

Global Governance, State Capacity and the Development Crisis in Africa

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Abstract

This article explores the nexus between global governance and state capacity in view of the implications for development crisis in Africa. Adopting a global governance analytical framework, the article contends with the norms and rules guiding contemporary world order. Primarily designed by Western powers and their allied multilateral institutions, African states often play peripheral roles in the process of global governance. It is argued that various international developmental models and strategies including Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced by Western powers and their multilateral agencies cannot yield the desired goals at the expense of good governance and productive political order in various African countries. The post-colonial experiences of many African states have demonstrated that successive leaderships in most parts of the continent have always undermined the tenets of good governance within the spectrum of liberal democracy. Thus, various elements of bad governance including corruption, abuse of the rule of law and contempt of democratic values on the one hand, and external manipulation by the hegemonic tendencies of the Western hemisphere on the other have drastically reduced Africans to captives of powerful states. The consistent pressure from global forces has undermined the capacity of the African state to implement an autonomous policy that is consistent with its historical, socio-cultural, economic and political realities. The article concludes that through effective internal governance framework and productive economic order, Africa can benefit maximally from the Western model for “best practices” on democracy. Thus, while a “global vision” may be desirable, given the interdependent nature of contemporary global order, however, the path to sustainable development depends on the development of indigenous African visions in consonance with the people’s socio-cultural, political and economic realities.

Keywords

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Governance, Liberal Democracy, League of Nations, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Multinational Corporation, Transnational, Institution, International Organization, Pandemic, Extremism, Development

1. Introduction

Global governance is the dominant framework associated with the rule of collective security, designed by the victorious allied powers with the establishment of the League of Nations, immediately after the First World War (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations). Global governance aims at maintaining a stable international order conducive to neoliberal economic and political reforms with a view to expanding the horizon of contemporary developmental paradigm beyond the shores of the Western hemisphere (Halabi, 2004). Considering the fact that the vast wastage of resources both human and material to the conduct of wars without concomitant tangible gains therefrom, it has become imperative to embrace global governance as a more rewarding and better constructive instrument of managing global differences between and among global citizens. The dividend of expanding global governance cannot reflect universal coverage at the expense of African continent. Hence, this article seeks to emphasise the imperative of collective efforts for addressing governance crisis of Africa in the interest of global peace, security, and stability. The axiomatic exploration of that thesis is that governance crisis somewhere around the global community is a threat to political stability and human security everywhere. The state of Africa's political and socio-economic situation has significant implications for the rest of the world considering Africa's place in the emerging world as it consists of 54 independent states, which constitutes almost 25% of the membership of the United Nations. The continent of Africa also comprises the largest number of landlocked states of any region. The foregoing indices manifestly affect the political environment in which leaders make choices, consequent upon which national and regional governance factors interact continuously.

The collapse of the League of Nations and the attendant implications for global peace and security informed the need for the reinvigoration of the post-World War I institution of global governance. The establishment of the United Nations and its operational agencies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), and World Trade Organization (WTO), among others, were designed to facilitate the maintenance of peace, good governance and socio-economic progress through multilateral approaches. Global governance is also an attempt at collaboration among different transnational actors, to tackle

various transnational challenges “beyond the capacity of individual state” (Olusola, 2017).

However, the Cold War that spanned between 1947 and 1991 and the ensuing rivalries between the Soviet Union and the United States of America and their allies, frustrated in larger part the system of global governance, because of the confrontations and conflicts that characterised the relationship among the global powers (<https://www.google.com/search?>). For example, the use of veto power by the United States of America and the Soviet Union who were the two major opposing super powers has always incapacitated the United Nations to act decisively on many global issues (<https://www.google.com/search?>). However, the apparent triumph of liberalism after the end of the Cold War in 1991 gave a new impetus to the system of global governance. In an international order increasingly transformed by globalisation, the agenda and scope of global governance incorporate “various transnational issues and challenges that cannot otherwise be tackled without the collective efforts of different multiple stakeholders at the international level” (Higgott, 2005).

Global governance is an attempt to regulate and maintain order with a view to preventing total descent into chaos in the interactions among sovereign nations (Keohane, 2002). As Rosenau (1992) writes, “global governance is broader than government because of its incorporation of official state’s institutions and informal non-governmental machineries to fulfill human desires and implement policies”. Global governance has widened significantly in scope in the post-Cold War international order. The end of the Cold War has been characterized by the proliferation of numerous agencies that engage with the state on wider issues. These agencies are the International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Multinational Corporations (MNCs), International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Transnational Social Movements. The proliferation of different states and non-state actors in the international system under the framework of global governance has been shaping the rule of behaviors, values, norms and institutions. The role of states in the establishment of human rights, civil rights, cultural values, religious beliefs, peace as well as peaceful coexistence in global governance is paramount (Awomoyi & Nkordeh, 2023). Furthermore, multiple stakeholders at the national and global levels particularly independent states and international institutions (such as IMF) are collaborating on specific socio-economic and political responsibilities to maintain a stable world order (<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/exrp/govern/govindex.htm>).

This treatise takes an exploratory overview of governance and developmental experiences in contemporary Africa, in view of the various impediments of the effectiveness of transcontinental socio-political instruments on the continent. Adopting global governance as analytical framework, it is argued that the norms and rules guiding contemporary world order are designed primarily by the Western powers and allied multilateral institutions, while African and other developing states play peripheral roles in these processes. The implementation of

these roles in African and other developing states is not in tandem with subsisting domestic practices, thereby constituting daunting challenges to the realization of millennium development goals. In other words, the relative disparity between indigenous economic architecture and the structure of Western practices constituted part of the causation for the poor performance of the various economic frameworks provided for the developing world by the international governance systems.

2. Defining the Problem

There is a school of thought that perceives global governance as a tool of Western hegemony in which the “developing states play peripheral role in international order” (Finkelstein, 1991). Another perspective views global governance as a collective attempt to find solutions to complex transnational socioeconomic and political challenges through collective approaches (Bartsch & Kohlmogen, 2005). A major criticism of global governance is that the norms and institutions regulating the global order are developed and imposed by the economically developed and militarily “powerful Western states that are willing to enforce the Western values upon the rest of the world” (Finkelstein, 1991). This in turn, has provoked resistance movements ranging from cultural and religion extremism to non-conformism across the world. In addition, the contemporary international system has not influenced a radically departure from its state-centric character of 1648 to the present time (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1601200>). Thus, the global system has remained structured around the interests of the state entity above the specific interests of individuals and/or groups that constitute the citizenry (Felice, 1996). Citizens of states have no direct relationship with the institutions of global governance except through the representatives of their states. Agenda setting and decision making under global governance are carried out through state representatives. Sometimes, this may not reflect the interests of the citizenry, because in a state where junior diplomats start negotiation processes, gain concessions and with the whole process being truncated by the decisions made by a senior diplomat who do not participate nor have a full understanding of the process or terms that led to the concessions is pitiable. Additionally, the experiences of many African states have indicated that “good governance is grossly absent within the principles of liberal democracy being canvassed by Western powers” (Olayode, 2013). For example, the repeated call for a democratisation of the United Nations system, especially, the Security Council to “accommodate more permanent members that would reflect global diversity has largely been ignored” (Cassese, 2005). The contemporary United Nations system is still structured in accordance to the 1945 model, with the subsisting five permanent members of the security council since its inception, (namely the United States of America, Britain, Russia, France and China) still retain the exclusive veto rights today.

There is no doubt that the multiplicity of different actors operating under the

banner of global governance is increasingly challenging the traditional sovereignty of state. The capacity of the African state to take an autonomous course of action has been severely undermined by the imposition of global norms and rules that are often referred to as “international best practices”. The process of adopting norms and rules for global governance has not always been participatory. In most cases, broad consultations with civil society stakeholders are relatively weak while real policy decisions are usually taken by government representatives and international bureaucrats (Watts, 2017).

3. Theoretical Consideration

The contemporary international order established after the end of the Second World War was structured along liberalism. International norms and organizations were framed on the hope of restraining violent behaviors of state actors and stimulating global cooperation (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2203817>). Liberalism advocates economic freedom, human rights, liberal democracy and the rule of law as the building blocks for promoting peace and harmonious relationships among states. Liberal institutionalism believes that institutional cooperation among states through membership of international organizations can tame the parochial self-interest of states and pave way for global peace. As argued by liberal theorists, strict adherence to the norms and rules of international institutions not only limits the scope of self-pursuits by states; it also reduces the exercise of unrestricted sovereignty (Mitrany, 1948; Keohane & Nye, 1977). The assumption of liberal institutionalism is that international anarchy can be mitigated through institutional cooperation among various actors while a measure of predictability of state behavior is also enhanced (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Operating within liberal institutionalism framework is multiplicity of state and non-state actors, regulated and controlled by certain pattern of behaviors, norms, objectives, and interests. There are also provisions for sanctions, incentives, distribution of resources and allocation of responsibilities (Olusola, 2017). However, a major criticism of liberal institutionalism is the unequal power relations that pervade the framework (Dowding, 2000). The distribution of resources and allocation of responsibilities are disproportionately done in favor of the technologically and economically advanced states at the expense of the developing countries (Harden, 2014). Africa is a developing economy and as such, emphasis should be placed on the achievement of revolutionary goals that will place her on a similar rank as the developed economies (Nkordeh, Popoola, Jefia, Okeoghene, Atayero, Awomoyi, & Bobmanuel, 2023). In addition, the militarily powerful states assumed the role of regulatory responsibility and custodian of international morality, while the poorer states have a minimal role in decision-making (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706821>). Thus, global governance appears to be an “instrument of Western hegemony whilst multilateral institutions remain the captives of powerful states” (Wolf, 1999). Consistent pressure from global monetary and finance institution such as the IMF, World bank, and Paris Club has

undermined the capacity of the African state for the implementation of autonomous policy that is consistent with its socio-economic and political realities. The inequality that characterised power relations under global governance has deepened the crisis of dependency of the global South on the Western World. This contradicted the earlier assumption of liberal institutionalism to facilitate interdependency and mutual cooperation within the framework of global governance. Suffice it to say that weak governance structure in Africa and the rest of developing world has been informed overdependence on the international handouts and unstructured internal political and economic architecture.

4. Global Governance, Crisis of Legitimacy and State Capacity in Africa

Decades of one-party dictatorship, economic mismanagement, repression and suffocation of civil society in the post-independence era in the post-Cold War global community accentuated the rapid decline and the subsequent crisis of legitimacy in various countries across Africa. The worsened political and socio-economic crisis reduced the capacity of the state to maintain effective control and satisfy public demands for socio-economic goods. The political crisis of the African state was further worsened by the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989, the concomitant effect of which underscored the fragility of African states

(<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/12/21/countries-hurt-by-war-and-fragility-need-strong-global-partnerships-resources>). The rapid withdrawal of external supports by Western super powers (particularly Russia) to African autocratic regimes weakened and exposed their vulnerability to popular forces agitating for political reform. The complex humanitarian challenges of the post-Cold War order exacerbated the crisis of development in Africa, and furthered weakened the capacity of the African state for effective governance.

In its 1989 report entitled “Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth”, the World Bank acknowledged the crisis of governance as the major bane of Africa’s economic underdevelopment (World Bank, 1989). The report further identified “the dominance of informal rule, non-responsive regime, violation of human rights and the concomitant loss of political legitimacy” (Akinrinade, 1988) as responsible for creating a hostile environment for sustainable economic growth. Protracted governance crisis provided the justifiable evidence for alternative political ideology expressed in liberal democracy which was presented by the United States as a political conditionality for the African state to be qualified for development assistance from Western governments, donor agencies and multilateral agencies.

The state-led centralized economic model implemented by various African states in the immediate post-colonial era became unsustainable by the attendant economic crisis of the 1980s on the continent (Wunsch & Olowu, 1990). The imposition of European imperialism on Africa’s political and economic systems

eroded peoples' historical values and liberties, which later aggravated governance and socio-economic crises in the post-colonial epoch. Thus, one of the devastating consequences of colonialism in Africa was the denial of political and economic rights of the people. The crisis of legitimacy of the African state necessitated a movement away from a state-led economic model to a new paradigm. In response to the African economic crisis, Western donors and their partners such as the IMF prescribed the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as a way out of the economic crisis

(<https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-017-0059-2>). It should be noted that the deteriorating economic crisis in Africa also had negative consequences for the operation of the global capitalist order. The adoption of SAP was principally instigated by Africa's external creditors (Olukoshi, 1991, 1993). Many African states had defaulted in the servicing of their external debts and also required new debt repayment rescheduling. A major condition given by most of the creditors for debt repayment rescheduling was a "clearance" of micro-economic stability from the IMF before further discussions and agreements on debt rescheduling could take place. Africa's external creditors demanded a demonstration of fiscal discipline and capacity to undertake needed internal economic reforms that would stimulate growth within the shortest possible time. As argued by Olukoshi (1993) on the Nigerian experience: "Nigeria by its refusal to take the IMF loan, which members of the London and Paris Clubs recommended, had to submit to the World Bank for a number of economic policy reforms" (Olukoshi, 1993). The country also had to accept the enhanced surveillance by IMF towards securing a medium-term credit worthy clearance before further debt rescheduling (Olukoshi, 1993). As further argued by Olukoshi:

The broad objective of SAP in Nigeria was to achieve fiscal balance by altering and restructuring production and consumption patterns of the economy; eliminating price distortions; reducing heavy dependence on crude oil exports and consumer goods imports; enhancing the non-oil export base and achieving sustainable growth (Olukoshi, 1993).

In many countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire, Niger, Benin Republic, and Malawi, where the SAPs were implemented, the strategies adopted were similar. Foremost among various adjustment reforms was "rolling back" the state's dominant responsibility in the economy and giving freedom to market forces to stimulate and mobilize local resources for efficient and productive economic development (Sesay & Olayode, 2007). According to Synge (1993):

Structural Adjustment Programme was designed to deal with underlying imbalances in the economy and thereby establish a basis for stable growth and development. It had two mutually reinforcing components; macroeconomic stabilisation aimed at controlling inflationary tendencies and achieving a viable balance of payment and, secondly, the elimination of imbalances

in the structure of production and expenditure to ensure the sufficient allocation of resources in the economy (Synge, 1993).

Other strategies adopted to implement the Structural Adjustment Programmes across many African countries were:

- a) the adoption of a market determined exchange rate for national currency;
- b) deregulation of external trade and payment arrangements (i.e. trade liberalisation);
- c) deregulation of interest rates;
- d) monetary and physical restraints;
- e) relaxation of administrative controls;
- f) pricing policy-elimination of subsidies;
- g) divestment of the state from the economy through privatisation and commercialisation; and
- h) external debt management (Adejumo, 1994).

For a continent with a welfarist-oriented ideology, the implementation of the SAPs brought hardship to many people, especially, the poor. The success of the adjustment policies was measured by its ability to achieve favourable balance of payment, attract considerable direct foreign investment and generate surplus foreign capital to maintain continuous debt servicing

(<https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-017-0059-2>). There was no doubt therefore that SAP was designed largely as a response to the demands of Africa's external creditors for economic stability. The potential beneficiaries of SAP were the foreign exchange dealers; merchant banks; multinational and foreign firms that benefited from massive currency devaluation; and government officials who engaged in such practices.

The implementation of SAP led to deterioration in the quality of life in some African nations. The total or partial withdrawal of subsidies on essential commodities by various governments in Africa and the rest of the developing countries including Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya led to decline in the consumption of many goods and services due to inability of majority of the populace to afford the cost. The hardships created by the implementation of SAP in the 1990s provoked widespread mass demonstrations and violent riots across Africa including Nigeria. The experience of many African states demonstrated that the implementation of SAP required coercive measures to push through unpopular policies. In many African states, anti-SAP protesters were brutally suppressed by government's security agencies. The economic hardship provoked by SAP measures and the harsh response of the state to quell popular opposition further exacerbated the crisis of legitimacy of the African state. As pointedly expressed by Beckman: "the political crisis of the African state is also the crisis of SAP" (Beckman, 1992). The excruciating hardship generated by the implementation of SAP further provoked a popular push for democratization, good governance, socio-economic justice and multiparty politics across Africa. Thus, opposition to SAP by the masses and various civil society organisations also provoked a driving force in the wave of democratization that swept through Africa in the 1990s

(<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2013/rise-civil-society-g>

[roups-africa](#)). Furthermore, the debt burden hanging on the neck of many African states left them at the mercy of the multilateral external creditors. Without other credible payment alternatives, African states had to submit to the demands of global governance institutions for economic reforms. The growing potency of multilateral institutions was demonstrated by their intrusive intervention in charting domestic economic and political paths for the African state. In many instances, African states were presented with “fait accompli” on many issues, losing their rights to autonomous independent decision-making.

The worsened performance of African economies under SAP made the World Bank and other multilateral institutions imposed political reforms on the African state. As noted by [Akinrinade \(1988\)](#):

By advocating good governance, gender equality, decentralization of power, human rights, the need to check corruption and waste, and the empowerment and involvement of people in decision making, the World Bank abandoned its previous economic interpretation of the African crisis.

The good governance model thus became increasingly deployed as a “developmental strategy” from the 1990s. However, the “good governance” being promoted by Western government and their allied multilateral institutions is the logic of liberal democracy and free market economy. The assumption is that free market will stimulate economic growth to provide a solid base for sustainable democracy. As stated by [Bendana \(2004\)](#):

The promotion of human rights, democracy, elections, constitutionalism, rule of law, property and gender rights have become critical elements of the “good governance agenda” being promoted under the global governance framework. Thus, good governance is the political administration of economic neoliberal policies such as deregulation of markets, trade and price systems; elimination of government interference in the operation of the market; removing of subsidies on social services; and promoting export-oriented productions ([Bendana, 2004](#)).

The underlying assumption is placing the interest of free capital economy above the interest of the people. Contemporary evidence from many African states such as Nigeria, Uganda, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Mali have shown that principles of good governance are evidently lacking from liberal democracy being promoted by the multilateral institutions. Liberal democracy has now become a key component of the political conditionality by multilateral institutions and Western governments. Unfortunately, liberal democracy has been reduced to the minimalist procedural elections to satisfy the demands of agencies of global governance. The periodic elections in many instances are poorly organized and often undermined by gross manipulation and irregularities, thereby creating further political chaos and chronic socio-economic crises in many African states. Nigeria, Cameroon, The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia are typical examples. Disputes over elections and term tenure have created serious political

instability in many African states.

5. African State from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Concerned by the deficits of development in the developing world, the United Nations General Assembly at the 2000 Millennium Development Summit agreed on eight time-bound goals with some specific targets and indicators to measure performance. These goals covered: poverty eradication; access to education; gender equality and women empowerment; maternal and child health; reducing HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; sustainable environment; and building global partnerships for development. The MDGs were applauded globally and this was attested to by its overwhelming endorsement as global development framework

([https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-\(mdgs\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-(mdgs))). The time frame given for the realization of the eight goals was fifteen years; from 2000-2015. The MDGs were formulated to provoke governments to formulate appropriate strategies and rise up to the challenges of development in their countries. The wide endorsement of the MDGs by African governments has been described as “a gradual, but more effective integration of the developing world, especially Africa, into the global economy” (Aleyomi, 2013). With the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, the framework became the global indicator for measuring development progress across the developing world. The MDGs indicators and targets were constantly used as benchmark by donor agencies, Western governments, multilateral development partners, development activists and civil society organizations to hold governments accountable and measure progress. The adoption of the Africa’s New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD) by the African Union was described as “part of Africa’s efforts towards achieving the targets of the MDGs’ (North-South Institute, 2005). A comparative analysis of both the MDGs and NEPAD indicate some similarities as both frameworks “aimed at eradicating extreme poverty as well as promoting primary education and basic healthcare; reducing the HIV/AIDS pandemic; reducing maternal and infant mortality; and pursuing global partnership for development” (Landsberg, 2003).

By the expiration of the deadline for the realization of the MDGs in 2015, many African states failed to meet the target of most MDGs because of economic hardship, poor implementation and inadequate support of the development partners as envisaged. However, the poor performance of many African states under the MDGs should not undermine some appreciable progress made under the framework. Many African states have used the MDGs framework to mobilise resources and local energies toward development projects. Notwithstanding many of these countries are not adequately committed to initiating poverty eradication initiatives, ensuring social security and mobilisation to eradicate illiteracy and improvement of maternal health. The MDGs were also successfully utilized as

“focus for advocacy, mobilization of local and international resources for development, and for project monitoring and agenda setting” (Lancet and London International Development Centre Commission, 2010). Policy reforms through affirmative action to remove traditional cultural barriers to gender inequality, especially in the area of women’s political participation have also been initiated by many African countries (Aina & Olayode, 2015).

Despite some modest progress achieved on some of the targets of the MDGs, the framework failed to alter the narrative of development from a donor-recipient perspective. Most of the strategic discussions on indicators, targets and overall planning were led by the donors with minimal participation of the developing countries. More importantly, the MDGs underplayed crucial governance issues such human rights, good governance, peace and security and community participation.

Given the 2015 deadline for the maturation of the MDGs, the world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, which incorporates a set of seventeen mutually reinforcing components with the aim to eradicate poverty, combat inequality and injustice and address climate change by 2030. Unlike the MDGs, the adoption of the SDGs followed wide consultations across different regions of the world. It is imperative to note that the SDGs adopted some of the African countries position under the Common African Position (CAP) framework for post-2015 development agenda

(https://www.good-deeds-day.org/sdg_long-term-goals/). It has been pointed out that “the SDG 10 on reduction of inequality as well as SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions are in consonant with governance in the context of development in Africa” (Olayode, 2005).

6. Conclusion: Rethinking Global Governance for African Development

As discussed in this treatise, governance both in the domestic and international domains is central to accomplishing sustainable development. The argument is that the crisis of governance has continued to reduce the capacity of many countries on the continent of Africa to promote economic growth and sustainable development, despite the vast human and material deposit with which the continent is graciously endowed. The crisis of governance in the African state therefore informed the imposition of Western orientation in politics and economy under the pretense of preventing the continent of Africa from total state collapse.

The context of the post-2015 SDGs has thrown up multifarious transnational issues that require collective efforts of global governance to address. There are complex challenges of poverty and pandemics, climate change, population pressure, instability associated with extremism and terrorism and rapid technological change. Arising from these changes, there is an urgent need to undertake reform of the global governance to make it more responsive to contemporary chal-

lenges. The demand for democratic governance at the state level should also be complimented at the level of global governance. The present operation of global governance is repressive and undemocratic; thereby representing a system of hypocrisy and double standard. While developing countries are pressurised to initiate democratic reforms; the norms and rules guiding multilateral institutions are dictatorial and in favour of the developed states. There is an urgent need therefore for democratisation of decision-making processes and governance of multilateral institutions to enable the broad participation of developing states. There is also a need to strengthen the rule of international law to regulate the conduct of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

There is no doubt that the new SDGs are much deeper than the MDGs in tackling the fundamental causes of poverty and a broad-based development framework that resonates with the need of developing states. African states should use the window of opportunity offered under the framework of SDGs 10 and 16 to promote governance, which would be a precursor for development. Improving on the MDGs, the post-2015 SDGs should develop clear indicators for measuring good governance and accountability. There should be collective monitoring efforts by state governments, development partners and civil society partners to ensure that indicators and targets are realized. In addition, national interests should always be incorporated into strategic engagement with global forces, especially on issues such as economic growth and good governance.

While previous development paradigms had neglected the issue of governance in their policy prescriptions, the new post-2015 SDGs have recognized the intricate linkages between governance and development projects. This new paradigm would have to take cognizance of the heterogenous complexity of various independent states of Africa with a view to evolving productive political and economic templates that are sensitive to Africa's historical and cultural realities (Okonye, Ojo, & Awomoyi, 2024).

Furthermore, other African countries can benefit from the democratic experiments of a few countries that have displayed some measures of stability, peace and progress on the continent such as Botswana, Mauritius, and Ghana among others. These countries can provide examples of "best practices" more than looking to the Western model for "best practices" on democracy. The continent should however not wait for technological change (Nkordeh, Ejiro, Okeoghene, Awomoyi, & Bobmanuel, 2023). As encapsulated in the SDGs, the task of institution-building is central to governance and development. Strengthening institutions as captured in the SDGs has opened a window of opportunity for the African states to promote governance and hold their leaders accountable. The African policy environment for many years has been characterised by the dominance of strong men over weak institutions. These strong men subvert the rule of law to accomplish selfish political gains at the expense of the common good of the citizenry. The outbreak of conflicts across different regions of Africa is the devastating consequence of weak institutions and bad governance. Functional

and effective state institutions can respond adequately to the needs of the people and implement national development visions independently without constraints from the intruding forces of globalisation. It is conclusively contended, therefore that while a “global vision” may be desirable, given the interdependent nature of contemporary global order, however, the path to sustainable development depends on the development of indigenous African visions, consistent with the people’s socio-cultural, political, and economic realities.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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