Democratic Governance, Capable States and Development in Africa: A Comparative Study of Post-1991 Ethiopia and South Africa

Ephrem Tadesse Gebere

Abstract

Political developments throughout Africa in the last two decades indicate a general acceptance and regular practice of formal democracy in the form of regular elections at national and local government levels. While the free and fairness of these elections continues to be questioned, most of the countries in the continent engage in regular electoral processes that ‘legitimize’ the elected governments and their public officials. The acceptance of formal democracy, on the other hand, is in the process of re-directing the focus of local struggles and international pressures for democracy from electoral/representative democracy into responsive and participatory democracy and the ability of elected governments and officials to deliver efficient and effective public services in accordance with the needs and priorities of their people. The election of governments through democratic election is only part of the equation when it comes to democratic governance and the delivery of public services.

In this context, the PhD research intends to explore the relationship between democratic governance, capable states and service delivery in Africa that takes into account the local, regional and global political and economic influences that continually shape the capacity and role of state in policy making and implementation processes. The conceptual and theoretical understanding of the PhD research will be complemented by extensive empirical research on post-1991 Ethiopia and democratic South Africa by looking at the relevance and level of democratic governance, state capability and public service delivery in these countries.