

## **Post-Third Wave Democratization: A Study of Nigerian and Ghanaian Democratic Experience in the West African Sub-region**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the democratic experience in the West African Sub-region and it focuses on Ghana and Nigeria after the post-third wave democratization. In a real sense, the post-third wave democratization was a transition to democracy after 1991. The character brought down authoritarian regimes such as one-party systems, military regimes, and the personalization of power. The consequences led to the establishment of democratic governments in different political situations. The article argues that the democratic experience dictates the non-feasibility of elections during the transition process as there are massive irregularities that marred the conduct of elections in different forms. This article contests the founding (first) elections that were conducted under the supervision of the military leaders. The outcome of the transition elections raised an issue on the quality of future democracy. This includes the socio-economic development that interfaces with the dividends of democracy. Therefore, the post-third wave democratization defines the new African politics. This implies that the two military leaders Jerry Rawlings (Ghana) and Abdulsalam Abubakar (Nigeria) intentionally handed over power to the military. The article submits that civilian-military relations are the new paradigm shift in African politics. Given the new approach, the researcher foresees that the politicians will deepen democracy in the two countries. However, military intervention in politics was a result of non-commitment to democratic principles in the past. Therefore, within the post-third wave of democratization in Africa, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger reverted to authoritarianism. The tradition became unending in African politics. This means that the countries that organized democracy-based unethical practices could witness military intervention or otherwise civil war that may obstruct the new democracies.

The methodology employed in this study includes qualitative and primary documents which extract information from all available data sources.

**Keywords:** Democratization, Authoritarianism, Election, Political Party, and democratic Experience

## 1. Introduction

The argument in this study is linked between the promise and performance of democratization in Africa. By examining whether democratic institutions have delivered the dividends of democracy as envisaged by the people before the transition to democracy. Development has been problematic in Africa due to the undemocratic practices among electoral stakeholders. The factor that influences this trend is usually caused by the tussle for power among political stakeholders or political ethnic groups to retain power against all odds. This explains the major impediments which restrain development in Africa. Democratic experience in West Africa witnesses chequered history after the political independence. Meaning that the transition to democracy was spontaneously established under severe crises. One of the issues that surrounded the political crisis is dishonesty among the political stakeholders within the cultural groups. The maintenance of democratic principles in the political environments was illusionary with the promises of a democratic system (Ndegwe, 2001). However, the principles and mechanisms are fundamental to democracy, and it is everywhere across the continents. The British colonialists that established a democratic government in Africa had understudied Africa in a dimension of constitutional development before their departure.

After the departure of the British, the reality is that the consent of the governed is now sought, rather than given to the actual people in Africa (Ake, 2001). It makes the operation resemble a hybrid or pseudo-democracy or semi-democracy as illiberal. It is considered illiberal because democratic achievement is settled within the electoral crisis. The post-third-wave elites are much more interested in power rather than the needs of the people which perfectly accounts for the non-feasibility of elections. In practice, democratization is feasible when the entire populace admits democratic achievement through socio-economic and political development (Ake, 2001). Democratic achievement is the end of democracy, and the people are the sources of political development.

Democracy entrusts the people with some real decision-making powers in the political institution, but it is trivialized for the fact that governance is ignored in Africa (Ake, 2001). In the 1990s, Africa witnessed worse economic performance due to a development crisis that was prolonged in either democratic systems or military regimes. The continuation of this process in African politics portrays the operation as unending authoritarianism through the election that represents cynical manipulation

on the part of the military cabals (Grugel, 2002). Therefore, the transition to democracy was a collective effort of the military with the civilian counterparts that took the lead in falling the authoritarian regimes. The Democratic experience in Africa is embedded in the military regime leadership experience where military cabals and their civilian collaborators created a mixed model of democratic practice (Gill, 2000). Nigeria and Ghana are relevant examples. Over the years, democratic experience in West Africa has led to a range of transitions from authoritarianism to new democracies.

There are frequent electoral crises during the process of transition to democracy. The mixed model democratization in Africa has marred the electoral contestation and participation in different forms. This political setting afterwards indicates that democratic achievement has not adequately defined the electoral values of the political elites (Bratton & Walle, 1997). The quality of elections in Africa falls short of the international benchmark.

In the 1990s, West African countries initiated strong political behaviour in the democratization process. It spontaneously brought about the founding (first) elections which emasculate authoritarianism in different forms (Bratton & Walle, 1997). The first election in Africa became the background of successive elections but was characterised by electoral violence. The transition to a multi-party democracy brought about political factions between the opposition political parties and the incumbent political party on the habit of not conceding the electoral results after the announcement (Kovacs et al, 2017). The trending issue after the post-third wave democratization is political patronage which becomes the norm in African competitive elections. In retrospect, the past elections were successful with electoral malpractice during the transition to democracy. The electoral mandate also gave the incumbent power holders access to the media, and resources for campaigning such as the police, and the military who patrolled the streets and constituted themselves into an instrument of provocation, and thereby, triggering electoral violence (Kovacs et al, 2017).

The democratic experience could also be explained by the nature of leadership construction in Africa, and the extent to which its process has shaped the voting behavior of the people after the post-third wave democratization. The nature of African politics can be illuminated by the behavior that led to the failure of the campaign promises and weak leadership performance. The operation occurs as a result of over negligence of good governance and poor electoral performance within the cycle of elites (Obadare & Adebani, 2016). The emerging political elites have forgotten that leadership is not by bargaining for power but rather through competitive democracy with the inclusion of electoral promises. Governance as the management of political institutions lends itself to the legitimacy of the populace to

the elites in power. It also indicates that, in future elections, other political elites contest for power in the state (Huntington, 1991).

The socio-political development usually operates from the liberal perspective. The new paradigm shift in Africa is that democratic government has continued to overtake the one-party system, the dictatorship of the military, and other forms of undemocratic institutions for civilization (Fukuyama, 1992). In this instance, the possibility of democracy in Africa should not be confused because democracy in principle is possible everywhere around the globe. The emergence of democracy in Africa compromises trending issues on governance which apply across African countries (Ake, 1992). Democracy is an issue in Africa because it interfaces with social realities through its processes and practices.

This compels the need to make inquiries into the West African sub-region's current democratic projects to confirm the process of electoral participation and competition. Another issue which provokes this research is the entrenchment of governance after the fall of military regimes in Africa and this forms the arguments of the political scientists. This study wants to find out if political participation and contestation will not be reversed to military rule after the post-third wave. The study is also interested in making inquiries into current democratic projects in Africa to find out if they can deliver development to the people concerning the expectations of the Western and African leaders after the post-third wave of democratization. Apart from these views, the research is to explore if campaign promises, leadership performance and the deepening of democracy are effectively maintained in the case studies.

## **2. Theory of Democratization**

This section explores the theoretical meaning of democratization, and it responds to the sweeping arguments that are significant to neo-liberal democracy. The formalist approach to democracy is relatively based on the universal principles which interface with the process, and practice of democratization. However, the orientation applies across the continents, and it started in the Western countries that initiated democratic culture. The integration of other continents, such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa, altogether outnumbered the global practice of democracy throughout history (Fukuyama, 1992). Transition to democracy operates in the form of waves, and democracy occurred in sequential from non-democratic to democratic systems across the globe.

Three waves occurred: the first wave from 1828 to 1926, the second wave from 1943 to 1962, and the third wave from 1974 to 1991. Within these periods, the reversal set into some corrupt democracies which later backslide to authoritarianism in the aforementioned waves (Huntington, 1991). Democratization should not be limited to a movement from authoritarianism to a democratic system. Rather, the adoption of

a process-oriented approach provides the mechanisms which pave the way for democratization, and such are: more than one political party competing for power, political office not confined to any privileged class, periodic elections, and protection of civil liberty (Grugel, 2002, Gauba, 2003). The elements provide the quality among countries that are successful in the practice from those that collapsed due to problematic politics. Theories of democratization have been used loosely by the authors, one of them (Grugel, 2002) in the assessment, and evaluation of the modern states. The explanations are chiefly constructed from the three schools of thought such as modernization theory, history sociology theory, and transition theory. (1) Modernization theory means the globalization of democracy, (b) history sociology theory focuses on the character of democratization e.g. protest, revolution, and development, and (c) transition theory means the willingness to change authoritarian regimes at all costs. These approaches are used interchangeably in the literature to explain the reality of human life (Grugel, 2002). (Ake, 1992) observes that the post-third wave is linked to the change of government either by transition or termination of democracy in the African context. Meanwhile, some African countries-initiated democracy and collapsed for short periods after their political independence. He further explains that democratization is a long process, and it requires feasible behavior that interfaced with the liberal model. The feasibility of democracy is an issue in the African context because the phenomenon accommodates an open system. As the government of the people for the people, and by the people.

Democratization also intertwines with the liberalization process of making democracy certain among the populace. It means that the entire people are committed to changing from an autocratic regime to representative democracy. This stance guarantees that human rights are absent in authoritarian states. Liberalization of democracy is the collective effort of anti-authoritarianism, and pro-democracy groups to defend democratic institutions (Gill, 2000). This point is supported by (Fukuyama, 1992) who claimed that democracy is the endpoint of mankind, and any form of government is characterized by grave defects to collapse. Democratization is assumed to be unfixed and has a timeless objective or criterion which paved the way for the electoral contest, and participation in the state. The conception of democratization is a routine, complex, discernible, and long-standing approach in politics (Whitehead, 2002). It also means that there are achievements in the democratic institution regarding the welfare outcome.

The formation of a political party is recognized as democratization, and the political activity gives birth to new leadership that is legal in the state. In the process, democratic leaders are selected from among the contestants. Balloting by the vote of the people is a procedural method that exercises the choice of the people. Thus, constituent power is derived from the electorates that legitimize the political institution (Saka, 2014). In this connection, democratization emphasizes the political behavior of the entire people for virtues. It reflects the paradigm shift in Political

Science, and it focuses on the realist assumptions that human beings are variables that determined changes in the political environment. Electoral contestation is subject to individual interest in leadership selection which could be evaluated periodically by the scientific method (Saka, 2020). Democratization is extensively beyond elections because it responds to a long range of political situations. The installation of democratic governments is primarily directed to the needs of the populace. As the citizens assess the government for an improved standard of living such as ending poverty, providing access to basic needs, and protecting citizens' lives and property including human rights (Ambrose, 1995). The practice accommodates the norms of democratic culture as part of the behavior of the political stakeholders (Ifeanacho & Nwagwu, 2009).

Democratization starts in the Western hemisphere in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The phenomenon maintains universal principles and creates an open society through the election which integrates the choices of the people for socio-economic development. It also improves participation, and contestation both have on democratic values which are less in authoritarian regimes. However, democratization is either progressed for sustainability or reversed to authoritarianism with the domination of unethical behavior in the state. Meanwhile, the new democracies in Africa have turned to the minds of the United Nations to support the operation (Boutros-Ghali, 1996). Meaning that the countries are inexperienced and should be guided to deliver dividends of democracy to the people. Democratization, democratic transition, and liberalization are used loosely by authors to describe an event that leads to changes in regimes to democracy. These nomenclatures have been established to explain the social movement in different political situations across the continents. The social movement developed from the pressure of political activists to confront authoritarian regimes. But it depends on how the activity starts in each country (Donatella, 2013). The deepening of democratization is fundamental after the transition to a democratic government. Particularly, in an ethnically divided society with major shortcomings, the challenges are deliberated on by the people in a short time. In this sense, the democratization of education provides dividends of democracy to the people through the promises in the manifestoes of the political parties (Murati, 2015). In Social Sciences, there is a question of what causes a democratic change in modern states. It starts from the articulation of the interests of the elite, and the citizen interactions to change the government irrespective of culture, religion, ethnicity, and language in the state. Perhaps, the failure of economic development and poor leadership are the variables that determined the root cause of democratization in Africa. Recent research has confirmed that economic development is not a parameter that triggers democratization, rather development reduces the likelihood of any democratic breakdown (Geddes, 2011). Therefore, the students of democratization should improve more on the failure of the poor leadership performance through the party system in Africa.

The students of Political Studies should also take note that many conflicts in Africa were a result of non-commitment to democratic principles. In Africa, there is a primordial struggle among the ethnic groups, particularly the majority ones to have leverage in power, and this behavior has culminated in large-scale civil wars. For example, Rwanda, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, and many more have faced democratic breakdowns due to ethnic cleavages. The possible approach to democratic achievement in Africa is the globalization of democratization. This political culture has been a focus of the developed countries that development lies in deliberative democracy and without democracy, there is no development in Africa (Ndulo, 2003). Given this stance, the Eastern and the Southern countries have been compared on the quality of democracy in the regions. In an attempt to construct a democratic government, after two decades the region experienced frequent collapse of democracy due to failure of governance. As a result, the new democracies are not moving along the deliberative representation, and the institutions are short cut in democratic achievements. Therefore, Brazil's, Peru's, and Argentina's democracies were assessed and compared by the first election after they transition to democracy (O'Donnell, 1993). Shortly afterwards, the three countries degenerated into authoritarian regimes (military intervention) in different forms, and this typology is also peculiar in the African context that witnessed frequent military intervention in politics.

The Islamic states across Asia and Africa are currently witnessing a democratization process by external factors. The neo-liberal democracy serves as a reactionary action against authoritarian regimes. The introduction of democracy in Afghanistan after the invasion by the USA, perhaps, outnumbered reforms established on electoral matters in the country. In a real sense, the democratization process was slow due to the involvement of the Islamic culture. There is a need to encourage the Afghan government with the support of the international communities through civic education (Larson, 2010). As a result of the electoral reform in the country, the international communities have relied on the thrust of socio-economic development as an instrument of leadership performance. This is the gradual process toward the progress of the new democracies to deliver dividends of democracy to the people (Carothers et al, 2010). In another dimension, there is the need to differentiate democratization from the legitimate social movement in the modern states. A legitimate social movement is to change certain policies of the government under the democratic system.

The post-third wave democratization in Africa brought about democratic transitions through elections which served as procedural arrangements. In the first instance, the Republic of Benin was the leading country in West Africa. In 1989, university students and the people opposed to autocratic government in power (military regime), and this resulted in the loss of legitimacy (Bratton & Walle, 1997). This democratic change also swept into Ghana in 1993 and Nigeria in 1999 under different political situations.

Democratic changes in the two countries transformed into representative norms on leadership selection with an emphasis on governance. The transition to democracy in Nigeria and Ghana witnessed many rounds of elections that transnationally promoted democracy in the West African Sub-region. Disregarding the military regimes collectively turned the leadership settings from the barrel of guns to the votes of the people. Therefore, there is room for choices in leadership selection through the procedural electoral process (Yoder, 2013). Within the post-third wave, it is commonly discussed in the mass media that elections in Africa are conducted under intolerance of the opposition political parties, the incumbent political party has leverage that works against free and fair elections. The observation was aptly confirmed by (Bratton and Walle, 1997) when they argued that "elections in Africa are generally depicted as empty and largely symbolic exercises designed to legitimate officeholders. And, indeed, following a long competitive election at independence, that is apparently what many African elections became". The variation of electoral contestations in West Africa has been illiberal because of different forms of electoral irregularities that obstructed the quality of democracy after the post-third wave democratization. Given this construction, the post-third wave democratization is a process of nation-building.

## 2.1 Democratic Process

The post-third wave democratization in Africa is influenced by internal and external factors. The transnational process interfaced with the intellectual assumption of "Ake" (2001) that democracy is possible in Africa. The fundamental question is how does the transition process in Africa take place in Nigeria and Ghana and other countries in the region? Before answering this question, during the third wave of democratization in Africa, the common authoritarian regimes are the one-party systems, military regimes, and personal dictatorships. However, the transformation processes occurred in Africa with the leading effort of the military leaders in power and the civilians that bring about democracy (Huntington, 1991). Meanwhile, the antecedents of the post-independence have played a significant role in the politics of Ghana and Nigeria. The former (Ghana) got political independence in 1957, and the latter (Nigeria) in 1960 under the West Minister Model (Parliamentary system). The political development of the two countries was organized on cultural affiliation to political parties. The democratic leadership of the First Republic in Ghana adopted personal dictatorship by Kwame Nkruma who ran the country in a self-style manner that led to acrimony, and distrust among the several ethnic groups (Meredith, 2011). Each ethnic group supported a political party along an ethnic line, and this behavior resulted in electoral conflicts that pervaded the country for several years. The unsettlement crisis in Ghana was greeted with the first military coup d'état in 1966 (Saka & Sesa, 2020). In Nigeria, the leadership of the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who hailed from the North maintained hegemonic power under the Northern People Congress (NPC). The opposition parties, then the Action Group (AG) from the



West and National Congress for Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) from the East formed the broad-based opposition political parties in the country. Therefore, between 1960 and 1966, there was inter-and intra-party politics that transposed to violence and crises (Ogbogbo, 2009). The outcome of the crises and violence led to the termination of the First Republic in Nigeria by the first military coup d'état in 1966.

The external factors that responded to the democratization process in Africa within the third wave are: the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the End of the Cold War in 1990, and the Freedom of Nelson Mandela in 1990, all of these events reflected the end of dictatorship in the global world including Africa (Saka, 2020). To start with, the Republic of Benin marched towards democratization in opposition to the military regime in the West African Sub-region in 1989. The transnational approach often integrated some African countries in the same region, for example, Ghana in 1993, and Nigeria in 1999 (Bratton & Walle, 1997). However, a democratization process generally responded to political activities after the post-independence. In this connection, the military cabals that took over democratic governments in 1966 in both countries have partially changed into democratic governments but were short-lived due to unending intervention in politics. In the Nigerian case, between 1966 and 1979, the country experienced four military coups, out of which two were unsuccessful (Oshita, 2018). In Ghana, three years after the successful coup of 1966, the military attempted a change of regime to a democratic rule in 1969 but failed. Nevertheless, the elections were conducted in the same year and established the Second Republic which was short-lived due to the struggle among the soldiers who would lead the country. In the same pattern, the 1972 counter-coup was successful, the Third Republic was also inaugurated by-elections in 1979. Shortly afterwards, the Third Republic was also terminated by the fresh coup led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in 1981 who was released from prison (Handley & Mills, 2000), (Meredith, 2011). Therefore, the remote cause of military intervention in African governance was due to the failure of the civilian government to unethical practices.

The civilians, as reformers, confronted the authoritarian leaders (military cabals) in different forms to liberalize the regimes in power in the two countries. In Nigeria, the political reformers informed the people through social media vis-à-vis radio, television, newspapers, and pamphlets with the collaboration of civil society groups. The modus operandi for liberalization was the connection of the Pro-Democracy Groups, and the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). These anti-military groups were established in 1994 from the South-West wing (Yoruba). Other civil society groups are the Campaign for Democracy (CD), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), and National Association of Lawyers (NAL) (Ihonvebere, 1996). The rationale behind the pressure group is to actualize the June 12 elections annulled by General Babangida. The annulment of the June 12 elections being the electoral mandate of Chief Moshood Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa both

accepted the results. And the international observers concluded that the outcome of the elections was free and fair in 1993. While the political reformers in Ghana are linked to colonialism, and the active civil societies groups are Fante Confederation and Aborigines Rights Protection both advocating for the indigenous peoples' rights. The collaboration of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), and Ghana Medical Association (GMA) were both instrumental to the democratization process in the country. The civil society groups organized themselves to inform pressure groups with the action of campaigning against the military regimes was unethical leadership (Botchway, 2018). The nationwide strike, protest, and demonstration approach were used to check the programme of the military in the country.

International agencies across the world have taken a stand to end the Cold War that polarized the globe into two factions. The plan by the Western developed countries assisted in changing the one-party system, personal dictatorship, and military regime in the political terrain of Africa Bratton (1994). Civil society is recognized as an international socio-political institution that represents the interest of democratic opposition to authoritarian leaders of the Central and Eastern European countries Bratton (1994). The civil movement against General Sani Abacha (Nigeria's military leader) from 1993 to 1998 was an infringement on human rights that led to the arrest of Ken Saro Wiwa, and eight others from the South-South, Nigeria. The intervention of President Clinton of the United States of America delegated Jesse Jackson as a special person to re-negotiate with General Abacha to withdraw the death penalty passed against the detainees (Westral, 1998). As a result, the military leader executed the eight human rights fighters in 1995 and this led to the removal of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations (Saka, 2020). The motion was raised by President Mandela at the Commonwealth of Nations meeting.

The transition to democracy also informed the internal dimension of civil protest in Africa. In retrospect, student protest in the Benin Republic became an impetus in another West African Sub-region (Bratton & Walle, 1997). The animation of the civil protest opposing the military regime was pervasive in the Western region of Nigeria, and probably Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ogun, and Ondo states. The agitation for the actualization of the June 12 elections was an aberration that caused political instability in the country. However, the effort of the military to elongate their stay in power metamorphosed the establishment of the Interim National Government (ING) in 1993, and the institution lasted for six months. The return of General Sani Abacha's regime was condemned both nationally and internationally because of the unconstitutional arrest of civilians, and the extrajudicial killings by the soldiers during the protest for actualizing the June 12 elections NADECON (1994). The engagement of Ghana in the context of protest invites the activities of the Ghana Medical Groups. Apart from the issuance of strike action, they also embarked upon physical protest, and it evolved during the regime of Jerry Rawlings. The military leader found the civil movement a threat to its regime and sought the arrest and imprisonment of the

members (Majeed, 2011). He later considered the civil protest for democratic development, and this shifted to more interest in democratic Ghana.

The activities of the civil society groups in neoliberal democracy in Ghana, with radical perspective in Nigeria. The two countries have undergone military autocracy and probably returned to democratic culture. In light of this development, democratization is a process towards state-building through democratic reforms. It, practically, entailed procedural methods by participation and contestation of the people. The process is guided by the electoral activities about the founding (first) elections. The founding elections are significant in the post-third wave because it ends authoritarian regimes. The election is also the virtue of democratization as well as democratic achievement (Huntington, 1991, Bratton & Walle, 1997). Therefore, how were the elections conducted in the first phase? And to what extent were they feasible in Nigeria and Ghana? The founding elections also served as backgrounds for the new democracies as well as democratic consolidations.

It is in the realm of history that military regimes were discredited in Africa for democratic government. In a real sense, Western democracy, Latin American democracy, Asian democracy, and African democracy, all account for the same output but the practices are different. The practice also serves as electoral input concerning electoral promises for which to be delivered by the political party after the elections (Ake, 1992). This will make the students of politics explain that the military regime and democratic government do not simply march together. In another instance, politicians, practitioners, and students should understand the background of leadership failure in Africa. The leadership crackdown was caused by the past civilian governments to address political issues that failed the government in Africa. The political issues exacerbate acrimony and this behaviour invited military intervention in politics (Francis, 2018). Therefore, it is the nature of politics being displayed after post-independence that brought about the military intervention in politics. The first military coup brought about changes in the political system but resulted in dictatorship in different forms. Afterwards, successive coups and counter-coups were experienced between 1960 and 2022. The fresh coup d'état in Africa are Burkina Faso in 2022, Niger in 2021, and Mali in 2021. By all indications, a military coup is unending, and it promotes the stay of juntas as opposed to a democratic government (Francis, 2018). However, part of the democratization process in Africa is the internal arrangement between the top military officials and the civilian counterpart's collaboration in governance. Nigeria and Ghana are both examples amongst other countries in the West Africa sub-region.

## 2.2 Feasibility of the Electoral Process

The assertion of 'Ake' under the neo-liberal democracy is on the feasibility of democracy in Africa and involved the political and economic perspectives. The objective of this section is to engage the theoretical and practical in-depth of the transitional elections of the two countries. In explaining the electoral matters of Nigeria and Ghana, the electoral commissions are designed on the principles of democracy to conduct credible elections according to the guidelines. Meanwhile, the transition to democracy in Africa is a dramatic approach to politics, and it occurs in periods across the continent (Thomson, 2010). In post-independence politics, many African countries degenerated into military regimes and returned to democracy in a short period. A few years afterwards, they returned to authoritarian regimes (reversal) due to unethical characters (Aka, 2001). The backsliding into the past democratic settings also turns to political renewal as the second liberation of neo-liberal democracy in Africa. This means that there has been a constant interruption in the civilian governments by the military in Africa. Therefore, after the post-third wave, the transition to democracy is essentially a mixed model of democratization (Bratton & Walle, 1997). The practice maintains the collaboration of the military and civilians in the democratic government. The arrangement has increased the level of participation and contestation within the new elites in different forms.

In an attempt to explain the major achievements of African countries after two, and a half decade, there is the need to link governance to development to see how this corresponds to political development. The current debate on African socio-economic performance has entered around the procedural electoral contestation and participation after post-third-wave democratization. It embeds the leadership capacity to deliver dividends of democracy, and the sustainability of democratic institutions by the political stakeholders vis-à-vis the politicians, elites, teachers, electorates, students, doctors, nurses, etc. The individuals are organized and as well function in a democratic way to improve the unity of the ethnopolitical groups. The essential mechanisms that drive the political institution are guided by the prisms with the wheel of the public good are the rule of law and accountability. These electoral values are not perfectly defined in West Africa after the post-third wave. Rather African countries have deeply engaged in mass corruption which has festered to increase abject poverty that has weakened and incapacitated the people (Oloruntoba & Falola, 2018). After the transition to democracy, popular power is taken by the politicians through fake promises that are peculiar in many African countries, including Nigeria, and Ghana. The evidence of political dishonesty dominates the political system, this occurs when the election is over, and it is recognized as a new African dictatorship (LeVan, 2015). The new African dictatorship centers on self-style behavior either by ethnicity or political mafias or religiosity in the political terrain. The system guarantees a one-party system, and it tolerates despotic policy that works against the principles of liberal democracy (Jinadu, 2005). In a real sense, the election contest in Africa is dictated by the political elites with the consequence of

ineffectiveness. The people cannot hold their public officeholders accountable in the democratic system (LeVan et al, 2015). Public accountability responds to the immunity of democratization, and it promotes the quality of democracy in different forms.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology involves the research framework in Social Sciences and it deals with data arrangement. Choosing the methods in these two cases enables concrete research focus from the research objectives. Therefore, the methods of data collection in this study include primary documents and secondary methods. The method provides holistic techniques and logic in conducting research in the field of Social Science. The relevance of primary documents requires relevant information which serves as sources of qualitative methods of data collection. Secondary data such as journals, books, magazines, newspapers, and archival materials will be consulted in this study.

### **4. Republic of Nigeria**

The establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by Decree 17 in 1998 under the regime of General Abubakar. The death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998 changed the political system from the barrel of a gun to open elections. At the end of the dictatorship in Nigeria, INEC was established without direct input from the public or scrutiny in the process under military rule. The multi-party system embraced the contestation of the people with national spirit as against the cultural affiliation in the past which favored the Electoral Acts (Onuoha, 2004). Three political parties contested for the 1998/99 general elections. These include the People's Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP) which later changed to All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD). However, the party system in Nigeria has been changing periodically with every election from 1999 to 2022 based on party disunity among the political elites. Despite the political variations, thirty political parties contested the 2003 general elections across the country (Onuoha, 2003). The magnitude of the political party in 2003 outnumbered the 1999 party registration.

The transition program to a democratic system started with the Local Government Elections. The elections were conducted on December 5, 1998, for the position of councilor's and council chairmen in the 776 Local Government Areas. The gubernatorial and state assemblies' elections were conducted on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999. In this process, the National Assembly Elections were also conducted on late February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999. Afterwards, on February 27<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the presidential elections were also conducted among the three political parties PDP and AD/APP alliance. The outcome of the elections indicated that General Olusegun Obasanjo, the presidential

flagbearer under the PDP, won the elections by a margin of eighteen million votes to eleven million votes of Chief Olu Falae (Carter Centre, 1999). The four rounds of elections were conducted across the country with organized political campaigns as designed by the Electoral Acts.

The electoral process is a relative term of democratization, and the activities respond to democratic development. The electoral activities underpin liberalization and oppose authoritarian regimes in all circumstances. First, voters' registration was a statutory function of INEC. Second, in the preparation process, a part of the Electoral Act is that each political party should maintain offices in 24 out of the 36 states to demonstrate ethnic, and regional mix as against the ethnic politics of the First Republic (Carter Centre, 1999). Third, the campaign, and electoral competition are also part of the INEC guidelines before the conduct of elections. In the process of the electoral guidelines, timetable for each electoral event was scheduled by the electoral umpire. For example, a party primary was conducted across the country to present the candidates' names three weeks before the four rounds of elections. Fourth, logistics were distributed across the country, such as ballot papers, and ballot boxes. Lastly, the recruitment of ad hoc officers was established, such as Presiding Officers, Polling Assistants, including Party Agents (Carter Centre, 1999). All of these political activities stimulated the transition to democracy in Nigeria.

## **5. Republic of Ghana**

The Interim Electoral Commission (IEC) is the umpire that conducts elections according to guidelines. In past electoral competitions, the political parties were affiliated with ethnoreligious participation. In the first round of elections, there was little change in the pattern of voting in the country (Orvis, 2001). Therefore, thirteen political parties were registered in 1992 after the lift of the ban on the democratic system. These parties include the Democratic People's Party (DPP), New Generation Party (NGP), Ghana Democratic-Republican (GDP), Party National Independence (PNI), Party Peoples Heritage (PPH), Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere Party (EGLEP), National Convention Party (NCP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), People's National Convention (PNC), People's Party for Democracy and Development (PPDD), National Justice Party (NJP), and National Salvation Party (NSP). In the multi-party system, eight political parties registered in the parliamentary election and out of which three political parties contested the presidential election in 1996 (Ninsin, 2006). These political attributes marked the first tune-over-test in the country, NPP, NDC, and PNC.

The founding (first) elections started with the presidential followed by the parliamentary both are conducted with the voting pattern in the country. The presidential elections were conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1992. Two political parties out of the multi-party system, NDC and NPP, emerged as the major contestants in the political space. In the outcome of the presidential election, Flight Lieutenant Jerry

Rawlings' party emerged as the winner, NDC with 58.3%, and NPP with 30.4%. The parliamentary elections were conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> December with the distribution of seats, and this resulted in proportional representation, such that NDC had 189 seats, NCP 8 seats, EGLEP 1 seat, and Independent Party 2 seats Historical (Archives, 1992). However, the liberalization of democracy ensures that electoral procedures started with the registration of voters in different centers across the country. The 1987 old data registration which contained voters' identities was also repeated in the referendum as well in the 1992 general elections. In each polling unit, identification of the voter's names by the Presiding Officers was a daunting exercise. The inherent challenge is that the voters could not trace their names on the registered lists due to changes in names, and addresses (Carter Centre, 1992). Besides this, the new electorates were not captured in the registration lists because they were disfranchised during the elections.

In the election procedures, the Presiding Officers, and Polling Assistants were confirmed efficient in the conduct of credible elections in 1992. The engagement of the Polling Agents or Party Agents at the polling units was a synergy to assist the Electoral Officers. Part of the challenge was the party agents overstepping their functions and employing unethical influence in the elections across the country. Meanwhile, the engagement of security agencies often assisted in the monitoring of elections. In the rural areas and urban centers, the security agencies were deployed in numbers to control the overwhelming crowds and any form of electoral misconduct in the 1992 general elections. The collaboration of the national and international electoral observers was affirmed by reports during and after the elections (Carter Centre, 1992). Furthermore, the Republic of Ghana operates a unicameral legislature, meaning that there is one parliamentary chamber, while Nigeria operates a bicameral legislature with two parliamentary chambers known as the National Assembly. The upper chamber represents the Senate, and the lower chamber represents the House of Representatives.

The Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Ghana are the two moving trains in the West Africa Sub-region. The two countries deliberately changed from military regimes to democratic systems after the post-third wave democratization. In this case, the Republic of Ghana 1993, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 through the elections that were conducted by the military leaders in both countries.

## **6. Challenges to Democratization**

This section examines the various challenges that derailed the democratization processes in the two countries examined in this study. However, the challenges that retarded the transition to democracies in these countries are crucial and should be examined to reveal the areas of convergence and departure between Nigeria and Ghana. To start with, the international and national electoral observers detected overwhelming riggings and irregularities that marred elections in varying degrees.

The evidence from Nigeria indicated that the four rounds of elections that were conducted in 1998/99 were not credible enough due to unethical activities and unhealthy competition (Onuoha, 2004).

The same scenario of flawed elections also played out in the Ghanaian multi-party system. For instance, the NPP an opposition political party, accused NDC of rigging the 1992 presidential elections in favour of the military leader (President Jerry Rawlings) (Premph, 2018). Apart from the irregularity, there were also inconsistencies in the procedures of the election, such as flawed registered lists and inadequate system of voter identification that is considered as a deliberate attempt to suffocate the electoral exercise (Carter Centre, 1992). In the transition process, the readiness of the elections is necessary for the updates of voter registration but the military leader in power failed to adopt an open ballot system that can ensure smooth electoral procedures in Ghana. Nigeria and Ghana adopted the secret ballot system to administer their respective elections.

More so, overcrowding of the voters at the polling stations was another problem that featured in the elections of the two countries. The political participation indicated that the election is a milestone of democracy with the choices of leadership selection. International observers have confirmed that, in Ghana, the presidential election was massively rigged with the connivance of the Electoral Commission, particularly the partisan supporters of Jerry Rawlings. The preceding election results have discouraged the opposition political parties from boycotting the 1992 parliamentary election across the country (IDEA, 2012). In Nigeria's case, the joint electoral observers in the 1999 election comprised Carter Centre (CC), National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI), European Union (EU), and the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). These groups of observers collectively reported that the four rounds of elections were manipulated by the military in collaboration with INEC to favor PDP candidates (Omotola, 2010). The outcome of the elections led to protests championed by the opposition political parties alleging that the election lacked credibility.

Voting behavior is a parameter that influences the choices of the electorates in the African multi-party system - whether democratic or hybrid in nature. In this case, ethno-religious participation often becomes a peculiar factor in determining the voting pattern, electoral participation, and contestation. It is so clear that the political groups vote for a party based on the ethnic affinity of the party to ensure that the affiliated ethnoreligious group has a majority in government. The evidence from the 1992 and 1999 Ghanaian and Nigerian elections respectively showed that the leadership selection was based on cultural affinity (Erdmann, 2007). In the former (Ghana), the incumbent military leader (Jerry Rawlings) established a political structure that favoured the presidential election. This gave the candidate overwhelming electoral leverage in winning the overall elections. This political pattern



was also implemented in Nigeria by General Abdulsalam Abubakar who produced General Olusegun Obasanjo as the winner of the presidential election in 1999. As a result, the imposition of military leaders as the founding democratic leaders was a political plot in Nigeria and Ghana (Fempong, 2008). Therefore, the power was systematically channeled through the whirlwind (political cabals) to produce the new democratic elites.

The transition to civil rule in Africa witnessed the processes that worked against the neo-liberal democracy in Nigeria. Before the transition to democracy, the military is the most corrupt institution, and the scourge reached the full-blown stage in the regime of President Ibrahim Babangida, (Bamidele, 2012). After the transition to democracy, the issue of corruption is brought forward to affirm the root causes of vote buying in the country. And to what extent does the practice of vote buying affect the transition program in West Africa Sub-region? The pro-democracy groups often captured corruption as an attitude that works with authoritarianism vis-à-vis one party, military regimes, and personal dictatorship (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). Therefore, transition in Africa, particularly after the post-third wave democratization in Nigeria and Ghana, has been enmeshed in various kinds of electoral misnomers such as vote buying, etc. Vote buying connotes an electoral bargain between the voters and the political elites vying for a political office or position. It also means money politics which is a new method of rigging an election (Adigun, 2019). In Nigeria's case, vote buying starts from the time of voter registration with a sealed agreement between the INEC representatives, and a popular political party to issue illegal voters cards in numbers. Another form of vote buying is direct contact between the party agents and the voters on election day. The international observers confirmed this electoral misnomer as a big money politics in an environment with severe poverty (Carter Centre, 1992). Vote buying in Ghana takes the form of money, gifts, and materials that influenced the voters before, during, and after the elections. The attitude is prevalent among poor voters. The survey research conducted in Ghana indicates that voters that do not engage in vote buying are more than voters that engaged in it. Even though the politicians offer money, some still vote according to their conscience. Therefore, the attitude towards the phenomenon is increasing in every election in Africa (Opiah 2018, Frank et al, 2018). The overall challenges are illuminated to identify the behavior that affects the founding elections, and their aftermath in the two countries.

The West Africa Sub-region established political parties through the prism of colonialism. This animation occurred after several coups and counter-coups, and the formation of the party system responded to the process of democratization in Ghana and Nigeria then. In this scenario, the British and African political parties are different in terms of their establishment which are shaped by their functions. The explanation of the British political parties is formally determined by the socio-economic development, whereas in Africa, political parties are constructed outside the

procedural electoral rules. After colonialism, the party system was neither a procedural election nor the legitimacy of the electoral institution due to forms of illiberal practices. Britain and France, as the architect of democracy in West Africa, have established a parliamentary system which recognized the opposition. Some years afterwards, the political parties disappeared due to military incursion into democratic power. A clear example is Ghana and Nigeria, it took political elites several years to re-establish functional political parties, contest and participate in elections, and assume constituent offices in their countries (Salih & Ahmed, 2003). In a similar argument, the operation of African political parties is peculiar to the cultural affiliation which is a substantive approach against the Western formalist approach. The substantive approach reflects Africa as a parochial ethno-religious one, designed to promote and advance the control of the state by dominant ethnic and religious groups (Jinadu, 2005). The politics resulted in electoral violence in Africa, and it increased daily after the post-third-wave democratization.

## **7. Conclusion**

My arguments on democratic experience in West Africa Sub-region engage the issues that are germane after the post-third wave democratization. However, the behaviour that surrounded the movement from authoritarianism to democratic systems is in varying degrees. To the extent that the European countries reasonably campaigned for a democratic government to oppose any form of dictatorship in Africa. The transition to democracy will encourage development in Africa given its multi-cultural and multi-religious complexities. The internal and external factors have contributed to the democratic process in Ghana in 1992, and Nigeria in 1999. Meanwhile, elections were conducted to hand over power to democratic leadership at the time scheduled. In a real sense, the outcome of the transitional elections in the two countries was marred by various irregularities, such as an unstructured party system, disfranchised voters, poor electoral administration, insufficient ballot papers, multiple thumb printing, and vote buying. In another context, the non-feasibility of the post-third wave in Africa was due to fake electoral promises, bad governance, and electoral violence after the elections. In these challenges, the questions that resonate in the minds after successful transitions to democracies is 'What legacy is put forward for the future elections in Ghana and Nigeria?' To answer these questions, perhaps, the consolidation of a democratic system is a relative term for the institutionalization or the deepening of democracy through the changing of electoral power in the two countries.

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