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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### DEMOCRATIC PATTERNS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES TODAY

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#### Abstract

Many writers and political commentators erroneously consider the sub-Saharan region as a homogeneous region and as such talk of an "African democracy". This article has come out with various patterns that can be observed today across the sub-Saharan region. The democratic 'snapshots' taken show variants emanating from the 4 sub-regions, a state's colonial history, the possession of oil, state's suffering sanctions and the longevity of the president. Two democratic indexes; Freedom House and Mo Ibrahim Index of Governance form the bases for the measurement of democracy in these states. In the majority of cases, both indexes have somehow given the same outlook of a country's democracy thereby reinforcing the conclusions drawn in this article. In order to proceed to the democratic patterns of these states, prior analyses of the decolonization and the struggle for influence by the Superpowers in the sub-Saharan region was done. These earlier dynamics help us to understand the present democratic patterns better.

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#### Introduction:-

The sub-Saharan region has been one of the regions of the world that has witnessed the fiercest competition for control from various "powers" out of Africa. The earliest invaders were the Arabs coming down from the North African region for commerce, slaves and the spread of Islam. Their influence is still felt today in this region especially in terms of religion and culture. This influence is particularly observed in music, architecture, dressing and food.

Many centuries later, the Arabs were succeeded in a similar mission by the Europeans. The Europeans were at the beginning of exploration which later led to the search for raw materials, slaves and a market for the manufactured goods.

The sub-Saharan region was a turbulent spot even before the arrival of the aforementioned foreigners. Various empires existed before the Arab-European penetration and there was a constant fight for domination amongst the empires. The conquerors did manage to maintain social cohesion and peace within their empires. These empires are a clear indication that Africans have been able historically to enact and maintain stable political institutions.

However, the Arab and European penetration was to have a profound effect on the mode of government, organisation and perception of power which continues to manifest itself today. The conquerors, especially the Arabs were more pre-occupied in spreading Islam and setting up political institutions in the form of caliphates, where the converted considered a nation in religious terms than from a geographical or ethnical point of view. The Arabs in

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particular made sure that African religious practices such as idol worship and animal sacrifice were discarded. Monotheism especially through the Prophet Mohammed was enforced. The Europeans followed this same path in Africa but monotheism was from Christianity with the worship of God through the “son of man”, Jesus Christ.

In order to understand the political patterns observed today in the sub-Saharan region, one needs to understand colonisation and decolonisation that this region was subjected to by the Europeans, followed by the Cold War conflicts (supported by the Superpowers in the policy of containment) that ensued after independence. These events have to a certain degree an impact of the political patterns of this region today. It would be erroneous to analyse the democratic patterns of this region today without taking their political history as the base.

### **Colonization and Decolonization Of The Sub-Saharan Region**

#### **Colonization**

By colonisation, this paper will focus only on the European colonisation. As earlier mentioned, the sub-Saharan region had earlier on in its history witnessed political conquest from various competitive empires within the region and later the Arab and then European colonisation. The European colonisation only, has been chosen as the base for today's democratic patterns in this paper because it is the one that accounts most. The states of this region today are fully a product of European colonisation.

The present sub-Saharan states today can be traced back to the Berlin Conference organised by the then first German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck in 1884-85. This conference brought together 13 European states and the United States of America (US) and it was meant to put order to the chaotic nature of the scramble for Africa at the time. The conference came out with rules and regulations to govern colonisation and trade in the sub-Saharan region. To an extent, the conference marked the formal recognition of the partition of Africa and the loss of sovereignty of the indigenous peoples of this region.

Rules pertaining to the partition of this region did not take into account the sociological composition of the peoples. By sociological composition, it is understood in terms of the culture, language or religions of the people. This resulted in the division of the same people into two or more states. The hinterland rule was somehow responsible for this division in that boundaries were drawn where two European powers met or where there was already an existing agreement between the people of the said region and a European state or business firm.

It should be noted that Africa was not represented at the Berlin Conference and as such no formal agreement existed between Africa and the Europeans for colonisation. However, various trade agreements existed between some European firms and the locals but that did not entail the loss of sovereignty. The absence of Africa in the Berlin Conference explains why there was a lot of resistance from the Africans to European domination. Most of the European powers were forced to engage in so many battles in order to conquer and subdue the Africans. In such a scenario, only a firm grip on the people through violence and dictatorship could enable the European powers have control over the Africans. Colonialism brought in despotism which in turn was carried onto some of the new states after independence. The African struggle to free themselves from the European dictatorship led to decolonisation in the 1960s.

#### **Decolonization (1957-1975)**

When the Cold War started after the Second World War (WW II), only Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa were not colonies in the sub-Saharan region. In fact the rest of the countries were firmly under certain European states (Great Britain, France, Belgium, Spain and Portugal).

At the end of WW II, most African states started clamouring for independence. Most of them had taken part in the war – fighting alongside with their colonial masters and now felt emboldened to demand their own independence. The initial response from the colonial powers was repression against these “insurgencies.” Repression was the tactics of Great Britain and France (Freud, 1984, p. 205) while the weaker colonial powers like Portugal and Belgium struggle to maintain their influence through military means<sup>1</sup>. Great Britain was fast to recognize the strength of these nationalistic movements, maybe due to its experience in India, than the other European colonial powers.

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<sup>1</sup> Belgium intervened militarily in the newly independent Congo while Portugal fought lengthy wars in Angola and Mozambique to resist decolonization.

Also, the European states were now economically weaker due to the high expenses incurred during the WW II and could not sustain the overseas expenditures. These colonial powers were in need of assistance themselves and succeeded to recover through the Marshall Plan (State Department, 2016). There was a need to free the colonies politically while maintaining an economic grip.

The decolonization process was not at the same pace amongst the European colonial powers. While colonization had been properly arranged through the Berlin Conference of 1884 (Craven, 2015, pp. 31-59), the decolonization followed a bilateral or multilateral approach<sup>2</sup> between the colonial power and the colony or colonies. The colonial powers had to ensure a proper handover of power to the newly independent states. This entailed putting up institutions, training the future civil servants and rulers, and also putting up a financial system that could cater for the new state. This however, did not turn out to be the case in some cases.

The British effort was to transfer power to “trusted African collaborators.” (Schmidt, 2013, p. 19). Discovering that it would not be possible to continue colonial rule, the British started reshaping the African societies to fit them into the Commonwealth where they could continue to influence these new regimes. Special privileges existed within the Commonwealth and Britain was the undisputed leader. Future leaders were mainly recruited from the weaker ethnic groups as was the case with Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> However, in Kenya, Britain had to employ military means against the *Mau Mau* Movement (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019) that threatened the lives of British subjects. British decolonization can be described as orderly, calculated and tactful, making sure that the new leaders were Anglophiles ready to continue cooperation with Britain and also ready to preserve all British interests. Britain at the end was less worried about decolonization as its European allies.

The story of France is quite problematic. The French originally had a policy of assimilation where Africans were to be given the same rights as the mainland French. Independence or secession claims out of this framework was considered as “treason.” (Freud, 1984, p. 224) The French view of the decolonization differed or contrasted the British. France coming out from WW II saw its position diminished amongst world powers and the African colonies were the only means for France to project itself internationally. The initial French view was against decolonization like the other imperial powers. France did every effort at the beginning to thwart the nationalistic movements demanding independence. One of such effort was to dissolve the two great federations of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa in its 1958 constitution. This was an attempt to weaken the trans-territorial nationalist movements. Realizing at the end that it could not defeat these nationalistic movements from its colonies, France yielded to these demands granting independence to most of the colonies in 1960. However, France made sure agreements (popularly known as *Françafrique*) with the newly independent states were signed in the political, economic and military domain to maintain French influence. These agreements continue to be a bone of contention between Paris and most of these states that do not want to be bound any longer to them. The agreements were disproportionate to the advantage of France. The French decolonization policy can be described as chaotic, less wilful and deceitful.

A scenario less colourful than the French, was the case of Belgium and Portugal. Their decolonization policy was the most unwilling (Shillington, 1995, p. 373). They had both invested very little in the economic and political developments of their colonies. “Until 1957 the Belgians had continued to rule their huge colony [Zaire] as if it were completely isolated from the changes taking place elsewhere in Africa.” (Oliver & Atmore, 1981, pp.261-262). One can describe these colonies as ill prepared for self-rule due to the little education they had received. However, uprisings in 1959 forced Belgium to consider independence for Congo. It was only in January 1960 that the Belgian government decided to grant independence in June 1960, meaning only six months were used for preparation for the hand-over! The Belgians, like their British and French counterparts wanted to continue influence after independence. Continuous access to the Congo’s enormous mineral resources remained a priority for the Belgians. Before granting independence, Belgium transferred colonial state-run companies to private Belgian firms. Even after independence, Belgian administrators still remained in Congo and 1,000 Belgian army officers took charge of the Congolese army.

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<sup>2</sup> Britain granted independence on a one-to-one basis while the French under De Gaulle announced plans to grant independence to all of its sub-Saharan colonies in 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Britain preferred to give power to the Northerners who were less educated and weaker than their southern counterparts in order to maintain influence.

Following the Belgian footsteps on decolonization was Portugal. In fact, Portugal had no intention of ever leaving its colonies. Portugal's weight and economy meant it could not maintain competition in the world market without her colonies. Portugal was the smallest and poorest of the imperial powers. It depended much on its colonies for cheap raw materials and markets for its manufactured goods. These concerns led to a fierce resistance from Lisbon to grant independence to its colonies. Portugal was then forced to engage into lengthy and costly wars with the nationalistic movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. The Portuguese colonies finally obtained their independence long after the British and French colonies. The decolonization policy of Belgium and Portugal shows a strong resistance to decolonization. Their decolonization can be described as ill prepared, unwilling and violent.

Lastly, we can talk of decolonization of Italian colonies by 'others'. Italy was defeated like Germany in the WW II and was forced to relinquish its colonies to the victors. The Italian presence in Africa was also a short one. Their East African Empire comprised of Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopia (Italy occupied Ethiopia from 1936-1941). Italy's occupation of Libya ended in 1943 after their defeat from the British and its colonial and Commonwealth forces. Finally, these colonies were placed on a UN mandate. Libya was placed under French and British tutelage until 1951, where the UN was forced to grant independence because of an increase of anticolonial sentiment. Britain administered Ethiopia from 1941-1952. Eritrea was transferred to Ethiopia. Italian Somaliland remained under Italian trusteeship on the request of the Western Powers and finally merged with British Somaliland in 1960 to gain independence as the independent nation of Somalia.

Now it will be advisable to grasp the events that accompanied decolonization, especially the conflicts that were inflamed by the Cold War actors. These struggles were under the policy of containment (practiced mostly by the West to limit the expansion of Communism), where the powers struggled to maintain influence in specific regions or attempted to expand influence to other regions. It can be best described as a struggle for domination by the two world ideological blocs.

### **The Policy Of Containment**

The policy of containment normally refers to the struggle for domination in Africa by Cold War actors. The decolonization process ushered in a new struggle between the Cold War powers. These powers "strove to shape a new international order that catered to their interests." (Schmidt, 2013, p. 2). Most of the independence struggles and conflicts that ensued independence had cold war influence. To the United States, it was a fight to keep the communist ideology and influence out of Africa.

This policy accounted for most of the civil wars that followed independence. We will analyse the most prominent which is the Congo crisis. The others will just be mentioned briefly. The Congo crises epitomises well the actions of the Cold War actors in the other conflicts.

### **Congo Crises (1960-1961):**

This crisis can be defined as the first encounter between the then superpowers in the sub-Saharan region. This was the earliest attempt for both to vie for influence in this region. Iandolo summarise well the Soviet weapon for domination when he wrote: "Soviet policy for the Third World was based on economic aid. In particular, Khrushchev thought that the superiority of socialism as an economic system would convince the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia to choose a non-capitalist path to development." (Iandolo, 2014, p. 34).

The Soviet Union was active in Africa prior to independence especially in most of the sub-Saharan states in the 1960s. In fact, Moscow had established diplomatic, economic and technical cooperation with Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Khrushchev's<sup>4</sup> strategy was to attract most of the newly independent states into the Soviet bloc through economic aid under acceptable conditions to these states. The erroneous believe in Moscow at the time was that most of these countries being very poor will shun capitalism as a model and will embrace Socialism. Congo represented an ideal state for the Soviet Union to portray itself as an ideal partner for the newly independent states. Congo was a huge country and had emerged from a bitter war of independence coupled with exploitation of its natural resources and discrimination of its people during the colonial period by Belgium.

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<sup>4</sup> Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev was the First Secretary to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964. This powerful post serves also as the leader of the Soviet Union.

This was an opportunity for the Soviet Union to show the difference between the “neo-colonialist” ambitions of the West and the USSR’s “freedom loving” approach to newly independent countries (Iandolo, 2012, pp. 683–704). Congo gained independence on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1960. Before gaining independence, The Soviet Union had already made contacts with Lumumba<sup>5</sup> who later became the first Congolese prime minister. Khrushchev sent a telegram to Lumumba on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1960 to congratulate him and also expressed his desire to establish diplomatic relations. Lumumba replied positively a few days later (Iandolo, 2014, p. 39). On July 8, 1960 the Soviet Union established official diplomatic relations with Lumumba’s Congo after a Soviet delegation headed by Mirzo Rakhmatov met Lumumba on July 7, 1960 (Natufe, 2011, p. 241).

This “romance” between Lumumba and the Soviet Union made the West especially Washington preoccupied. Prior to independence, U.S officials met Kasavubu, Tshombe, Kalonji and other leading anti Lumumbists to emphasize the need to protect “American capitalist interests” (Iandolo, 2012, p. 161) after June 30, 1960. Soon after independence, the new state plunged into crisis. Colin Legum (1961) summarizes the Congo Crisis as follows:

1. July 5 1960, Congolese soldiers mutinied against the Belgian officials still in command. They wanted the indigenization of the army.
2. July 10 1960, Belgian troops landed in Katanga at the invitation of Tshombe and start disarming Congolese soldiers.
3. July 11, declaration of independence of Katanga from the Congolese republic, made by Tshombe.
4. September 4, Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba as prime minister.

The mutiny of the Congolese soldiers coupled with the declaration of independence of the Katanga region left the newly independent nation in chaos. Belgium under the guise of sending troops to protect its citizens, started disarming the Congolese soldiers and gave all necessary support to The Katanga separatists. The reaction of Washington and Moscow was to completely change the crisis to their advantage. The US saw an opportunity to get rid of the “hostile” Lumumba who was much closer to Moscow than to Washington. Moscow was swift to condemn the Belgian intervention and made an official declaration blaming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for being responsible for the chaos in Congo. This declaration also called for the withdrawal of Belgian troops (Iandolo, 2014, p. 40).

Initially, when the conflict erupted, Lumumba and Kasavubu sought UN help to re-establish the central government’s control over the national territory. Lumumba believed the UN forces will fight alongside the Congolese army but by the end of July, Lumumba realized that Hammarskjold (UN secretary general at the time) was not committed to the idea of UN forces fighting alongside the Congolese army; Lumumba decided to seek the Soviet’s military aid and opposed the UN mission (Collins, 1993, p. 252). The Soviet Union rallied with most African and Third World countries calling for the withdrawal of Belgian troops. The US, Belgian and other Western states were in favour of limiting the Soviet presence in this region and as such questioned the legitimacy and actions of the UN in Congo. Belgium’s policy in the Congo during the 1960 and 1961 was nuanced due to divisions amongst the politicians in Brussels as to how they should interfere with the domestic affairs of the Congo, the support of the secessionist Katanga Region and to the role of the UN in Congo. Brussels position shifted at times from support to the Katanga to support to the central government but Brussels resisted all attempts to cut links with the secessionists (Ibid p. 256).

Washington, Paris and London later backed UN mediation which they now saw as the only means to get the Soviets out the Congo. The UN was now used to serve American geopolitical interests in this region. America used its almost 100 million dollars yearly contribution to the UN mission to foster its own agenda. The UN decision to offer food and pay the Congolese army in order for it to remain neutral in the conflict opposing Kasavubu and Lumumba only gave an additional support to Kasavubu and the new chief of staff Joseph Mobutu appointed by Kasavubu. Mobutu gained popularity for these payments which ultimately helped him in his coup days later. Collins (1993) in his article states that: “The combination of U.N. and U.S. support was pivotal for Mobutu’s subsequent seizure of power.” (p. 262). Mobutu seized power on the September 14, 1960 seemingly to protect the Congo “from Communist colonialism and from Marxist-Leninist imperialism.” (Ibid). This was the beginning of American total influence in the Congo and the region.

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<sup>5</sup> Patrice Lumumba was the leader of the Congolese National Movement (MNC) that was strongly anti-colonial and fought hard for independence.

The Congo crisis marked the beginning of a very sad future for democracy in the sub-Saharan Africa states. It also sharpened the East-West divide and increased their search for influence in the sub-Saharan region. Further conflicts in Africa will see their active participation through proxies. A brief look at them follows.

#### **The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002)**

has its origin in the internal struggle against the Portuguese colonization. The main nationalist movements were the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA. The Angolan Civil war portrays how an internal conflict can be externalised and finally seems to be externally created. By the end of the civil war, six foreign countries had participated in one way or the other. These countries were the U.S., The Soviet Union, China, Cuba, South Africa and the Congo. On March 31, 2002 Angolan top military officials and representatives of the UNITA rebels signed an agreement to the destructive civil war.

#### **The Mozambican Civil War (1977-1992)**

carried many characteristics similar to the Angolan Civil War. This was another Portuguese colony in The Southern African Region. As it was the case with Angola, Portugal never prepared to grant independence to Mozambique. The various state actors included South Africa, U.S, the Soviet Union, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi. When the US ended its support for Renamo in 1988 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, a number of peace talks were held between Renamo and the Frelimo government that finally culminated into the Rome General Peace Accord that was signed on October 4, 1992 (United Nations, 1992).

#### **The Somali Crisis**

Somalia's geographic position made it a geo-strategic actor during the Cold War. In short, Somalia has been a victim of its geographic position than a victim of its natural resources as some of its sub-Saharan states. There is nothing as valuable resources in this country but has seen the most fierce battle for control and domination in its history. America's presence in this region was to "to support and stabilize pro-Western governments, control the sea route, and ensure the economic security of the West and restrain the possibility of a Soviet blockade of oil lanes." (Schulz, 2011, par. 8). The Soviet Union had marked its presence and influence in Somalia officially through a 1963 Russian military aid agreement, where the Somalis will be trained and armed by the Soviets. In order to prevent the expansion of the Soviets in Somalia, the Americans offered financial and military support to the government of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. The Ogaden-Battle was to swap allies in this region (Global Security, 1986). The US seized this opportunity to increase its military support of Somalia under the condition of Somali withdrawal from the Ogaden border region with Ethiopia. From thence, Ethiopia continued to enjoy support from the Soviet Union and Cuba while Somalia gained support from the US through Saudi Arabia. This continued to the end of the Cold War and with no adversary in this region, Washington abandoned Somalia.

#### **The Guineas (Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau)**

The West African state of Guinea Conakry gained independence from France on October 2, 1958 with Sékou Touré as president. The Fifth Republic of France under Charles de Gaulle had offered a choice between more autonomy in a new French Community and total independence outside a French Community to its colonies. Most of them went for the former while Guinea Conakry chose the latter. The withdrawal of France was immediately replaced by the Soviet Union. Sékou Touré played the Soviet Union and the US one another to get his desired aid and trade. During the Cuban missile crisis, Touré refused to allow Soviet jets to refuel in Guinea though the airport had been extended by the Soviets for this purpose. Again in 1975 Touré change his mind and allowed Cuban and Soviet jets to refuel in Guinea during the Angolan civil war. Two years later, he again changed course and moved closer to the US and France (History.com, 2019). Guinea also played a role of a middleman for the Soviets to arm and support the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) led by Amilcar Cabral in neighbouring Guinea Bissau. By the time of independence, PAIGC had received assistance from 10 countries; China, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Libya, Algeria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Ghana.

#### **Democratic Patterns Observed In The Sub-Saharan Region Today**

The democratic patterns in the sub-Saharan states will be analysed using five categories;

1. The four sub-regions. These are West Africa (ECOWAS)<sup>6</sup>, Central Africa (CEMAC), East Africa (EAC)<sup>7</sup> and Southern Africa (SADC).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Mauritania is not considered since it is not a member of ECOWAS though it is situated in West Africa

2. the colonial heritage of these states,
3. Top-10 oil and mineral producing states,
4. Top-10 long-serving presidents and Top-10 corrupt states
5. States that are under sanctions and those that have been sanctioned before because of democracy or human rights abuse.

The five categories will be analysed and compared using the Freedom House Index of 2020, which actually are calculations of 2019 and the Mo Ibrahim Index of 2018 based on calculations of 2017.

These are the latest reports that are available for now.

The Economist Index was considered complex for the analysis. Freedom House and Mo Ibrahim indexes' scores are on 100. "0" being the least or worst score and "100" the best. All scores below **50** are indicated in red.

Freedom House score countries according to their political rights and civil liberties.

The Mo Ibrahim Index is broad and covers almost all areas of governance. It defines governance "as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that every citizen has the right to expect from their state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens" (IIAG, 2020). Four categories which are "Safety & Rule of Law,

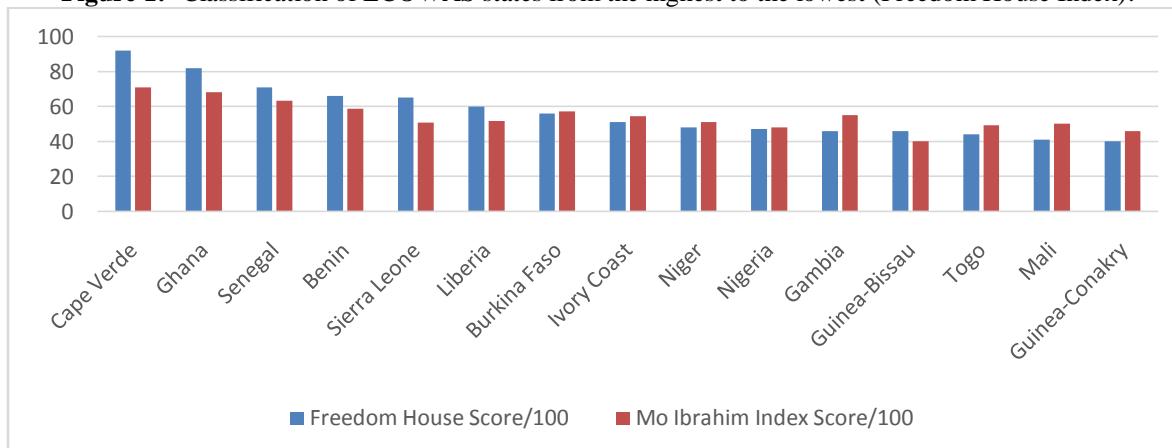
Participation & Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development" (Ibid) are used in measuring governance. These four categories in turn do have sub-categories that are used in measuring the said-category. The measurements of the 4 sub-regions follow below.

**Table 1:-** The West African sub-region (ECOWAS).

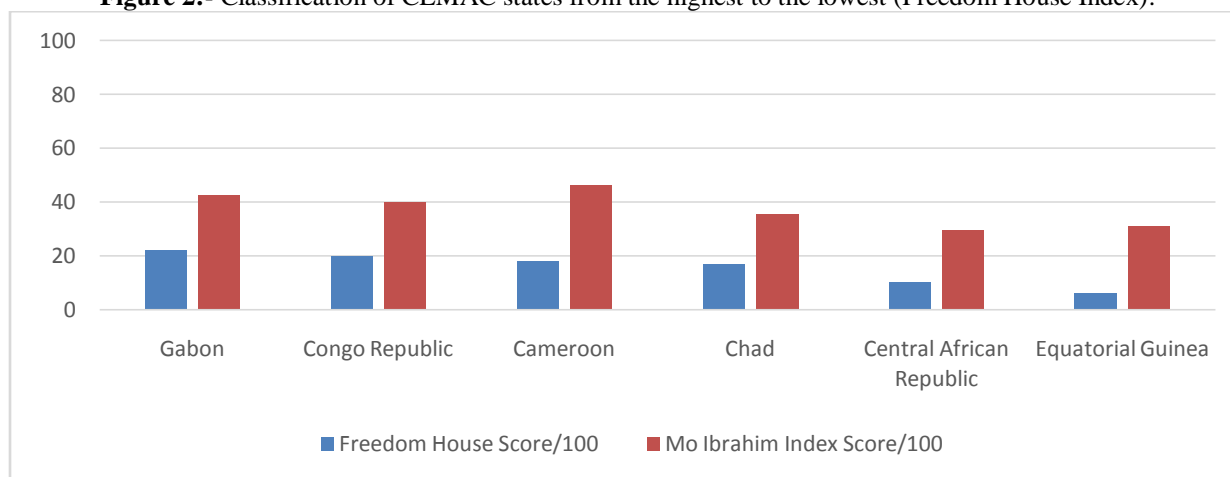
Country	Freedom House Score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index Score/100
Benin	66	58.7
Burkina Faso	56	57.1
Cape Verde	92	71.1
Ivory Coast	51	54.5
Gambia	46	54.9
Ghana	82	68.1
Guinea-Conakry	40	45.9
Guinea-Bissau	46	40.2
Liberia	60	51.6
Mali	41	50.1
Niger	48	51.2
Nigeria	47	47.9
Senegal	71	63.3
Sierra Leone	65	50.9
Togo	44	49.1
Average	<b>57.0</b>	<b>54.3</b>

<sup>7</sup>The Republic of Sudan and Ethiopia are not considered in this study since they have no tight links with any of the sub-regional groups. South Sudan is not equally included though it is a member of the EAC. It's relatively young political history accounts for this omission

<sup>8</sup>The DRC is geographically more central than southern but is a member of the SADC

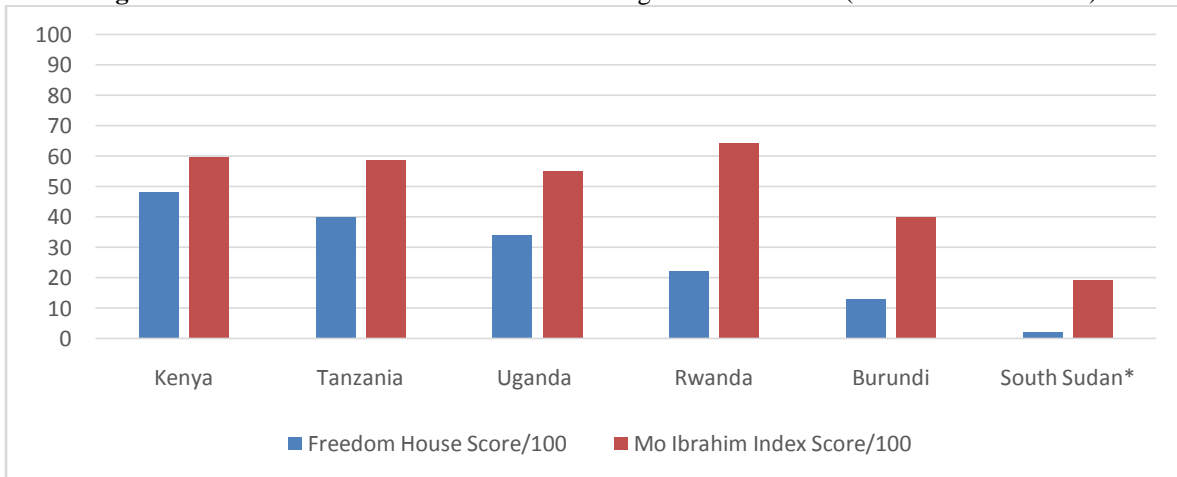
**Figure 1:-** Classification of ECOWAS states from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index).**Table 2:-** The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).

Country	Freedom House Score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index Score/100
Cameroon	18	46.2
Central African Republic	10	29.5
Chad	17	35.4
Congo Republic	20	39.8
Equatorial Guinea	06	30.9
Gabon	22	42.5
<b>Average</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>37.4</b>

**Figure 2:-** Classification of CEMAC states from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index).**Table 3:-** The East African Community (EAC).

Country	Freedom House Score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index Score/100
Burundi	13	39.8
Kenya	48	59.8
Rwanda	22	64.3
South Sudan*	02	19.3
Tanzania	40	58.5
Uganda	34	55
<b>Average</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>49.5</b>

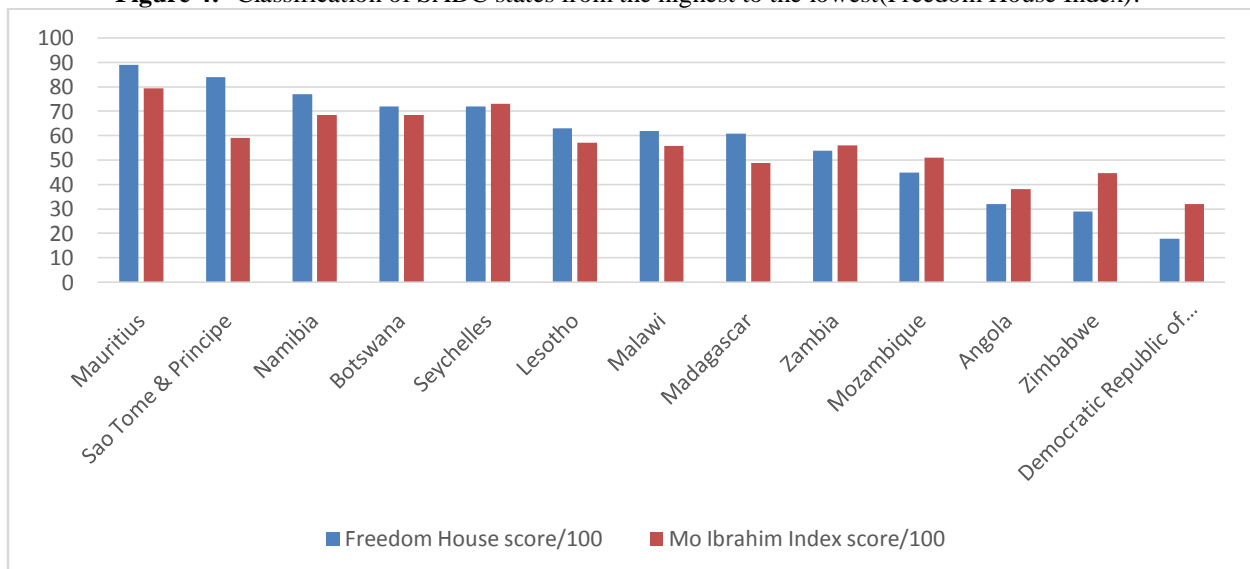
**Figure 3:-** Classification of EAC states from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index)

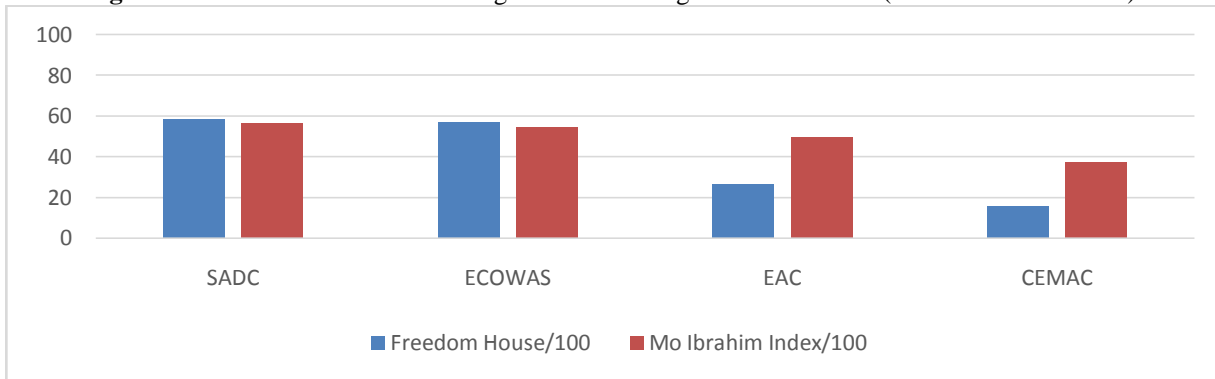


**Table 4:-** The Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Angola	32	38.3
Botswana	72	68.5
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*	18	32.1
Lesotho	63	57.1
Madagascar	61	49
Malawi	62	55.8
Mauritius	89	79.5
Mozambique	45	51
Namibia	77	68.6
Sao Tome & Principe	84	59.2
Seychelles	72	73.2
Zambia	54	56.2
Zimbabwe	29	44.7
Average	<b>58.3</b>	<b>56.4</b>

**Figure 4:-** Classification of SADC states from the highest to the lowest(Freedom House Index).



**Figure 5:-** Classification of the sub-regions from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index).

#### Analysis of the 4 sub-regions

The central African zone is the epicentre of poor democracy in the sub-Saharan African region. As can be seen in Table 2. This sub-region's performance in democracy in particular and governance in general falls below the African average on both the Freedom House and Mo Ibrahim indexes of measurement. This is no coincidence but a true reflection of the political dynamics in this sub-region. The Central African region, though the smallest region, is host to four of the ten longest-serving leaders in Africa (Table 10). In fact, the longest-serving, ObiangNguema of Equatorial Guinea is from this sub-region. The Central African region also contains the most corrupt countries on the Transparency International classification on corruption (Table 12). The constitution or the constitutive document of CEMAC makes no mention of human rights and democracy. The absence of a constitutional or legal document that binds the community on democracy and human rights has created an atmosphere of indifference even when violations are criticised from foreign bodies. There is a strict respect of the domestic affairs of fellow member states (though unwritten) especially when democracy and human rights are concerned and this respect is based on the fact that what is happening in the other member state might have happened here (fellow member state) before or is happening too now or may happen tomorrow. It is like saying "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones". Member states do actually violate Treaty obligations from time to time with impunity.<sup>9</sup>

The East African Community trails the Central African states on poor governance or democracy. But unlike the Central African states, this sub-region as a whole has had a good number of civil wars which can account to some extent the relative low scores; Sudan versus South Sudan, Ethiopia versus Eritrea, Rwanda (1990-1993) and Burundi (1993-2005). The collapse of Somalia as a state in 1991 bringing an era of lawlessness, insecurity and terrorism has further helped to destabilize the region. These states have spent most of their time trying to defend their territories or seeking reconciliation within the state, and thereby pushing democracy to the background. To an extent, these political upheavals could justify the poor democratic and human rights performance. The East African region is not welded together as the West, Central and Southern African communities because there is an East African Economic Community (EAC), but not all of these states in this sub-region are part of it.

But not all is negative or red in the sub-Saharan region. While two zones show a negative performance, two also show a positive performance. The West and Southern African zones are all above the African average on both indexes of measurement. But what accounts for this? The West African region has not been as peaceful as their southern African counterpart. There has been occasional civil wars, coups and democratic interruptions. But ECOWAS has always shown resolve to redress these situations either diplomatically or militarily. This has played an important role in promoting democracy. ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone are good examples of military intervention. It threatened to intervene militarily in January 2017 in the Gambia if the outgoing president, YahyaJammeh continued to refuse the election defeat. This threat and ECOWAS mediation led to Jammeh handing over power to the rightful winner, Adama Barrow. ECOWAS was instrumental in reversing the military interruption of democracy in Mali and Guinea-Bissau. ECOWAS was also firm on the Ivorian disputed presidential elections of 2010 where they threw their support behind AlassaneOuattara who eventually was installed as President after a UN/French military intervention. The Charter of ECOWAS has got clauses on democracy and human rights and

<sup>9</sup> In many occasions Equatorial Guinea and Gabon have expelled Cameroonians from their territories. The two have also been hindering free movement as required by the CEMAC Treaty with visas still required from the other member states

even a human rights Court – what is completely absent in the Central African and the Eastern African regions. The Court is completely independent and has had path-breaking cases such as judgments against the Gambia for the torture of journalists, against Niger for condoning modern forms of slavery and against Nigeria for impeding the right to free basic education for all children. The Court permits individuals and NGOs to bypass national courts and file suits directly with the Court (Alter, Helfer, & McAllister, 2013). Concerning the democratic clause, Article 45(1) of ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance sets out, “In the event that democracy is abruptly brought to an end by any means or where there is massive violation of Human Rights in a Member State, ECOWAS may impose sanctions on the state concerned” in form of suspension of membership ((Biersteker, Eckert, & Tourinho, 2016, p. 105). It is no surprise then, that this commitment to democracy is highly consistent with the West African peoples’ appetite for democracy and multipartism. An Afrobarometer study revealed, “76% of citizens in West African countries support democracy, against a continental average of 71%, and 80% oppose any form of authoritarian regime (one-party rule or a military regime), against a continental average of 77%.” ((IDEA, 2016, p. 8).Dulani in 2005 showed: “Most citizens favour a limitation on presidential mandates of two terms.” (Ibid).

The Southern African zone has got the most rated democracies in Africa. It happens to be the most peaceful and most prosperous region. Most of the states in this region have a consolidated democracy with Zimbabwe and Swaziland as exceptions. The DRC and Angola, though part of this sub-region deviate from these established and peaceful democracies. This does not mean democracy is fully flourishing amongst the states. More work is needed to consolidate democracy in countries like Zambia and Malawi. The SADC countries need to be credited for the progress going on in Zimbabwe, though Zimbabwe is still far from perfection. In fact, SADC has made significant strides to consolidate citizens’ participation in the decision-making process, democratic practice and institutions. The constitutions of all SADC countries enshrine the principles of equal opportunities and full participation of the citizens in the political process (UNHCHR, 2012). Article 4 of the Treaty stipulates that "human rights, democracy and the rule of law" (Ibid) are principles guiding the acts of its members. Article 5 of the Treaty outlines the objectives of SADC, which commits the Member States to "promote common political values, systems and other shared values which are transmitted through institutions, which are democratic, legitimate and effective" (Ibid). It also commits Member States to "consolidate, defend and maintain democracy, peace, security and stability" (Ibid) in the region. The constitution of SADC reflects the hearts of the leaders to forge ahead common values that are exhibited through democracy and the respect for human rights. SADC has got other Protocols especially on elections and election monitoring (SADC, 2012). Democratic elections are at the centre of SADC’s operations out of the economic realm. This sub-region is full of ex-British colonies which also explains their above average score in sub-Saharan region as will be seen in the next section.

### Colonial Heritage

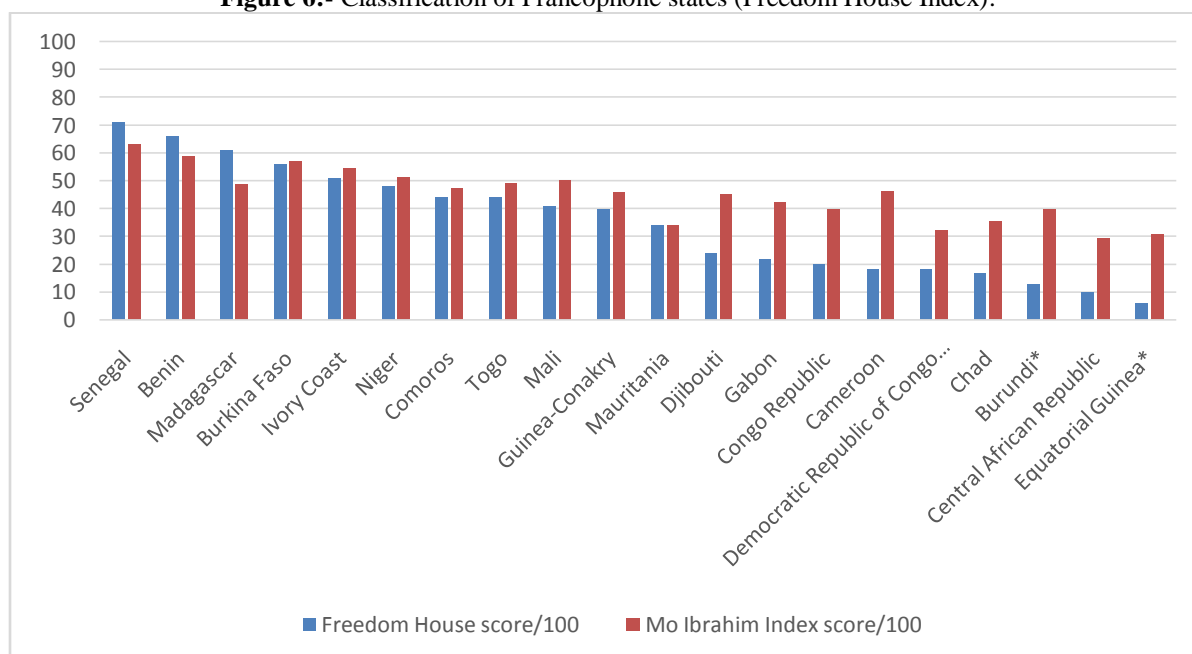
Here a comparison is made of sub-Saharan states with respect to their colonial heritage. It would be interesting to know if colonialism has had any effect on the democratic and human rights processes in these states. Belgium lost leverage on its former colonies after independence and France did everything possible to absorb them into their sphere of influence. After the Rwandan genocide in 1994, Rwanda accused France of having colluded with the regime of Juvénal Habyarimana (President of Rwanda, 1973-1994) to massacre the Tutsis and decided to turn to the Commonwealth. Today, Rwanda has a more Anglo-Saxon-leaning culture than French. As such, Rwanda will be treated as a former British colony. Meanwhile the DRC and Burundi, former Belgian colonies, and Equatorial Guinea a former Spanish colony will be treated as French colonies due to their membership of the Francophonie.

**Table 5:-** Francophone states sub-Saharan region.

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Benin	66	58.7
Burkina Faso	56	57.1
Burundi*	13	39.8
Cameroon	18	46.2
Central African Republic	10	29.5
Chad	17	35.4
Comoros	44	47.5
Congo Republic	20	39.8
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*	18	32.1

Djibouti	24	45.1
Equatorial Guinea*	06	30.9
Gabon	22	42.5
Guinea-Conakry	40	45.9
Ivory Coast	51	54.5
Madagascar	61	49.0
Mali	41	50.1
Mauritania	34	34
Niger	48	51.2
Senegal	71	63.3
Togo	44	49.1
Average	<b>35.2</b>	<b>45.1</b>

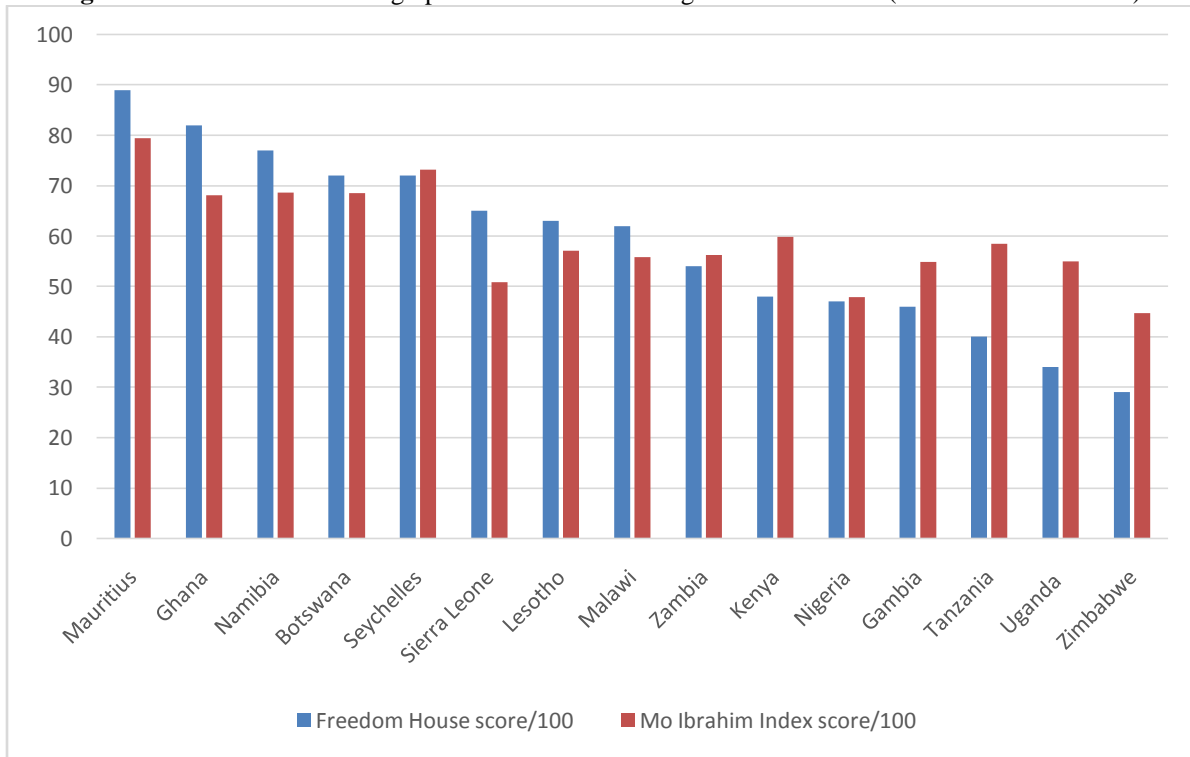
**Figure 6:-** Classification of Francophone states (Freedom House Index).



**Table 6:-** English-speaking sub-Saharan states.

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Botswana	72	68.5
Gambia	46	54.9
Ghana	82	68.1
Kenya	48	59.8
Lesotho	63	57.1
Malawi	62	55.8
Mauritius	89	79.5
Namibia	77	68.6
Nigeria	47	47.9
Seychelles	72	73.2
Sierra Leone	65	50.9
Tanzania	40	58.5
Uganda	34	55
Zambia	54	56.2
Zimbabwe	29	44.7
<b>Average</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>59.9</b>

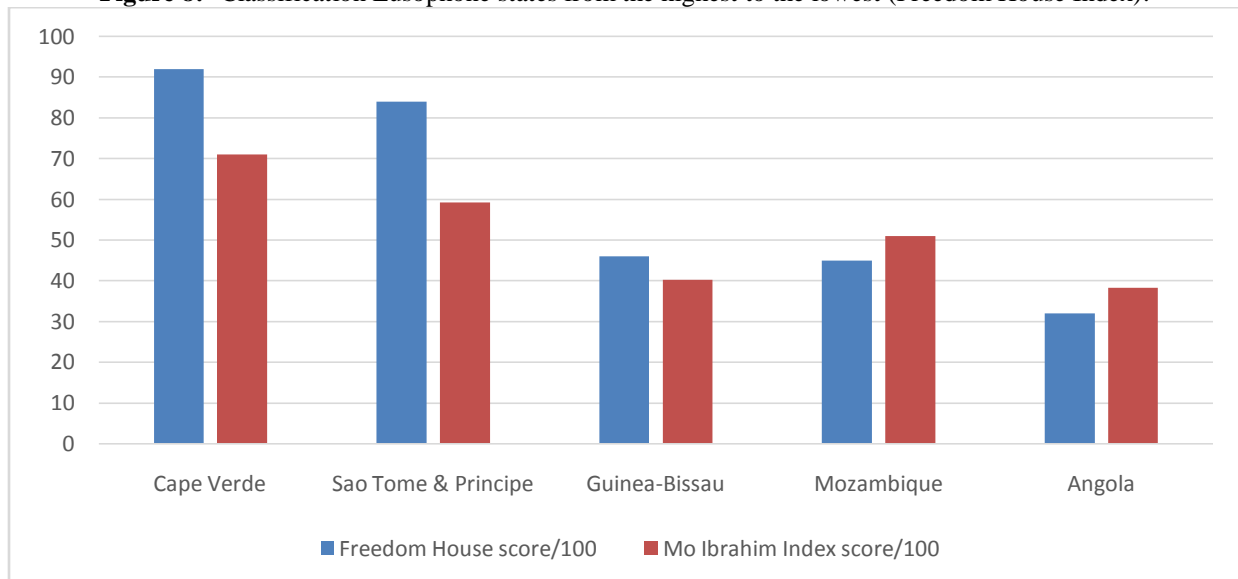
**Figure 7:-** Classification of Anglophone states from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index).

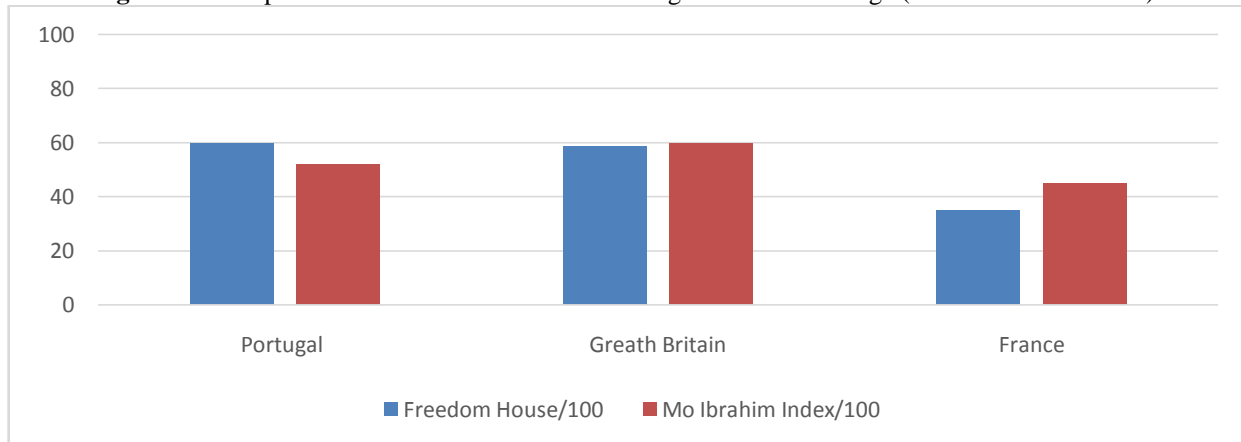


**Table 7:-** Portuguese Former colonies.

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Angola	32	38.3
Cape Verde	92	71.1
Guinea-Bissau	46	40.2
Mozambique	45	51
Sao Tome & Principe	84	59.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>52.0</b>

**Figure 8:-** Classification Lusophone states from the highest to the lowest (Freedom House Index).



**Figure 9:-** Comparison of democratic scores according to colonial heritage (Freedom House Index).

There is a remarkable difference between the French former colonies and the English former colonies. The Portuguese picture is a mixed one, almost even between good and bad. Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe are faring very well in democracy while Angola and Guinea-Bissau are doing badly. With the Portuguese “chased” away at independence, these former territories have little in common with Portugal except for the language. Mozambique had long embedded itself in the British culture through its immediate neighbours who are all former British colonies and its membership to SADC and the Commonwealth. Mozambique can be treated fairly as part of the British dominion. The case of the Belgians former colonies have been explained above.

The difference between the British former colonies and the French former colonies is of particular interest. They both had almost an equal number of colonies in Africa. We notice the majority of the former British colonies are performing well in democracy than the former French colonies (Fig. 9). To an extent, modes of colonial rule are to be at the origin. The British had an indirect rule system during colonial rule. This system gave important powers to the local chiefs or kings in their territories. The French on the other hand, had direct rule, and traditional customs with regards to the enthronement of chiefs or kings were scrapped by the French. All local authorities were appointed by the colonialists and the chiefs could be depose in case of insubordination. Also, as has been noticed earlier in this article, the British were more prepared to grant independence to its colonies than the other European powers. The British were able to allow a gradual transition, tailored to local circumstances and as such, local competitive elections were held before independence. This resulted in real popular leaders being elected at independence. In addition, at independence, most of these colonies adopted the parliamentary system of government which gave more powers to elected legislative organs than the executive organ.

On the other hand, France was not fully set to grant independence to its colonies. The French had the policy of assimilation where the Africans were just “black” French people. The colonies were an extension of France and Africans were elected to the French national assembly. Faced with popular demands from Africans for independence after the WW II and coupled with the financial responsibility that France could no longer bear, De Gaulle accepted the idea of independence but with a behind-the-scene firm control. Most elections at independence was just a formality to validate the French picks. New leaders appear after independence without real legitimacy. In order to consolidate their powers, repression became the only remedy. By adopting the Jacobin state (highly centralized), no other organs or structures competed with the executive’s powers. This also explains why the democratic processes in the 1990s were tumultuous in the former French colonies and most of them had to revert to national conferences for a transition to a new democratic state.

Another factor that cannot be completely discarded is language and history. The new former British colonies adopted English as their national language and language of instruction in schools. Studying in English and studying English history exposed them to democratic and human rights events that have marked the British history. The Magna Carta, Bill of Rights, the Glorious Revolution and democratic debates in Westminster must have instilled the culture of democracy and human rights to them more than their French counterparts whose political hero in French history was Napoleon – who represented every aspect of dictatorship. The former British colonies were also exposed to the liberal writings of John Locke, David Hume, Edmond Burke, John Milton and fellow American Thomas

Jefferson. To conclude, the former British colonies were more exposed to ideas of human rights and democracy than their French counterparts. In fact, the French also had great writers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc. but they were all overshadowed with personalities like Napoleon, De Gaulle and the Jacobin state which all had in common - the centralization of power.

#### **Sub-Saharan states that are under International sanctions and those that have been sanctioned before**

The goal here is to find out if the countries under International restrictions or that have once suffered from international sanctions are faring well in democracy or not. The question that comes to mind is: Does international sanctions bring meaningful progress in a country's democratic march?

**Table 8:-** Sub-Saharan States under sanctions (EU plus Others).

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Burundi	13	39.8
Central African Republic (CAR)	10	29.5
Eritrea	02	29.3
Guinea-Bissau	46	40.2
Guinea-Conakry	40	45.9
South Sudan	02	19.3
Sudan	12	30.8
Somalia	7	13.6
Zimbabwe	32	44.3
<b>Average</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>35.5</b>

**Table 9:-** States that have been hit by sanctions before (EU plus Others).

Country	Freedom House score/100	Mo Ibrahim Index score/100
Angola	32	38.3
Cameroon	18	46.2
Ivory Coast	51	54.5
Liberia	60	51.6
Mali	41	50.1
Nigeria	47	47.9
Togo	48	49.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>48.2</b>

Tables 8 and 9 above give a grim picture of democracy in countries under international restrictions or sanctions and as well countries that have once been under such sanctions. These countries still remain amongst the worst as far as democracy and human rights are concerned. In reality, we noticed that countries that once bowed down to sanctions, simply turned back to old habits when sanctions were scrapped. One conspicuous example that has embraced democracy among those sanctioned states, and is taking strides to consolidate democracy is Liberia. Ivory Coast is timidly in progress though political tensions remain rife there. These scores show the sanction policy does not seem to be working or is an effective policy to bring about a meaningful change in democracy in such states. Clearly, the policy of sanctions needs to be revisited.

#### **Long-serving presidents and democracy**

In general, two hypotheses can be considered on this criterion. One, a president can stay for long because of consent from his people. This means a popular leader can win as many elections as the people decide. Examples include Sir Robert Walpole, the longest serving Britain's Prime Minister, who was in office for 21 years, from 1721-42, (BBC, 2003), William Lyon Mackenzie King of Canada ((Rauf, 2016), 21 years as well and President François Mitterrand of France who spent almost 14 (1981-1989) years as president (Frane24, 2011). In the aforementioned cases, the leaders are there because of the will of their electorate but we do find situations where the leader serves for long not because they are popular or being elected. In these cases, regular elections are held but the results are known in advance. The elections are just a sham with the aim of giving legitimacy to the incumbents. There is no possibility for the opposition to win. Various tactics are adopted to ensure such longevity - repression and rigging. History has

also known such leaders, from Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union, Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania to Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire.

**Table 10:-** Sub-Saharan current longest-serving leaders (2020) 20 years.

Country	FH/100	MI Index score/100
Teodoro ObiangNguema, Equatorial Guinea (41 years)	06	30.9
Paul Biya, Cameroon (38 years)	18	46.2
Denis SassouNguesso Congo Republic (36 years)	20	39.8
Yoweri Museveni, Uganda (34 years)	34	55.0
Isaias Afwerki, Eritrea (27 years)	02	29.3
Idriss Derby, Chad (30 years)*	17	35.4
Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, Djibouti (21 years)	24	45.1
Paul Kagame, Rwanda (20 years)	22	64.3
Average	<b>17.9</b>	<b>43.3</b>

Table 10 scores above are a clear indication that these leaders are not there because of the will of the people (democracy). These leaders use patronage, political clientelism, repression and sophisticated methods of vote rigging. In these regimes it is difficult to distinguish the party and the government. In order to give a semblance of national popularity or acceptance, the political clique or clan produces “elites” across the country whose duties are to sell the regime to their people, though some may not be recognized by their own people as representing them. These elites are die-heart supporters of the regime who gain favour either politically or economically. The ruling party makes good use of the state’s human and financial resources leaving the opposition with empty hands and thereby actually closing the political system. The opposition is reduced to “noise makers” who have no possibility of mobilising the population. They do not only suffer from human and financial resources, the public media, tightly controlled by the state makes it difficult or impossible for them to pass on their messages. In these regimes, the ruling party is always overwhelmingly represented in parliament with the presidents always having a majority score in the first round in elections.<sup>10</sup>

The long-serving leaders’ regime is also characterized by the mystery of power. The state is run by sects and to accede or rise, you have to be affiliated to one of the powerful sects. If it is not a sect, then it is a clan, a tribe or a region that rules. It is not a surprise then, that most of these states are also the most corrupt (Table 12).

Dissident views are very much unwelcome. If dissidents are not eliminated physically, then they are either arrested or corrupted and/or co-opted into the system where they become silent. The long-serving regimes are easily recognisable; almost all offices and businesses have the effigies of the president, giant projects and infrastructures bear the president’s name, and every good to the nation is given merit to the president. The news is dominated by the president’s activities and top government officials and ministers have a duty to always make a reference to the head of state in their speeches and interviews with the effigy of the president carefully hung behind and above their heads. The ruling party uniforms and gadgets are always covered with the effigy of the president and each outing of the president is widely covered by the state media and are animated by dancers and members of the party in party uniforms, even in occasions that are completely apolitical. All-important state appointments (political, economic and educational) up to the sub-divisional levels are done by the president. These leaders are omnipresent in the life of their nations though devoid of legitimacy.

#### **Top-10 Oil Producing and Top-10 most corrupt countries in the sub-Saharan region (2019)**

Here the article is interested in finding out if producing oil can be factor in a country’s poor democratic performance. We will consider the first top-10 oil producing countries and their democratic scores and then we check if there is a correlation between producing oil and being corrupt.

**Table 11:-** Top-10 sub-Saharan oil producing countries.

Country	Production/BBL/D*	Freedom House	Mo Ibrahim Index
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<sup>10</sup> In their last respective presidential elections, Teodoro ObiangNguema won with 93.7 % (2016), Paul Biya 71.3 % (2018), Denis SasouNguesso 60 % (2016), Yoweri Museveni 60.6 % (2016), Isaias Afwerki (no elections since 1993), IdrissDeby 61.6 % (2016), Ismaïl Omar Guelleh 87 % (2016) and Paul Kagame 98.8 % (2017)

Nigeria	1,570,000.00Dec/19	47	47.9
Angola	1,387,000.00Feb/20	32	38.3
Congo Republic	320,000.00Nov/19	20	39.8
Ghana	214,000.00Nov/19	82	68.1
Gabon	180,000.00Nov/19	22	42.4
Equatorial Guinea	156,000.00Nov/19	06	30.9
Chad	128,000.00Nov/19	17	35.4
Sudan	79,000.00Nov/19	12	30.8
Cameroon	69,000.00Nov/19	18	46.2
Ivory Coast	49,000.00Nov/19	51	54.5
<b>Average</b>		<b>30.7</b>	<b>43.4</b>

**Table 12:-** Top-10 most corrupt countries in the sub-Saharan region (2019).

Country	Position/180	Score/100	Freedom House	Mo Ibrahim Index
Somalia	180	09	07	13.6
South Sudan	179	12	02	19.3
Sudan	173	16	12	30.8
Equatorial Guinea	173	16	06	30.9
Guinea Bissau	168	18	46	40.2
DRC	168	18	18	32.1
Rep. of Congo	165	19	20	39.8
Burundi	165	19	13	39.8
Chad	162	20	17	35.4
Eritrea	160	23	02	29.3
<b>Average</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>31.1</b>

The above results show clearly a net poor performance of oil producing countries vis-à-vis democracy and human rights. There seems also to be a correlation with tight-sitting presidents and oil production (Table 10). This is the sector where corruption is highest. It is no surprise then that of the 180 countries ranked on corruption by Transparency International (2019), these countries have an average position of 169. Only Ghana (80) is in the top-100. Nigeria (146), Angola (146), Congo Republic (165), Gabon (123), Equatorial Guinea (173), Chad (159), Sudan (173), Cameroon (153) and Ivory Coast (106), (Transparency International, 2019). Ghana's average position with regards to others can be analysed in one part as a new-comer in oil production. Ghana discovered oil in 1997 and started production in 2010 while its constitution and democracy was already consolidated. Maybe, it would have been as corrupted as the others if oil production had started early after independence as in the other oil-producing states. Probably, the longevity of the leaders in oil producing countries can be traced to the control of these oil-productions and illicit enrichment. The corruption is not only at the level of these governments, but include international circuits mostly involving the multinational firms (MNFs). The corruption by MNFs have often led to human rights abuses in the affected areas of exploitation. It is for this reason that Gatto examines how the EU could do more to ensure the EU-based MNFs respect human rights when operating in developing countries. He recommends that the EU firmly links the promotion of MNFs human rights obligations to international human rights law, thereby supporting the constitution of an international law framework within the UN (Gatto, 2011).

Oil has been a source of instability and unrest in most oil-producing countries. It has been in some cases be described as a curse than a blessing. It is for this reason that Professor Alain FOGUE TEDOM (2008) said it can be noted that *“la richesse pétrolière n'est pas seulement un bien pour l'Afrique noire. Elle est, notamment en Afrique subsaharienne, une importante source d'insécurité, généralement occultée ou ignorée.”* (p. 67), [Oil wealth is not only a good for sub-Saharan Africa. It is, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, an important source of insecurity, generally hidden or ignored. (Author's translation)] ELF-Aquitaine's support of the Biya's regime in Cameroon in the 1990s (Areola, 2013, p.126) after a disputed presidential election that was condemned by international observers and its support of Denis Sassou's overthrow (Martin, 2012, p. 93) of the elected government of Pascal Lissouba can be traced to oil. The MNFs in most cases have the tacit support of their home governments. Most contracts are obtained from direct negotiations with the president concerned and not through a fair tender bidding. This corrupt tendency observed in oil production also holds true for mineral extraction. The DRC and

Sierra Leone are classic examples. Some civil wars and coup d'états are sponsored by these MNFs. In this complex situation, corruption is both exogenous and endogenous.

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