

AJIA

**AFRICAN JOURNAL
OF INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS**

**REVUE AFRICAINE
DES RELATIONS
INTERNATIONALES**

Volume 10

Numbers 1&2, 2007



African Journal of International Affairs
Revue africaine des relations internationales

Editor in Chief / Rédacteur en Chef

Adebayo Olukoshi

Managing Editor

Sulaiman Adebawale

Editorial Board/Comité de rédaction

Cardoso, Carlos, CODESRIA, Dakar Senegal

Martin, Guy, Winston-Salem State University, USA

Maloka, Eddy, Africa Institute of South Africa, South Africa

Matlosa, Khabele, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

Osuntokun, Akin, University of Lagos, Nigeria

Pondi, Jean Emmanuel, University of Yaounde II, Cameroon

Sindjoun, Luc, University of Yaounde II, Cameroon

CODESRIA would like to express its gratitude to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA/SAREC), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, NORAD, the Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA), the French Ministry of Cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rockefeller Foundation, FINIDA, CIDA, IIEP/ADEA, OECD, OXFAM America, UNICEF and the Government of Senegal for supporting its research, training and publication programmes.

Le CODESRIA exprime sa gratitude à l'Agence suédoise de coopération pour le développement International (SIDA/SAREC), au Centre de recherche pour le développement international (CRDI), à la Fondation Ford, à la fondation MacArthur, Carnegie Corporation, au NORAD, à l'Agence danoise pour le développement international (DANIDA), au ministère français de la Coopération, au Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement (PNUD), au ministère des Affaires étrangères des Pays-bas, à la Fondation Rockefeller, FINIDA, CIDA, IIEP/ADEA, OCDE, OXFAM America, UNICEF, et le gouvernement du Sénégal pour leur soutien généreux à ses programmes de recherche, de formation et de publication.

Produced in collaboration with the Africa Institute of South Africa

Typeset by Djibril Fall and printed in Senegal by Imprimerie Graphiplus

Cover designed by Kalidou Kassé

African Journal of International Affairs
Revue africaine des relations internationales

A Bi-annual Journal of the Council for
the Development of Social Science Research in Africa

Revue bi-annuelle du Conseil pour le développement
de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique

Special Issue on Elections and the Challenge
of Post-Conflict Democratisation in West Africa

Guest Editor

Cyril I. Obi

Volume 10, Numbers 1&2, 2007

African Journal of International Affairs

Revue africaine des relations internationales

A Bi-annual Journal of the Council for the Development
of Social Science Research in Africa

Revue bi-annuelle du Conseil pour le développement
de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique

The *African Journal of International Affairs* is a bi-annual publication of CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal. It offers a platform for analyses on contemporary issues in African international affairs in relation to global developments as they affect Africa. AJIA welcomes contributions in English and French from both African scholars and scholars everywhere working on Africa.

La *Revue africaine des relations internationales* est une publication bi-annuelle du CODESRIA, Dakar, Sénégal. Elle offre une tribune pour l'analyse des questions contemporaines concernant les relations internationales africaines en relation avec les événements mondiaux qui affectent l'Afrique. La revue sollicite des contributions en anglais et en français d'universitaires africains et non-africains qui travaillent sur l'Afrique.

All contributions should be sent to/Toute contribution doit être envoyé au

The Editor/Rédacteur en Chef
African Journal of International Affairs/
Revue africaine des relations internationales
CODESRIA, BP 3304, Dakar, 18524 Senegal
Tel.: (221) 33 25.98.22/23
Fax: (221) 33 824.12.89
Email: codesria@codesria.sn

Subscriptions/Abonnements

	Africa/Afrique	Elsewhere/Ailleurs
1. Individuals/Individus	\$15	\$30
2. Institutions	\$20	\$40

ISSN 0850-7902

African Journal of International Affairs

Revue africaine des relations internationales

Volume 10, Numbers 1&2, 2007

Contents / Sommaire

- Introduction: Elections and the Challenge of Post-Conflict
Democratisation in West Africa 1
Cyril I. Obi
- Democracy and Conflict Management
in Africa: Is Ghana a Model or a Paradox? 13
Jasper Ayelazuno
- From War to Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance
in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone 37
Abraham John
- The Challenges of Documenting War Atrocities in
Post-Conflict Sierra Leone: A Study of the Truth and
Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 55
Proscovia Svärd
- Post-Conflict Elections in Africa: Liberia and Guinea-Bissau
in Comparative Perspective 73
John Akokpari and Elisabete Azevedo
- Partnership and Post-War Guinea-Bissau 93
Jónína Einarsdóttir
- Rhetoric of Power, Power of Rhetoric: Discourse Implications
of Mass Media Reports of Election Campaigns and the
Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria 113
Augustine U. Nwagbara

- Pro-democracy Movements, Democratisation and Conflicts
in Africa: Nigeria, 1990–1999 127
Kehinde Olayode
- Democracy, Elections, Election Monitoring
and Peace-Building in West Africa 147
Adelaja Odukoya



Introduction: Elections and the Challenge of Post-Conflict Democratisation in West Africa

Cyril I. Obi*

Abstract

This special issue of *AJIA* is comprised of eight selected and revised versions of papers presented at the conference on Post-Conflict Elections in West Africa: Challenges for Democracy and Reconstruction that was organised by the Nordic Africa Institute's Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa Programme, and held in Accra, Ghana from 15 to 17 May 2006. The conference was directed at a critical evaluation of elections and post-conflict democratisation in West Africa. Organised in terms of case studies, comparative and regional perspectives, the papers provide interesting insights into the nature of multi-party democracy in the region and its impact on peace-building.

Résumé

Ce numéro spécial de *AJIA* comprend huit versions choisies et révisées de communications présentées à la conférence tenue à Accra (Ghana) du 15 au 17 mai 2006 sur le thème Les élections post conflit en Afrique de l'Ouest : Défis pour la Démocratie et la Reconstruction. Ceci était dans le cadre du programme de Nordic Africa Institute sur les transitions post conflit, l'État et la société civile en Afrique. La conférence était centrée sur une évaluation critique des élections et de la démocratisation post conflit en Afrique de l'Ouest. Organisées autour d'études de cas, de perspectives comparatives et régionales, les communications apportaient d'intéressants éclairages sur la nature de la démocratie multipartite dans la région et son impact sur l'établissement d'une paix durable.

* Programme Co-ordinator, Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. E-mail: Cyril.Obi@nai.uu.se

- Olayode, K.O. (2004), 'Civil Society and Democratisation in Africa: The Nigerian experience', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.
- Olowu, D. and Wunsch, J., eds (1990), *The Failure of the Centralised State*, Boulder CO: Westview.
- Przeworski, A. (1991), *Democracy and the Market*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russett, B. (1993), *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a post-Cold War world*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schatzberg, M. (1993), 'Power, Legitimacy and Democratisation in Africa', *Africa*, Vol. 63.
- Stepan, A. (1988), *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Suberu, R.T. (1993), 'The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict: The travails of federalism in Nigeria', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 4.
- USAID (1994), *Civil Society, Democracy and Development in Africa: Proceedings of a Workshop for Development Practitioners*, Washington DC: USAID.
- Woods, D. (1992), 'Civil Society in Europe and Africa: Limiting state power through a public sphere', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2.



Democracy, Elections, Election Monitoring and Peace-Building in West Africa

Adelaja Odukoya*

Abstract

This essay explores the linkages between elections, democracy and peace-building in West Africa. It engages in a radical critique of neo-liberal democracy and its ramifications for peace and development. This provides the context for explaining some of the limitations of multi-party democracy, elections and election monitoring in Africa. Drawing on illustrations from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana, the nature of democracy in West Africa is explored, and some suggestions are then made towards strengthening the democracy-peace linkage in the region.

Résumé

Il s'agit ici d'explorer les liens existant entre élections, démocratie et l'établissement d'une paix durable en Afrique de l'Ouest. Il s'ensuit une critique radicale de la démocratie néo-libérale et de ses ramifications pour la paix et le développement. Cet essai donne le contexte expliquant quelques unes des limites de la démocratie multipartite, des élections et de l'observation des élections en Afrique. Les cas du Nigeria, de la Sierra-Leone et du Ghana sont cités à des fins d'illustrations pour explorer la nature de la démocratie en Afrique de l'Ouest, et des suggestions ont été faites en vue du renforcement du lien entre démocratie et paix dans la région.

Introduction

Following the end of the Cold War, the institutionalisation of market-based economic reforms and multi-party democracy were considered as *sine qua non* for engendering peace and political stability in Africa. The

* Department of Political Science, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

E-mail: lajaodukoya@yahoo.com

World Bank and International Monetary Fund's (IMF), insistence on democratisation and good governance as political conditionalities for countries seeking credit or economic reform assistance became the norm. Therefore, a consequence of the end of the Cold War was the universalisation of Western political and economic values exemplified by neo-liberalism.

The essay interrogates the linkage(s) between elections, democracy and election monitoring as modalities for post-conflict peace and conflict transformation in West Africa. Central to this concern are the ambiguities between liberal democracy and elections in Africa, and the positions of Western democracies keen on promoting the multi-party agenda on the continent. The analysis that follows explores the utility of elections as tools for peace-building in West Africa. The rest of the essay is divided into three parts: a theoretical and conceptual framework, followed by a critical analysis of democracy, elections and election monitoring in West Africa. The final part includes recommendations and a conclusion.

Some Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Democracy means different things to different people: a method, a process, a system, an ideology, a platform for power contestation and not the least a class struggle. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War has privileged liberal democracy globally as the most credible basis of governmental legitimacy. Similarly, democracy provides Third World nations badly in need of aid with the legitimacy required as an important condition for attracting foreign capital and development assistance. The foregoing produces some divergence between and within democratic theory and democratic politics, making democracy rather ambiguous and highly ideological, thus necessitating the conceptual question: 'which democracy' or 'whose democracy'?

At present, democracy has been transformed from its classical notion underpinned by the assumptions of *government by the people; common good, the rationality of man; and the contradictory goal of liberty and equality* (Rejai 1967: 203). Classical democracy has been critiqued for its philosophical fallacy, abstract content and an empirically invalid proposition or better still its illogicality on the rationality of human nature (ibid.). These limitations have done harm to democratic theory in two important respects: first, they have engendered different orientations about the democratic enterprise, thus complicating and making cross-national

and cross-cultural comparisons difficult; second, they pose serious problems for democratic practices, making it possible for regimes at different extremes of the political spectrum to lay claim to being democratic.

The differences in orientation about democracy are exemplified by a focus on three democratic models, namely: the communitarian, deliberative, and agonistic. While communitarian democrats are concerned with 'the community who share the same framework of values' (Gabardi 2001: 553-4), deliberative democrats deal with 'the public space of rational collective deliberations' (ibid.), while for the agnostic democratic model the orientation is towards 'a radical pluralistic public sphere of contested identities, moralities, and discourses' (ibid.).

Clichés such as *liberal democracy, democratic socialism, social democracy, and homegrown democracy* are products of these complex ideological meanings to which democracy could be 'bent', making democracy akin to a journey to an uncertain destination. Attempts at clarifying these, according to (Rejai 1967: 203), have led to the development of 'a set of propositions, practices, and institutions that can be observed and operationalized'.

The provision of 'regular constitutional opportunities' for leadership change, as well as an inclusive social system of majoritarian participation in decision-making is for Lipset (cited in Rejai 1967: 204) what makes democracy. In concurrence, majoritarian rule, according to Satori (cited in Rejai 1967: 204), is the very core of democracy. Underlining the fact that majoritarian rule is not a given but a function of deliberate political calculation, Joseph Schumpeter (1942) argues that democracy can only make sense based on its electoral imperative under which the people periodically elect among elites their rulers in a competitive electoral process. Huntington (1984: 195) similarly opines that: '... a democracy thus involved two dimensions – contestation and participation'. Robert Dahl's polyarchy thesis of a pluralist electoral contest is another derivative of the Schumpeterian democratic project. However, while elections are important to democracy, their canonisation as the *raison d'être* of democracy is conceptually and theoretically flawed. Unfortunately, democracy in Africa is oriented by this Schumpeterian bias for procedural democracy.

The essence of the resulting multiparty democracies in Africa is well captured by the Marxian position, as argued by Adejumobi (2000: 61), that elections are 'a system of political and ideological reification of the

hegemony and power of the dominant class, a system of social acculturation through which dominant ideologies, political practices and beliefs are reproduced'. In this wise, the importance of elections as a platform of ordered choices, and political competitions for installing political incumbents in an exercise that privileges the people as sovereign is seriously negated. Consequently, representative democracy '... replaces government by the people with government by consent of the people. Instead of the sovereignty of the people, it offers the sovereignty of the law' (Ake 2000: 10).

Under multi-party democracies in Africa, poverty, illiteracy, oppression and disempowerment of the people combine to reduce their political potency. Thus, the pre-eminence of the people as being central in the principal-agent relations implied by representative democracy is seriously compromised. Furthermore, these structural imbalances make it possible for the agent in the political principal-agent relationship to dominate the political processes and determine the possibilities and probabilities of outcome. With this, elections in Africa are at best superficial. This is because they do not adequately address the roots of structural social inequalities and inequities that marginalise and pauperise most of the people, effectively excluding them from politics.

To the democratic peace theorists, non-democracies are societies in which violence and coercion prevail. In such societies, highly conflictive relations make internal democracy precarious, especially where there is strong opposition. The result is 'mistrust and fear within and outside government' (Maoz and Russett 1993: 625). Consequently, a non-democratic state apparently lacks the institutional and behavioural constraints for war. It is argued that even a bad democracy '... does not give the leader of the government the incentive that an autocrat has to extract the maximum attainable social surplus from the society to achieve his personal objectives' (Olson 1993: 571).

The arguments of the liberal peace theorists have been critiqued on theoretical and conceptual grounds. First is the existence of a number of non-economic factors responsible for the reduction in international war-mongering. Prominent among these are the legacies of the Cold War and balance of power in international relations. Hence, liberal peace has worked only in the context of powerful nations (Buzan 1984: 605), a condition that has substituted 'a "peaceful" use of force for a "physical" one' (ibid.). Second, the discriminative and non-equitable nature of liberalism and the dependency condition imposed on Third World

nations not only keeps them weak, it also makes the use of force in their domestic politics inevitable. This is usually with the indirect support of powerful nations interested in the protection of the exploitative conditions of surplus expropriation (Buzan 1984: 617).

Democracy cannot be taken as given. There are a number of universal preconditions and specific contextual variables that guide and condition it. Huntington (1984: 214) advances conditions for the institutionalisation of democracy, namely: higher levels of economic well-being; the absence of extreme inequalities in wealth and income; greater social pluralism, including particularly a strong and autonomous bourgeoisie; a more market-oriented economy; greater influence vis-à-vis the society of existing democratic states; and a culture that is monistic and more tolerant of diversity and compromise.

The ecology of democracy in West Africa is different from that existing in the nations of the West. In West Africa, there exist a number of factors at the historical, economic and systemic level of the state militating against democracy. A major deepening factor against democracy in West Africa is the nature and the character of the state and the contradictions and crises it engenders.

The state in Africa is beset by several structural weaknesses. It performs a gatekeeper role and is used by dominant elites as a mechanism for rent-seeking. Under this condition, the autonomy of the state and its capacity to mediate between conflicting group interests is seriously compromised. Therefore, the public sphere of the state is appropriated into the private domain of strong ethnically based political contestations. Citizenship is therefore poorly defined, leading to the transfer of primary loyalty to primordial groups as opposed to the state.

With the state as the controller of national resources and their ultimate disperser, politics becomes a zero-sum game. This naturally engenders social exclusion and political marginalisation, human rights violation, corruption, mismanagement, irresponsible and non-accountable government and illiberal democracies; it also caricatures elections, marginalises and disempowers the people, promotes irreconcilable conflicts and makes peace unattainable.

The condition of democracy in the West African region is further complicated by the power struggle and mistrust engendered by the above contradictions between those Joel Barkin (2006: 18–19) identified as incumbent authoritarians, insurgents and reformers. These political

'gladiators' have different and mutually exclusive agendas: first, incumbent public office-holders/governments seek to hang on to power by all means; and second, the insurgents seek to institute a new patronage order.

What constitutes democracy ultimately is the expression of the will of the people. Bjornlund et al. (1992) put it perceptively thus: 'However one defines democracy, it is irreducibly a system of government in which the authority to exercise power derives from the will of the people.'

Elections, Election Monitoring and 'Illiberal' Democracies in West Africa

According to Wanyande (1987: 80), 'elections represent a way of making a choice that is fair to all – one that leaves each member of the electorate with the reasonable hope of having his alternative elected'. An election is therefore an empirical demonstration of a citizen's liberty and political choice. It is for this that it serves to legitimise government. Properly managed elections provide a veritable platform for conflict resolution and transformation outside the battlefield and without bloodshed. Hence the requirement of elections to be free and fair. Unfortunately, as Douglas Anglin (1998: 474), argued, 'while much lip-service is paid to the norms of free elections, too often the reality is a travesty of democracy'. Devoid of the attributes of freeness and fairness, elections become an empty shell, lacking any real democratic content.

Elections ideally reflect and impact on the orderliness within society, and the stability, credibility and possibility of rejuvenating the political leadership through the change of decadent members of the elite and the advancement of the non-elite elements. Economically, elections properly conducted promote an environment for capital mobility and higher productivity, especially in a post-authoritarian and post-conflict political order in dire need of reconstruction and development. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that elections in West Africa are the very opposite of the above conditions. As Villalón (1998: 16) rightly argued, 'Elections themselves may be a strategy for maintaining power and many African elections ... have been clearly intended to forestall change, or even strengthen the status quo'. Elections as political stratagems for pursuing these agendas produce quasi-democracies in West Africa. This concern, among others, led to the institutionalisation of election observation and monitoring as an important aspect of the African democratisation project.

Election monitoring has however become a part of the global project to promote liberal democracy in Africa and other parts of the developing world. The Afro-pessimism and perception of Africa as the graveyard of democracies are major factors in the increased importance of international election observations and monitoring in Africa. To Anglin (1998: 472), election monitoring is a component of the peace packages for conflict resolution and transformation in the context of electoral democracy. The logic, he argues, is premised on the utility of neutral observers in ensuring conformity with electoral principles. The presence of election observers is also erroneously believed to have a 'restraining influence on anyone tempted to break the rules' (ibid.). Unfortunately, incumbents in West Africa exploit the election monitoring mechanism to accord respectability to elections, especially since it poses no threat to the desire to manipulate electoral processes (ibid.).

For Bjornlund et al. (1992: 406), election monitoring boosts confidence in the fairness of the electoral process; helps deter fraud in the balloting and counting procedures; reports on the integrity of the election; mediates disputes resulting from the election, and vouchsafes democratisation. However, the seeming incongruence between the intensity of election monitoring and observation on the one hand, and the problematic of free and fair elections has led to the representation of the election monitoring by some critics as 'disguised tourism' (Soremekun 1999) and a charade (Munson 1998: 37).

It is noted that election monitors could face a clash of interests. In such cases, they need to remain truthful to the tenets of democracy. However, they also have the desire to protect and project the institutional agenda of their organisations. Again there is the tendency to comply with the hegemonic position and interests of their countries, defined in terms of strategic and economic interests, with human rights and democracy being tangential (Bjornlund et al. 1992: 347).

These contradictory interests are usually resolved in favour of the hegemonic power at home and the strategic interest of the election monitors organisations. A good example is how the European Union's (EU) desire to become a global player informed its involvement in the post-apartheid democratisation in South Africa (Olsen 1998: 353–61). Furthermore, France's strategic interests led to her increment of development aid and assistance, as well as its approval of Niger Republic's 1996 elections while other EU member-states imposed sanctions (ibid.).

The continued crisis in Nigeria exemplified by the deteriorating Delta Niger conflict and the proliferation of ethnic militias in the country since the return to democratic rule in 1999 provides a good case of the limited value of election monitoring as a tool for peace-building. The three elections conducted since Nigeria's return to democracy – in 1999, 2003 and 2007 – were anything but democratic. These elections were characterised by executive high-handedness, vote rigging, violence and zero-sum politics. Many prominent politicians – such as Chief Bola Ige, leader of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), who was serving in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) government (on the President's invitation) as the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of the Federation; Alhaji Ahman Pategi, Chairman of the Kwara State PDP; Chief Harry Marshal, a PDP leader in Rivers State; Barrister Igwe and his wife; Sunday Ugwu; Hon. Odunayo Olagbaju, a member of the Osun State House of Assembly; Adamu Warri; Chief Dokibo, PDP Vice-chairman for South-South geopolitical zone, and Luke Shigaba, Chairman Bassa Local Government, Kogi State – were all suspected of being assassinated before the 2003 general elections.

Engineer Funsho Williams and Dr. Ayo Daramola, both gubernatorial candidates of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Lagos and Ekiti States, were also killed by suspected assassins just before the 2007 elections. It is curious that in most cases no one has been successfully prosecuted and convicted for these political killings. In the run up to and during the 2003 and 2007 elections, hundreds of Nigerians lost their lives in political violence. Of note has been the violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta or South-South geopolitical zone where militia groups affiliated to political parties or prominent PDP politicians have unleashed violence against voters, and each other, in the bid to steal elections in favour of their patrons (Stakeholder Democracy Network 2007).

The foregoing suggests that election observers have at best been mere spectators of Nigeria's rather controversial elections. With respect to the reports of the monitors on the 1999 general elections in Nigeria, Darren Kew (1999: 33), a member of the Carter Centre monitoring group, has this to say on the monitors' position:

This was not a credible election, but we could live with it if the military would. Criticisms were directed toward what the INEC could do to improve the process for the next round of elections in three years. The IRI, the EU, and the TMG all noted that violations had been witnessed, but buried those comments behind support for the transition.

As Kew (1999: 33) further noted:

Most of the donor governments and international monitoring organizations had generally decided beforehand that they were willing to accept and indeed, preferred an Obasanjo outcome of the Abubakar transition, as long as the regime appeared to make a good-faith effort towards open elections.

The above observation raises some important questions about the real motives of election monitors in providing legitimacy to the outcome of elections once this fits well with the interests of donors and the international community. Apart from exposing the ideological underpinnings and ambivalent underpinnings of election observation, it also shows how it could hurt the monitoring of a grassroots-based democratisation of Africa in the long run.

The violation of electoral democratic norms has not been limited to Nigeria. The 1996 elections held in the middle of a civil war in Sierra Leone were similarly fraught with security, logistical and political problems that posed serious limitations for the success of these elections. In view of the violence, voting in 53 of the 58 polling stations in Bo was suspended. The serious rebel bombardment of the capital, Freetown, led to the extension of voting to a second day. 'Whole chiefdoms in the Kailahun, Kono, Kenema districts in the Eastern Province, Pujehun and Bonthe in the Southern Province and Tonkolili in the Northern Province did not vote' (Wai 2006: 16). The electoral management body was reportedly openly in favour of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Unable to contradict the claims of inflation of votes in favour of Kabbah in the southern province, the electoral body, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), was forced to reduce Kabbah votes in the province by 70,000 in the run-off election (Wai 2006: 17). This fraudulent election was not only sanctioned by the international election monitors, but hegemonic forces of Western nations represented by the UK and USA prevailed on Kerefar-Smith, candidate for the run-off election, to accept the flawed result, enthroning Ahmed Kabbah, the preferred candidate. This partly explains why democracy in Sierra Leone still remains a highly contested prospect.

However, in spite of other problematic elections in West Africa – in Niger and Togo – there has been some mention of a 'Ghanaian model' of electoral democracy. A number of factors have been identified as

being responsible for the success of the Ghana model. Among these factors, according to Ibrahim (2007: 6), are:

Rebuilding of institutions, re-establishment of the rule of law, proper conduct of pluralist elections, promotion of press freedom, reconstitution of effective local government, development of effective oversight functions and effective public probity in a state that had previously suffered considerable decay. It is therefore a model about the gradual improvement of state efficacy, democratic governance and respect for human rights.

An important fact in the Ghana success story is the elite-championed national consensus as to the viability of the path of electoral democracy as a platform for national rebirth. Thus, it can be argued, the internal structural political change rather than election monitoring lies at the heart of the Ghanaian model of electoral democracy, but it should be noted that Ghana's form of elite democracy is far from perfect. A lot still has to be achieved in terms of addressing the socio-economic needs and welfare concerns of the majority of the people. Democratic consolidation in Ghana will have to address the issues of inclusiveness, popular participation, freedom and economic empowerment.

The observation of elections in West Africa is part of the post-Cold War conditionalities aimed at promoting Western-style multi-party democracy and capitalist development in the region. As such its impact is limited to electoral procedures that would best guarantee the conditions for the realisation of its strategic, normative and ideological goals. This type of neo-liberal democracy neither really empowers the people nor includes them in decision-making, beyond choosing from competing elites during periodic elections. Support to civil society groups, the funding of research, workshops and conferences on different pro-democratic projects, election monitoring, provision of financial and logistical support for elections, training, providing for fugitive pro-democracy activists, mediation in conflicts, and in certain cases putting pressure on incumbents to democratise the state are some of the many ways the West has strived to promote democracy in West Africa.

The point at issue therefore is that there is a limit to which the West can insist on democratic reforms and the sanctity of the electoral process beyond the demands of market or neo-liberal democracy. The promotion of multi-party democracy is partly a strategy to prevent the throwing up of forces opposed to Western capitalist interests in a far-reaching process of popular or grass-roots democratisation. Obi (1997:

147–64) situated the concern of the US with election monitoring not only in the context of 'post-Cold War diplomacy of promoting the universalization of democratic values, human rights and institutions around the world', but also because it would further the strategic interests of America.

In essence, offering a stamp of legitimacy for elections that do not address the structural political problems in West Africa is in the long-term interest of the West, because, first, it helps to effectively demobilise any opposition contemplating violence, and second, it secures the cooperation of the favoured ruling elite in the continued exploitation of the resources of their nations by transnational capital.

Conclusion

The democratic practice in the West African sub-region oscillates between pseudo-democracy and semi-democracy (Thompson 1993: 473–4). It is imperative for the countries in the region to move from pseudo- and semi-democracy to popular and people's democracy. This among other things would require a new social contract built around developmental democratic states. This can be achieved only through reconstituting the state as a people-centred entity that is also autonomous from competing social forces. Putting an end to political corruption and promotion of inclusive citizenry and popular legitimacy will go a long way to achieving this goal. It is also necessary to transform the economies in the region away from their current status of primary-commodity exports that are dependent on volatile global commodity markets and an unjust international trading order.

Second, there is the need for serious institutional engineering, as the Ghana model has clearly shown. The many non-functional and weak institutions must be energised for political inclusiveness and efficacy. The police, judiciary, legislature, civil society groups, the mass media, political parties etc., need to be guided by the rule of law and the common good of society.

Third, economic well-being has been found to play an important role in democracy-building. Therefore the continued impoverishment, illiteracy, powerlessness and impoverished conditions of the majority of West African citizens are a clear negation of democracy. It is only an empowered citizen who can be in a position to make effective and informed political choices. Popular empowerment is a prerequisite for popular democratic participation and efficacy, just as economic democ-

racy, often ignored by liberal democracy, is a *sine qua non* for popular empowerment. Much will have to be done to effect the social redistribution of wealth, which is presently characterised by a wide gap between the few rich and the many poor.

There is no gainsaying that for a long time to come election monitors will play an important role in elections in the sub-region. To this end, a positive orientation to democracy and pre-election issues and conditions that privilege the incumbent against the opposition deserve serious attention in the monitoring process. A common standard for election monitoring is also imperative and urgent. The patchy and compromise orientation of election observers and monitors, Soremekun (1999: 26) argues, is at the root of their insignificant impact on electoral observation and monitoring in Africa. The West needs to change its orientation of promoting elitist and 'limited' versions of democracy that tend to promote external interests rather than the interests of the African people.

Given the cultural context of the people of West Africa, there is no gainsaying the fact that majoritarian democracy as practised in the West may not, given the conditions in the various countries, sufficiently address the specific interests of various political interest groups and communities in the sub-region. In these nations there is no room for oppositional politics. Opposition parties are often treated as enemies – to be fought and crushed by the ruling party. This brings to the fore the need to address the structural political challenges facing West Africa – the national and citizenship questions, economic crises and social injustice – and fashion a new form of equitable and inclusive democratic politics. A starting point perhaps is for a radically different, socially committed visionary political leadership to emerge from the ongoing democratic struggles in the sub-region.

References

- Adejumobi, S. (2000), 'Elections in Africa: A fading shadow of democracy', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1.
- Ake, C. (2000), *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Anglin, D. (1998), 'International Election Monitoring: The African experience', *African Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 389.
- Baker, B. (1996), 'Introduction', in S. Myers, *Democracy is a Discussion*, New London CT: US Information Agency and Connecticut College.
- Barkin, J.D. (2006), 'Democracy in Africa: What future?', in M. Ndulo, ed., *Democratic Reforms in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey.

- Barnes, S. (2001), 'The Contribution of Democracy to Rebuilding Post-Conflict Societies', *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 95, No. 1.
- Bjornlund, E., Bratton, M. and Gibson, C. (1992), 'Observing Multiparty Elections in Africa: Lesson from Zambia', *African Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 364.
- Buzan, B. (1984), 'Economic Structure and International Security: The limits of the liberal case', *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 4.
- Diamond, L. (1997), 'Consolidating Democracy in the Americas', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS)*, No. 550.
- Doyle, M. (1983a), 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3.
- Doyle, M. (1983b), 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3.
- Farber, S.H. and Gowa, J. (1995), 'Politics of Peace', *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 2.
- Gabardi, W. (2001), 'Contemporary Models of Democracy', *Polity*, Vol. 33, No. 4.
- Huntington, S. (1984), 'Will More Countries Become Democratic?', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 2.
- Huntington, S. (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*, Norman OK and London: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Ibrahim, J. (2007), *Transforming Elections in West Africa into Opportunities for Political Choice*, Occasional Electronic Paper 2, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, at: <http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/books/book.xml?id=25244> [accessed 21 November 2007].
- Kew, D. (1999), 'Democracy: dem Go Craze, o: Monitoring the 1999 Nigerian Election', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 27, No. 1.
- Mansfield, D.E. and Snyder, J. (1995), 'Democratization and the Danger of War', *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1.
- Maoz, Z. and Russett, B.M. (1993), 'Normative and Structural Cause of Democratic Peace: 1946–86', *American Political Science Review*, No. 187, No. 3.
- Munson, H. Jr (1998), 'International Election Monitoring: A critique based on one monitor's experience in Morocco', *Middle East Report*, Winter.
- Nelson, W. (1984), 'Huntington on Democratic Politics: A Review of *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 1.
- Obi, C. (1997), 'United States and Election Monitoring in the 1993 Nigerian Presidential Elections: Lesson, retrospect and prospects', in O. Ogunba, ed., *Governance and the Electoral Process: Nigeria and the United States of America*, Lagos: American Studies Association of Nigeria (ASAN).
- Olsen, G. (1998), 'Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post-Cold War Africa: How serious is Europe and for what reason?', *African Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 388.
- Olson, M. (1993), 'Dictatorship, Democracy and Development', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3.
- Olukotun, A. (2003), 'Election Observers, the Media and the 2003 General Elections', in R. Anifowose and T. Babawale, eds, *2003 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria*, Lagos: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

- Owen, J.M. (1994), 'How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace', *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2.
- Rejai, M. (1967), 'The Metamorphosis of Democratic Theory', *Ethics*, Vol. 77, No. 3.
- Schumpeter, J.A. (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 2nd edn, New York: Harper Brothers.
- Soremekun, K. (1999), 'Disguised Tourism and the Electoral Process in Africa: A study of international observers and the 1998 Local Government Elections in Nigeria', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 27, No. 1.
- Stakeholder Democracy Network (2007), 'Further Rigging, Nigeria's General Elections, 14 & 21 April 2007', Election Observer Report: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States, at: <http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/main/content/view/51/47/1/2/> [accessed 21 October 2007].
- Tangri, R. (1995), 'The Politics of Africa's Public and Private Enterprise', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 2.
- Thompson, M. (1993), 'The Limits of Democratization in ASEAN', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3.
- Villalón, L. (1998), 'The African State at the End of the Twentieth Century: Parameters of critical juncture', in L. Villalón and P. Huxtable, eds, *The African State at a Critical Juncture: Between disintegration and re-configuration*, London: Lynn Rienner.
- Wai, Z. (2006), 'Election as a Strategy for Conflict Transformation in Sierra Leone: A critique of the liberal peace agenda', Paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute's Conference on Post-Conflict Elections in West-Africa, Accra, Ghana, 15-17 May.
- Wanyande, P. (1987), 'Democracy and the One-Party State: The African experience', in W. Oyugi and A. Gitonga, eds, *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Williams, G. (2003), 'Democracy as Idea and Democracy as Process in Africa', *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 88, No. 4.
- Wolf, R., Weede, E., Enterline, A.J., Mansfield, E. and Snyder, J. (1996), 'Democratization and the Danger of War', *International Security*, Vol. 20, No 4.

Notes to Contributors

Manuscripts submitted to the journals should be typed double-spaced and in two (2) hard copies. Electronic versions should be submitted as MS Word or RTF attachments. Avoid excessive formatting of the text. Camera-ready copies of maps, charts graphs are required as well as the data used in plotting the charts and graphs. Please use the Harvard Reference System (author-date) for bibliographic referencing, e.g.:

It is interesting to note that... the word for 'tribe' does not exist in indigenous languages of South Africa (Mafeje 1971:254).

N.B.: It is essential that the bibliography lists every work cited by you in the text.

An abstract of 150 to 200 words stating the main research problem, major findings and conclusions should be sent with the articles for translation into English or French. Articles that do not follow this format will have their processing delayed.

Authors should indicate their full name, address (including e-mail contact), their academic status and their current institutional affiliation. This should appear on a separate covering page since manuscripts will be sent out anonymously to outside readers. Manuscripts will not be returned to the authors.

Articles submitted to any CODESRIA journal should be original contributions and should not be under consideration by another publication at the same time. If an article is under consideration by another publication the author should inform the editor at the time of submission.

Authors are entitled, free of charge, to two copies of the issue in which their article appears and electronic off-prints in form of pdf file for either printing or distribution.

CODESRIA

Av. Cheikh Anta Diop x Canal IV BP 3304, Dakar, 18524 Senegal.

Tel: +221 33 825 98 22 / 825 98 23 – Fax: +221 33 824 12 89

Email: publications@codesria.sn or codesria@codesria.sn

Web Site: www.codesria.org

African Journal of International Affairs
Revue africaine des relations internationales
Volume 10, Numbers 1&2, 2007
Contents / Sommaire

Introduction: Elections and the Challenge of Post-Conflict Democratisation in West Africa	1
<i>Cyril I. Obi</i>	
Democracy and Conflict Management in Africa: Is Ghana a Model or a Paradox?	13
<i>Jasper Ayelazuno</i>	
From War to Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone.....	37
<i>Abraham John</i>	
The Challenges of Documenting War Atrocities in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone: A Study of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).....	55
<i>Proscovia Svärd</i>	
Post-Conflict Elections in Africa: Liberia and Guinea-Bissau in Comparative Perspective.....	73
<i>John Akokpari and Elisabete Azevedo</i>	
Partnership and Post-War Guinea-Bissau.....	93
<i>Jónína Einarsdóttir</i>	
Rhetoric of Power, Power of Rhetoric: Discourse Implications of Mass Media Reports of Election Campaigns and the Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria.....	113
<i>Augustine U. Nwagbara</i>	
Pro-democracy Movements, Democratisation and Conflicts in Africa: Nigeria, 1990-1999.....	127
<i>Kehinde Olayode</i>	
Democracy, Elections, Election Monitoring and Peace-Building in West Africa.....	147
<i>Adelaja Odukoya</i>	