

# DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA: A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Chibuikem Okeke

<sup>2</sup>Francis Okechukwu Ndubusi

## **Abstract**

Democracy is a system of government that claims to allow power to reside in the hands of the people. Majority rule, thus becomes the hallmark of every democratic system of government. What this means is that what matters most in a democracy is the majority interest. The leaders strive to represent only the interests of the masses as evidenced in the majority. How true is this regarding the African experience of democracy? This essay reflects on the practice of democracy in Africa. Effort is made to expose the pitfalls of democracy in Africa. The method of analysis is employed in the discourse. The claim in this essay is that, largely, democracy has failed in Africa due to the presence of bad leaders in the continent who constitute the minority. The minority political elitist class in Africa from whom leaders emerge have a wrong disposition to governance. Governance for them is basically a means for the service of their selfish insatiable interests allowing the interests of the majority that constitute the masses to suffer. This is why democracy continues to fail in Africa. The essay therefore calls on Africans to become more active and involved in politics, and by so doing, learn to hold their leaders accountable. With such massive active participation in politics, Africa will be freed from the greedy political elites that have kept the continent backward.

**Keywords:** Africa, Democracy, Governance, Leadership.

## **Introduction**

Democracy may be a word familiar to most, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused at a time when dictators, single-party regimes, and military coup leaders alike assert popular support by claiming the mantle of democracy. Yet the power of the democratic idea has prevailed through a long and turbulent history, and democratic government, despite continuing challenges, continues to evolve and flourish throughout the world. Democracy, which derives from the Greek word *demos*, or people, is defined, basically, as government in which the supreme power is vested in the people (Becker & Raveloson, 4). In some forms, democracy can be exercised directly by the people; in large societies, it is by the people through their elected agents. Or, in the memorable phrase of President Abraham Lincoln, democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people (Lincoln in Becker & Raveloson, 3).

In this paper, effort is made to expose the democratic experience in Africa. The work proceeds with a brief discussion on the meaning and fundamental principles of democracy as a system of governance. Thereafter, effort is made to capture the practice and experience of democracy in Africa. The challenges confronting

democracy as it is practiced in Africa are presented. The paper concludes with a call on Africans to safeguard democracy by themselves by participating actively in the democratic processes, especially during elections.

### **Meaning of Democracy**

Democracy literally means ‘rule by the people’ taken from the Greek origin. Hence, the initial system of democracy practiced in ancient Greece is described as ‘direct democracy.’ In a direct democracy, public policies and laws are decided upon by a direct decision of all eligible voters. Given the complex nature of modern societies, direct democracy has given way to representative, in which voters elect representatives who then proceed to make the laws and policies affecting public governance. Democracy is thus a philosophy of government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly through participation or indirectly through a system of representation, usually involving periodic free and fair elections (Clack, 1). Through such elections, democracy, a political system, enables the citizens to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government. As an ideal “democracy aims to protect and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individuals, instill social justice and foster economic and social development (UN HRR, 55).

Democracy is a system of governance in which power resides with the people, rather than with the rich (aristocracy), with an individual (dictatorships), a royal family (monarchy), or with a clergy (theocracy). Durkheim suggests that the basic hallmark of democracy is the citizens’ capacity to participate in the state’s judgment. To him, the state’s legitimacy springs from its collective conscience (Durkheim in Clack, 12). In other words, the citizens should be able to contribute to the natural reasoning and deliberations of the society. In Durkheim’s view, if we want to have a viable democracy then we must have a vibrant public sphere where issues of common concern could be debated in a rational manner (Durkheim in Clack, 12). Dahl views democracy as a concept that defies definition in the sense that the way one defines it would betray one’s beliefs, personal outlook, political experience and ideological preference. There are differences for example between the United and Soviet Union’s conception of democracy (Dahl, 21). A major difference between USA and the former Soviet Union is that US emphasizes political freedom as basic to democracy while USSR focuses on economic rights and its leaders are even prepared to suppress or deny individual rights for the sake of the survival of the system. However, Dahl (21), in an attempt to describe the connections between “the Ideal” and “the actual,” suggests five criteria and six institutions 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. They include; (1) Election of the officials; (2) Credible, fair and frequent elections; (3) Freedom of expression; (4) Alternative sources of information; (5) Associational autonomy; and/or (6) Inclusive citizenship.

Held posits that democracy is a cluster of rules and institutions permitting the broader participation of the majority of citizens in the selection of representatives who alone

can make political decision (12). According to Schmitter and Karl democracy is a system of governance in which the rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through competition and cooperation of their elected representative (14). Luckham and White suggests that it is a procedural system involving open political competition with multiparty, civil and political rights guaranteed by law, and accountability operating through an electoral relationship between citizens and their representatives (cited in Cheeseman par. 21).

### **Types of Democracy**

There are two categories: direct democracy and representative democracy based on the various ways democracy has been defined and practiced.

#### **Direct Democracy**

Direct democracy places all power in the hands of the individual. When political decisions must be made, all members of a polity gather together and individuals cast a vote. In theory, this sounds like the ideal form of government. There are no intermediaries. Each person is treated as an equal, and each person is given a chance to directly influence the policy making process (Saylor Foundation, 2). In practice, however, this system is hard to implement. Historically, small political communities tend to use direct democracy. In small towns or indigenous communities where everyone knows one another and the issues under debate directly affect them, such an arrangement is ideal. However, once there is an expansion in the size of the electorate and the scope of policy areas, direct democracy becomes impracticable.

#### **Representative/Indirect Democracy**

As political communities change and evolve, so does our understanding of how democracy should be implemented. The second major type of democracy is referred to as representative democracy. This political arrangement establishes an intermediary political actor between the individual and the policy outputs of the state. Through the electoral process, one person or a group of people are elected and assigned with the task of making decisions on behalf of the group of citizens that they represent (Saylor Foundation, 2). This is the type of democracy that is practiced in contemporary times in most African countries where attempts are made to apply the principles of democracy to state governance.

#### **Basic Principles of Democracy**

Democracy, whether direct or indirect, is guided by some core principles without which democracy ceases to be. These principles are (Ceka & Megalhaes, 13-20):

- Recognition of the fundamental worth and dignity of every person;
- Respect for the equality of all persons;
- Faith in majority rule and an insistence upon minority rights;
- Acceptance of the necessity of compromise; and
- Insistence upon the widest possible degree of individual freedom.

Of course, these concepts can be worded in other ways. No matter what the wording, however, they form the very minimum that binds anyone, persons or state that profess

believe in democracy. Of course, these principles are abused in different degrees by states practicing democracy across the globe. In fact, the quality and extent of progress of a people's practice of democracy is determined by the extent of adherence to these hallowed democratic virtues.

### **The Rise of Democracy in Africa**

The penchant toward democratic governance that became a global culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially after the end of the Cold War has left an indelible mark on the continent of Africa. Although local forces for political reforms had been a continuous feature of Africa society through the colonial period to the post-independence era, a favourable atmosphere was created after the collapse of Soviet Union that complemented and assisted the domestic forces, already agitating for political and economic reforms. The implementation of varieties of structural adjustment programmes with their excruciating impact on the local population, elicited widespread resistance, sometimes violent opposition, and demand for socio-economic and above all, political changes in the form of multi-party politics (Olayode, 151). Democracy thus became the 'absolute' option for most of the newly independent states in Africa. Hence, the match toward democracy in Africa has two important features. The first is that it is mainly a mass movement of the dominated classes, and the second is that it is a human rights movement for civil liberty (Olayode, 152).

The contemporary push toward democracy in Africa is a continuation of the original nationalist struggles against imperialism, neo-colonialism, and for accountability, good governance and the empowerment of the masses. The majority among Africans view democracy as a vehicle for attaining deeper political and economic goals that would address the basic problems of the people and liberate them from the clutches of hardship, exploitation, marginalization, oppression, and dictatorship. Initially, popular struggles in many African countries in the 1980s have had little to do with political demands but were concerned with securing relieves from the social contradictions and hardships created by economic hardship. Olayode suggests that the opposition was based on the constitutive interests of various organisations -higher salaries and better working conditions for labour union and workers, better campus conditions and lower fees for students, lower rents for market stalls for market woman, and so on (2016, 153). However, the emergence of human rights and pro-democracy organisations specifically to demand political reforms, the inspiration from political struggles in other parts of the world, and support from members of the international community led to expedient and transient coalition formation for political agitation towards multi-party democracy.

The human rights movements (such as Amnesty International, Civil Liberties Organisation- CLO, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives- CHRI, etc.) (Akinrinde 123-130) recognized that the root cause of human rights abuses in Africa came from non-responsive governments, able to muscle through their political, economic, and social agendas without effective 'legal challenge'. By clamping down harshly on political opponents, African dictatorial regimes undercut human rights' protection. It was the overweening obstacle. Thus, without democratization and its

ability to restore the rule of law, transparency and accountability in government operations, the human rights situation in Africa remained seriously flawed. It appeared clearly that human rights movements couldn't stand aside from politics. Thus, the forces unleashed by the implementation of structural adjustment policies, coupled with the increased repression of civil society by successive military dictators, stirred human rights movement into demands for democratic reforms. This historical event took place contemporaneously in most African states (Ake, 241). Contemporary democratic movement has enabled various groups to assert their rights and resist authoritarian regime, and install democratic government in many African countries. These struggles enabled fledgling civil society coalitions to blossom, thereby strengthening their efficacy. However, the deep polarization in many multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies in Africa, at the same time, has destabilized the growth and furtherance of democracy in Africa (Olayode, 73), especially in the West African sub region where chronic bad governance has led to abuse of political power and military incursion in States like Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, and most recently, Niger.

### **Challenges of Democracy in Africa**

There are obvious challenges obstructing the growth and development of democracy in Africa. These challenges undermine the core principles of democracy in African states practicing the system. The consequence of this is the perennial crisis of bad governance in Africa which has terribly impoverished the continent. Attempt is made to expose some of these challenges. Note that the bulk of the problems confronting democracy in Africa centers on weak or dysfunctional political institutions in most countries in Africa. This weakness manifests in the form of fragile legislative and judicial systems, biased electoral umpire, etc.

#### **A. Absence of Free and Fair Elections**

There is actually no democracy without free and fair elections. Election is thus a critical component of democratic governance because it allows the people to decide who their leader becomes since in democracy citizens' consent is the primary matter that confers legitimacy to any political leadership. It is only election that makes consent possible. In other words, free and fair elections confer legitimacy to political leaders in democracy. In most African states, however, elections are generally terribly flawed. Sheriff et al affirm that "African states have been known with the culture of rigging and manipulation [of] elections results and even using the techniques of money inducement to get electorates to vote for them whether they are competent to rule or not" (Sheriff et al, 8). The *International Peace Institute* (2011) stated that:

Elections have been manipulated by legitimate autocratic regimes or ensure dynastic successions on the continent. Violence still plagues approximately 20 to 25 percent of elections in Africa. In recent times, high profile electoral crises in Kenya (2007-2008), Zimbabwe (2000-2008) and Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2011) have collectively led to at least

four thousand deaths and hundreds of thousands displaced (cited in Sheriff et al, 13).

The findings of the *International Peace Institute*, 2011, is still valid in most African countries even in the most recent times. Recent elections conducted in Nigeria, both in 2019 and 2023, confirms this fact. In the just concluded general elections in Nigeria, the electoral umpire (INEC- Independent National Electoral Commission), had to violate its own regulations in order to ensure that the elections favour the candidate fronted by the incumbent government. Other countries in Africa where elections are terribly flawed include Togo, Guinea, Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo, etc.

### **B. Violation of the Principle of the Rule of Law**

Rule of law is a described as a democratic principle of governance in which all persons, institutions, and entities (public and private), including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights principles (Sheriff & Aliyu 7). The rule of law suggests that the law is supreme; that is, no one is above the, including the state. After all, the state is a creation of law. In most African states, democracy is not practiced according to the rule of law. Sheriff and Aliyu notes that in Africa, “the governing elites failed to deliver on their promises of economic progress, political participation, and personal dignity to expectant populations” (10). Commenting on the situation in Burundi, Ibrahim notes:

Serious human rights violations have mostly been perpetrated by organs of the state - specifically high-level officials in the intelligence service who report directly to the president, the Burundi national police force, the military, and the Imbonerakure - the youth wing of the ruling party CNDD-FDD. The report concluded that given the gravity, nature and scale of the acts and direct involvement of state bodies, the violations are likely to constitute crimes against humanity. The report further found that the climate of widespread impunity in Burundi is being sustained by hate speech uttered by Burundi government representatives, members of the ruling party and its youth league (cited in Olayode, 153).

This blatant disregard for the rule of law and the consequent violation of human rights is evident in almost all African states. What Ibrahim observes of Burundi applies in many other States. In Nigeria, for instance, we see organs of the states like the DSSS (Directorate of State Security Service), EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission), etc being used by persons in power to detain and punish perceived opposition members. Sometimes they do so even against the judgment and pronouncement of the supreme courts of the land. Currently, the previous Governor of the Central Bank and EFCC chairman are being detained by the DSS contrary to the pronouncement of the law (Oluwafemi, 14). This is undemocratic. Occurrences like these continue to militate against democracy in Nigeria and Africa, at large.

In most African States, the judiciary, legislature and executive arms of government are not independent of one another (Aidi, 4). Hence, the democratic principle of checks and balances does not apply effectively within democracies in Africa. The executive harasses the others and ensures that the other two arms do her bidding at all times (Aidi, 4). The implication is that the three arms collaborate to syphon the commonwealth of the state, and hence impoverish the citizens. This is the specific reason for the failure of democracy in most African states.

### **C. Poverty and Unemployment**

Unemployment and poverty have been one of the key challenges of democratization in Africa because if sixty percent of African population is unemployed the result is poverty (Sheriff & Aliyu, 13). Africa states have faced fairly common challenges in respect of democratization over the years. The challenge is enforced mostly by lack of balanced development, unemployment, inequality and poverty. This challenge has affected the ability of the population to make a free choice. Thus, socio-economic inequality and lack of inclusive governance combined with uneven income distribution, widespread corruption and nepotism, have severely compromised efforts towards democratization in Africa (Sheriff & Aliyu, 13). Socioeconomic inequity and the unequal distribution of wealth are among the key factors instigating civil unrest, ethnic and religious violence, terrorism, banditry, kidnap and other social vices threatening the peace and harmony of the states within the Sahel region (Tar, 81-94). The level of poverty and unemployment is so excruciating that it affects the judgment of the masses during electioneering campaigns. Majority of the citizens are ready to trade their future and the interest of their nation for a paltry sum giving to them by the corrupt politicians. This is why vote-buying is a pervasive phenomenon in Africa.

### **D. Military Interventions**

Military rule is a system or pattern of government where the military personnel are in control of the machinery of governance of the state (Obiajulu & Obiemeka, 43). It is a system of government that does not guarantee the liberty and human rights of the citizens, and press freedom or independence of judiciary (Sheriff et al 11). It is a dictatorial system in which the dictator is an army general. Ordinarily, the function of the military in the state is not to govern but to defend the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the state; to protect the state against aggression or aggressor coming from outside the territories of the domestic state and assisting police in maintenance of internal peace and security when the need arises (Aidi, 5). The military however often use the failure of political leaders to offer good governance and better the lives of the masses as an excuse to truncate democratic rule and capture political power. This was the case in countries like Nigeria and Ghana in the past where there have been military interventions (Aidi, 5); and in recent times, in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea and Niger (Useni).

In 1950s and 1960s when most African countries gained independence military rule became a norm in African as a result of corrupt leaders, stagnating economic conditions, ethnicity and foreign intervention (Obiajulu & Obiemeka, 43). In 1990s, Africa witnesses an era of democratization where most African countries imbibed the

principles of democracy as their system of governance. International bodies such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), United Nations kicked against the military rule. Democracy became the norm in Africa. This system seemed to be the order judging from the conduct of elections and methods of leadership for some time until the 2000s. But there wasn't significant difference between military rule and democratic rule in most African states. This is because the ills experienced during the military junta in most African states were still being experienced in the democratic dispensation. Africans were even more impoverished by the corrupt civilian political elites. The consequence of this, in recent times, is the resurgence of military rule in some African states, especially in West Africa. There have been military interventions in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and most recently Niger. These were necessitated by the failure of democratic leadership in those countries (Useni). Aidi remarks:

Africa is acutely affected by the ongoing global democratic recession. In 2020, a military coup took place in Mali. In 2021, four African countries – Chad, Mali, Guinea, and Sudan - experienced military takeovers. Thus far, in 2022, two coups have occurred in Burkina Faso and an attempted one in Guinea Bissau. Yet polling data and activism on the ground shows African youth believe in and are prepared to fight for democracy (Aidi, 1).

In these countries where the military have taken over, the presidents of those countries turned themselves into some despot and ruled the people with blatant disregard to the constitution. Elections after elections, they retained themselves in government as presidents even against the wish of the masses. Mamadou (2005) gives us a clear analysis of this tendency amongst African leaders, thus:

As at December 2008, 23 African heads of state and government have been on the throne for more than 10 years. Before his death in June 2009, President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon went down in history as Africa's longest serving leader. He was on the throne for 42 uninterrupted years. Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi, is 40 years in office [as at the time of this citation] while President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea celebrates his 30th year as head of state, same for President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola, President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, 80, has ruled for 28 years, while President Paul Biya who came to power in the Republic of Cameroun in 1982 has already made 27 years in office, without any intention to retire soon. In Guinea, 74 year old Lansana Conte was in his 24th as president before death on December 22, 2008. Sudanese President Omar Hassan has spent 20 years, even in the face of continued ethnic, religious and political instability; President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia is 18 years on the throne, so also is President Idris Diby of the Republic of Chad. Out of the 53 serving African political leaders, 15 came to power through military coup d'état and then manipulated their ways to become 'elected' civilian presidents (Cited in Sheriff et al, 11).



Notice that some of the presidents mentioned in the above quotation are still in power even till this year (2023) such as the president of Cameroun. Ifeoma expressed sentiments similar to that in the above excerpt in her own research and concludes that the sit-tight syndrome (the desire to hold on to power beyond the constitutional terms) has become one of the greatest undoing of democracy in Africa (13); and it is one of the alibi for the wave of military interventions being expressed in democracies in Africa.

### **Consequence of the Failure of Democracy in Africa**

From the discourse so far, one can argue that democracy has failed woefully in Africa. This failure is not because democracy as a system of governance is bad in itself. It is rather because the corruption prevalent among leaders in Africa has not allowed democracy to thrive in the continent. The failure of democracy in Africa has led to political apathy among the masses. Majority of the citizens are no longer interested in state politics. They feel that the state has failed them; therefore, there is no need to concern themselves with issues concerning state policies and governance.

Political apathy is the deficiency of love and devotion to a state. It is the indifference on the part of citizens of any state as regards their attitudes towards political activities such as elections, public opinions, and civic responsibilities (Yakubu, 39). Political apathy is therefore absence of interest in, or concern about, socio-political life (Yakubu, 39). Thus, an apathetic person lacks interest in the social and political affairs of his country. Put simply, the primary consequence of the failure of democracy in Africa is bad governance, and this failure of governance (bad governance) has directly led to political apathy. The state is supposed to provide for the welfare of the citizens while the citizens are, in turn, supposed to strive for the betterment, growth and development of the state. The state automatically loses the fidelity of the masses immediately the masses feel neglected by the state. Yakubu underlines the mutuality that should exist between the state and the citizens thus, “It was based on the understanding that the government would provide security, justice, liberty and welfare for the people. On the other hand, [the] people would be obedient and discharge their political, economic, social and other responsibilities” (Yakubu, 39). Unfortunately, bad governance in Africa has denied the bulk of African masses a democratic governance capable of meeting the above mentioned responsibility. The result is defiance and lack of patriotism amongst the people in relation to the state.

Employment rate, literacy, and security of life and properties are critical indicators by which a state’s capacity to cope with her responsibilities to her citizens may be accessed. For the sake of this essay, however, security of life and property will be used to expose the failure of democracy in Africa as a factor promoting political apathy. Security ordinarily means “freedom from danger or relative freedom from aggression and unwarranted violation” (Akali, 126). Along this line, it is often perceived that the amount of security a state enjoys is just a mere reflection of its defense system. However, security is more encompassing than what the definition suggests. Provision of security is a core objective of every state. Plato noted that one of the most critical

functions of the state is the protection of the society (Okwudiba, 21). Security as an objective or obligation of a state is more, and widely, discussed by social contract theorists such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau (Yakubu, 40). These theorists emphasized on the needs of human nature as the starting point for the formation of the state. They suggest that before the establishment of a state, human beings lived in a state of nature. And it was in the attempt to escape from the state of nature that human beings decided to establish a state. As a result, a contract was made between the people and the state. The people were to obey and support the state while the state was to, among other things, protect the citizens against the danger in a state of nature in which life was very dangerous (Okwudiba, 24). Patriotism is therefore a product of faithfulness to the agreement between the state and the people. If the state fails to protect the lives and properties of the people from dangers, the people are permitted to rebel against the state because the contract that binds the state and the people must be fulfilled by both parties at all times.

In most African countries, however (especially those in the Sahel region), the state renege habitually against this contract. They deny the people of their fundamental rights as persons, abuse core democratic principles and enslave the citizens; they fail to protect the citizens against internal and external aggressors- notice the banditry and spate of terrorism prevalent within the Sahel. All these have amounted to political apathy among the people. Today, most ordinary suffering Africans see their homeland as belonging to the privileged few political elites who operate within the corridors of political or know those who wield such power. They consider themselves totally eschewed from the benefits that should accrue from the commonwealth of their nations. Given this perceived abandonment by the state, the people turn deaf ears totally to the happenings in the state. Their attention is channeled towards daily subsistence. This explains why majority poor citizens in Africa no longer border about who emerge as president because they feel all the members of the political elite are the same. It is the elitist world against their proletariat world. Hence, they see electioneering campaigns as a time to take back from the politicians what is rightfully theirs. They intentionally partake in vote buying and selling and feel morally justified. The citizens also seek for the slightest opportunity to steal and damage government property if it would benefit them temporarily. They see these as just means of hurting the state that does not border about their welfare. In many ways, therefore, political apathy is a direct consequence of the failure of democracy and governance in Africa. It however not the cure to the failure of democracy. As a matter of fact, it worsens this failure because it directly emboldens the political class to perpetuate impunity through their untoward use of political authority.

### **Conclusion**

Democracy is rooted in the principles of rule of law, free and fair elections, state legitimacy, minority rights, fundamental human rights, press freedom, etc. By embracing democracy, African states became poised to adopt these principles against their hitherto repressive political inclinations. However, as Olayode observes, still largely characterized by cult personality, party control, authoritarian rule and sit-tight syndrome, leaders began to combine elements of democracy and authoritarianism to

form a competitive authoritarian, hybrid regime or electoral autocracy (Olayode, 160). In such systems, elements of democracy such as elections, opposition and competition are allowed to avoid sanctions from the international community. However, electoral fraud, harassment, patronage, the control of media and violence were sustained by the corrupt political elites as systemic ways of frustrating change of regime and perpetuating the incumbent in power. This has been the bane of democracy in Africa. If democracy must work effectively for Africa, Africans must learn to hold their leaders accountable. The citizens must realize that the state and the wealth of the land belong the poor in the same manner that it belongs to the greedy political elites. Hence, every African must become a watchdog to protect and preserve the resources of the state from been lavished by the unscrupulous politicians in Africa. This 'watchdog' function can be most properly done during elections. Africans must know that their vote is their power. Hence, electoral vices such as vote buying and selling must be eschewed. The electorates must learn to guard their votes and ensure that the electoral umpire is not biased. All forms of political apathy should be eschewed. International bodies such as ECOWAS, UN, AU, etc must be unbiased in their appraisal of elections in Africa. They should learn to speak in defense of democracy, not in support of the incumbent. This observation is pertinent because of the baffling reports given by these bodies after terribly substandard elections in Africa. If democracy must work effectively in Africa, ordinary Africans must get involved in the democratic processes as much as the primary actors- the politicians are involved.

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Chibuikem Okeke is a doctoral student of Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Okechukwu Ndubuisi is a lecturer at Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

## References

- Alkali, R. A., *Issues in International Relations and Nigerian Foreign Policy*, Zaria: Bos Academic Press Inc, 1996.
- Ake, Claude, "The Unique Case of African Democracy" *International Affairs* Vol. 69, No. 2: 239-244, 1993.
- Aidi, Hisham, "African Democracy in Crisis," *Policy Brief*, no. 64, 2022.
- Akinrinde, Babafemi, "Human Rights NGOs in Nigeria: Emergence, Governmental Reactions and the Future," *African Human Rights Law Journal*, vol. 2, 110-134, 2002.
- Becker, P. & Raveloson, J. A., *What is Democracy?* Antananarivo: KMF-CNOE & NOVA STELLA, 2008.
- Ceka, B & Magalhaes, P. C., *The Meaning of Democracy and its Determinants*. Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 2014
- Cheeseman, N., *A divided continent: Regional report Africa*. Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018. <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BS/Bibliothek/>. Accessed 21/08/2023.
- Clack, G., *The Culture of Democracy* (Woodrow: Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2013).
- Dahl, R., *Modern Political Analysis*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India, 1995.
- Ifeoma, A., *African Conflict Resolution and International Diplomacy*. Abuja: Authur House, 2009.
- Obiajulu, S. & Obiemeka, A., *Government and Politics of Nigeria. The Struggle for Power in an African State*. Enugu: Book Point LTD, 2003.
- Olayode, Kehinde, "Contemporary Challenges of Democratisation and Development in Africa," *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 12, no. 28, 146-159, 2016.
- Olayode, Kehinde "Democratisation and the National Question in Nigeria (1999-2007)," *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 65-92, 2013.
- Okwudiba, Nnoli, *Introduction to Politics*. Ikeja, Longman Nigeria Ltd., 1986.
- Oluwafemi, Ayodele, "DSS: Emefiele Legally Detained/ Findings on Face-off at Court Premises Shocking," *The Cable*, August 7, 2023. [thecable.ng/dss.emefiele-legally-detained ....shocking/amp](https://www.thecable.ng/dss.emefiele-legally-detained....shocking/amp). Accessed 15/09/2023.
- Sheriff, G. I, et al, "Challenges of Democratization in Africa," *North Asian International Research Journal of Business Economics*, Vol. 5, no. 9, 1-17, 2001.
- Sheriff, G. I & Aliyu, I. M., "The Dichotomy between Western and Islamic Democracy: An Eagle View into the Thematic Tenets," *Social Science Journal*, vol. 2, 1-17, 2018.
- Tar, Usman A., "The Challenges of Democracy and Democratisation in Africa and Middle East," *Information, Society and Justice*, vol. 3, no. 2, 81-94, 2010.
- The Saylor Foundation*, [www.saylor.org/courses/polsc221/#4.1.5/](http://www.saylor.org/courses/polsc221/#4.1.5/), 2010, retrieved, 13/08/2023.
- United Nations, UN, Human Right Report (UN, HRR), 2002. [Doi\\_Publikationen/Regional-Report\\_NW\\_BTI-2018\\_Africa-A-Divided-Continent\\_2019.pdf](#). Accessed 12/08/2023

*Stephen Chibuikem Okeke & Francis Okechukwu Ndubuisi*  
Useni, Rufai, “Analysis of Military Interventions in Africa- Niger,” *YouTube Video-Arise News*. Accessed 16/09/2023.