

**AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
CHIEF ECONOMIST COMPLEX**



**Elections and Political Fragility in
Africa**

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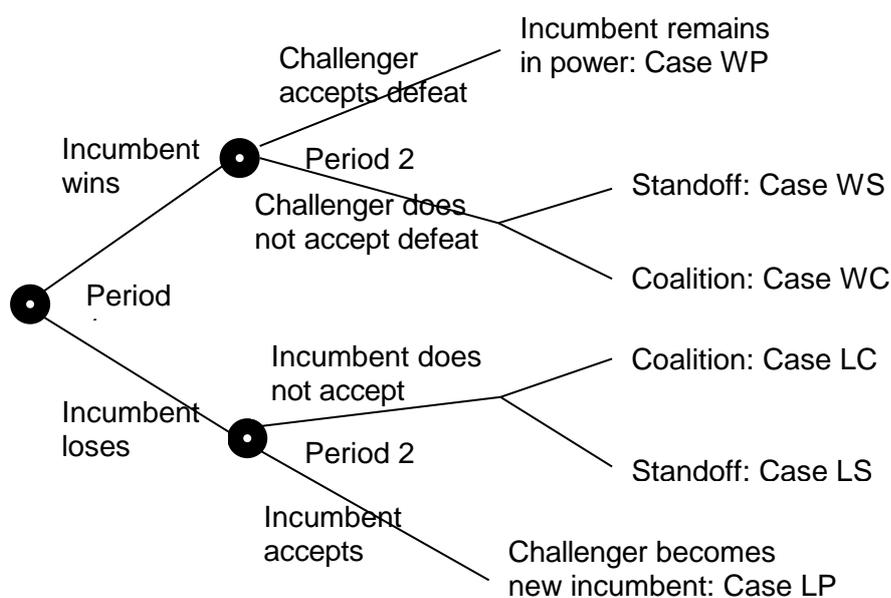
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1. Introduction

The motivation and purpose of this brief is to analyze and understand political fragility in Africa at the level of the apex institution which is government. In Africa, all institutional weaknesses and strength flow from the top. This brief analyses the strategic choices of 653 African Presidential and Legislative elections from 1960-2010. It shows that the incumbent wins with no contestation 64%, forms a coalition 6%, and result in a standoff 2%. The incumbent loses and accepts defeat 16%, coalition 12%, and standoff 0%. Africa stands out as one region that has been slowest in establishing democratic institutions. Sub-Saharan African countries have been holding various elections that have established democracy in some countries but have caused reversals in others. The post 2011 fall or transformation of autocracies in North Africa and Middle East and the unsteady transition illustrates the challenges of democracy lying ahead in this region.

Election outcomes can be represented by a tree structure for a two period representation¹ (Fig. 1) with six outcomes. (i) If the incumbent wins the election after period 1, it remains in power (WP) if the challenger accepts defeat. (ii) A standoff (WS) or (iii) coalition (WC) ensues if the challenger does not accept defeat. (iv) If the incumbent loses the election after period 1, the challenger becomes the new incumbent (LP) if the incumbent accepts defeat, or (v) a standoff (LS) or (vi) coalition (LC) ensues if the incumbent does not accept defeat.

Figure 1.



2. Mapping of Actual African Election Outcomes

Table 1: Mapping Actual Election Outcomes 2006-2011+Eritrea 1993*

Incumbent Wins	Incumbent remains in power	Algeria 2009, Angola 2008, Benin 2011, Botswana 2009, Burkina Faso 2010, Burundi 2010, Cameroon 2007, Cape Verde 2006, Democratic Republic of Congo 2007, Eritrea 1993, Egypt 2010*, Ethiopia 2010, Namibia 2009, Rwanda 2010, Seychelles 2011, South Africa 2009, Tanzania 2010, Togo 2010, Tunisia 2009*, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2008.
	Standoff	Central Africa Republic 2011, Chad 2011, Djibouti 2010, Equatorial Guinea 2009, Gambia 2006, Mali 2007, Nigeria 2011, Republic of Congo 2009, Senegal 2007, Somalia 2009, Sudan 2010.
	Coalition	Gabon 2009, Mozambique 2009.
Incumbent loses	Challenger becomes new incumbent	Sierra Leone 2007, Niger 2011, Sao Tome 2011, Morocco 2007, Mauritania 2009, Mauritius 2010, Ghana 2008, Guinea 2010, Comoros 2010, Liberia 2005, Cote d'Ivoire 2010**
	Standoff	
	Coalition	Guinea-Bissau 2009, Kenya 2007, Lesotho 2007, Madagascar 2007, Malawi 2009, Zimbabwe 2008

Table 2: Outcomes of Elections in Africa 2006-2011+Eritrea 1993*

Win		Uncontested	Standoff	Coalition	Total
	Incumbent		21	11	2
Challenger		11	0	6	17
		33	11	8	51

Source: Hausken and Ncube (2012).

¹ A game theory model is used (see Hausken and Ncube 2012)

Table 3: By Country Outcomes of Elections in Africa 2006-2011+Eritrea 1993*

	Elections in Africa	Election Date	Winner	Case	Dispute Violent	Coalition	Population 2012 (Millions)	GDP 2012 (Billions US\$ Current)	Free Press
N°	Country								
1	Algeria	4/9/2009	Incumbent	WP	No	No	35.980	187.412	No
2	Angola	9/6/2008	Incumbent	WP	No	No	19.618	103.930	Semi
3	Benin	3/13/2011	Incumbent	WP	No	No	9.100	7.504	Semi
4	Botswana	10/16/2009	Incumbent	WP	No	No	2.031	15.031	Semi
5	Burkina Faso	11/21/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	16.968	10.132	Semi
6	Burundi	6/28/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	8.575	1.678	Semi
7	Cameroon	9/30/2007	Incumbent	WP	No	No	20.030	26.414	Semi
8	Cape Verde	2/12/2006	Incumbent	WP	No	No	0.501	2.228	Semi
9	Central African Rep.	1/23/2011	Incumbent	WS	No	No	4.487	2.042	Semi
10	Chad	4/25/2011	Incumbent	WS	No	No	11.525	11.959	Semi
11	Comoros	12/26/2010	Challenger	LP	No	No	0.754	0.633	semi
12	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	1/19/2007	Incumbent	WP	No	No	67.758	15.176	No
13	Congo, Republic of	7/12/2009	Incumbent	WS	No	No	4.140	15.777	Semi
14	Côte d'Ivoire	11/28/2010	Challenger	LP	Yes	No	20.153	22.413	Semi
15	Djibouti	4/8/2011	Incumbent	WS	No	No	0.906	1.244	Semi
16	Egypt	11/28/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	82.537	228.958	No
17	Equatorial Guinea	11/29/2009	Incumbent	WS	No	No	0.720	19.041	No
18	Eritrea	5/24/1993	Incumbent	WP	No	No	5.415	2.596	No
19	Ethiopia	5/23/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	Yes	84.734	34.613	No
20	Gabon	8/30/2009	Incumbent	WC	Yes	Yes	1.534	16.992	Semi
21	Gambia, The	9/22/2006	Incumbent	WS	No	No	1.776	1.239	Semi
22	Ghana	12/7/2008	Challenger	LP	No	No	24.966	39.220	Semi
23	Guinea	11/7/2010	Challenger	LP	No	No	10.222	5.911	Semi
24	Guinea-Bissau	7/29/2009	Challenger	LC	Yes	Yes	1.547	0.976	Semi
25	Kenya	12/27/2007	Challenger	LC	Yes	Yes	41.610	37.059	Semi
26	Lesotho	2/17/2007	Challenger	LC	No	Yes	2.194	1.854	Semi
27	Liberia	10/11/2005	Challenger	LP	No	No	4.129	1.662	Semi

28	Madagascar	9/23/2007	Challenger	LC	No	Yes	21.315	9.484	Semi
29	Malawi	5/19/2009	Challenger	LC	Yes	Yes	15.381	5.890	Semi
30	Mali	7/22/2007	Incumbent	WS	No	No	15.840	10.770	Semi
31	Mauritania	7/18/2009	Challenger	LP	Yes	No	3.542	5.409	Semi
32	Mauritius	5/5/2010	Challenger	LP	No	No	1.307	11.319	Semi
33	Morocco	9/7/2007	Challenger	LP	No	No	32.273	105.575	No
34	Mozambique	10/28/2009	Incumbent	WC	No	Yes	23.930	14.314	Semi
35	Namibia	11/28/2009	Incumbent	WP	No	No	2.324	12.859	Yes
36	Niger	3/12/2011	Challenger	LP	No	No	16.069	6.478	Semi
37	Nigeria	4/16/2011	Incumbent	WS	Yes	No	162.471	241.517	No
38	Rwanda	8/9/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	10.943	6.090	No
39	Sao Tomé & Príncipe	8/7/2011	Challenger	LP	No	No	0.169	0.253	Semi
40	Senegal	2/25/2007	Incumbent	WS	No	No	12.768	12.875	Semi
41	Seychelles	5/21/2011	Incumbent	WP	No	No	0.087	1.114	Semi
42	Sierra Leone	8/11/2007	Challenger	LP	No	No	5.997	2.220	Semi
43	Somalia	1/30/2009	Incumbent	WS	Yes	No	9.557	5.896	No
44	South Africa	5/6/2009	Incumbent	WP	No	No	50.460	378.135	Free
45	Sudan	4/15/2010	Incumbent	WS	No	No	44.632	63.329	No
46	Tanzania	10/31/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	46.218	25.562	Semi
47	Togo	3/4/2010	Incumbent	WP	No	No	6.155	3.345	Semi
48	Tunisia	10/25/2009	Incumbent	WP	No	No	10.594	47.123	No
49	Uganda	2/18/2011	Incumbent	WP	No	No	34.509	18.907	Semi
50	Zambia	10/30/2008	Incumbent	WP	No	No	13.475	23.411	Semi
51	Zimbabwe	3/29/2008	Challenger	LC	Yes	Yes	12.754	6.368	Semi

*Libya did not hold elections. Swaziland holds “no party” elections. Both have been excluded.

Source: African Development Bank Statistics Department, 2012.

Tables 1-3 are mappings of 51 actual elections outcomes for the period (2006-2011+Eritrea 1993) in Africa for the various cases. The incumbent won 34, the challenger won 17. Of the 34 wins, 21 were uncontested, 11 caused standoff, and 2 resulted in a coalition. Of the 17 losses, the incumbent conceded defeat in 11, 0 caused standoff, and 6 caused coalition. Considering the 34 events that the incumbent wins, for 21 countries, the incumbent remains in power without contestation from the challenger. For these countries, the incumbent's win probability is usually high. Second, for 11 countries a standoff followed. If a standoff were to follow, we would expect the incumbent's win probability to be intermediate, i.e. the incumbent's wins but is challenged. However, the incumbent stands fast against the challenge and a standoff occurs but the incumbent remains in power. Third, for two countries, Gabon and Mozambique a coalition is formed. For these countries we would expect the incumbent's win probability to be low.

In the 17 cases where the incumbent loses, first for the 11 countries, where the challenger becomes the new incumbent, the probability of winning for the incumbent is usually low. In this case the challenger then receives at least 50% of the votes and subsequently took over power. Second for the six countries, where a coalition is formed, the probability of the incumbent winning is usually intermediate. Third, for no countries a standoff occurs. For such an event the probability of the incumbent winning is usually high.

An incumbent government facing elections choose a multiplicity of strategies. Before the election it can ensure that the country becomes productive, it can fight with the challenger (opposition), or it can produce public goods. After the election it can accept the election result, it can form a coalition with the challenger, or it can refuse to leave office causing a standoff with the challenger.

Flawed elections, typically held by autocrats usually involve violence and manipulation. The cost to citizenry of these elections is quite high. The elections result in loss of life, physical and mental injury which could be permanent, suppression of freedom of speech, and general human rights violations. The election process is meant to strengthen democratic institutions, but could worsen conflict. In cases where strong party controls sources of political unrest, that party is likely to win if there is asymmetric information about its ability to cause unrest. Election outcomes in most African countries have been challenged as not having been free and fair.

3. Recent Post-Election Coalitions in Africa

Three recent post election coalitions in Africa stand out. Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) were characterized by violent elections and more violence post the election. The elections in Kenya took place in December 2007 and the incumbent was unable to win outright and won 102 out of 210 parliamentary seats. The closeness of the election results resulted in both parties claiming victory and the right to form a new government. The dispute caused serious violence among their supporters. Subsequently, some of the leadership individuals in both parties have been charged by the International Criminal Court as having instituted the violence. As of April 2012 they had not yet stood trial. After the violent dispute, the two parties came together to form a coalition government.

The example of Zimbabwe was similar to that of Kenya, where there was a violent dispute on the election results in March 2008. A run-off between the two leading candidates was to take place to decide the outright winner. The opposition did not take part in the run-off due to fear of a violent and unfair election process. This all resulted in a coalition government being negotiated between the two parties. In Cote d'Ivoire the election process up to the run up of the elections in November 2010 was conducted peacefully. However after the elections, the losing incumbent refused to cede power to the challenger and a violent armed civil conflict ensued which had to be resolved partly through an external military intervention and forced the incumbent to leave power. The example of the Ivory Coast election in November 2010 was more extreme. After a seemingly professional process running up to the election, after the election the losing incumbent refused to cede power to the challenger. An armed civil conflict ensued, which had to be resolved partly through an external military intervention.

In all these examples, the incumbent leader exerted effort in fighting, production, and exerted effort on public goods. The contestation for power had economic consequences. The Zimbabwe economy grew at -5% on average over an 8-year period during the political standoff 2000-2008. The Ivory Coast economy is expected to grow at -7% in 2011 due to the political standoff. The Zimbabwe economy recovered after the political resolution, growing at about +8% annually over the period 2009-2011. The incumbent, realizing it had more to lose, compromised and co-opted the challenger in a government of national unity. This caused some economic recovery, shifting effort from fighting to production. However, effort was needed in keeping the coalition going. Zimbabwe 2011 presented a situation where the incumbent was willing to break the coalition because it discovered new natural resources

where it received rent which then increased its appetite and resources for fighting to keep the rent. The Ivory Coast 2011 presented a scenario with an external agent of restraint, the US and the international community, who refused the coalition and cooption option, and tried to force the incumbent to leave power. In all these 3 situations we have a two period scenario, one period before the election, and one period after the election.

4. Analysis of 653 Election Data in Africa (1960 – 2010)

Empirical analysis² is conducted to test which factors determine electoral outcomes. The outcome of an election is dependent on a set of explanatory variables (Economic variables - real per capita GDP growth, public investment as a share of GDP growth; Social factors – enrollment in tertiary education, inequality, ethnic fractionalization, religious fractionalization; Others – number of years incumbent has been in power, strong opposition, single political system, incumbent from the military, coastal country, moderate natural resources and abundant natural resources). The empirical analysis analyzed how election outcomes relate to various country characteristics and political players. A database that includes all 653 elections in Africa from 1960 to 2010 was used for the study. 299 (46%) were legislative elections and 354 (54%) were presidential³.

4.1 Presidential Elections

Of the 354 presidential elections, the incumbent president won 207 without contestation. On the other polar opposite, in 52 cases, the incumbent lost and conceded defeat. In 95 cases, the election results were contested by the loser. The incumbent lost, rejected the results and formed a coalition in 48 cases. The challenger lost, contested the results and formed a coalition with the incumbent in 40 cases. Seven elections resulted in a standoff. These are the cases of Benin in 1991 and 2001, Togo 2005, Zimbabwe 2008 and Malawi 2009 where the challenger's contestation of the incumbent victory resulted in a standoff, and in the cases of Somalia 2009 and Mauritania 2009 where the incumbent contestation of his loss also resulted in a standoff. Some coalition is formed after a certain period of standoff. Standoff may result from a broken coalition or may be imposed by the international community while the situation is a real standoff as in Zimbabwe.

² Multinomial logit regression analysis

³ It covers all African countries except Libya, Sao Tome and Principe, Eritrea, Somaliland (not internationally recognized) and South Sudan where no elections were held.

4.2 Legislative Elections

Out of the 299 legislative elections, the incumbent won 210 without the challenger's contestation. Only 5 elections where the incumbent won were contested. These are the cases of Kenya in 2002 and Guinea in 2010 where the contestation resulted in a coalition and the cases of Malawi in 2009, Benin in 1991 and 2007 where contestation resulted in standoff. In 52 cases the incumbent lost and accepted defeat while in 32 cases the incumbent lost, contested the results and negotiated a coalition with the challenger. The data are in Table 4.

Table 4: Classification of African election outcomes (frequency and percentage): 1960 - 20120

Outcomes	legislative		presidential		Total	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
incumbent loses, accepts defeat	52	17%	52	15%	104	16%
incumbent loses, contestation, coalition	32	11%	48	14%	80	12%
incumbent loses, contestation, standoff	-	-	2	1%	2	0%
incumbent wins, contestation, coalition	2	1%	40	11%	42	6%
incumbent wins, contestation, standoff	3	1%	5	1%	8	2%
incumbent wins, no contestation	210	70%	207	58%	417	64%
Total	299	100%	354	100%	653	100%

Overall, during 1960-2010, 80% of the presidential and legislative elections results were accepted, 18% resulted in a coalition and 2% resulted in a standoff. Incumbent tend to win elections they organize with a 71% probability. When they incumbent loses, he tend to reject the results (79% of the time). The challenger tends not to contest the results (contestation occurs in only 7% of the cases). However, the challenger's contestation rate is higher for presidential election (12%) than for legislative elections (2%).

The data show those election standoff are few. Some of the coalitions are formed after a certain period of standoff. And standoff may result from a broken coalition, or the coalition may be imposed by the international community while the political situation is a real standoff as in Zimbabwe.

5. Factors Determining Electoral Outcomes

Every election tends to be a unique event in time. Electoral conditions even within the same country vary a lot from time to time. The final outcome of an election depends on several factors including the economic performance of the incumbent, the provision of public goods, institutional factors, social factors, the incumbent characteristics, the challenger's characteristics, the electoral system, historical and geographical factors and initial conditions.

Social factors seem to have strong effect on electoral outcomes. Observing that the most frequent electoral outcome in Africa is WP, this suggests that when voters get access to higher education, and obtain a better understanding of the political, social and economic situation of their country, they are more likely to contest the re-election of the incumbent if they deem it fraudulent. Ethnic fractionalization also significantly affects the electoral outcomes. This seems expected as conflicting ethnic interest is a strong additional motivation for the incumbent to fight for re-election.

In terms of political factors an additional 5-year mandate in power significantly decrease the probability of incumbent loses, it however increases the probability of the incumbent winning outcome. This is in line with the fact that the appetite for power increases with the time spend in power. If the opposition is strong, the incumbent is less likely to cling to power or win without contestation as expected since the cost of electoral fraud and results rejection are high. Challenges have more freedom to campaign and contestation is more likely to occur. Changing the political system from multiparty to single party decreases the probability of an incumbent losing and the result is contested. Accepting defeat is not a big deal in a single party election since power remains under the party control no matter the election outcome. For the same reason there is no need to cling to power when losing.

If the incumbent is from the military the probability of the incumbent losing and contestation increases by 0.12. This result can be explained by the fact military incumbent are more likely to come to power through political coup and govern by force causing voter discontent in the long run. To legitimize their power and demonstrate their popularity to the international community, military incumbents often organize "democratic elections". Voters are likely to express their discontent through the ballot and the incumbent is likely to lose. Because the incumbent did not expect to lose and want to hold power, he will not concede defeat.

6. Contestation of Election Results

Rigorous economic analysis was performed using binary analysis and the results show that the number of years spent in power can significantly turn the odds in favor of an incumbent winning and staying in power instead of conceding defeat to the challenger. For an additional year spent in power by the incumbent, there is a relative likelihood of 0.08 that an election results in challenger becoming the new incumbent. Economic performance and social factors do not seem to matter much for this likelihood.

The analysis also compared the case of standoff and contestation against the incumbent losing and staying in power. Switching from multiparty elections to single party elections significantly turn the odds in favor of incumbent winning. If the incumbent is from the military, the probability that the incumbent loses and causes a standoff or results contested is nine times higher. Military incumbents are to a higher degree expected to lose and cling to power than they are to win without contestation. If a country has a moderate natural resource endowment instead of no or few natural resources then the odds are higher that the outcome is incumbent winning against the incumbent losing that result in contestation and standoff. Social factors don't matter.

In addition the likelihood of contestation is significantly high when the opposition is strong and economic performance is poor. Voters seem more concerned about their economic situation during electoral period. Social factors such as tertiary education and ethnic and religious fractionalization also matter. Contestation is likely to occur when voters have more tertiary education. This is not surprising since country-wide contestations generally begin in universities. Contestation is also significantly high if ethnic and religious fractionalization increases.

7. Conclusion

Using a database of 653 elections in Africa over the period 1960-2010, of which 299 are legislative and 354 are presidential, the study found that the most frequent outcome in Africa is the incumbent winning without contestation of results. Good economic performance decreases the probability of losing while the provision of public goods in the election period affects the probability to accept an election outcome. High tertiary education enrollment, ethnic fractionalization and religious fractionalization increase the probability of contestation of election results by the challenger when the incumbent claims victory. Political factors, such as the strength of the opposition, multi-party system, civil incumbent and power alternation increase the probability of the challenger winning and taking over power. Abundant natural resources increase the probability of incumbent losing but then deciding to cling to power. Finally the empirical evidence also shows that the type of former-colonizer of the country matters.

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