7-1992

Africa and the democratic option: a quest for effectiveness and legitimacy in governance

Austin Ogbe-Ogunsuyi

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations

Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations/3324

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. For more information, please contact cwiseman@auctr.edu.
AFRICA AND THE DEMOCRATIC OPTION:
A QUEST FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND
LEGITIMACY IN GOVERNANCE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OR ARTS

BY

AUSTIN OGBE-OGUNSUJI

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

JULY 1992
The prospects of democracy in Africa is the central concern of this study. The factors that contribute to the existence of undemocratic or autocratic governments in most of Africa therefore becomes our major focus for evaluation.

An analysis of the pre-colonial, colonial and neo-colonial political history of Africa attributes autocracy in Africa to irreconcilable differences between the African traditional institutions and the imposed colonial political and economic systems. This socio-economic and political disharmony orchestrated by the colonial economics of exploitation, set the tone for neo-colonial African States fraught with economic and political instability.

Our research strategy involved a qualitative technique of collecting and analyzing a significant body of data relating to the political history of African states. Through an
Afrocentric prism, the flaws of the African political and economic systems are traced to underlying deficiencies in the nature of its States. For a second and perhaps authentic emancipation of Africa therefore, the components of the state structure must be realigned giving priority to the values, customs and traditions of African people. This should form the base for a democratic environment that will usher in effectiveness and legitimacy in governance in those states.

A Democratization Front comprising Africans in Africa and in the diaspora is advocated to design and monitor the democratization movement in the continent. The Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) should serve as the supervisory body to the Democratization Front. The philosophy of the Democratization Front would include a Pan-African mobilization against the forces of political economic and social exploitation of the continent.
(c) 1992

Austin Ogbe-Ogunsuyi

All Rights Reserved
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the guidance and support of many people. Foremost amongst them are my parents Dominique and Comfort Aimievbiye who taught me to seek knowledge and truth for their true essence. My gratitude and comradeship go out to the numerous scholars who have made enormous contributions to the understanding and search for the economic and political liberation of Africa. These scholars include, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, Andre Gunder Frank, Johan Galtung among others. I cannot leave out the members of my thesis committee from those to whom the completion of this endeavor is highly indebted. They are Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Dr. Alex Danso and Dr. Johnny Wilson. I also salute all those who continue to search for the authentic liberation and freedom of African people throughout the world.
# Table of Contents

Abstract  
Copyright Page  
Statement of Understanding and Notice to Borrowers.  

Acknowledgements .................................................... ii  
Table of Contents .................................................... iii  

Chapter  

1. Introduction ....................................................... 1  
Hypothesis ......................................................... 4  
Statement of the Problem ........................................... 7  
Conceptual Framework  
   Introduction ....................................................... 10  
   The State In Africa ............................................... 12  
   Neocolonialism .................................................. 13  
   Euro-American Rhetoric ......................................... 18  
   Political and Economic Liberation ............................ 22  
   Afrocentric Prism ............................................... 27  
   Part 1 Overview .................................................. 28  

2. Methodology, Research Technique, Analytical Framework and Literature Review.  
   Introduction ....................................................... 30  
   Methodology ...................................................... 31  
   Research Technique ............................................. 31  
   Analytical Framework .......................................... 36  
   Literature Review  
      Major Trends .................................................. 38  
      Popular Participation and Economic Development .......... 42  
      A Flaw In Theory .............................................. 46  
      The United Nations: Friend or Foe? .......................... 50  
      Western Perspective .......................................... 57  
   Part 2 Overview .................................................. 63  

3. Political, Economic and Psycho-Social Dimensions of Autocracy In Africa.  
   Introduction ....................................................... 67  
   Political Dimension  
      The Value Factor ............................................. 69  
      Autocracy Installed ......................................... 74  
      A Ruling Elite ................................................. 78  
      Religion, A Factor ........................................... 80  
      Communality, A Factor ....................................... 82  
      External Factors: Euro-American Complex ................. 83  
      Framework For Action ....................................... 87  

iii
Economic Dimension
Introduction.............................................89
Global Inequalities.........................................91
Colonial Economics.........................................94
Obstacles To Reform........................................97
Two Worlds In One..........................................102
Psycho-Social Dimension
Introduction...............................................108
Functional Domination.....................................110
Afrocentric Framework....................................113
Part 3 Overview.............................................114

4. Conclusion

Introduction...............................................117
Findings.....................................................118
Recommendations.........................................133
Philosophy For Democratization Front................135

Bibliography...............................................136
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

African nations since independence have witnessed various forms of repressive governments.¹ With a few exceptions, the entire continent could easily be described as an authoritarian theater that has eluded democracy/popular participation² in any meaningful sense. Several reasons have been advanced for this situation. Some include the fact that the colonial history of States in Africa set in motion a tradition of repressive mechanisms in the name of governance.³ Others suggest that the repressive outlook is a reflection of the backwardness of the people and their inability to govern themselves democratically.⁴ However, the consensus of concerned opinions points to an urgent need to garner legitimacy for more effective forms of government to evolve on the African continent.⁵

Historically, most African States inherited one form of

---


² Democracy and popular participation are used synonymously in this study.

³ Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of The Earth, (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.


government or the other from the colonial authorities. The states were exposed to two contemporary models - the Westminster parliamentary democracy and the Stalinist one-party absolutism. Ironically, the one-party system has over the years gained prominence over the move towards democracy. A tradition of authoritarianism was in many instances installed and later overtaken by more repressive regimes of military dictatorships.  

Three decades since independence, mainly under authoritarian regimes, African states still grapple with the most basic questions of effectiveness and legitimacy in governance. Repressive measures have for most parts escalated, economic situations worsened, starvation pervasive, and the international community appalled at the deterioration of the African societies.

Democracy as an option for the second, and hopefully, authentic emancipation of Africa, has become a serious consideration by various concerned interests. The Lagos Plan

---


7 This must not be confused with the notion that all members of the international community actually worry over the predicaments of African societies. The business community which continues to gain from the poor economic conditions seem not to care.

8 'OPTION' in the title of this study highlights the competing political structures in the continent. They include: Communist/Socialist, Islamic regimes, Military/Dictatorial and Democratic/Popular participation.
of Action, the African Priority Program for Economic Recovery and the Dag Hammarskjold seminar at Uppsala have been forums for such discussions. While some of these discussions have tended to attribute every predicament facing Africa to the lack of democracy/popular participation, others have assigned only partial blame to such a phenomenon. The strategies for solution have been therefore influenced by their assumptions of the situation.\footnote{Ibid.}

With the demise of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR),\footnote{A. Glass and J. Albright, "The Last Soviet: Gorbachev Quits As Communist Flag Comes Down," \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, 26 December 1991. This marked the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), the bastion of communism.} opinions seemed converged towards the necessity and timely adoption of democracy/popular participation by African states. Meanwhile, there remains a cloud of uncertainty regarding the undefined nature and processes that democracy/popular participation should assume. Of particular concern to political scientists is the need to analyze the nature of the state crises to determine the prospects of democracy in Africa. Equally serious concerns must be given to the need to guard against creating an environment that disorients members of the society intended to benefit from the very ideals of political, social and economic transformations.

The reins of Western models of democracy/popular participation must therefore be guarded to benefit African
societies through processes that conform to the rationality of African peoples. Hindsight would advise that the abysmal failure of either the parliamentary or Stalinist socialist structures in Africa serve as sad reminders of the results of 'whole-sale' delivery of 'alien structures' to other peoples without due considerations of their political, economic and social history, for the purposes of calculating long term progressive effects.

Hypothesis

Democracy/Popular participation in Africa is the panacea to political instability and economic retardation of its countries.

By democracy/popular participation we mean that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.\textsuperscript{11}

This hypothesis propels from three basic tenets. The first is the Utopian concept that sees democratic principles as the inalienable rights of citizens to be part of the decision making process of their society. The second rests on the utilitarian concept which believes that with democracy or popular participation a polity could be galvanized towards economic goals that would in the long run bring about the

development of their society. And finally, a world environment that has witnessed the demise of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), the bastion of communism, reaffirms if not imposes, the model of Western liberal democracy consumed in a Judeo-Christian history as the most viable system of political transformation.

Individually and collectively, these various viewpoints could argue that political stability is a precursor to economic growth. However, the thrust of their argument differs in the most desirable process for the attainment of democratic ideals or on the time limit for attaining such goals.

The Utopian concept is obviously strong on its argument that democratic principles of equality, fraternity and freedom promote a polity of self conscious and public motivated individuals who should be committed to the protection and stability of their political environment to guarantee those rights. However, an over-emphasis of the utopian qualities of unbridled freedom for citizens often translates into anarchy as was demonstrated in the political upheavals that arose soon after the French Revolution in 1789.

The utilitarian concept therefore tends to be more realistic because its argument weighs more on the processes of democratic attainment rather than the ideals by themselves. Incidentally, the practical models of democracy in the world today - Western Liberal societies - promote "representative democracy". By implication, the Athenian models of "direct
democracy" which according to many scholars are the ideal type, have often been compromised if not obliterated. Proponents of the representative models in the United States of America among others, insist that it was the most practicable manner of democratic practice in a highly populated and diverse society.

The final concept emanating from the hypothesis, rests on the notion of the African environment in a fast changing world. This brings to this study specificity, while trying to adapt the essence of the earlier discussed concepts to the African reality. It however raises some questions: (1) must the seeming collapse of communism or socialism alone determine whether African states adopts democracy? (2) To what extent must the Utopian ideal be mixed with the Utilitarian notions to produce the most desirable model of democracy that would foster economic development? and (3) to what extent do both the internal and external forces that impact the African environment support the authentic development of democratic ideals?

These and related issues will form the thrust and focus of this study. Details for testing these hypothesis questions will be elaborated under Methodology and Analytical Framework (Chapter 2).
Statement of the Problem:
A People Marginalized.

Tyranny has deprived most African states of political legitimacy. The subjects or victims see the state as a hostile force to be evaded, cheated or defeated as circumstances permit. Consequently, loyalties are focused on local communities and primary groups which are often very caring and never threatening. In effect, what is happening in Africa is the dissolution of society rather than its development.  

In these words Claude Ake articulates the bane of most African societies caught in the web of authoritarian rulership. The irony is that, three decades since the hard won independence, the majority of its people who fought to overthrow colonialism in the new African nations do not have any say in their government.

With high hopes for popular participation, many Africans welcomed the independence of their countries and geared-up for politics. But fate soon revealed that such an ideal was illusory in a complex of historical realities of superpower exploitation and local bourgeois connivance.

A scholastic review of the problem therefore must seek to highlight the various facets that perpetuate authoritarian regimes in Africa. It must also seek to answer the questions: (1) what has led to the authoritarian proclivity of African nations? (2) what were the effects of these authoritarian

---

regimes on development prospects of those countries? and (3) what are the political options available to those societies?

Fortunately, the first question received some support from our opening quotes from Claude Ake, "Development and Democracy". In an overview of the Africa political theater, Claude Ake thinks that non-democratic government persist because Africa has turned away from its democratic tradition.

The second question evokes a quick reminder of the present political and hence development impact of authoritarianism in Africa which requires no special skills to identify and enumerate. Tyranny has deprived the people of participation in their government; development stagnates, citizens are alienated. Meanwhile the decimation of the society through the exploitative mechanisms of former colonial authorities continues given the porous nature of the artificial state structures imposed by the colonial authorities. 13

The final question tries to explore solutions to the problem, weighing possible alternatives, few as they may be. On this question rests the essence of our thesis topic: Africa and the Democratic Option 14: A Quest for Effectiveness and

13 Ibid.

14 The question of OPTION reaffirms the cautious note in the analysis of existing systems and careful consideration of any viable alternative. It is instructive to remember that since Africa currently suffers from the imposition of unbridled alien political structures (the thesis of this concern), a choice of desirable political transformation must seek to reconcile the intended system with the socio-cultural and
Legitimacy in Governance. By implication of the topic, the assumption that democracy is an option is implied. Explicating this problematic would necessitate resolving some key questions arising: (1) why democracy/popular participation? (2) How conducive are Africa's internal and external environments to a democratic option? (3) How will Africa attain democracy/popular participation?

Opinions on each of these questions remain as diverse as the numerous views expressed on the issue. However, the first question obviously confronts the thesis topic's tacit assumption on the notion that democracy was a viable option. It therefore reaffirms the realization that democracy is not the only possible option but one among several considerations.\textsuperscript{15} Invariably, it requires the investigation to probe its validity as an option bearing in mind the existence of possible alternatives. Thus, such a strategy for research eliminates rigidity on the part of the researcher and the subject from hasty conclusions based on rigid and rather narrow and simplistic premise.

The question of how conducive are Africa's internal and external environment to the democratic option, draws attention to the internal political arrangement of most African nations political realities of the people to be legitimate and effective.

\textsuperscript{15} Africa nations have severally experimented with the Parliamentary, Socialist, Presidential, authoritarian and/or Military regimes at various levels of their political, socio-cultural history(Development Dialogue).
and the overwhelming influence on these nations by external forces (the Euro-American complex). This should seek to elucidate the structural imperatives of the African political realities in the climate of a global systemic order orchestrated by superpower muscle flexing. By implication it lays the groundwork that envisages strategies for solutions that would demand deliberate efforts to apply problem-solving devices at both the internal and external levels; for any desirable solution to be reached.

Finally, the question on how Africa will attain democracy, re-enforces the need for a thorough evaluation of Africa's romance with democracy in its peculiar neo-colonial environment. A deep sense of Africa's pre-colonial and post-colonial historical realities should be instructive to fashion a "democratic atmosphere peculiar to Africa's needs".

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

A conscious effort must be made to attempt an overarching definition of democracy, examine its internal dynamics as well as its interrelationship with social and economic systems while trying to determine Africa's disposition or adaptability under these circumstances.

Given the plethora of definitions of democracy prudence would advise a definition most compatible to our present concern. Seymour Lipset in "Some Social Requisites of
Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy", provides a cross between Joseph Schumpeter and Max Weber which should be adequate for our present engagement. According to Lipset, democracy in a complex society is defined as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials.

It is the social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence their decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders.  

This definition exposes the deficiency of most African nations which lack either partial or total apparatus for collective decision-making. The existence of antagonizing interests groups which many analysts relate to ethnic diversity, religious and traditional groups in most African states, further reaffirms the bases for internal social instability which perpetuates undemocratic propensity in the polity. The key point to note in this definition includes:

1. a political formula "a system of beliefs, legitimizing the democratic system and specifying the institutions - parties, a free press, and so forth - which are legitimized : ie, accepted as proper by

---

16 Seymour Lipset, Some Social Requisites For Democracy. (Missouri: The Bobb Merrill Reprint Series in Social Sciences, 1959), 70.

17 Ibid., 71
all.
b. one set of political leaders in office, and
c. one or more sets of leaders, out of office, who act as a legitimate opposition attempting to gain office.\textsuperscript{18}

In seeking to develop a conceptual framework of Africa and the democratic option, three basic conditions need evaluation; Africa's largely undemocratic proclivity, that is the nature of the state in Africa; the rhetoric of the Euro-American complex states on the democratization of Africa, that is neocolonialism; Africa's prerogative to adopt and integrate democracy to its political reality, that is political and economic liberation.

The State In Africa

In having to design a political formula for African states based on a system of beliefs, legitimizing the democratic system and specifying institutions, we must seek to understand the structural nature of African States and their multifaceted layers of political institutions consumed in a colonial history. The structural imperatives propelling the countervailing dynamics or complementary factors within these political institutions must be resolved before a design could be effective and legitimate. The point of departure is to acknowledge the existence of an imposed structurally deficient State Structure on these countries, by former colonialists; that these State structures have obfuscated a wide variety of

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 71.
indigenous social/political activities which produced an irreconcilable mix between the traditional institutions and the colonial political systems; and that any progressive political transformation in Africa must acknowledge the tacit powers of the traditional institutions, religious groups, and other non-governmental institutions and actors there-within as preponderance in the political drama orchestrated by the Euro-American complex. Goran Hyden in "Community Governance and High Politics" supports this viewpoint when he states that:

In a holistic perspective, the governance crisis facing the African state today centers on its role as (1) actor in international arena—the sovereign dimension (2) determinant of power relations in society—the accountability dimension and (3) executor of policy—the delivery dimension. The problematic condition affecting the African state is that as actor in the international arena, it is besieged, in its relations to society it is set apart, and as executor of policy it is overloaded.¹⁹

Neocolonialism

A conceptual framework of this socio-political complex must acknowledge and/or accommodate the notion of an imposition of the recent alien political system over a traditional model that had been ingrained into the political, social and economic fabric of the dominated people over

several centuries. Some elaboration would illuminate this point. A number of contemporary scholars on Africa's political situation would argue - and rightly so - that the intent of the colonies in Africa was for economic exploitation and nothing more.\textsuperscript{20} By implication therefore, the political systems installed in arbitrarily carved out parts of Africa were political machines to facilitate the exploitation of those colonies. As it were, the colonized natives were first forcibly coerced into cooperating with the colonist and by a later design - neocolonialism - after the botched political independence, were manipulated into assisting the former colonists to defraud their own economy. The neocolonial era therefore demonstrates the inherent intentions of political dominance resulting in conflicts which reaffirmed the futility of political independence by African nations. The colonial imperative of imperialism imposed a deficient system on African nations, which cast a dark cloud over their true independence. They lost in the process, the ability to evolve effective and legitimate systems of governance that could enhance economic development and political stability.

Meanwhile the sustenance of colonialism propelled by imperialism aimed at the exploitation of the colonized people, failed to reconcile the divergent traditional, religious and

\textsuperscript{20} Frantz Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, (New York: Grove Press 1963), and Harry Magdoff, \textit{Imperialism: From the Colonial Age To The Present}, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978) are among the scholars who hold the viewpoint that colonialism was purely for exploitative purposes.
other non-governmental institutions in its imposed political structures. Consequently, the people were alienated from those alien political structures, a phenomenon that transcended to their post-colonial State government. Allegiance and support have thus oscillated within or between the other pre-existing systems (traditional, religious and ethnic affinity). Meanwhile pre-existing traditional systems centered around Chiefs, Kings or Obas and heads of shrines or local courts continue to flourish as sanctuary for those seeking safeguards from the alien structure (the modern day government). In consonance with their exploitative intentions, many of the colonists adopted and perfected the divide-and-rule tactic by capitalising on the existing cleavages in these societies for their ultimate advantage. When eventually these 'artificial creations'- present day African states- were handed over to Africans themselves, a complex machinery of double-level-exploitation (of African people at the local level and the overall economy through capital flight) of their resources, had been artistically contrived and perfected. These structures were infested with a tradition of clientele-ship, through which the colonists installed their agents who, for purely personal gains, remained loyal to their former masters, serving in the process as guarantee for continued subservience of their domain. This tribute paying mentality gave rise to

---

widespread corruption and the sacrifice of merit for mediocrity. As the imperatives of the artificial structures did not change, the natives were further alienated. Government positions by consequence were seen as instruments to benefit the individual and his first base of allegiance—his ethnic group, or his religious association. In his work; "On Community and High Politics" Goran Hayden attributes the fundamental source of the State crisis in Africa to the neglect of existing traditional institutions by the former colonialists in the formation of the colonial administration:

Most African communities are rich in organized activities. Most of these are single-function groups, established eg. to overcome production bottlenecks on the land, savings and credits, or assisting with funerals. Typical of the African situation is that these have always been unofficial. When the colonial powers established a system of local government, none of these functions were deemed sufficiently important to form part of such a system. Instead, local government became exclusively an extension of central government concerns. After independence, the system of local government inherited from the colonial powers continued for a while but was almost invariably curtailed by central authorities on the grounds that it encouraged mismanagement and misappropriation of funds.

While the modern institution attracted a certain class

22 Ibid., 12.

of legitimacy, the traditional institutions remained in silhouette but acted as safeguard for flighty `allegiance mongers'\textsuperscript{24} who like the ruling elite took advantage of the structural deficiency of their political systems. Allegiance thus became conditioned by the guarantee of direct benefit - monetary or otherwise - as faith in long term goals failed. Given this porous scenario of fragmented levels of allegiance, a class of `dangerous' elite made up of a combination of traditional and religious leaders and a corp of educated citizenry have perpetuated a system of instability for personal gains. Through a neat process of `oscillating allegiance',\textsuperscript{25} political leaders maintain a strong bond - although often not written- with the traditional, religious and other non-governmental institutions to whom a large chunk of the people occasionally peg their allegiance. But on records, these traditional institutions are either considered ceremonial or largely of no consequence.

Political instability has led to political disillusionment among African governments and consequently has reflected as a dark picture of ineffectiveness and poor state of economy. Further disillusionment has raised more serious concerns over these deplorable circumstances and caused an

\textsuperscript{24} The concept of `allegiance mongers' is original to this writer. It has direct interpretation from the Webster's New World Dictionary meaning - `allegiance dealers or traders'.

\textsuperscript{25} The term `oscillating allegiance' is original from this writer. It has direct interpretation from the Webster's New World Dictionary and means - `swinging or mobile allegiance'.

agitation for a re-evaluation of the various dimensions interacting in these complex political and socio-economic circumstances.26

**Euro-American Rhetoric**

The global systemic realities of an economically and politically integrated post World War II International system has assumed more challenging characteristics. Consequently, a new consciousness of global interdependency arose sending a wave of panic and confusion which threatened the former colonists and avowed exploiters of Africa as the toils of centuries of exploitation was finally grinding Africa to a halt. In a hasty attempt to forcibly resurrect "the goose that lays the golden egg", the Euro-American complex, the same perpetrators of the exploitative machinations of colonialism and imperialism, resorted to a last minute ditch effort to blame the 'victim'(ailing Africa), for its predicaments.27 In a tradition typical of diversionary and exploitative tendencies, it chose that element which seemed most visible among African nations - authoritarianism; identifying that as the cause of the continent's underdevelopment and declining productivity. From this theoretical standpoint, they insisted that African nations must bend-twice-over at all costs to

---


27 Ibid. 77.
satisfy the Euro-America ever increasing acquisitive appetite. Meanwhile, the conspirators and agents of exploitation both in Africa and the capitalist centers of the world continued to pillage the already deprecated economy. But the Euro-American complex deceptions of 'good-intentions' towards Africa, have not only remained superficial but highly despicable. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank agents of this complex insist on structural adjustment programmes which by their sheer design favor authoritarian rather than democratic systems of governments.28

At the helm of the deceptive drama has been the United Nations (UN) which as the foremost international organization that ought to foster global peace and harmony, tacitly perpetuates the exploitative tendencies of the Euro-American complex. Predictably, African Nations newly out of colonialism, gladly embraced the UN, hoping it was a great chance to claim equality with their former colonial dictators. Part of the visioned gains of UN membership was to stop the exploitative practices of the industrialized nations and enforce fairer trading conditions. To celebrate this new confidence in global affairs, the non-aligned movement, a group comprised mainly of third world nations including Africa

---

28 Seymour Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*, (The Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series In The Social Sciences 1959), 70, allude to a tendency towards greater acquisition in authoritarian regimes than in democracies. His example was the accelerated growth rate in Socialist Russia in the Stalin era soon after World War II.
states, staged a dramatic showing in the 1970s and 1980s to demand a New World International Economic and Information Order. Their united efforts and larger number at the UN eventually led to the adoption at the General Assembly of the principles of the New International Economic Order in 1974. The stage at this point seemed set for a World poised to see greater cooperation between the industrialized or developed nations and those classified as underdeveloped. But instead, the developed nations withdrew their support for the resolution. This was obviously another way of saying that developing countries must wait for a 'new day' to develop. From then on, the unequal trade practices between the developed and underdeveloped countries continued to the benefit of the developed nations.\textsuperscript{29}

Subsequently, the African economy fell an easy prey of the lending conglomerates of the World with their nucleus at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank comprising the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Agency (IDA); both subsidiaries of the UN. Now firmly drawn into the global economic system African nations in good faith borrowed from the World Bank under IMF conditionalities. But as the global economy witnessed seismic movements of increasing wants by the developing nations coupled with diminishing supply of

raw materials by the developing nations, the lockjaw of the IMF conditionalities on its debtor nations found a stranglehold on those economies. Invariably, most African nations in the 1980s and 1990s became debt havens with staggering economic hardships with pockets of starving populations from Ethiopia to Angola. The spate of failed crop seasons exacerbated the situation to further complicate the political instability of most of these nations.\(^\text{30}\)

Through its policy of multilateral autonomy, the UN which houses the General Assembly, the main decision making body of the organization claims no authority over the activities of its affiliate agencies: the IMF and the World Bank. Consequently, when the General Assembly through its regular sessions promulgates any resolution it is not binding on its members. The ambiguity of the organization which tends to support strongly skeptics' charges of double standard emanates in the form of UN insistence of maintaining peace and harmony on the one hand and the World Bank and the IMF instigating anti-peaceful and unharmonious environments through its stringent lending conditionalities to the third World and African nations on the other hand.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{30}\) An attempt is not being made here to undermine the damage done to the African economy by the spend thrifty acts by local politicians who are themselves Africans. The point to establish is that due to the deficient inherited political structures both internal and external forms of exploitation became permissive.

Political and Economic Liberation

But as the onus of adjustment rests squarely on the artificial state rather than on the amalgamated traditional systems, as the former has usurped the overall parameters of authority and governance, the relationship of both systems must be reassessed to realign the process of legitimacy that could lead to more effective governance. Serious reflection on the dynamics of the interwoven complex would enhance appropriate mechanism for the design of a progressive political framework. Conventional wisdom might suggest that to make these artificial systems work to the benefit of its people necessitates a reversal of the initial motivating factors—colonial exploitation. Simple as this might seem, it is not without its merits. However, the reality of the situation would involve dealing with two strategies. The first would require the perpetrators of the exploitative intention to desist from further commission. The second, places the responsibility of overthrowing the continued exploitation of African people on Africans themselves. Sadly, the first option seems far-fetched as the political realities have proved that the acquisitive impulse of the former colonists cannot succumb to persuasions.\(^{32}\) The second option therefore becomes the most viable choice. Political expediency would however advise that the first option though subordinate must be dealt with at

some level to enhance an overall certainty of success in this endeavor. Having identified all the components in this political, social and economic complex, it would become easier to determine their effect individually and collectively on the overall political realities of African states and specifically on the prospects for democracy in the region.

The roles of the various actors at both the traditional and the State level of government must be identified at their levels in the social structure to determine their mobility and relevance in the `oscillating allegiance' structure. The next task towards any progressive goals of social reconstruction must be to reconcile society's varied fragmented and disoriented members. Popular participation therefore becomes a prerequisite to legitimacy which should enhance effectiveness in governance. A framework of legitimacy leading to effectiveness in governance is envisioned.

To be effective, the perceived political formula must learn to empathize with the political history of the colonized people with a view to gaining their support and consent to garner and redirect `all allegiance' to a common authority or a `new state system'. By `surrendering' their powers to a common authority the present cleavages which accentuate conflict resulting in political instability, political disillusionment, ineffectiveness, and underdevelopment, would be dissolved. It would be instructive to note that internal political conflict could be effectively articulated through
the political, economic and psycho-socio systems in the African societies. The porous nature of the state attracted in the first place, external forces -colonists- who took advantage of the circumstances to perpetuate a process of gradual economic asphyxiation and political manipulation of African peoples. 33

To confront the Euro-American rhetoric in a clarion call for democracy in Africa, adequate attention must be paid to the political, economic and psycho-social dimensions of the interlocking phenomena explained above.

The political dimension would seek to explicate the nature of political climate in most Africa countries; a situation influenced by both external and internal factors. It would establish the notion of imposed alien structure by the colonial authorities, which failed to blend the existing traditional institutions; religion, politics and socio-economic values and/or practices into its framework of governance.

Any attempt to consider democracy as an option in Africa therefore, must not only Africa's colonial history of political structural imperatives that is, colonial administrative and economic structures, but must seek to re-design a structure that will re-unite the local institutions and individuals towards a common or rational political

objective to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness in governance. Only this strategy can stem the tide of present hostility between the citizens and governments in most Africa nations a product of alienation brought about by colonialism.

Democracy is often considered viable as it would allow the people to participate in the decision-making process and generate the will to resist exploitative tendencies of the imperialist. It is also hoped that democracy will re-establish confidence in government through the people's direct involvement. It is also expected that it would generate a self-motivated, society oriented citizenry who will form the bedrock of a stable political system that would set the stage for the over-all development of those societies.\(^3\)\(^4\)

The economic dimension like the political dimension would seek to dissect the exploitation machinery established by the colonial regimes. It would seek to trace the process of economic imperialism through the imposition of the policy of mono-culture to supply colonialists manufacturing plants.

These colonized nations were also not expected to evolve their own productive forces and industrialize because they were meant to serve as markets for the finished goods of the industrialized nations.

A major aspect of the structural economic complex to effect this dependency outlook was established through the

design of roads, railways as well as other infrastructures from the hinterland to the sea ports to facilitate exportation/exploitation of raw materials.\textsuperscript{35}

These existing economic imperatives were later exploited by the multinational and transnational corporations which inherited commercial activities in these regions after the symbolic withdrawal of the colonial authorities.

By its very nature, the structural imperatives of imperialism negated democracy as imperialism needs more authoritarian environments in order to thrive. To facilitate this exploitative machinery are its agents, Africans themselves, who have been brainwashed into selling their national resources for self aggrandizement.

Democracy as an option in this regard becomes viable as it will restore the needed economic initiative in the people and usher in economic programs that are realistic and truly intended to develop their society. As a quest for legitimacy and effectiveness in governance, democracy would motivate the populace towards enhanced confidence in their economic environment, enhancing appropriate economic sacrifices of labor and savings to generate development.\textsuperscript{36}

The psycho-social dimension will address the process of brainwashing in the domination complex. This is instituted

\textsuperscript{35} Walter Rodney, \textit{How Europe Underdeveloped Africa}, 80.

through the establishment of educational institutions (formal and informal), bureaucracies, religious and other societal factors that would indoctrinate the dominated people into accepting and supporting the dominant authorities.

This dimension speaks to efforts to distort the history of the dominated group; to attempts at generating self-hatred amongst them; and the over-riding orientation of inferiority complex.

Democracy as an option in the governance of these countries becomes viable under these circumstances because it would replace the imperialists intention of exploitation and therefore re-install self-esteem and mutual trust between the people and their government.

**Afrocentric Prism**

A good point of departure in this endeavor would be through the adoption of an Afrocentric prism rather than the prevailing Eurocentric paradigm. According to Molefi Asante in "Afrocentricity", the need for an Afrocentric philosophy is so great it is impossible not to insist on every black person should adopt it. He further states that it combines the elements of philosophy, science history and mythology to give the clearest perspective on that peculiar and particular group of people called Africans. As a bases for theory formulation

---

therefore, Afrocentricity is pro-African and consistent in its belief that technology belongs to the world.\textsuperscript{38}

Essentially, Afrocentricity is African genus and African values created, reconstructed and derived from African history and experiences in their best interest. What it ultimately seeks to ensure is that given the African perspective in theoretical analysis, a greater understanding and appreciation of African viewpoints which have often been disregarded by the prevalent Eurocentric tradition of education which glorifies all that is western.\textsuperscript{39}

PART 1 OVERVIEW

What this scholastic exercise seeks to achieve therefore, is to articulate the internal dynamics of the colonial and post-colonial historical realities of African nations and test their suitability for a democratic transformation in harmonious alignment with the socio-political and economic environments of those countries.

Conscious effort will therefore be made to separate the rhetoric of the Euro-American complex as far as their insistence on promoting democracy in the third world and Africa is concerned from the practices of agents of the developed nations such as the Multinational and Transnational


\textsuperscript{39} Uchelli and Dennis O'Neil "Challenging Eurocentricism," \textit{Forward Motion}, vol 11 no 1 (March 1992).
corporations whose trade practices perpetuate undemocratic environment in Africa.

The integrity of the United Nations as an impartial umbrella organization charged with promoting global peace and harmony raises a number of questions in light of the activities of its subsidiaries the World Bank and the IMF whose conditionalities have strengthened the propensity for authoritarian regimes in most of Africa and the third world.

Having outlined these characteristics, we must turn next to the internal forces or interests groups that foster a healthy climate for exploitation. Here specific mention must be made of the growing cadre of African elites comprising mainly of academicians, traditional and religious leaders. Given the dual dimensions of internal and external environments that affect the prospects of democracy in Africa any strategy to transform or liberate these societies must assume a dual posture to address both the internal and external environments of the problem.
Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH TECHNIQUE
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW.

Introduction

In the tradition of a scholarly research, this study will utilize three major approaches: (1) Critical analysis of existing literature; (2) the development of a conceptual framework and (3) international political economy.

Three major categories of literature will be reviewed. The first represents a cross section of popular opinion, among both western and African scholars which tends to support the notion that the lack of democracy/popular participation is responsible for Africa's predicaments. Among these scholars are Claude Ake, 'Development and Democracy,' and Adebayo Adedeji, 'The African Alternative: Putting the People First,' David Apter, Modernization and Development and Seymour Lipset, Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy.

The second body of literature espoused by mainly western modernization theorists impress that African states are undemocratic because they are backward. These include writings by Max Weber, Huntington and Seymour Lipset.

The third category of literature sees autocracy as the historical imperative of imperialism embedded in the colonial history of Africa's nations. Leading scholars of this viewpoint include Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Andre Gunder
Western scholars, pro-democracy writers among African scholars and those of
theoretically, they possess strong similarities in their vision that democracy/popular participation are not only
utmost but egalitarian. They also agree that it would

Furthermore, this study intends to critically establish the

Research Technique

First, a concept of participation is presented in a global environment of unequal
cost/benefit appraised in the context of African states will be evaluated in the context of

Primarily, the imperatives of international political

economic crisis.

A conceptual framework built around the nature of the
economic uncertainty which has brought about political instability and
state in Africa will be used to elucidate the development of


Methodology

Frank and Jonan Gatung. 31
bring about development and economic growth at some point. But they differ mainly in their conceptualization of the problem. While the pro-democracy western scholars believe that African societies are autocratic or underdeveloped because they are backward, their African counterparts are less likely to concur. Furthermore, African pro-democracy writers also tend to be more optimistic than western writers on the prospects for democracy in the continent.

To establish both the similarities and differences in these viewpoints, the systems analysis of developmental theorists is utilized. This is preferred because of its commitment to historical and holistic approach to the study of developmental environments. Leading contributions to help explicate this viewpoint will include works by Johan Galtung and Andre Gunder Frank. The orthodox or western system theory elaborated by David Easton among others is considered inadequate for this exercise because it is ahistorical, aholistic and aberrant in its problem identification technique.

The final category of the relevant literature deals with what is often referred to as the radical viewpoint. The thrust of this work comes out of the Marxist, Neo-Marxist and Dependency theorists. Its proponents see underdevelopment as the product of imperialism and therefore the effect of the developed economies. Incidentally, these socialist writers are not unanimous on optimal solutions. According to Ronald
Although Samir Amin accepted Marx's fundamental concepts in a theory of accumulation on a world scale, Lenin's analysis of transformation of the system at the center, Baran and Sweezy's updating of Lenin's analysis, he attempted to extend his analysis to the study of transformations in the periphery, where he understood underdevelopment to be the consequence of primitive accumulation for the benefit of the center.  

Amin also remarked that the consensus of opinion among these scholars is that socialism cannot exist until it transcends capitalism in everyday way.

Given these divergent viewpoints or processes for action in social mobilization for political and economic liberation, an attempt will be made to find a middle ground between the capitalist/western and socialist/radical ideals.

The tone of our evaluation of the international political economy is set by historical structures based on relationships and interactions between African states and its international environment. We seek to understand how it integration into the global economic and political system affect its overall development and in particular, its political system. Some critical thought on the involvement of the United Nations on Africa's quest for political and economic liberation receive some attention. Three decades of such relationship has

---

witnessed Africa sink deeper into debts with attendant political instability.

A conceptual framework based on the historical materialism of both pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa illuminates the evolution of an embattled political economy dominated by the 'Euro-American complex'. The objective here is to identify the structural imperatives imposed on African nations by their colonial history. This 'alien structure' failed to reconcile the existing traditional institutions thus bequeathing on the independent African state, political structures containing subsets of divergent interests and political legitimacy. We rely on political philosophy to support our thesis that only through the total mobilization of the entire subsets in any society can allegiance and hence legitimacy be assured. No talk of effectiveness nor legitimacy can flourish without a sound basis for democracy/popular participation.

The main body of this project will evaluate the various dimensions of Autocracy in Africa. This analysis is engaged through the Afrocentric prism in three dimensions viz: the political dimension; the economic dimension; and the psychosocial dimension.

Under the political dimension we examine the evolution of the state character and its characteristic authoritarian

---

attributes.

At the level of economic dimension, we review the integration of the African economy into the global systemic phenomena through colonialism with the continuous surveillance of the Euro-American complex. A system of strategic exploitation of Africa through the global division of labor and trade conditions is established.

Finally, at the psycho-social level we will delve into the entanglement of African nations at both institutional and informal levels, in the global systemic order to determine the process of manipulation and enhancement of a 'slavish mentality' towards the dominating superpowers. The thrust of this design, centers around how colonialism perpetuated the syndrome of domination through the establishment of the colonial language or languages in occupied territories, to the adoption of colonial-styled institutions which paved the way to neo-colonialism after the so called independence of these nations. The role of African leaders swept by this current of 'mind shackles' or 'brainwash' will be elaborated at both the philosophical and historical levels.

The concluding aspects of this project will focus on normative strategies. It would seek to draw broad based deductions from the evaluations reached at the various levels of our endeavor. It would try to distill and blend the wisdom in opposing positions to produce a coherent theoretical political analysis of structural imperatives in global
systemic order. Contemporary world politics is not a seamless web; it is a tapestry of diverse relationships most of it dictated by the superpower logic.

Analytical Framework

To cut through the maze of opinions on the subject we have adopted various aspects in the relevant literature considered substantially representative of contemporary viewpoints to form the bases of our view. Adebayo Adeleke, "The Africa Alternative: Putting the People First" and "African Charter for Popular Participation in Development" Arusha, (1990) for the major foundation of our critical analysis. Claude Ake, Goran Hyden and some others scholars considerably buttress their viewpoints. Part of the issues adopted at the recent Arusha conference included (1) provide recognition of the need of people's participation in Africa's recovery (2) sensitize national governments and the international community to the dimension and result of the benefits to be derived from the contributions of the people to their own self-development (3) recommend actions to be taken by governments, the United Nations system and the public and private donor agencies in building an enabling environment for effective popular participation in the development process which motivates people and their organizations to undertake self-reliant development initiatives.

The second resource for data include the analysis and
arguments presented by Western perspective on both the cause and prospects of democracy in the continent. Seymour Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*, serve as the model of western perspective against which opposing arguments are raised. There is substantial reliance on both philosophical and historical evidence to explicate the structural imperatives of the Africa political realities. Meanwhile, other information sources in the three dimensions of the problem come from an unobtrusive synthesis of the content of literature in the discipline of international political economy. Major contributors to this endeavor of economic objectives of imperialist ventures and the motives and practices of international finance capital in the era of neocolonialism include such scholars as Paul Baran, Harry Magdoff, Samir Amin, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, Johan Galtung and Andre Gunder Frank.

Ronald Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics*, provides the link between the disjointed discussion on democracy and development. A structuralist/instrumentalist approach elucidates the structural imperatives of the post colonial legacy of neo-colonialism as well as the collaborative tendencies of African elites bourgeoisie to the exploitative network. A synthesis of the divergent viewpoints should assist any interested reader of this project with well-rounded facts and data to make authoritative determination of
the validity of the hypothesis

LITERATURE REVIEW

Major Trends

The justifications provided for democracy are essentially of two kinds. The first, utilitarian or pragmatic in character, relies essentially upon the consequences to which democracy leads — not necessarily happy consequences but consequences likely, over the long run to be better on several dimension than those to be expected from any alternative system of government. The second, more theoretical and abstract, looks not to the consequences of democracy but to the principles of justice and equality from which it is claimed that democracy is deduced or derived. 42

This dichotomy marks the separate viewpoints of commentators on the issue of democracy as an option in Africa. But there is however a near unanimity on the notion that democracy would foster economic development in that continent. Leading among those who express such optimism is Adebayo Adediji, the former United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. He was unequivocal on this conviction in his work; The African Alternative. Putting The People First:

Basic rights, individual freedom, and democratic participation by the majority of the population have become increasingly lacking in Africa. This pervasive lack of democracy has also made

popular mobilization and effective accountability difficult. The existing patterns of social differentiation and political organization have tended to encourage a rather narrow base for decision-making and the lack of popular debate over basic national development policies and their implementation.\footnote{Adebayo Adeleji, \textit{The African Alternative. Putting The People First}, (Addis Ababa, 1990).}

Adeleji does not only see the lack of democracy from the theoretical abstract based on the principles of equality and justice, but from the utilitarian standpoint. He maintains that the lack of democracy had been detrimental to development efforts and insists that popular participation was the alternative to the existing structural adjustment programs:

The process of marginalizing the participation of the people in the formulation of public policies, which has tremendous negative impact on their well-being and even on their very survival, has been exacerbated by the persistent socio-economic crisis which Africa faced throughout the 1980s with the consequential ever growing concern and preoccupation by governments with short-term crisis management. To assist in dealing with such crisis there has been a tremendous increase in the role of foreign experts and managers in national economic policy formulation and decision-making as the price to be paid for access to external financial resources.\footnote{Ibid., 7. emphasis is this author's because it is doubtful that the influx of foreign experts would assist African governments. Skeptics believe Western interest lie more in the re-payment of their debts at all costs. Cheryl Payer, \textit{The Debt Trap: The IMF and The Third World}, draws similar conclusions.}
of Adedeji and in what seemed a consensus rally this out-look formed the cornerstone of the Arusha, Tanzania session on the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Strategies in Africa. The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development drawn up at the session was therefore highly reflective of this viewpoint.

The conference among other things resolved:

> We are united in the conviction that the crisis currently engulfing Africa, is not only an economic crisis but also a human, legal, political and social crisis. It is a crisis of unprecedented and unacceptable proportion manifested not only in abysmal declines in economic indicators and trends, but more tragically and glaringly in the suffering, hardship and impoverishment of the vast majority of African people. At the same time, the political context of socio-economic development has been characterized, in many instances, by an over-centralization of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development.  

The passion and frustration of those concerned is not only pathetic but largely reaffirms the dilemma of African nations in the face of multi-faceted problems many of which have violated any known solutions. They even took the message further:

> Africa’s grave environmental and ecological crisis cannot be solved in the

---

absence of a process of sustainable development which commends the full support and participation of the people. We believe in this context that the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programs for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) which was endorsed by the twenty-fifth Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held on July 1989....

They also had words for the international community, including the United Nations itself:

We call on the international community to examine its own record on popular participation, and hereafter to support indigenous efforts which promote the emergence of a democratic environment to facilitate the people's effective participation and empowerment in the political life of their countries. We also call on the United Nations to intensify its efforts to promote the application of justice in international economic relations, the defense of human rights, the maintenance of peace and the achievement of disarmament and to assist African countries and peoples' organization with the development of human and economic resources.

The catalogue of grievances and intentions, the weeping agenda of African conferences, was again re-enacted. The specific roles of governments and peoples in achieving its success were

---

46 Ibid. p 18 item 9. The conference was also endorsed by the Conference of Non-Aligned countries held in Belgrade in September 1989 and by the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations which invited the national community, including, multilateral, financial and developmental institutions, to consider the framework as a basis for constructive dialogue and fruitful consultation.

47 Ibid., item 21 & 22.
for good reasons incorporated.

However, three basic issues make all these supposedly well-intentioned statements quite disturbing if not lamentable. (1) why would the 'wise men' choose to compound a political process of transformation with an economic aspiration? (2) why would they choose to ally with the United Nations when past records of such 'unholy alliances' have proved futile? and (3) why have they allowed their notion of popular participation to conflict with that of economic development?

Popular Participation And Economic Development

The tendency to confuse popular participation with economic development, the African Charter of Popular Participation in Development, reflects a larger confusion among African scholars and ruling interests on the most appropriate strategies for its political and economic liberation. The entire literature of the Charter was therefore consumed with charged statements and hasty conclusion likely to lead to rash decisions:

We strongly urge African governments to promote the formulation and implementation of national development within the framework of theforesaid aspirations, interests and realities, which develop as a result of popular participatory process, and which aim at the transformation of the African economies to achieve self reliant and self-sustaining people centered development based on popular
participation.  

To present the notion of popular participation in such a nebulous configuration raises a specter of confusion in the sea of undefined interpretation of what democracy connotes. Conventional wisdom suggests that clustering of competing issues often complicates or compound their essence leading to overall misconception or disregard for well thought-out processes of solutions. Furthermore, pressing as the multifaceted problems of Africa are, a consummate attempt to adopt a cure-all remedy would not only detract from the major focus but the essence will be lost in the maze of conflicting concepts. Max Weber in explaining the progress of societies towards an ideal state emphasizes that 'as a nation passes through stages of development, forms certain attitudes, and behaviors, it moves from 'one kind' of rationality to another.' Weber further stated that the effective - emotional end of his theory is incompatible with modern capitalist societies, while the purposive - rational is compatible. The implication was that the latter is more rational than the former.  

---


rational framework that might benefit the purposive - rational set of goals of the state. Weber suggested a charismatic leader while Schumpeter and other pluralists interpreted Weber's analysis by implicitly applying his rationality categories and concept of development of active societies to individual differences within societies. They also argued that individuals are implicitly placed in a continuum of social-psychological development from 'traditional' to modern. This meant that not everyone in a society as 'rational' as the other, thereby contradicting liberal assumptions of rationality as a universal characteristic. They equally found problems with Weber's 'modern' capitalist individual, as nonrational on utilitarian grounds. This implied that Weber's value base theory of action suggested that traditional members of society would not be able to function as 'rational' political citizens. Their non-participation in a functioning democratic system would be a contribution to the system. The pluralists and Schumpeter on the other hand contended that direct democracy is not possible because everyone in the society is not at the same stage of cultural development. They identified two distinct stages: the leaders and the ratifiers; those who are not interested and those who are misinformed. Schumpeter proposed the governance of elites who are politically involved and could devote themselves to studying

50 Ibid., 297. The dispute is not over the incremental nature of development of political systems but on roles in the process.
politically involved and could devote themselves to studying the relevant social issues and are capable of understanding them. Schumpeter went on to specify about political activities, stating that there is no such thing as a uniquely determined 'common good' that all people could agree on or be made to agree on by the force of rational argument. Even if the opinions and desires of individual citizens were perfectly definite and independent data for the democratic process to work with, and if everyone acted on them with ideal rationality and promptitude, it would not necessarily follow that the political decisions produced by that process from the raw materials of those individuals volitions would represent anything that could on any convincing sense be called the will of the people. Schumpeter elaborates:

Thus the typical citizen drops down to lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way that we would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interest. He becomes a primitive man again.\(^{51}\)

He recommended (1) high quality of human material of politics (2) an effective range of political decisions which must not be extended too far that is, many decisions should be made by competent experts outside the legislature (3) democratic government which must command a dedicated bureaucracy that

legislature that must be morally resistant to corruption and must exhibit self control in their criticism of government (5) that competition for leadership requires a large measure of tolerance for difference of opinions. While Schumpeter's theory of democratic state is therefore an empiricist theory that conforms to classical economics in it amorality and its problem solving approach, it has tended to influence contemporary liberal democratic thought leading to its modification and better understanding.\textsuperscript{52}

A Flaw in Theory.

Given this elaboration on the processes of rationality in societies, the most logical explanation for the tendency to confuse popular participation with economic development becomes a major problem of contradictory terminologies in theory formulation. Somehow, this theoretical problem has also been traced to the dilemma of the overall essence of Political Science which Ronald Chilcote tried to address in explaining its flaw in understanding political life:

Scientific knowledge is theoretical and based on facts, but facts alone do not explain events and must be ordered in some way. Political science has become a fact-gathering discipline and also has contributed to the reform of society through the application of knowledge. Yet these concerns reflect a neglect of 'the general framework' within which these facts could acquire meaning to transcend any particular time and place......

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 36.
political science has impeded its own movement towards a fundamental understanding of political life.⁵³

Chilcote therefore advises students of political life to view political systems as a whole rather than concentrate on solution for particular problems. This implies that theory must combine with reliable knowledge and empirical data. "But when preoccupation with fact-gathering siphons away energy from seeing the facts in their theoretical significance, then the ultimate value of factual research itself may be lost".⁵⁴ This attribute therefore becomes a more human factor of interpretation than of science itself.

In an attempt to alleviate this problem of 'facts cluster', the work of Johan Galtung "A Structural Theory of Imperialism" is instructive. The thrust of the theory is based on the most glaring facts about the world; the tremendous inequality, within and between nations, in all aspects of human living conditions; and the resistance of this inequalities to change. Galtung elaborates:

The world consists of Center and Periphery nations; and each nation in turn, has its center and periphery. Hence, our concern is with the mechanism underlying the discrepancy, particularly between the latter in the center in the Center and the periphery in the Periphery. In other words, how to conceive of, how to explain and how to


⁵⁴ Ibid., 146.
counteract inequality as one of the major forms of structural violence.\textsuperscript{55}

Galtung goes further to stress that any theory of liberation from structural violence presupposes theoretically and practically adequate ideas of the dominance system against which the liberation is directed. He sees imperialism as a species in a genus of dominance and power relationship. It is a subtype, he notes, and has itself subtypes. Given the nature of global systemic realities, dominance in relations between nations and other collectives will not disappear with the disappearance of imperialism he further stated:

\ldots nor will the end to one type of imperialism (e.g. political, or economic) guarantee the end to another type of imperialism (e.g. political, or cultural).\textsuperscript{56}

Trying to elaborate the details in the Center/Periphery analysis further might deviate from the analytical support we intend its theoretical emphasis to stress on the efficacy of holistic and historical analysis. However, the cornerstone of the analysis graphically outlined states that:

\begin{quote}
Imperialism is a relation between a center and a periphery nation such that;
(1) there is harmony of interest between the center in the center nation and the center in the periphery nation.
(2) there is more disharmony of interest within the periphery nation than within
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 155.
the center nations, (3) there is disharmony of interest between the periphery in the center nation and the periphery in the periphery nation. 57

Having laid the theoretical foundation Galtung went on to accentuate what he called the types of imperialism to include: 1) economic, 2) political, 3) military, 4) communication, 5) cultural. He noted that there was no theory that one is more basic than the others, nor precedes the others, but that they should all be examined regarding the extent to which they generate interaction patterns that utilize the two mechanisms of imperialism so as to fulfill the three criteria of imperialism, or at least the first of them.

Without any intention to denigrate the importance of the other types of imperialism, the focus of the present study would advise that we concentrate on the political and cultural imperialism which Galtung derives from the concept of the "mother country":

the center nation is also an indication of how the decision - making center is dislocated away from the nation itself and towards the center nation. These decisions may then affect economic, military, communication, and cultural patterns. 58

Also contributing to this subject, Andre Gunder Frank in "The Development of Underdevelopment" remarks that future

57 Ibid., 156.
58 Ibid., 165.
historical research will confirm that the expansion of the capitalist system over the past centuries effectively and entirely penetrated even the apparently most isolated sections of the underdeveloped world. Stating that:

Therefore, the economic, political, social, and cultural institutions and relations we now observe are products of the historical development of the capitalist system no less than are the seemingly more modern or capitalist features of the national metropolis of these underdeveloped countries. 59

The viewpoint and process of analysis expressed by Galtung and supported by Gunder Frank are elucidated to highlight the pre-eminence of historical determinants in any consideration of Africa's political transformation. Africa's political predicament is not so much the absence or lack of democracy; as Africa Charter of Popular Participation and the contributions of Adebayo Adedeji: Putting the People First, tends to make us believe; but the presence or decimation of imperialism.

The United Nations: Friend or Foe?

On the second question, alliance with the United Nations, our consideration of the systems theory identifies that organ as a political unit in the extra-societal environment of the African reality which makes its direct participation in

African deliberation a double standard.  

But a larger consideration on this question rests on the philosophy and history of the foundation of the Organization. Above all, its proclivity to disregard or at best marginalize Africa's concerns has not only been overt or covert demonstrations of its engineering agenda (largely prescribed by its Western and Eastern founders) but a greater commitment to keep all those not its prime interest (Africa included) in perpetual subordination. Perhaps due to complete ignorance or sheer wishful thinking African nations have over the years struggled in vain, to incorporate their concerns on the United Nations agenda drawn up at its inauguration in 1945.

Dag Hammarskjold, the second Secretary-General visualized two distinctly different models of UN effectiveness. He stated that the organization might be either a 'static conference machinery or a dynamic instrument of governments' for introducing a new world order. Far from prescribing a supranational role, Hammarskjold hoped that a politically immune international civil service, together with quasi-legislative competence of the deliberative body might help states overcome their immediate and narrow interests.  

A peek into the structural institutions of the UN will further illuminate its

---


underlying philosophical imperatives that shape its actions and inaction. Administratively, the UN consists of six permanent organs and a vast array of specialized agencies, conferences, funds and commission. According to Walter Jones, it operates differently from the sovereignty status states, and therefore has different potential impact on the international system and change therein.\textsuperscript{62}

The paradox of the UN is that although it is equipped with every apparatus to function as a full fledged inter-governmental organization, its pronouncements do not have binding capacity. Walter Jones, notes that these pronouncements may result in subsequent treaties and may have customary or moral impact.

But the ability of privileged members of the organization to both sway the general opinion or denounce its decisions have in the main been couched in this 'non-binding clause'. Consequently, the collective morality or consensus could be re-enacted or ignored as long as those privileged members deem fit. Africa's experience with the UN has been largely one of denials, rejections or at best vain promises. In defense of this allegation, Walter Jones remarked that only resolutions of recommendatory nature, could require states to act as agents of the General Assembly (the legislative body of the Organization). While such recommendations may not be legally binding Jones further stated, their execution by eager states

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 573.
may nevertheless place the imprimatur of the General Assembly upon their policy. The most outstanding example of this incident according to Jones was the Uniting for Peace Resolution (1950) passed by the General Assembly during the early months of the Korean war. The Soviet Union's return to the Security Council after a lengthy boycott, incapacitated the United States from using the council for legitimizing its policy in Korea. In the face of Soviet vetoes of American-sponsored resolutions Washington moved its policy to the General Assembly. The Uniting for Peace Resolution expanded the Assembly's legitimizing capability to the area of international peace and security, a province originally reserved for the Security Council. Under the resolution, the United States and other Western powers continued their military actions in Korea and at the same time, opened a debate regarding the relative constitutional position of the Security Council and the General Assembly.\(^{63}\)

In October 1943, when the allies (America, Britain and the Soviet Union) foreign ministers met in Moscow to draw up the principle of a global organization based on the sovereign equality of all states and with a minimum of incompatibility, most of present day Third World countries (including Africa) were still under the bondage of colonialism. At the time of the eventual formation of the United Nations in 1945, the situation of Third World countries had not changed. The UN

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 576.
agenda was therefore specific to its spirit of establishment; to perpetuate the allied power, with a joint charge to guarantee each of them immunity from substantive interference by lesser states which were to recognize their superior power and undiluted sovereignty. The UN was, in practice a reformed version of the League of Nations.  

To ensure the strict adherence to its objectives, of the fifteen permanent members of the Security Council, five of them (the Soviet Union, United States, Britain, France and China) were accorded veto powers to challenge any issue in the Security Council. Meanwhile the UN headquarters remained in New York. Walter Jones thinks third world countries (Africa included) are skeptical of the UN because it tends to promote the domination of the superpowers over the less developed nations of the world.

He however did not deny that the industrialized nations had a leverage due to their financial commitment to programs executed by the United Nations. Consequently, the developed states, insisting on maximum efficiency from their expenditure, impose difficult criteria, Jones further argued. 'They insist on pure investment development, designed to mature the non-visible aspects of third world economy so that larger and more productive projects can follow with

maximum probable success'. 65

The developing countries confronted with staggering unequal trading and lending conditionalities by the developed nations have often looked up to the UN for rescue. Determined that they could seek justice and fair trade through the UN, the third world nations under the auspices of Non-Aligned Movement fought for the establishment of the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was to provide a collective voice to challenge the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

There were other obstacles to confront. The United States had been instrumental to the organization of the economic sectors of the UN. These included in 1944, the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire which gave birth to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Meanwhile, Washington rejected the forming of the International Trade Organization in 1948, which would have limited the exercise of unilateral restraint to trade. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade with permanent institutional structures was adopted. 66

Still hoping to change the tide at the UN third world nations enthusiastically promoted and won through vote


66 Peter Calvocoressi, World Politics Since 1945, 152.
nations enthusiastically promoted and won through vote resolutions for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and its subsidiary the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in 1974.

These joint proposals were meant to promote a climate for more balanced trading conditions and a regulation of the one-way flow of information from the industrialized to the underdeveloped nations. In reaction to these seeming third world victories at the UN the Reagan Administration announced late in 1983 that the US would withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on December 1984. The United States charged the UN with having politicized every issue and allowed itself repeatedly to be used as a third world, anti-West forum. The US further objected to UNESCO's debate on Arab-Israeli issues not related to the Organization's charge; to the Secretary - General's attempt to impose the NWICO that would have restricted the rights of the Western press operating in third world countries; and the position taken by the Organization on restricting the activities of transnational corporations. Consequently, the withdrawal of the US from UNESCO meant the loss of 25% of the Organization's financial support.67

In the African arena, the UN had at best been a docile spectator to the atrocities of the super powers occasionally

apartheid South Africa question, the Namibia situation, the colonial resistance, has not only been largely orchestrated by super power politics but almost entirely without due regard or consideration of Africans as a people. The decade of the 80s confirmed the fears of African nations as they are sunk in debts and asphyxiating conditionalities by yet another UN organ the IMF.

Western Liberal Perspective

Another body of literature and by far the most persuasive, is that propagated by western orthodox scholars. It challenges the very notion of the suitability of democracy in Africa. Proponents of this viewpoint maintain that societies must meet specific standards comparable to those of western societies in order to become democratic. A model of this opinion is led by Seymour Lipset in "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy". He states that:

in dealing with democracies, one must be able to point to a set of conditions that have existed in a number of countries, and say; democracy emerged out of these conditions and has become stabilized because of certain supporting institutions and values, as well as because of its own self - maintaining processes. These conditions listed must


because of its own self - maintaining processes. These conditions listed must be ones which differentiate most democratic states from most others.70

The implication of this notion does not only tend to claim that democracy is the exclusive preserve of western nations but does so by excluding all others who do not possess these subjective indices for democracy. He further elaborates:

A considerable portion of this symposium is devoted to a debate concerning the contribution of religion, particularly Christian ethics, towards democratic attitudes. The principal author, Ernest Griffith sees a necessary connection between the Judeo-Christian heritage and attitudes which sustain democratic institutions; the other participants stress the political and economic conditions which may provide the basis for a consensus on basic values which does not depend on religion, they point to the depression, poverty, and social disorganization which resulted in Fascism in Italy and Germany, in spite of strongly religious population and traditions.71

Lipset challenges this viewpoint because it lacks a perspective which assumes that theoretical propositions must be subjected to test by a systematic comparison of all cases, and which treats a deviant case properly as one case out of many. He maintained that deviant cases which do not fit a given proposition are cited to demonstrate that there are no


71 Ibid, 70.
social conditions which are regularly associated with a given complex political system. Lipset insists that the advantage of an attempt such as presented here, which seeks to dissect the conditions of democracy into several interrelated variables is that deviant cases fall into proper perspective. Even at that, his anticipated deviant case cited was Germany, which succumbed to dictatorship in spite of an advanced educational system. Far from the picture of possible inclusion in the democratic arrangement are African nations.

In general, Lipset stresses two principal complex characteristics of social systems that bear on stable democracy: economic development and legitimacy. These he presents as structural characteristics which sustain a democratic political system. He breaks down the economic development complex into: industrialization, wealth, urbanization and education and examines two aspects of the problem of legitimacy, or the degree to which institutions are valued for themselves, and considered right and proper. He insists:

From Aristotle down to the present, men have argued that only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics and could develop the self-restraint necessary to avoid succumbing to the appeals of irresponsible demagogues. 72

72 Ibid., 75.
Lipset then draws a correlation between legitimacy and effectiveness from the standpoint of the latter being primarily a function of economic development and follows with a discussion on the sources of cleavage in a society and the ways in which various resolutions of historically crucial issues result either in descriptive forms of cleavage or in cross-cutting affiliations which reduce conflict to a manageable level. Finally he relates these various factors to the future of democracy.

Although Lipset cautions that this paper is primarily concerned with explicating the social conditions which serve to support a democratic political game, his analysis did not quite exonerate him. Categorically, he states that most countries which lack an enduring tradition democracy lie in the underdeveloped sections of the world. To support this thesis he states that; 'it is possible that Max Weber was right when he suggested that modern democracy in its clearest form can only occur under the unique conditions of capitalist industrialization'. To reduce what he termed as complications introduced by sharp variations in political practices in different parts of the earth he suggested dealing separately with different culture areas.73

According to Lipset, the two best areas for such internal comparison are Latin America, Europe and the English-speaking countries. More limited comparisons may be made, he stated,

73 Ibid., 89.
among the Asian states and Arab states. He does not list colonized English-speaking countries on his chart of comparison which must explain his conviction that democracy was not to be considered in those regions. There is no doubt that Lipset has raised fundamental questions that do not only make a bad case for any democratic potentials for nations other than those he described as possible, he also ruled out any chances of societies without his set of variables ever attaining democracy.

His thesis runs counter to acceptable principles of political inquiry and the impressive opinions of other commentators on the prospects of democracy in societies where they do not presently exist. Fred M. Frohock on "The Nature of Political Inquiry" stated that:

The fundamental thesis of logical positivism is that the meaning of a statement is tied to its mode of verification, and further, that statements which cannot be verified are meaningless. Further, the peculiarly embracing claims of logical positivism reveal a paradox which holds for all similarly closed claims in an empiricist epistemology. If we move from the assumption that all knowledge derives from experience, then definitive judgements are impossible.

Logical and convincing as the Lipset analysis, it falls victim of its rigidity and broad generalizations about the conditions

74 Ibid., 79.

of democracy. Lipset also sealed the chances of new entrants to such a political system. According to Frohock:

The immediate problem of this version of positivism is direct enough: the meaning-criterion postulated is itself not available to the verification procedure which provides for meaning. To make claims of any sort is to assume a philosophical positivism, and this position must then itself be assumed as true. This requirement does not lead to a paradox when verification requirements are flexible; but when they are drawn rigidly, then the philosophical position constituting the claims in question must be judged by the same requirements.

An attempt is not being made here to discredit the overall seriousness of Lipset's work on democracy, but that his seeming omission of an African perspective is inadequate for an objective assessment of such a universal topic as "Some Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy".

Easily counteracting Lipset's thesis therefore, Frank Holmquist on "Why Democratic Forms of Rule in Africa are Necessary and Possible", states that:

Democratic forms of rule in Africa are possible because of the nature of Africa's social and economic structure, and because democratic forms may be at least partially institutionalized. First,

---


77 Ibid., 26.
Africa's social and economic structure is characterized by limited capitalist development and accompanying weak social classes, and a high degree of social pluralism. A second reason to believe that democratic forms are possible is that there is more institutional stability in Africa than meets the eye. \(^78\)

The flaws in Lipset's analysis started from his title "Some Social Requisites of Democracy". This assumes a universal characteristic but fell short both in terms of universal utilization and flexibility.

**PART 2 OVERVIEW**

We have attempted to simulate the divergent opinions in the debate on the prospects and progress of democratization in Africa. We confronted a wide expanse of literature, obviously imbued by sentiments, striving to provide an over-arching theory to both understand and remedy the situation. With the counteracting viewpoints of other scholars the validity of those precepts were challenged. The thrust of the Literature Review was to achieve: 1) critique the viewpoint expressed in The African Charter For Popular Participation and Development, as a contradiction in terminology and therefore fraught with predictable deficiencies 2) examine the structural imperatives of Africa's integration into the global systemic economic and

\(^{78}\) Frank Holmquist, "Why Democratic Forms of Rule in Africa are Necessary and Possible." The Carter Center of Emory University. Beyond Autocracy In Africa. February 17-18, 1989.
political environment, and 3) de-mystify the exclusiveness of western nations to prospects for democratic ideals.

We have tried here to deal dispassionately with Africa's State crisis insisting that a tradition of complicating or confusing its social-economic and political issues in order to gain utmost attention, unwittingly distorts from the import of such messages. Issues concerning problems of the region must be addressed scientifically taking into consideration the scientific nature of strategies anticipated for effective solution.

In this regard, the crucial aspects of the African Charter for Popular Participation and contributions supporting the Charter by Adebayo Adedeji were challenged for compounding political issues with economic issues in their deliberations. Succinctly, we offer the explanation of Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter on their debate on the location and separation of the political from the economic in the society. For more appropriate paradigm for studying or propounding theories for action, we offer the structural models of Johan Galtung supported by the writings of Andre Gunder Frank. Their analysis advocate that transformation of either the political or economic systems in underdeveloped countries - such as those in Africa - must begin with an assessment of the dynamics of imperialism.

The western perspective of the prospects for democracy in Africa came next under review. Acknowledging the divergence
of opinions on the issues in western perspective, it was not difficult to pin-point the most prevalent notion consumed in the empiricist epistemology. A generic of this tradition was identified in the works of Seymour Lipset "Some Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy". This viewpoint betrayed the assumption that democracy was impracticable in Africa. We test these assumptions with the logical positivism analysis of Fred Frohock and found them very tenuous. We further challenged this western perspective with the writings of Frank Homlquist who de-mystified and emasculated the bias infused claims.

Suspicious of the role of the United Nations as an impartial arbiter among nations we challenged the wisdom in confiding in the UN in the process of promulgating the African Charter For Popular Participation. This curiosity led to the evaluation of the historical relationships between the UN and African states, which confirmed our fears. Based on its past records, and the manner of determining its priorities, the UN lacks the ability to institute development in the underdeveloped states. For a purposeful and progressive action therefore those states must in the any future determine their own agenda and make specific recommendations to the UN from their collective decisions.

The focus of the literature review therefore supports our investigation by strengthening our assumption of understanding the dynamics of imperialism as the point of departure towards
democratic transformation of African states.
POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF AUTOCRACY IN AFRICA

Introduction

Whenever the society is dissolved it is certain the government of that society cannot remain. Thus the conquerors swords often cut up governments by the roots and mangle societies to pieces, separating the subdued or scattered multitude from the protection of, and dependence on, that society which ought to have preserved them from violence.\textsuperscript{79}

On this perspective rests the concept of legitimacy. Based on our earlier contention, the political displacement of the traditional systems by the alien colonial systems brought about political alienation. The polity in confusion resorted to 'oscillate allegiance' in a complex mixture of the alien structure, and pre-existing traditional, religious and cultural systems. Invariably, allegiance and legitimacy oscillate between the traditional and the alien systems without either of them gaining the much needed favorable ratio to galvanize a polity into more progressive action. Analyzing the process of disintegration of society John Locke stated:

The usual and almost only way whereby this union is dissolved is the in road of foreign force making a conquest upon them; for in that case (not being able to maintain and support themselves as one entire and independent body), the belonging to that body which consisted therein must necessarily cease, and so everyone return to the state he was in

therein must necessarily cease, and so everyone return to the state he was in before, with a liberty to shift for himself and provide for his own safety, as he thinks fit, in some other society.  

Politics in Africa has thus been characterized by instability, corruption, shortage of essential commodities and overall political disillusionment. In many parts of Africa the Military phenomenon evolved to re-enact the philosophy of violence bequeathed by the colonial system.  

To articulate the multi-faceted dynamics of the entire system demands first the appreciation of the value systems and beliefs of both the traditional institutions and those of the alien regime. Of paramount importance would be their measure of commitment to their subjects as well as their process of legitimacy. The traditional and imposed alien institutions must be evaluated against the background of ineffectual alien structures which have failed due to their own internal dynamics of exploitation and therefore negated the very essence of governance. Frantz Fanon helped to further illuminate this view:

Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to the sort of sub-stratification which results from and is nourished by the situation in colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together -  

---

80 Ibid., 417.  

81 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth. (New York: Grove Press 1963).
that is to say the exploitation of the
native by the settlers was carried on by
dint of a great array of bayonets and
cannons.82

POLITICAL DIMENSION

The Value Factor:

To determine the extent of conflict between both the
traditional and imposed alien structures, we must first
examine the values that propel its members to action. Seymour
Lipset in the article "Some Social Requisites of Democracy:
Economic Development and Political Legitimacy", emphasized the
importance of culture in the evolutionary process of political
transformation. In doing this, he referred to a discussion by
a group of political theorists on "culture as a pre-requisite
to a successfully functioning democracy" which expose the
difference between the approach of the political sociologist
and the political philosopher to a comparable problem. A
considerable portion of the symposium he stated, was devoted
to a debate concerning the contribution of religion,
particularly Christian ethics, towards the development of
democratic ideals. Lipset credits Ernest Griffith with the
notion that there was a necessary connection between the
Judeo-Christian heritage and attitudes which sustain
democratic institutions. Other participants at the symposium
stressed the political and economic conditions which may
provide the basis of a consensus on basic values which does

82 Ibid., 36.
foundation of democratic ideals.\textsuperscript{83} Carl Cohen in Communism, Fascism and Democracy described the political evolution of western societies as gradualistic, imbibing in the process utilitarian or pragmatic concept of justice and equality.\textsuperscript{84} Underlining these notions are the gradualistic evolution of the democratic process in western societies which progressed at various social levels through feudal, aristocratic, and authoritarian regimes.

The relevance of this analysis is to present a picture of the nature of the western tradition of democracy which are often prescribed for African nations. Rather unfortunately, the historical, political and economic realities of African nations are not similar or comparable to those of western societies to make these suggestions logical. However, we must admit that within the ambit of the democratic process either western or socialists lie certain uncontroversial values and political ideals that portend universal application. To locate this element or value in the African societies we must re-visit its traditional political, economic and social history.

By the 19th century, before the era of colonization, most of the African societies were still largely feudal, or partially democratic, but with strong central governments.


partially democratic, but with strong central governments. Political ethics therefore arose out of the sentiments of allegiance to their ethnic rulers often considered of divine authority. The traditional political systems reflected the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historical diversity of Africa. While some systems were based on kinship others were demarcated by territory while yet some consisted both. According to Christian Potholm in *Four African Political Systems*, some African political systems appointed their leaders, while others recognized inherited positions. Commenting further on the political structure, Potholm stated that some Africa political systems reflected classless societies, while others had extensive class orientation for political roles. A third group was based on the Castes.\(^{85}\) Consequently, decision making were extended to the society through either small-scale political systems involving a few families, middle-range systems involving thousands of families and hundreds of thousands of persons, and large-scale political systems that involved millions of people. The point to note Potholm stated is that:

> in Africa, we analyze the strains and tensions concomitant with this wide range of political forms, that we see this diversity as one of the "given" of contemporary African political systems.\(^ {86}\)


\(^{86}\) Ibid., 78.
Other attempts to classify in some organized fashion the multitude of African systems based on political organization were made in 1940 by M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard in their "Introduction to African Political system".\textsuperscript{87} This effort developed a classificatory scheme based on those aspects of the system concerned with the control and regulation of the use of force and the relationship between political authority and kinship:

They concluded that there are three major categories of political systems: hunting bands, segmentary lineage societies, and primitive states.\textsuperscript{88}

Classified under the hunting and food gathering band were such groups as the Khoikhoi and San, the Bergama and the Mbuti which were entities where political structures and kinship organization were completely fused.

They classified the segmentary lineage societies as those that exhibit political activities that exceed kinship relations and are, in effect "stateless" political systems where political authority is dispersed throughout clan-group segments which are spatially juxtaposed and structurally equivalent. Among the African political units of variations of this kind are the Nuer, the Logoli, the Tallensi, Ibo, Luo, Nandi and Masai.

What a number of western writers classified as primitive

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 78.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
states were characterized by centralized authority, well defined legal and administrative institutions and a hierarchical decision-making pattern. The Baganda, Zulu, Benba, Binis, Yorubas, Kanuris and Ashanti groups were among those that belonged to this general category.\footnote{Ibid., 81.}

According to Potholm, the need for a dynamic analysis of the "process of decision making and conflict resolution" instigated the creation of political anthropology as a sub-field. This not withstanding, he added, anthropologists have often confused structure with process, overestimated the ritual aspects of political offices and failed to distinguish between the form and substance of power. He blames political scientists most for the misconception charging that:

By and large, political scientists (particularly Americans) ignored Africa until the late 1950s and then often concentrated on the largest ethnic unit or the emerging "national politics". Generally speaking, they were less concerned with traditional Africa political systems than with the new states and their institutional framework.\footnote{Ibid.}

What Potholm regarded as oversight was but a tradition established by the colonist to undermine traditional political institutions with their intrinsic values to install authoritarian models for purely exploitation considerations.
Autocracy Installed:

A logical impetus for the imposition of 'alien regimes' is glaring in the philosophy that motivated colonialism. Joyce Cary in "Britain and West Africa" stated that the wave of imperialism and nationality in Europe escalated the conflict among Europeans nations over possessions of territories in Africa in the 19th century. She stated:

Other nations of Europe, France, Portugal, Germany and finally Britain, which had been, so to speak, holding their breath since 1870, and waiting for the immense dust of the campaign to blow away and discover to their eyes the new political landscape, now perceived that Africa was at least one part of it. And each considered, "If I do not secure my position, I shall be thrown out of it." That is to say, each separate government feared a loss of prestige, now become so important in this new age of nationalist and romantic competition.91

Different patterns of government were subsequently imposed on the colonial territory to maintain the dominance of the colonizers. In his writings, Sheldon Geller in "The Colonial Era" stated that colonialism was essentially a system of political, economic and cultural domination forcibly imposed by a technologically advanced foreign minority on an indigenous majority. The writer further stated:

The dogma of the innate moral inferiority of the indigenous population was widely shared by many Europeans living in colonial Africa and was used to

rationalize the master-servant relationship between Europeans on Africans.92

Broadly speaking, the colonial authorities imposed various structures over their territories which subsequently became identifiable by their comparable internal dynamics of exploitation rather than mere symbolic labelling. The British developed its system of indirect rule, perfected in Nigeria and replicated in other territories of occupation. This policy was designed for the convenience of the limited number of British officials assigned to govern the colonies. British rule was therefore highly centralized; under the Governor in the colonial administrative structure was a Lieutenant General who was assisted by a permanent secretariat and departmental officials responsible for medical care, public works, forestry, agriculture, education, police and the penal institutions as well as politics.93

The French apparently did not follow a uniform pattern. But their commitment to maintaining their stronghold over the colonies in the guise of uniting them with the mother country, was however never in doubt. Under a grandiose title of a policy of assimilation, the French imposed authoritarian chain of command over the colonial territories similar to those in

France under Napoleon 111 who was then in power. Unlike the British, the French created a centralized colonial structure in 1895 with a Governor General with headquarters at Dakar for all French Africa who was to coordinate French policy in all its West Africa colonies.\textsuperscript{94}

The Belgian mode of administration even went beyond the norm of institutional establishment to infuse the personality of Leopold 11 of Belgian. The Belgian parliament passed legislation placing Congo under the direct supervision of Leopold 11 as Chief of State and that the union between Belgian and the new state should be "exclusively personal". The Congo was subsequently referred to as the "personal playground" of Leopold. He appointed an Administrator General for the country, subdivided it into fifteen districts, each under the supervision of a commissioner who was directly responsible to the Administrator General. In the account of Dorothy Dodge:

Chieftaincies were divided into zones and eventually into sectors, and the power of the chiefs was reduced. In 1891, rules for governing in the native population were formulated. "Invested " chiefs confirmed by the government enforced the Administrator's rulings.\textsuperscript{95}

The Portuguese also displayed similar traits of authoritarianism under a different guise. Under its policy of

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 48.
"Christian paternalism" Portugal listed its colonial objectives, as christianizing, colonizing and civilizing of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea. In almost 500 years of its Portuguese rule, emphasis was placed on overseas areas as an integral part of Portugal for administrative purposes only.

The Spanish, Italians and Germans had less spheres of influence but none-the-less demonstrated similar intentions of political domination through the installation of authoritarian regimes rather than nurture democratic ideals in those territories.

For most parts therefore, independence for these colonies was a mere replacement of the physical presence of European administrators with African loyalist who would both by the nature of the inherited structural political system and their own selfish motivations guarantee subservience of the former colonies. In a rather complex mix of dual loyalty a rising middle class cultivated and nurtured by the colonial authorities, maintained the colonial tradition of exploitation by assuming local leadership positions by professing allegiance to either several or individual traditional institutions they deemed most auspicious, for political expedience. Commenting on the rise of middle class following colonialism Dorothy Dodge elaborated:

The African nationalist movement began as a revolution against the traditional system, as well as colonialism, as a

---

96 Ibid., 48.
result of colonial policy. French assimilation policies produced highly trained elite but left the great majority of the French subjects without adequate academic opportunities.\textsuperscript{97}

Similar polarizing effects or stratification or divide-and-rule policies continued to re-enforce allegiance to either the British, Belgians and Portuguese even after the so-called independence. The new middle class thus formed the core of reactionary movement that perpetuated autocratic regimes negating any move towards democratic ideals.

A Ruling Elite:

A deciding factor in the creation of this middle class therefore was education which placed this group at a pivotal position to sway opinions in either directions. Closely related to this variant was christianity which had gained substantial ground, becoming an identity symbol. A glaring example of the significance of the educated elites' role in government was emphasized by a poll of the educational background of the 84-member 1951 Gold Coast legislature:

Sixteen had received advance training in the United Kingdom, and 4 in the United States. Nine were graduates of Achimoto. Secondary graduates numbered 15 and 13 had received standard V11 certificate, which would be equivalent to the primary level.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 50.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid p.51.
The scope of the academic elite was later to be expanded to include pseudo-traditional rulers, urban dwellers, a rising class of wealthy merchants and military officers who today form a cog in the wheel of progress towards a democratic society, due to their orientation of 'flighty allegiance'. This scenario of mutual suspicion generate a siege mentality in the ruling elite who develop an attitude for intolerance to stay in power. This attribute of the ruling elite therefore becomes the center piece of its value system an obvious negation to the development of democracy and democratic institutions. According to Lipset:

...if a political system is not characterized by a value system allowing the peaceful "play" of power-the adherence by the "outs" to decisions made by the "ins" and the recognition by the "ins" of the rights of the "outs" - there can be no stable democracy. 99

Ironically, these ruling elite resort to double standard when it comes to resolving conflicts of interests among their ranks. Soon after the nationalist movements the new academic elite developed suspicion for traditional institutions seeing them as potential or direct impediments to their quest for authority and legitimacy among the populace. A number of confrontations were therefore witnessed with casualties on both sides of the disagreement. But as the furors between the various ethnic groups become common place political events,

99 Seymour Lipset, Some Social Requisites of Democracy, 97.
the political leaders themselves often resorted to arousing ethnic sentiments, to gain advantage over adversaries. Unwittingly, this move considered politically expedient boomerang to strengthen the latent authority of the traditional rulers. ¹⁰⁰

But, as the impetus of the traditional institution resides in historical realities, its authority and commitment to the well being of its people comes into direct conflict with that of the ruling elite many of whom have constituencies that transverse boundaries of more than one ethnic entity. Motivated by the will to stay in office the ruling elite play the numbers gain by imposing the wishes of the majority ethnic group over those of the minority creating a climate of perpetual hostility and suspicion among the various ethnic groups. ¹⁰¹

Religion, a Factor:

Another visible element in the traditional political arrangement is the religious institution.

Through the process of social evolution which pre-dates colonialism, the religious institution in Africa have elevated to the status of prominence impacting constantly on

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 352.
contemporary political activities.102

In a number of instances, especially in the Moslem dominated parts of the continent, such as Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Sudan and Sierra Leone, separation of traditional and religious institutions become difficult as more often than not, the traditional leader is also the spiritual head of the ethnic group. Where they are separate, the ties remain due to long traditions of co-existence in pre-colonial times. Libyan-style Islamic model of governance remains the vision of many Islamic adherents in parts of the continent. The effective blending of the political and religious nature the moslem societies remain one of its propensity for fanaticism and perpetuity.

In other parts of the continent that continued to practice the African traditional religion, spiritual and political authority tended to be more divided between personalities. This did not always translate into arbitrary disobedience of the authority of the head of the ethnic group who was in most cases considered of divine rights. There existed a working agreement between both institutions to resolve differences and promote the good will for their people.103

103 Ibid., 148.
-82-

Communality, a Factor:

Perhaps the bastion of the cultural and social environment of most African societies either Islamic or Traditional African was the commitment to communal development rather than the exaltation of individuality which forms the hallmark of the western liberal democratic principle. Integrity and fair play guided most activities whether they were economic or social.

This communal attributes among African people stand out as a distinguishing characteristics between those societies and western liberal societies. At the core of this distinction resonates the notion of community-motivated personality in African societies and the individually-motivated instincts propagated by the western culture. These social realities manifest become very crucial parameters that shape the nature of political opportunities available to these societies.

A popular notion that gained prominence in early era of independence was that the spirit of communality was more compatible with socialism. The writings of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Amical Cabral of Guinea Bissau reflected these assumptions. Three decades after independence in Africa failed to produce any success in socialism. The Tanzania experiment only came close to achieving that objective but floundered due to the overriding imperialist domination of the global systemic structures.\(^{104}\) Despite the failure of socialism in

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 165.
many parts of Africa, it remains an ideal which many Africans believe would flourish in the future.

In recent times the communal spirit was rekindled with the establishment of many cooperative societies particularly the group often referred to as the Non-Governmental Groups (NGOs). Their activities have received widespread acclaim for its economic success in many countries in Africa they have to create avenues for political complicity an already turbulent political environment by their autonomy. The communal attributes cannot be entirely blamed for the political manifestation of voluntary agencies, but their potential for effects - positive or negative - cannot be undermined in any serious analysis.

**External Factors: The Euro-American Complex:**

The impetus for democratization in Africa cannot be determined by the internal dynamics of its contemporary societies alone, because of the overwhelming influence on its political history of colonization. Consequently, the role of the former colonialists and particularly the Euro-American-complex as major determinants of African political, economic and social realities must be evaluated. Were their influence on contemporary African affairs negligible, their role could have been glossed-over or totally ignored. But their influence since the colonial era remained dominant and frequently
expressed through their varied interests in the continent.\textsuperscript{105} While the presence and interests of the Euro-American-complex continued to determine and shape the choices of African nations, any hope of freedom from this stranglehold is sealed by the global organizations into which African nations have been integrated. These include International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Multi-National Corporations (MNC) and the Trans-National Corporations (TNC). Although they deny any political motif, the IMF and World Bank directly impact decisions of political dimensions when through their loans conditionalities they insist on the types of fiscal policies a country should be engaged. These conditionalities often stress withdrawal of government subsidies and tax increases to debtor third world nations - Africa inclusive - as measures to repay their debts.\textsuperscript{106} The political impact of these conditionalities does not only determine governments' choices but negatively affect the aspirations for legitimacy through popular participation. However, Africa's democratic efforts must seek to deal with Euro-American rhetoric of idealistic prescriptions for democracy and their actual demonstration of practical support towards that political reality. For one reason, Africa has a totally incomparable past with the Euro-American democracies

\textsuperscript{105} Walter Rodney, \textit{How Europe Underdeveloped Africa}, 165.

which should make those recommendations suspect. In the opinion of Lipset:

Max Weber argues strongly that differences in national patterns often reflect key historical events which set one process in motion in one country, and a second process in another.\textsuperscript{107}

The irony is that although European nations profess their commitment to democracy, this image did not reflect the realities of political life in Africa. As Sheldon Geller puts it:

Before 1945, less than 1 percent of the African population had full political and civil rights or access to modern democratic institutions. Instead, most Africans were ruled by autocratic bureaucracies which demonstrated little interest in promoting democratic ideals.\textsuperscript{108}

At the helm of the deceptive drama has been the United Nations, which as the foremost international organization that ought to foster global peace and harmony, tacitly perpetuates the exploitative tendencies of the Euro-American complex.

African nations coming out of the colonial era, gladly embraced the UN hoping that through its membership they could discontinue their exploitation through unequal trade practices with the industrialized nations. In a dramatic effort, in the


70s, the non-aligned movement mainly composed of third world nations, including many African nations, urged the United Nations to instigate a New World International Economic Order of fairer trade practices and cooperation between the developed and developing nations. Through its increased numerical strength of new independent nations, a pact—the New World International Economic Order—was consequently passed at the General Assembly in 1974. But rather than uphold the intention of the resolution the developed nations turned away from it emphasizing instead, the adoption of the resolution of the General Agreement for Trade and Tariffs (GATT). This was at best another way of saying, that they were not prepared to assist developing nations develop. The global unbalanced trade practices persisted and an emasculated African economy fell prey to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Regional Development (IBRD), or the World Bank; both subsidiaries of the UN.  

Drawn into the global systemic economic arena, African nations in good faith borrowed from the World Bank under IMF conditionalities which insist on reduced government subsides on essential commodities and increased taxes. It also requires that debtor countries open their borders to external markets unconditionally. But the global economic recession aggravated economic tensions around the world in an environment of

---

109 Payer, The Debt Trap: The IMF and the Third World Debt Crisis, 118.
increasing demands of the developed nations against the dwindling supply of raw materials by the developing nations. In this logjam, the IMF conditionalities found a strangle on Africa's economy. Consequently, most African nations in the 80s and 90s became economically chaotic with staggering human hardships with rebounding political effects of instability becoming the norm.

Through its policy of multi-lateral autonomy, the UN, whose main instrument for political decision remains the General Assembly, claims no authority over the activities of its legal entities the IMF and the World Bank. When the General Assembly through its policies espouses a democratic agenda for development for third world nations, the IMF and the World Bank through their insistence on immediate returns on loans from those ailing economies, exacerbates the already fragile political climate, promoting both instability and authoritarian regimes.110

Framework For Action:

Given this state of African political dilemma, issues concerning the commitment of Western concept of democracy must be properly analyzed because it does appear that no meaningful efforts at democracy would be possible given the structural imperatives of the present African countries in the global

systemic political economy dominated by the Western powers. Part of Africa's democratization effort therefore must be to take up Western nations on their rhetoric and ensure their genuine support through creating political environments in their countries that will ensure the climate of support for Africa's democratic aspirations.

The legacy of the apartheid struggle of the eighties remains a landmark of how a political environment in the West can accelerate political developments in Africa and perhaps the rest of the world. For several years, the western powers through the deceptive machinations of elite capitalists controlled mass media, obfuscated the degree of inhumanity and degradation of the apartheid political system from their citizens. But the truth finally "won the day" when "the common people" became aware of the atrocious nature of apartheid. From then on, in most of the capitalist headquarters, the people took to the streets in protests and demonstrations and did not quit until legislation were passed to imposed sanctions against the South African apartheid regime.¹¹¹ This decision created a healthy atmosphere of the change of attitude of the apartheid government leading to the release of long-held political prisoners among whom was Nelson Mandela. Other processes were equally set in motion to bring about the

eradication of the apartheid regime. It might perhaps be too early to speculate the extent of success of this movement to eradicate apartheid, but the lesson learnt from this exercise definitely informs the assumptions that the imperialist domain lies among the elites of Western societies and not among the Western peoples themselves.\textsuperscript{112} A strategy therefore calculated to inform the people of the West of the hideous intentions of their governmental and non-governmental establishments to decimate developing economies, must be a good point of departure in creating a healthy political environment that could engender the desired political transformation.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Introduction:

One of the most widespread generalizations linking political systems to other systems of society is that democracy is precursor to economic development. By implication, African countries have been blamed for being underdeveloped because they are undemocratic. An opposing thesis to this assumption postulates that African nations are undemocratic because they were not initially designed to be democratic in the first place. This later argument maintains that African nations through a compromise at the Berlin conference in 1885-86, were designed purely for the purpose of

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 71.
exploitation by the colonialists.\textsuperscript{113} To uphold either of these arguments means denouncing the assumptions made by the other as no two opposites can be the same.\textsuperscript{114} The simplistic, a-historical deficiency of the former upholds the superiority of the latter postulate. Proponents of this conviction include Frantz Fanon and Samir Amin among others. A logical implication deducible from this theoretical standpoint portends that through popular participation, a greater sense of general good would determine the choices governments make. In the same vein popular participation would engender fuller and more resourceful participation in the economy which should enhance productivity which could lead to overall economic growth. Conversely, popular participation should eliminate the nefarious intention of African imperialists forces because the people would possess the will to resist external manipulations and exploitation. Democracy/popular participation, therefore becomes the ideal of this concept. But the intricacies involved in the economic dominations-complex of African societies manifest irreconcilable contradictions which make authentic efforts at democratization difficult to separate from capitalist rhetoric.


\textsuperscript{114} Ollman, "Marxism and Political Science: Prolegomenon to a Debate on Marx's Method", 8.
Global Inequalities:

We now turn to the nature of global inequalities as they translate into the realities of African nations. According to Sheldon Geller, in the "Colonial Era":

As an economic system, colonialism bound the peoples of Africa more closely to the international capitalist system in general and to the metropolitan economy in particular. The colonial situation gave the metropole the power to monopolize economic policy and impose a system of "enforced bilateralism".\footnote{Sheldon Geller, "The Colonial Era", \textit{Africa}, 146.}

He explained that what this meant in practice was that trade was generally oriented towards the metropole and that nationals of the metropolitan power controlled the most important sector of the colonial export economy, and that colonial development policies reflected the interests of metropolitan banks, import-export houses, shipping firms engaged in colonial trade, mining companies (exploring the internal resources of the colonies), and white settlers population. Furthermore, the colonial system provided the metropole with outlets for its manufactured goods, raw materials for its industries, and tropical products for metropolitan consumers on terms which were advantageous to the colonizers.

Walter Rodney expands this concept when he argues in "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" that the exploitation process of Africa by the Europeans went as far back as the 15th century.
culminating in the slave trade. Rodney maintains that development and underdevelopment were not only comparative terms, but that they had a dialectical relationship, one to the other:

that is to say, the two help produce each other by interaction. Western Europe and Africa had a relationship which insured the transfer of wealth from Africa to Europe. The transfer was possible only after trade became truly international; and that takes one back to the late fifteen century when Africa and Europe were drawn into common relationships for the first time along with Asia and the Americas.¹¹⁶

Incontrovertible is the notion that, through the integration of Africa into the global systemic economic environment based on the desires of European nations, its economic roles were prescribed and maintained through the development of institutions, formal and informal, to suit the objectives of the Europeans. Measures, including the creation of bureaucracies that favored economic exploitation were introduced. Transportation road and water routes were designed to lead to the coast for export or exploitation of raw materials from the colonies and the importation of manufactured goods from the metropolitan capitals. The nature of farm produce for export by the colonies was also determined by the need of the European industries. Prices for these commodities as well as those of the manufactured goods sold to

¹¹⁶ Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, 75.
the colonies were fixed by the European industrialists.

Through this process a global division of labor was established with the industrialized world prospering in technological advancement while the underdeveloped world remained producers of raw materials or perhaps 'rot materials'.

Samir Amin in Maldevelopment: Anatomy of Global Failure, outlined three levels of super imposed relations of capitalist exploitation on pre-capitalist societies. These include, for the sub-Saharan Africa three classifications: the trading economy, the reserve economy and the concessionary economy. Through this model Samir Amin discusses the forms of extraction of surplus to raise in general terms, the law of value. His conclusions are that:

It is on such theoretical foundations that we have shaped our thesis that labor power needs to have a unique value on a world scale although it retains differential cost, above or below this value. The precise measure of this tendency to a differentiation of the costs of labor power can be gauged, albeit crudely, by 'double factorial terms of trade', or the relationship between gross terms of trade and the index of comparative productivity of labor.

The genesis of trading relations was the pre-colonial

117 The depreciation of the value of farm produce was so abysmal that to describe them as 'rot or waste' materials reflects the despondence of the African economy.

period of rigorous trading between the European nations and territories in Africa. Some historians date the era from the early 15th century which started with trading in gold, pepper and ivory. The exchanged quickly changed to slave trade with the discovering of the New World. By 1807, when slave trade was officially abolished, trading activities reversed to commodities with emphasis on cultivation of 'cash crops' for the growing industries in Europe. Due to the specific needs of commodity trading which required longer period of cultivation and harvest the Europeans saw the necessity to gain some physical control of the factors of production of the raw materials and security of the market for the manufactured goods. Drastically therefore, unlike the needs in the era of slave trade where most transaction could be consummated at the coast without necessarily going into the hinterland, a new element that required further penetration of Africa's hinterland evolved.

Colonial Economics:

In the wake of competition over territories in Africa, many European nations including Britain resorted to the establishment of companies which were to merge the responsibility of colonial governments with that of private energy and ambition. In Britain in 1749, an evidence was provided of the commitment to operate the colonies purely as companies for profit in the proposal to parliament to that
effect. The British government formed the Board of Trade and Plantations to rendered the three schemes put to it, to parliament:

1. By the Royal African Company, the planters and some London merchants, for a new Joint Stock Company, with monopoly.
2. By some British merchants, for an open, regulated company, that is, a company with settled establishments on the coast, but no monopoly. The British merchants were not as rich as the Londoners.
3. By Liverpool merchants, for Governments to take over the forts and put them under a committee of nine merchants. All schemes required, of course, a subsidy.\textsuperscript{119}

According to Dorothy Dodge, the British parliament later combined elements from the last two schemes and set up a regulated company open to all British traders, and vested in it, the whole property of the Royal African Company. It was to have among other things subsidy of one thousand pounds a year and its ports and harbors were subject to inspection by any captain of the Royal Navy. A new corporation named "The Company of Merchants Trading in Africa" was thus established and its charter was from Port Sallec in South Barbary to the Cape of Good Hope - about 7,000 miles of coast:

In practice, it took over from its predecessor one fort on the Gambia and eight more, in a ruinous condition, on the Gold Coast and Slave Coast. Bunce Island at Sierra Leone had been abandoned in 1728. Cape Coast Castle remained the

\textsuperscript{119} Dorothy Dodge, \textit{Britain and West Africa.} 1946, 16.
We have gone to this length to elaborate the processes of the formation of the British trading company to nullify colonists' rhetoric that humanitarian objectives of spreading civilization to a "backward" people motivated their occupation of territories in Africa. Predictably, these developments had profound effects on both trade and administration of the colonies with the establishment of Sierra Leone which served as the administrative headquarters of the entire British West Africa. The propensity for the British companies which established the colonies, to translate trade policies into political domination, was demonstrated by its conquest of the Ashanti empire in 1874.\textsuperscript{121}

King Leopold of Belgium in 1876 established an International African Association, with himself as president, he sought to acquire for himself at least a share of the African booty. Any exploration Leopold assumed, gave him, a first claim upon the territories. In Dodge's account, Leopold in 1878 contracted an agreement with Stanley, a British subject, who made treaties with Congo Chiefs. When in 1884 Stanley was succeeded by another Englishman, de Winton, he was Governor of an enormous territory by the letter for the International African Association under the domain of Leopold

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 19.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
as King and President. As unilateral declaration of ownership over territories continued, the situation aggravated to the level where confrontation between European countries over colonies in Africa was becoming inevitable. At this point, Bismarck of Germany who did not want war over Africa summoned the Berlin Conference.

Through its intention and execution, the Berlin Conference brought the integration of African societies into the world economic system, just as it had its political institutions. The trading economy was therefore transmitted from the pre-colonial to the colonial in the process setting the pace for a structural economic model that complemented the political structural imperatives already set in motion through the very same process.

Obstacle to Reforms:

The depth of integration and economic entrapment of African states became most visible when its young governments tried to transform their status of trading economy to reserve economy following the nationalists movement of the late 50s and 60s. The concept of reserve economy was largely predicated upon the perceived need for both political and economic independence which the new nations of Africa saw as the only measure of their authentic independence. This motivation generated programs such as the Green Revolution which was aimed at improving and increasing the productive levels of
agricultural products to boost export potentials and in the process enhancing the productive capacities of the various countries. But as Samir Amin observed, the impetus of the Green Revolution was aborted:

The reason for this smothering is related to the fact that this agriculture of 'modern farmers' is super-exploited by the upstream industries (foreign in this instance) supplying inputs and by the world market imposing real price cuts on these exports crops (the World Bank systematically encouraged over-production for this purpose).122

A further quest for alternative development strategies instituted the concessionary economy which was capitalism's classic solution to operate the integration of the economy through the wholesale involvement of the industry and monopolies in the agro-business. While this has been largely validated by Amin's model of agricultural economy a larger dimension of this phenomenon is illustrated by the incursion of the multi national and transnational corporations who with large capitals have dominated the economies of African nations. Amin's pessimism of their futility was prophetic:

It would have the effect not only of transferring the benefit of peasant surplus labor to the monopolies but also of worsening the overall national dependence of peripheral capitalist societies on these monopolies and further accentuating the distortions of accumulation in these societies.123

123 Ibid.
In order therefore to resolve the intricate components involved in the process of economic domination or imperialism of African nations, the historical and philosophical impetus of imperialist incursion into Africa must be determined and challenged on the bases of its manifestation. Equally important would be a comprehensive perspective of the existing economic arrangements which were overwhelmed and dominated. We must also seek to establish how those intentions translated into the African realities in terms of physical development during and after the colonial era. The impact of the permanent trade arrangement, at the global level, has stifled economic innovations that could facilitate greater productivity for the most parts of the continent.

Rather surprisingly, the economic imperatives of democracy seem to have gained prominence, with the growing notion that it could effectively evolve development strategies. Unfortunately, either due to ignorance or sheer mischief, the question over who would benefit most by the sustenance of the existing order or by adopting authentic democratic governments seems to be often overlooked.

By the implication of our earlier assumptions of the political imperatives of imperialism, as the motif of colonialism, a logical conclusion deducible is that authoritarian regimes were most beneficial to imperialists governments to have lasted so long.\textsuperscript{124} Some scholars have

\textsuperscript{124} Walter Rodney, \textit{How Europe Underdeveloped Africa}, 73.
argued, and quite reasonably, that exploitation prospers more under authoritarian regimes than democratic ones.\textsuperscript{125} Against this background therefore it could be inferred that the former colonialists stood to benefit more by Africa's authoritarian regimes as long as the African (puppet) leaders stayed loyal and maintained at all cost the existing trade relations which were mostly in favor of the former colonialists. Meanwhile colonialism prospered through the use of force to keep the colonies in domination. As corollary of the post-colonial era, only administrations which promised a commensurate amount of coercive force could possibly keep the colonies intact.

An innovation in the Euro-American-complex was the replacement of the physical presence of colonialists by the MNCs and TNCs and their comprador conniving African natives. A large chunk of the exploitative conduit is contrived through these Africa natives who as comprador capitalists collaborate to deplete their nation's resources for personal gains.\textsuperscript{126} The point to note here is that the alien economic structure of exploitation makes its members victims of neocolonialism who act according to the terms of its dynamics without realizing the degree of self infliction they are causing. However, the nature of the processes of exploitation lies within its concept of an over-arching philosophy to keep Africa's


economies primarily as the source of raw materials and market for finished goods. Examples to demonstrate this phenomenon are replete in many African literature and physical evidence which point to the persistence of colonial domination through its agents, the MNCs and TNCs in the post-colonial era. That the pattern of economics persisted after independence was not only an underestimation of the far-reaching effect of colonial intention, but a confirmation of the ignorance of the colonized peoples. Some of the structural imperatives bequeathed to colonial societies to maintain their subservience was the deliberate design of basic infrastructure that related transportation to agriculture and mining activities, all directed towards the sea ports to colonial capitals.

Given the economic reputation of the Western/African relations it remains doubtful that the western nations will generously allow African countries to undergo a process that will ultimately lead to their economic independence resulting in either less or no further exploitation by the western economies. If we therefore accept the thesis that the undemocratic or authoritarian practice of African nations is profitable to western capitalists, we are therefore confirming that democracy would be more beneficial to the erstwhile exploited people. A prima facie case of reward based strictly

on the assumption that a loss at one end of a causal relationship means automatic gain to the other party in the same relationship. Such an assumption becomes problematic when dealing with economic variables in a global system of vicious international competitors. But there are substantial grounds of proof that the relations between the Western societies and Africa nations were unbalanced mainly to the advantage of the Western societies while African economies were plundered. However, while such an argument cannot deny any consequence from the empowering effects of democracy on Africa's populace, it might not successfully claim total or substantial indifference from the shortfall of continued dominance of capitalist economies. But its credibility in the same causal complex remains a valid basis for making such an argument.

We must therefore seek to understand the role of major actors in the economic complex and how they complement themselves in the exploitation mechanism of these former colonies.

Two Worlds In One:

Mahbub ul Haq in "Inequalities in the Old Economic Order" lays a grim picture of a world divided materially and philosophically into two separate planets of unequal humanities; one embarrassingly rich and the other desperately poor. He believes that most of the required changes lie within the control of the Third World -Africa inclusive- whether in
restructuring of domestic political power or in the fashioning of new development styles and strategies or in the search for new areas of collective self-reliance. But he believes that:

But a part of the struggle is at the international level—the need to change the past patterns of hopeless dependency to new concepts of equality, partnership and interdependence.¹²⁸

He contends that, arguments abound that in the international order—just as much as within national orders—all distribution of benefits, credit, services and decision making get warped in favor of a privileged minority. This situation he reckons cannot be changed except through fundamental institutional reforms. Mahbub outlines the major inequalities between the industrialized and developing nations as follows:

...There is tremendous imbalance today in the distribution of international reserves. The poor nations, with 70 per cent of the world population receive less than 4 per cent of the international reserve of $131 billion during 1970-74, simply because the rich nations controlled the creation and distribution of international reserves through the expansion of their national reserves currencies (mainly dollars and sterling).¹²⁹

Troubled by this and other trade imbalances, the third world nations, including some in Africa, took their plight to


¹²⁹ Ibid., 317.
the United Nations, and successfully brought about the introduction of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which met for the first time in 1962 in Geneva. The ideals of UNCTAD have since remained illusory. Before the end of the second world war, the United States and Britain, agreed at Bretton Woods, to apply to the international economic principles of free trade, non discrimination and stable rates of exchange. This led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Trading Organization (ITO), one to clear the channels of trade of physical obstacles (Tariffs and Quotas), the other to provide the finance for international trade and its expansion. Britain wanted an international currency, a variable volume of credit geared to the expansion of trade and much larger initial reserves than the $25,000.00 million which the Fund actually started. In place of the common currency was established the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which although lacked the institutional performance of the projected ITO was nevertheless pledged to the same objectives, which it pursued by a series of meshed bilateral bargaining to reduce tariffs, abolish quotas, rule out new or extended preferences and assure to all every preference available to any. Its objectives included:

reduction of obstacles to trade in manufactured goods, particularly the reduction of tariffs. The average

---

130 Peter Calvoceressi, *World Politics Since 1945*, 152.
industrial tariffs when GATT came into force was 40 percent, but by 1980, this average had been reduced to not much more than 4 percent and the volume of world trade had quintupled in twenty-five years.\textsuperscript{131}

But as the provisions of GATT still proved highly inadequate for third world nations, most of its states in Asia, Africa and Latin America established in 1967 the Group of 77. They collectively stressed the unfairness of an economic order dominated by purchasers and consumers of raw materials arguing in favor of commercial preferences as opposed to GATT's rules of equal treatment for the economically weak and strong, for transfer of technology at bargain prices and for cheap borrowing.

The group however became divided between moderates and radicals and further divided when the oil prices of the seventies -imposed by Oil Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)- served oil producers well but impoverished the Group's oil importers.\textsuperscript{132}

In 1974, due to the political will of the group of 77 in the UN, a New International Economic Order was declared in the General Assembly but again the aftermath demonstrated the limited effectiveness of third world collective votes in global economic affairs. Predictably, the western nations with their overwhelming economic power waded off the resolution of

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p.153.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 156.
the UN General Assembly and kept instead, a strategy for economic 'aid' at the levels of charity and bargaining chips to garner obedience and support from third world nations.\textsuperscript{133}

The Bretton Woods Conference had also created the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development later known as the World Bank to assist post war reconstruction of Europe. As this task was largely taken over by the Marshall plan, the Bank gradually turned its attention to development and to the rest of the world:

Like the IMF, with which the Bank was allied by their common location in Washington and by the requirement that the Bank must be a member of the Fund, the Bank was governed by a professional board where the larger contributors to its capital funds carried commensurate weight. Besides, these funds, the banks raised money by floating its own bonds on international stock exchange.\textsuperscript{134}

But somehow, its strictly conservative policies stipulates borrowing in money markets at the best available rates, which restricted its initial activities to financing the rich rather than aiding the poor states. The Bank's activities until the seventies were restrained but later magnified by a factor of ten or more accompanied by a doctrine which, in order to justify lending to less conventionally credit worthy recipients, emphasized potential economic value of poor

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 157.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 154.
societies, once they were developed or developing.

Summing up the debacle of third world countries entrapped in deteriorating global economic environment, Calvocoressi stated:

The effects of world recession on the attitude and capabilities of the rich were even more in evidence at UNCTAD's fifth Conference in Manila in 1979. The desperate poverty, in some areas famine in the third world; the prognosis of a world population double by the end of the century, with cities under siege and the outbreak of wars for raw materials; a third world external debt of $300 million or more; and western aid in decline and western protectionism rising--all these pointers produced a sense of gloomy despair which the Conference could find on way of alleviating.\textsuperscript{135}

We have gone to great length to explain the mechanism involved in the global systemic economic atmosphere to identify the major key players and the distribution of roles and advantages. Equally implied through this analysis is the insignificant role of most African nations at the global level of decision making and their susceptibility to decision made by the key actors. Also evident is the degree of double standard and proclivity on the part of the key actors to manipulate the system to suit their convenience.

Our thesis that autocratic governments are more compatible with the global systemic demands of African nations, therefore gains substantial validation through this analysis.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 163.
-108-

PSYCHO-SOCIAL DIMENSION.

Introduction:

The psycho-social dimension of our ongoing investigation derives from the notion that a dominated people are subjected to a certain degree of mental brainwashing which alters their perception of reality. A state of autism. This state of mental enslavement perpetuated through the various established institutions of the dominating powers is achieved through the socializing or manipulation of the oppressed people to adopt the imposed social, political and economic systems. Consciously and otherwise, they conform to these alien dictates without considering the long term impact on their immediate environment or nations. This process of mental shackles often referred to as cultural imperialism entails the encapsulation of the colonized people in the ideological machination of the colonists. Analyzing the processes of cultural domination Herbert I. Schiller stated:

In this sense, the concept of cultural imperialism today best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system. The public media are the foremost example of operating enterprises that are used in the penetrative process. 136

Africa's people have remained entrapped by the foregoing implication at the psycho-social dimension and have therefore not gained total freedom as was often assumed. Proponents of this argument usually refer to the imposition of western educational and administrative systems designed to rid the dominated people of any sense of their true identity. In Angola, Mozambique as well as other Portuguese speaking countries Portuguese language was imposed and substituted for the local language of the people. Foreign names, concepts culture were ingrained into their consciousness that even after the so called independence of those nations they became mentally and hence physically attached to those former colonists. Invariably, trade and other forms of over-all activities in those regions have not altered from those of the colonial era. Expatiating on the importance of culture as a force of political life, Amilcar Cabral the former Secretary-General of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands stated:

Whatever may be the ideological or idealistic characteristics of cultural expression, culture is an essential element of this history just as flower is the product of a plant. Like history, or because it is history, culture has as its material base the level of the productive forces and the mode of production. Culture plunges its roots into the physical reality of the environmental humus in which it develops, and it reflects the organic nature of the
society, which may be mode of production.\textsuperscript{137}

Functional Domination:

The cornerstone of the western educational precepts on Africa have been shaped by theories and ideologies grounded in anthropology and sociology. These have in turn formed the bedrock of the educational systems in the colonies; a process to justify and conceal the real intention of colonialism and further convert young Africans into its posturing as a civilizing agent. Jean Copens in African periodization aptly demonstrates the functional evolution of the European perspectives from the eighteenth century through: traveller, explorer, missionary, soldier, administrator, ethnologist. Copens further remarks that ethnologist not a pure or blameless science and as a science it has filled and continue to fill a very special ideological function. He quotes Leclerc:

To the victorious, anthropology was the parlance and the practice of a society which gave itself the alibi, the good conscience and the luxury of a 'scientificity' in its colonial experiences. To the anthropologist in the field, his position as a European was a precise scientific meaning and solely a scientific meaning (methodological): the understanding of social systems assumes a certain externality with regard to such

systems. Only an outsider can grasp the entire structure in them. In a word, anthropologist in the field still regard European institutions as a condition of knowledge he aims to elaborate.  

Consequently, there emerged a middle class of African elites or petit bourgeoisie many of whom studied in colonial headquarters. Many of them by the nature of their education became apologists of the colonial system. They pursued only self-serving goals like their 'individualist oriented' European counterpart to the detriment of his native environment. According to Frantz Fanon, the abolition of the most naked abuses of the colonial states-inequality of remuneration between equally trained African and European technicians, forced labor, disenfranchisement and racial discrimination in social intercourse. This constituted for the petit bourgeoisie the most urgent task of the movement for independence. To stay in office and perpetuate the tradition of colonial imperatives the new African 'educated' elites many of whom have adopted European ways of life resort to whatever means including continuing the avowed practice of "pay-offs" to their external support capitalist centers, and through faithful obedience. The leadership under the circumstance is no-longer dictated by merit but by patronage of the external

support centers.\textsuperscript{139}

The tradition of patronage or sycophancy encouraged and perpetuated at the pinnacle of leadership percolates to lower levels of government resulting in uncontrollable corruption, nepotism, ethnicity, lack of accountability and a state of political instability. Political disillusionment is further enhanced by a polity which develops a syndrome of hostility for every thing local and considers all that is foreign, especially from the culture of the former colonial authority, as modern, sophisticated and superior. With values about the domestic environment so misplaced, the impetus for development becomes muddled and unattainable. Consequently, political upheavals promptly escalate to usher into power a change of guides who have seize the opportunity to dip their ‘hands’ into the state purse just like their predecessors.\textsuperscript{140}

The Euro-American capitalists who are themselves elites of their political systems engage in rhetorical schemes through their unified media and other propaganda machinery to deceive their people from the actual intentions of their acquisitive efforts. Constantly, in their choreographed sections in congress and other public forums they blame African nations for their problem. For solution; they proclaim the lack of democracy.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{139} Frantz Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, 81.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 83.

\textsuperscript{141} Herbert Schiller, \textit{Communication and Cultural Domination}. 
The world has therefore grown accustomed to this recurring cycle and has almost accepted the conviction that Africa was doomed to fail.

Afrocentric Frame work:

In order to understand and appreciate the gravity and extent to which domination could pervade the psycho-social dimension the Afrocentric paradigm is offered. According to Molefi Asante in Afrocentricity, the psychology of the African without Afrocentricity has become a matter of great concern. He states:

Afrocentricity is the belief in the centrality of Africans in post modern history. It is our history, our mythology, our creative motif, and our ethos exemplifying our collective will. Our basis of our story, we build upon the work of our ancestors who gave signs towards our humanizing function.\(^{142}\)

The emphasis of Afrocentricity according to Asante is that it forms the centerpiece of human regeneration. He also notes that to the degree that it is incorporated into the lives of the millions of Africans on the continent and the Diaspora, it will become revolutionary. It therefore confronts unequivocally what it considers as the Eurocentric view that had dominated the educational tradition of western societies. The western educational tradition as alluded to earlier evolved from societies whose self-serving interests informed

\(^{142}\) Molefi Asante, Afrocentricity, 35.
their occupation and rule via colonialism, of other societies in the world. But the oppressed people, as in Africa, must seek relief from their oppression by first identifying the best possible means. It is hoped that through the Afrocentric prism a philosophy for solution can be articulated.

PART 3 OVERVIEW:

We have in this chapter tried to articulate the political, economic and psycho-social dimensions of Africa’s Autocracy to both identify the salient variance in the processes that have led to autocracy and therefore determine plausible solutions or remedies. Our commitment to democratization will not be complete without a thorough dissection of the prevailing autocratic nature of states in the continent.

The political dimension of our analysis established the historical process of displacement of traditional political institution by the alien structure of the colonists. A process of alienation towards governments thereby evolved which had manifest in political instability, corruption and overall disillusionment.

We have traced the root cause of the conflicts between the traditional Africa institutions and the imposed alien structures to the underlying differences in the intrinsic values of both societies. The Europeans had evolved from the Judeo-christian background that gave adequate recognition to the role of the individual over that of society while the
African evolved from societies propelled by the primacy of the community rather than the individual.

The process of installation of autocracy was traced to the colonial design prompted by a philosophical commitment to dominate territories for economic advantage i.e imperialism. The process was therefore deliberate as the present state structure in Africa were initially designed to function as primarily business enterprises. At the so called independence, the process of integration of these entities into a global systemic order to perpetuate the exploitation was perfected i.e neo--colonialism.

An elite ruling class which later inherited the alien structures were constrained to maintain the exploitative machinery. Other aspects in the political dimension addressed were, the religious factor and the Euro-American complex. A framework for action was also suggested.

The economic dimension supporting the same theme looks at the global systemic inequalities which has kept African economies subordinate to those of the industrialized nations. We traced the evolution of this phenomenon to the 15th century. Supported by the works of Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, we demonstrate the futility by some governments in Africa to transform their economies from its imposed trading orientation to that of reserve economies as a precursor of authentic economic development. The reaction by the industrialized nations re-affirmed their determination to
keep the underdeveloped nations underdeveloped. The UN was also found to be structurally incapable of bring about the necessary changes because of its philosophical commitment to western nation at its formation.

At the psycho-social dimension, we address the issue of the psychological and social levels of domination of the African people. By a process referred to as cultural imperialism, the entrapment of a colonized people is perfected through educational, administrative processes and structural designs by the colonists. We offer the Afrocentric view as a viable paradigm that would over through the domination syndrome negating positive actions for democracy in Africa.
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

Introduction

We had set out on this project on proving the hypothesis that: democracy/popular participation in Africa is the panacea to political instability and economic retardation in those countries.

Our statement of the problem therefore asked some specific question: (1) what has led to the authoritarian proclivity of African nations? (2) what are the effects of those authoritarian regimes on the development prospects of those countries? (3) what are the political options available to those countries?

Further reflections on these questions and their solutions evolved a newer set of inquiry, which are although related, demand specific answers if the entire investigation is to be both scholarly and comprehensive. These new inquiries were (1) why democracy/popular participation? (2) How will Africa attain democracy/popular participation? (3) How conducive are Africa's internal and external environment to the democratic option?

In the course of this project, we have tried to articulate the interlocking dimensions surrounding these questions through a process of historical materialism and social/cultural transformation which could sufficiently support our viewpoint, for purposes of clarity and validity.
Divergent literature on the subject matter was consulted to give credence to our analysis we sought to piece together the huge puzzle in the dilemma of political economic and social crises in most parts of the African continent.

Findings

Our findings have not in most parts been in anyway extremely shocking, revealing or entirely novel. But nevertheless, our study's originality in perspective, structural arrangement and logic, supported by a commitment to the Afrocentric viewpoint, must be of valuable consideration to further discussion in the field.

For the purposes of systematic analysis of our study, we have, in providing answers to our research questions, tried to be prudent to limit our findings to the scope of the specific questions raised. This should not be interpreted as disregard for other related questions but a commitment to the concise rather than the nebulous in inquiry.

(1) What has led to the authoritarian proclivity of African nations?

Given the political and economic history of most African nations, we were convinced that the authoritarian proclivity of African nations resides in the structural imperatives of the 'alien political systems' imposed on those nations by former colonists. To arrive at this conclusion, we drew arguments from Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped*
Africa, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Joyce Cary's *Britain and West Africa* among others. All these authorities suggested either wholly or in part that the motivation for colonies was both the search of external markets for raw materials to feed the growing industries in Europe and for purely romantic purposes as Europe moved into a turbulent era of both psychological and direct warfare between its nations in a scramble for supremacy and therefore dominance. Among the major events which exacerbated the situation, was the defeat of both France and Austria by Germany in the six weeks war, and the declaration of an International African Association by King Leopold II of Belgium; and with himself as President proceeded to claim rights over territories in the Congo. Bismarck of Germany then summoned the Berlin Conference of 1885 not so much as to dissuade further occupation of Africa by Europeans but to set in motion a comprehensive design for such occupation without instigating conflicts among the European countries.143

From all intent and purposes therefore, the ideals of the Berlin Conference were realized with the successful partition of Africa among states without rancor amongst themselves. The consideration was not the benefits it ought to bring to Africans themselves. However this exercise also reaffirm the underlining motivation of its initial objectives of exploitation and domination at all cost. To achieve both

objectives, at least expense, authoritarian regimes were installed through the institution of violence to perpetuate repression of any insurrection against its authority. Authoritarianism became ingrained into the psych of the African natives over the colonial periods and when finally the colonists withdrew granting the colonies independence, they left in their place, loyal servants who they trusted to maintaining the status quo. At the same time the established administrative structures and languages and cultural values introduced by the colonists served as a permanent bondage to the colonists and the global economic system to which have been introduced with little or no technical know-how.

(2) What were the effects of these authoritarian regimes on development prospects of those countries?

Authoritarian regime by their very nature exclude popular participation in their decision-making process. It is therefore arbitrary in its decisions and outlook with little or no regard for members of their society. These attributes dispose authoritarian regimes to be oppressive and intolerant of opposition. They become unto themselves all-knowing and hence alienates their citizens from the processes of government to which they should be a part. Alienated, the citizens seek alternative forms of government which breeds a tradition of political instability. With unstable governments emerges a disturbed economic and social environment. Production therefore deteriorates or stagnates, human moral to
work is low and society is worse for it on the long run.

These attributes have been observed in the Africa situation as the inherited authoritarian regimes were transferred to the African middle class who took over the reins of governance from the colonial regimes. Three decades after the independence of these nations, the political situation remains volatile as one authoritarian regime reproduces its exact kind.\textsuperscript{144}

Meanwhile, the embers of political instability continued to be fanned by the Western industrialized nations who made gains from these unstable conditions by selling products (arms in war) and other items, in pursuance of its internal philosophy of imperialism.

As the African middle class, made up of civilians lost grip on government, their counterpart in the nations' armies, equally established to enforce colonial authority took up arms against their citizens in the name of saving them from corrupt civilian governments. But with time, many of these military regimes became the mirror image of the civilian administration as the realities of the deficient state structures assumed prominence. Overwhelmed by the complexities of the muddled societal structures which manifest in constant schisms and dissensions, they resort to what they know best—repression and

\textsuperscript{144}Ibid., 57.
aberrant choices in decision-making.\textsuperscript{145}

The external factors of global economic integration did not make any matters better. The economic factor orchestrated by the superpowers continued to determine the political and economic prospects of the continent. Generations of a monoculture agricultural base for overseas exports, initiated by the colonial regimes set the pace for a mono-culture agricultural orientation. Droughts, poor weather conditions, population explosion and the toil of generations of unbalanced trade practices by Western nations dragged African countries into a debt crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. Political, economic and social malaise have therefore become the testimony of these nations as they grapple with an extensive list of strategies for solution.\textsuperscript{146}

(3) What are the political options available to those countries?

As stated earlier, the political option for liberation had historically rested on the competing ideologies viz: Western liberal doctrine and the Communist/Socialist ideology.

Since the end of World War II, many of the new African states experimented with either ideologies depending on the orientation of its leadership. Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah expressed serious support for socialist reforms while Tanzania


\textsuperscript{146} Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, 115.
under Julius Nyerere also tried to evolve socialist reforms. Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe showed some signs of socialist inclination while Ethiopia under the military leadership of Mengitsu Haile Mariam tried to build a Cuban-style society.

A third option for African countries opened with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in many of the Arab states. Libya led the way by adopting full fledged Islamic political principles, Algeria, Sudan, Nigeria and Egypt have since had their share of the tremor of Islamic insurgence demonstrated by increasing religious riots in those nations.

But it seems incontrovertible that the structural imperatives of the international system driven by capitalism has often reduced most attempts at communism/socialism to ineffective sloganization. The failure of many of such attempts have often been blamed on lack of popular will and inadequate economic support to sustain its utopian principle.

Unfortunately, there remains the threat of permanence of the military in power, a factor which many fear has become a characteristic of the African political culture. The military has been involved in governments in Sudan, Zaire, Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone among others. As Kokole and Mazrui argue, once the genie of military politicization is unloosed, it is very hard to put it back in the bottle. They note that one of the primary challenges that confronts the future of democracy in Uganda is how to reassert civilian control over
the military. The same is true of some other countries.

Questionable as these options are, they do not fail to explain the conditions of African states. Understanding their nature therefore allows this analysis to determine their desirability. This knowledge would further enhance a better measurement of social conditions that might propel or retard efforts and hence progress towards democracy. Fortunately, authoritarian regimes have been no more (and often less) effective than democratic ones. The people of Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda have explicitly and repeatedly rejected authoritarianism as a premise of government.

Having established the static foundation of our theoretical assumptions on the political, economic and social predicaments, we turn next to what could be considered as viable or plausible measures that could be adopted to redeem the situation. We had earlier asked? (a) Why democracy/popular participation? (b) How conducive are Africa's internal and external environment to the democratic option? (c) How will Africa attain democracy/popular participation?

(a) why democracy/popular participation?

We had established the debate on democracy on two major notions, considered most popular in this debate: (a) that for utility it was capable of galvanizing a polity towards


148 Ibid., 26.
economic growth and development. (b) that it was most acceptable because of its majority appeal and its essence of justice and equality.

However, there is not sufficient evidence in history to prove that democracy or popular participation leads to economic development and therefore economic growth. Incidentally the argument stands strong that authoritarian regimes could inspire economic growth as demonstrated by the Stalinist regime in former USSR. However, our consideration of this option in the African context comes partly because of the nature of authoritarian regimes in those countries and aesthetic ideals of the supposed majority benefits that could be achieved through democratic institutions. It is therefore appropriate to assume that where other forms of government have failed to bring about necessary changes in governments in Africa, through the law of 'Progressive Elimination' untested methods should be considered. To degenerate the essence of this intention to the fancy of novelty alone would degrade the sincere efforts to seek an authentic formula for the governance of African nations. The position of this research is that any future political systems in Africa be must adapted to the political, economic and social realities of the people, to be effective. The failure of past imported regimes has not only failed to establish patterns of government worthy of mention but threatens the continent and global community with spate of conflicts and inhumanity that are bound to have their
effects beyond their immediate boundaries.\textsuperscript{149}

Somehow, many African nations have at the peak of the superpower (US and USSR) cold war conflict experimented with socialism and capitalism Islamic, military, single-party dictatorship and democracy. Rather unfortunately, commitment to socialism had at best been limited to sloganization while the State itself remained centralized and interventionist.\textsuperscript{150} While many pro-socialist governments in African States professed socialism they lacked the resources and resolve to uplift their economic environment, placing them at the mercy of the capitalist predators. Consequently, the State crisis, infused greater repressive mechanisms triggering hostility and further alienation of the populace, exacerbating the already tenuous state of political instability, economic quagmire and social disillusionment. It is therefore expected that democracy/popular participation might fulfill the dual objectives of utility and justice in those societies.

(2) How conducive are Africa's internal and external environment for democracy/popular participation?

Pessimists will argue and for very good reasons that democracy/popular participation is unattainable in African

\textsuperscript{149} Conflicts in Africa such as in the Congo crisis of the 60s and recently the Somalia crisis are but a few examples that expose the humanitarian posturing of the western nations in their interventionist policies in Africa.

nations because of its peripheral nature. In his comments Samir Amin maintains that a solution would be possible only through the evolution of a democratic society based on socialist ideals:

That is not the case in capitalism: here democracy only functions when its potentialities are emasculated by the 'majority consensus' produced by the exploitation of dominant central positions in the world capitalist system. That is why bourgeois democracy- limited as it is, as Marx analyzed it- is only possible in the central capitalist countries.¹⁵¹

With the demise of the former USSR, and a reversal in social strategies of former socialist countries in the early 1990s, the fate of Samir Amin's style of democracy seems to suffer to the greater advantage of the model he described as bourgeois democracy. Whether these events are coincidental or incidental to the fate of global socialism or not, many African nations have expressed greater commitment to the ideals of democracy in the late eighties and early nineties.

According to a survey of the African Insight, there was a surge towards multiparty systems of government as Africa's political wheel threatens to come full circle and arrive at the point at which it stood in those early post-independence years when multiparty politics in most states had yet to be

resolved in favor of authoritarian systems. It further stated:

Heralded by the break-up of Madagascar's Marxist-Leninist governing coalition in March 1990 and the defeat, three and a half month later of Algeria's ruling National Liberation Front in that country's first multiparty local government elections, the winds of democracy have since blown across the continent ever more strongly.\textsuperscript{152}

Other indices established by this report were that during the later half of 1990, and the first quarter of 1991 the number of multiparty states in and around the continent doubled from 10 to 20; a roughly equal number of countries were either planning or seriously contemplating the opening-up of their political systems. Meanwhile, the present single party and non-party states are all vulnerable to pressures of change from within. Where President Arap Moi of Kenya have rejected the quest for democracy in Africa as a ploy for Western interference, Julius Nyerere, ex-President of Tanzania shifted from his earlier avowed support for one party states to reconsider the prospects for multiparty reforms. His successor, President Mwinyi set up a commission to investigate Tanzania's political system. Political change has also been the order of the day in South Africa, following the lead was the emergence of an enthusiastic multiparty democracy in newly-independent Namibia and South Africa' endeavors - although tenuous- to achieve all-inclusive democracy and the

\textsuperscript{152} Africa Insight, Towards Democracy? vol. 21, No 1, 1991.
dismantling of apartheid.¹⁵³

The African Insight also traced favorable developments to Zambia and Mozambique where in early 1991 constitutional provisions for opposition parties elections had not been left out. Its leadership, MPLA government, renounced Marxist Leninism in an effort to settle its protracted dispute with UNITA providing for multiparty elections eighteen months after the cease-fire.

Francophone Africa has not been left out. Popular movements for reform marked by serious public unrest have prompted governments to defuse the situation by removing restrictions on opposition parties, thereby paving the way for constitutional changes. The Insight also states that, in Gabon and Zaire, power monopolies were broken by co-opting opposition leaders to serve at top government levels and by the voluntary transformation of single -party administration into interim governments or governments of national unity.

The electoral success of Houphouet Boigny -Africa's longest-ruling leader when his party retained power in Cote d'Ivoire came with mixed feelings due to low turn-out at the polls which analysts regard as suppressed concern over the confidence of the electoral process. In the Cape Verde, and Sao Tome parliamentary representatives were voted out of office with President Manuel de Costa withdrawing from the presidential race. A new leader Miguel Trovoada, a former

¹⁵³Ibid.
prime minister, was returned unopposed. The Cape Verde also
witnessed the removal of its president, Aristides Periera (first in Africa to be removed by election) with the victory of
former supreme Judge Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro. The swing
from Marxist-Leninist and introduction of multiparty politics
also took as casualties former President Kerekou of Benin, who
emerged as the first African military ruler to be removed
through the ballot. His successor was a technocrat turned
politician, Nicephore Soglo.

Multiparty elections in the second half of 1991 have been
promised to voters of Bukina Faso, Cameroon and Zaire. Nigeria
and Niger have already started electoral processes initiated
by the military regimes. Despite this hopeful picture for
democracy, a number of states in Africa still substantially
resist the impetus for democracy. They include Kenya, Uganda
and Djibouti East Africa; Libya in North Africa; Malawi and
Swaziland in Southern Africa; and Equatorial Guinea and
Seychelles among the Island states.

The environment for democracy hinged between the growing
internal movements with growing political awareness and the
demise of the once vibrant alternative to the Western liberal
ideology, the USSR. This situation evoked a precipitous
atmosphere for an avalanche of agitations for popular
participation in governance.

(3) How will Africa attain democracy?

This question have erupted as many answers as there have
been comments. None, we must say have the qualities of either comprehensive solution nor the expected optimism for success. However, there have been mainly two strategies into which all opinions tend to support. They have often been generally categorized under the broad titles: Internal and External initiatives.

At the internal level, conscious efforts must be made to adapt the manner of democracy to specific environments. This notion portends that consideration be given to the divergent nature of the social, economic and political characteristics of the people concerned. This implies that no one set of rules be imposed on all ethnic groups. In practice therefore, the set of rules established and internalized by the Igbo of Nigeria could differ from those preferred by the Yorubas. Adequate attention should be paid to the historical political nature of these groups to make the democratic blueprint desirable. The viability of an over-arching framework should be such that certain degrees of variations in the alignment of decision making are arrived at supported by documented legal provisions that specified boundaries are acceptable to the people. To adapt the framework to the changing global socio-cultural environment, conscious efforts must be made to address the fine boundaries of differences and similarities between these cultural settings. The final phase of this design should concentrate on effective educational models to reaffirm the positive goals of democracy/popular
participation, supported by the people's will. Through a concise educational - formal and informal - coupled with community relations the present state of ethnic hostility and mutual suspicion will be rectified. The necessity of effective law enforcement organs to uphold justice and equality for all cannot be overemphasized. Judging by the needs of African states, more efforts at strengthening the enforcement of law and order should be given priority over that of a military build-up.

Part of the strategies to fend-off external forces should include an unbridled commitment by African nations to regional integration and away from the current trends of almost total dependence on overseas initiatives for their fortunes. Through the Organization of African Unity (OAU), concerted educational programs should be developed to inform Africans and friends of Africa around the world of the true nature of its predicaments. An African Democratic Front sponsored by all African nations and supervised by the OAU should set about establishing Information Bureaux at the various capitalist centers to monitor and generate models for dealing with hostile policies towards Africa. This Bureaux should adopt as their strategy effective public relations tactics which should include promoting lobby groups and other interests groups to press the concerns of African nations onto the policy agenda of their resident capitals.

The Democratic Front should at the same time, revive the
spirit of Pan-Africanism and work with a philosophy that substitutes national boundaries with continental boundaries. Part of its efforts therefore must seek to encourage school curriculum at all levels to instruct their pupils on the prospects of a united Africa with interdependent states.

The underlying philosophy of this strategy assumes that an empowered continental of African people will be the pre-requisite to an economic front that can reject the hostile policies of western nations. Such a political will should also give rise to the proper economic attitude to lay the foundation for development and overall social advancement.154

Recommendations

The lessons of history inform that imposed alien political structures have failed due to their incompatibility to African environments. Efforts must be made to evolve political systems that would take into consideration the values and notions of political organization of the people.

The traditional institutions, the religious and other groups must be accommodated with assigned specific constitutional responsibilities in the new scheme of things.

All institutions must be made subject to common laws with an effective enforcement agencies.

154 The isolationist policies of pre-world war one America and China are instructive models to learn from.
The military due to its checkered history of intermittent disruption of the political process should be re-oriented to pursue the constitutional goals of defense of its citizens. Recommendations to curb the excesses of the military should not be limited to either total suspension and re-building processes to a complete reduction of its budget. Whatever, scheme is devised must take into consideration the enormity of opposition it would receive due to the established corruption of the military regimes in the continent.

More pressure should be brought against the United Nations to guarantee the survival of the regional communities in Africa.

Africans and Africans in Diaspora should re-unite through the "Democratization Front" as they did during the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to articulate and form pressure and lobbyists groups to rekindle the spirit of Pan-Africanism to promote African democracy/popular participation; the unfinished agenda in the OAU.

The OAU must as a matter of urgency establish the "Democratization Front" and set up the necessary machinery to ensure its success in promoting democratic institutions throughout the continent.

Africa can never be free until all its people can form the bedrock of its political will.
A PHILOSOPHY OF THE DEMOCRATIZATION FRONT

* A realignment of local forces with African states towards democratic reforms. Both the traditional and state authorities must collaborate to reassure the populace of a new charter of commitment to the good of society.

* Every effort must be made to discourage external forces dictating the pace of Africa's democratic initiative. The people's will must be sought to determine the most desirable models.

* The Democratic Front will only interfere in economic issues as far as they impact the democratization process. It will concentrates on formulating policies and strategies for democratic institutions but make general remarks on how the economic development impact the process.

* The initial thrust of the Front should be the rural areas where most Africans live. This will be followed by urban based programs.

* Legal councils attached to the Fronts should constantly conduct public hearings to update the legal statutes.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


