors with the most documents produced for democracy work in Kenya. Democracy discourse in Kenya needs to feature more Kenyans and African scholars interested in it than the western researchers.



**Fig. 3 Documents by author**

### Documents by Country

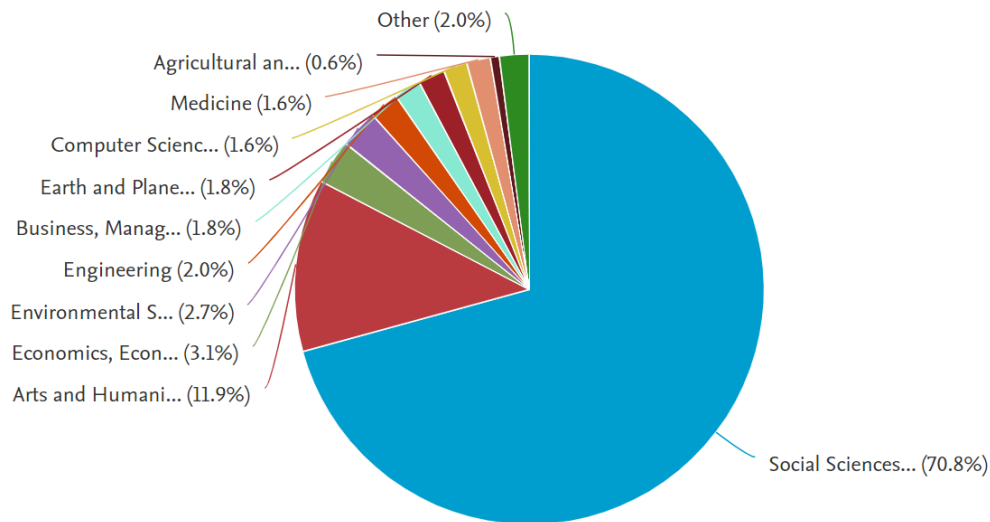
The United States publishes the most about Kenyan democracy with 120 documents published between 1961 and 2023. The United Kingdom follows closely with 65 documents on democracy in Kenya. The EI cumulatively has more documents about democracy in Kenya than Kenya. This shows the epistemological direction of the research on democracy in Kenya.



**Fig. 4 Documents by country or regional block**

### Multidisciplinary Nature of Democracy and How it Affects Disciplines

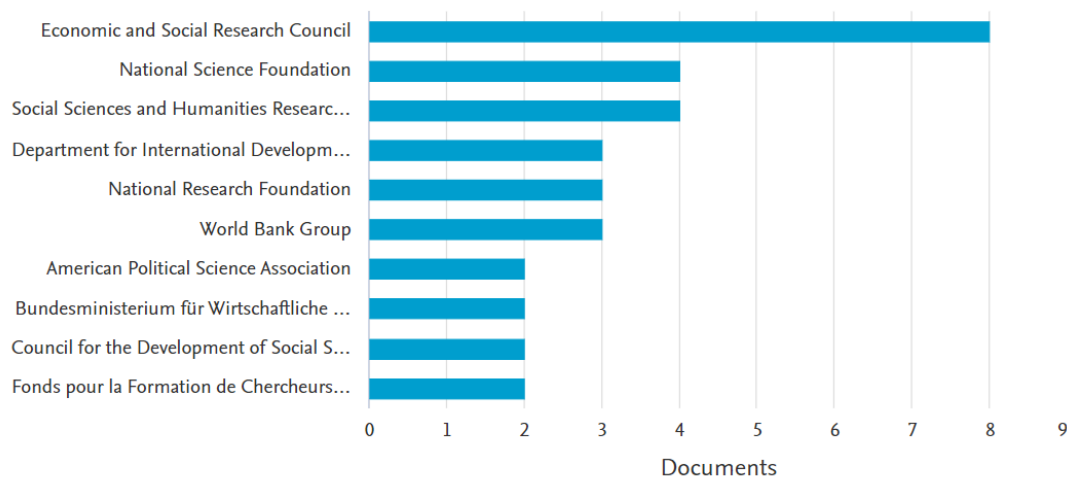
The 381 research documents on democracy in Kenya shows that democracy affects all disciplines. Good governance is the foundation for growth and development at scale, and in a way that it affects people at the bottom of the pyramid. The bottom-up approach potential to drive change is depicted by the multidisciplinary link of democracy to several aspects of life in the society. While social sciences recognise democracy the most, Arts and humanities, economics and environmental science equally recognise the role of democracy in their research.



**Fig. 5 Documents by discipline**

### Documents by funding source

The democracy research is funded by the west. The Economic and Social Research Council has funded 8 democracy research in Kenya, followed by the National Science Foundation and Social Sciences and Humanities Research that have sponsored 4 research each. DFID and the World Bank are also sponsors of democracy research in Kenya. This raises the questions on the impartiality and neutrality of the researchers.



**Fig. 6 Funding sources**

### 3.2 Democratic Theory

The problems of political representation have been under review since the 1990s. Sharp focus has been on problems of fairness, constituency definition, deliberative political judgment, and new, nonelectoral forms of representation (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). Democracy emphasizes the concept of participation and argues on the basis of participation of the people and for the people (Pateman, 1970). Democratic theories that argue for expanding the scope and domain of democracy assume that democratic experiences will transform individuals in democratic ways. This assumption depends on viewing the self as socially and discursively constituted, a view that contrasts with the standard liberal-democratic view of the self as prepolitically constituted and narrowly self-interested (Warren, 1992).

The fairness in democracy and democratic process has not been met in Kenya as all the elections have been contested since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992. All elections have also had limitations that restrict the participation of some constituencies like that of the poor that work away from their rural homes where they registered as voters. It has also raised the question of where a voter should register to vote and exercise their voting right as the city residents have continued to register in their rural homes, raising the question of who represents their interest in reality. The politics of negative ethnicity, a narrative propelled by the media has made ethnicity to be synonymous with negativity in Kenya, extending the neo-colonialism with respect to divisive politics and agenda. Democracy also downplays the other non-elective forms of representation with the weight given to the political forms of representation associated with governance and power.

Elements of social learning theory are seen in Kenya as Kenyans increasingly emulate the western countries in their political campaigns and election systems. The western countries have achieved a level of economic independence that makes the comparison a bad idea. Kenya needs to figure out the governance form that fits its context and borrow lessons if applicable, from countries that have a near similar context as Kenya, that are making notable progress.

Systems theory posits that people are products of complex systems such as education and religious systems as argued in this paper, and their choices and capacity to make decisions are determined by the systemic design of these institutions. The individual decisions are not made in isolation, but collectively in line with the ethnic narratives in Kenya. This shows that the institutionalization of democracy is a very strategic and tactfully designed component of the neo-colonialism.

Rational choice theory is also emerging as a component of the democratic process in Kenya. The theory helps to explain why the people make the choices that they do, adding that people weigh the risks, benefits and costs. This is not true in the case of elections in Kenya as the electorate make their decisions based on ethnic leaders and their agenda for their communities. The agenda is based on assumption that it will improve the welfare and socio-economic benefits to the communities.

Kenya has not attained the level of being a robust democracy as it is still grappling with the challenges that it did face at independence in 1963. Democracy as a form of governance extends the neo-colonialism and makes Kenya a gateway for the colonial masters and their surrogates to enter the African region and exploit resources as the people in Africa languish in poverty. There is need to pursue a real independence and not a socially constructed independence where indoctrinated individuals were identified and whitened to become surrogate colonial masters that extended the service for the benefit of the colonialists and their affiliates. It should be noted that all positions held by the white settlers in the 1920s are held by Kenyans in 2020s without the change in philosophy and ideology.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This paper has analysed the connection between research interest and the democracy narrative in Kenya. The paper has historically analysed the goal of education in Kenya since 1920s to-date, and the influence of religion as a complimentary factor for a collective ignorance, and the role of education and religion in enabling bad governance through a socially constructed democracy. The paper has identified some major democracy assumptions and deconstructs them in the table 1 below.

**Table 1. Social constructs vs realities of democracy in Kenya**

Typology	Social Construct	Reality
The voters know what they want	The assumption that politicians' campaign and inform the voters about what they can do for them to achieve change, and the assumption that voters in turn make an informed decision is socially constructed	Majority of the poor vote along ethnic lines and euphoria of the time. Majority of the voters do not vote for a visionary leader, but a leader with missionary pledges. Majority of the voters do not know what they want and deserve, and do not understand their role and position in a government elected by the people for the people.
Democracy works in Kenya	Kenya is an example to the region because democracy is mature and works well.	Democracy has failed in Kenya. The elections are plagued with irregularities and often the elections fail to meet the threshold for free, fair and credible elections. Additionally, the leaders do not make any change that benefits the poor at scale. There is more than enough evidence of greed and selfishness in leaders with leaders enjoying privileges and impunity. The will of the majority has been subverted by the electoral bodies and courts. This led to the post-election violence in the case of 2007.
Democracy institutions work in Kenya	The democracy institutions are assumed to work well	The democracy institutions do not deliver credible elections.

	because they have delivered in the general elections	Other democracy affiliate institutions are driven by various interests with a lot of western influence and hand in their modus operandi. There is a lot of dependence on the clearance by the western observers as a threshold for showing that a democracy-linked institution works well.
Educated people make better choices	Kenya's literacy rate is at 82% according to UNESCO, 83% according to World Bank (2022). It is assumed that the educated population translates to quality and well-weighted decisions	Kenyans vote along ethnic lines and their decisions are not in any way influenced by education. There is fanaticism in professors and peasants alike. There is a colonial connection in the negative ethnicity adopted by Kenyans during elections
The religious institutions play a key role in ensuring peace and democracy	The religious bodies are neutral and do not take sides	The religious institutions are made up of human beings that identify with different ethnic groups and interests. The religious institutions have low influence on the voters decision.
The poor are the majority of voters	Majority of Kenyans are poor and they make up the majority of voters. Politicians that appeal to the voting block of the poor have a high chance for victory	Majority of registered voters are poor but there is questions about the credibility of electoral body in relay of tallied results. In 2007, there were cases where the vote tally revealed massive irregularity. The use of technology has not solved the situation as an IT head was murdered in 2013 in order to manipulate the outcome of elections. According to the world bank, Kenya's literacy rate is 83% (2022) meaning even if the poor are majority, they are educated. Kenyans have elected the same faces in the ballot since 2002 with only

		the political parties and ethic composition changing.
The leaders have the best interest of the people	It is assumed the leaders have a vision and wish to change the lives of the majority poor for the better	In reality, the leaders are selfish and greedy individuals that want to protect their wealth by being in elective position where they have impunity and access to power. The leaders have historically not fought for the poor in meaningful and sustainable ways by legislation and rollout of beneficial programs for the poor
Observers give credibility to the elections	It is assumed that when the election observers, especially from the global north, give credence to an electoral process, then the election outcome is legitimized and considered credible, free and fair to a greater extent	The observers sample a few electoral polling stations and have near zero-contribution on the electoral process. In 2013 when Kenyan elections were nullified by the supreme court of Kenya, the observers had already endorsed the results. The observers also oversee and endorse elections of leaders of corrupt regimes that their governments and agencies continue to work with
Apathy by voters	Voter apathy is due to lack of interest in the democracy process in Kenya	Voters are increasing learning that democracy is not democratic after all and that voters participation in elections does not determine the election outcome. The 'system' determines who it wants to have as president

#### 4.1 Education and democracy

Education is used tactfully to indoctrinate Kenyans into a group of followers that are easy to manipulate and govern. The education system in Kenya is using the same systems rolled out in 1920s when the colonialists wanted to churn out clerks for the colonial administration. The education system has not changed over time, leaving the quality of graduate's poor and hampering with their capacity to think independently and pragmatically. The Kenyan education system is emphatic on institutionalizing fear and thus it teaches people what to think, not how to think. The education system forms the foundation for epistemological injustice and unconsciously promotes

knowledge as a reserve for knowers, with images of white individuals at the helm of discoveries and major inventions. The saviour in religion is also given a non-black image. The education is delivered through Schools that serves as subtle prisons that keep children locked up physically and mentally and prepare children for job that are an extension of the mental prisons, until they retire and are rendered useless.

#### **4.1.1 Education has no correlation with voters' decisions**

There is evidence in Kenya that education has no correlation with election outcomes. An analysis of the media reveals that 8 out of 10 professors support their ethnic leaders (media analysis of 2013 and 2017 elections). The most education individuals by academic credentials and that hold the highest offices in the governance structure, are equally corrupt and embezzle funds meant for development programs. Some of the most adversely mentioned corrupt individuals in most cases of graft attended the best learning institutions in Kenya dubbed the national schools, and have impressive academic credentials. The impact of their work is however always not visible at scale among the poor.

#### **4.1.2 Education has correlation with citizens' obedience to systemic policies**

The goal of education in Kenya as is currently instituted is to deliver obedient individuals at the tail end of education. This was most relevant during the colonial times when the colonial masters needed loyal Africans to work for the colonial government. The objective was never changed when Kenya achieved its independence and thus extends the neo-colonialism to date. This obedience is emphasised by religion alongside school.

#### **4.1.3 Education has correlation with loss of traditional livelihoods**

Education is one of the leading causes of rural-urban migration and deviation from Agriculture, the main economic activity and livelihood source of Kenya. The use of education to move Kenyans from agriculture to search for white collar jobs has increased vulnerability of Kenyans and made them easy to govern as they are helpless and controlled by fear and threats. Additionally, the religious teachings have warned and threatened them to avert any rebellion as the fear of hell is complimented by the education system. Sayings such as 'the voice of the people is the voice of God' make it easy for people to let the voice of God reign.

#### **4.1.4 Education has correlation with loss of identity and socio-cultural activities**

Education and assimilation have worked tactfully to gradually wipe out the identity of Africans. The African identity has been wiped in very tactful way with each generation losing one element at a time. The naming system has changed significantly in about 100 years, the religious system has also changed in 100 years with Christianity, Islam being the most dominant religious groups, languages keep disappearing as children in 2000s are taught English and monolingualism is being promoted by parents. The undocumented African cultural practices and heritage have been wiped out slowly over time as the education system focused on western scrips and religion.

#### **4.1.5 Education has correlation with neo-colonialism**

Education is the foundation on which neo-colonialism is enabled and thrives. Education whitens as it is built on the epistemological philosophies of the whites and whiteness. All African cultural practices have been linked to primitivity and considered inferior by the Africans themselves. There is more adoption of whiteness in religion, education, marriage, rites of passage and many other spheres of life. Education is an enabler of divisive politics at the national and continental level.

## **4.2 Christian Religion and democracy**

The Christian religion is the most dominant religious group in Kenya. and has received the fairest share of visibility and favours with a white saviour dominating the churches and homes across Kenya 45 out of 50 homes in Western and Central Kenya have the photo of a non-black saviour on the walls of their common areas or in a book in the house. The Kenyans have been transformed into terrorists as the Kenyans have shown more love for their newfound religion than their own religious beliefs that is lost and with no records of worship system. You become a terrorist once you love your religion more than humanity and the Kenyans love religion more than humanity, especially the Christians. The Muslims are however projected as the terrorists in the white narrative.

### **4.2.1 Christian Religion has no correlation with voters' decisions**

Religion indoctrinates Kenyans that ascribe to the Christian faith to make heavenly decisions. The heavenly decisions are however usually in favour of the governance system and manages individual relationships through the commandments and their affiliated teachings from the religious books. Despite the religious teachings, there is no influence of religion during the election process as the faithful resort to their ethnic cocoons to vote in their ethnic leaders. Religious institutions have also been used by politicians as campaign grounds where they meet the voters in a cheaper way.

### **4.2.2 Religion has correlation with citizens' obedience to systemic policies**

Religion enshrines obedience through fear and threats of a God that punishes sin. The use of religion alongside education plays a key role in producing an ignorant citizen population by age of majority. This is a very tactful complimentary approach to churning followers that do not have the know-how and skills to think independently and revolt against oppression.

### **4.2.3 Religion has correlation with loss of identity and socio-cultural activities**

Religion has replaced a big share of the African identity of diverse communities living in Kenya. Religion introduced the concept of being born again where new names are given, and the religious doctrines have been translated into the native languages making it easier to share with the native communities in Kenya. Christian religion has replaced the African worship practices of the native Kenyan communities. The Christian religion gives a new identity to the Kenyan native groups that identify with Christianity and worship the Jewish saviour.

### **4.2.4 Religion has correlation with neo-colonialism**

Religion played a key role in making the African worship practices to be associated with witchcraft and primitivity and replaced it in its entirety with the Christian religion. The diverse communities have successfully left their individual native worship practices that have been lost over the generations, and embraced a new way of worship. This plays a key role in aiding neo-colonialism and provides a good platform through which the west can introduce some interest agenda such as same sex marriage where love and forgiveness are promoted, but at the same time condemn polygamy that was common among the African native groups.

## **5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

Democracy is a noble driver for good governance, but this article argues that democracy comes in handy when some milestones have been achieved by a nation. Kenya, like many other African countries, struggles with the implementation of democracy for the benefit of its citizen because it is pre-mature based on the state of the nation politically, socially and economically. This paper argues that even with an educated population, without economic liberation, democracy is



ineffective and inefficient for addressing the African socio-political and cultural fabric. This paper reveals that where the citizens have not been economically liberated, democracy is tactfully designed to extend neocolonialism status quo by creating enablers in education and to a fair extent, religious institutions. It is a contributing factor towards extending neo-colonialism that paves the way for resource exploitation by the colonial masters. Kenya like other African countries, continues to be exploited by the west and is treated as a pet of the west through very tactfully designed but subtle strategies.

Kenya should consider alternative forms of achieving holistic economic liberation for the next 50-100 years, and during that period, adopt a suitable system of government that is closest to and synonymous with the historical African socio-political, economic and cultural system. The education system needs an overhaul to review and adopt an education system that promotes Agriculture as the default economic activity in the place of job seeking for white- or blue-collar job and celebrates the native languages in schools. The school system has to focus on independent thinking and practical life skills that are relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The religious belief needs to be phased out over time, and a national religion adopted in the place of foreign religions as the article argues that one cannot be independent when espousing a foreign religion. Kenya cannot decolonize itself until it takes off the hands of the west from education and religion, and by extension governance.

Democracy is effective and efficient where the citizens are economically empowered first, then educated and socially liberated, but this is not the case for Kenya as majority may be considered as educated but without economic liberation, their thinking is incapacitated which is why democracy as implemented does not work for Kenya. The researcher supports what democracy espouses, but argues that certain conditions need to be met first at a micro-level before the fruits of democracy can be cascaded at a macro-level.

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