

Elite Influence on the Governance Project in Africa

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Abstract

Elite is a small group of influential people who often have great wealth, privilege, political power or ability in society. The elite are those people or organizations that are usually considered more prominent in society compared to others usually in similar categories. Elites can also be defined as simply organized, more compact, more homogenous and therefore capable of keeping their grip on society. Elites play an important role in the political, economic, intellectual and social development processes of African societies. The advancement of society requires a certain caliber of people with an elevated level of responsibility, to provide guidance on the aspiration of its members in line with improving their living conditions and elevating their overall output in terms of different forms of work. While elites may fall into several interrelated categories, this paper, focuses on three major interrelated categories of elites; political elites, business elites and intellectual elites. It aims at examining the role played by these various categories of elites in advancing governance in Africa. It highlights the contextual nuances of governance in Africa whilst drawing connections to how elites have either enabled or hindered such processes.

Keywords: Elites, Governance, Politics, Intellectualism, Business, Africa

Introduction

Elites is a small group of influential people who often have great wealth, privilege, political power or ability in society (Maloy 2017). The elites are those people or organizations that are usually considered to be more prominent members of society compared to others in similar categories (Osei 2018). Also elites can be defined as simply organized, more compact, more homogenous and therefore capable of keeping their grip on society (Mingardi 2019). In various parts of Africa, the elite take different forms. Kenya elite, for example, consists of a class of highly educated people who hold university and graduate degrees and hold highly paid and influential positions in the civil service, in business, politics and other fields. They are descendants of privileged few who acquired a western-type education and the languages of the colonial Power-English, French, Spanish and Portuguese-during the colonial period (Bunyi 2018). In South Africa, the African nationalist elite included African, Colored, Indian professionals, traders, intellectuals and leaders of religious organizations (Mbeki 2021). Elites play a key role in the development of African society. Sustainable development in general requires a team of elite with a high sense of responsibility, leading society towards what its members wants such as improving living conditions, increasing work and production efficiency (Diop 2021). Elites have helped develop a system that many voters today take for granted for pragmatic, political, idealistic or self-interested reasons, and that democracy represents the interests of the people in parliament. The aim is to promote, introduce, defend, and reform ideas and practices (Richter, 2017). We can classify elites according to the type of resources

they have access to or control over. We can talk about ‘business elites’, those who have money or control the economy, ‘political elites’, those who have influence or make decisions in the state, ‘social elites’, people with personal relationships that provide them with information and access to other resources, ‘cultural elites’ who influence social rates, trends and cultural development of society, and ‘knowledge/intellectual elites’, who control or influence opinion in social consciousness, these arenas of social power are not unique (Heslop 2019).

The concentration and circulation of state power within a group of people due to their economic status and social influence has led to exclusive and elitist politics in states across the sub-Saharan region of Africa (Baba 2014). Political power in a modern state, government and democracy is a popular tool created with the support of the majority. Power is not the exclusive right of elites. It belongs to both the elite and the masses (Baba 2014). Deciding who rules is not exclusive power of elite (World development report 2017). It must be the power of the citizen as healthy entity (Baba 2014). Therefore, the fact that people of the same social strata and class always appear as party candidates in elections is a clear sign that elites have excluded people from different classes from leadership of state affairs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As mentioned above, elites may take several categories and fall into numerous interrelated strata. This paper, focuses on three major interrelated categories of elites; political elites, business elites and intellectual elites. It aims at examining the role played by these various categories of elites in advancing governance in Africa. It highlights the contextual nuances of governance in Africa whilst drawing connections to how elites have either enabled or hindered such processes.

Influence of African Elites on Governance and Democracy

A. Political Elites

After many African countries gained independence, political elites who steered their countries to independence, played a major role in steering the Governance agenda of their countries. For example, Julius Nyerere was the main force behind the organization of African unity know today as the African union, which aimed at the stability and peace on the African continent. Under Nyerere’s leadership, the Tanganyika African Union (TANU) espoused peaceful change, social equality, racial harmony, rejection of tribalism and all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination. Nyerere was also committed to creating an egalitarian socialist society based on agricultural cooperation in Tanzania (Yusuf 2019). He collectivized village farmlands, conducted mass literacy campaigns, and established free and universal education (Smith 2013). He also emphasized that Tanzania needs to be economically self-reliant Instead of continuing to depend on foreign aid and investment (Yusuf 2019). However, his construction of a one- party state and his use of detention without trial, led to accusations of dictatorial governance, as well as economic mismanagement (The patriotic vanguard 2021). He also unsuccessfully pursued the establishment of Pan-Africanist formation of an East African federation with Uganda and Kenya (Bjerk 2011).

Under Kwame Nkrumah’s administration in Ghana, he funded national industrial and energy projects, developed a strong national education system and promoted Africanist culture. Kwame played a leading role in strengthening African international relations during the period decolonization (Biney 2007). Nkrumah’s use of metaphors in his speeches set him apart from other politicians as he openly and frequently critiqued colonialism and imperialism. This inspired confidence in his leadership, lifted spirits of Ghanaians and empowered them to take social and political action (Nartey 2020). Nkrumah inspired other African countries towards independence and was a great supporter of the liberation of South Africa from apartheid and racism (Biney 2007). On the flip side, he was accused of gradually rolling back

Ghana's economic achievement after independence, silencing the press, restricting freedom of speech and being authoritarian. He imposed a one-party state and passed laws that put his opponents in prison (Gyampah 2019). Nkrumah also provided a testing ground for Arthur Lewis' ideas, who was then his economic adviser, on the Country's economic development which led to what was referred to as 'economic misery' and political instability in Ghana (Tignor 2016).

For the case of Uganda, in 1964, Obote introduced a bill in parliament calling for a referendum on Buyaga and Bugangaizi counties, which he claimed to be part of Buganda but later claimed by the neighboring kingdom of Bunyoro. After becoming prime minister in 1962, Obote accepted a constitution that gave federal status within Uganda to five traditional kingdoms, including Buganda. He also formed a governing coalition made up of Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and Buganda's Kabaka Yekka party. Conversely, he was accused of forming self-serving policies and subsequently changing the constitution to suit his personal interests and ambition. On April 1st 1966, in a parliament surrounded by troops, Obote introduced a new constitution without prior notice, which was scheduled to be voted on the same day. It was passed without debate and he informed members of parliament that they could find their copies in their pigeon holes (Goitom 2018). In the same Constitution, Obote abolished all kingdoms and other vestiges of federalism in the country (Wapakhabulo 2001).

In addition to the political processes mentioned above, political elites have been involved in peace settlements on issues that may affect the relations of their countries with other countries (Solimano 2005). For example, the recent case where Uganda and Rwanda were having border issues that led to Rwanda's closure of its borders for a period of 3 years. This adversely affected business relations between the two countries. Following the visit of Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Senior Presidential Advisor on Special Operations and Commander of Land Forces of the Uganda People's Forces (UPDF) to Rwanda, both parties were able to raise issues that needed to be resolved. This saw Rwanda finally agreeing to re-open her border to Uganda, on 31 January 2022, after receiving assurances that problems that led to its closure three years ago would be resolved (The Independent 2022).

Whilst political elites have been instrumental in advancing the Governance agenda of their countries, they have been accused of re-producing colonial tendencies of; exclusionary politics based along divisive ethnic lines, strengthening states' repressive instruments, human rights violations, massive diversion of vital economic resources for personal benefit, among others (Ubi and Ibonye 2019). They have further exploited their position by misusing their countries' economic surplus to achieve exorbitant standards of living, embarking on loss making industrialization projects, and transferring large sums of money into private bank accounts while borrowing from developed countries and getting deeper into debt, thereby driving their economies backwards. Due to these and other detrimental factors, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced slowing growth and increasing poverty since independence (Mbeki 2005).

Before the pandemic, African leaders were increasingly resorting to overriding term limits and rigging elections to stay in power. COVID-19 gave them greater leverage, providing new reasons for postponing of elections in countries including Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania, and imposing restrictions on media across the continent regarding election results (Campbell & Quinn 2021). Political elites seek to gain and/or expand political power by exploiting nationalism and the need to create a domestic other to promote solidarity among major nationalities (Romman 2001). As political elites become entrenched in powerful institutions, organizations, and movements, they often able to decisively shape and influence political outcomes. A case in point, during the just concluded Uganda 2021 elections, the NRM

Government (whose candidate was the President as well as presidential candidate) used its political influence to cut off internet connection on all social media platforms which limited the citizens of the country from staying updated with the outcomes of the elections (Osei 2018). The closure of internet also prevented citizens from covering and sharing election malpractices in their various locations.

Others have used legislatures subservient to the president to amend their constitutions, allowing them to remain in power beyond the Constitutional deadlines. In addition to these and other recent institutional changes, political elites have created conditions that make it extremely difficult for the opposition parties to participate in elections (Mbaku 2020). Political elites have constantly used excessive power to transition into new governments in countries such as Congo, Uganda and Rwanda. For example, in Uganda the use of the military and the police to control the process and outcome during elections, use of tear gas, greatly limited the opposition from fully exercising their right to protest against unfairness and bad governance (Tripp 2004). On a more positive note, in some countries such as Kenya, Liberia and Ghana presidents stick to a two-term limit for their country's presidential terms. In 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution after a long and difficult journey. The Constitutional adoption was a result of intense negotiations focused on people driven processes, requiring consensus among the elite, along with public involvement, both of which were key to a successful conclusion. Different bodies, decision making rules, each under significantly different political conditions were also involved in the process (Murray 2010).

Additionally, democratization in Africa continues to be influenced by the west, which has had a history of placing immense diplomatic pressure on the countries that are considered as underdeveloped. The western countries are still involved in political decision making and economic development of the countries they colonized and others, for a series of benefits including; political supremacy, natural resource extraction. At the same time, political elites in African countries tend to ally with Western countries for their personal benefit rather than for the benefit of the countries (Ahere 2021). Sabelo argues that global colonization poses major challenges to Africans denying them the space to shape c African future. The Europeanization of the world meant that Africans were relegated to the sidelines of historiography. This was achieved through the process of racialization of humanity, enslavement and colonization of Africans. These processes effectively colonized the African Imagination and suspended African subjectivity. Also the dominance of power countries such as USA, China and Europe has greatly influenced African states when it comes to economic operations, investment and security issues. African leaders have only succeeded in staying in power through balancing internal and external forces, with the interests of external forces outweighing those of internal constituencies in African leaders' political calculations. However, what is clear is that whenever some African leaders attempt to articulate a vision of the future of their countries and of the continent, either as individuals or as collective, they opt for "westernization", that is they push for economic growth within the context of the existing problematic neo-colonial economic structures (Gatsheni 2014).

The discussion above reveals that political elites have been at the center of Africa's governance agenda since the various countries acquired independence. While they've steered their countries forward in certain instances, in other cases their agenda has been driven by selfish aims of amassing power, control, self-enrichment and influence. Such selfish interests have often gotten in the way of enhancing governance in their various contexts.

B. Intellectual elites

Intellectual elites are persons that are usually considered intellectually better off than non-elites. Intellectual elites are often perceived as knowing more, having higher natural aptitudes for knowledge acquisition and residing in favorable environments (Mauia 2016). Intellectual elites have had a substantial role to play in the African governance project. Political elites, discussed above, have gradually come from a defined group of intellectual elites. Through the academic exercise, Universities have stimulated people to have political interest and discussion, possession of extensive knowledge about government operations, the internalization of democratic norms, as well as the ability to grasp and interpret new information more critically which has enabled some to become active in politics (Mattes 2012).

Universities such as Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Fort Hare in South Africa played a key role in producing a new generation of African intellectuals and liberties who worked to numb colonial and apartheid regimes and Manichean allegorical notions of social reality. These African intellectuals included Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Yusuf Lule and Robert Mugabe that, in their early years clamored for self-determination and the independence of African people (Latshwayo & Formunyan 2019). From 1960 to 1970, the first intellectuals were both revolutionaries and Pan-Africanists. Many served as advisors in the shadow of the first leaders. However, due to their small numbers and, above all, their lack of understanding of the African realities due to their long absence during their studies, they were unable to play an important role in the political arena in the early years of independence.

Only in the second period, from 1970 and 1990, did these intellectual elites play a fundamental role alongside the military. After 1990, the intellectual elites emerged as a political force, this time mainly as liberals from international institutions, American and French business schools. These people played important political roles as presidents or prime ministers of republic (Igue 2010). For example, Nelson Mandela studied law at the university of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand before becoming President of South Africa (Hallengren 2001). Joaquim Chissano (President of Mozambique from 1986 to 2005) was the first black student to go to the only high school in the colony, studied medicine in Portugal, then moved to France to continue his studies which he later abandoned to pursue his political aspirations (Independent 2007). John Kufuor (President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009) studied and practiced law in London and later on in Ghana. He later one joined Oxford University where he pursued a degree in economics, philosophy and politics subsequently acquiring a Master's degree from the University.

Intellectual elites have heralded the formation of post-independence political parties including; the African National Congress Party (ANC), formed by Nelson Mandela, which spearheaded the campaign for human rights, an end to racism and discrimination among the South African people (Beresfod 2013). President Kwame Nkrumah who studied literature and socialism in the United States formed Convention People's party (CPP) that led the Gold Coast (later on Ghana) to independence from Britain in 1957 (African News 2022). Also President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya who studied anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski at the London school of economics, also assumed leadership of newly established Kenya African National Union (KANU) that led Kenya to independence on 12 December 1963 (Rowe 2022).

Intellectual elites in different African countries have negotiated peace settlements, pacts or arrangements aimed at ending violent conflicts, wars and replacing them with new political arrangements. However, the negotiations don't always guarantee change in democracy and attempts at settlements may break down depending on the participant's commitment to a negotiated resolution of the existing dispute and their willingness to compromise (Barnes 2006). For example, in Northern Uganda there were peace negotiations

between Lord Resistance Army (LRA) and government representatives with the aim of ending the wars and address problems facing those affected by the LRA's twenty-one-year-old insurgency (Christi 2006). However, although a ceasefire was reached in September 2006, LRA leader Joseph Kony refused to sign a peace agreement in April 2008 (The Guardian 2008). In 2008 and 2009, LRA launched a series of attacks in South Sudan town subsequently forcing the South Sudanese Government to withdraw from its mediation role (Press 2009).

While academic intellectuals have always worked closely with political elites, some have been outspoken in opposing some of the political agenda pushed by political elites. For instance, Ali Mazrui has argued that African leaders have betrayed their conventions about the importance of good governance and critical thinking citizens by supporting leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who banned opposition parties and began undermining academic freedom at higher level institutions. Furthermore, Universities have always opposed the role of the state intervention that undermines academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This follows from previous experiences in which the government sought to significantly interfere with the functioning of university institutions, paralyzing universities and preventing them from offering criticism or reflect on the state and its role in the international community. For instance, Aman Attich reports that there was an increase in serious violations of freedom of speech and expression in Algeria, where security forces, opposition parties and militant groups silenced scholars and citizens as a whole. Another disturbing incident was the expulsion of more than 40 university professors and lecturers from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia in the mid- 1990s (Latshwayo & Formunyan 2019).

Also in Uganda, academic activists like Stella Nyanzi who has constantly criticized president Yoweri Museveni's dictatorship and regime using provoking poetry has been imprisoned twice. After being freed from prison, she went into exile in Germany fearing retribution, reprisal and punishment (Davies 2022). Similarly, Kakwenza the author of the controversial "The Greedy Barbarian" was also detained at the end of 2021 on issues regarding criticism of the government in power. The court refused to release his passport so he could travel for medical reasons and he ended up going into exile in Germany (Obbo 2022). Additionally, Journalists in Rwanda have been imprisoned for criticizing Rwanda's dictatorial rule. For example, on 6th May 2021, seven men including Phocas Ndayizera, a freelance journalist were sentenced to 10 years in prison by the high court. Ndayizera was arrested in November 2018 with 12 other defendants and charged with terrorism due to his association with BBC (Monitor Civicus 2021).

From an epistemological standpoint, African intellectuals have been critiqued for not contextualizing the acquired knowledge in ways that can transform their contexts. While critiquing intellectualism in the African context, Francis Nyamnjoh argues that, for the most part, African education has not translated into meaningful action (Nyamnjoh 2015). Faced with the idea of prioritizing local expertise over foreign intellectual models, African leaders make the absurd excuse needing to be internationally competitive. He further asserted that African education remains largely an externally driven journey aimed at devaluing and destroying African creativity, values and autonomy. This sense of helplessness, self-hatred, and profound sense of inferiority forced them to metaphorically and materially "light up their darkness" to please their colonial and post-colonial bosses.

Sabelo Ndlhovu-Galsheni further argues that in particular Africans and African scholars, need to be authentic to themselves by admitting that they are products of very problematic Western scholarship and therefore need to be open to unlearning and re-learning, as a tool of cognitive disobedience, to become

deeply rooted in Eurocentric thinking and ideology. Much of the African continent has acted blindly, trying to solve problems whose origins have not been accurately or fully identified (Agaba 2020).

These and several other varied experiences throughout the continent have characterized the rather complex relationship between intellectuals, intellectualism on one hand and politics as well as political elites on the other. Nonetheless, intellectual elites have a vital role to play in theoretically, epistemically and practically contributing to the advancement of governance and democratic processes in their various African contexts.

C. Business Elites

A country's political regime clearly affects how entrepreneurs express their interests in political decision making processes. Due to their broader power, business tycoons can engage in asset acquisition and management by establishing direct links with relevant politicians. Large corporations play an important role in democracy, as they often use their financial power to help ruling political elites create an un-even playing field for other weaker political opponents (Pleines 2019). Most business elites in Africa have continued to finance election campaigns of aspiring candidates and political parties by among other things; endorsing candidates of their preference, providing means of transport and money that is used in lobbying for votes from masses to foster mutual winning of both parties (business elites and political elites (Bawn et al.2012). Furthermore, Africa is a particular target for intervention by external forces, whether major powers, international non-governmental organization or multi-national companies. In most cases, these organizations influence democracy of African countries, with their access becoming easier especially with conflict or post states, failing and collapsed states, countries with comparatively low development levels, for purposes of harnessing the continent's vast natural resources (Soest 2016).

In Uganda, the government has been committed to transitioning from the sale of raw materials to manufacturing; by identifying opportunities with different stakeholders and recommending actions to strengthen and enhance its development. There has been a rise in the contribution of manufacturing services to GDP growth with manufactured goods comprising a growing percentage of exports. However, Uganda still derives a substantial portion of its foreign exchange earnings from the export of unprocessed products (Mutebi 2020).

For the South African case, for centuries, property ownership was not a preserve of the Africans, who were excluded from owning land and other assets. In opposing apartheid, Africans emphasized that they did not oppose capitalism, a point Nelson Mandela repeatedly made, they only objected to the exclusion of Africans, colored people and Indians from becoming capitalists (Mbeki 2021). From the late 1980s to 1994, South Africa underwent far reaching transformation that affected every aspect of its social, economic and political elite. Key economic imperatives were both a motivator and a driver of change and the business community was at the centre of these changes. Besides the primary stakeholders, a core elite, with a crucial stake and interest in negotiating a new political settlement were major drivers of change. These facilitated the building of an effective, inclusive and responsible State. The political settlement that ensued and the state building efforts that followed have continued up to date (Marais & Davies 2015). However, in the fight to create stability in democracy, businesses were subjected to asset confiscation and taxes from African nationalist elites with political power but no assets and no credible opposition. Furthermore, businesses elites and executives in Africa, especially in local government and state owned enterprises, continue to be implicated in corruption scandals. These include the companies that provide electric power, rail and air transportation, and services such as broad band, public broadcasting and the postal services (Mbeki 2021).

There has also been the element of state capture where businesses and politicians collaborate to influence a country's decision-making process to advance their own interests. For example, the case of former President Zuma and the Gupta's owning a portfolio of companies that benefited from lucrative contracts with government agencies and South African State corporations. They also recruited several members of Zuma family, including the president's son Duduzane, into senior positions (Arun 2019). Civil servants responsible for various public agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance, Natural Resources and public enterprise, as well as the government agencies responsible for tax collection and communications, airlines in South Africa, state owned rail freight operator Transnet and energy giant Eskom were directly tasked by the Gupta's to make decisions that would benefit the brother's interests. It is alleged that compliance was rewarded with money and promotions, while noncompliance was punished with firing which lay with president Zuma (Boussion 2022). This damaged the reputation of many companies that had done business with Gupta's (Arun 2019).

According to Mabutho Shangase, in South Africa the middle class continues to be cushioned off from poor services as they benefit from apartheid spatial planning. Most black people, including those who live in some middle class settings, remain vulnerable to mismanagement, as many maintain close ties to family and relatives in towns and regions rural areas that they support financially. In addition, the poor masses both in rural and urban areas continue to bear the brunt of poor services such as crumbling public infrastructure and chaotic public schools and health facilities. Periodic power cuts which have a devastating impact on the economy and overall livelihoods due to public sector incompetence and poor corporate planning (Shangase 2022).

In Kenya, Politics are often influenced by ethnic groups which has increased the stakes of political competition. Successive governments have tended to favor their own in terms of accessing resources and leaders have typically used their influence over their own communities to demobilize and co-opt protest movements and militias (Cheeseman 2020). From independence onwards, there was an overlap between the state, public interests and private interests, between private business and public administration. This was reinforced because of the significant economic power of an interventionist state at the head of a public economy controlling the economic machinery. This was done to strengthen the state power and protection of Kenya's nascent industry. However, the economic results of its economic management were mediocre and irregular which led to the lack of return on investment of financial aid, public debt, and difficulties in food security which were visible manifestations of the economic situation (Thibon 2015).

Also in Kenya becoming a politician is financially attractive which has attracted business elites to join politics. The salaries paid to politicians, along other fringe benefits such as cars, housing and travel allowances, office space and lifetime pensions are quite substantial. For example, from the July 2021 to June 2022 financial year, counties were allocated KSH370 billion which is said to have increased from 15% of the country's total revenue to 35% (Iraki 2022).

In the Nigerian case, business elites in Nigeria have influenced the country's economy for example Aliko Dangote, considered to be one of the richest men in the world, became the dominant player in the Nigerian cement industry due to his close ties with the several Nigerian governments. Dangote's business skills and understanding of Nigerian economic and political and environment enabled him to proactively foresee and exploit the rapid increase in domestic cement demand. Also the unwillingness of most multinational cement companies to increase their investments in Nigerian, due to corruption, helped to reduce the competition and investment risks for Dangote cement (Akingoade & Chibuke 2016).

Furthermore, oil tycoons in Nigeria have, at times, contributed to instability in some parts of the country, for example the oil produced in the Niger Delta contributes enormously to the country's GDP, but it has caused so much under development, destruction and divisions within the country. Niger Delta society has to bear the adverse consequences of the extraction and exploitation of the petroleum resource. Individuals and groups in the Niger Delta states have always seen themselves as threats to stability and as assets to ensuring peace in an ever-changing terrain. The dependency has created a rentier state in which all problems are solved through a patronage network funded by crude oil (Falola 2021).

Conclusion

The discussion above has analyzed the role of elites in advancing Africa's Governance agenda. It looks at an interrelated group of elites, notably; the political, intellectual and business elites. In the case of political elites, it is highlighted that while, these have played an instrumental role in delivering independence and sovereignty for the African people, they have, for the most part, taken on colonial master tendencies of control, amassing resources for themselves for the purposes of self-enrichment, militarization of states, holding onto power, among other mechanisms that have frustrated the advancement of democracy.

Intellectual elites are usually interrelated with political elites. As the Africans who managed to benefit from early forms of advanced education, subsequently actively participated in the running of their countries political affairs. These include the likes of Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta etc. However intellectual elites have also tended to be critical of their Governments, something which often puts them in opposition with the Governments of their countries with dire consequences such as imprisonment, exile from their countries and termination from the institutions where they work. Another challenge that is raised with intellectualism in Africa is that its epistemological outlook is steeped in a Eurocentric paradigm which hinders the use of African knowledge in the advancement of its economic, social and political agenda.

Business elites are a crucial financial machinery for political elites. These have from time to time financed election campaigns, media campaigns, influenced voters to vote in favor of their preferred candidates, thereby entrenching the ruling political elites in political positions. In countries like South Africa, the ruling elites have, at times, been accused of allowing business people to 'Capture the State' as well as pursuing selfish business motives while the majority of the Country remains under resourced. While in Kenya, access to politics and business is still largely influenced by ethnic ties. Furthermore, the state has often tended to be interventionist, thus directly controlling the economic machinery in ways that have either benefited or disadvantaged the economy depending on which political-ethnic group is at the helm. In the Nigerian example, business magnates like Ali Dangote are often closely intertwined with the State and the million dollar businesses like oil, have been noted to bring numerous negative consequences including adverse environmental consequences, rampant corruption, underdevelopment whilst benefiting the few people at the top.

Overall, the elite are at the heart of advancing good governance ideals and democracy for Africa. This can only be possible if they are truly committed to using their political, intellectual (knowledge) and financial power to positively bring about meaningful and transformational development for their various contexts throughout Africa.

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