IFE JOURNAL
OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES (IJOHUSS)

A Journal of the
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.
(Sponsored by Tertiary Education Trust Fund / TETFUND)

MAIDEN ISSUE, 2013

IFE JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES

AND SOCIAL STUDIES
(IJOHUSS)

A Journal of the Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

MAIDEN ISSUE, 2013

IFE JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES (IJOHUSS)

The Editorial
The Journal is an international journal of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria under the sponsorship of the Education Tax Fund (ETF), Nigeria. It aims to publish high quality papers in the fields of Humanities, Social Studies and related fields. The frequency of publication would be biannually, two issues per volume.

Vision of the Journal
The vision of the journal is to be a globally acclaimed medium of dissemination of outstanding and reliable scientific information and innovative research findings.

Mission of the Journal
The mission of the journal is to advance knowledge by promoting and encouraging high-quality research activities and cutting edge scientific publications in Humanities, Social Studies and related fields. To this end, the journal will publish its issues regularly, promptly as at when due and ensure a reliable distribution network to all the members of academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University and other subscribers both nationally and internationally.

Pattern of Publishing, Supplementary and Specific Edition
Each edition shall endeavour to publish articles spread across different fields in the humanities. Supplementary and special editions may be published as needs may arise. The journal would have a wide scope to cover every specialty in the related faculties in the university; it would be given a very wide publicity.

Editorial Board
The Editorial Board is constituted as follows:

a. Editors-in-Chief – seasoned Humanities, Social Studies and related fields academics within OAU, Ile-Ife.

b. One seasoned academic from each section of the Humanities, Social Studies and related fields in the faculties represented, within the OAU.

Subscription
Nigeria, Individual: N1000 per copy; Institutional: N2000 (Excluding postage)
Outside Nigeria (Individual) $10; Institutional $20 (Excluding postage)

Notes to Contributors

The Board hereby calls for well researched articles on contemporary issues in Administration, Arts, Education, Law, Library and Social Sciences. Book reviews, comments, research findings and interdisciplinary papers are, most especially, welcome.

Guidelines and general information

- Articles should not be more than 15 to 18 pages in A4 double-line spacing. Such article should be original and contain previously unpublished data, interpretation or synthesis.
- Submitted articles will be peer-reviewed.
- The paper should be accompanied with an abstract of not more than 150 to 200 words with the format: Aim, Methodology, Findings/Demonstration and Conclusion.
- Articles should be submitted as a soft copy through electronic mail (e-mail) MS-Word attachment to ijohuss@yahoo.com .
- There should be a brief biographical note on a separate page.
- The coverage should bear the title of the paper, the author's name and the institution's affiliation.
- You may visit the Journal website and register at www.ijohussonline.com as submissions may be submitted via this medium in future.

We welcome suggestions on the improvement of this website at ijohuss@yahoo.com .

IFE JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES (IJOHUSS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Democracy and Accountability in Pre-colonial Africa: Lessons for Contemporary African States

Joshua Segun and Oni Samuel, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The authors contribute to the debate on democracy and accountability in Africa by examining the nexus between democracy and accountability. They argue that whereas democracy engendered accountability in pre-colonial Africa, modern democracy in Africa fails to bring accountability to the front burner of politics, which is attributed to colonial rule that led to the destruction of indigenous system cum the attitudes of post-colonial leaders. Given this scenario, the authors contend that accountability, which was the hall mark of pre-colonial Africa, should be imbibed by contemporary leaders of Africa. Africans should be sensitised to making their leaders answerable for their actions.
Key words: democracy, accountability, pre-colonial Africa, contemporary Africa

Introduction

Democracy, often viewed by scholars as the most civilised system of governance, has generated much controversy. Regrettably, however, there is a lack of consensus about its meaning as the concept has been viewed with various lenses by different scholars (Omoyefa 2010). The word democracy is often said to be derivative of two Greek words – 'demos' and 'kratos', meaning 'people' and 'rule/power' respectively. This lends credence to the popular definition of democracy as "Government of the people by the people and for the people'' credited to Abraham Lincoln. Gyekye, (1997) interprets the expression "of the people" in the above definition of democracy as meaning that it is the people who (should) govern, or at the minimum, it is the people who, not only choose those who are to rule, but, also, find ways to control the rulers and see to it that the way they are ruled conforms to their wishes. Gyekye also believes that most modern African political systems are not democratic, in as much as they are not derivatives of African people, but are rather a wholesale importation of European systems. This argument is not the focus of this paper. However, from the above, it can be gleaned that democracy means rule by the citizens. A historical excursion into pre-colonial Africa reveals that democracy is not new to traditional Africa societies, epitomised by the prevalence of democratic strands in governance.

Today, democracy has become the most popular system of government for some obvious reasons. The emergence of a New World Order subsequent to the end of the cold war no doubt produced significant impact on the world system. One outstanding area in which this is noticeable is the global resurgence of democratisation; or to borrow a leaf from Huntington (1991) it has brought about the "third wave" of democratisation. Evidently, African states are no exception. It is believed that the wave of democratisation that swept through Africa was largely exerted on the state by both internal and external forces (Lawson, 1991; Agbu, 1996; Osaghae, 1999; Zack-Williams, 2001; Omotola; 2002 and Omotola, 2007). Analysis of the two factors is not within the scope of this paper.

Little wonder that Oche (2004) observes that since the end of cold war, quite a number of countries in Africa like Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Gabon, Cameroon, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Congo-Brazzaville, South Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo have tried to transit or attempted to democratise. One can also add that others which had already embraced democracy are also trying to consolidate it. In the same vein, Ona (2003) argues that out of the fifty-three (53) independent countries in Africa, forty-eight (48) are republics.

Since democracy underscores the fact that the people are the most important element and also connotes good governance and accountability, can modern democracy in Africa be said to be exhibiting these traits? Agyeman (2003:333) contends that "if we were to be very honest with ourselves, we surely would not find it too difficult to be convinced of the fact that Africans have been irresponsible and harmful to Africa in terms of self-governance"

In addition, accountable leadership, which is synonymous with honesty in the use of resources of the nation, is conspicuously absent in the lexicon of contemporary democratic countries in Africa. Etuk (2003:129) observes that "African leaders uniformly, almost without exception, have an insatiable capacity to steal the people's wealth, even where they are poor and to leave them more impoverished. This paper examines democracy and accountability in pre-colonial Africa with the aim of bringing to the fore some lessons that can be learnt in order to bring good governance to the front burner of politics.

Axworthy (2005), in his analysis on democracy and accountability, focuses on five steps of the accountability ladder toward democracy and these include: individual accountability to conscience, organisational accountability, political accountability, democratic accountability and global accountability. Braton and Logan (2006) emphasised vertical accountability with a particular focus on the political leaders. In the same vein, Burnell (2008) considers the relationship between 'accountable governance' and constitutional implementation, with reference to Africa among others. However, there seems to be no major work drawing lessons from democracy in pre-colonial Africa with a view to bringing to the limelight how such can help to improve democracy in modern Africa.

Democracy and Accountability: A Theoretical Approach

How democracy is visualised varies as it is often influenced by ideological and cultural contextualisation. However, Venter, (2003) contends that almost every circumstance, democracy is conceived as involving social justice government accountability and human freedom. Without gainsaying, liberal democracy involves the procedural minimum of contestation for political offices and policy choices, popular participation in elections and accountability of elected public officials under the rule of law. It can be deduced from the above that the wheel of democratic governance runs on equity, transparency, social justice and accountability of elected representatives. According to Chidam'modzi (2003), in democratic theory, representation presupposes individuals who exemplify the characteristics of the people they represent on one hand while at the same time are able to think and act on their behalf. This is brought to the fore

via an electoral process in which the major assumption is that only those who promised to advance the interests of the people got elected. In other words, democratic accountability is synonymous to the ability of citizens to hold political office holders accountable for the power delegated to them by the people; that is to say, responsiveness and answerability of political office holders (Hyden, 2010).

If modern (liberal) democracy is analytically dissected, one can quickly observe the fact that, accountability has come to be its permanent feature. Schedler (1999) asserts that scholars now tend to perceive public accountability as a major attribute of democracy and democratic quality as well as an ingredient of democracy's long-term sustainability. Thus, accountability mitigates the abuse of political power, while at the same time, gingers elected political office holders to serve the purpose of their election. Przeworski (1995:108) argues that

> ...Governments are accountable only when voters can clearly assign the responsibility for performance to competing teams of politicians, when the incumbent can be effectively punished for inadequate performance in office, and when voters are sufficiently well informed to accurately assess their performances.

In traditional Africa, aside few allusions to the political situations in some societies that are not democratic, the rule by popular consent held sway and actions and decisions of rulers were consistently based on the will of the people (Oluwole 2003). In the same vein, Forte and Evan-Pritchard (1940) averred that the structure of an African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent. A ruler's subjects are as fully aware of the duties they owe to him, and are able to exert pressure to make him discharge his duties. However, accountability appears to be the missing link in modern African democratic governance.

Democracy and Accountability: A Synergy

The cornerstone of a well functioning democratic system is the obligation of political leaders to answer to the public for their actions and decisions. In principle, political accountability serves a dual purpose. It checks the power of the political leaders to prevent them from ruling in an arbitrary or abusive manner and helps to ensure that government operates effectively and efficiently. In addition, accountability is intimately linked to citizen participation, leadership responsiveness and the rule of law. These are pillars that define and reinforce the practice of democracy, particularly, representative democracies. In short, the level of accountability of elected representatives to their constituents is regarded as a key indicator of the quality of democracy actually enjoyed by the society, (Donnell et al. 2004, Diamon and Marlino 2005).

However, the condition under which democratic institutions generate incentives for government to be accountable is somehow stringent; they are often not met by most institutional frameworks. Suffice to say that election appears to be the most visible way of ensuring accountability of political office holders. It is essential to stress that the inherent limitations of individual's votes as a means of enforcing accountability upon elected leaders are well known. The fact must be taken into consideration that

opportunities to cast a ballot are infrequent, arising for President or parliament only once every four or five years. Furthermore, elections force voters to compress myriad preferences of political identity, competing policies and retrospective evaluation and future expectations of performance into a single choice (Masavall, 1996). Thus, an election constitutes a blunt instrument for enforcing accountability. In Africa, where ethnic or regional voting patterns are common and party platforms are weak, elections rarely offer real programmatic alternative to voters. Elections also can do almost nothing to hold bureaucrats, the judiciary or security forces to account for their actions.

Democracy and Accountability in Pre-colonial Africa

It is necessary to note that, in order to have a full grasp of Africa politics, one needs to take a historical excursion into Africa traditional democracy. Africa traditional democracy is opposed to the western traditional conception of democracy (Jere 2007). Little wonder that Jafta (1999) asserts that it is unreasonable to understand democracy as a western concept only, because western democracy is liberal, based on one culture and ignores the value of another culture. He added that western democracy came from the people who have the same culture. In the same vein, Wamthalika (1998) states that, there is clear evidence that Africa had common conceptual and analytical framework of participatory democracy on African traditions and values.

There were some pre-colonial Africa states that were theocratic, like the kingdom of Burundi whose founding father was Ntare I Rushhansi, who ascended to the throne in 1675 and brought into focus the system of Baganwa, provincial governor, who often contested the central power. Under Mwezi II (1852) the indigenous traditional state reached its peak. The elected king had all the power and headed an elaborate network in Baganwa. Despite the theocratic nature of Burudi, there was an element of flexibility in the royal authority, which gives the impression that there was democratic openness (Aroga, 1999)

In West Africa, the various powers were monarchies, in which one could, nevertheless, find vestiges of democratic element such as elections and the sharing of political power within the circle of the notables. From these systems, three different methods of balloting are discernable. In the first case unanimous confidence is given to one of the notables by his peers, in the second, voting is intended to settle the contest between two personalities of equal influence; in the last, voting is a sort of drawing of lots. Aroga (1999) notes that it was through this last procedure that Biton Koulibaly became the first Emperor of Segou (613-81). Each of the notables had a stick bearing his personal sign. Three innocents not having any idea about the stick were called forth: an uncircumcised man, a newly circumcised person and a pregnant woman. All gave luck to the Bambara by choosing a stick. The gathering of notables had to recognise that power fell to this man.

What is democratic is not only the election but also the fair play of the notables. The description of this type of election, however, shows quite well that they were known in their various forms and practised in one way or the other depending on the society (Aroga, 1999). There is considerable evidence that decisions by consensus was often the order in African deliberations and was so in principle.

Kaunda and Mutiso, cited in Wiredu (1992), state that "in our original societies we operated by consensus. An issue was talked out in solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved". In the same vein, Nyerere, cited in Nyirabu (2002:100), asserts that "… in an African society the traditional methods of conducting affairs is by free discussion", and went on to quote that "the elders sit under the big tree and talk until they agree".

Gyeke (1997) gives a lucid analysis to portray the fact that democratic norms, including consultation, accountability, choice and freedom of expression were prevalent in Akan traditional political system. He states that the chief, who was the political head of an Akan town or village, is chosen from the royal lineage by the head of the lineage in consultation with members of that lineage. It is necessary that the person chosen be acceptable not only to the councilors, who represented their clans, but also to the Asafo Company of young men or "commoners" who are, in effect, the body of citizens. The paramount chief was chosen the same way, except that his election has to be accepted to the chiefs of the constituent towns and villages. Thus, never is a chief imposed upon an Akan community.

The scholar submits that the active participation of the community in its own political affairs in traditional African society was not unique to the Akan of Ghana. In many non-decentralised societies, elders would sit and discuss clan or state affairs in the open view of everyone. Such participation and ownership of the political system is arguably the essence of democracy.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, the Igbo appeared to be the best democratic political system. It is necessary to take a quick look at the Igbo democracy. Igbo society is essentially founded in a small unit called family (ezi). A group of ezi forms the ummuna (also known as lineage). Ummuna is generally believed to have come from ancestor or kindred. The ummuna is headed by the Okpara who performed religious and political functions. The okpara is usually the eldest son of the ummuna (Ugwuanyi, 2008). A collection of ummuna made up the ogbe, also referred to as obodo (village) (Nwala, 1985); the ummuna acted as the nucleus of Igbo socio-political organisation. This is because it is made up of a number of extended families or family group known as Ugwulu or ama (Ogueijiofor, 1996) and serves as a thread that weaves or binds these families together.

Extensive consultation was held with various segments of the society on crucial matter of the state and this is the first major quality of the Igbo society that qualifies it to lay claim to democracy. This is to extend the option(s) of the majority and carrying everybody along in matters that they believed "Unu oha Ka Ike- enya –ohu-na – onye" (The foolishness of the majority is better than the wisdom of one person)' (Ugwuanyi, 2008:178). In fact, all segments of the society are actually involved in crucial matters of the state.

It is interesting to note that women were also not left out. In the final analysis, the Oha or grand elders functioned as the highest decision making body. They were recognised as repository of knowledge and wisdom, hence they were expected to seal the decision reached (Ugwuanyi, 2008). Achebe, (1999) puts it more pungently: that the Igbo rule themselves community by community. If there was any important thing a community

should discuss, a gong is sounded and all male adults would converge in the community square; and the matter would be discussed in the presence of all. Igbo, according to him, do not send a representative, i.e. somebody who will be their spokesman.

He goes on to stress that this age old practice by the Igbo was the origin of democracy. Anyone, who says that democracy is not good for the Igbo, neither understands the Igbo or democracy (Achebe, 1999). Ugwuanyi, (2008) argues that the Igbo abhor monarchy, oligarchy, and autocracy. Their world view is rooted in democratic disposition to issues. Scholars of Igbo politics have described Igbo democracy with different nomenclature. Nwala, (1985) refers to it as unanimity; Okafor (1999) describes it as ohacracy, while Oguejiofor (1996) calls it government by the council of elders. There were socio-cultural variables that accounted for the success of Igbo democracy: first is the Igbo belief in the principle of egalitarianism; second is the Igbo belief in the dignity of labour and private property and last is their opinion of the non- remunerative nature of political office in the Igbo state (Ugwuanyi, 2008).

Rulers of pre-colonial Africa society were made accountable to the people through various mechanisms put in place to check their excesses. The African political model did not provide or make provision for absolutism or tyranny. All societies provided elaborate and explicit rules of behaviour for their rulers. The rulers were expected to uphold their traditions and defend their territory from aggressors; expand, if possible, the wealth through war; but they also expect them to be just, considerate and conscious of the conventions and interests of the people at all times. In short, kings were looked upon as the symbols of the authority and legitimacy of their kingdoms. The rights and privileges accorded them were expected to be coterminous with the power and authority they wield, which also distinguished them from ordinarily people in the society (Otubanjo 1989).

The ceremony of installation of a king provided opportunity for defining the scope of the ruler's power and for initiating an incoming ruler into the tolerance level of his subjects. These were done through all kinds of ways, including the symbolic drama of initiation rites and oral poetry. Most of such rites include the display of obeisance and respect, not only to selected Chieftains, but in some cases, to the entire people gathered in an appointed square. For instance, the initiation rites of the "Owa Obokun of Ilesha", in its final stages, demanded of him to acknowledge the sovereignty of the people by lying fully prostrate before them at the public square. Other less dramatic acts of acknowledgement abound everywhere (Otubanjo, 1989).

Davidson (1962:145) observes that among the Ashanti, all chiefs, from emperors to local chiefs were presented with a people's charter, which, in essence, was a statement of what the subjects expected from their rulers. The following is a representative of the substance of this charter:

> Tell him that
> We do not wish for greediness
> We do not wish that his ears be hard of hearing
> We do not wish that he should decide matters by himself
> We do not wish that it should be said, "I have no time, I have no time".
> We do not wish for personal violence.

For the African, kingship conferred several privileges and rights, but these did not include the rights to treat a kingdom as a private fife.

Although kings, chiefs and officials wielded considerable power in pre-colonial African societies, especially the centralised ones, as people always associated them with the divine and were feared, obeyed and respected, yet they were circumvented by numerous institutions, conventions, rituals, elders and the people themselves (Ikelegbe, 1989). Among the Jukun people, the main duty of the king was to secure for the people a successful harvest. He is called Azaikwo (our Guinea corn), Afyewo (our Groundnuts), Asoiwo (our Beans). He was vested with the power to control the rain and winds: whose impact on agriculture and, therefore, the welfare of the people was directed and economically, fundamental (Oculi, 1989). When a new king has been installed, he would be told his power, how to use it to benefit the people, and the danger of popular rebellion against his regime and assassination if he deviates from his duty:

> Today we have given you the house of your father. The whole world is yours. You are guinea corn and beans... Henceforth you have no father no mother. But you are the father and mother of all. Follow in the footsteps of your forefathers and do evil to no one, that your people may abide with you, and that you may come to the end of your reign in health (Oculi, 1989:47).

In the same vein, the Attah of Igala and the Mali of ancient Bornu were also treated to similar warnings on their coronation days (Leaver, 1985). The effectiveness of the power of a ruler for securing popular support was a fundamental basis for political legitimacy. Albeit the ruler is god, the mortal vessel through which his power runs could either corrupt the proper use of it or blunt its thrust and punch. Thus, human character (bad behaviour) and physical decay like losing a tooth, arrival of grey hairs could undermine his power (Oculi, 1989). Tahir, (1984) had dramatised the near destruction to a society when a Malam exploited the people he was supposed to safeguard (beyond the limits of societal norms among the Hausa-Fulani people).

It has been noted that, in ancient Egypt, the population responded to bad government through uprising to overthrow the rulers or through protest walking with their feet and migrating beyond the borders of the Pharaoh's domains and thus bringing an end to territorial obligation of the ruler. The Igala and the Yoruba are noted for subjecting unwanted ruler to taking poison by himself under the constitutional supervision of the politically relevant elders and kingmakers (Oculi, 1989).

In the Benin kingdom, for example, the Uzama which was the Council of State helped to check the excesses of the Obas. In addition, there were also some social checks. The people could protest abuses and wickedness of Obas through resort to sorcery, refusal to cooperate or perform obligations and through emigration (Oculi, 1989).

Although there are no formal method(s) of removing chiefs and traditional rulers in the Hausa-Fulani emirate system, a traditional ruler could be derobed if found to have acted against the interests of the people. In Ghana, for instance, the Ashanti of Ghana often had enough reasons for destooling their kings. In the annals of record, the following

kings were destooled for drunkenness: Kwabena Abiagye of Asumagya, Kwabena Brukin and Kwasi ten of Nsuta. Akuamoa Pinyin of Juaben was destooled for abusive tongue and disrespect to the council of his elders. This is in line with the argument of Davidson (1992) that despots certainly arose in pre-colonial Africa, but they were dethroned as soon as could be.

However, in segmented societies of pre-colonial Africa, the people through their assemblies constituted the utmost check on governance. Deliberations were usually open and free, although the elders or lineage heads presided over such meetings. The leaders were, therefore, ultimately responsible to the people through their assembly. In fact, it is interesting to note that leaders could be accused, reprimanded and protested against during such meetings and, at such times, they had to defend themselves and their actions (Oculi, 1989). Wingo (2001:164) argues that:

> Tyranny and despotism were not in the vocabulary of those pre-colonial
> political arrangements first the state agents came from among the ordinary
> folks. They lived with them. The Fon (chief) himself was an ordinary citizen,
> most often a farmer, an occupation he kept alone aside the function.

Democracy and Accountability in Contemporary Africa

Borrowing a leaf from Nwigwe, (2003), his analysis of Nigeria's governments in which he described them as "Mafia governments" befits the situation of most African countries. 'Mafia', according to him, means a government that is power-drunk, self-seeking and barren in terms of ideology and without orientation. Authority is directed towards achieving self-interests and desires. In many countries in Africa, leaders are scarcely ever elected by the people but, rather, selected by their kind. In spite of multiparty elections, those to rule are clearly predetermined and selected even before elections are conducted. Ignorance and poverty orchestrated the stage for money politics.

Although there seems to be evidence of democratic structure in the three arms of government - legislative, executive and judiciary, yet much power is concentrated in the hands of the executive organ. The modern African system of democracy, according to Nwigwe (2003), is a paradox because the voice of opposition is not welcome, no matter how constructive it is. Politics in Africa is a means of achieving wealth and, as a result, it is not aimed at service to the people. It is indeed a quick way of making money.

Little wonder, that Fanon (1963:147) argues that:

> the political party in many parts of Africa, which are today independent,
> is puffed up in a most dangerous way. In the presence of the members of
> the Party, the people are silent, behave like a flock of sheep and publish
> panegyrics in praise of the government of the leader. But in the streets
> when evening comes, away from the village, in the cafes' or by the river,
> the bitter disappointed of the people, their despair but also their
> unceasing anger makes itself heard.

In the same vein (Sandel, 1996:3) postulates that African public life is life with discontent, with citizens losing control over the forces that govern their lives. This has resulted in a declining turnout and faith in the democratic system. Okafor, (2003:581) succinctly captures the situation of lawlessness in governance of modern African societies as a "game without rules":

> In Africa, the game of politics is played as though it had no rules even though it has the politicians as the players. The referee is corrupt and was bribed by one of the teams. The spectators are the citizens who are bewildered by the manner of the game. Fouls are ignored when committed by one team, good players from the other team are penalised without reason. Rented fans cheer foul play from one team and jeer decent play from the other.

He continues:

> Spectators are bewildered and dumb founded. Security officials, keep strict surveillance on the spectators and are poised to deal with protestation or any attempt to disrupt the game. And so the game goes on. The favoured team must win by all means. In the end it is declared the winner and the actual winners became losers.

The implication of the type of electoral process described above leads power-mongers and power-holders to exercise this power ultra vires, unfettered by rules. Thus, the power holders, having obtained power by unlawful means, strive to maintain it with a high degree of lawlessness. Their gluttonous quest for boundless riches have position their minds to stay put in power indefinitely. A few examples are necessary at this juncture. President Hosni Mubarack of Egypt clinched the presidency of his country not less than three consecutive terms. In fact, in 1993, he was nominated as the sole candidate to represent the only party in Egyp t- the National Democratic Party (NDP); Mobutu Sese Seko, the late president of Zaire now (Democratic Republic of Congo) "one of the world's most corrupt regimes", ruled for thirty-two (32) years in a disastrous dictatorship and never wanted to hand over the reins of power until he was forced by the rebel forces to resign as president (Agudosy, 2003). Others include Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, Eyadema of Togo, Denis Sasson Nghesso of Congo, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Omar Bongo of Gabon, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Ghadafi of Libya spent about forty-two years in power; when asked to step down he vowed to fight with the last drop of blood and he made good his threat as he rode roughshod on his opposers before he died in the process.

Reasons for Non-Accountability of Modern African Democracies

The question to ask at this juncture is why have most African post-colonial governments failed the accountability and democracy test? The reason is not farfetched. From the work of Senyonjo (n.d) three important factors are attributable to this development. The first factor is neglect of all aspects of indigenous institutions in favour of wholesale adoption

of foreign models, which were poorly understood. Democracy practised today in Europe took more than two thousand years to evolve, passing through a painful and gradual transformation of already existing institutions. In short, Africa cannot be said to have a full mastery of modern democracy before adopting it as a system of government. This lend credence to an argument credited to Ona (2003) that African (modern African) States jump-start democracy (modern democracy) without checking the "engine" of citizenship, the "clutch" of distribution of wealth, the "battery" of literacy, the "break" of accountability. No wonder the so-called democracies are, at best, pluralistic dictatorships in which selfish and unscrupulous tyrants ride roughshod on the people, defending only their personal interests and those of their political cronies and clubs. The second factor noted by Senyonjo is the lack of an adaptive capacity due to the destruction of traditional institutions through which new ideas could be assessed, critiqued and adopted. The third factor is the adoption of corrupt, non-democratic colonial models of governance. Without sentiment, it is necessary to understand that, while the colonial Administrators brought on board a lot of good reforms that improved the lot of Africans, some of their practices were clearly regressive. In African traditional political systems, Africans were ultimately involved in their affairs, but it has been observed that colonialism rendered politicians and government miles away from the people they ought to serve. This attitude has been copied by post-colonial states of Africa. Thus, injury done to the state is not seen as injury done to individuals. The traditional system generates sentiment of personal commitment to the community that the modern state is yet to create in its citizens.

The aforementioned vices have earned the state in Africa according to Animashaun (2009) such adjectives as the rentier state, the prebendal state, the predatory state and the kleptocratic state, all stressing the irrelevance of the state to the ordinary people.

Lessons for Contemporary African States

One can see that political office in pre-colonial Africa, like the Igbo, attracted no remuneration. This contrasts the monetary benefits associated with modern political offices which have made them too attractive. There is need to cut down on such benefits. In fact, elected public officers should be paid little above people with equivalent qualification and experience in the same capacity in other organisations. If this is done, politics will be left to those who have the mind to render selfless service to the people. Another concomitant advantage of the above is that, violence, cutthroat competition that seems to have assumed a permanent feature of African political process as a result of benefits that often occasioned political offices will be mitigated if not totally eradicated. It is essential to sensitise modern Africans to the duty of holding their leaders accountable, just as traditional African societies like Egypt, Igala, Benin and so on did. The process of election or selection as the case may be in traditional Africans was seen as free and fair. There should be concerted efforts by all Africans to make sure that all political office holders emerge through free and fair elections. There should be a standard to measure how free and fair an election is and any election that falls short of the standard should be nullified and perpetrator(s) brought to book. The implication of election rigging is that, those who came to office through incredible elections often felt unaccountable to the people, hence the senseless looting of public funds.

It is very necessary to check the excesses of political parties. A situation in which a party just gives automatic ticket to serving elected officers to contest the next election without recourse to the electorate for such approval should be frowned at. This suggests the imperative for internal democracy in the political parties, failing which it will be near impossible for them to midwife national democratic institutions. In African traditional societies, political leadership emerged through people's consent. This cannot be said to be the case in the modern African system of governance.

Citizens should check the use of governmental power via popular protests as was the case in African Traditional societies, epitomised by Egypt and as occurred during the recent fuel price protests in Nigeria. Like traditional political systems in which leaders lived among their people, modern day politicians should be made to live among the people they represent. This will facilitate easy access to their representative(s) and in turn make the representative(s) to appreciate the problems of the people he/she represents and accountability easy on his or her part.

Traditional institutions combine both authority and legitimacy, which remains a tall order in post-colonial governance of African societies. "A chief was a chief because the people made him a chief"; "kings were made by the people". Electoral malpractices have made modern governments suffer the problem of legitimacy crisis. Drastic measures must be put in place to check this negative trend.

The idea of borrowing democratic principles hook line and sinker from Western world while jettisoning African indigenous democratic ideals should be discarded. African democracy should be a hybrid of the good aspects of our indigenous democracy cum that of western democracy.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that democracy is not new to Africans as one can see some democratic strands in the organisation of pre-colonial African societies. The position of this paper is that the type of democracy practised by contemporary African states makes mockery of accountability which was the hall mark of democracy in pre-colonial Africa. Colonial rule ushered in modern democracy that dealt a deadly blow on accountability as a result of neglect of indigenous institutions in favour of wholesale adoption of foreign models which were poorly understood. However, if the recommendations given above are taken into consideration, accountability and indigenous democratic principles will be restored to the politics of modern African states.

References

Achebe, C. (1999) Tomorrow is Uncertain, Today is still Early. First Odenigbo Lecture delivered at Owerri, Nigeria, Translated from Igbo by Ndee Ehirim and Published in the *Comet*, Sept. 29.

Agbu, O. (1996) External Pressure and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria. *Nigeria Journal of International Affairs* (NJIA), 22 (1): 1-22.

Agudosy, Fabian I. (2003) Reinvigorating Responsible Governance through Political Communication in Africa: A study of "the end justifies the means" In

Ogueijiofor O. J. (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa,* Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp.586-603.

Agyeman, K. (2003) The Quest for Moral Democracy. In O.J. Oguejiofor (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa,* Munster: Lit Verlag Munster.

Animashaun, M.A (2009) State Failure, Crisis of Governance and Disengagement from the State in Africa. *Africa Development* XXXIV, (3 and 4):47-63.

Aroga, J.D (1999) The Idea of Democracy in Africa Tales. *Research in Africa Literature* Vol. 30 (1) 140-153.

Axworthy, T.S (2005) The Accountability Ladder: Five Steps Toward Democracy, A Paper Presented to Thematic Session D Improving Political Accountability in Asia's Democracies. 1st Biennal Conference 15-17 Sept. International Convention, Center Taipei, Taiwan.

Burnell, P. (2008) "The Relationship of Accountability Governance and Institutional Implementation, with Reference to Africa" *Journal of Politics and Law* 1 (3) September

Braton, M. and Logan, C. (2006) Voters but not Yet Citizens: The Weak Demand for Vertical Accountability in Africa's Unclaimed Democracies. *Working Paper* No 63, Afrobarometer, pp. 1-25.

Chidam'modzi Hermes, F. (2003) "The Problem of Representation: Dilemmas of African Democracy" In O. J. Oguejiofor (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa.* Vol. 1. Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp.367-380.

Davidson, B. (1962) *Discovery Africa's Past.* London: Longman

_____ . (2000) *The Black Man's Burden, Africa and the Curse of The Nation-State.* Ibadan: Spectrum Book Ltd

Diamond, L. and Morlino, L (2005) "Introduction" In Diamon L and Morlino L (eds) *Assessing the Quality of Democracy.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, pp. ix-xiii.

Donnell, O., Jorge. G., Vargas Cullel and Iazatta Osvaldo, (eds) (2004) *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Application.* South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Etuk, Udo. (2003) "Practical and Theoretical Problems in the Emergence of Responsible Governance in Africa in Oguejiofor O.J. (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and responsible Governance in Africa.* Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 121-139.

Fanon, F. (1963) *The Wretched of The Earth.* Harmondsworth, Penguin, p. 147.

Gutema, Bekele (2003) Problems in the Emergence of Responsible Governance in Africa. In O. J. Oguejiofor (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa.* Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 107-120.

Gyekye, K. (1997) *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the Africa Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press.

Hyden, Goran (2010) Political Accountability in Africa: Is the Glass Half-full or Half-empty? *Working Paper* No. 6, 1-23.

Ikelegbe, A.O (1989) Checks on the Abuse of Political Power. In Ayoade John A. A. and Agbaje Adigun (eds) *African Traditional Political Thought and Institution.* Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), pp.141-151

Jafta, L.D (1998) *Religion and Democracy in South Africa Simeins Historiae Ecclesiestical.* XXIV (2)

Jere, P.Q (2007) Political Authority and Democracy in Africa retrieved on 8/05/2010 http//zithandozami-geko.blogspot.com/2007/05/political-authority-an-emocracy-in html

Lawson, (1991) External Democracy Promotion in Africa Another False Start? *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 37 (1): 1-26.

Leaver, J. E. (1985) Kanem and Bornu under three Dynasties. In J. F Ajayi and Bashir Ikara (eds) *Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Masavall, Jose. M. (1996) Accountability and Manipulation. *Working Paper* No 92, Instituto Juan March de Estudiose Investigaciousness, Madrid.

Meyer Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, E.E (1940) *African Political Systems.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moncrieffe, J. (2001) Accountability: Idea, Ideals, Constraints. *Democratization*, 8: (3) 26-50

Nwala, T.U (1985) *Igbo Philosophy.* Lagos: Lantern Books

Nwigwe, B.E. (2003) Origin and Limits of State Authority. In O. J. Oguejiofor O.J (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa.* Munster: Lit verlag Munster, pp. 85-104.

Nyirabu, Mohabe (2002) The Multiparty Reform Process in Tanzania: The Dominance of the Ruling Party. *African Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 7. No. 2: 99-112.

Oche, O. (2004) Democracy: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues. In H. A. Saliu (ed.) *Nigeria Under Democratic Rule* (1999-2003) Vol. 1. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, pp.10-19.

.Oculi, Okello (1989) The Limits of Power: Lessons from Egyptology.In A.A.J. Ayoade and Agbaje Adigun (eds) *African Traditional Political Thought and Institutions.* Lagos: Centre For Black and African Arts and Civilization and Civilization.

Oguejiofor, O. J. (1996) *The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion on The Socio-Political Character of the Igbo.* Nsukka: Falladu Publishers.

Okafor, F.U (2003) Game without Rule: Confronting the Problems of Lawless Rulers in Africa. In O. J. Ogueijiofor (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa.* Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 579-588.

_____ . (1992) *Igbo Philosophy of Law.* Nsukka: Falladu Publishers

Oluwole, S. B. (2003) Democracy and Indigenous Governance: The Nigerian Experience. In O. J. Ogueijiofor (ed.) *Philosophy Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa* Vol 1 Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 419-444

Omotola, J. Shola (2002) A Review of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Implication for the Nascent Democracy. *The Polity* Vol. 5.

------. (2007) Democratization, Good Governance and Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 9 (4), 247-274.

Omoyefa, P.S. (2010) Democracy and the Quest For Responsible Governance in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences* 22(2): 107-114.

Ona, Godfrey, I. (2003) Africa and the Illusion of Democracy. In Oguejiofor, O.I (ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*. Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 276-308

Osaghae, E. E. (1999) Democratization in Africa: Faulting Prospects, New Hopes. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 17 (1)

Otubanjo, Femi (1989) Themes in African Traditional Political Thought. In J. A. Ayoade and A. A. B. Agbaje (eds) *African Traditional Political Thought and Institutions*. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, pp. 3-17.

Przeworski, A. (1995) *Sustainable Democracy*. Cambridge University Press

Sandel, J.M (1996) *Democracy's Discontent*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

Scheduler, A. (1999) Conceptualizing Accountability. In Schedler, Diamond, L and Plattner (eds) *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner (Chapter 2).

Senyonjo, J. (n.d) Traditional Leaders. Introduction: Part 1.

Tahir, I. (1984) *The Last Imam*. London: KPI.

Ugwuanyi, O. L. (2008) The Idea of Democracy in Igbo Culture of Nigeria. In I. Odimegwu (ed.) *Nigeria Democracy and Global Democracy*. Akwa: FAB Education Books, pp.172-183

Venter, Denis (2003) Democracy, Good Governance and Leadership. What Prospect for African Renaissance? In J. O. Oguejiofor (ed.) *Philosophy Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa* Vol. 1. Munter: Lit Verlag Munster, pp. 229-275.

Wamthalika, B. (1995) *One Africa One Identity: Toward Democracy, Good Governance and Development*. Harare: Sapes Books Publication.

Wingo, A.H. (2001) Good Governance As Accountability. In Teodros Kirds (ed.) *Explorations in African Political Thought*. New York: Routledge. 151-170

Zack-Williams, A.B (2001) No Democracy, No Development: Reflections on Democracy and Development in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*. Vol. 28, No. 88: 213-223.