

**University of Belgrade
University La Sapienza, Rome
University of Sarajevo**

Master Program State Management and Humanitarian Affairs

Marija Zagel

**Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Processes and Obstacles
Case Studies: Ghana, Nigeria, DR Congo**

Master Thesis

Belgrade, January 2010

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Members of the Commission:

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zoran Krstić, Mentor
Prof. Emer. Dr. Marija Bogdanović, President
Prof. Dr. James Walston, Cantab., Member**

Defense date: _____

Mark: _____

Belgrade, January 2010

Table of Contents

A. Introduction.....	2
I. Democracy and Democratization – Theories and Realities.....	2
II Measuring Democracy.....	8
B. Democratization in Africa – Processes and Obstacles.....	15
I Introduction.....	15
II Political Reshaping.....	17
III Economic Factors.....	29
Natural Resources.....	32
Stabilization and Adjustment Policies.....	34
Foreign Aid and Foreign Debt.....	37
IV Social Factors.....	44
Neopatrimonialism and corruption.....	44
Ethnicity.....	54
C. Case Studies.....	57
I Ghana.....	57
II Nigeria.....	74
III DR Congo.....	98
D. Conclusions.....	115
Literature.....	118

Table of Figures

I Ghana

Figure 1: Selected economic indicators.....	67
Figure 2: Transparency International Corruption perception Index.....	68
Figure 3: Economist’s Intelligence Unit Democracy Index.....	68
Figure 4: Ibrahim’s Index of African Governance.....	70
Figure 5: World Bank Governance Indicators.....	71
Figure 6: Polity IV.....	72
Figure 7: Polyarchy.....	72
Figure 8: Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Report.....	73

II Nigeria

Figure 9: Selected Economic Indicators.....	89
Figure 10: Transparency International Corruption perception Index.....	91
Figure 11: Economist’s Intelligence Unit Democracy Index.....	91
Figure 12: Ibrahim’s Index of African Governance.....	94
Figure 13: World Bank Governance Indicators.....	95
Figure 14: Polity IV.....	95
Figure 15: Polyarchy.....	96
Figure 16: Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Report.....	96

DR Congo

Figure 17: Selected economic indicators.....	109
Figure 18: Transparency International Corruption perception Index.....	109
Figure 19: Economist’s Intelligence Unit Democracy Index.....	110
Figure 20: Ibrahim’s Index of African Governance.....	111
Figure 21: World Bank Governance Indicators.....	112
Figure 22: Polity IV.....	113
Figure 23: Polyarchy.....	113
Figure 24: Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Report.....	114

A. Introduction

I. Democracy and Democratization – Theories and Realities

Over the course of time, the inferred meaning of democracy as a term has changed, evolved, lost and gained in its complexity. Originally stemming from Hellenic political culture, the literal translation as “the rule by the people” has rarely, if ever, been true throughout the centuries separating ancient Greece and modern age.

Attempts to define democracy have been innumerable. Disagreements on their validity have been equally frequent. In the previous century, modern discussion in political literature dedicated to democracy has seen many approaches to defining democracy, deliberative, substantive and procedural being among the most prominent ones.

The proponents of the substantive view on democracy see procedures as a necessary, but insufficient condition for attaining democracy. The advocates of the deliberative interpretation concentrate on preferences, seeing the deliberative methods through which they are being shaped as crucial for democracy. Proponents of the procedural approach on democracy stress the significance of institutions and practices present in democratic societies, without giving too much consideration to the results, or to the modeling of preferences.¹

The modern theoretical standpoints in defining democracy originate in the eighteenth century, with the inception of what will later become known as classical theory.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau based his opinions on the idea of the “social contract” that creates an indivisible body that we are all a part of. Under the “supreme direction of the general will”, we all invest our powers and surrender our persons to this body. He deduces that all decisions made by such an entity, undoubtedly interested in self well-being, shall be good ones.² Therefore, he stresses the importance of the source of authority and the purpose of this collective body: its universal inclusiveness, and its aim for the common good.

Joseph Schumpeter resolutely, convincingly, and with ease refutes this theory of democracy centered around the “will of the people” and the “common good” as guiding principles, dismissing them as utopian³. Instead, he offered a fresh procedural definition by which “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people’s votes”⁴.

1 Dahl, Robert Alan, Shapiro, Ian, Cheibub, José Antonio (eds.), *The Democracy Sourcebook*, MIT Press, 2003, p. 556, p. ix

2 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Pact*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 2

3 Schumpeter, Joseph A., *The Classical Doctrine of Democracy*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 5-11

4 Schumpeter, J., *The Classical Doctrine of Democracy*, p. 9

Samuel Huntington, in his seminal work “The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century”, warns of problems of imprecision and ambiguity emerging when democracy is defined in terms of source of authority or in terms of purposes, as classical theory does. He simply states that the key procedure of democracy is that the leaders are selected by people they govern through the means of competitive elections. Huntington has no doubt that Schumpeter, and those who followed his thought, have won the battle for theoretical supremacy.⁵

This focus on the electoral process has later often been criticized as narrow, overly minimalistic, and insufficient. Indeed, it is not hard to be misled by an oversimplified understanding of these words.

Przeworski, although not blind for the shortcomings of the ideas introduced by Schumpeter, makes a strong case of defending the standpoint revolving around the electoral process. He portrays the theory as far more complex and riddled with meaning than one might conclude upon initial reading. The voting process represents a systematic avoidance of violence as a method of conflict resolution, and brings consequences of its own, such as moderation of the incumbent’s behavior, universal compliance with the results obtained through the process, and its immense informative potential, just to name a few.⁶

Continuing the chain of thinkers focused on the importance of the competitive electoral process as the essence of democracy, Robert Dahl delivered the new concept of “polyarchy”. This social construct is not intended exclusively for the classification of regimes – it can also be applied to assess various other types of social associations, from churches, over company boards, to football clubs. He elicits two distinct dimensions to be observed: contestation and inclusiveness, with civil liberty inherent to the nexus of the two.⁷

One of the most common traps when discussing democracy at any level is failing to acknowledge the difference between the perfect, nonexistent, ideal form of democracy on the one side, and the reality imposed by frames, limitations and constraints of actual circumstances on the other.⁸

Dahl, in an attempt to describe the connections between “the Ideal” and “the Actual”, suggests five criteria that a system should fulfill in order to be seen as democratic. He emphasizes that these, while belonging to the realm of “the Ideal”, can and should serve as a standard towards which “the Actual” should strive, and against which it should be compared. These are, in his opinion:

5 Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1993, p. 366, p. 6

6 Przeworski, Adam, *Minimalist Conception of Democracy*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 12-17

7 Dahl, Robert A., *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, Yale University Press, 1971, p. 267

8 Dahl, Robert A., *On Democracy*, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 217, p 26-29

1. effective participation;
2. voting equality;
3. enlightened understanding;
4. control of the agenda;
5. inclusion of adults.⁹

Moving to the field of reality, Dahl observes modern states and names six institutions that should exist in a country in order for it to be seen as a democracy. Such a large-scale democracy must have:

1. elected officials;
2. free, fair and frequent elections;
3. freedom of expression;
4. alternative sources of information;
5. associational autonomy;
6. inclusive citizenship.¹⁰

With Dahl, and those who followed and expanded the idea of polyarchical democracy, it now becomes clearly visible that Schumpeter's original vision has been elaborated to the extent where it has received a meaning neither so solely concentrated on elections¹¹, nor as narrow and minimalistic as it once might have been perceived. Dahl's work represents a synthesis of procedural, deliberative and substantive approaches in contemporary political thought concerning democracy¹².

Przeworski points to another problem that frequently occurs when attempting to define democracy – the fact that the majority of contemporary definitions of democracy have a common feature: “almost all normatively desirable aspects of political, and [...] even social and economic life are credited as intrinsic to democracy”¹³. In other words, the incessant adding of items to the must-have list of features has overstretched the meaning, and perhaps decreased the value of the term.

Without dispute, there are certain factors from the economic, social, and cultural sphere that have to be present in order for a democracy to function. However, they are often ascribed far greater significance than they deserve, sometimes being lifted to the status of *conditio sine qua non*.¹⁴

9 Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 37-38

10 Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 85-86

11 Diamond, Larry, *Defining and Developing Democracy*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 29-39 , p. 32

12 Dahl, R. A., Shapiro, I., Cheibub, J. A. (eds.), *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 556, p. ix

13 Przeworski, A., *Minimalist Conception of Democracy*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 12

14 Diamond, L., *Defining and Developing Democracy*, p. 29-30

The term “democracy” has, therefore, varied in its meaning, ranging from those deemed narrow and insufficient, usually concentrating on electoral processes, over those that call for wider institutional, social, economical, and other requirements, to those that encompassed such a wide and numerous variety of factors, that it made the concept almost completely elusive, and the fulfillment of such conditions close to impossible.

Diamond claims that the contemporary return to the purely political meaning of the term has made it easier to study democracy, even in its rapport to aforementioned economic and social factors¹⁵.

In the minds of many there is no place for doubt that the modern representative capitalist democracy has prevailed, establishing itself as the only plausible, logical and possible path that all states will, sooner or later, arrive at. Some other authors, however, seem to be less than sure that this is true, or desirable.

Fukuyama’s groundbreaking, radically innovative, and much disputed idea is that, at the point when all states have completed their transition to such, Western type democracy, we can declare the end of history, at least in terms of evolution of human society¹⁶.

In another pivotal work, Robert Dahl posits that, although its opponents have either been lost in the rubble of past times, or buried more recently by their own incompetence and loss of legitimacy, or forced to adopt a more democratic appearance, democracy has yet to win the contest for global support.¹⁷

Certain societies, like some of those belonging to the Confucian or Islamic sphere of influence, as well as some where social values differ greatly from those belonging to, loosely seen, western civilization, tend to foster different views on desired political arrangements. Some agents within the African societies, for example, propagate adherence to more traditional, tribal structures, observing them as a functional and more appropriate way of arriving at political decisions.

Some of Africa’s “big Men” even argued that the one-party state served the purpose of overcoming ethnic and other divisions, and achieving greater cohesion of the nation. Former Tanzanian president Nyerere argued that democracy is actually stronger in a one-party state, as that party represents the whole nation, while multiple parties can encompass only small portions of the society. This sort of argumentation seemed to have success as far as the donors and scientists go, but it had little to support it in practice¹⁸.

15 Diamond, L., *Defining and Developing Democracy*, p. 31

16 Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and The Last Man*, New York, Avon Books, 1993, p. 418

17 Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 1

18 Flanery, Rachel, *The State in Africa: Implications for Democratic Reform*, Crime, Law and Social Change, 29, 1998, p. 179-196, p. 183-4

The others tend to favor the view by which the conditions in Africa have simply not matured to sustain democracy. Some observe that the western liberal type of democracy necessarily includes multipartism, for which the region is just not ready, and suggest more precise changes regarding human and civil rights and political liberties¹⁹.

“Although the terms ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ are often used interchangeably, they are not synonymous. Democracy can be seen as a set of practices and principles that institutionalize and thus ultimately protect freedom”²⁰.

Another lively debate on the issues of democracy that has persisted is whether democracy should be seen as dichotomous, in other words “you either have it or not” concept, with no gray areas in between, or as a continuous one, meaning that there are different extents to which an entity can be democratic or undemocratic.

Democracy has hardly progressed steadily, continuously, and persistently throughout history. It would be fairer to say that, since its debut in ancient Greek polis and the Roman republic, it has disappeared, for centuries at a time, only to appear again, in a different place, or, fortunately, more than one, and often in a changed form. Volumes have been written on factors favorable for promoting democratic changes, as have been about those hindering them.

It is indisputable that the twentieth century witnessed the largest number of transitions to democracy in history. Although the percentage of countries with regimes that can be classified as democratic is about the same as it was almost a century ago, significant shifts in the meantime notwithstanding, it is far more important that the greatest portion of the world’s population thus far lives in democratic conditions²¹. At the end of the twentieth century, out of 192 countries Dahl counted 65 as democratic²².

This time period provides a great variety of different examples regarding the penetration and success of democratization. There are countries that have never gotten a taste of democratization; there are those that, following the process of democratization, failed to consolidate the democratic institutions and reversed; and there are those which have undergone the change and successfully maintained the acquired legacy.²³

19 Decalo, Samuel, *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, African Affairs, 91, 1992, p. 7-35, p. 7

20 Kekic, Laza, *The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index of Democracy*, in *The World in 2007*, ed. of *The Economist*; retrieved January, 10th 2010 from www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_INDEX_2007_v3.pdf

21 Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave*, p. 25-26

22 Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 8

23 Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 145-159

Upon closer study of these experiences, Dahl deduces three conditions that are essential in achieving democratic institutions:

1. control over military and police forces (by elected officials);
2. absence of foreign intervention opposing democratization;
3. democratic beliefs and political culture.

Stressing that the list remains open, he adds another two conditions that are very favorable, albeit not crucial as the previous ones:

1. modern market economy and economic growth;
2. weak/absent cultural pluralism.²⁴

In a similarly named article that preceded his now inevitable book “The Third Wave”, Samuel Huntington claims that the realization of democracy depends upon whether political elites do or do not believe in it as “the least bad form of government for their societies and for themselves”²⁵.

Huntington distinguishes among three main types of democratization process (similar trichotomous divisions are offered by other authors, varying in selection of terms):

1. transformation, led primarily by the ruling elites;
2. replacement, where the opposition plays the key role;
3. transplacement, which is a product of active engagement of both sides.

According to Huntington, a fourth possibility is foreign intervention, which he considered too rare a case in reality to be an item on this list.²⁶ However, from today’s perspective, with the examples of Afghanistan, Iraq and others in mind, it is obvious that democratization by foreign intervention deserves (again) a full spot in this typology.

Huntington closely links the concept of democratization to that of a compromise. He explains that democratization in a society is achieved when this type of arrangement, as a rare event happening between the two sides, becomes reality. Democracy becomes stabilized when such a reality becomes something ordinary.²⁷

Declaring that causes of democratization at different places, at different times are essentially different, Huntington provides an extensive list of what are considered to be conditions favorable for democratization, compiled from a voluptuous body of literature. Although all of these

²⁴ Dahl, R. A., *On Democracy*, p. 145-159

²⁵ Huntington, Samuel P., *Democracy’s Third Wave*, in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 93-98, p. 98

²⁶ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave*, p. 114

²⁷ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave*, p. 172

relationships and dependencies are widely supported, it is obvious even after a superficial examination that some of the factors are directly opposed to each other. For example homogeneity and heterogeneity of a society, or presence and absence of consensus on political and social values, although fundamentally conflicting, all appear on this list. Summing it up, it can be said that there is no single condition sufficient, or necessary to democratize a country; it is always a combination of elements, and that combination is unique for every country.²⁸

Analyzing the course, speed and scope of the democratization process in the previous 200 years, Samuel Huntington discerns among three separate waves and reverse movements that followed them:

1. First wave of democratization (1828-1926)
2. First reverse wave (1922-1942)
3. Second wave of democratization (1943-1962)
4. Second reverse wave (1958-1975)
5. Third wave of democratization²⁹

II Measuring Democracy

After these basic considerations we arrive at another problem of democratic discourse: the measure of democracy. Classifying systems as democratic or nondemocratic can be quite easy. There are rarely significant discrepancies among different research studies that try to assess which countries belong to either category. However, we are still left with a question that poses a bigger challenge: how (non)democratic is a particular system? Where does it lie on an imaginary scale? How is it ranked compared to others? Hence, we have to employ our judgment in order to determine what criterion, or rather a set of them, to use, whether a society meets them or not and, if yes, to what extent. Having seen that different political scientists do not only use different standards, but also value them differently, it is not surprising that there have been numerous propositions as to how to assess and quantify democracy. Here is a brief description of a few that are most widely used among theorists and practitioners, and which will be referred to in the case studies.

Freedom in the World Report:

Freedom House is a US-based organization that has taken an active role in advocating and analyzing the state of liberties and democracy in the world. Founded in 1941, it first published its now famous and frequently cited Freedom in the World Report in 1973. Since the inception, the

²⁸ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave*, p. 37-38

²⁹ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave*, p. 16

Report attempts to grade, track and provide analysis of democracy throughout the changing world on an annual basis. It is probably the most popular and widely used measure of democracy today.

The unbiasedness of the Report has been disputed due to its alleged pro-US inclinations. The issues regarding methodology, based on the opinions and judgments of “experts and scholars”³⁰ have also been raised. The organization itself claims that it “does not maintain a culture-bound view of freedom”, but does, however, proclaim the stand that “freedom for all peoples is best achieved in liberal democratic societies”³¹. It must be said that, although the Freedom in the World Report has had its critics, it remains an indispensable tool in the analysis of democracy for both academia and a wider audience.

The Report separately assesses the state of political rights and civil liberties using scales from 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest degree of freedom, and 7 the lowest. According to the obtained rating, countries and territories are categorized as “Free”, with the average score ranging from 1.0 to 2.5, “Partly free” with the average score between 3.0 and 5.0, or “Not free”, if the average score is above 5.5. This method of classification was introduced in 2003; one could say that, prior to this, categorizing was somewhat more lenient, since the limit for “Partly free” stretched to 5.5, while the combined average score had to exceed 5.5 in order for a country to be proclaimed “Not free”.

In addition to the above mentioned rating and classification, the Freedom in the World Report observes whether a certain country satisfies the minimum requirements necessary to label it as an “electoral democracy”. These criteria are:

1. a competitive, multiparty political system;
2. universal adult suffrage for all citizens (with exceptions for restrictions that states may legitimately place on citizens as sanctions for criminal offenses);
3. regularly contested elections conducted in conditions of ballot secrecy, reasonable ballot security, and in the absence of massive voter fraud, and that yield results that are representative of the public will;
4. significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.

The label pertains to the last election(s) held, and is removed if the entity fails to meet the said criteria.³²

30 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: Methodology*, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/FIW_MethodologySummary_ForWeb.pdf

31 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: Methodology*

32 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: Methodology*

By contrast, in order for a country to be called a “liberal democracy”, it has to portray a far greater scope of civil liberties. According to the Freedom House methodology, all countries that are categorized as “Free” satisfy the demands set for both “electoral” and “liberal” democracies, while some of the countries from the group of the “Partly free” can be called “electoral democracies”, but they do not reach the standards set for “liberal democracies”.

Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index:

Starting in 2006, the so called Intelligence Unit of the popular weekly magazine “The Economist” has been conducting a study of its own. The Economist Intelligence Unit democracy index aims at assessing the state of democracy in 167 countries in the world. Finding some democracy assessment tools, namely Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Report, to be too narrow in their view of what democracy encompasses, The Economist Intelligence Unit uses 60 different indicators, and centers its index around five categories:

1. electoral process and pluralism;
2. civil liberties;
3. the functioning of government;
4. political participation;
5. political culture.³³

The study used a scale from 1 to 10, with countries being classified in four categories, depending on the score. The countries averaging 8-10 are in the category of Full democracies, followed by Flawed democracies whose mean score is 6-7.9, Hybrid regimes ranging 4-5.9 on the scale, and Authoritarian regimes with an average score under 4 on the scale. The countries in the first three categories are considered to be democracies, while the last category is labeled as dictatorial.³⁴

Sub-Saharan Africa reflects a grim image. Out of a total of 44 countries observed in both 2006 and 2007, only one is in the category of Full democracies (Mauritius). The number of Flawed democracies decreased from seven to six between the two reporting periods, with Mali being demoted to the group of Hybrid regimes. Sierra Leone represents an addition to the latter category, since it improved its status from Authoritarian to Hybrid regime. Thus, 15 Sub-Saharan countries have scores that classify them as Hybrid regimes, and the remaining 22 have scores that put them in the group of Authoritarian regimes. Unsurprisingly, it ranks at the bottom of the list comparing

³³ Kekic, Laza, *The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index of Democracy*

³⁴ Kekic, L., *The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index of Democracy*

seven different regional scores, with only North Africa and Middle East showing poorer democratic achievement.³⁵

The Polity Data Series:

The Polity Data Series is another widely used instrument among political researchers. Originally started in the '70s and periodically updated ever since, it aims at providing “data resource for studying regime change and the effects of regime authority” by “coding the authority characteristics [...] for purposes of comparative, quantitative analysis”³⁶.

The Polity Series uses a 21-point scale which encompasses a wide scope of regime authority, ranging from the lowest scoring hereditary monarchies (-10) to the highest ranking consolidated democracies (+10). The obtained scores are converted into three categories: autocracies, ranging from -10 to -6 on the used scale, anocracies, explained as “mixed, or incoherent authority regimes”, with assigned values of -5 to +5 and, finally, democracies, scoring +6 to +10.³⁷

Vanhanen’s Index of democracy (Polyarchy Dataset):

Vanhanen’s Index of democracy or Polyarchy Dataset was first produced by Tatu Vanhanen in the early '70s, and is maintained by the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Oslo, Norway. The Index covers 187 countries and territories in the period between 1810 and 2000³⁸. Drawing on election data, it uses Dahl’s two-dimensional model as the departure point, measuring competition and participation (hence the name), and deriving the democracy index from them.³⁹

Afrobarometer:

Afrobarometer is a regionally oriented research project conducted cooperatively between two African-based institutions – the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) and the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) from Ghana, on one side, and the Michigan State University, USA, on the other. It is based on surveys of public opinion and attitude in the political, economic and social sphere. The standardized sets of questions pertaining to democracy, markets and civil society are conducted in regular cycles, allowing for the possibility to compare results between

35 *The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index of Democracy*, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_INDEX_2007_v3.pdf and <http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf>

36 Polity Data Series, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>

37 Polity Data Series

38 International Peace Research Institute, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Governance/Vanhanens-index-of-democracy/>

39 Norwegian Social Science Data Services, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.nsd.uib.no/macrodataloguide/set.html?id=34&sub=1>

different countries within the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to track changes that occur over time for a specific country.⁴⁰

The Afrobarometer has thus far released results of three rounds that have been completed since the initiation in 1999. Round 1 was conducted in 12, Round 2 in 15, and Round 3 in 18 countries. Round 4, currently under way, encompasses the largest number of countries so far – 20. As far as countries of particular interest for this thesis are concerned, Ghana and Nigeria were subject to all three completed rounds of surveys, while DR Congo is yet to be included in the project.⁴¹

Bretton and Chang, while discussing the links between building the state and building democracy, point to the crucial role of improving governance in Africa. The features of governance, some of them at a dismal level in most of the African countries, indicate the state of the state, which in turn, affects the level of democratization.⁴² Zakaria goes further, claiming that it is not democracy that the world lacks today, but governance⁴³.

Apart from the scholars, the significance of governance has also been recognized by numerous practitioners. Realizing the magnitude of the problem, the African Union has made good governance one of its priorities as a necessary element in developing The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program was thus supplemented with the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance in 2002, which reiterates the commitment to adhere to democratic values and, in particular, good governance⁴⁴.

According to the World Bank, governance is broadly defined as “traditions and institutions by which authority is exercised”⁴⁵. This includes:

1. processes by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced;
2. the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies;

the respect of the citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.⁴⁶

40 *Afrobarometer*, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>

41 *Afrobarometer*

42 Bratton, Michael, Chang, Eric C. C., State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?, *Comparative Political Studies*, 39, p. 1059-1083, p. 1061

43 Zakaria, Fareed, *The Limits of Democracy*, *The Newsweek*, 01/29/07, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.fareedzakaria.com/articles/newsweek/012907.html>

44 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): *Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance*, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/documents/2.pdf>

45 Kaufmann, Daniel, Kraay, Aart, Mastruzzi, Massimo, *Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2007*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4654, p. 105, p. 7, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/06/24/000158349_20080624113458/Rend/ered/PDF/wps4654.pdf

46 Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., Mastruzzi, M., *Governance Matters VII*, p. 7

Thus, governance is of essential importance for the development and entrenchment of democracy on the continent, as well as vice versa. The good governance agenda is routinely linked to the arrangements with the World Bank as well as with the majority of other donors as a prerequisite for awarding assistance. As the issues that rise in relation to good governance represent significant factors, and are crucial to democratization processes, the assessment of governance is valuable to this paper.

The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators:

Based on the aforementioned definition, the World Bank has developed Worldwide Governance Indicators, that first appeared for the year 1996. The Indicators were published biannually until 2002, and on yearly basis ever since, providing valuable data for over 200 countries around the world.

The Indicators draw on a large number of sources of data retrieved from over 30 different organizations across the globe. These are then assigned to categories that measure six dimensions of governance, constructing an equal number of aggregate indicators.⁴⁷

These six dimensions of governance are:

1. Voice and Accountability, which attempts to measure “perceptions of the extent to which a the country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media”;
2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence, focusing on “measuring perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism”;
3. Government Effectiveness, centered around “measuring perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies”;
4. Regulatory Quality, with the goal to measure “perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development”;
5. Rule of Law, “measuring perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence”;

⁴⁷ Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., Mastruzzi, M., *Governance Matters VII*, p. 1

6. Control of Corruption, aimed at “measuring perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as ‘capture’ of the state by elites and private interests”.⁴⁸

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance:

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance, another potentially important instrument has surfaced in the previous several years as a product of cooperation between The Mo Ibrahim Foundation, an African based institution established by Mohamed Ibrahim, a telecommunications magnate and businessman, and the renowned Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Governance. The authors aim not only to provide all the interested parties with a comprehensive tool for assessing and tracking government performance in the region, but also to point out that the actual situation, which is improving, is often blurred by the most prominent, bad occurrences on the continent.⁴⁹

Seeing its first edition in 2007, and set to be published annually, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance attempts to assess the quality of governance in all 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, as seen through five different categories:

1. Safety and Security;
2. Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption;
3. Participation and Human Rights;
4. Sustainable Economic Development
5. Human Development.⁵⁰

The 57 criteria encompassed “capture the quality of services provided to citizens by governments”, and try to reflect the results of governance on the people of the countries in question.⁵¹

The first edition of the Index (2007) was based on the data from 2005, while the second (2008) used data collected in 2006. On the first issuance, the data collected in 2000 and 2005 was also provided. The results in each category, as well as the overall score are given on a scale from 0 to 100, while the rank represents the position, based on the overall score, among all 48 countries of the region.⁵²

48 Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., Mastruzzi, M., *Governance Matters VII*, p. 7-8

49 The Ibrahim Index of African Governance, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index-2008/pdf/english_briefing_note.pdf

50 The Ibrahim Index of African Governance

51 The Ibrahim Index of African Governance

52 The Ibrahim Index of African Governance

Failed State Index

Fund for Peace, a US based organization founded in 1957, has been publishing its Failed State Index since 2005, supported by the prestigious Foreign Policy Magazine. Using an original methodology, Fund for Peace uses a powerful data collection system to index, scan and evaluate a large body of open-source documents of various nature. The results, collected from May to December of the previous year, are then scored against twelve social, economic and political indicators, each bearing between 0 and 10 points, with 0 signifying the most stable, and 10 the least stable possible environment. The obtained results, ranging from 0 to 120, are then used to compile a list of states, with the highest ranking being the least stable ones. The research started by encompassing only 76 countries in 2005, but reaching a figure of 177 by 2007⁵³.

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

There is no doubt that corruption is very difficult to express in quantifiable measures. There is also no doubt that, in societies as deeply perverted by it as most of African societies are, every day people feel it on every day basis.

CPI has been published annually since 1995. Based on opinion surveys and expert assessments, this quantitative tool aims to measure corruption in more than 150 countries.⁵⁴

The main source of criticism of this index lays in its methodology. Perception is by nature a subjective dimension, susceptible to many influences, rendering the index highly imprecise. The comparison of data on annual basis should also be taken with restrictions, as sources of data and methodology vary from year to year. Although the shortcomings of the index are evident, it is still widely used by scholars as well as general public.

B. Democratization in Africa – Processes and Obstacles

I Introduction

There are numerous factors that influence the political reshaping. The strength of their impact varies from country to country, and is not linear. As we can see, different authors tend to stress different factors as being the most decisive in democratization processes. As it is impossible to thoroughly examine all of them, we will try to explore those that are most often seen as the crucial ones in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa.

53 Failed State Index, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.fundforpeace.org>

54 Transparency International's Corruption Index, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.transparency.org/tools/measurement>

Analyzing what is, as we saw, usually mentioned as prerequisites for democratization, for example capitalism, relative wealth, cultural unity, civic culture, social agents, or Western Christianity, Joseph concludes that African countries lacked the majority, if not all of them, and therefore, represented an “infertile terrain” for democracy⁵⁵.

Stephen N. Ndegwa compiled a list of major reasons for failure of democratic consolidation. Economic crises and deep discontent, institutional weakness/decay, external conditioning and dependency, post-cold war fluidity and lack of external patronage and, finally, patrimonialism and personal rule tendencies are the factors that are deeply woven into the fabric of African states and societies. Although these conditions were the power behind the anti-authoritarian changes, they have proven not to be particularly conducive to further democratization and consolidation of democratic institutions⁵⁶.

Despite the existence of undoubtedly formidable efforts by private actors at home and abroad to promote human rights, civil liberties, and pluralist democracy, as well as the onset of encouraging upheavals that swept over Eastern Europe, Joseph claims that these impulses would remain futile, albeit praiseworthy, if it was not for three key factors: the worsening economic crisis, the increasing pressure from international financial institutions and aid agencies to gain greater control over economic policy, and changes in international relations following the end of the Cold War, namely the rising intolerance for authoritarian regimes, which were previously welcome as allies in the fight with a bigger enemy.⁵⁷

It is habitual in relevant academic literature to make a distinction between internal and external reasons for the onset and spreading of democratization. In an attempt to summarize contemporary academic views on causes of democratization in Africa, Abrahamsen concludes that it is widely agreed upon that internal factors carried much greater significance. The external, or international factors seem to have just “made things *marginally* less difficult for those in Africa seeking to democratize their political systems and *marginally* more difficult for those (mainly incumbent authoritarian elites) who sought to prevent them from doing so”.⁵⁸

Sachs has a somewhat more balanced opinion. He states that there is no doubt that the corrupt and authoritarian rule of some African leaders has facilitated the impact of external influences. In his

55 Joseph, Richard, *Democratization in Africa after 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives*, Comparative Politics, 29, 1997, p.363-382, p. 368-369

56 Ndegwa, Stephen N., *A Decade of Democracy in Africa*, Journal of Asian and African Studies, 36, 2001, p. 1-14, p. 4-5

57 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 363

58 Abrahamsen, Rita, *The Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective on Democratization*, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 35, 1997, p. 129-52, p. 129

words, “if it is true that these leaders hanged themselves and their fellow citizens, the rich countries often provided the rope”⁵⁹.

However, upon closer inspection, we can observe a high dependency of the internal factors on the external ones as well as a great degree of overlapping between the two.⁶⁰

The influence of the end of the Cold War and the demands and pressures of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are considered to be the foremost influences from the outside. The deepening economic crises and loss of legitimacy (in great part due to mismanagement, corruption and other practices in close relation to neopatrimonial rule) are seen as the principal stimuli from within. The external and internal factors formed a nexus that led to a surge of liberalization and democratic attempts on the continent.

The same reasons, crucial for this wave of regional democratization, can be roughly divided into political, social and economic ones. The boundaries of such a classification are also blurred, as some factors clearly span over all three categories. Neopatrimonialism, for example, generally acknowledged as one of the key features of the African state, and without doubt one of its gravest ailments, represents a social phenomenon that has an overwhelming economic and political significance. Despite the downside of this grouping, it seems appropriate to be used for the purposes of this thesis.

II Political Reshaping

Since the independence, all but a handful of African countries have failed to maintain the newly acquired democratic institutions and regressed into the trap of authoritarian regimes. When considering external political factors, it is impossible to ignore the Cold War. Ironically, the final gain of full independence was followed by further manipulation of African countries, as proxy subjects during the era of the Cold War, and/or as viable suppliers of natural resources⁶¹. The new democracies in sub Saharan Africa, and elsewhere, were continuously under pressure to make an ideological, and even a military choice between the rival sides. This was even more evident in ethnically diverse states, which also had to endure a constant struggle among the proponents of the two sides from within⁶².

59 Sachs, Jeffrey D., McArthur, John W., Schmidt-Traub, Guido, Kruk, Margaret, Bahadur, Chandrika, Faye, Michael, McCord, Gordon, *Ending Africa's Poverty Trap*, in *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Brainard, William C., Perry, George L. (eds.), Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 117-216, p. 136

60 Abrahamsen, R., *The Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution*, p. 129

61 Sachs et al., *Ending Africa's Poverty Trap*, p. 136

62 Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar, *On Cultures of Democracy*, *Public Culture*, 19, 2007, p. 1-22, p. 4

The ideological and military fight for the clients between the two hostile blocks, in Africa and elsewhere, had largely taken the appearance of helping the less fortunate. The Soviet Union and its satellites on one, and the western powers led by the United States on the other side, engaged in a race for political and economical dominance on the continent. This was primarily exercised through abundant financial aid to the newly independent countries.

The political elites in Sub-Saharan countries, concerned with issues like poverty and illiteracy, were more inclined to the Soviet-led socialist doctrines of distributive justice, social welfare and regulated markets. In face of the Cold War struggle and increased pressure from the West, they preferred to take a neutral rather than an openly negative stance towards the penetration of communism. That is how the West discovered that authoritarian regimes represented a much stronger barrier against the Soviet block than ideologically hesitant ones.⁶³

In the situation where two opposing groups of patrons compete for the clients, these can utilize greater leverage. Both the West and the Soviet Union, in their geostrategic race, were trying to get as many clients as they could. This raised the importance of African countries, and made the donors look the other way when their African allies were engaging in severe human rights abuses.⁶⁴ African countries, and their increasingly authoritarian leaders, were able to maximize their role as desirable allies in the Cold War battle to extract the desired benefits, financial, military, or otherwise. Moreover, neither of the two groups of donors were ready to sacrifice an ally amidst growing reports of human right abuses and wide-spread oppression.

By the mid '80s, however, the opinions of the Soviet elites had undergone a significant change. They no longer adhered to the idea of the “irreconcilable struggle between imperialism and socialism for the allegiance of the Third World peoples”, and the Soviet financial assistance to African countries was beginning to wane.⁶⁵

The end of the bipolar struggle for influence and power, in addition to triggering transitions to (more) democratic systems in Eastern Europe, had a formidable impact on pro-democratic changes in Africa.

After the end of the bipolar rivalry, and the onset of a new struggle for power on the international stage, Africa found itself playing another important role on this newly set stage, primarily through its vast reserves of natural resources and raw materials.

63 Gaonkar, D. P., *On Cultures of Democracy*, p. 4

64 Dunning, Thad, *Conditioning the Effects of Aid: Cold War Politics, Donor Credibility, and Democracy in Africa*, International Organization, 58, 2004, p. 409-423, p. 411-3

65 Dunning, T., *Conditioning the Effects of Aid*, p. 414

The post-Cold war era also witnessed the departure of the politicians belonging to the first African generation, and the uprise of the ones that had no base in the fight for independence⁶⁶. This was a period of a significant generational change between the ones that waged the battles of independence, and faced the immediate difficulties brought by the fruits of this fight, and the ones that followed them. While the former generation was driven by basic democratic principles of self-rule in their struggle for independence from colonial powers, the latter found their motivation in fighting the inner enemy embodied in the form of the autocratic regime.

In the thirty-three years that stand between the first Sub-Saharan country proclaiming independence, Ghana in 1957, and the last colony losing that status, Namibia in 1990, the methods of regime transitions were primarily limited to military coups. The idea that a president stays in the office for a previously determined period of time, or for as long as the voters showed their support for him was virtually unknown. Only three countries of the region held competitive elections during the '70s; in all of them the incumbents were quickly ousted by the military⁶⁷.

The military took upon itself the role of a superior entity, an element that will perform as a cohesive force within society, preserving order amidst omnipresent crisis. These sealed echelons were creating policy away from the public eye, not allowing for any civilian opposition, safe in their hierarchical heights.

African leaders were defending the one-party rule claiming that multipartism, and the subsequent choice, was “an imported luxury which is neither needed nor affordable in developing countries”, and that democratic institutions can be achieved within the frame of a single party rule. Stevens of Sierra Leone saw multipartism as “a system of [...] institutionalized tribal and ethnic quinquennial warfare euphemistically known as elections (which) contributes an open invitation to anarchy and disunity⁶⁸”.

According to Decalo, whether it was a benevolent, more firm, or simply tyrannic form of governing, the thirty years between the independence and the beginning of democratic changes in the '90s “empirically negated” the single-party rule.⁶⁹

It is not difficult to see the source of a certain level of skepticism towards democratization processes in Africa. The long promised freedom from colonizers was, for the most part, very short lived, leading to yet another form of forced and unwilling subjection to various authoritarian regimes. Many attempts of reversal back to democracy in the '70s and '80s also ended rapidly. This caused a

66 Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel, *Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress*, Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel (ed.), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004, p. 351, p. 5

67 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 368-369

68 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 9-10

69 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 11

certain degree of frustration with democratic promises, as the experience showed that they often vanish soon after their most vocal proponents seize the power.

“At independence, African leaders based their rule on the promise of improved material welfare. But as the economic predicament worsened during the 1980s, the rhetoric of development sounded increasingly hollow.”⁷⁰ However, the continuously deteriorating economic situation in combination with abuse of power, clientelism and mismanagement led to the state’s failure to perform its basic purposes and a general loss of state legitimacy.

After the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) did not render expected results, the degree of public dissatisfaction rose. It became evident that, with the state as incapacitated by neopatrimonial practices as it was, the political restructuring needed to accompany the economic one, or, to put it in Young’s words, “without a remoralization of public institutions, and minimal accountability and transparency, economic liberalization could never be sustained”⁷¹.

The tendency to attribute the bulk of blame for Africa’s problems to economic (under)development had to be revised, after it became evident that a lot can be ascribed to political problems characteristic for the continent. This led to a new focus, aimed at the character of the state⁷².

Bretton and Chang point out that African states, in addition to lacking the classic socio-economic requirements observed as necessary for democracy – e.g. sense of national identity and progressing distributive economy – also lack a crucial condition from the political realm: a viable state⁷³.

The African state was strong in the way that it owned most of the economy, and that the bureaucracy was the only cohesive and organized group on the political scene. On the other hand, it was weak, since it failed to achieve legitimacy in the sense of ability to command obedience, and since certain marginalized groups expressed secessionist tendencies.⁷⁴

The state in Africa was so badly eroded during the decades of neopatrimonial looting, that it lacked the capacity, and legitimacy, to perform its function. At the beginning of the ’90s, Decalo described the African state, whether civilian or military, as being fundamentally unaccountable, securing some stability through the “social glue of patronage” or foreign aid, embarking on unsustainable economic adventures based on the distorted view of its own possibilities, bankrupting on the way. Shortly, the state in Africa was morally, economically and politically bankrupt.⁷⁵

70 Abrahamsen, R., *The Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution*, p. 134

71 Young, Crawford, *The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa: Ambiguities and Contradictions*, in *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*, Joseph, Richard (ed.), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, p. 15-38, p. 15

72 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.180

73 Bratton, M., Chang, E., *State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 1059

74 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 8

75 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 13-4

This created the internal environment for the upcoming wave of democratization. The strong external impulses came in the form of events that swept over Eastern Europe, followed by political pressure for African countries to join the global tendency towards democratization⁷⁶.

Although the pictures of democratic upheavals in Eastern Europe definitely had some impact on the subsequent movements for democracy in Africa, it would be wrong to see them as a “knee-jerk” of the processes happening in the former Soviet block. Africa was for some time, due to a range of internal and external factors, getting ready to demand democratization.⁷⁷

Upon the beginning of the late 20th century wave of democratization on the African continent, the hopes of simultaneous successful transitions in the political and economic realms were not given too much base. Such a grim view was founded on three reasons, as van de Walle notices. Firstly, as it has previously been experienced in other parts of the world, democratization causes far greater participation, and puts the new democratic state leaders under “strong distributive pressures”, from both the new forces on the political scene, as well as the old ones. Secondly, the weakening of the executive branch in favor of the legislative would hinder the former from making and implementing decisions necessary for ensuring economic stabilization, and worsen the existing problems of corruption, poor economic leadership and state failure. The third reason lies in the much disputed role, behavior, and agenda of the West⁷⁸.

Analogous to Huntington’s global waves of democratization, we can also discern three African waves and the reverse movements, but, due to obvious reasons, occurring in a historically much narrower period. The first happened in the period preceding and following the independence⁷⁹. The anti-colonial fight, that was spearheaded by the basic democratic idea that people should be able to rule themselves was swiftly followed by a myriad of nondemocratic regimes⁸⁰. The second came in the ’70s, together with its counterpart. The third one was more in line with its global analogue, taking place during the 1980s and 1990s, although some see it as far from over, and even further from definitely successful.⁸¹

According to Young, using Huntington’s time-line, democratic waves in Africa coincide with the late periods of the second and the third global wave, while the lengthy period of “patrimonial autocracy” can be seen as the reversal movement that followed the second wave⁸².

76 Young, C., *The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa*, p.23-4

77 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 13

78 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Economic Reform in a Democratizing Africa*, (a), *Comparative Politics*, 32, 1999, p. 21-41; p.21-22

79 Young, Crawford, *Africa: An interim balance sheet*, *Journal of Democracy*, 7, 1996, p. 53-68, p. 55-6

80 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 363

81 Young, C., *Africa: An interim balance sheet*, p. 55-6

82 Young, C., *The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa*, p. 16

Relying on Dahl's well-known two-dimensional model that encompasses contestation (competition) and inclusiveness (participation), Bratton and de Walle developed a typology of African regimes. The 47 countries that comprised the Sub-Saharan region at the time preceding the wave of democratization in the '90s, were divided into five different categories:

1. plebiscitary one-party system (16 countries);
2. military oligarchy (11 countries);
3. competitive one-party system (13 countries);
4. settler oligarchy (2 countries);
5. multiparty system (5 countries).

The first three types, that account for as much as 40 countries, all represent different forms of neopatrimonial regimes. Additional five countries, from the multiparty type, can also be viewed as displaying neopatrimonial characteristics if we acknowledge their inclination to personal rule. Only two out of forty-seven countries, Namibia and South Africa, that constitute the category of settler oligarchies, broke away from, otherwise standard, neopatrimonial practices⁸³.

It is also important to understand that this typology is not firm and absolute. Not abandoning neopatrimonialism as the umbrella feature, countries have displayed a tendency to change in relation to the two dimensions, moving from one category to the other⁸⁴. Responding to changing situations, the leaders and appropriate elites also adapted the rules of the game, nonetheless never stepping out of the boundaries that allowed them to remain comfortably cushioned in the neopatrimonial tradition.

We will now take a closer look at the three regime types that are clearly neopatrimonial, encompassing a great majority of African countries, including the three countries that will be subjected to a more thorough examination as case studies.

Plebiscitary one-party systems. Typically led by a civilian ruler that was revered for his contribution in the struggle for independence in the '60s, or a military leader that rose in a coup a decade later, this was the most frequent type of regime on the continent. They were characterized by high levels of participation and very low competition. Very high voter turnouts (above 90%), and a matching quantity of votes that supported the incumbent regime were offset by virtually non-

83 Bratton, Michael, Van De Walle, Nicolas, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 307, p. 77-82

84 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 77-82

existent competition, obvious from the fact that opposition parties were banned, and that there was only one single candidate, from the only/ruling party, per election⁸⁵.

Military oligarchies. Frequently headed by a prominent personality, they were de facto led by an elite comprised primarily of military personnel, aided by civilian experts and technocrats. The military officers that ruled the state tended to belong to the generations that performed the repeated attempts of military coups during the '70s and '80s. Contestation was present within the elite decision-making, but only there. Participation was at a very low level, with elections often being very rare, if held at all. Opposition in form of parties and associations was forbidden. Compared to the previous type, the plebiscitary one-party system, sometimes ran by a military ruler, military oligarchies were characterized by a much greater military presence in political life. However, the institutions of the system appeared to effectively carry out their functions through established civil or military hierarchy. Both Nigeria and Ghana represented examples of military oligarchies until the early '90s⁸⁶.

Competitive one-party system. These regimes were usually governed by independence-days heroes, as in the examples of Zambia (Kenneth Kaunda) and Côte d'Ivoire (Félix Houphouët-Boigny), who often predetermined their heirs to the presidential posts through previously established party predominance. Characterized by high levels of participation, similarly to plebiscitary one-party systems, their competitive counterparts allowed a certain degree of competition. Ordinary voters had some choice among same-party candidates, even if that choice had no actual bearing on the actual policy. Some opposition was also permitted through media and civic associations⁸⁷.

Having in mind all the described hindrances, one might say that what followed was a democratic surprise, defying the prognosis and, obviously, thus far established set of rules by which it should not have occurred. For example, only a few years preceding these changes Huntington wrote that, due to poverty and violence immanent to their political life, African states were not "likely to move in democratic direction"⁸⁸.

There are different standpoints which consider the events not so startling. "Spawned by stifling political authoritarianism and economic decay, and triggered by the spectacle of the fall of titans in Bucharest and elsewhere, in 1990 a powerful backwash of popular demonstrations for 're-democratization' flooded all corners of Africa. By 1991 the backwash was a veritable tidal wave,

85 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 77-82

86 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 77-82

87 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 77-82

88 Huntington, Samuel P., *Will more Countries Become Democratic?*, *Political Science Quarterly*, 99, 1984, p. 193-218, p. 214

methodically transforming the political map of the continent.⁸⁹ That is to say that the shifts that swept the continent in the early '90s were a corollary of the situation.

The turbulent political shifts away from one party and military rule in the first half of '90s followed a certain sequential pattern, which can be substantiated by statistical data: they were introduced by **political protests**, the frequency of which reached the maximum in 1991; followed by **liberalization reforms** which were at the highest stage in 1992; then came **competitive elections** that culminated in 1993, with **democratic trend** indicators continuing to rise in the following year, as well. It can be concluded that each one of these phases ushered the next one, making way for, what seemed to be a relatively rapid, wide-spread and rather successful transition to more democratic forms of regimes on the continent⁹⁰.

The pertaining literature often saw the African Third wave as a period of rebirth or second independence of Sub-Saharan countries. This optimistic view lost its plausibility in view of relevant empirical data and observations that followed. Moreover, it gave way to the phenomenon that will later be dubbed as “afropessimism”. So, why did the pendulum of scientific opinion sway from one extreme to the other? Where is the right measure of success or failure of the African struggle for democracy? What are the factors and conditions that led to results so diverse?

The surge of democratic changes that swept across African societies in the first half of '90 did not necessarily mean democracy. The liberalization of political systems did not always proceed to the heights that we label as democratic.

The political turbulences that marked the beginning of the '90s had very different outcomes. While some countries resisted the turmoil and retained the authoritarian regimes, others underwent liberalization to a certain extent; while some bounced back to authoritarianism after a brief period of a democratic attempt, some other ventured into a new, democratic experience. As Brettonand de Walle put it “ the political processes of the period displayed a combination of *both change and continuity*”⁹¹

There were even voices that African regime transitions are so far away from what we tend to call “democratization” elsewhere in the world, that it is “both arbitrary and terribly premature”⁹² to use it when discussing political changes in Africa.

89 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 7

90 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 3-4

91 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 6

92 Schatzberg, Michael, *Power, Legitimacy and 'Democratization' in Africa*, cited according to Bratton, M., Van de Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 10

By 1995, the majority of African countries had undergone some form of liberalization. Some have even experienced democratization, to a different extent, and with different success. After the initial period of liberalization, and occasional transition to democratic regimes, the question arose of what path will be taken from there. Possibilities were many – reversal to authoritarianism, stagnation and struggle, and decisive progress towards the establishment of democracy being the most prominent ones, with many shades in between.

Having in mind the array of events of very varied nature that took place in Africa in the mid-'90s, ranging from elections held under circumstances of open intimidation of voters, and those that could not be consistently conducted throughout the territory in face of threats of violent conflict, over new victories of old leaders, proclamation of new constitutions, to military coups with democratic endings, and landmark, overturning elections⁹³, it was only natural to expect an equally diverse range of outcomes of these occurrences.

Regime transition can be described as a “struggle between competing political forces over the rules of the political game and for the resources with which the game is played”. It should also be emphasized that regime transitions can be very diverse: the speed at which they occur can differ to a great extent, ranging from quick, sharp transformations to those that evolve for much longer time, as is the case with gradual liberalizations of some despotic rules; the direction of a transition is also a complex variable, as it can lead towards a more democratic system, or a more authoritarian one; and, finally, we must not forget that any transition can be a subject of reversal, with new regimes failing to establish themselves and making way for the return of the old ones⁹⁴.

Although we can discern different results brought by the changes that occurred in the early '90s, several key innovations were introduced in the realm of African politics in comparison to the earlier post-colonial period.

First of all, the concept of political competition, previously largely unknown to the majority of the citizenry, was introduced. The choice over those who will govern did not exist even in countries that held elections, since they were generally noncompetitive and with more than foreseeable outcomes. The change that happened in this regard in the mentioned period was of a stable character, continuing to the present days. The number of countries holding competitive elections increased dramatically. In the second half of the '80s only nine countries held competitive elections, determined by the presence of opposition in the legislature, and even these were seriously marred.

93 Young, C., *The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa*, p. 15

94 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 10

In comparison, the first half of the '90s saw thirty-seven of them.⁹⁵ The number of competitive elections in the region rose from an average of two per year, to fourteen⁹⁶.

The elections, previously often “noncompetitive affairs”, were the most tangible result. In the period between 1960 and 1990, only one president of a Sub-Saharan country lost the elections, whereas between 1990 and 2005 that ratio rose to one out of seven. This manner of change of incumbents certainly boosts public confidence in democracy. Even if we could not always claim that the electoral process was free and fair, the simple adherence to repetitive competitive elections seems to have a positive impact on democratic consciousness, media, civil society, and office-holders themselves, motivating them to mobilize electoral support.⁹⁷

The second major change brought by the period was the leadership turnover. Before 1990, the majority of the national leaders in Africa were placed either by a military coup, or by ruling party elites. These were also the main paths of leadership succession, if any was to occur at all. The incumbents defended their positions by concentration of power, highly personalistic rule, and procedural protections against being removed from power by elections. This slowly began to be exchanged for more democratic transitions of power in the 1990s, and has continued ever since.⁹⁸ Perhaps less striking in terms of pace and number of countries that experienced it in the mentioned time period, the shift in the manner of leadership changes, from those highly disputable, to those rightfully claimed fully democratic was more than significant.

Finally, the range of political regimes of the continent underwent a significant change. Prior to this, the majority of regimes could be classified as either civilian one-party systems, military oligarchies, or a hybrid of these two categories. After this interval, the one-party systems were, at least as far as the legal framework is concerned, nonexistent.

However, one should not fall into the trap of overemphasizing the success of the democratic wave that swept over the entire continent in the 1990s. This was often done, leading to the phenomenon later dubbed “afrooptimism”, with a great number of theorists, practitioners, and interested public, domestic and abroad, being carried away by the sudden, rapid and overwhelming change, that proved not to be as profound as the majority hoped.

95 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 6-7

96 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p.3

97 Diamond, Larry, *The State of Democracy in Africa*, paper presented at the conference *Democratization in Africa: What Progress toward Institutionalization?*, co-organized by US State Department, US Embassy in Ghana and the Center for Democratic Development (CDD), held in Ghana, 2007, p. 1-15, p. 5, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_GIF_confreports/african_democ_2008.pdf

98 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 7-8

The “sheer romance” of the developments on the continent was concealing the fact that it would be very difficult to “set up stable democratic governments in countries long beset by poverty, authoritarianism, low administrative capacity, and ethnolinguistic divisions”⁹⁹.

Primarily, the scope of change was not as large as it might have seemed. An almost identical number of leaders was voted out of their offices as was voted to stay there. In other words, a vast number of ruling African politicians, adapting to the new situation, and observing the demise of some of them, quickly realized that they would have to harness the electoral power to their advantage. A milder version of this practice was the descent of old leaders, which were replaced by their clones, very unlikely to bring any major change in directing the political affairs of the country in question¹⁰⁰.

Brettonand de Walle posit that the democratization process relies in a great measure on institutions that exist, and that ensure political competition; consequently, it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve democracy when these institutions do not exist within a society¹⁰¹.

The prevalent form of regimes that emerged as the result of democratization processes at the beginning of the previous decade was what is usually named pseudodemocracy or virtual democracy. The terms are credited to Diamond and Joseph, respectively, and connote the continued existence of authoritarianism, or at least illiberalism and neopatrimonial practices with competitive elections¹⁰².

When discussing the reasons for the onset of democratization in Africa, but also for frequent slips back to authoritarianism, we can distinguish between two main groups of theories that have emerged in the literature. The first focuses on the state, defined as a set of core political structures, administrative institutions governed by law that, through coercion, claim a legitimate command over certain territory. The second group is centered around regimes, seen as sets of political procedures, popularly called the rules of the game, determining who can play in the decision-making process and how. The proponents of the first attitude argue that democracy can not be established without an appropriate political structure to support it, namely the state. The advocates of the second view, on the other hand, posit that these structures have to be legitimized, which requires an adequate set of procedures, or a regime.¹⁰³

99 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Africa's Range of Regimes*, Journal of Democracy, 13, 2002, p. 66-80, p. 66

100 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 8

101 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 273

102 Ndegwa, S. N., *A Decade of Democracy in Africa*, p. 2

103 Bratton, M., Chang, E., *State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 1060-1

Bretton and Chang propose a third approach, unifying the previous two: “a self-reinforcing cycle in which state-building and regime consolidation feed each other”. According to this opinion, a viable state is not only a prerequisite for democratization, but also its product.¹⁰⁴

There are several crucial differences in “the nature of political authority and its embodiment in political institutions” between Africa and other parts of the world that have experienced political shifts towards more democratic forms of regimes. These differences claim a vital role in the character of political transitions on the continent¹⁰⁵.

The regime transitions more often than not failed to substantially empower the institutions of the political systems. The state remained largely inapt for the provision of basic services, law and order could not be guaranteed, judiciary and legislative institutions were feeble. New leaders, having learned the lessons of the past, tended to try to grab as much from the acquired positions as they could, as fast as they could. The political parties that emerged after long one-party rule did not hesitate to attempt to reestablish exclusive control once they were in the position to do so. Although the non-governmental institutions, like political parties, media, unions, civic organizations, churches, etc. were significantly strengthened through the transitional processes, it remained disputable just how far this went, and whether they were powerful enough to impose the transparency and accountability necessary for a living democracy¹⁰⁶.

The ascent of new leaders did not make them immune to the ailments of the old ones. Inherited patterns of the post-colonial regimes proved hard to eradicate. Responding to changing situations, the leaders and appropriate elites also changed the rules of the game, nonetheless never stepping out of the boundaries that allowed them to remain comfortably cushioned in the neopatrimonial tradition.

The recent (from the '90s on) reforms are still failing to downsize the bureaucratic machinery, allowing for continued budgetary pressure, from the economic view, but also inefficient state apparatus, from the political standpoint.

Hyden recognizes that the changes that happened in the political life of Sub-Saharan countries since the beginning of 90s, especially in the way of choosing the official representatives and greater independence of the judiciary branch, are important¹⁰⁷. African countries have, in general, stepped back from the previous patterns of wide-spread disregard for the legitimacy, fairness and freedom of electoral process, and improved their performance in the fields of civil and human rights. This does

104 Bratton, M., Chang, E., *State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 1061

105 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 61

106 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 8-9

107 Hyden, Goran, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 306, p. 113

not, however, mean that ailments that have persisted on the continent for decades are cured: the problems arising from rooted neopatrimonial practices, nepotism, corruption, abuse of office, etc. continue to undermine the efforts to extend and stabilize democratic institutions in the region.

The speed of the democratization process that took place in Sub-Saharan countries took its toll. The short time in which democratic procedures and institutions were attempted to be established proved to be insufficient for their proper rooting and stabilization. The drawbacks of this democratic hastiness are present to date.

Bretton and Chang are wondering if Africans are, perhaps, trying to apply “democratization backwards, by implementing electoral procedures “before they have secured a legitimate political order based on a rule of law”¹⁰⁸. The democracies of the first wave went forwards to democracy, developing the institutions of the state before introducing universal suffrage as the measure of democratization. The third wave democracies, on the other hand, went in the opposite direction: they moved to democracy backwards, introducing elections before having set the institutional foundations of the state.¹⁰⁹

The Sub-Saharan countries still face great difficulties institutionalizing democracy whose torrent flooded the continent in the first half of the '90s. The elapsed time prepared grounds for the transition from an overly optimistic perspective to the one that was far more pessimistic in regards of future developments on the continent¹¹⁰.

The rebirth of African democracy is losing the avid support that gave it speed and strength at the beginning of the '90s. Many are disillusioned by the extent of the faced problems, which were often invisible in the liberalization frenzy; they are disappointed by the characters of their leaders, who largely follow in the steps of those they fought against; and they are dissatisfied with the assistance from the developed world, which did not meet neither the nature, nor the scope of their needs.

III Economic Factors

The indisputably tangible relationship between economy and democratization has proven to be extremely complex. The relevance, nature and extent of this bond has been in the focus of scholarly interest for quite a while. The assumptions, theories, and analyses have rendered diverse results.

Not all economic factors, conditions and environments are equally conducive to transitions to more democratic regimes, nor are they all equally supportive of maintaining the achieved level, let alone

108 Bratton, M., Chang, E., *State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 1059

109 Bratton, M., Chang, E., *State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 1062

110 Ndegwa, S. N., *A Decade of Democracy in Africa*, p. 1

advancing it. Great variations that have been observed have allowed for an array of substantiated standpoints pertaining to the matter.

It has been long believed that economic growth and increase in income lead to democracy. The proof can be found in a simple empirical observance – most of the developed countries are democratic, while most of the undemocratic ones are poor. Judging by economy and democracy indices, Sub-Saharan Africa can be taken as a regional example of this theory. However, the situation might not be as simple as it initially appeared to be.

Huntington formed a “political transition zone” or, as Joseph explains “a range of per capita incomes in which opportunities for effecting a transformation of authoritarian systems appear to increase”¹¹¹. This is to say that political transitions towards more democratic regimes are more likely to occur under certain economic conditions.

Not denying the positive correlation between income and democracy, Acemoglu et al. argue that this bond is not causal. But, how do we explain the fact that, from the contemporary point of view, richer countries are more democratic? The answer, according to research these authors have conducted, lies in the historical circumstances that established the complex bond between the level of income and that of democracy¹¹².

Challenging once again the very basis of the modernization theory, these authors also posit that economic crises actually provoke democracy. When confronted with an economic crisis, it is far more probable for an authoritarian regime to crumble, than it is for a democracy to slide back to such a regime.¹¹³

Przeworski establishes these theories as fundamentally faulty. In examining the link between the democracy and economic development, he concentrates on two issues: the first is the effect of economic performance on the advent and sustainability of particular types of regimes, and the second is the effect of the political regimes on the economic performance. He concludes that, although there is no question that democracy as a type of regime is more frequent in economically more advanced countries, it does not mean that economic well-being is a condition for democracy but, rather, that democracies survive easier in developed economies. He posits, moreover, that economic development is the key factor of sustainability of a democratic regime.¹¹⁴

111 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 369

112 Acemoglu Daron, Johnson, Simon, Robinson, James A., Yared, Pierre, *Income and Democracy*, Working Paper, Version February 2005, p. 29, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jrobinson/researchpapers/unpublishedpapers/jr_IncomeDemocracy.pdf

113 Acemoglu et al., *Income and Democracy*, p. 4

114 Przeworski, Adam, *Democracy and Economic Development*, in *The evolution of political knowledge: democracy, autonomy, and conflict in comparative and international politics*, Mansfield, Edward D., Sisson, Richard (eds.), Ohio State University Press, 2004, p. 300-24, p. 312

Contrary to the popular belief that certain economic standards are necessary for political change, the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced a political step forward in the first half of the '90s, without enjoying the elevated level of economic development thought necessary. The problems that African societies are encountering in their attempts to achieve and deepen democracy largely depend on their economic well-being. Lasting constitutions, effective institutions, electoral systems that result in valid representation, conflict resolution, decentralization of power and other difficulties that have been plaguing African states cannot be achieved in the environment of poverty¹¹⁵.

Ndulo claims that a part of the colonial legacy was that the inherited institutions in the African states were basically undemocratic. They were based on “hierarchy, compliance, and discipline”, without any interest in matters such as representation and accountability. The regimes in the newly-independent countries retained this pattern, nourishing patrimonial practices, corruption and exploitation of positions of political authority. The old rulers were merely substituted with new ones, while the states sank deeper into authoritarianism or turned towards military dictatorship. Furthermore, the absence of democratic institutions has ensued the economic decay, and ultimately led to wide-spread conflict and poverty.¹¹⁶

Przeworski repudiates the effect of the colonial legacy on the survival of democratic regimes, stating that, although we can clearly establish that democracy does fail easier in the countries that gained their independence after the Second World War, this effect can be attributed to other reasons, foremost the fact that the former colonies were simply poor¹¹⁷, and poverty clearly represents a hostile environment for the sustainability of democratic institutions.

Van de Walle stresses that the political and economic transitions rarely happen together, but rather in a succession, with one influencing the other. “Political transitions are conditioned by the legacy of past economic decision-making and in turn have an impact on economic policy-making following democratization.” However, the same author will conclude that “political liberalization has had little effect on economic performance in Africa”¹¹⁸.

Sachs and Warner negate that institutional quality is of crucial importance to economic growth, seeing the institutions as a consequence, rather than as a cause of growth¹¹⁹. Mehlum et al., on the other hand, claim that institutions and their quality play a decisive role in determining the fate of a

115 Ndulo, Muna, *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies, 10, 2003, p.315-368, p. 363-4

116 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 362-3

117 Przeworski, A., *Democracy and Economic Development*, p. 310

118 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Economic Reform in a Democratizing Africa (a)*, p. 22-3

119 Sachs, Jeffrey D., Warner, Andrew M., *Sources of Slow Growth in African Economies*, Journal of African Economies, 1997, p 335-376, p. 359-60

the country's economic growth relevant to the resources in question: if the institutions are “grabber friendly”, the incomes from natural resources will tend to decrease, as opposed to “producer friendly” institutional behavior, which tends to result in increased incomes¹²⁰.

However, we have witnessed democratization processes in growing economies, like the ones in Asia, and the ones on the decline, as was the case in Latin America, East Europe, and Africa. Similarly to Latin America, the fiscal crisis in Africa seems to have accelerated the democratization processes.¹²¹

In order to understand the patterns and problems of economic developments in sub-Saharan Africa and, most importantly, their impact on the political reshaping of the continent, some key elements that led to the creation of particular economic conditions in the region need to be considered. These are the (mis)use of natural resources, the stabilization and adjustment programs, foreign aid or foreign assistance (here used in the limited meaning of Official Development Assistance, or ODA) and foreign (external) debt.

Natural Resources

The impact of resources on democracy, its transition, stabilization and consolidation has been of utmost interest to both academia and policy practitioners. An enormous body of literature has been produced concerning the subject.

Sub-Saharan Africa is richly endowed with natural resources. Mineral wealth in the form of diamonds, gold, silver, cobalt, platinum, copper, chromium, iron, phosphates, etc. as well as oil is abundantly present throughout the region. Nevertheless, the continent is drowning in poverty. Instead of using the natural resources as a driver for economic and overall development, many African states have been misusing them for decades. The patterns of (mis)management of resources, and their impact on democratization have been awarded varying degrees of importance.

When trying to establish the impact of mineral resources on democracy and democratic transitions, we face three different possibilities, each represented in literature. According to the first theory, which has been present for a long time and belongs to the wider concept of the resource curse, mineral resources have a negative effect on democracy. The second one, far less argued for, is diametrically opposed, claiming that this effect is positive, given some conditionalities, such as

120 Mehlum, Halvor, Moene, Kalle, Torvik, Ragnar, *Institutions and the Resource Curse*, The Economic Journal, 508, 2006, p. 1–20, p. 1-3

121 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 369

ownership structure and equality of distribution. The third theory simply states that the influence of resources on democracy can be considered negligible.¹²²

In countries that derive high portions of their revenues from resources, political choices are made more on the basis of the distribution of those revenues than on the basis of ideology. Voters in these economies tend to make their choices based on promises for greater influx of resources to their region, rather than ideological issues.¹²³ In the face of potential benefit from the resource revenues, the electorate will tend to display more interest in the economic than political perspective. This includes questions pertaining to democratization. People who are provided with greater windfalls from resources have less incentive to demand democratic changes.

Dunning, on the other hand, establishes a positive correlation between natural resources and democratization. He claims that if economic elites profit from the unequal distribution of resources, they will have less incentive to resist democratization processes¹²⁴.

Haber and Menaldo, using a large sample of resource rich economies, examine the impact of exploitation of the resources on democracy, and broader, on regime types and their change. They challenge both the widely accepted theory of the resource curse and the increasingly popular one of the resource blessing. These authors, using a thorough analysis, reached the conclusion that resources have neither significantly positive nor significantly negative influence on the onset and further development of democratic regimes.¹²⁵

Jensen and Wantchekon turned their attention exclusively to resource-rich African states after the third wave. They posit that these countries are less likely to undergo democratization, and more often fail to maintain it. They claim that the distributive discretion of the incumbent regime fortifies its power, making liberalization very difficult, as can be clearly observed on the case of Nigeria. They also suggest that the resource-dependence can, in part, be credited with a higher rate of opposition boycotts and electoral frauds in the post-third wave period, as well as with the incidence of civil wars.¹²⁶

Moreover, after initial democratization in the first half of the '90s, a great number of African countries regressed to authoritarian rule. Jensen and Wantchekon attribute this to natural resource richness. They established that natural resources in African states have a negative correlation with

122 Haber, Stephen, Menaldo, Victor, *Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism: A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse*, forthcoming, p. 1-69, p. 2-3, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.international.ucla.edu/economichistory/conferences/haber.pdf>

123 Jensen, Nathan, Wantchekon, Leonard, *Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa*, *Comparative Political Studies*, 37, 2004, p. 816-840, p. 819

124 Haber, S., Menaldo, V., *Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism*, p. 3

125 Haber, S., Menaldo, V., *Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism*, p. 42-3

126 Jensen, N., Wantchekon, L., *Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa*, p. 817-9

the level of democracy and quality of governance¹²⁷. They observed that in the post-Cold war era democracy has been achieved only in resource-poor African countries, such as Madagascar, Benin or Mali, while the resource-rich countries, for example Nigeria or Gabon, have failed at introducing them. They posit that the democratic reforms in the latter cases can be successful only via implementation of firm accountability mechanisms throughout the state.¹²⁸

Stabilization and Adjustment Policies

The constant, pervasive use of state resources resulted in persistent fiscal crises, while it hindered possibilities for sustained development. The neopatrimonial African state spent much more than its revenues allowed, while widespread rent-seeking and economic interventionism led to a state apparatus with two major shortcomings: it was far too big compared to the size of the economy, and far too weak to be capable of effective collection of revenues¹²⁹.

In fact, by the beginning of the '80s, the state revenues expressed as percentage of GNP, at least for the countries where the data could be collected, fell to a level as low as 18.3%, compared to over 30% in OECD countries. The situation only became worse with the development of the economic crises during that decade¹³⁰.

The rule of post-colonial African leaders was, in great measure, based on the promise of a better standard of living for their compatriots¹³¹. Practices like control of basic food articles, subsidies of public service, therefore, served the purpose of securing support of the masses, but were also an important method of enhancing national and social cohesion, which was often in short supply. Consequently, the disruption of such a state of affairs, as imposed by the Western donors, necessarily also meant the disruption of sensitive political mechanisms.

In 1981, the World bank published a “blistering critique” on African development that became known as the Berg Report on African development. This prompted the Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other donors to condition external aid and negotiations on the subject of already existing debts with economic liberalization. That was the birth of “structural adjustment programs”, better known under their acronym SAPs. By the mid-'80s, it became evident that the Soviet Union was pulling back the financial line on its former African protégés. With the West increasing demands for economic reforms in turn for their financial aid, African countries were

127 Jensen, N., Wantchekon, L., *Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa*, p. 824-33

128 Jensen, N., Wantchekon, L., *Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa*, p. 816

129 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 67

130 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 67

131 Abrahamsen, R., *The Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution*, p. 134

compelled into the dialogue on the topic, and state socialism in Africa was rapidly losing its appeal¹³².

Although some African leaders tried to resist the calls and requests for economic reforms from various donors, financial aid providers, and probably most prominently the BrettonWoods financial institutions, the reality of budget deficits, continued absence of the private banking sector, and tiredness of the donors to finance failing systems forced them to accept the high demands of the IMF and The World Bank¹³³.

The economic reform programs were primarily oriented towards the privatization of public and state owned businesses, the promotion of market economy and liberalization of prices.

In a study dedicated to the link of economic difficulties and political events in the region, Van de Walle explains in a nutshell the difference between the stabilization and adjustment policies. While the stabilization policies tend to “restore macroeconomic balance in the short to medium term”, the adjustment policies are designed to “alter basic economic institutions”¹³⁴. Together, these sets of measures were designed to turn around the disintegration of African economies and provide an economically sound atmosphere that would also be conducive to political changes. However, they fell short of even modest expectations.

Van de Walle points out that stabilization was often prioritized over development¹³⁵. Cutting the expenditure is never popular. Digging into development funds is, in contrast, far less noticeable. More importantly, the former is likely to cause wide dissatisfaction of the masses, which directly translates into a loss of political points for the implementer. Opting for preservation of political standing therefore often meant the status quo or decline of economic progress. Over time, these practices led to prolonged economic crises on the continent.

The adjustment policies tended to be comparatively slower, but less likely to be reversed, as experience has shown. Although the results vary across the region, some progress was undoubtedly made. Almost all countries complied to the IFI’s demands for price liberalization. The deregulation, however, often remained nominal, with the state continuing to interfere with the economy in various ways. Privatization, although very slow in the ’80s, became an important issue in the reform processes in the following decade. The initial lag can be attributed to the political opposition, while the later acceleration is due to expected revenues from sales and rising costs of support for the public companies that were, in large part, leaking capital and simply represented poor business

132 Young, C., *The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa*, p. 21-2

133 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 369-370

134 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Economic Reform: Patterns and Constraints*, in *Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress*, (b), p. 29-63, p. 31

135 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 34

assets. The privatization processes were, however, prolonged in many countries, and often ensued by concerns over the possibilities of profit for particular persons, political or ethnic groups, and foreign agents.¹³⁶

It is essential to understand the political implications of the measures implemented as requirements for finalizing various financial arrangements, usually as parts of SAPs and various other adjustment and stabilization programs.

The SAPs seem to have exacerbated the situation instead of improving it. “Economic reforms, culminating in privatization, encapsulate how a combination of excessive deregulation and a lack of balancing safeguards have worsened poverty and deprived governments of the resources required to build strong national institutions, including political parties, that promote democracy and development.”¹³⁷

Some foster a different perspective on the issue. The SAPs brought general deterioration in living, with lower incomes, rising unemployment and growing social differences. This fueled the popular protests, while austerity measures also negatively affected the power of the elites to continue to supply their neopatrimonial networks. The whole complex of consequences led towards the increased calls for democratic changes.¹³⁸

Van de Walle observed that, approaching the '90s, “more than half of the nations in the Sub-Saharan Africa were effectively bankrupt, and most of the others were propped by Western public capital”¹³⁹. Decalo elaborates: “Africa was at a political dead-end morally, and economically bankrupt [...] parallel to the political sterility of the African one-party state, most economies were bankrupt”¹⁴⁰.

Structural adjustment and stabilization programs that had to be implemented as loan requirements, more often than not diminished the support that the regimes enjoyed, leading to currency devaluation, loosening control of the prices, introduction of payments for public services, reduction of public sector, etc.¹⁴¹. The unpopularity of these measures in turn led to increasing dissatisfaction with the regime. A persistently increasing number of voices echoed demands for political changes, inspired by difficult, if not unlivable economic conditions. The catastrophic economic performance

136 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 36-40

137 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 364-5

138 Abrahamsen, R., *A Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution*, p. 141-2

139 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Neopatrimonialism and Democracy in Africa, with an Illustration from Cameroon*, in *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Wiedner, Jennifer A. (ed.), Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, p. 129-157, p. 135

140 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 14

141 Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p.369-370

of the region “provided the context for [...] political debacles”, and will continue to influence the future of democratic processes¹⁴².

However, the allies in times of struggle for democracy can prove to be enemies for the very regimes that resulted from these efforts. This becomes very obvious on the example of economic factors. The economic difficulties that heavily affected Africa, among others, during the '80s, led to loss of trust in institutions of authoritarian regimes, and, finally their complete decay. Economic crisis, as many times before, turned out to be a powerful inducer of changes. But, after their implementation, if not dealt with in a relatively short period, economic crisis presents an equally large obstacle for the new regimes, and can ultimately lead to another movement for change. Moreover, the disappointment can have demotivational effect and result in demobilization of popular forces, opening way for reverse tendencies and slips back to authoritarianism.

Following the political liberalization in the first half of the '90s, some positive changes in economic indicators on the continent seen in the middle of the decade, such as record growth of almost all economies, appeared to suggest the end of the African economic crisis. These changes, together with the termination of several violent conflicts, as well as the emergence of new leaders seemingly determined to face the economic issues, provided an encouraging prospect for future developments. However, these were to some extent slowed down by world-wide crises that started in 1997, the renewal of the old wars, and the commencement of the new ones.¹⁴³

In the era of globalization, the lag of African economies is becoming even worse, leading to an even greater marginalization. This, in turn, results in governments being incapable of providing for basic democratic institutions. There have been examples where the electoral processes could not be financed by the state, but were dependent on outside funding.¹⁴⁴

The progress that has been made in stabilization in recent years remains itself unstable, easily subject to reversals, as well as unsustainable without the help from abroad¹⁴⁵.

Foreign Aid and Foreign Debt

In the period between 1960 and 1997, over \$500 billion of foreign aid has been poured into Africa. This is close to the value of four Marshall plans.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the continent seems to be growing poorer and poorer.

142 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 29-30

143 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 29-30

144 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 364-5

145 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 31-32

146 Ayodele, Thompson., Cudjoe, Franklin, Nolutshungu, Temba., Sunwabe, Charles, *African Perspectives on Aid: Foreign Assistance Will Not Pull Africa Out of Poverty*, Cato Institute Economic Development Bulletin, 2, 2005, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=9292

Following the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition of foreign aid, or Official Development Assistance (ODA), it is the flow which is “(i) provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and (ii) each transaction of which: a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent”. Contrary to what a great portion of the general public tends to believe, it does not encompass military aid, anti-terrorism activities, or capital investments, as the main goal does not seem to be the development of the recipient country, but the donor the country’s profit which is likely to result from such a transaction. Peacekeeping, assistance to refugees as well as debt relief and various programs aimed at building the country’s capacities are, on the other hand, viewed as ODA.¹⁴⁷

The question whether foreign aid helps or hinders the overall development of a country, including economic growth and democratization, remains without a definite answer. A plethora of factors need to be taken into consideration, as well as their complex mutual relationships.

The success and objectives of aid have been preoccupying the academia for a long time. Is the reason for providing assistance the wish for introduction of democratic changes in the recipient countries, or is the real purpose promotion of donor countries’ geostrategic goals? Although the definite conclusion is yet to be reached, we can say that conditioning of aid seemed much less feasible during the Cold War era, since authoritarian rulers were well aware of their roles in the bipolar world. With the end of this period, the threats of the donors are gaining credibility.¹⁴⁸

Dunning found that true democratic reforms in Africa, at least those demanded by the donors, could not really be expected in the Cold War era. The African autocrats knew that the geostrategic interests would prevail, and that they could, ultimately, turn to the other side for financial support.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the threats regarding conditioning of aid by democratic reforms had a hollow sound to them.

With the end of the Cold War, the West was able to afford to stop ignoring the behavior of yesterday’s allies and openly address its moral dilemmas. By the beginning of the ’90s, the assistance to these regimes was starting to be conditioned by governance and other political and economic requests. Even the World Bank, restricted by its acts from conditioning assistance on

147 Data collected from the OECD Database, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/21/34086975.pdf>

148 Dunning, T., *Conditioning the Effects of Aid*, p. 409-10

149 Dunning, T., *Conditioning the Effects of Aid*, p. 411-2

political grounds, stated its preference for liberal democracy, while the terms of good governance were already considered to be not a political demand, but a developmental necessity.¹⁵⁰

Dunning reexamines data and findings which point out to the positive effects of foreign aid on democracy in Africa. He claims that foreign assistance had no impact on democracy in the period from 1975 to 1987, while it had a significant positive influence in the period from 1987 to 1997.¹⁵¹ This is in line with observances regarding the change in leverage that the African states had during and after the Cold War.

Djankov et al., on the contrary, using data pertaining to a large sample of countries, found a strong correlation between aid and decrease in democracy. They explain that the negative effect of aid on the institutions is, at least partially, based in the lower incentives for accountability, since the revenues are less dependent on taxes. Foreign aid can also enhance rent-seeking as well as motivate office incumbents to try and exclude other agents in order to maintain access to the resources obtained by aid.¹⁵²

Diamond notices that the donors, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, had utmost power to require both political and economic changes, and that their power “to induce democratic change [...] through aid conditionality is directly proportional to the dependence of the aid recipients [...] upon them and to the unity of the donor community.”¹⁵³

Low extractive capacity of the majority of African countries rendered them increasingly reliant on foreign aid in order to pay for basic state functions. Some countries base more than half of their annual budget on foreign aid¹⁵⁴. Zambia can be taken as a good example, with foreign aid amounting to 32.7% of GNP in 1993¹⁵⁵. The case of Uganda is even more striking, with foreign aid comprising up to 58% of the budget¹⁵⁶. On the other side, the state revenues which were at an average level of 27% of GDP in 1980, decreased to only 11.9% in 1991¹⁵⁷.

Djankov et al. suggest that we can view the effects of foreign aid as somewhat similar to those of natural resources. Both cause a sudden increase in resources, and are subjects to rent-seeking. Therefore, besides the curse of natural resources, we also have “the curse of unnatural sources”.¹⁵⁸

150 Abrahamsen, R., *The Victory of Popular Forces or Passive Revolution*, p. 130-1

151 Dunning, T., *Conditioning the Effects of Aid*, p. 410-11

152 Djankov, Simeon, Montalvo, Jose G., Reynal-Querol, Marta, *The Curse of Aid*, *Journal of Economic Growth*, 13, 2008, p. 169-194, p. 170-4

153 Diamond, Larry, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives*, cited according to Joseph, R., *Democratization in Africa after 1989*, p. 370

154 Ayodele et al., *African Perspectives on Aid*

155 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 67

156 Ayodele et al., *African Perspectives on Aid*

157 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 67

158 Djankov, Simeon, Montalvo, Jose G., Reynal-Querol, Marta, *Does Foreign Aid Help*, *Cato Journal*, 26, 2006, p. 1-28, p. 2, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj26n1/cj26n1-1.pdf>

In a later study, after conducting a broad research on the effects that aid and oil have on democratic institutions, the same group of authors will conclude that aid can be a bigger curse than oil¹⁵⁹.

Diamond shares the standpoint, observing the similarities between the effects of foreign aid and oil. They both represent external rents that rulers can mismanage and use for their own benefit; both pose opportunities for irrational use and squander of resources; both are used to fund oppressive regimes and neopatrimonial relationships; both decrease the accountability; finally, “both feed the monster of African politics: corrupt, lawless, personal rule“.¹⁶⁰

As Luttwak and Tupy notice, “aid has kept predatory African states alive by enriching corrupt political leaders and paying the salaries of their bureaucrats, soldiers and police”. It has also been shown that as much as 40% of weapons are bought from the funds secured through aid. Bearing in mind that African conflicts are mostly intrastate in character, it is not hard to imagine that these resources are being used to oppress internal opposition to the government.¹⁶¹ This is yet another way in which aid can be used to hinder potential democratic movements.

It has been acknowledged that democracy and its growth represent one of the key underpinnings of development¹⁶². Development assistance is largely conditioned by demands relating to good governance, which is considered a developmental prerequisite. Donors like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the OECD, and the European Union have developed policies that condition the assistance by implementing practices of good governance¹⁶³. Although external donors often insist on economic reforms as a condition for providing assistance, they are reluctant to condition aid upon the level of democracy achieved, positing that foreign aid has a beneficial effect on the democratization processes¹⁶⁴.

Pouring funds into the continent with little or no criteria, and giving the recipients a carte blanche for spending proved to be an ineffective strategy in the long run. Moreover, it has produced a dependency that is a tremendous burden for the providers and the recipients alike. Some countries rely on foreign aid to comprise as much as half of their budget, or even more, while the living conditions seem to be deteriorating. At the same time, the voters in donor countries are becoming weary of what they see as a bottomless pit that is devouring their money. The facts, however, tell a different story.

159 Djankov, S., Montalvo, J. G., Reynal-Querol, M., *The Curse of Aid*, p. 171

160 Diamond, L., *The State of Democracy in Africa*, p. 2

161 Luttwak, Edward N., Tupy, Marian L., *The Aid Africa Can't Afford*, Los Angeles Times, July, 8, 2008

162 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 363

163 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 338

164 Djankov, S., Montalvo, J. G., Reynal-Querol, M., *Does Foreign Aid Help*, p. 2

At the 1970 General Assembly Conference dedicated to development, the world's wealthiest economies committed to reach the target of 0.7% GDP given in aid purposes. Twenty-five years later, most of the world's richest countries were even richer, while those poorest were even poorer. By 2005, only five countries had attained the established goal of 0.7% GDP, while the others fell well behind the agreed mark. The need to meet this level of aid, if not exceed it, was reiterated on several occasions, the Monterrey Conference, Gleneagles Summit, Doha Conference being the most prominent ones.

Moreover, the wealthy economies are giving far less than before. For example, according to the OECD data, in the period between 1970 and 2008 the members of this organization's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) were providing, on average, between 0.22% and 0.36 % of their GNI for ODA purposes¹⁶⁵. The history of G7 countries' givings, ranging between 0.32% and 0.18% of GNI, shows that these are even a little less inclined to maintain the level of ODA from the '70s and '80s, let alone venture towards the goal of 0.7%. The most obvious example is that of the world's most advanced economy: the US were giving 0.32% of GNI for ODA in 1970, while that portion dropped to 0.1 by the beginning of the century.¹⁶⁶

There is an obvious link to the Cold War rivalries: the amount of aid was relatively abundant during the '70s and '80s, when the competition for influence and power across the globe was still fierce. After the fall of the Berlin wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the balances were altered, reducing the need for securing allies through financial means, or reducing the level of financial means necessary. Consequent to these new developments, the amount of aid was severely decreased.

This had an adverse effect on young democracies emerging as a part of the African democratic rebirth in the first half of the '90s. In acute need of external help to cope with the challenges of restructuring the economic, social and political structures, the Sub-Saharan new democracies were faced with rising debts, accrued mostly by the previous authoritarian regimes.

The problem of the debt burden in the Sub-Saharan region can hardly be overemphasized. In some countries, the annual servicing of these debts surpasses the value of export by 1000%. The enormity of obligations towards creditors often leads to the state where governments are unable to sustain their budgets, leaving little, if any space for financing democratic institutions.¹⁶⁷ Observing the unsustainability of the situation, the issue of debt relief has been repetitively raised.

165 OECD International Development Statistics, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>

166 OECD International Development Statistics, retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>

167 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 365-6

Moreover, half of all aid flowing from the developed world to Africa is returned in the form of debt payment¹⁶⁸. Some countries end up paying much more in debt service than they ever received as aid¹⁶⁹.

Another issue pertaining to aid, increasingly pointed at in recent years, is the fact that a great portion of these resources never reaches the population it was nominally intended for. Given the circumstances, the first thought that comes to mind is, naturally, corruption. Although there is no doubt that there is a history of looting the assistance funds, the sobering truth is that only 40% of the aid budgets are transferred to recipient countries, while the rest is spent mostly on administration and consultancy¹⁷⁰.

The question of “tied aid” has also been attracting much attention. This is the popular name for assistance contingent on spending the resources exclusively goods and services from the donor country. As much as 92% of Italian, and 70% of the US ODA is “tied”, while the G7 countries on average condition slightly less than one-third of their ODA in this way. It is estimated that this practice reduces the value of aid by nearly 30%. “Tied aid” is clearly the way of the donors to profit from providing aid, while it may not necessarily be in the best interest of the recipient. It also hinders local businesses, preventing them from participating in developmental projects.¹⁷¹

Aid has had another damaging effect on the furthering democracy in Africa. Viewed from an institutional point, this practice is impeding democratic development, since the local political elites are not allowed the control over these processes, and are being mere witnesses of the activities implemented in their own country. This evokes feelings of frustration, and hampers valuable learning experiences, as the decisions are being made elsewhere, out of reach of the authorities of the recipient country. With policies being completely designed elsewhere, they have been passive observers, or mere implementers, at best. The lack of decision-making capacity in favor of donors has rendered them feeling “emasculated”.¹⁷²

A lot of aid is simply used for other purposes from those that were initially planned. Thus, the funds are not looted or wasted, but diverted in some other direction. Calderisi points out that donors are not in position to always exercise control over the spending, as this would mean assuming the role of the government.¹⁷³

168 *Our Common Interest*, Report of The Commission for Africa, 2005, p. 461, p. 28

169 *Paying the Price: Why rich countries must invest now in a war on poverty*, Oxfam International, 2005, p. 89, p. 18

170 *Paying the Price*, p. 52

171 *Paying the Price*, p. 50-1

172 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 53

173 Calderisi, Robert, *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid isn't Working*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 256, p. 167

The quantity of aid poured into the continent, and the subsequent “set of international institutions that have sprouted to manage Africa’s relationship with the donors serve to protect the status quo”¹⁷⁴. In deed, African states have more often than not been hindered, not helped by international aid.

Robert Calderisi, who has served as a high-ranked World Bank official in Sub-Saharan Africa for many years, suggests that Africans, in constant attempts to satisfy the donors, feel like “circus dogs forced to perform tricks”¹⁷⁵.

Van de Walle suggests that, having in mind that the decades of aid have not rendered expected results, while diminishing the states’ capacities to conduct future reforms and induce growth, the conditions for aid need to be changed: firstly, it should be aimed at those governments that showed tangible will to reform, and by no means at those that have repeatedly dodged to do so; secondly, the conditions should pertain to a limited number of problems, and focus on governance; thirdly, such conditioned aid should be less invading for the intrastate affairs.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, the Commission for Africa suggests that the foreign aid should be less dependent on policy conditions, with emphasis on the decision-making and budget processes of the recipient countries, while trying to boost, and by no means jeopardize democratic institutions in these countries¹⁷⁷.

Sachs et al. have called for a large increase in aid to Africa in order to help it out of the hypothetical “poverty trap”¹⁷⁸. The Commission for Africa has, similarly, suggested in 2005 that the level of aid to Africa should be increased by \$25 billion per year, in order to reach \$50 billion by 2010, with the aim of adapting to the increase in revenues due to economic growth and improved governance. The amount of aid should then be increased by another \$25 billion, in order to adapt to changes induced in the previous period.¹⁷⁹

According to Sachs et al., the enormous increase in aid should be supplied in the form of grants, not loans, and it should be aimed at public investments, and not consumption¹⁸⁰. The Commission for Africa Report is also calling for grants as the primary form of aid to the continent¹⁸¹.

Some are, however, of diametrically opposed opinions, claiming that increased aid would have a distinctly adverse impact on the state and its performance. Moss et al. argue that governments that do not need the approval of their citizens and legislatures in order to raise revenues have little

174 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 30

175 Calderisi, R., *The Trouble with Africa*, p. 166

176 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 58

177 *Our Common Interest*, p. 314

178 Sachs et al., *Ending Africa’s Poverty Trap*, p. 144-5

179 *Our Common Interest*, p. 316

180 Sachs et al., *Ending Africa’s Poverty Trap*, p. 144-5

181 *Our Common Interest*, p. 313

incentive for accountability and developing their own efficiency. The absence of accountability leads to anti-democratic effects.

Luttwak and Tupy suggest that the withdrawal of aid may bring the final demise of the dysfunctional neocolonial African state, allowing for the development of new, more democratic political structures¹⁸². It has been pointed that countries that rely on the outside assistance tend to be less democratic, as their governments, as long as they are receiving funding from exterior agents, do not have to maintain legitimacy.¹⁸³ Calderisi, among others, suggests halving the aid to individual countries, basing it on the fact that reduced resources would increase competition among countries and induce responsible handling of the scarcer funds¹⁸⁴.

However, it should not be forgotten that most of the poor African countries still depend on the quantity of rainfall as the most important factor for economic growth. In conditions of primarily rural orientation, low productivity and poor infrastructure, as is the case in many countries in the region, the relationships between the political and economic transitions remains a weak one.¹⁸⁵

Sub-Saharan countries have received and continue to absorb an unprecedented amount of aid. However, this mode of help has not always been useful or helpful. On the contrary, the increased reliance on foreign assistance, along with astronomical figures required for the service of debt seems to have pushed the countries deeper into poverty, leaving little space for economic revival and financing of democratic institutions.

IV Social Factors

Neopatrimonialism and corruption

Neopatrimonialism and ensuing practices, most prominently corruption in its many forms, are often pointed at as being one of the major culprits for the failure of the post-colonial state in Africa. Simultaneously, they inspired popular demand for democratic changes. Nevertheless, they remain one of the most stubborn obstacles on the path of democratization.

The neopatrimonial surrounding represented a natural breeding ground for corruption. It is an integral segment of neopatrimonialism and its most powerful weapon. Corruption is a phenomenon that can be found in almost every country of the world, but is considered to be woven into the fabric of African societies, and is often considered “the norm rather than exception”¹⁸⁶.

182 Luttwak, E. N., Tupy, M. L., *The Aid Africa Can't Afford*

183 Moss, Todd, Pettersson, Gunilla, Van de Walle, Nicolas, *An Aid-Institutions Paradox? A Review Essay on Aid Dependency and State Building in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Center for Global Development, Working Paper Number 74, 2006, p. 1-28, p. 14-5

184 Calderisi, R., *The Trouble with Africa*, p. 249

185 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (a)*, p. 38

186 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.184

Neopatrimonial regimes are usually defined as hybrid systems in which customs and patterns of patrimonialism are merged with rational-legal institutions¹⁸⁷. This same broad phenomenon has also been researched under different names, particularly “prebendalism”, “personal rule”, “politics of the belly”¹⁸⁸ (or “politique du ventre”), “big Man” rule, clientelism, patron-client relationships, etc. While some researchers question whether there is any sense in discussing neopatrimonial practices as institutions that are able to influence and shape individual leaders as well as relationships in the society, others claim that the neopatrimonial logic has become inherent to African societies to the extent that they represent “an operating code” for political behavior¹⁸⁹. Neopatrimonialism has become “the institutional hallmark”, the “core feature” of African regimes that emerged in the post-colonial period¹⁹⁰.

In order to understand the nature of neopatrimonialism, we must first take a closer look at the progenitor idea of patrimonialism. In explaining this concept, Weber focused on the organization of the state, bureaucratic apparatus, and the nature of authority.

Patrimonial authority was originally defined by Weber to describe the type of rule characteristic for small, traditional polities. The personalistic, individual authority, based on power and prestige, is concentrated in the hands of one man. The other members of such polity rely completely upon the will of the leader rather than on any type of legal code. In turn, he provides them with needed security and stability. Thus, with an individual selectively dispensing material gains and favors on one side, and his subjects receiving them in exchange for their loyalty on the other, a patron-client relationship is established¹⁹¹.

In contrast, we have regimes with rational-legal authority. Within them, the line between public and private realms is clearly established, while legal codification and institutions of the system are empowered to enforce it.¹⁹²

We could find examples for Weber’s patrimonial rule in medieval kingdoms and some Muslim societies, with rulers often being ascribed divine characteristics¹⁹³. However, in the times we live in, when even the tiniest, most traditional and poorest societies possess at least some sort of constitution and codified legal system, Weber’s description becomes inapplicable. Nevertheless, it is not completely obsolete. While it is safe to say that some of these features are present in almost every polity, some states, notably the ones in Africa (and some parts of Asia and Latin America),

187 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 61-68

188 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63

189 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63

190 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 61-68

191 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 61

192 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 62

193 Hyden, G., *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, p.95-6

retained the characteristics of patrimonial regimes to a much greater extent, albeit in a new form and adapted to the existence of constitution, laws, and bureaucracy¹⁹⁴.

The neopatrimonial regime, therefore, represents an amalgam of the two types of authority suggested by Max Weber. We can observe the rational-legal system, including separation between the private and the public sphere, constitution and laws. However, patrimonial practices are hidden behind these visible characteristics, while largely relying on the public resources.¹⁹⁵ They simultaneously exhibit inherited patrimonial traditions and contemporary legal tendencies. Thus, the outer shell of the contemporary framework in which the state operates is constantly corroded by the inner mechanisms of neopatrimonialism which are being fed directly from the state coffers.

In these hybrid regimes, despite the existence of a political and administrative system, neopatrimonial rule is still linked rather to a person than to the office the person holds. The individual at the head of state is often awarded this position for life. Similarly, the other officials in such a regime do not take the bureaucratic positions in order to perform public service, but so that they could obtain personal gain in forms of status and material benefits. Material benefits do not encompass only salary awarded with the position, but also illegal profits in form of prebends, rents and corruption. It can be said that the key distinction of neopatrimonialism is “the incorporation of patrimonial logic into bureaucratic institutions”¹⁹⁶.

Numerous African kingdoms that Europeans found upon their arrival, might be categorized as patrimonial. However, the colonizers tailored the land to fit other purposes, then split it and patched it up again to a different shape, dividing the ethnicities, tribes and clans in the course. They also installed a new way of governing. This, however, did not mean that the previous patrimonial norms vanished from the society. After the departure of the colonizing powers and the proclamation of independence, the African states, retaining the shape and form given by the colonizers, were left with an institutional framework bestowed upon them, but also with social norms that never ceased to exist.

Immediately after the end of the colonial rule, the state was viewed as “an instrument operating for public good and the vehicle for eliminating mass poverty”. However, these states did not possess the necessary political history, did not have experience with centralized authority, nor did they attribute due credit to “party competition, and lacked the ideological basis for such competition”. Trying to cope with the situation, African countries resorted to statism, and authoritarian features of governing. This, among other things, meant that certain individuals were given the power to control

194 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 62

195 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 44

196 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 62

the state resources, permitting them to use the funds for personal gain. This “political and bureaucratic interdependence” led to what we identify as neopatrimonialism¹⁹⁷. Neopatrimonial practices will prove to have a distinctly adverse impact on the processes of democratization.

The rulers of these new countries often adopted the modes of behavior of medieval kings. Due to the resemblances to the old regimes, the researchers branded the new concept neopatrimonialism. The difference was the abundance of resources, both internal and external, that the new patrons had at their disposal¹⁹⁸.

Patrimonial practices evolved, adapting to a new, institutionalized environment. Demonstrating a very high resistance to changes, they were assimilated into the system, becoming an invisible yet omnipresent integral part of the institutional framework, and determining the future development of political life.

Van de Walle notices that “in most African countries, power lies with a president and a small ruling circle who use the state’s resources to keep the support of large networks of political clients. Such neopatrimonial rule is inherently antidemocratic because it is based on the private appropriation of public goods¹⁹⁹. Consequently, this patronistic clique will try to retain their positions and the source of personal enrichment by distributing a portion of public resources, which they hold under control, into the hands of neopatrimonial web members. These clients, in turn, display loyalty for the received prebends, thus reinforcing the relationship.

Political life in neopatrimonial states revolves around the exchange between the patrons and their clients, and the structures that arise from this relationship²⁰⁰.

The phenomenon is not, however, limited only to the top levels of the state authority. In a neopatrimonial African state, “political authority is based on the giving and granting the favors in a continual series of dyadic exchanges that go from a village level to the highest reaches of the central state”²⁰¹. In other words, neopatrimonialism is a pervasive, self-perpetuating force that has permeated all levels of society in Africa.

It can be deduced that neopatrimonialism is irreconcilable with democratic aspirations. Being “profoundly undemocratic in spirit”, it is in collision with both political participation and competition²⁰². Neopatrimonialism undermines these basic principles, rendering democracy

197 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p. 181-182

198 Hyden, G., *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, p. 96

199 Van de Walle, N., *Africa's Range of Regimes*, p. 69

200 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

201 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 44

202 Van de Walle, Nicolas, *Globalization and African Democracy*, in *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*, p. 95-118, p. 110-1

increasingly difficult to achieve. Moreover, neopatrimonial practices, including providing favors, selective adherence to the rule of law and corruption have a detrimental impact on popular belief in democracy.²⁰³

Clinging to neopatrimonial practices in new democracies can have fatal consequences for the regime. Constant delegitimization of the government due to neopatrimonialism “facilitates more direct assaults on democratic regimes”²⁰⁴.

According to the classification of Bratton and van de Walle, there are at least three different institutions that have persisted in African neopatrimonial regimes to the present: **presidentialism**, **clientelism**, and **use of state resources**²⁰⁵.

Presidentialism refers to “systematic concentration of political power in the hands of one individual, who resists delegating all but the most trivial decision-making tasks.”²⁰⁶ In other words, the leaders in these systems attempt to assemble complete and absolute control over each and every affair of the state.

Ndulo claims that presidentialism represents a part of the colonial legacy. Similarly to the colonial governors who had discretionary power to decide over almost any affair of the state, the post-colonial rulers followed the same pattern, reserving for themselves an unrestricted authority.²⁰⁷

Przeworski found that presidential democracies tend to be much shorter-lived than parliamentary ones. On average, the former regimes survive for 24 years, while the life expectancy for the latter exceeds 70 years. This is partly due to the fact that presidential democracies often have roots in military dictatorships, while the parliamentary systems frequently stem from civilian dictatorships.²⁰⁸

Van de Walle concludes that neopatrimonial regimes are “highly presidential, in the sense that power is centralized around a single individual with ultimate control over most clientelist networks, [...] and most of the (state) resources.”²⁰⁹

While the power is being increasingly concentrated in the hands of the individual holding the most prominent political position, other institutions of the system, judiciary, military and civil service, for example, are losing theirs. Somewhat paradoxically, the number of public offices dramatically rose,

203 Van de Walle, N., *Globalization and African Democracy*, p. 110-1

204 Van de Walle, N., *Globalization and African Democracy*, p. 110-1

205 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63

206 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

207 Ndulo, M., *The Democratization Process and Structural Adjustment in Africa*, p. 333

208 Przeworski, A., *Democracy and Economic Development*, p. 310

209 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (b)*, p. 45

despite the weakening of the institutions²¹⁰. This was due to the increased appetites of the neopatrimonial machinery, where awarding employment within the bureaucratic apparatus was a frequent transaction taking place within the network.

The rulers in the neopatrimonial regimes also had a tendency of developing a cult of their own personality, with their images occupying the media and the walls of public venues, and their literary attempts widely available in bookshops. As it was observed in the case of one of Africa's presidents, and can be applied to many, these practices turned the presidents into semi-deities, and bestowed governments with super-powers. The concentration of power in the hands of an individual, and consequent personalization of authority resulted in long-lasting incumbencies of neopatrimonial African rulers²¹¹.

Another prominent and frequent feature in the neopatrimonial context was the ruler assuming the role of the universal father figure. As such, he was responsible and willing to resolve peoples' problems in direct contact, not bothering with official ways through the institutions of the system²¹².

The absolutistic authority of neopatrimonial bosses was subjected to only few restraints. The side-effect of a weak state was a weak state apparatus. This machinery acted accordingly inefficiently even in response to the leaders' commands. Ethnic and clan strives also had to be kept in check. Apart from these hindrances, there was not much to impose limit to the rule of neopatrimonial potentates. The judiciary and legislative branches were heavily hindered, and institutional pluralism frowned upon. Their power was unimpeded by "legal niceties", checks and balances, nor participation, which existed only on paper. Typically ruling through decrees, it was not rare for the strongman to declare himself a president for life²¹³.

Clientelism refers to another type of informal institution, where neopatrimonial bosses dispense rewards to their loyal clients. This is usually in the form of public office positions, when we speak about the state, or in the form of various contracts, licenses and projects, when wider society is concerned. In return, the clientèle mobilize electoral support and leave the decision-making to their strongmen. The described practices can be detected in all societies to some extent, but in Africa they are so omnipresent that clientelism became a systemic feature²¹⁴.

The practice is evident in all strata of the society: at the upper levels, the ruler awards the political elite with prebendal control that comprises public offices, monopoly rents, and opportunity to develop their own pyramids of clients. This usually means that the number of public offices

210 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63

211 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

212 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

213 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

214 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

constantly grows, reaching astronomic quantities. At lower levels, this type of control is often exhibited through party structures²¹⁵.

Moreover, the distribution of state resources to clients developed the need to direct the economy in order for patrons to establish control over rents and monopolies. The economic policy became contingent on the requirements of the rent-seeking elites. In other words, clientelism promoted privatization of public resources and induced state interventionism²¹⁶.

Use of state resources is closely connected to clientelism. It is used for providing the political legitimacy for neopatrimonial strongmen. As there is virtually no distinction made between the public and private property, the state resources are abundantly used to meet the political needs of the incumbents²¹⁷.

All neopatrimonial practices share a common feature: the personalization of authority. As Flanery notices, the personalization of authority was comprehensive to the extent that all political and bureaucratic relations at all levels were personalized²¹⁸. The political positions were translated to economic profit²¹⁹. A successful neopatrimonial politician rose himself above the institutional framework, liberating himself from the strings proscribed by such a system.

Hyden explains that Africa had its particular, neopatrimonial capitalism, characterized by the fact that people were able to become wealthy through their positions as officials. Accordingly, the political logic supersedes the economic one²²⁰.

The main reason why these webs, created by patron-client relationships, are so omnipresent in African societies is the benefit they seemingly provide to all the parties involved. Through them, people gain employment, political positions and, most importantly, the sense of social and economic security in highly insecure circumstances²²¹. In an atmosphere of economic uncertainty, low national cohesion and failure of the state, the involved individuals feel more attached to a particular network than to a state.

A practice that might be seen as clear corruption from the standpoint of Western democracy can appear as acceptable and legitimate from a neopatrimonial perspective, especially since “legitimacy is largely dependent upon the ability to serve various patrimonial networks”²²². “Corruption in

215 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

216 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 63-65

217 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 66-67

218 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.184

219 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.184

220 Hyden, G., *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, p. 96

221 Orvis, Stephen, *Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 36, 2001, p. 17-38, p. 27

Africa is almost a matter of common sense: As long as everyone else is abusing public office to benefit their clans and families, it remains self-defeating not to do so as well.”²²³

This is even more understandable since, analogous to the highly present ethnic divisions in African societies, neopatrimonial networks were often structured around ethnic premises. This gave way to the notion of “political tribalism”, defined as “amoral, self-interested competition for power and resources among ethnically based leaders”²²⁴, another form of neopatrimonialism restricted to members of a certain ethnically based group. Diamond notices that, with this ethnic organization, a patron deemed his kinsmen as the most reliable supporters in his quest for political power. “This makes the system unstable, as identity, power, and resource conflicts mix in a volatile brew, prone to explosion.”²²⁵

Poverty, undeveloped classes and the absence of national integration that are characteristic for presidential neopatrimonial states, represent the moving force behind the attempts to replace these regimes with more democratic ones. The pervasiveness of the described structures, characteristic of neopatrimonial regimes, “means that the state is the major or only avenue for upward mobility, status, power and wealth.”²²⁶

It is posited that this lack of clear distinction between the public and the private realm causes the weakness of the state in Sub-Saharan Africa²²⁷. With the blurring of these boundaries in neopatrimonial practices, or the blunt disregard for the distinction, the state and its functionality become the primary victim.

Flanery claims that the neopatrimonial state fails in its fundamental role of promoting general welfare, economic development and growth, while only the minority that is connected to the ruler profits from it. The majority, not belonging to these networks, cannot benefit from a state not interested in providing for the basic needs of its citizens, like food, water, health and education, not to mention higher developmental goals²²⁸.

Moreover, the economic policy became contingent on the requirements of the rent-seeking elites. In other words, clientelism promoted privatization of public resources and induced state

222 Cilliers, Jakkie, *Resource Wars – A new type of insurgency in Angola’s War Economy in The Role of Oil And Diamonds*, Cilliers, Jakkie and Dietrich, Christian (eds.), Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa, 2000, p. 1-19, p. 12

223 Luttwak, E. N., Tupy, M. L., *The Aid Africa Can’t Afford*

224 Orvis, S., *Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?*, p. 24

225 Diamond, L., *The State of Democracy in Africa*, p. 3

226 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.183

227 Von Soest, Christian, *How does neopatrimonialism affect the African state revenues: The case of tax collection in Zambia*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45, 2007, p. 621-645, p. 622

228 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.183

interventionism²²⁹. De Waal openly says that, while a great number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa can be called neopatrimonial, some of them are “frankly criminal”²³⁰. In cases such as Uganda or DR Congo, neopatrimonialism effectively devoured the state and the majority of its functions.

The power to have state resources at their disposal, moreover – to create the economic policy in order to maximize the profits and perks emerging from occupying a public office represented a strong incentive for political elites. The patron-client dynamics required the growth of the pyramids, with consequent expansion of public offices. The state apparatus was swelling in order to saturate the neopatrimonial appetites. At the end of the '80s, public employment accounted for more than 50% of non-agrarian employment, and consumed 60-80% of the national budgets²³¹.

Neopatrimonial regimes, as a result of clientelism and use of state resources, tended to have very low developmental capacity. The leaders, ruling through clientelistic practices and force, fail to exhibit sufficient control over their own creations. The oversized state apparatus built on clientelistic principles is expensive to maintain, largely incompetent, and unwilling to follow directives coming from the top. The swelling of public offices entailed increasing amounts of money required to provide for the salaries. This was, in a great measure, the reason for insufficient public investments. The neopatrimonial authority was building a contradiction between the redistributive practices of the state, on one side, and long-term accumulation, on the other. Furthermore, the infrastructure was poorly maintained, state agents could not function properly as a result of shortage of resources, offices were not able to function due to antiquated equipment, officials used already ran down vehicles for private purposes, and even gas coupons were being sold for profit.²³²

A state that is not able to collect taxes risks not being able to perform its fundamental roles, as are ensuring security and welfare. A study by IMF showed that African countries are losing as much as sixty percent of tax revenues in this way. This is attributed not only to Africa's general poverty, but also to the neopatrimonial practices that interfere heavily with state functions, including tax collection.²³³

Overall, the state displayed an inability to perform even its basic functions. This situation was further exacerbated in the '80s in the face of the growing economic crisis, which brought steep

229 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 66-67

230 De Waal, Alex, *How will HIV/AIDS Transform African Governance?*, African Affairs, 102, 2003, p. 1-23, p. 13

231 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 16

232 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 66-67

233 Von Soest, C., *How does neopatrimonialism affect the African state revenues*, p. 622

devaluation of salaries. The state was not in full control of its territories, nor was it in position to enforce its laws across that territory.²³⁴

Therefore, the patron-client relationships, and neopatrimonialism as a regime type characteristic of the region, undermine the state in Africa on several different fronts: economically – with the mismanagement and abuse of state resources; socially – by restricting the possibilities of interaction outside a given neopatrimonial web, and by inhibiting the development of other pathways of social cohesion and mobility; in the realm of state-building – due to frequent ethnic nature of neopatrimonial formations; structurally – by undermining the power and significance of official institutions; politically – by subjecting every political discourse, as well as every institution of the system, to the rule of neopatrimonial logic.

Neopatrimonial practices, in form of nepotism, clientelism, widespread corruption, etc. can be observed across the globe. However, as it is often the case, the situation is hardly uniform. There are still countries where the politicians in high positions freely merge state interests with their own, with no one standing in their way. In others, and this goes for a number of western democracies as well, despite long established democratic institutions, we can still observe some form of neopatrimonial behavior. However, neopatrimonialism here appears in a milder form, with a clear distinction being made between the private and public sphere, and is being kept under control, as opposition and media are ready and able to demand accountability. Most African countries fall into the “in between category”, with clientelism still present, but being increasingly restrained. In these hybrid environments, politicians do not have public property at their will. In these societies, the fight for democratization is actually at its peak when facing rentierism and other forms of abuse of official position.²³⁵

As Warren points out, although we might be inclined to see corruption as a lesser evil in comparison with some others ailments affecting African societies, it heavily undermines the culture of democracy. When people lose trust that public decisions are made with appropriate public interest in mind, they become cynical about their own participation, and prefer to focus on their own interests, which leads to further contraction of democratic realm.²³⁶

Lindberg suggests that even mere adherence to the electoral procedures represents a path that leads away from the neopatrimonial rule²³⁷. That is not to say that free and fair elections are the cure for

234 Bratton, M., Van De Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 66-67

235 Van de Walle, N., *Africa's Range of Regimes*, p. 69

236 Warren, Mark E., *What Does Corruption Mean in a Democracy?*, *American Journal of Political Science*, 48, 2004, p. 328-343, p. 328-9

237 Lindberg, Steffan I., *Democracy and Elections in Africa*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2006, p. 248, p. 154

neopatrimonialism. It has been established that multiparty elections do not necessarily guarantee that previous neopatrimonial behavior has been put behind. This pervasive characteristic has proven to be resilient, and remained unchanged following electoral processes²³⁸. It has been noticed that, while in established democracies the electorate expects the elected office-holders to deliver on their campaign promises after winning the elections, the voters in African neopatrimonial states expect the greatest rewards preceding the elections. The voters thus have the power to blackmail the politicians, requiring personal favors in exchange for their support. Although some election processes may appear to be up to democratic standards, the lack of distinction between the state and party structures also prevents fair and free elections, as the ruling party has power over the resources and the ability to control the opposition.²³⁹

It is clear that neopatrimonialism has a devastating impact on democracy, although the extent is disputed. Furthermore, the adequacy of democratic regimes in the African environment is being disputed, on the grounds that it only represents new chances for old players to continue profiting from relationships that never changed²⁴⁰. Neopatrimonialism flourishes in closed systems, like the African state. Van de Walle sees African (re)integration into the globalized world economy as a factor that will have negative influence on neopatrimonialism for several reasons. Firstly, the opening of the economy and the pressure of international competition will have a disciplinary effect on the institutions. Secondly, in attempt to attract and keep foreign capital, the institutions of Sub-Saharan states will have to exercise greater transparency and accountability. Thirdly, the resources that feed neopatrimonial practices will shrink with the opening of the economy and the decrease of monopolistic rents.²⁴¹

Ethnicity

Ethnic and tribal sentiments that are intertwined in the African political, economic and social reality to a much greater extent, and in numerous variants widely unknown to established democracies, have been recognized as being fatal for democratization on the continent. The preservation of these sentiments is largely credited to colonization and its legacies.

Most of the borders in Africa are colonial creations. In attempts to gain dominance over the lucrative breadths, the expanding European colonizing powers engaged in what is today known as “Scramble for Africa”, competing among themselves for power and control over particular areas of the continent. The spheres of influence, and direct control over certain territories kept changing

238 Van de Walle, N., *Economic Reform (a)*, p. 29

239 Farzana Nawaz, *Corruption and resource distribution in neopatrimonial systems*, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2008, p. 1-8, p. 4

240 Flanery, R., *The State in Africa*, p.180

241 Van de Walle, N., *Globalization and African Democracy*, p. 111

during the later 19th and early 20th century. The competition was for the most part finished by 1914, with demarcation of territories and recognition of respective colonizing powers. However, in the partitioning of the continent and formation of entities, the colonizers rarely, if ever, took into account the ethnic, cultural and other boundaries that were already in place. Instead, the borders were drawn elsewhere, usually in cabinets of European colonizers, and often dependent on a momentary whim. These territories were simply tessellated into a jigsaw, while a completely different, largely uncorresponding, and at times an invisible mosaic of peoples and cultures continued to live beneath these artificial structures. Tribes and their loyal members were divided between two, three or more entities.

The colonizers were rarely interested in nation-building. On the contrary, they often applied the tactics of “divide and rule”, using the strong feelings of tribal loyalty to attain their own interests.

After the Second World War, and the wider movement of decolonization, colonies world-wide began to experience a rising degree of self-governance, and ultimately, independence. However, the people of Africa could not make the slate clean. The independence was granted to territories within the borders that were agreed upon, and internationally recognized, regardless of loyalties that might have been present. It is understandable that many people did not possess a sense of loyalty and belonging to these entities, largely imposed by the colonizers, and left intact due to international pressure for stability.

Nation building, as a process, is frequently viewed through the prism of European experience. It is still considered widely lacking in sub-Saharan Africa. However, nation building in Africa, in its eagerness and sometimes hastiness, often ignores sentiments of tribal adhesion, provoking in turn feelings of defensive preservation, resentment and belligerency. Since gaining independence, all African countries had to face a dual task: building a nation while building a state. Sadly, a lot of them failed.

One-party state systems in Africa were largely justified as the only cure for the cancer of ethnicity. This, however, did not present an inhibiting factor for the leaders to manipulate ethnic feelings in order to secure loyalty and support for their struggle for power. The ethnically based groups competing for power meant further erosion of fragile, nascent national sentiments. The inclusion or exclusion from the political struggle based on ethnicity is also in fundamental contradiction to democratic spirit.

It is also necessary to take into account that ethnic and tribal feelings more often than not go beyond the boundaries of the state. Construction of clientelistic networks around ethnic axis, typical in

African neopatrimonial states, is another motivational factor for adhering to the idea of kinship as the most important social structure.

With the beginning of the process of African (re)democratization in the first half of the '90s, it became once again painfully obvious how neglected the issues of nationalism were. Although some suggest that almost all wars in Africa are basically caused by poverty²⁴², the catastrophes in Rwanda, and later DR Congo were directly induced by the “malignant ethnicity” that has remained unaddressed since the formation of the state. Similarly, but with less grave consequences, the political scene of Nigeria has been dominated by a ethno-religious discourse, occasionally exploding into conflicts. As Decalo notices, the description of Nigerian political parties as being narrow, ethnically based, mass-mobilizing and essentially confrontational, can be repeated across the continent²⁴³. The link to neopatrimonial practices largely revolving around ethnic structures is evident.

Ukiwo suggests that the reason for the rising incidence of ethnically and religiously motivated conflicts in societies that underwent process of democratic transition lies “in absence of effective citizenship and good governance“. If “democracy“ does not stretch further than just elections to introduce real positive changes in citizens’ lives, the people, feeling detached from the state, will convene around ethno-religious concepts that foster conflict.²⁴⁴

This cohesive power, limited to a certain segment of society, often led to more or less strong federalist, confederalist and secessionist movements across the continent. The results of these aspirations range from greater autonomy for particular ethnic groups and efficient decentralization of power, over continuing tensions due to frustrated attempts to achieve a higher degree of self-governing, to blood-thirsty, decades long conflicts inspired by the same tribal sentiments. The extent of influence that tribalism and low national cohesion have had on democratization is, however, still to be agreed upon. The academic disputes on the matter are vivid and prolific, and cannot be fully encompassed here.

242 Sachs, Jeffrey, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, speech given in Carnegie Council on March, 30th, 2005, transcripts retrieved January, 10th 2010 from <http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/5132.html>

243 Decalo, S., *The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa*, p. 30-31

244 Ukiwo, Ukoha, Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 2003, p. 115-138, p. 120

C. Case Studies

I Ghana

The path*

Ghana, formerly known as The Gold Coast, was the first of all Sub-Saharan countries to gain independence from colonial rule, in its case from Great Britain, on March 6th 1957. The country that was by far the most developed in the region in the realm of political, and in particular, democratic maturity, emerged on the stage of independent nations with a fairly long constitutional and representative heritage, bold in its historical and geographical context, albeit fundamentally colonial.

Unlike some other colonizers, the Belgians in the Congo, for instance, the British enabled the Ghanaians to manage their own state successfully. People were well educated, at least in African terms, and a strong domestic political elite as well as a vivid political dialogue were formed before the country became independent.

Ghana has enjoyed what could be named a soft transition to independence. During several years preceding the independence, a range of introductory procedures were put in place, directing the country towards self-governing. This pertained primarily to the electoral process of the legislative, with three elections (1951, 1954 and 1956) being held prior to independence.

The pre-independence years and the subsequent period in the political life of the newly born state and, since 1960, a republic, were notably marked by the character of Kwame Nkrumah, independent Ghana's first Prime minister, and later president, and one of the creators and strongest promoters of the idea of pan-Africanism. He was without doubt one of the most prominent leaders of Africa in the previous century. While his noteworthy regional and international efforts, mirrored amongst others in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, which would later be succeeded by the African Union, earned much praise during the period of his political activity, and resonated for decades that followed, his conduct in domestic affairs left much to be desired.

Western educated Nkrumah, while firmly believing that capitalism is unsuitable for African societies, was not so keen on embracing some aspects of what would become known as African socialism, as some of other African leaders of the time were. Nevertheless, he still considered socialism, or rather "scientific socialism", to be the most appropriate system for further

* The part of this section pertaining to the period prior to 1994 is primarily based on historical data assembled from the Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/ghtoc.html>

development of the continent, since it would allow the for preservation of traditional values of African societies and the spirit of egalitarianism²⁴⁵.

On the domestic front, with timely adjustment of the necessary legal framework, constitution included, he secured his positions in terms of party dominance in the parliament, and even more – he was pronounced a life-long president, as was a common practice of the epoch in the region. Although Ghana was, as many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa of the time, in effect a one-party system since its independence, the passing of these acts formalized the autocracy of Kwame Nkrumah.

Nkrumah realized the importance of industrial development, trying to turn Ghana into a contemporary industrialized country. Ill-conceived and very expensive projects that his administration undertook did not yield expected results, while they were draining the budgets. the country's economy suffered tremendous damage in a matter of years. These attempts of modernization, including some major public works, were conducted at a very high cost. This affected the people, therefore the constituency, and hence Nkrumah himself, as would become obvious only several years later.

Nkrumah's administration also severely restricted human rights. Under the cloak of common good that supersedes individual rights, the Trade Union Act and the Preventive Detention Act came to power, forbidding strikes, and legalizing imprisonment without due process. The latter act opened the way for predatory bureaucrats to detain opponents and feed on corruption, as the fear from the administration progressed. This led to widespread mismanagement, intimidation and corruption.

His much praised work on African issues, and much contested ways of governing ended abruptly with a military coup in 1966. What followed was a series of coups, more or less violent changes of military and civil regimes, and a general deterioration in the country's social, economic and political conditions.

Altogether, there were four successful coups. The period of the First Republic lasted from independence in 1957 to the violent military coup in 1966. After a triennial military rule came another relatively short period of civilian rule, the Second Republic (1969-1972). After this, the military again took over the governing of the country until 1979, when another civilian rule was installed, the Third Republic, to last only three years. The described period of 15 years since the first coup which dethroned the independence leader Nkrumah was filled with a multitude of other, less successful attempts of military takeovers.

245 Nkrumah, Kwame, *African Socialism Revisited*, Paper read at the Africa Seminar, Cairo, 1966, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/1967/african-socialism-revisited.htm>

By the end of the 70's, the country was suffocating in high inflation rate, huge budget deficits, and wide-spread union strikes, which only made bad productivity figures even worse. The culmination of the long-lasting political turmoil was reached with another attempted military takeover of the governing position in the spring of 1979. The failed attempt, but even more the oratory skills of the young air-force officer Jerry Rawlings at the subsequent trial, led to his emergence as a national hero of many Ghanaians. He and his fellow coupists were soon thereafter freed by their military colleagues. This marked the first ascension to power of Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. Later in the year, after a number of speedy trials of selected businessmen and alleged executions of military officers, with rumors about his personal involvement in murders, he and the military elite surrounding him handed over the power to Hilla Limann, opening way to the Third Republic. However, the military elite organized around Rawlings soon began to feel dissatisfaction with new civil leadership of the country, which led to yet another coup in December 1981. Rawlings, following his second seize of power, formed the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), suspended the constitution, dissolved the parliament, and banned all political parties.

Rawlings' focal concerns were the reconstruction of the country's economy and political stability. In other words, he retook the rule over the country with the guiding idea that "[...] the revolution's main and long-term goal was to create a more just society in which the interests of the majority were not repressed in favor of those of a tiny minority and in which the productivity of all Ghanaians would increase" and saw participatory democracy as the best for achieving this.²⁴⁶

Rawlings' other key concern was the dismal economic situation, one of the reasons behind the repeated military intervention. Rawlings seriously took upon his administration to revive the country's economy, resorting to sharp austerity measures. Aware of the difficulty of the situation, highlighted by high inflation and unemployment rates, Rawlings' administration sought financial assistance from the World Bank, a move that provoked wide opposition, even within the PNDC itself. In the period from 1983 to 1987, marked as the first phase of the recovery program, Ghana managed to lower inflation from a painful 200% to 20%, and to overturn the economic shrinking of 3% on an annual basis to a healthy 6% growth. These results, alongside an outstanding debt payment record, secured further international financial support, and the second phase of economic recovery.

However, the success of the reforms was obscured by severe problems. Unemployment was a burning issue, exacerbated by the austerity measures. The government's economic plans failed to provide appropriate solutions for the employment and reemployment of those who lost their jobs

246 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/ghtoc.html>

due to the reforms. The situation was worsened by repatriation of more than one million Ghanians expelled from Nigeria, a move that brought important political points, but increased the pressure on the economy.

In relation, the political support for Rawlings was increasingly brought under question. Upon ascension, Rawlings' populist rhetoric, alongside the sorry state the country was in, ensured backing by the constituency, while he publicly proclaimed to have issues that influenced the country's political stability at the top of his priority list. In 1982, as a proof of its commitment to democratic ideas, the PNDC announced the establishment of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), a government agency with the task of forging a plan for a new, functional and democratic system of governing the country. After much procrastination, Rawlings realized that the opposition to his rule was growing, and that he would have to make shifts towards the promised constitutional democracy. In 1987 the NCD suggested the formation of District Assemblies in every of the country's 110 districts. This move to decentralize power was to provide the people with the power to participate in the decision-making. It also provided for an active engagement of traditional authorities, with a third of the seats in every Assembly reserved for traditional chiefs. However, this pro-democratic move also ensured that the PNDC had an effective control over political opponents: with the ban on political parties still in place, the only passage to the position of power was through established structures, ultimately under the PNDC rule.

Ghana was one of the countries that were hit by the democratization surge in early '90s. Rawlings, who had always proclaimed his commitment to leading the country towards democracy, nevertheless wanted to keep these processes under control. At the beginning of the '90s, succumbing to both foreign and domestic pressures, he came to realize the character as well as the necessity of changes that were under way in Ghana, but also continent wide.

Rawlings prepared well for the shifts that were happening under his rule. In 1991, the NCD, after conducting public debates on desired ways of governance, submitted its report. These findings were centered around the need for a transition to a multiparty system and the drafting of a new constitution. Soon after that, Rawlings publicly announced the schedule for implementing these changes. The year 1992 was to see the draft of the new constitution, a referendum on this act, and free presidential and parliamentary elections. According to the plan, the Fourth Republic was to be pronounced in January 1993.

The announced agenda was going as planned. After presenting a draft, a referendum on the new Constitution was held in April 1992. Although the turnout was not as high as expected, the

promulgation was secured. In May, the ban on political parties was lifted and the preparations for elections proceeded.

The 1992 Constitution marked a watershed in Ghana's modern political history. The new highest legal act of Ghana provided for a democratic system within the framework of a presidential unitary republic. The country's administration, following the experiences gained under the rule of the PNDC, was decentralized through a system of local governing bodies. The constitution, which is in power to date, also contains guarantees for human and civil rights and political liberties.

The provision that caused much controversy was the one that prevented the prosecution of former PNDC officials and other office-holders during the previous 11 years of the Rawlings era for deeds in relation to their positions. This was to protect the persons belonging to the ranks of the old regime, should they be replaced, from the institutionalized attempts of retaliation.

Rawlings himself officially left the military and turned civilian shortly before the scheduled elections. He also founded his own party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), an offspring of the PNDC. In November that year, after a campaign that was marred by patronage and abuse of state media by the NDC, and subsequent elections that were, for those reasons, seen as neither free nor fair²⁴⁷, Rawlings was elected over his opponents by a landslide. The opposition contested the results, bringing accusations of fraud. Parliamentary elections followed in late December. However, in the light of previous alleged foul electoral practices, the opposition boycotted these, resulting in a low voter turnout of only 28%, and the NDC occupying 189 of 200 parliament seats²⁴⁸. Thus, the Ghanaian elections of 1993 marked the official transfer of power from military into civilian hands, although the hands in question remained the same.

By the 1996 presidential elections, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) became the strongest opposition party on Ghana's political scene. Rawlings, running for his second mandate as an elected president, faced a candidate from a coalition led by the NPP, John Kufuor. Partly due to insufficient consensus within the opposition ranks²⁴⁹, Rawlings was reelected with 57.4%, while John Kufuor, won 39.6% of the votes²⁵⁰. The NDC's dominance in the parliament decreased to 133, with the NPP taking 60 seats²⁵¹.

The dissatisfaction with Rawlings' governing was swelling. The country's economy was in problems, the inflation rate was on the rise, and the distribution of the weight of austerity measures

247 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Ghana (2006)*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2006&country=1280>

248 Data on elections retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

249 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Ghana (2006)*

250 Data on elections retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

251 Data on elections retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

was brought under question. The negative feelings were supported and fanned by the growing power of the media.²⁵² The very constitution that he promulgated after years of authoritarian rule prevented the now democratically chosen president from running for the office again. Constitutional provisions limit a presidential mandate to a maximum of two four-year terms in office. At the end of 2000, after almost twenty years, Jerry Rawlings stepped down from the position.

The 2000 presidential elections were decided in a run-off, since neither of the seven candidates won the necessary number of the votes (above 50%). The second round was won by John Kufuor of the NPP with 56.9%, while his main opponent, former vice-president in the Rawlings administration, John Atta Mills of the NDC won 43.1%²⁵³. The parliamentary elections brought a further balancing of power in the legislature, with the NPP taking 99, and the NDC 92 seats²⁵⁴. Neither of the two biggest rival parties possessed the absolute majority in the parliament, forcing them to take into account the interests of smaller parties and independent representatives, representing another impulse for further consolidation of democratization.

Kufuor also won the next elections in 2004, with 52.45% of the votes, again against Atta Mills who won 44.64%²⁵⁵. The parliamentary elections were held for the now enlarged representative body, with 30 additional seats. The NPP won the absolute majority of 128 seats, while the oppositional the NDC took 94²⁵⁶.

For the 2008 presidential elections, Nana Akufo-Addo, former Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Minister of Foreign Affairs during both administrations of the departing president Kufuor, was the selected candidate of the NPP. The NDC reelected John Atta Mills who served as Vice-President in Jerry Rawlings' administration in the period 1997-2000. Mills was a candidate in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, but lost both times to Kufuor. The other eight candidates on the ballots were running as independent or belonged to minor political parties.

After three rounds of voting, and unusually high voter turnout of around 70%, Atta-Mills won the presidency with a wafer thin margin of less than one percent. At the parliamentary elections held at the same time, in another close race, the NDC reserved 114 seats, while the NPP won 107²⁵⁷.

Although there were allegations of electoral fraud and fear of violence, especially with some politically inspired clashes throughout the year, and the previous examples of post-electoral

252 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, Aspenia: Into Africa, 29-30, 2006, p. 125-131, p. 128

253 Data on elections retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

254 Data on elections retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

255 Electoral Commission of Ghana, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.ec.gov.gh/userfiles/file/2004PresidentialResults.pdf>

256 Data on elections retrieved from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

257 Electoral Commission of Ghana, retrieved from <http://www.ec.gov.gh/node/134>

outbursts of violence in Kenya and Zimbabwe, the situation was successfully contained, although with heightened army and police presence.

Atta-Mills' entering the office at the beginning of 2009 represents a significant mile-stone in Ghana's political history: it was the second time that the presidential powers had been peacefully transferred from one legally and democratically elected president to the other. It also points out to Ghana's continued determination to maintain its reputation as one of the beacons of democracy on the continent.

Today

Ghana's total area is cca. 239,000 km², slightly smaller than the United Kingdom, with the population estimated at around 23,500,000.

Under the 1992 Constitution, Ghana's political system is envisaged as a unitary presidential multiparty democratic republic, with the president being both the Chief of State and Head of Government. The Government is vested with the executive power. The legislative power lies with a unicameral parliament consisting of 230 members elected for a two-year term, and the president that approves the bills and has a power of veto. The judiciary is independent. The system of checks and balances between the branches of the government is designed to provide an efficient power sharing, in an attempt to prevent attempts of coups, the formation of a one-party state and dictatorial regimes.

The Constitutional provisions were designed to prevent the reappearance of dictatorship and military interventions by the means of effective power-sharing. Both the president and the parliament are elected for four-year terms, with the elections already traditionally being held on December, 7th.

Many African countries are suffering from the superfluity of presidential powers. As Walston notices, it can be attributed partly to Rawlings' style of governing, and partly to the constitution that allows such a distribution of power. However, a clear trend of shifting the balance towards the parliament can be observed.²⁵⁸

The Constitution also provides for the continued existence of the Council of State, an advisory body based on the traditional council of elders. The 25-member Council consists of 11 persons being nominated by the president, additional 10 being elected from each of the regions, and final 4 representing institutions: 3 are former office-holders, and one is the current President of the

258 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, p. 129

National House of Chiefs²⁵⁹. It reflects Ghana's ties with the traditional structures, which are thus successfully incorporated in modern democratic institutions.

Chieftancy, primarily viewed as a part of monarchical systems, is often viewed as incompatible with the idea of the modern democratic state²⁶⁰. On the party level, the NDC tends to have greater support among the ethnic Ewe and Krobos, while the Akan speaking population favours the NPP.²⁶¹

Lately, the conflicts have been arising from the fact that the traditional chiefs, although prohibited from selling the land bestowed upon them with their position, are allowed to rent it out. Prompted by rising demands for land, this rule resulted in the chiefs being able to accumulate considerable wealth. The pressures are now being put on them to redistribute the profits.²⁶²

The character of traditional tribal leaders can be assessed from a different point of view. Due to the growing responsiveness, their role is becoming more similar to that of elected political representatives, thus turning them into an alternative source of power and enhancing political pluralism²⁶³.

Tribalism, therefore, still represents a source of conflict, although not nearly as much as in some other Sub-Saharan countries. This factor should be carefully observed, as it could seriously inhibit further democratic consolidation if these rifts deepen.

Administratively, Ghana is divided into ten regions: Upper west, Upper East, Northern, Brong-Ahafo, Volta, Ashanti, Western, Central, Eastern, and Greater Accra Region. In an attempt to promote the decentralization of the country, these were further divided into 138 districts, with their own local assemblies.

Prior to the elections, the previous government implemented the Comprehensive Decentralization Policy. It was envisaged to empower the bodies of local governance, namely District Assemblies and Regional Coordinating Councils by supplying them with greater human and financial resources. The plans to supply regional bodies with greater control over budgetary issues are under way²⁶⁴.

The establishment of the National Reconciliation Commission, and its subsequent activities, were another test and proof of Ghana's democratic maturity. Modeled after similar institutions, primarily South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this body heard testimonies of more than

259 *Official internet presentation of the Republic of Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010
http://www.ghana.gov.gh/council_of_state

260 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, p. 130

261 Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity IV Country Report: Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from
www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Ghana2007.pdf

262 Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity IV Country Report: Ghana*

263 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, Aspenia, 29-30, 2006, p. 125-131, p. 130

264 African Economic Outlook, *Country profiles – Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010
<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/west-africa/ghana/>

2000 people who reported to have suffered abuse in the period from 1957 to 1993. Although the Commission's findings did not lead to criminal prosecutions, they resulted in financial compensations and, importantly, had significant political weight.

The summoning of Jerry Rawlings by the Commission had important consequences. Besides displaying the will to condemn the abuse of political power, it shook the myth in which the chief is seen as an untouchable semi-deity with eternal powers. Rawlings, although not prosecuted for the alleged crimes, and treated with political gloves, was stripped of his untouchable image. The hearings also served the purpose of reinforcing the country's democratic image and resolution to continue the development of democratic institutions.

During both 2000 and 2004 campaigns there were indications that Rawlings would attempt to once again take the power via a coup. If there were any intentions for such an act, they were effectively dispersed by the military publicly proclaiming its devotion to the institutions of the system.²⁶⁵

In effect, Ghana fosters a two-party system. However, the two major teams on the political scene, the NPP and the NDC, lack true differentiation amongst them. The two biggest and strongest parties should evolve in the way that they represent different concepts and ideas, and not only be told apart by the foremost individuals²⁶⁶.

In relation to the freedom of the media, Ghana is praised as one of the African countries with the most freedom in the sector²⁶⁷.

Economy

During the eight years of Kufuor's administration, the government tried to battle the country's economic problems. This primarily pertained to substantial foreign debt and strong donor dependency²⁶⁸. Despite being one of the star examples of SAPs' beneficial effects, Ghana is still highly dependent on the help from outside. Foreign aid makes up more than a half of the country's entire annual budget²⁶⁹. This is a sort of dependency that sheds a different, grimmer light on Ghana's success story. In line with the commitment to reduce dependency and enhance sustainability, the country has implemented serious reforms. According to the African Economic Outlook, a joint project of of the African Development Bank, the OECD Development Centre, UN Economic commission for Africa and several other institutions, Ghana's external debt has decreased significantly in the previous years. Although the figures show that Ghana's foreign debt had the

265 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, p. 128

266 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, p. 130

267 BBC News, *Country Profile – Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1023355.stm

268 *Freedom House, Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Ghana (2006)*

269 Ayodele et al., *African Perspectives on Aid*

lowest point in 1990, and reached its peak several years ago, the truth is that it has been reducing as part of the country's GDP. This decline has been constant, and the country has managed to reduce its debt towards foreign creditors from 73.1% of GDP in 2005, to 17.8% at the end of 2008²⁷⁰.

Poverty is another issue that has been plaguing the country. Craig Murray points out that even Ghana, a model country according to the Bretton Woods Institutions and NEPAD, cannot overcome the obstacles of poverty. Namely, although Ghana has been accommodating all the changing prescriptions of development experts, poverty remains an evident problem. He finds that the reason for this lies in the failure of development aid that Ghana has been receiving as budgetary support, and recommends the return to financing complete projects.²⁷¹

Ghana's economy is highly reliant on the mining sector. The country is rich in gold, diamonds, manganese and bauxite. Gold alone accounts for 30% of the country's foreign exchange income.²⁷² Ghana has been holding the position of the world's second largest cocoa producer since 2003²⁷³. Belonging to the agricultural branch, cocoa production is, however, highly susceptible to unpredictable weather conditions, which makes it, and the economy with such composition, rather unstable. Offshore oil deposits were discovered in 2007, opening a new horizon for the country's economy. This expected boost for the country's economy is, however, yet to come, with the first rise in revenues expected in the coming years.

The country needs to diversify its economy in order to become less dependent solely on shifty gold and cocoa markets, as well as varying climate factors. Ghana was one of the countries that successfully completed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries program administered by the World Bank and the IMF²⁷⁴. The sound economic leadership resulted in further foreign investments as well as qualification for additional financial aid arrangements²⁷⁵. This will facilitate the government's efforts to invest in other branches of economy.

270 African Economic Outlook, *Country profiles – Ghana*, retrieved from <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/west-africa/ghana/>

271 Murray, Craig, *Ghana - Democracy and Economy*, June 2007, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2007/06/ghana_democracy.html

272 UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Country Profile – Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/ghana?profile=all>

273 UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Country Profile – Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/ghana?profile=all>

274 The World Bank, *HIPC initiative*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://go.worldbank.org/4IMVXTQ090>

275 CIA, *The World Factbook: Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>

Figure 1: Selected economic indicators

Indicator / Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
GDP (current \$)	5,886,003,712	6,457,441,792	4,977,488,896	10,720,346,112	15,147,078,656
GDP growth (annual %)	3	4	4	6	6
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	31	43	27	15	15
Revenue, excluding grants (% of GDP)	12	n/a	n/a	24	25
Official development assistance and official aid (current \$,000)	559,720	648,390	599,690	1,147,310	1,150,930
External Debt (current \$,000)	3,734,359	5,494,878	6,115,902	6,742,849	4,479,212
Total Debt Service (% of goods, services and income)	38	24	16	7	3

Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators Database²⁷⁶

Corruption

Corruption is present in the country, although not as rampant as on the rest of the continent. Political parties use clientelism to secure electoral support²⁷⁷. John Kufour made promises to tackle corruption in his campaign for the 2000 elections²⁷⁸. He has made such a point of fighting it that, with the approach of the NPP party primaries in 2007, he requested eight of his ministers and fellow party members to obey the NPP's statute and resign from their cabinet positions, as they would not be able to perform their duties to the highest standard and campaign at the same time, but more because they might be tempted to use resources available to them as office-holders for candidature promoting purposes. One of these eight was his own brother.²⁷⁹ Although Kufuor had very little to lose by this move, since he had to leave the office after two terms, it was still a noteworthy gesture of resolution in the fight against corruption.

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index project did not collect data in Ghana during the first three years, from 1995 to 1997. Since then, the country has been regularly featured in the Organization's yearly survey. Ghana's score has displayed some minor fluctuations, scoring in the lower half of the scale, with slight improvements. The results seem much better if viewed within the Sub-Saharan frame, where only several countries rank better than Ghana. The overall

276 Table created using selected data from The World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>

277 Walston, James, *So far so good in Ghana*, p. 131

278 *Freedom House, Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Ghana (2006)*

279 Murray, Craig, *Ghana - Democracy and Economy*

number of observed countries more than doubled since the first edition of the Index, bringing improvement in the country's global position in relative terms.

Figure 2: Transparency International Corruption perception Index

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Score	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,3	3,3	3,5	3,4	3,9	3,3	3,6	3,5	3,3	3,7	3,9
Rank/ out of	n/a	n/a	n/a	55-58/ 85	63-67/ 99	52-56/ 90	59-60/ 91	50/ 102	70-75/ 133	64-66/ 146	65-69/ 159	70/ 163	69/ 180	67/ 180

Source: Transparency International²⁸⁰

The other indicators that directly express corruption related activities in quantifiable terms portray a slightly different situation. According to The Ibrahim's Index of African Governance, Ghana improved in the section of Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption by more than 8 points. The World Bank Government Indicators also signal progress in this field. The country's position in global terms, measured by the percentile rank improved steadily from 34% in 1996 to 56% in 2007. The governance score, expressed in the range from -2.5 to +2.5, also displays an upward tendency, with the values rising from -0.50 in 1996 to -0.17 in 2007.

Figure 3: Economist's Intelligence Unit Democracy Index

Category \ Year	2006	2008
Electoral process and pluralism		7,42
Functioning of government		4,64
Political participation		4,44
Political Culture		4,38
Civil liberties		5,88
Overall score (rank out of 44/167)	5.35 (11/95)	5.35 (12/94)

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit²⁸¹

Ghana's results portrayed by the Economist's Democracy Index are, as expected, the highest among the three observed countries. The results within the categories have remained unaltered in the time between the two reports (2006 and 2008, respectively). With the overall score of 5.35 in both years, placing the country in the group of Hybrid regimes, Ghana takes 95th place in the world in 2006, and 94th place in 2008. This score puts the country at the 12th place in the Sub-Saharan region in 2008, one spot lower than in 2006. Ghana scored relatively high in the category of Electoral process and pluralism, and around the middle of the scale in other categories.

280 Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices...

281 Table created using data from the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Index of democracy*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_INDEX_2007_v3.pdf and *Index of democracy 2008*, retrieved June 20, 2008 from graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf

Although the position around the middle of the and very high ranking among other African countries may seem encouraging, the lack of any improvement in the categories can be a reason for concern for the country's political leaders and other stakeholders.

Afrobarometer: Selected indicators²⁸²

Extent of Democracy: In **Round 1** of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted between July 1999 and June 2001, people interviewed in Ghana were asked to evaluate the extent of democracy in their country by labeling it as either a democracy, or not. Out of 1633 persons surveyed, 84.9% believed that Ghana is a democracy, while 15.1% thought it was not. Although the choice was dichotomous, not allowing for nuances in interviewees' answers, it can be concluded that vast majority of Ghanaians saw their country as a democracy around the turn of the century.

In **Round 2**, between May 2002 and October 2003, on the same issue, 1000 people were asked to assess their country as not a democracy, a democracy, but with major problems, a democracy, but with minor problems, or a full democracy; the last possible answer was that the respondent does not understand the question/democracy. With these, more diversified possibilities, only 1.9% thought that Ghana was not a democracy, 15.3% that it was, but with major problems, 33.4% reckoned these problems were minor, 21.1% saw the country as a full democracy, and a very high 28.3% deemed they do not understand the question/democracy.

Out of 1073 respondents in **Round 3**, for which the data was collected from March 2005 to February 2006, only 1.9% thought that Ghana was not a democracy, 11.9% saw it as a democracy with major problems, 42.6% thought these problems were minor, 37.0% viewed it as a full democracy, while 6.6% declared that they do not understand the question/democracy.

It can be established that the citizens' confidence in the democratic character of the state is rising.

Support for Democracy: When the survey examined the support for democracy in **Round 1**, out of 1990 people 76.5% said that they prefer it to any other form of government, 14.6% that to people like them it did not matter, while 8.9% thought that in certain situations, a non-democratic government could be preferable.

Round 2 brought some changes: out of 752 examined, 82.3% preferred democracy, 10.2% thought it did not matter, while 7.4% said that in certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

282 Data selected from the Afrobarometer, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.jdsurvey.net/afro/afrobarometer.jsp>

An equal percentage (8%) of 1068 those interviewed during **Round 3** thought that it did not matter, or that in certain situations, a non-democratic government could be preferable. The remaining 84% trusted that a democratic government was the best option.

As we can see, people are gaining more trust in democracy as the favored form of government.

Satisfaction with democracy: To the question exploring the satisfaction with democracy in **Round 1**, on a sample of 1990 persons, the results were as follows: 15.7% said they were very dissatisfied, 16.5% that they were somewhat dissatisfied 13.5% had a neutral opinion, 36.9% were somewhat satisfied, and 17.5% very satisfied.

In **Round 2**, the possible answers were altered. Thus, regarding satisfaction with democracy, 3% of the 772 surveyed thought that the country is not a democracy, 9.7% were not at all satisfied, 15.7% were not very satisfied, 41.2% were fairly satisfied, and 30.4% stated they were very satisfied.

Out of 1027 persons questioned on the matter in **Round 3**, only 0.6% thought that Ghana was not a democracy, 5.1% were not at all satisfied, 12.7% were not very satisfied, 37.8% said they were fairly satisfied, while a very high percentage of 43.9% was very satisfied.

The obtained results suggest that the citizens' feelings are steadily shifting towards the positive pole.

Figure 4: Ibrahim's Index of African Governance

Category \ Year	2000	2002	2005	2008*
Safety and Security	86.0	85.9	86.1	86.1
Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption	63.8	70.5	70.5	72.7
Participation and Human Rights	69.9	77.1	79.8	80.2
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	43.8	44.7	46.6	47.3
Human Development	61.4	61.8	64.1	64.3
Total score (out of 100)	65.0	68.0	69.4	70.1
Rank (out of 48)	10	9	8	7

Source: The Moi Ibrahim Foundation²⁸³

* Based on data from 2006

Ghana, as expected, ranked the best among the three countries. Moreover, it shows steady improvement over all five main categories throughout the observed period. Its ranking, compared to the other countries of the continent, has also progressed, rising within the upper quarter.

The country, while demonstrating stable and formidable results in the category of Safety and Security, appears to have difficulties in improving the Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development in a significant measure. The result in the category of Participation and

283 The Moi Ibrahim Foundation, *The Ibrahim's Index of African Governance*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://site.moibrahimfoundation.org/the-index.asp...>

Human rights, of particular interest to us, improved by more than 10 points between 2000 and 2006, and by almost the same value in Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption.

Failed State Index

According to the Failed State Index, Ghana is doing comparatively well in comparison to other Sub-Saharan countries. While it was not included in the survey published in 2005, in 2006 it ranked 106th among 146 states, with a composite score of 60.5 out of 120 possible. The figures showed a small move for the worse in 2007, when Ghana had an overall score of 61.9, and placed 125th out of 177 countries included. The next year brought further, albeit slight deterioration, with the sum of 64.6 across all categories, but improvement in the position, with the 123rd place on the list of 177 states.²⁸⁴

Figure 5: World Bank Governance Indicators

	Voice and Accountability		Political Stability		Government Effectiveness		Regulatory quality		Rule of Law		Control of Corruption	
	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)
1996	39.2	-0.29	38.9	-0.18	40.3	-0.37	47,8	0,11	38,6	-0,39	34.0	-0.50
1998	37.0	-0.43	43.8	-0.05	50.2	-0.21	47,3	-0,1	39	-0,44	44.7	-0.35
2000	47.6	-0.06	37.5	-0.21	57.8	+0.01	51,7	0	51,9	-0,06	48.5	-0.25
2002	47.1	-0.08	44.2	-0.05	51.7	-0.22	38,5	-0,41	50	-0,17	43.2	-0.38
2003	53.4	+0.16	46.6	0.00	47.4	-0.27	41,5	-0,33	47,1	-0,19	48.1	-0.31
2004	55.8	+0.14	49.0	+0.05	47.4	-0.25	42,4	-0,32	44,8	-0,29	47.1	-0.32
2005	58.2	+0.27	56.7	+0.29	52.6	-0.10	50,7	-0,11	47,6	-0,21	45.6	-0.36
2006	60.1	+0.46	55.3	+0.26	56.9	-0.02	54,1	-0,02	52,4	-0,08	56.3	-0.10
2007	62.0	0,5	53.4	+0.22	55.0	-0.04	53,9	0	52,4	-0,08	56.0	-0.17

Source: The World Bank²⁸⁵

284 Fund for Peace, *The Failed State Index*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.fundforpeace.org>

285 Table created using data collected from the World Bank, *The Worldwide Governance Indicators project*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp

Figure 6: Polity IV²⁸⁶

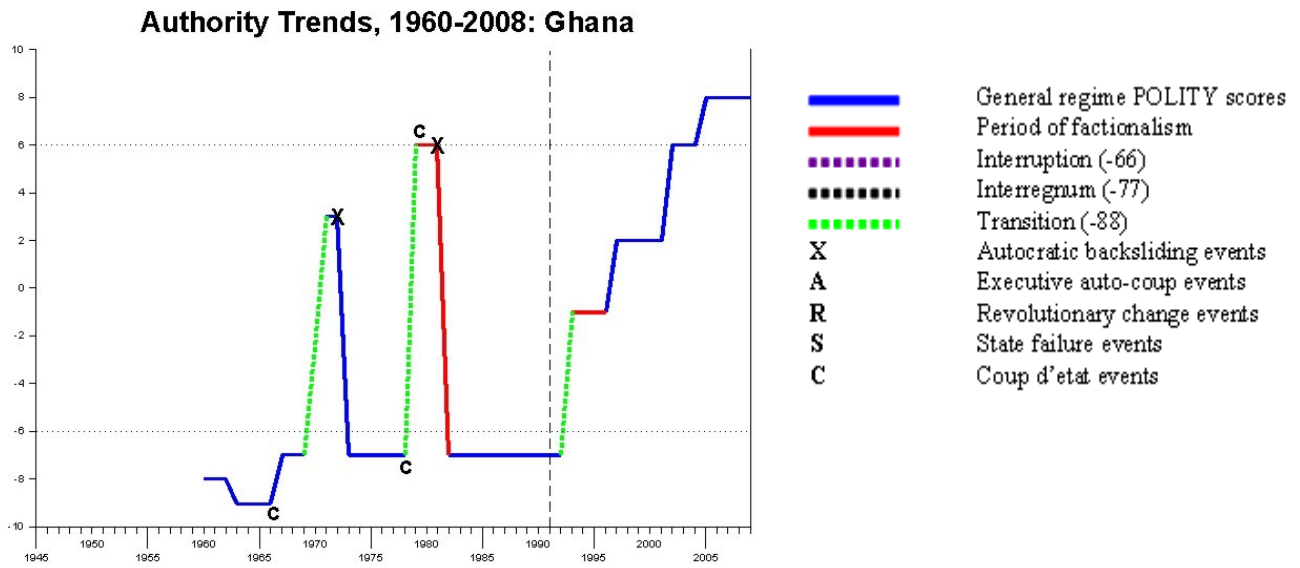
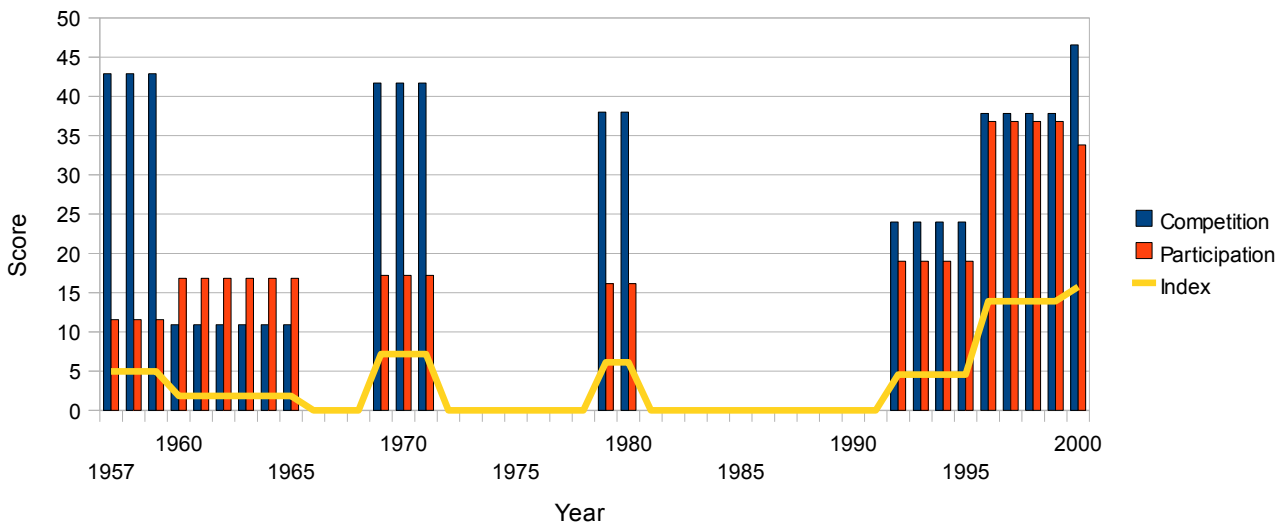


Figure 7: Polyarchy²⁸⁷



286 Graph retrieved from the Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity IV Country Reports: Ghana*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Ghana2007.pdf>

287 Graph created using data from the International Peace Research Institute – Center for the Study of Civil War, *Polyarchy Dataset*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://www.prio.no/misc/Download.aspx?file=%2fprojects%2fdataset-website-workspace%2fPolyarchy%2520Dataset%2520Downloads%2ffile42531_polyarchy_v2.xls

Figure 8: Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report

	1988/89*	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Political Rights	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Civil Liberties	5	5	6	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Status	nf	nf	nf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
Electoral democracy	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y

Source: Freedom House²⁸⁸

* The year number corresponds to the year covered, not the year of the Edition

Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report faithfully mirrors the democratic processes that took place in Ghana. The country had scores of 5 or 6 in Political Rights and Civil Liberties and was categorized as "not free" up until the beginning of the democratic transition at the beginning of the 90s. Since the proclamation of the Constitution and the elections in late 1992, the scores rose and Ghana was seen as being "partly free". However, considering the nature of the elections, the Country could not be put in the group of electoral democracies until the elections of 1996. The scores kept the positive trend and brought Ghana to the list of "free" countries in 2000, and reaching formidable values of 1 and 2 in Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively, in 2005. These results have been maintained to date.

288 Table created using data from Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report: Country Ratings and Status, FIW 1979 – 2009*, retrieved January 13, 2010 from http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/CompHistData/FIW_AllScores_Countries.xls and *Freedom in the World Report: Electoral Democracies, FIW 1989-90-2009*, retrieved from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/CompHistData/ElectoralDemocracyTable.xls>

II Nigeria

The Path*

Nigeria is a colonial conception, as is the case with most countries in Africa. The country was formed under the British colonial flag in 1914, when three regions, the North, the East and the West united. The three territories were each dominated by certain ethno-religious groups: predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the North, largely Christian Igbo in the East and Yoruba concentrated around the former Colony of Lagos on the Atlantic coast in the West. The regions displayed a great disproportion in development and economic power, with the two southern areas, the West and the East, being significantly more advanced, while the North was more populous than the remaining two combined. The disparities were also apparent in social structures, ethnic composition, culture, religious beliefs, etc. The problems arising from these issues have plagued Nigeria ever since.

The British Empire invested considerably in developing the prosperous colony. Major public works, like the construction of roads, railroads, ports and other infrastructure facilitated a further advance of various branches of economy, primarily agriculture and the mining industry.

Apart from formidable effort and resources put in the development of economy, infrastructure and emancipation of the citizenry, the Empire also engaged in political experiments. The large country was governed indirectly, through traditional leaders, who were officially recognized only if they accepted the British rule. However, the three regions were only loosely connected, and characteristics of administration varied greatly between the regions. While the governance in the northern parts largely rested on compliance of traditional Muslim rulers, the South, with its westernized domestic elite, enjoyed modern representative bodies, as was the Legislative Council in Lagos. It can be said that the British kept with the “divide and conquer” rule, and did so successfully.

In 1916, the British colonial administration formed a Nigerian Council, an advisory body consisting of traditional rulers and leaders. Although without any major influence, the creation of the Council was another important step towards the establishment of participatory institutions.

Nigeria started developing a vibrant political scene in the early 1920's. This was in part encouraged by the 1922 Constitution, which introduced a new representative legislative body. Although the members were still largely appointed, the country started experiencing a larger degree of political competition. This ultimately led to political associations and formation of political parties.

* The part of this section pertaining to the period prior to 1991 is primarily based on historical data assembled from the Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Nigeria*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/ngtoc.html>

However, whether originating from urban tribal associations, labor unions, or student organizations, the political organizations tended to differentiate on the basis of regional and ethnic affiliations. The trend continued, although the increased political activity and rising consciousness of the need and desire for self-governing brought cooperation among ethnically and regionally based parties in their communication with the British government. The constitutional changes resulting from this activity, and the ethno-regional nature of the dialogue, implied a federal structure of the colony.

Even though there were some attempts of pan-Nigerian political party platforms, the ethno-regional aspirations would soon prevail. In the wake of its independence, Nigeria was still deeply divided along fault lines of ethnicity, religion and regionalism.

The post-war period brought an acceleration of the journey towards independence, mirrored in the promulgation of several constitutions. These provided for larger autonomy of Nigeria, but also for the increased autonomy of the regions. Unity under the central government on the federal level was promoted, while the regional parliaments and other governing bodies were also given broad powers.

With the waning British presence and the rising level of self-governing, a number of problems, primarily based on ethnic/regional/party and economic differences gained importance. The Muslim North grew increasingly defensive towards southern attempts to bring changes, particularly in the realm of economy and educational issues. In the South, the struggle for ethnic/party dominance between the Igbo and the Yoruba was becoming more prominent with an increasing number of positions in the state apparatus becoming available. These provided ample opportunities for patrimonial practices, protectionism and corruption.

In this turbulent, complex, and sensitive environment, Nigeria proclaimed independence on October, 1st 1960. Although the British Queen remained the head of state, Nigeria acquired a formidable extent of self-governing capacities: the executive power was formally vested in the Governor General appointed by the monarch, and in the government responsible to the parliament; the legislative power lied in the hands of the bicameral parliament; the judicial branch was headed by Nigeria's Federal Court.

In the parliamentary elections preceding the independence, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) led coalition took close to a half of the 312 large House of Representatives²⁸⁹, thanks to the proportional system of representation, awarding the region 174 seats, and a carefully conducted campaign that targeted the populous Muslim North. They formed a coalition government with the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) headed coalition, largely under Igbo influence, leaving out the Yoruba controlled Action Group (AG).

289 Data on elections retrieved January 14, 2010 <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html>

The electoral blocks also had different visions about the extent and scope of the federal authority, as well as the territorial division of the Nigerian federation, i.e. its redistribution through formation of new states. It was in the interest of the North to preserve the make up created by the British, with this region having a clear advantage in the parliament stemming from the fact that it had a much larger population. The Northern Cameroon also became a part of this region in 1961, after a referendum held on this issue.

Regional and ethnic tensions were sparked again in 1962. The immediate reason was the census which had vast political and economic consequences, as it was to determine the allocation of parliamentary seats as well as financial resources for each of the regions. The figures, never officially published, seemed to have been largely inflated in order to assure more regional power to the South.

Manipulations with tender ethnic feelings continued. In 1963, following splits in AG that held power in the Western Region, and the subsequent governmental action which stirred the party out of its ruling position, a new federal entity, Southwestern region was carved out²⁹⁰. The fragile balance of power between the competing ethno-religious, regional and party elements received a heavy blow.

In October 1963, Nigeria officially became a federal republic. The regions had wide powers, including their own constitutions and public services, while the army, the police and issues regarding economic development rested in the hands of federal authorities.

The elections held in 1964/5, burdened by widespread violence and illegal practices, ushered a new period of ethnic, regional, and party conflicts. This ultimately led to the end of the First Republic in January 1966, and the first in what would become a series of military coups and counter-coups, again ethnically colored. It also marked the beginning of extreme violence, resulting in thousands of deaths and almost two million people fleeing the Northern region.

In 1967, in an attempt to attain a new equilibrium between the country's belligerent groups, the federal military government, which was not dominated by any of the major ethnic groups, decided to transform the federation: instead of the existing four regions, twelve different states were formed from them. This regrouping brought significant changes in terms of the power balance between the regions and the central government. The latter became much stronger, dictating, among others, the allocation of revenues, which would become increasingly important with the onset of oil boom in the 70's.

290 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Nigeria*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9430.html>

The discovery of vast reserves of oil in the Niger delta at the Southeast of the country fueled further animosities among the diverse population groups. Inspired by the fear of being stripped off immense resources originating from oil revenues, three states belonging to the Eastern region proclaimed independence as the Republic of Biafra in 1967. After the initial success of the Biafran forces, the federal government reacted severely to the secessionist attempt, blocking off the whole area. This eventually resulted in thousands of deaths due mostly to starvation and disease before the civil war ended in 1970. The images of the conflict and starving people remain vivid to date.

In 1970, General Yakubu “Jack” Dan-Yumma Gowon, the head of the Supreme Military Council as well as the Federal Executive Council comprising military personnel and civilian technocrats, announced a six-year plan that was to address the country’s most burning problems and prepare the way for transition from military rule. The broad agenda encompassed everything from a new constitution, the creation of new states and the organization of nationally based political parties to the implementation of economic plans, producing a formula for allocation of revenues and the reconstruction of areas damaged during the civil war.

The soar of oil prices in the 70’s had enormous influence on Nigerian politics. The country’s revenues from this resource increased by 350% between 1973 and 1979. This fueled public spending, but also led to increased inflation rates, and accentuated differences in revenue distribution among states. Although the military government intended to invest the bulk of oil revenues in decreasing the army of unemployed workers, together with development and diversification of the economy, thus far primarily oriented on agriculture, the economic plans were poorly designed and characterized by unrealistic expectations. This was further emphasized by wide-spread crime, prebendal practices, rampant corruption and overall inefficiency of the administration. Gowon’s rule ended in a coup in July 1975, only to be succeeded by another military regime.

Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammad’s decisiveness in fighting inflation, pursuing Nigeria’s own interests regarding oil production and trade, and clean break with ill practices of the previous administration resulted in broad support from the masses. He conducted a comprehensive cleansing of civil services, the army, the judiciary and public companies. He also extended the federal power, thus diminishing that of the state authorities. Muhammad revised Gowon’s plan for transforming the country into a 19-state federation in order to address some of the demands of major ethnic groups as well as minorities. The territorial reshaping was conducted in 1976, with a clear message that further requirements for new states would not be satisfied. In deed, this make up of the federation

would endure for a relatively long time, until 1989, compared to the growth in the number of states from the independence to this point.

Although the Federal Executive Council under Muhammad's rule was largely filled with civilian ministers, it was subordinate to the Supreme Military Council. He obliged to complete the transition to civilian rule by 1979, and founded a commission to draft a new constitution. He warned against "opening of the old wounds" of ethno-regional strives, and stated his preference for an executive system, as opposed to the parliamentary, without political parties, or at least only with nationally based ones.

The popular leader was assassinated in a coup in February 1976, and succeeded by his deputy Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, who continued the processes of reform and preparation for the civilian rule. The draft of the new constitution was published in October of the same year, and an assembly was formed the next. Political parties were obliged to have a national platform and executive boards that represented at least two-thirds of the states.

The mentioned boom in oil prices was well used by these two military regimes. They also managed to introduce industrialization at a faster pace, significantly diversify the economy, promote indigenous entrepreneurship and wider education. Steps were taken towards decentralization of the country's economy, particularly by fostering development outside the big urban areas, and moving the capital from Lagos to Abuja. This was also to serve as a way of appeasement, since Abuja had no predominant geo-ethnic affiliation, and was positioned centrally.

Following promulgation of the new constitution, and elections in July and August 1979, Nigeria entered the period of the Second Republic in October 1979, with Shehu Shagari at the position of the president. It will turn out to be very short-lived experiment. The parties that contested in the electoral procedures, although formally nationally based, had some continuity with the ethno-regionally based ones from the period of the First Republic. The winners, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) bore clear resemblance with the former Northern People's Congress (NPC), but with somewhat wider support. Apart from their disputable win of presidency, they also had a substantial number of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives, although far from majority. Even though the newly established presidential system was designed in order to facilitate effectiveness of the federal authority, the fragile coalition that was formed inhibited such development. There was also a problem of cooperation between the opposition-ran states and the central government

The high level of oil prices that benefited Nigeria during that decade came to an end, but was not followed by appropriate reduction in public expenditure. On the contrary, the spending continued for political reasons, often in form of malformed projects that served the purpose of creating

illusions of development and equal allocation of resources. National foreign debt was increasing at a head-spinning rhythm, and corruption seemed worse than ever. After the heavily rigged elections in 1983, it was evident this attempt of democracy was near its end.

Thanks to the atmosphere of pervasive corruption and incompetence that Shagari's government projected throughout the Nigerian society, a new military coup on the New Year's Eve 1983, under the leadership of Major General Muhammadu Buhari, was seen as a positive change. His attempts were aimed at restoring the trust in the authorities and mobilizing the national spirit as well as attacking corruption, promoting austerity, and reviving the economy. However, the results were poor. Although the enormous foreign debt posed an increasingly heavy burden, the growing economic crisis and high unemployment rate rendered the people unwilling to adhere to strict economic reforms proposed by the IMF. The regime was repressive, trying to silence any opposition. In August 1985, amidst rising unrest in the country, this military government was relieved via another coup.

The regime of Major General Ibrahim Babangida, had to face the painful problem of foreign debt, the servicing of which amounted to almost one half of the country's annual budget. To this extent, a Structural Adjustment Program was set in action in 1986, followed by proclamation of National Economic Emergency later that year. Drastic measures that included reduction of salaries and oil subsidies, even stricter austerity, strong discouragement of import, and devaluation of the national currency brought some results in relations with IMF and the World Bank. However, the overall recession, tangible fall in income and steadily rising unemployment were pushing the country deeper into the economic crisis. It is no surprise that, with the loosening of the repressive measures, the most vocal opponents of military dictatorship were labor unions and university students.

In 1986, Babangida made another highly controversial move by upgrading Nigeria's position in the Organization of Islamic Countries from an observer to that of a full member. Apart from producing unrest and conflict at the time, this step would prove to have far-reaching implications, some of them becoming even more obvious today.

Stating his intentions to lead the country towards the civilian rule, Babangida set the limit for this transition for 1989. In attempt not to repeat the mistakes of the Second Republic, he formed the civilian-based Political Bureau and Constitution Review Committee with the aim of providing recommendations for a gradual shift. Bureau's advice included the formation of a two-party system where the parties would be nationally based, as opposed to the multipartism of the First and the Second Republic which mirrored the ethno-regional divisions. In accordance with the Bureau's

recommendations, local elections were held in late 1987, although still under the ban on existence of political parties. They were largely annulled and repeated.

The lifting of the ban on political parties in 1989 proved to be an illusion. Every association that tried to register faced plainly impossible requirements, resulting in the formation of two government designed and sponsored parties later that year – the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The difference in political views of the proscribed parties was insignificant.

Another important political move was a decree by which all former politicians, particularly those office-holders that were found guilty of criminal deeds in relation to their position, were forbidden to enter the new parties. This was to represent an attempt to make a clean break with the corrupt, ethnically and religiously based traditions of the past, and cultivate a new generation of different politicians.

Political reshaping was closely tied to changes in the spheres of economy, characterized by the SAP, with efforts in the social field, by attempted mobilization of wider social strata, and with shifts in political culture, embodied in the popularization of MAMSER (Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance) movement.

In 1990, the Babangida regime was still in power, and still promising the return to civilian rule. After an unsuccessful coup, apparently backed by civilians, it became evident that the procrastination of the transition cannot be justified for much longer. Both the presidential and the elections for the bicameral parliament were finally scheduled for 1992. Only the latter were held, and immediately annulled.

Presidential elections of June 1993, which were to represent the finalization of the country's move to the civilian rule, were won by the SDP's candidate Moshood Abiola. After Babangida nullified Abiola's victory, the country came was engulfed in civil disobedience, protests and strikes, which also affected the economy. Despite army interventions, the uproar continued. Babangida merely formally handed the power to Ernest Shonekan. Within months, another coup, headed by General Sani Abacha, restored the military rule. Abiola's attempt to claim the presidential post in 1984 resulted in his imprisonment by the Abacha regime on the charges of treason. He died under questionable circumstances in 1998, while still in detention.

Abacha's coup and return of Nigeria to military dictatorship painted a sad picture in the atmosphere of blooming pan-African liberalization and democratization movement. However, both internal and external prodemocratic agents undermined the regime. Ironically, Abacha sent Nigerian troops to

some other African countries to fight for democratic causes, while his rule at home was characterized by human rights' abuses that included intimidation, unlawful detainment – the mentioned president-elect Abiola, and the former military head of state Obasanjo, who also opposed the regime – as well as alleged executions. Aware of Nigeria's role as one of the top oil producers, he shrugged away the threats of economic sanctions from abroad. His reign is also known for rampant corruption and flagrant looting of the country's coffers. To date, Nigeria is trying to trace and regain some of these funds scattered all over the world.

Following Abacha's sudden and somewhat mysterious death in 1998, Major General Abdulsalami Abubakar was sworn into office. He soon pronounced the return to civilian rule, and upon promulgation of the new Constitution in May 1999, Nigeria experienced its first free elections in decades.

However, the elections were not fair. Serious irregularities were reported, including buying of the votes and false ballots. Nevertheless, Olusegun Obasanjo, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate and former military ruler (1976-1979) was accepted as the winner. With this transfer of power, Nigeria, which has spent most of its independent life under military rule, entered the period of the Fourth Republic.

In 1999, soon upon his inauguration, and following the example of some other African nations (e.g. South Africa, Ghana, etc.) Obasanjo formed the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission with the task of investigating human rights' abuses during various military regimes since 1966. Popularly known as the Oputa Panel, after its chairman, the Commission began its work in late 2000, and finished it in 2001²⁹¹.

Ibrahim Babangida refused to appear before the Panel, challenging both the legal basis of its existence and its power to summon him. After being supported by the Court of Appeals, Babangida and some of his former associates sued President Obasanjo, the Commission, and Chairman Oputa, alleging that, under the country's laws, they had "no power to summon witnesses outside the Federal Capital Territory", and that "the 1999 Constitution made no provision for tribunals of inquiry"²⁹². With the Supreme Court ruling in his favor, Babangida seriously undermined the attempt of the Commission to supply justice and closure to the victims of his regime. By the time the Report of the Commission was published in 2005, its relevance was diminished beyond repair.

Obasanjo's first term was also marred by outbursts of ethnic violence, which the government tried to suppress by matching violence, evoking heavy criticism at home and abroad.

291 *Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission of Nigeria (HRVIC) Report*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.nigerianmuse.com/nigeriawatch/oputa/>

292 *Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission of Nigeria (HRVIC) Report*

His alleged dedication to anti-corruption fight expressed during the campaign remained in the domain of promise. There were no true efforts to rein the rule of the political godfathers that preside over wide patrimonial networks. The conducted reforms proved to be marginal, allowing the elite to continue personal enrichment²⁹³. In one of the potentially richest countries on the continent, a small, corrupt minority is enjoying the fruits of political positions, while the average Nigerian people are living in poverty, with poor health services as well as weak educational and employment opportunities. However, Obasanjo did manage to set in motion the economic reforms, and was diligent at trying to tackle the foreign debt.

The presidential elections of 2003 revamped some old memories. There were reports of widespread electoral fraud, including voter intimidation, ballot and results falsification, cases of multiple voting, etc²⁹⁴. With the electoral support again divided along the ethno-regional and religious line of North and South, there were fears of broader ethnic violence, but the situation was contained.

Upon winning his second term as the president, Obasanjo implemented some unpopular economic measures, including elimination of oil subsidies. This prompted labor union based strikes and protests, and the President tried to pass a law which would limit unions' rights to strike, but the attempt was curbed by the parliament to include only the essential services²⁹⁵.

In spring 2006, Obasanjo threatened the nascent Nigerian democracy by attempting to pass a law which would allow him to run for the third term in office, despite constitutional restraints. Blocked by the parliament and opposed by his own vice-president, Atiku Abubakar, he decided to hand-pick his successor. He found him in the person of Umaru Yar'Adua, fairly unknown governor of one of the northern states. Yar'Adua was also unmarred by any corruption allegations. The All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) put forward Muhammadu Buhari as their candidate, while Atiku Abubakar ran for the Action Congress (AC).

The elections held in April 2007 were heavily tainted by fraud, unfairness and other illegal practices. Prior to voting, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) denied Abubakar the chance to participate as a presidential candidate, due to corruption charges. After several appeals to higher court instances by both sides, the Supreme Court backed Abubakar's candidacy. Both domestic and international observers agreed that the voting process displayed a very high degree of irregularity, including rigging, multiple voting, intimidation, etc. There were also violent episodes accompanying the balloting throughout the country. The role of INEC, and in deed its

293 Freedom House, *Countries at Crossroads Report (2006)*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=7&ccrpage=31&ccrcountry=137>

294 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Nigeria (2006)*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=7030>

295 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report, Country Report: Nigeria (2006)*

independence, became very questionable. Both Buhari and Abubakar appealed the results, but the Supreme Court rejected the petitions. Umaru Yar'Adua was inaugurated as the president of Nigeria in May 2007. This was the first peaceful transition from one elected government to the other in Nigeria's history.

Yar'Adua decided to form a government of national unity, inviting the ANPP and the AC to join him. The ANPP answered positively, and currently holds several ministerial posts in the cabinet.

Although he was at first seen as a mere pawn in Obasanjo's hands by many, some of his gestures after appointment as a president speak differently. He overturned some of his predecessors' decisions, namely those about rising VAT and reducing subsidies on gas, which, undoubtedly, brought him some popularity points.

Nigeria, on both institutional and practical level, faces obstacles that hinder the renewal and consolidation of democracy²⁹⁶. Uwezurike claims that hostile ethnic feelings, regional differences and wide-spread corruption of the officials are the problems that have been persisting to plague the nation since it gained independence²⁹⁷. During the last bout of the military rule, between 1983 and 1999, Nigeria underwent severe institutional decay that affected administration at all levels, as well as the police and the army. Corruption, prebendalism and disrespect for law degraded the country and created certain expectations of neopatrimonial benefits among the future civilian authority.²⁹⁸ According to Agbaje et al., "dominant values have been toxic to democratic politicking"²⁹⁹.

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During the 70's, an unusual occurrence of military government preparing ground for a civil rule. The military decided to open a debate on a wide range of questions – from ethnic conflicts, over secular nature of the state, to modes of securing that no group achieves dominance over others. This dialogue resulted in an original mixture of federalism and consociationalism.³⁰⁰

In order to absorb some of the unfairness brought by the majoritarian democracy, Nigeria has been fostering the consociational model since the '70s. It was reflected in the "federal character principle" as well as in the agreement on zoning and rotation of posts among the three major ethnic groups.³⁰¹

296 Agbaje, Adigun and Adejumobi, Said, *Do Votes Count?* Africa Development, Vol. 31, 2006, p. 25–44, p. 25

297 Uwezurike, Chudi, *Ethnicity, power and prebendalism: The persistent triad as the unsolvable crisis of Nigerian politics*, *Dialectical Anthropology*, 21, 1996, p. 1-20, p.1

298 Bach, Daniel, *Nigeria: Towards A Country Without A State*, a paper presented at the conference *Nigeria Maximizing Pro-Poor Growth: Regenerating the Socio-Economic Database* held in London, June 2004

299 Agbaje, A. and Adejumobi, S., *Do Votes Count?*, p.25

300 Bach, D., *Nigeria: Towards A Country Without A State*

301 Ukiwo, U., *Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*, p. 132-3

The attempts to provide for a more secure way of distributing of revenues, and simultaneously satisfy the appetites of different groups, the number of states in Nigeria continued to grow. By 1976, Nigeria numbered 19 states and a Federal Capital territory, in 1989 this number rose to 21, only two years later the reconfiguring resulted in 30 states, with the final number, for now, of 36 states attained in 1996.

Both federal and consociational constitutional models are viewed as possibilities of dealing with tensions in plural societies, while ensuring territorial and political integrity of the society in question³⁰². This seemed to be an appropriate solution that would appease a multitude of Nigeria's geo-ethnic groups and their aspirations, and preserve the wholeness of the country. The 1999 Constitution provided for a higher degree of self-governing and greater autonomy of states, but has also fueled further inter-religious and ethnic conflicts.

Ukiwo warns that the consociational model in Nigeria lacks effectiveness due to the overpolitization and concentration of power in the hands of the president, leading to ethnoreligious conflict. The strong presidential system, which was preserved in the 1999 Constitution, places excessive emphasis on this position, producing discomfort in the ethnicities that are not filling the post at the moment.³⁰³

Today

Nigeria is a federal presidential republic, consisting of 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory. The states are further divided in an uneven number of Local Government Areas (LGAs), formerly known as districts. There is a total of 774 LGAs. With more than 148,000,000 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populous African country, and eighth in the world.

The president, elected through direct popular vote for a four-year term serves as both the head of state and head of government, or the Federal Executive Council. In order to assure the balance of power, the presidential post is being rotated among the three regions.

With executive power being vested in the government, the legislative is divided between the government and the bicameral National Assembly, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. All 360 members of the House of Representatives are chosen for a four-year term, through direct popular vote, using the "first past the post" system in single-member constituencies. The 109-large Senate is elected for the same period, also through direct popular vote, via the same

302 Lijphart, Arend, *Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links*, Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique, Vol. 12, 1979, p. 499-515, p. 499

303 Ukiwo, U., *Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*, p. 132-3

system, but in 36 multi-member constituencies, being the federal states, i.e. three Senate seats per each state, with an additional seat for the Federal Capital Territory.

The judicial branch is independent, with the Supreme Court being the highest instance. The country nurtures a legal system which allows for existence of customary law, reflecting the country's various cultures, customs, traditions and values. This includes, among others, the Shari'a law applied mostly in the northern states.

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The Shari'a courts of appeals have existed in Nigeria since independence. They have, however, limited its scope of activity to civil law. What many, including academia, law practitioners as well as national and international human rights advocates, find alarming are recent developments where the jurisdiction of these courts has been extended to include criminal cases. The practices include punitive flogging, amputations and death sentences by stoning. This opened the door for a multi-faceted discussion, ranging from human rights matters to constitutional issues.

Section 38 of the Nigerian Constitution, which came into effect in May 1999, specifically allows for freedom of religious practices: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom... to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance³⁰⁴". Consequently, thirteen northern states have gradually introduced Shari'a law to a greater extent into their legal system. The provision is used by the proponents as well as opponents of the Shari'a: while the northern Muslims invoke their rights to freely practice their religion, the non-Muslims living in the states practicing this religious law claim that they are denied the same right by the ruling majority³⁰⁵.

There are also other unavoidable questions of human rights. It is argued that the Shari'a law is discriminatory against the Muslim population subjected to it, as they do not have the choice of whether they will be tried by the religious or the common courts of law. Furthermore, some of the offenses that are severely punished under the Shari'a are not even observed as such in the common law system. These forms of discrimination are, again, in collision with the country's supreme legal act.³⁰⁶

On the other hand, the Constitution in its often cited Section 10 clearly states that "the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion³⁰⁷". Many argue that the

304 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>

305 Human Rights Watch, *Political Shari'a*, 2004, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/nigeria0904/13.htm>

306 Human Rights Watch, *Political Shari'a*

307 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

exercise of Shari'a in the northern states is a direct breach of this constitutional article, while the Muslims point to the fact that Shari'a is applicable to Muslims only³⁰⁸.

Recently, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has called for a new Constitution, which would, according to them, guarantee true federalism, by allowing the Muslims prevailing in the northern states to adopt a constitution of their own, in line with their religious beliefs³⁰⁹. This would, however, mean discrimination towards non-Muslim population in these states.

The Supreme Court, the country's highest judicial instance, has not yet declared these practices of the courts operating under the Shari'a law as constitutional or not. There is no doubt that this is a very sensitive question, politically and otherwise. However, letting it simmer for longer without addressing it could boil over to another wave of violence that would pose a serious threat to the multi-religious society of the populous country.

Partly, it does come down to a very practical political question – the elections. Obasanjo, himself a Yoruba Christian from the South, has won a formidable number of votes in the Muslim, Shari'a North in the presidential race in 1999³¹⁰. With this in mind, he had to calculate his actions carefully, and treat the religious and political feelings of these voters with caution. Although his aversion towards some of the punitive practices is apparent, he was careful not to step on any constitutional toes. Yar'Adua, on the other hand, is a Fulani Muslim and, prior to accession to the post of the President, occupied the position of governor of Katsina. It was under his leadership that this state introduced Shari'a.

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Another issue raising from the formation of new entities is that of the indigeneity, which is in the Constitution of 1979 defined as “either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents was a member of a community indigenous to that state”, and carried as such to the constitution of 1999. With the creation of new states, people who have spent their entire lives on a certain territory have found themselves in the situation of non-indigeneity. The importance of this formulation lies in the implementation of quotas for civil servants, access to education and health services, and even ownership rights on the basis of indigeneity, not residency.³¹¹ The necessary legal framework, which would protect non-indigenous population from discrimination, has yet to be passed.

308 Human Rights Watch, *Political Shari'a*

309 Muhammad, Abdul Salam, *Nigerian Muslims want new constitution*, Vanguard, Lagos, Nigeria, June, 30th 2009, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/06/30/nigerian-muslims-wantnew-constitution/>

310 BBC News, *Nigeria Sharia architect defends law*, March, 21st 2001, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1885052.stm>

311 Bach, Daniel, *Nigeria: Towards A Country Without A State*

This formulation has created numerous possibilities of discrimination among Nigerians, some of which find themselves “alien” to the territory that they have lived on all their lives. Moreover, they are subject to disadvantageous treatment when it comes to basic services provided by the state. On the higher level, the state is exacerbating the atmosphere of already heavily disturbed ethno-regional and religious relations by institutionalizing bias based on ethnicity and origin.

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The link between the resource richness and violence is obvious in Nigeria. The increase in incidence of ethno-religious conflicts mirrors the inability of the government to deliver democratic dividends³¹². The formation of new states is directly related to (re)distribution of resources, particularly those acquired from oil and ethnic strives. The existence, growing activity and militancy of various para-military groups represents an important issue in contemporary Nigerian society. The competition for riches has prompted a true arms race in some parts of Nigeria, particularly in the oil-rich Niger delta³¹³. According to Ukiwo, the Nigerian state remains oppressive, privatized, unpopular and unhegemonic, and thus often viewed as the enemy by particular ethnic and religious groups³¹⁴. Even with a less extreme view, it is certain that the state has proven to have very limited power in relation to ethnic and communal violence, losing considerable resources as well as failing to exercise its authority, protect the local population and its own interests.

Numerous private armies and militias are fighting for dominance over certain territories, but also over profits that can be generated from them. There are repetitive calls for change in allocation of revenues obtained from oil, and violent conflicts between communities and ethnic groups over the access to oil in the Delta region are not ceasing, taking their toll in human lives as well as in profit. The production is often halted by sabotages, abduction of workers, and forceful occupation of oil platforms. Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), one of the largest and most active militant groups in the oil-rich region, has recently declined government’s proposal for amnesty, and fervently continued its fight.

The second category consists of various vigilante groups, which represent an increasingly important factor in the country’s life. The spread of vigilante groups, particularly at the beginning of Obasanjo’s rule, began as the expansion of private security sector. However, their continued growth signifies the failure of the police and armed forces to provide effective protection to the citizens. It is also the mirror of the government’s inability to exercise control across its territory.³¹⁵ Although

312 Ukiwo, U., *Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*, p. 129

313 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report (2006)*

314 Ukiwo, U., *Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*, p. 129

315 Bach, D., *Nigeria: Towards A Country Without A State*

for some they signify the only security and guarantee of some level of justice in their communities pervaded by crime, the fact remains that they are groups operating under own, disputable moral code and unrestrained by the hand of law. Their activities include arbitrary beatings, detention, and even executions.

Economy

Nigeria's economy is primarily based on oil and oil related products. The country is world's 11th largest oil producer, which provides 95% of foreign exchange earnings and about 80% of budgetary revenues³¹⁶. The richness in black gold has also brought menaces such as corruption, theft and inter-communal conflict. Even the theoreticians that subscribe to the view that, in general terms, mineral resources have no significant impact on democracy, point out to Nigeria as an exception, estimating that the country would democratize faster if it was not as dependent on mineral resources³¹⁷.

The oil production gave a strong boost to Nigerian economy, turning it into the strongest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, with the estimated GDP of over \$200 billion, and in the rank of middle-income economies, Nigeria stalls with further democratization, remaining largely corrupt and entrenched in kleptocratic traditions.

Due to its richness in oil, Nigeria was not eligible for HIPC program. In 2005, following rise in non-oil sectors of economy, for the first time in decades, the Paris club wrote off \$18 billion of Nigeria's more than \$30 billion big debt to this group of countries, in exchange for the remaining \$12 billion. In the next year, helped by soaring oil prices, Nigeria was the first African country to pay off the debt to the Club.³¹⁸

316 CIA, *The World Factbook: Nigeria*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/NI.html>

317 Haber, S., Menaldo, V., *Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism*, p. 22-26

318 BBC News, *Nigeria settles Paris Club Debt*, April, 21st 2006, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4926966.stm>

Figure 9: Selected Economic Indicators

Indicator / Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
GDP (current \$)	28,472,471,552	28,108,826,624	45,983,600,640	112,248,610,816	165,468,815,360
GDP growth (annual %)	8	2	5	5	6
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	7	56	38	20	5
Revenue, excluding grants (% of GDP)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Official development assistance and official aid (current \$,000)	255,080	210,900	173,700	6,414,130	2,042,330
External Debt (current \$,000)	33,438,924	34,092,471	31,354,920	22,178,282	8,933,714
Total Debt Service (% of goods, services and income)	23	14	8	16	1

Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators Database³¹⁹

In the last twenty years of the 20th century, Nigeria received close to \$3.5 billion dollars in aid, almost an exact match to the figure the late Abacha has been accused of pocketing. The quantity of aid does not include the World Bank loans which amounted to as much as \$1 billion on yearly basis. However, the country's infrastructure remained in a dismal state, while public services were not even apt to maintain basic levels of hygiene. This is largely due to corruption and graft. Numerous projects that won money from abroad were faked: some were never even started, serving as a smoke screen for obtaining money from international donors. This caused severe reductions of aid, bringing it to half of what it was in the 1990.³²⁰

Corruption

Corruption is debilitating Nigeria. Corruption related to oil revenues alone claimed as much as ten percent of GDP on the annual level³²¹. During his election campaign, Olusegun Obasanjo made firm promises to tackle corruption. In the beginning of his first term in office, he seemed to stay true to his word: he established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), helped setting of the Transparency International presence in the country, and vehemently supported the African Peer Review Mechanism. However, following initial gestures, electoral mathematics once again proved to be a mighty disincentive for facing the issue with full strength. With secured second term, and nothing to lose in that regard due to constitutional constraints on number of presidential time in office, Obasanjo again displayed serious intentions to

319 Table created using selected data from The World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>

320 LaFraniere, Sharon, *Africa Tackles Graft, With Billions in Aid in Play*, The New York Times, June, 6th 2005, p. A6

321 Bratton, M., van de Walle, N., *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, p. 67

fight corruption: several members of his cabinet were arrested for various charges related to corruption and large amounts of federal funds were saved by simply awarding contracts on basis of competitive bidding.³²²

Obasanjo's administration also led a long battle on the international field in order to retrieve some of the enormous wealth dispersed in banks around the world by the previous military regimes. It is estimated that over \$500 billion have been looted out of the country. The late General Abacha was the most successful, stealing several billions personally. After lengthy legal and diplomatic efforts, close to a billion were restored³²³. Sadly, it seems that a portion of these financial resources never reached the destination, and was immediately spent on corrupting more Nigerian civil servants³²⁴. Moreover, when the Senate Public Accounts Committee decided to check on the sum in the country's central Bank, they found mere \$12 million³²⁵. Unable to breakaway from deeply rooted habits of the bureaucracy, Nigeria is oozing money due to corruption.

Ironically, it has been speculated that president Obasanjo himself has used threats by anti-graft investigations in order to persuade opposing presidential candidates to drop out of the race and thus secure favorable electoral conditions for his favored successor Yar'Adua³²⁶. Thus, anti-corruption campaigns, once they have actually began to show results and become more efficient are used in order to intimidate political opponents, leading to exchanging one undemocratic and detrimental procedure for another. Moreover, how successful are the anti-corruption attempts, when this type of intimidation produced results? Corruption or fight against it remain a question of convenience in Nigeria.

Simultaneously, as a part of his election campaign, President Umaru Yar'Adua claimed that he would declare all his assets upon assuming presidency. By doing this shortly after the victory, he provided a rare example to other Nigerian politicians. His intent to fight graft was also mirrored in the prosecution of some of the prominent office-holders, including Obasanjo's daughter. Human Rights Watch, however, warned that, apart from these opening moves, Yar'Adua has failed his promise: "[he] had two years to show that he meant business... But, instead, it is business as usual." He fired the chairman of the anti-corruption commission and spared his party-fellows of any

322 LaFraniere, Sharon, *Africa Tackles Graft, With Billions in Aid in Play*

323 Ayodele et al., *African Perspectives on Aid*

324 *Abacha-Gelder teilweise verschwunden*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/Abacha-Gelder_teilweise_verschwunden.html?cid=5610108

325 Ayodele et al., *African Perspectives on Aid*

326 BBC News, *Profile: President Umaru Yar'Adua*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6187249.stm>

corruption-related investigation. The parliament, under Party rule, is avoiding to pass the freedom of Information bill, which would provide Nigerians with the insight in government's spending.³²⁷

Figure 10: Transparency International Corruption perception Index

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Score	n/a	0,69	1,76	1,9	1,6	1,2	1	1,6	1,4	1,6	1,9	2,2	2,2	2,7
Rank/ out of	n/a	54/ 54	52/ 52	81/ 85	98/ 99	90/ 90	90/ 91	101/ 102	132/ 133	144/ 146	152- 154/ 159	142/ 163	147/ 180	121/ 180

Source: Transparency International³²⁸

At the time of its debut in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Nigeria was at the very of the list. The country lingered around this position for years. The picture began to show signs of very subtle improvement with Obasanjo's attempts to establish some control over the situation. This continued, albeit at a snail's pace, with the scores rising from the original 0,69 in 1996 to close to 3 in 2008. Thanks to encouraging moves made Yar'Adua's reign, the country is at the verge of entering the middle third of the list.

Figure 11: Economist's Intelligence Unit Democracy Index

Category \ Year	2007	2008
Electoral process and pluralism		3,08
Functioning of government		1,86
Political participation		4,44
Political Culture		4,38
Civil liberties		3,82
Overall score (rank out of 44/167)	3.52 (124)	3.53 (27/124)

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit³²⁹

Both in 2007 and 2008 Nigeria scored as 124th out of 167 countries observed, or as 27th in the Sub-Saharan region, improving its result by a mere 1/100 of a point. The country, whose overall score of 3.52 puts in the group of countries characterized as Authoritarian regimes.

If we take a closer look at the results across the five categories, it becomes apparent that some changes did occur. The state of Electoral process and pluralism slightly deteriorated in the two years that stand between the two reports, while the level of Political participation dropped by more than a

327 Human Rights Watch, *Nigeria: Abuser's Reign at Midterm*, June, 7th 2009, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/06/07/nigeria-abusers-reign-midterm>

328 Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices...

329 Table created using data from the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Index of democracy*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_INDEX_2007_v3.pdf and *Index of democracy 2008*, retrieved June 20, 2008 from graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf

point. However, the encouraging fact is a strong rise in the functioning of government, the issue that has been plaguing the continent's most populous country since independence.

In the 2007 edition, based on the data from the previous year, Nigeria could also be found on the Watchlist of the Economist's analysts, expected to take a turn for the worse after the elections in 2007. The analysts warned of danger of unrest and possible military intervention following the elections. Although not without some turbulence and dissatisfaction after a marred electoral process, the new president Umaru Yar'Adua managed to maintain his position, although the country still struggles to stay on the path towards democracy.

In the 2008 edition, the Economist Intelligence Unit put Nigeria on the list of countries with "a high or very high risk of social unrest", alongside some other turbulent areas, like Palestinian territories, Chad, Sudan, and DR Congo. This was due to ethnic and religious conflict which were again on the rise during the previous year, when data was collected.

Afrobarometer Selected Indicators³³⁰

Extent of Democracy

In **Round 1** of surveys conducted through the Afrobarometer project between July 1999 and June 2001, 3511 people were interviewed on the extent of democracy in Nigeria. They were asked to give their opinion on whether the country is a full democracy, has minor problems, but still is a democracy, has major problems, but still is a democracy, or is not a democracy. Respectively, the results were 17.6%, 46.8%, 34.3%, and 1.3%. As we can see, although aware of important obstacles that hinder democracy in Nigeria, by far the greatest percent believed that the country can be perceived as democratic.

In **Round 2**, between May 2002 and October 2003, the answer by which the respondent declares that he/she does not understand the question/democracy was added to the ones already existing. The percentage of those who thought that Nigeria was not a democracy increased to 13.0%, 53.3% now believed that, major problems withstanding, it is a democracy, while 25.6% thought the problems were minor, and only 7% viewed the country as a full democracy. Some 1.1% of 2381 persons included declared that they do not understand the question/democracy.

A sample of 2123 persons was surveyed from March 2005 to February 2006 in **Round 3** regarding the same issue. Some 19.1% answered that Nigeria was not a democracy, 49.9% thought that it is, but with major problems, 22.9% deemed that problems were minor, 5.7% viewed the country as a full democracy, while 2.3% said they did not understand the question/democracy.

³³⁰ Data selected from the Afrobarometer, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.jdsurvey.net/afro/afrobarometer.jsp>

The survey shows that people are becoming less likely to see Nigeria as a full democracy, but a great majority of them believes that it is a democracy to a certain extent. However, the number of those losing their trust that the country is a democracy is on a rapid rise.

Support for Democracy

When the survey examined the support for democracy in **Round 1**, out of 3590 people 81.2% said that they prefer it to any other form of government, 9.6% that to people like them, it doesn't matter, while 9.2% thought that in certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

In **Round 2**, the percentage of those favoring a democratic form of government dropped to 69.1%, 10.8 thought it did not matter, and a very high 20.1% said that in certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

The difference can be in part attributed to the novelty of democratic experiment. Round 1 was conducted between July 1999 and June 2001, and Round 2 between May 2002 and October 2003. In this period, the country was freshly out of a decades-long military dictatorship. Having in mind outbursts of ethnic and electoral violence in this time-frame, as well as rampant corruption and shaky economy, it is understandable that in part people saw democracy in a relatively unfavorable light.

Out of 2097 respondents to the same question in **Round 3**, 68.5% still preferred a democratic government, 13.2% thought it did not matter, while 18.3% said a non-democratic government can be preferable in certain situations.

Satisfaction with democracy

To the question how satisfied or dissatisfied is the interviewee with the way democracy works in Nigeria, with five possible answers in **Round 1** ranging from very unsatisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, over neutral, to somewhat satisfied and very satisfied, 3.3% of 3527 persons chose the first option, 11.3% the second, neutral answer was not reported, 59.3% declared themselves as somewhat satisfied, while 26.1% was very satisfied.

The offered answers regarding satisfaction with democracy in **Round 2** were changed. With these, 2.0% did not see Nigeria as a democracy, 31.2% answered that they are not at all satisfied, exactly the same percentage said they were not very satisfied, slightly less, or 29.5% were fairly satisfied, and 6.1% were very satisfied. Similarly to the changes in answers regarding support for democracy, a negative trend can be observed.

The possible answers in **Round 3** remained the same. Out of 2132 persons, 1.7% thought the country is not a democracy, 38.7% were not at all satisfied, 33.2% were not very satisfied, 22.3% said they were fairly satisfied, and only 4.1% were very satisfied.

Figure 12: Ibrahim’s Index of African Governance

Category \ Year	2000	2002	2005	2008*
Safety and Security	63.8	61.7	62.8	63.7
Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption	34.7	39.2	44.5	48.2
Participation and Human Rights	47.3	47.6	42.9	44.1
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	37.8	36.0	40.4	40.7
Human Development	42.5	42.8	45.7	45.9
Total score (out of 100)	45.2	45.5	47.3	48.5
Rank (out of 48)	39	41	38	39

Source: The Moi Ibrahim Foundation³³¹

* Based on data from 2006

According to Ibrahim’s Index of Governance, although the overall results portray improvement of governance across the observed period, Nigeria’s performance has slightly fluctuated, as can be proven by examining results in some of the categories, but also the country’s ranking among others.

With almost 14 points, the greatest, and for our topic the most important improvements can be seen in the category of Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption, while the state in the realm of Participation and Human Rights has in fact deteriorated over the observed period. Judging by the provided data, the situation in the field of Safety and security can be viewed as stable, while the Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development show somewhat slow, but rather steady progress.

Failed State Index

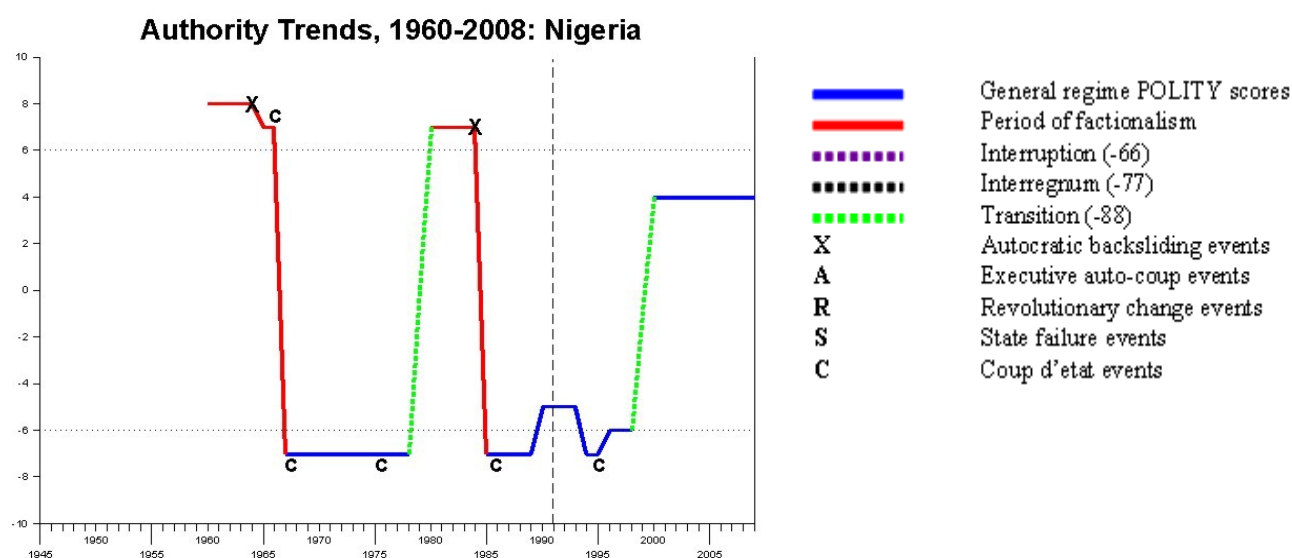
Fund for Peace’s Failed State Index has included Nigeria since the inception of this annual survey. In 2005, with the overall score of 84.3 (with the highest and worst possible being 120), the country took 54th position out of 76 countries examined. In the next year’s report, the figures were grimmer: the score reached 94.4, putting Nigeria at 22nd place of 146 included in the research. The results for the next two years, 2007 and 2008 portrayed a worsening tendency, with composite scores being 95.6 and 95.7, and the country positioning as the 17 and 18, respectively, on the list of 177 states.³³²

331 The Moi Ibrahim Foundation, *The Ibrahim’s Index of African Governance*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://site.moibrahimfoundation.org/the-index.asp...>

332 Fund for Peace, *The Failed State Index*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.fundforpeace.org>

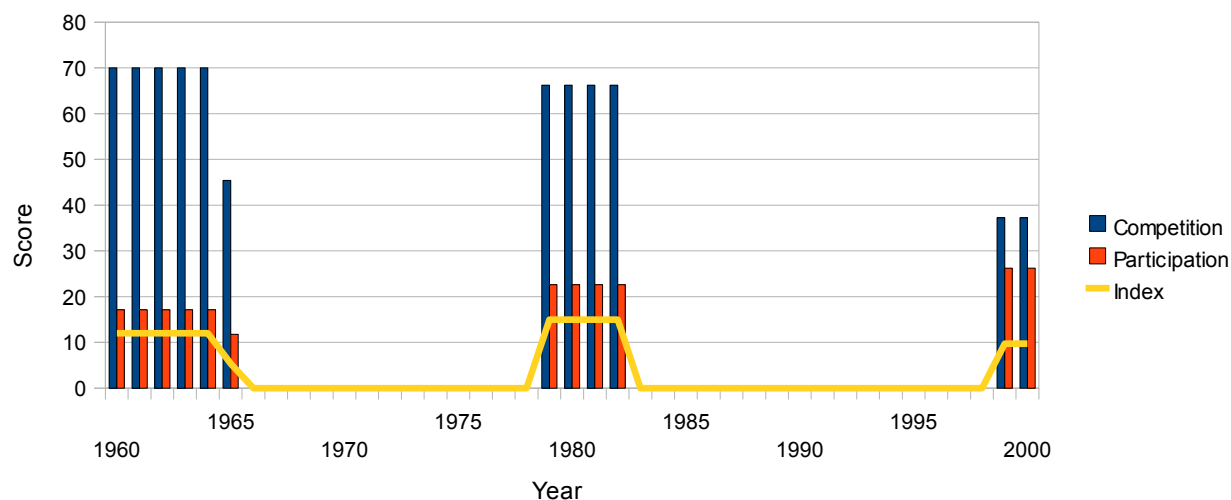
Figure 13: World Bank Governance Indicators

	Voice and Accountability		Political Stability		Government Effectiveness		Regulatory quality		Rule of Law		Control of Corruption	
	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)
1996	3.3	-1.82	7,7	-1.63	5.2	-1.36	12,2	-1,13	7,1	-1,35	4.9	-1.25
1998	12.0	-1.22	20.2	-0.84	13.3	-1.07	18	-0,93	6,7	-1,35	10.7	-1.12
2000	27.4	-0.72	9.1	-1.58	12.8	-1.02	23,4	-0,67	11,4	-1,17	6.8	-1.17
2002	25.5	-0.76	7.2	-1.71	11.8	-1.04	10,7	-1,2	3,8	-1,5	2.4	-1.38
2003	27.4	-0.72	6.7	-1.65	16.6	-0.90	12,7	-1,16	3,8	-1,65	4.4	-1.26
2004	26.4	-0.72	4.8	-1.81	14.7	-0.94	8,3	-1,3	4,3	-1,54	4.9	-1.32
2005	24.5	-0.75	4.8	-1.73	22.3	-0.84	18,5	-0,89	6,7	-1,41	8.7	-1.21
2006	32.2	-0.49	3.4	-2.05	17.5	-0.89	18,5	-0,96	11	-1,19	8.7	-1.14
2007	31.7	-0.54	4.3	-2.07	14.7	-0.93	19,4	-0,89	8,6	-1,2	12.1	-1.01

Source: The World Bank³³³Figure 14: Polity IV³³⁴

333 Table created using data collected from the World Bank, *The Worldwide Governance Indicators project*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp

334 Graph retrieved from the Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity IV Country Reports: Nigeria*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Nigeria2007.pdf>

Figure 15: Polyarchy³³⁵**Figure 16: Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report**

	1988/89*	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Political Rights	6	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7	6	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Civil Liberties	5	5	4	4	5	6	7	6	6	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Status	pf	pf	pf	pf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf
Electoral democracy	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	n

Source: Freedom House³³⁶

* The year number corresponds to the year covered, not the year of the Edition

Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report shows that Nigeria has not undergone substantial changes in neither of the two main categories being assessed. Immediately preceding the democratic shifts on the continent, during the military rule headed by Ibrahim Babangida, the country scored a mere 6 on Political rights, with slightly better result of 5 on Civil liberties. By the middle of the '90s and deterioration of the overall political situation under prolonged military dictatorship, the Freedom House's scores aimed at measuring democracy reached the lowest possible values. A noticeable ump happened with the transition to civilian rule and elections held in 1999. However,

335 Graph created using data from the International Peace Research Institute – Center for the Study of Civil War, *Polyarchy Dataset*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.prio.no/misc/Download.aspx?file=%2fprojects%2fdataset-website-workspace%2fPolyarchy%2520Dataset%2520Downloads%2ffile42531_polyarchy_v2.xls

336 Table created using data from Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Report: Country Ratings and Status, FIW 1979 – 2009*, retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/CompHistData/FIW_AllScores_Countries.xls and *Freedom in the World Report: Electoral Democracies, FIW 1989-90-2009*, retrieved from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/CompHistData/ElectoralDemocracyTable.xls>

with very few liberalization promises being kept during both Obasanjo's and Yar'Adua's rule, the country is showing very limited and unstable progress.

III DR Congo

The Path*

The territory that we today know as the Democratic Republic of Congo had a troubled and tumultuous history. The Congo Free State was founded in 1885, with King Leopold II of Belgium as its actual owner. This was a unique example in history where a person, not a country, possessed another country. It also turned out to be a reign of terror and bloodshed that hardly had a worthy precedent. Led by interest in the country's enormous natural wealth, which was primarily rubber at the time, Leopold II and his rogue corporate front that officially ruled the country engaged in finding innovative ways of extracting as much profit as possible, not hesitating to commit despicable atrocities and sacrifice human lives on the way. Some researchers estimate that the country's population more than halved in this period, due to killings, forced labor and famine.

As the stories of horror spread and reached Europe, the pressure on Belgium to rein its regent was rising. In 1908, the Belgian parliament took over the administration of the country, which changed its name to Belgian Congo, and became the largest and economically most fruitful Belgian colony. With Congo's natural riches only gaining in value, Belgium continued investing in infrastructure, the humanitarian situation improved, with native population even having some access to basic education, but without any real civil and political rights, while the firm colonizing grip remained in place. This continued until late 1950s, when increasing external pressures on Belgium to allow the country's independence along with blooming internal nationalist movements, made way for the establishment of the First Republic, despite obvious reluctance of the colonizing force.

The Republic of the Congo, sharing the name with its western neighbor, held its first elections in May 1960, in the wake of independence which was officially proclaimed on 30th of June that year. The ethno-religious and social cleavages became apparent before that, with political parties being formed almost exclusively on tribal basis, but displayed in full light immediately before and upon gaining full statehood. The elections resulted in the country being led by Patrice Lumumba as the Prime Minister, and Joseph Kasa-Vubu as the President of the State. The existing frictions among the emerging political elites of the infant independent state and their constituencies were only fueled by foreign geopolitical and economic interests.

The former colonizing force Belgium was intent on retaining its business interests in Congo. This soon became evident in the provinces of South Kasai and Katanga. The diamond rich region of South Kasai declared its independence from Belgium before the independence of the country itself.

* The part of this section pertaining to the period prior to 1993 is primarily based on historical data assembled from the Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Zaire (Former)*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/zrtoc.html>

Soon thereafter, under the leadership of Moïse Tshombé, supported by the Belgian industry, and more importantly, Belgian army troops, the resource endowed province of Katanga followed with the proclamation of its own independence from the country that has been itself only a fortnight old. In what would later become known as the Congo crisis, the country became a battleground of many interested parties.

In the period of the First Republic, between 1960 and 1965, the Congo crisis literally devoured the country. Secessionist aspirations, insurgencies, mutiny, loss of control over the armed forces, inability to exercise control over the vast territory, conflicts in the leadership ranks that ended in executions, UN peacekeeping attempts, foreign interventions that at times amounted to virtual occupation, Cold war proxy struggles – all of it could be seen in the Congo of that period. The country was a theater for the Cold War proxy conflicts, with both Soviet Union and the United States taking active roles. It finally ended in African post-colonial fashion – with a military coup. The Mobutu era began.

A vehement anti-communist, and for that reason widely supported by the United States which saw in him an opportunity to secure a regional ally in their struggle against the common enemy, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, as he was known at the beginning of his public career, came to power in 1965 in a bloodless coup, thus establishing the Second Republic. He initially banned any political activity in the country, justifying this move with bad experiences the country endured regarding politics in the initial period of its existence. The role of the parliament was reduced to that of a rubber-stamp, and even abolished for a period. He dedicated his first years in the cabinet to reconstruction and development of the devastated country, a task he performed with relative success. The second focus of this period was the consolidation and fortification of his own power, and removal of any opposition, whether through patronage, outlawing, or simple execution.

In 1967, Mobutu's master plan for the rebirth of the nation was made public. Firstly, the new Constitution, adopted with almost 98% at the referendum that year, gave the president, i.e. Mobutu, very wide authorities: he was the head of both the state and the government, supreme commander of the army and the police and in charge of foreign policy. The members of the cabinet that he selected were to be mere executors of his plans. The president also had the power to appoint provincial governors. Not only was the executive power concentrated in the hands of the president, he also had significant powers from the judiciary and legislative domain. The president was to appoint the judges of all the courts in the country, including the Supreme Court. Finally, he was vested with the power of executive order which was in rank with a law.

Secondly, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR) was established as the only party, and the only possible way to engage in political life. Moreover, all the citizens of the country automatically became party members. The move was explained by the Founder-President: “In our African tradition there are never two chiefs [...] That is why we Congolese, in the desire to conform to the traditions of our continent, have resolved to group all the energies of the citizens of our country under the banner of a single national party”³³⁷. After 1972, when the administrative and the Party structures became one, the Party de facto became greater than the state itself.

Thirdly, Mobutu promulgated the so called Manifesto of N’Sele. This was the political platform of MPR and the blueprint for what would later become the base of mobutism, the ideological matrix of his reign. The Manifest concentrated on three main areas: nationalism, revolution and authenticity. Nationalism was centered on economic development of the country; revolution, seen as a national issue, meant rejection of both capitalist and communist values, and quest for an own original path; authenticity concentrated on developing original national identity. The Manifesto clearly stated that personal liberties are a threat, and that the authority of the regime must be undisputed. Mobutu clarified his ideas with these words: “Africa, with its recent heritage of the village chief cannot accommodate European or American-style democracy”³³⁸.

Realizing the devastating consequences of a poorly organized state, as had been seen in the post-colonial days, but also wanting to avoid any resemblance to the colonial era, Mobutu tried to revive the order of the colonial state in its slightly modified form, which would be more agreeable to his own ambitions. He tried to replace the Catholic Church, one of the three pillars of the apparatus of control in the colonial era, by the party, which later fused with the state³³⁹. The remaining two pillars, the state, which became the entity owned by the Party, and the business, that was nationalized, were successfully transformed to serve the agenda.

In line with these anti-colonial and original aspirations, Mobutu started the campaigns of authentication. The clothing was reinvented, ousting the western look for an original design known as the “abacost”. Renaming was without a doubt one of the strongest weapons of authentication: the streets, the cities, the country itself, and eventually the people, including himself, changed their names in order to obtain a more authentic, African, non-western, Zairian identity. The Ruler, now named Mobutu Sese Seko Nkuku Ngbendu Waza Banga, or “The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his

337 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Zaire (Former)*

338 Dunn, Kevin C., *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.115-116

339 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Zaire (Former)*

wake³⁴⁰, to better reflect his heritage, introduced a series of similar projects that served as a mobilization, cohesion and legitimization force of the dictatorial regime he established in the country to be called Zaire.

However, Mobutu soon started to display clear tendency towards personalistic rule, adorning himself with heroic, if not divine attributes. The self-proclaimed “father of the nation” became the traditional chief in his own village – Zaire, in particular when it comes to appearance, which appealed not only to his compatriots, but also to the international community which was reluctant to change its image of Africa. He proved to be inventive in developing the cult of personality and substituting old institutions with new ones. He went as far as having the national television daily depict him descending from the clouds³⁴¹. In words of one of his ministers, not only did the Party become the new Catholic church, but he was its Pope, and his picture their crucifix³⁴².

The state was becoming increasingly centralized, first by introducing government-appointed officials at almost all levels of local administration, and later by fusion of party and administrative structures. This secured an almost absolute control by Mobutu and his agents.

Mobutu Sese-Seko also recognized the perils of ethnically motivated political affiliation. He was quick to abolish all forms of associations based on ethnic loyalties, no matter how benevolent they might have been.

In proclaimed attempt to evoke traditional feelings of solidarity and communal spirit, Mobutu’s regime introduced obligatory civic work, popularly known as “salongo”. This was, in fact, a form of forced labor that bore too much resemblance to the colonial times. Despite possible legal repercussions, this measure generated increasing dissatisfaction and resistance, significantly contributing to the diminishing of the legitimacy of the regime over the course of time.

Mobutu saw the economic and political independence as two very dependent concepts. He also ruled in a patrimonialistic manner, which led to “rampant corruption incompatible with economic diversification and development”³⁴³. The country became so pervaded with corruption, that the term “cleptocracy” was actually invented for the purpose of describing his rule. Public offices became synonymous of criminal activities. Mobutu and the machinery of corruption, personal enrichment, and lawlessness that he constructed were dragging the country deeper and deeper into utter poverty and overall bankruptcy.

340 Dunn, Kevin C., *Imagining the Congo*, p. 192

341 Dunn, Kevin C., *Imagining the Congo*, p.110

342 Meredith, Martin, *The Fate of Africa: from the hopes of freedom to the heart of despair; A History of Fifty Years of Independence*, Public Affairs, 2006. p. 752, p. 297

343 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Zaire (Former)*

Under his concept of Zairinization, conducted in 1973-1974, Mobutu decided to rectify the mistakes of the history that was so cruel to Zairians. He nationalized foreign businesses and property handing them back to the “sons of the country”, the definition that encompassed Mobutu’s associates, high-ranking party officials and family members. Shortly thereafter, sensing the outrage of the public, Mobutu offered some of the property for sale to individuals that had to satisfy a set of criteria. These ranged from party activity to personal integrity, and were subject to arbitrary judgment which could be amended through bribe. The whole business turned out to be another scramble for the loots, with the ones being closer to Mobutu drawing most of the benefits from it.

These projects also proved to be decremental to the country’s economy, with the foreign debt more than tripling between 1972 and 1974, while Mobutu and his cronies compiled enormous wealth³⁴⁴. Faced with catastrophic effects of prior “economic restructuring”, such as high inflation, severe rise of unemployment and death of entire branches of economy, Mobutu tried to reverse them through “retrocession”. This term for return of a portion of the property to previous owner was supposed to stabilize the economy and bring back the foreign capital. However, partly due to unfavorable conditions on the international markets, Zaire was compelled to increase foreign borrowing, turning Mobutu’s ideas of economic independence into a farce, while the popular discontent was rising.

The political framework in Congo/Zaire represented a lush environment for the widest range of neopatrimonial practices. Mobutu’s rule was effectively based on the “stick and carrot” principle, with punitive measures for those who opposed the regime, and abundant rewards for those who displayed loyalty. Civil servants were often relocated in order to prevent creation of parallel power networks, allowing Mobutu and his closest clique to retain maximum of centralized power. State funds were freely used to oil the neopatrimonial machinery, leaving little to be used for financing any other functions of the state. As another consequence, the civil servants were underpaid, thus very open for corruption and extortion.

By mid-70s, Zaire was in a dismal economic state. Mobutu and the elite surrounding him turned to international donors, primarily the Paris Club and the BrettonWoods institutions. However, if the reforms the lenders required were carried out, Mobutu’s regime would be left without the ground it was standing on: complete power and discretion over the finances that financed the system. Therefore, Mobutu and his entourage played their foreign partners against each other, appealing to different economic interests of the donors. The IMF made four stabilization plans, and Paris Club as many reschedulings of the payments. The implementation of demanded changes such as debt service, control of spending and corruption, maintenance and development of infrastructure and

344 Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Zaire (Former)*

revival of production were effectively avoided in great part by using poor coordination between donors.

Mobutu also engaged in the Angolan civil conflict, a proxy battle of the Cold war. The Zairian forces fought against the ruling Angolan regime with the help of the USA and some other Western countries. This was also a way of dealing with the Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo (FLNC), the remains of the armed Katangan forces that fled to Angola after the unsuccessful secession, and were fighting on the side of the Angolan government. As a consequence, the Angolan forces backed the FLNC during the invasion of the former Katanga province, renamed to Shaba, in 1977 and 1978. Although the FLNC expected wide support from the local population as well as from the groups that opposed the Mobutu regime, the Zairian troupes, with the crucial help from France and Belgium, defeated the rebels in both conflicts.

The political and economic situation in Zaire was continuously deteriorating. In December 1980, 00 members of the Parliament sent an extensive letter to President Mobutu demanding democratic changes in the country. The MPs in question were detained and tortured. The most prominent of them, Étienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, a former close member of Mobutu's circle, formed the Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social despite the ban on political parties.³⁴⁵ The Union, among others, spearheaded the resistance to the Mobutu regime.

In the first part of his rule, Mobutu tried to stifle tribal and secessionist tendencies by promoting Zairian nationalism and developing the federal structure. However, in his latter years, he used same ethnic loyalties to manipulate one group against the other, maintaining power for himself.³⁴⁶

As the Cold war was coming to the end, the West grew increasingly reluctant to look the other way from Mobutu's blatant breach of human and political rights, creating external pressure on the regime. The internal resistance to Mobutu continued to swell during the '80s as well. What started as opposition aimed at the regime turned into a fight for democracy³⁴⁷. Resentment for the Mobutu and his entourage ripened into a quest for a complete political transition. By the end of the decade, the country was economically completely ruined, and the corruption took catastrophic proportions. This, coupled with long human rights abuse led to protests that flooded Zaire in 1989 and 1990.

Being faced with increasingly overt opposition from the masses, Mobutu realized the need to give in to popular demands, at least verbally. He engaged in his own farcical experiment in direct democracy, inviting citizens and associations to send their comments regarding the political system

345 Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges: *The Congo from Leopold to Cabila: A People's History*, Zed Books, 2002, p. 304, p.185

346 Roessler, Philip, Prendergast, John, *Democratic Republic of the Congo in Twenty-First-Century Peace Operations*, Durch, William J. (ed.), US Institute of Peace Press, 2006, p. 651, p. 233

347 Nzongola-Ntalaja, G.: *The Congo from Leopold to Cabila*, p.171

of DR Congo. The results, which were never published, urged Mobutu to start promising political shifts towards multiparty democracy. The Third Republic was proclaimed in April 1990. The liberalization was to consist of promulgation of the Constitution, partial lifting of the ban on political parties and elections. However, Mobutu was intent on dragging his feet as long as it was possible. And he did, for almost six years.

Mobutu's circles of loyal followers kept on the short leash of corruption and clientelism started to disintegrate. Known as the "dinosaurs", Mobutu's close associates sensed the definite change of the political climate and started to defect and found their own parties. These were based more on the hope that the legal consequences and popular demands for justice would be avoided, than on a genuine opposition to Mobutu.

Short-lived governments succeeded one another until 1992, when the Conference Nationale Souveraine (Sovereign National Conference) was held. The Conference was to finally put the country on the road towards democracy, by forming a provisional legislative body and the electoral commission as well as formulating a transitional constitution. However, Mobutu used the loopholes in the Transitional Charter to manipulate and obstruct the new institutions³⁴⁸. Parallel government and parliament were formed, thus effectively blocking the country. This standstill, filled with violence and foreign intervention, lasted until 1994, when an amalgam government was established. However, the situation did not take a turn for the better in the following period. The new institutions formed to realize the concept of liberal democracy failed, and the popular support and trust in the new system faded³⁴⁹. The transition towards democracy was stalled and frustrated until the beginning of the Congo Wars.

The First Congo War that lasted from November 1996 until May 1997 resulted in the final disappearance of Mobutu Sese Seko from the Congolese political scene, and the ascent of Laurent-Désiré Kabila to the presidential post. It was directly inspired by the infamous Rwandan slaughters of 1994 spilled over the border to Zaire, mainly to the two Kivu provinces. After the end of the violence in the country, the Hutus massively fled to the neighboring Zaire. However, the militant parts of the community organized attacks on both the local Tutsi population, locally known as Banyamulenge and the ones across the border line. The Tutsi government in Rwanda responded with supplying weapons to Tutsis in Zaire. Mobutu's regime responded by ordering the ethnic Tutsis of Zairian nationality to leave the country. Rwanda as well as Burundi, Uganda and Angola supported the various anti-Mobutist groups which gathered around Kabila, a known dissident and rebel, to form Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo/Zaire (AFDL,

348 Nzongola-Ntalaja, G.: *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, p. 202-5

349 Nzongola-Ntalaja, G.: *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, p. 202-5

Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire). During their quest to liberate the country, the AFDL enjoyed the support of local population. Their strength also grew through soldiers of the dissipating Zairian army joining the rebels. In May 1997 Mobutu fled the country and the AFDL forces marched into Kinshasa. As one of his first moves, the new regime changed the name of the country to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Laurent Kabila came into the position of the president of the country that was not a state. What was worse, Kabila came to a throne, a presidential pedestal for decades carefully built and adorned by Mobutu, and he, despite initial promises and expectations, had no intention of reclining the regal status he obtained. Despite the hope that was produced after concluding 32 years of Mobutu's rule, the country sank into another long and brutal civil conflict the very next year.

After taking over as the country's leader, Kabila did not want to be overly dependent on his Rwandan allies. After several softer displays of power and gradual increase of tension, Kabila made the final break with his former allies by ordering the Rwandan armed forces out of the country. The Second Congo War began.

The Second Congo War, also dubbed the African World War or African Great War due to participation of as much as eight countries, lasted from August 1998 until the beginning of 2003, when a peace agreement was accepted by major warring sides. It ravaged the country, but also the whole region, drawing at least eight other countries into the conflict: Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad and Sudan mostly supported Laurent Kabila, while Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda sided with the rebels. Despite repeated efforts and official end of the conflict, the warfare in the eastern Congo continues to date.

The Lusaka Peace Accord of 1999, one of the failed attempts to install peace in Congo, was designed very ambitiously. Imagined as much more than just a cease-fire agreement, it also encompassed a plan for a democratization process. It was to start with the launch of a 45-day long Inter-Congolese dialogue, a comprehensive national conference that was to bring together representatives of the government, armed groups, political parties and civil society to discuss, among other, political transition and democratic elections.³⁵⁰ However, the actors proved to be less than willing to implement this agreement and the violence continued.

The conflict in the DR Congo was never simple to grasp. It is a multidimensional, multiethnic and finally multinational conflict. Both conflicts were marked by participation of numerous agents, ranging from loosely organized militias and rebel groups, over armed political parties to several

350 Heep, Jeremy, Davis, Darlene, *Promoting Peace and Democracy in The Congo: Democracy Advocates Engage in Peace Process*, Elections Today, 8, 2000, p. 9 and 24, p. 9

official armed forces from several countries. However, while Rwanda, the original epicenter of atrocities, is slowly but surely making its progress towards lasting peace, even if using some unorthodox recipes in achieving this goal, Congo has been the actual, although somewhat less visible battleground ever since. The country has been torn by warfare for almost 15 years.

Although originally provoked by the happenings in Rwanda, and largely fueled by ethnic feelings in the beginning, the civil war in DR Congo, often dubbed Africa transformed into a plunder inspired by the country's abundant mineral riches and other natural resources, the interested sides did not hesitate to establish mechanisms of organized plunder.

Although the data on the number of victims of the warfare in Congo is highly unreliable, and the estimates on the subject vary greatly, it is one of the bloodiest conflicts that are known in history. Taking place in invisible depths of a nearly forgotten continent, the toll in human lives it collected while it officially lasted, and the consequences it still imposes today are devastating. In fact, it is the deadliest conflict since the World War II³⁵¹. Moreover, years of unrestrained violence, routinely accompanied by destruction of infrastructure, disastrous economic conditions, looting, massive breach of human rights, lack of government control over the territory, etc. led to unprecedented human suffering. To date, people are dying primarily due to non-violent causes – illnesses linked to poor sanitation, commonly treatable diseases and hunger. According to the International Rescue Committee, in addition to 5.4 million lives lost in the war torn country in the preceding decade, further 45,000 people continue to die every month³⁵².

Kabila was assassinated in 2001, and his son was brought to take the place. This presidential nepotism was justified by the people's trust and the need for maintenance of order. Young Joseph Kabila indeed tried and managed to bring some stability, and the Peace Agreement was signed at the end of 2002.

The formal end of armed conflict has not brought peace to the people who are still subjected to severe consequences of conflict, and incessant insecurity in all spheres of living. Occasional armed strives continue to plague certain areas of the country, hindering efforts of normalization of living conditions, including sanitation and basic health care, reconstruction of infrastructure, economic reforms, and other improvements.

The Transitional Government established in June 2003 took upon the tasks of putting an end to conflict, reintegrating all former combatants, rebuilding the country's economy and implementing democracy. The latter called for organizing free and fair elections, originally planned for June 2005.

351 International Rescue Committee, *Special Report: Congo*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from <http://www.theirc.org/special-report/congo-forgotten-crisis.html>

352 International Rescue Committee, *Special Report: Congo*

As the rebel groups were reluctant to submit to the governmental power and the violence continued, the elections had to be postponed until July of the next year.

The presidential and parliamentary elections held in July 2006 were the first democratic, multiparty elections since the country gained its independence in 1960. Favored by some western governments, late Laurent Kabila's son, Joseph Kabila, won the October run-off with a margin of 6% against his rival, former Vice-President and rebel leader Jeanne-Pierre Bemba Gombo. Although there were outbursts of election violence, especially following the proclamation of the results, Bemba accepted the ruling of the Supreme Court on election results, and retained a powerful opposition stand. He is, however, facing charges in front of the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes during the Congo Wars.

Today

The Democratic Republic of Congo covers over 2,344,000 km², being at the 12th place of the world's largest countries, and the 3rd in Africa. Population estimates (under current circumstances, census remains in the domain of fantasy) range from just over 66,000,000³⁵³ to almost 69,000,000³⁵⁴, taking into account the consequences of AIDS and AIDS related mortality. This makes DR Congo the 19th most populous country in the world, and the fourth on the whole African continent.

DR Congo is striving to achieve the constitutionally proclaimed framework of a unitary, semi-presidential democratic republic. The semi-presidential system, as it was set, can be a successful cohabitation, as has been seen in many states. It can also lead to ineffective governance, fuel frictions and induce conflicts. This division of power between the president and the prime minister is what originally led to deadlock situations in both 1960 and 1965, provoking ubiquitous instability in the country.

During Mobutu's reign, Zaire became known as one of the most infamous examples of what is known as the phenomenon of the failed state. It earned this title for its government's constant inability to exercise control over its territory, possess legitimate authority, or provide basic public services. According to Weberian principle regarding state's monopoly on violence, DR Congo is still failing as a state. Various militant groups as well as organized and well connected criminal networks are effectively hindering the statehood, especially in the eastern parts of the country.

353 BBC News, *Country Profile – DR Congo*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1076399.stm

354 CIA, *The World Factbook: Congo, Democratic Republic of*, retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html>

There have been reports that the new escalation of violence has fostered renewed recruitment of children to fight for causes of various militias. Needless to say, as has been proven before in particular in sub-Saharan region, these victims of human rights abuses represent a particular hindrance to processes of peace consolidation, and their reintegration into society outside the warfare regime is still a struggle even after years of repetitive attempts.

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The country is rich in natural resources, especially diamonds and ores of gold, cobalt, tantalum, tin and copper. However, the abundance of highly priced mineral resources, and vast economic potential deriving from it remain largely untapped, at least as far as the state and general population are concerned. Approximately 50% of the population is categorized as living in poverty, with the figure being at 70% immediately after the conflicts³⁵⁵. The natural wealth, especially in the east of the country, has been the source of conflict since the birth of the independent state. It also led to wide-spread corruption, criminal activities of grand proportions, often including public officials, multinational and transnational companies and foreign governments.

The oil sector is responsible for about 65% of GDP and over 92% of exports. It also accounts for as much as 85% of state revenues. The production is expected to rise until 2010, followed by a fall due to decrease in reserves. With the support of the World Bank, the government is making efforts to diversify the economy and improve the basic conditions of living.

DR Congo is a heavily indebted country. After strong concerns of the debtors in regards to financial agreements with China, the government revised the infrastructure-for-as a part of the HIPC initiative, it reached the decision point and qualified to receive debt relief.

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Almost any attempted research pertaining to political, economic and social situation in DR Congo is bound to suffer from a chronic lack of statistical data, especially reliable and recent ones.

Figure 17: Selected economic indicators

Indicator / Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
GDP (current \$)	9,349,764,096	5,643,439,104	4,305,797,120	7,104,018,432	8,953,299,968
GDP growth (annual %)	-7	1	-7	6	6
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	109	466	516	22	17
Revenue, excluding grants (% of GDP)	10	5	4	n/a	n/a
Official development assistance and official aid (current \$,000)	895,790	194,750	177,120	1,828,230	1,216,540
External Debt (current \$,000)	10,258,587	13,239,366	11,692,447	10,600,248	12,282,618
Total Debt Service (% of goods, services and income)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators Database

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One of the major difficulties encountered when analyzing the political reality, or any other for that matter, in DR Congo is chronic lack of relevant data. The country itself does not collect or have the necessary information at disposal, while almost any comprehensive collection of information in the field is rendered virtually impossible due to security issues.

Corruption has been metastasizing for decades, engulfing the whole state apparatus. These practices, it has been reiterated, not only have devastating effects on the country's economy and development, but also on peace and security and, finally, on the society as a whole.

Figure 18: Transparency International Corruption perception Index

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Score	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,0	2,1	2,0	1,9	1,7
Rank/out of	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	133-139/ 146	144-150/ 159	156/ 163	168/ 180	171/ 180

Source: Transparency International³⁵⁶

Transparency International is one of the organizations that was unable to conduct its surveys in DR Congo prior to 2004. well-known Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The data collected from that time forward paints a grim picture. Already devastating results became even worse, while the

356 Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices...

country lingers around the bottom of the list, leaving behind only the most renowned examples of criminal states.

Figure 19: Economist's Intelligence Unit Democracy Index

Category \ Year	2006	2008
Electoral process and pluralism	4,58	3
Functioning of government	0,36	0,71
Political participation	2,78	2,22
Political Culture	3,75	3,13
Civil liberties	2,35	2,35
Overall score (rank out of 44/167)	2.76 (33/144)	2.28 (39/154)

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit³⁵⁷

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, the Democratic Republic of Congo's low scores of 2.76 and 2.28 in 2006 and 2008, respectively, put the country deep in the range of Authoritarian regimes. The position on the list of 167 countries observed by the analysts has deteriorated by full ten spots, putting the country merely 13 places from the bottom.

The score in Electoral process and pluralism declined by more than a 1.5 point, Political participation by more than a half, as did the Political Participation. While Civil liberties remain at the same level, it must be said that it is, at 2.35, indeed a very poor one. The only progress was made in the field of Functioning of government. The results of 2008, in fact, show almost double value as compared to the ones from 2006, but they, sadly, fail to reach even the threshold of one single point.

The Democratic of Congo is also (together with Nigeria) on the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2007 list of countries that are in danger of experiencing social unrest. This proves to be true, as conflicts continue, especially in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, bordering Rwanda.

³⁵⁷ Table created using data from the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Index of democracy*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_INDEX_2007_v3.pdf and *Index of democracy 2008*, retrieved June 20, 2008 from graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf

Figure 20: Ibrahim's Index of African Governance

Category \ Year	2000	2002	2005	2008*
Safety and Security	39.3	32.5	52.1	52.8
Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption	35.4	35.4	25.0	24.3
Participation and Human Rights	7.8	15.6	13.4	14.7
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	16.9	23.7	26.3	26.3
Human Development	29.7	28.3	30.4	30.7
Total score (out of 100)	25.8	27.1	29.4	29.8
Rank (out of 48)	47	47	47	47

Source: The Moi Ibrahim Foundation³⁵⁸

* Based on data from 2006

Data provided for the Democratic Republic of Congo by the makers of Ibrahim's Governance Index show significant oscillations in the country's performance, as can be expected, considering other known factors and facts influencing the country's performance. Although the overall result has slightly improved in the observed period, the change has not proved to be sufficient to move the country from the next to last position in the region it has steadily occupied since the establishment of the list, followed only by Somalia's infamous example.

The category of Safety and Security has fluctuated significantly during the time in question, starting at a low level of below 40 points, than falling even lower, to rise by more than 20 points at the last year with data collected. However, it should be reemphasized that the Index is put before us with a lag of two years, meaning that the last complete data set originated in 2006. This has a particular significance in this category, subject to swift and devastating changes for worse.

The situation in the field of Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption has seriously worsened, with results declining by more than 10 points. The performance in the realm of Participation and Human Rights are encouraging when observed as almost double in value in 2006 as they used to be in 2000, but not as much so if we look at the absolute figures, which remain catastrophically low. Almost the same can be concluded when observing the category of Sustainable Economic Opportunity, the results in which rose by whole 10 points, but only to the extent of mere 26 points. The field of Human Development is also at a rather sad level, barely passing 30 points.

Failed State Index

As could be expected, DR Congo ranks high on the list Failed State Index according to the Fund for Peace research. In 2005, the country scored 105.3 points, which secured second position on the list of 76 countries in the world, preceded only by Cote d'Ivoire. Next year brought even worse results

358 The Moi Ibrahim Foundation, *The Ibrahim's Index of African Governance*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from <http://site.moibrahimfoundation.org/the-index.asp...>

in terms of the score – 110.1, but Sudan’s infamous example kept DR Congo in the second place out of total of 146 states around the world. 2007 brought slight improvements, with the score dropping to 105.5, and ranking to 7th on the list of 177 countries. The last published report, that from 2008, thus actually pertaining to 2007, did not bring significant shifts: the score was 106.7, and the country occupied 6th position out of 177 states world wide³⁵⁹.

Although economic indicators might bring some improvement, bearing in mind the wide-spread occurrence of violence, suffering of civilians due to conflict, famine, lack of sanitation, health care, etc, limited rule of law, dysfunctional state apparatus, failure to provide basic public services, rampant corruption, etc, it is very unlikely that the country will improve its overall record in this field to a significant extent.

Figure 21: World Bank Governance Indicators

	Voice and Accountability		Political Stability		Government Effectiveness		Regulatory quality		Rule of Law		Control of Corruption	
	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)	% Rank (0-100)	Gov. Score (-2.5 to +2.5)
1996	5.7	-1.63	5.8	-1.88	1.4	-1.70	2	-2,56	1	-2,06	0.0	-2.09
1998	2.4	-1.90	0.0	-3.06	2.4	-1.86	1	-2,43	0,5	-2,1	1.0	-1.73
2000	1.9	-1.89	0.5	-2.64	2.4	-1.76	1,5	-2,34	1,4	-1,99	2.4	-1.60
2002	3.4	-1.71	1.4	-2.22	0.9	-1.77	4,9	-1,71	1	-1,84	1.5	-1.46
2003	5.8	-1.58	1.9	-2.19	3.3	-1.45	3,9	-1,67	0,5	-1,85	2.4	-1.43
2004	3.8	-1.73	1.4	-2.22	5.2	-1.48	3,4	-1,7	1,4	-1,78	3.4	-1.39
2005	5.8	-1.66	1.9	-2.32	1.4	-1.67	4,4	-1,62	1,4	-1,72	2.4	-1.41
2006	7.7	-1.55	1.0	-2.39	1.9	-1.68	7,3	-1,4	1,4	-1,73	2.9	-1.44
2007	8.7	-1.46	2.4	-2.26	1.4	-1.68	8,3	-1,35	1,4	-1,67	3.9	-1,27

Source: The World Bank³⁶⁰

359 Fund for Peace, *The Failed State Index*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from <http://www.fundforpeace.org>

360 Table created using data collected from the World Bank, *The Worldwide Governance Indicators project*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp

Figure 22: Polity IV³⁶¹

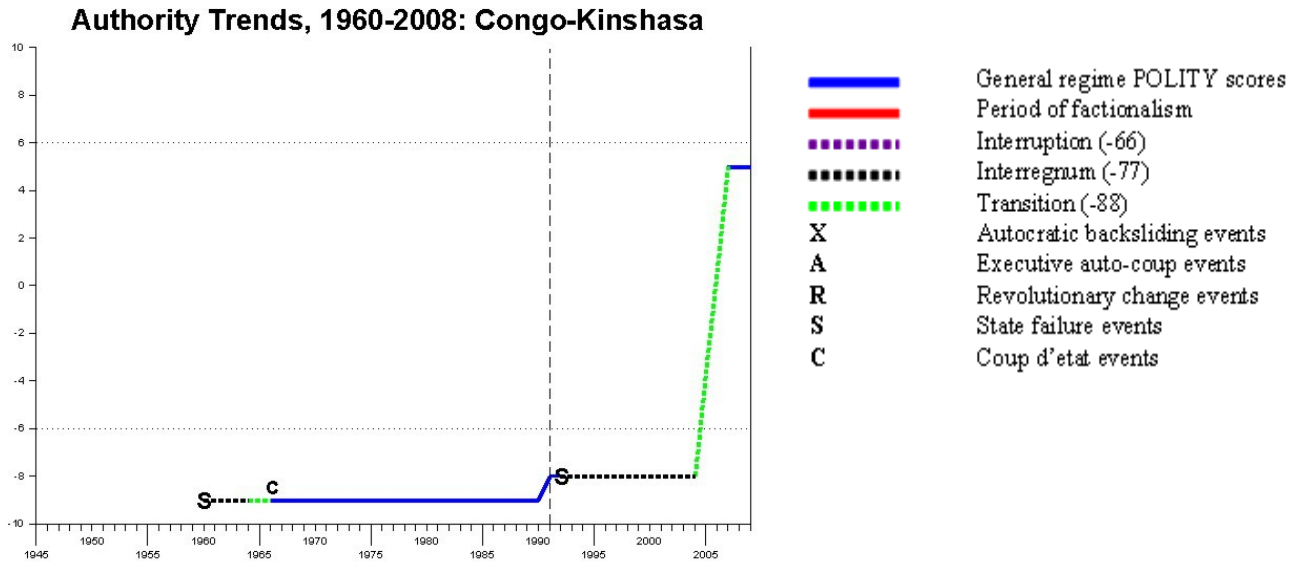
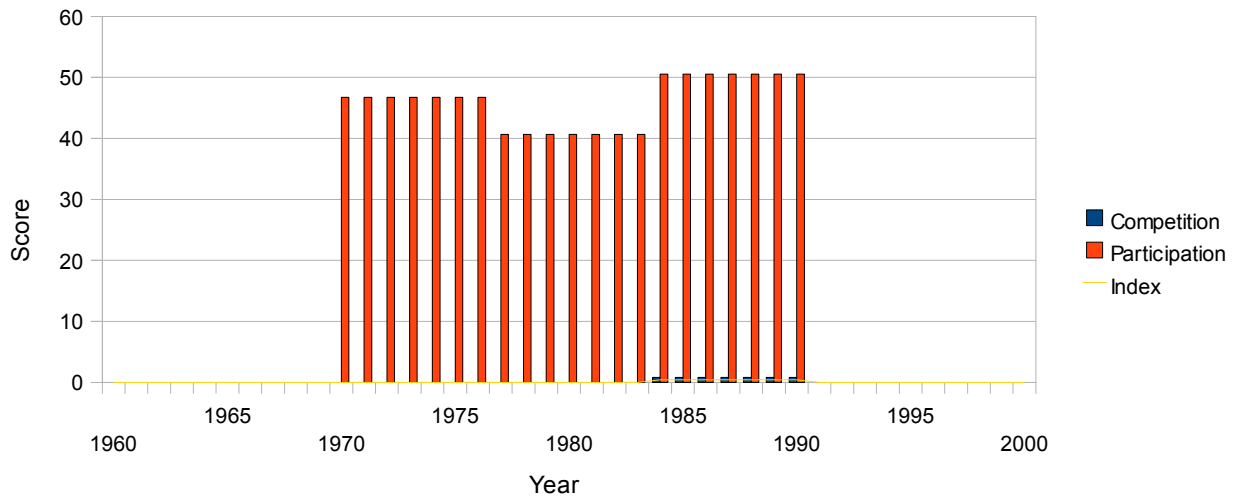


Figure 23: Polyarchy³⁶²



361 Graph retrieved from the Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity IV Country Reports: Ghana*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Ghana2007.pdf>

362 Graph created using data from the International Peace Research Institute – Center for the Study of Civil War, *Polyarchy Dataset*, retrieved January 15, 2010 from http://www.prio.no/misc/Download.aspx?file=%2fprojects%2fdataset-website-workspace%2fPolyarchy%2520Dataset%2520Downloads%2ffile42531_polyarchy_v2.xls

Figure 24: Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report

	1988/89	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Political Rights	7	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6
Civil Liberties	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Status	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf	nf
Electoral democracy	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n

Source: Freedom House

* The year number corresponds to the year covered, not the year of the Edition

When it comes to Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report, DR Congo displays one of the worst images. Observing the trend since the beginning of the African wave of democratization, we can conclude that the country has shown very little progress.

Moreover, DR Congo's scores in either Civil liberties or Political rights never went beyond 5, and that only for a very short period: in the Reports for 1992 and 1993 regarding Civil liberties, and in the past three Reports when assessing Political rights. Accordingly, the country was never in the Partially free category, nor did it ever occur in the group of Electoral democracies.

D. Conclusions

In an attempt to promote democracy and good governance on the continent, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation established an annual prize for deserving African leaders. The amount of US \$ 5 million and an additional life-long payment make it the most generous yearly award in the world. The quantity is meant to motivate African leaders to display responsibility of leadership in order to enjoy the fruits of such work or, as critics point out, to “bribe leaders to do their jobs”. However, following three laureates so far, the Foundation has been unable to find a suitable candidate for 2009.³⁶³ This is a vocal illustration of the state of affairs on the continent.

The mention of Africa usually invokes images of civil wars, famine, corruption, failed states or incompetent governments and various human rights violations. When we think of the continent, we seem to see armed men, nameless in their utter poverty and misery, lethal diseases that are easily treatable anywhere else in the world, children with distended abdomens, all starving not only for food but also for some peace, order, and a good state that could be even distantly capable of ensuring the basics. This seems to have been unattainable for decades.

However, this is also a false image. There are many different faces of Africa: some are painfully impoverished, sickeningly brutal and downright ugly; the others display contemporary aspirations, vibrant societies, and, above all, tremendous potential.

Although some generalizations about the process of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, its development, hindrances and regional specificities can be drawn, the process was hardly uniform.

Ghana represents a stellar and often acclaimed success story of the region. The country has conducted an effective and peaceful transition to democracy in a relatively short time period. Moreover, by continuing its efforts in further consolidation of democratic order, it represents a bright example and restores hope for the rest of the continent.

Nigeria, on the other hand, displays some persistent ailments, the same ones to be seen throughout the continent. Corruption in the country remains cancerous. According to Transparency International, Nigeria is still lingering at the bottom of their list of the world’s most corrupt countries. “Malignant ethnicity” characterizes the political life of Nigeria both as a tool for mobilization, as well as means of gaining benefits³⁶⁴. Violent conflicts still pose one of the country’s biggest and most serious problems, continuously taking lives every year.

363 Mark Tran, Mo Ibrahim prize for African leadership will not be awarded this year, 19th October 2009, The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/19/mo-ibrahim-african-leadership-prize>

364 Uwezurike, Chudi, Ethnicity, power and prebendalism: The persistent triad as the unsolvable crisis of Nigerian politics, *Dialectical Anthropology*, 21, 1996, 1-20, p.1

DR Congo, finally, is the country that provides the least reason for an optimistic attitude. The government is struggling to embark on the path of democratic change. However, with the violent conflicts of varying proportions ravaging the country for more than a decade, translating the idea of democracy into reality seems as a lengthy journey. It is a very common phenomenon in Congo that former rebel movements turn into political parties. However, they prefer to stay true to military hierarchy, and even more to stay close to their weapons, posing a constant threat and creating an atmosphere of permanent insecurity.

A refocused Africa would have a tremendous potential to grow and develop at a rapid rate. This requires introduction, and more importantly, adherence to a series of deep changes, by a wide range of agents, at a large scope, on permanent basis.

Democratization in Africa undoubtedly greatly depends on economic conditions. Without substantial development that will be able to sustain and provide for further investment into democratic institutions and their promotion, the future of democracy on the continent is questionable, at best.

The past several years again gave reasons for hope for African countries, with growth rates at around 6% across the continent. This was largely thanks to the beneficial atmosphere on global markets, particularly concerning commodity prices, but also improved governance and economic management³⁶⁵.

African countries, or a large number of them, need to move forward from symbolic gestures and protocolar democracy, and implement substantial adjustments that signify true dedication to democratic reforms.

The African political elites need to be instilled with a sense of ephemerality, and the people with a sense of citizenship, responsibility and power. Needless to say, the existence of free and fair elections is a prerequisite for any further advancement in the field. Unfortunately, this minimum of democracy is still to be reached in a number of countries, where ethically challenged leaders still cling firmly to their autocratic thrones.

The neopatrimonial relationships have to be deprived of their folkloric value and fought in all strata of the society. This problem, present throughout the world, proves to be particularly debilitating in African societies.

365 Obiageli Ezekwesili, *The Urgency of Harnessing Africa's Natural Resources to Fight Poverty*, retrieved from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/0,,contentMDK:22141153~menuPK:5649751~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258644,00.html>

The hypertrophy of the bureaucratic apparatus that for years has been feeding on patrimonial traditions must be dealt with in a manner that will stop the hemorrhaging of financial resources from the budget without producing an additional economic, social and political burden of a new army of the unemployed.

By even a remotely serious observation of the main hindrances preventing further democratization in the vast majority of African countries, we can conclude that all these reasons are deeply intertwined. What sometimes seems very frustrating to scholars is absolutely devastating in practice: challenges and problems of sub-Saharan polities are so deeply, and often inextricably knotted that any attempt of fighting them resembles going against the proverbial multi-headed monsters that rejuvenate easily. In deed, these monsters have been devouring the democratic and developmental potential of societies, economies and political elites. And a successful program to tame the maladies, and lead towards a path of improvement, has yet to be found for most of the countries on the continent.

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