

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN WEST AFRICA:
A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BENIN, GHANA AND NIGERIA

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by

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ABSTRACT

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN WEST AFRICA:
A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BENIN, GHANA AND NIGERIA by Major
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The bitter lessons of history have taught West Africa that there are no longer respectable alternatives to democracy after the collapse of communism. Nonetheless, governance in West Africa in the 21st century remains the greatest problem because illiberal democracies seem to be gaining legitimacy due to the fact that they are reasonably democratic. Such illiberal democratic governments if not exposed will continue to plunge the sub-region into a vicious cycle of semi-authoritarianism rule which does not promote economic prosperity. This thesis therefore examines the challenges and prospects of the nature of liberal democratic system of governance in West Africa, through a comparative assessment of Benin, Ghana and Nigeria. The thesis argues that though other attributes of liberal democracies are important, the environment in West Africa calls for a political system marked by guaranteed safety and security, respect for the rule of law and human rights, free and fair elections, a vibrant civil society and a system of transparency and accountability within the sub-region. This is the best way to ensure a reversal to the cycle of political instability and poverty that has characterized West Africa for decades.

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ACRONYMS

AEC	African Economic Community
AU	African Union
CBDH	Commission Beninoise des Droits de H'omme
CDD	Center for Democratic Governance
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States.
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
GACC	Ghana Anti- Corruption Coalition
GII	Ghana Integrity Initiative
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NDC	National Democratic Party
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NPP	New Patriotic Party
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
SFO	Serious Fraud Office

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNSIA	The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa
WB	World Bank
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The study of an indigenous African democracy is a very worthwhile enterprise, because it is a rich source of ideas that can inspire and inform constitutional thinkers in Africa. On that foundation of historic and ethnographical knowledge, we can build genuinely African democratic constitutions that differ from the borrowed constitutions of today-- alien constitutions people do not care about and will not defend when they are violated. (Legesse 2000, xi)

Background

Various scholars have attributed several reasons for the political turbulence and the lack of economic prosperity that has characterized West Africa despite its natural endowment of requisite resources necessary to achieve sustainable development. Though the pioneer leaders may have missed the opportunity of choosing the right developmental paradigm just after independence, the current world political order offers a fresh start especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This new opportunity, however, may become elusive unless West Africa completely sheds itself of the old mentality of blaming others for its failures and gets it act together. The sub-region needs a genuine democratic transition to begin a new era that will fully embrace liberal democracy as the engine of political emancipation and economic prosperity.

West Africa is the western most region of the continent of Africa. Geopolitically, West Africa comprises sixteen countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Mauritania. Out of these sixteen countries, nine are Francophone, five Anglophone, and two Lusophone, thus making English, French, Portuguese the official languages of member states. It is by far Africa's most populous

region with “a population around 300 million inhabitants representing 4.6% of the world population, close to 60% of the European Union and roughly equivalent to that of the United States” (www.oecd.org, 1).



Figure 1. Map of West Africa

Source: ochaonline.un.org

The economy of member states is predominantly agricultural and the major exports are crude oil, gold, diamond, bauxite, iron, coffee, timber, cotton and groundnuts. External economic investors in the sub-region are the European Union, China, the United States and Arabs of Lebanese and Syrian origin. Internal official trade between member states is low due to poor interstate infrastructures particularly road, railway and telecommunications. The different colonial histories and heritages, as well as deep-seated

distrust between the ruling élite, have always being a source friction. All the same, informal cross border trade and movement of populations are quite widespread.

The population of the sub-region is dominated by young people, most of whom lack education, technical skills and the general prerequisites to function effectively in a modern economy. There is a wide disparity in wealth distribution and income among the urban and rural population centres. Governments of member states are therefore under constant pressure to accelerate development and economic prosperity in both urban centers and rural areas. Regrettably, governments lack the resources and for other reasons to provide for these demands. As a result, this has created a process of permanent agitation for change in the sub-region that is not clearly defined beyond the demands for improvement in living standards. West Africa therefore, is a flash point of political, economic and social agitation. The outcome of this scenario is the emergence of insurgent and rebellious movements supported largely by economically marginalized youths and alienated members of the élite.

Due to these insurgent and rebellious movements, emerging governments from this scenario have tended to be autocratic, operating with repressive governmental systems, which excludes the opposition and divergent views in its day to day governance. With the exception of Mauritania, Guinea and Guinea Bissau, which were suspended following the recent coup d'états in those respective countries, all the other countries are active members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

After decades of colonial rule, the colonial powers gave way to freedom in West Africa as Ghana became the first African country, south of the Sahara, to gain independence in 1957. Guinea came next, later in 1957, Senegal in 1960 and followed

eventually by the rest of West Africa. The dream of self rule and political freedom finally became a reality. The high hopes of economic progress were however confronted with the developmental choice that such young nations had to make. Championed by the leaders of the three pioneer independent countries in the sub-region, post-colonial West African leaders, after coming to power, {Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana (1957-1966), Sekou Touré of Guinea (1958-1984) and Leopold Senghor of Senegal (1960-1980)} denounced multi-party democracy as a Western invention and an imperialist dogma. They harbored doubts and disliked capitalism, regarding it as continuation of colonialism.

In their minds the newly won independence from colonial rule presented an opportunity to totally break away from capitalism and its tenets. Soviet-styled socialism, with the state determining the economic destiny of the people, became the most acceptable way to move their countries towards economic prosperity. The justification at that time was the perception that, African socialism represented a fusion between the communal values and practices of pre-colonial African societies and Western socialist ideas. This fusion, in their mind was to create a unique democracy that differed from Western democracy.

The only leader at this time, who differed ideologically in opinion, was Cote d'Ivoire's charismatic leader Felix Houphouet Boigny who, at that period, was attributed to have remarked to socialist leaders in West Africa that, "don't make the mistake of thinking that socialism will feed the people" (Watkins 2007,1). In spite of Boigny's early involvement with socialism in his career, he was discerning enough not to be deluded by their rhetoric. Operating a capitalist economy, with the assistance of France and a single-party system, Côte d'Ivoire flourished in its first two decades of independence as a

prosperous state in sharp contrast to the failures of West African states which had chosen the socialist orientation. This was the state of affairs in West Africa when ECOWAS was formed in 1975 amidst military dictatorships and single-party rule.

Objectives of ECOWAS

The objective of ECOWAS was to promote co-operation and integration in economic, social and cultural activity, ultimately leading to the establishment of an economic and monetary union through the total integration of the national economies of member states (ECOWAS Information Manual 2007).

Since such integration policies and programs are influenced by the prevailing economic conditions in member countries, and the relevant developments on the international scene, ECOWAS took the principal provisions of the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty into account. It visualized an eventual improvement in the living standards of its peoples, maintaining and enhancing economic stability, fostering cordial relations among member states. It also aimed at contributing to the progress and development of the sub-region against the background of the threat of worsening economic conditions at the time.

The Economic Down Turn and Instability

Unfortunately, by the late 1980s, most authoritarian rulers in West Africa faced crises of legitimacy. The challenges posed by global price shocks of world commodity prices became insurmountable because of lack of economic diversity in their economies. Subsequently, by the end of the decade (1990), most of West Africa was in the grips of a sustained economic downturn (Lewis 1998, 148). Desperate to address these imbalances,

coupled with the lack of a forum to peacefully air grievances, the only option left for changing the ruling governments was through coup d'états or armed insurrections whose leaders eventually perpetuated the same ineptitude. Regrettably, the authoritarian system of governance favored the international political climate at the time, and was also supposed to be suitable for controlling the ethnic divisions in the sub-region (Mine 2008).

Subsequently, the political instability that plagued West Africa after this period as a result of the economic downturn came as no surprise as rampant coup d'états in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Benin and The Gambia became the order of the day. The degeneration of Liberia, in 1989, followed by Sierra Leone in 2000 and later Cote D'Ivoire in 2002 into civil wars eventually made the sub-region the most unstable part of Africa. With a restricted mandate that dealt only with economic matters without any consideration to political issues, ECOWAS was compelled by the unstable situation in the sub-region to change its mandate in 1990. As a result, it decided to militarily intervene in the civil war which had broken out in Liberia. ECOWAS' strategy to resolve the conflict followed two parallel but mutually interactive channels of making and enforcing peace in Liberia. The former involved negotiations and arbitration, and the latter the deployment, in August 1990, of a 3,000 strong sub-regional force called the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to supervise a cease-fire.

Forming ECOMOG

Nothing in the history of ECOWAS had prepared it for the roles of making and enforcing peace. As a regional economic organization, it therefore lacked the institutions and procedures which could provide the framework for the operation in Liberia. The initial response of ECOWAS was to appoint a Standing Mediation Committee with The

Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo as members, and Guinea and Sierra Leone as observers, with a mandate to establish the facts in the Liberian crisis. This Committee, on the advice of Nigeria, created the intervention force in August 1990 with troops mainly from Nigeria, and smaller units from The Gambia and Ghana, and from Liberia's immediate neighbors, Guinea and Sierra Leone. This set in motion the peace process whose politics and diplomacy saw a regional peacekeeping initiative involving for the first time in Africa, the deployment of a multinational intervention force by a regional organization in an intra-state conflict.

The competing interests and objectives of Nigeria, the local hegemon and the architect of the ECOMOG, and those of Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, brought to light some of the historical divisions in the sub-region. This not only impeded the effectiveness of ECOMOG operations, it also strained the cohesion of the intervention force. The conflict itself manifested the contradiction in Liberia's complex and fractious ethnic politics and tasked the resources and resilience of ECOWAS to the limit. Later in Togo on 10 December 1990, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security to endorse the formation of ECOMOG. ECOMOG since then had embarked on peace keeping operations in Liberia from 1990 to 1997, in Sierra Leone 1997 to 2000, in Guinea-Bissau in 1999 and currently still deployed in Côte d'Ivoire.

Revision of ECOWAS Protocols

In 1993, the ECOWAS protocols were revised, extending economic and political co-operation among member states. In the political sphere for instance, it provided a West African parliament, an Economic and Social Council and an ECOWAS Court of

Justice to replace the existing Tribunal and enforce Community decisions. The biggest lesson that ECOWAS learned however was the fact that economic prosperity could not thrive in an unstable environment. Hence the treaty formally assigned the Community with the additional responsibility of preventing and settling regional conflicts using early warning systems such as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (Revised ECOWAS Protocol 1999). The endorsement of this early warning mechanism was for the prevention of conflicts from degenerating into war that would necessitate subsequent expensive peace support operations. It also laid the appropriate foundation for the transition process to democracy in West Africa.

The Transition to Democracy

Although the post independence expectations of prosperity had died down due to poor political leadership, West Africa since the early 1990s, assumed a new political order with democracy spreading across the sub-region as part of the “third wave” of democracy that swept Africa. As explained by Press:

The long simmering discontent and anger with politics which boiled over in Africa at the end of the Cold War in 1989 had its toll in West Africa. Pervasive poverty and international domestic pressures for democracy set the stage for change to some degree, but mostly it was the power and idea of freedom that changed the shape of West African politics more than at any time since independence. The fever of political freedom which spread rapidly across the sub-region, prompted confrontations and other challenges to longtime authoritarian rulers. But it was ordinary people not just political opposition leaders who stood up for democracy, often against great odds, sometimes against brutal force, resulting in the persistent conflicts within the sub-region. (Press 1999, 3)

Today, most ECOWAS states have introduced political reforms and have become either democratic or in the process of becoming so. Electoral politics and constitutional changes

of government have become common as many countries are already into their second or third round of multiparty elections. Beginning from the sovereign National Conference that was convened in the Republic of Benin in the early parts of the 1990s, West African governments began, one after the other, to succumb to pressures to reform their systems of governance. In order to ensure that members of the community have individual and collective stakes, the political space was opened up to all interested players and restrictions on the media and autonomous associational life removed.

These reforms points to a new model of democracy, an emerging liberal democratic concept of governance within the sub-region. Despite these political changes and the high hopes of prosperity for the people, the extent to which countries are progressing towards the consolidation of liberal democracy remains a source of concern.

As explained by Samuel P. Huntington, a leading political scientist:

In a particular period when many countries embrace democracy-figuratively, a wave propels them forward. Some of these countries safely ride the wave to dry land and prosper as democracies. Others are sucked back into the nondemocratic sea as the wave recedes, hopefully to be pushed back towards land by the next wave some decades in future. The assumption of this assertion is that the leaders of the countries supposedly being caught in the reverse wave intended to reach the shore, but in many cases did not. However, the reality in West Africa is that most countries that fail to reach the shore are not failed democracies caught in the wave's reflux; on the contrary, they are successful semi-authoritarian states that rode the wave as far as they wanted and managed to stop. The result is that regular competitive multi party elections are held, thereby qualifying the country as a liberal democracy, yet the day to day practices of the state are marked by abuses. (Ottaway 2003, 9)

Like many prominent political analysts have recently suggested, many West Africa's new democracies could be described as illiberal.

In a modest assessment, liberal-democracy may seem to be flourishing, as human rights abuses, lack of due process and other negative practices that occurred during the

days of single party or military states are less frequent now. However, to what extent liberal democracy has been consolidated within the sub-region in the midst of the apparent inherent challenges of governance is the focus of this study. Through a comparative assessment of Benin, Ghana and Nigeria this thesis explores the prospects and challenges of governance in a liberal democratic era in West Africa. The choice of these countries is partly informed by the contrasting results achieved by their respective democratic processes despite the similarities in their political histories. Detailed reasons however will be given in later chapters.

While cautiously proposing the idea that the practice of liberal democracy within the sub-region is flourishing, it is also important to recognize the fact that governance in West Africa has also been uneven and characterized by numerous setbacks thus making the issue a genuine concern. Obviously, the contexts of electoral pluralism within which the contemporary challenges of governance are posed are different from the previous context of repressive and authoritarian rule.

Elections may now have become routine, but the danger of reducing this into cynical and costly rituals performed to satisfy the basic requirements for international legitimacy cannot be ruled out. Recent events in Mauritania, Guinea and Guinea Bissau, as already alluded to, have shown that the quest for democratization is still fragile. This crisis of democratization and the desire to sustain it in West African therefore influenced the urgency with which the ECOWAS Protocol on democracy and good governance was endorsed.

Other Stakes of the ECOWAS Protocol

Realizing that no meaningful development could take place in a conflict torn sub-region, the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance was adopted by the Heads of States and government of member states on 21 December, 2001 in Dakar, Senegal. This protocol is currently the latest and most far-reaching attempt by ECOWAS to consolidate peace, security, stability and democracy in a sub-region that has witnessed at least three violent civil wars within a decade. As noted by A. Sesay, the Protocol is vital for several reasons because it has the potential of impacting directly and indirectly on the people of ECOWAS member states, thereby promoting sub-regional peace, security, stability and economic and human development (Sesay 2004, 1-2). The Protocol is organized in three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the principles and modalities of its implementation, Chapter 2 covers sanctions and Chapter 3 relates to general and final provisions. In view of the fact that the principles in Chapter 1 emphasizes on democracy and good governance which are relevant to this study, some of its contents will be discussed according to the relevant thematic sections as set out by the protocol.

Section 1 focuses on the uniformity in the Constitution of ECOWAS member states. Thus, Article 1(a) provides for the separation of powers-the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, the empowerment and strengthening of parliaments and guarantee of parliamentary immunity. It also provides for autonomy of the judiciary in all member states. Article 1(b) stipulates that every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections, while 1(c) proclaims zero tolerance for power obtained through the use of force or power maintained through unconstitutional means. When a member state violates this core principle, the citizens reserve the right to assert their

sovereignty, using peaceful means whilst the government would be denied recognition by member states. Section I(f) touches on the sensitive issue of religion in recognition of the fact that some of the conflicts within ECOWAS member states, such as Nigeria, emanate from religious intolerance.

Section 2 deals with elections which remain a contentious issue that continues to threaten the fragile political fabric of most ECOWAS states. As observed by Ochoche, electoral violence increases the insecurity and vulnerability of the society in so many ways and invites military rule which is an assault on democracy. He goes on to explain that military rule itself often finds its alibi in the political instability, destruction and insecurity generated by the collective rejection of electoral result (Ochoche 1997, 20). Article 3 of section 2 stipulates that the bodies responsible for organizing the elections shall be independent or neutral and shall have the confidence of all political actors (ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance 2001, 2). It endorses the fact that the first crucial step towards a free and fair election is a truly independent and non-partisan electoral body. Article 2 (3) enjoined member states to: “Take all measures to ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for in elections, to participate in the formulation of government policies and perform public functions at all levels of government” (ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance 2001, 2). The significance of these articles lies in the fact that the majority of ECOWAS member states are yet to institutionalize the orderly transfer of political power.

Section 4 dwells on the role of the Armed Forces, the Police and Security Forces in a democratic era. These groups form a very important aspect of the society in West Africa, unfortunately their role in national politics has been meddlesome and

retrogressive. It is generally accepted that much of the political instability witnessed in the sub-region is traceable to the intervention of the armed forces in political governance, as exemplified in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Hence the need for these coercive instruments of state must to remain apolitical. Article 19 (1) states thus: The armed forces and police shall be non-partisan and shall remain loyal to the nation. Similarly, Article 20(1) reads that the armed forces, police and other security agencies shall be under the authority of legally constituted civilian authorities. This article emphasizes the need to subordinate the armed forces and other security agencies to civil authority.

Section 5, which deals with poverty alleviation and promotion of social dialogue, tends to acknowledge that economic deprivation and marginalization, real or imaginary, have been at the centre of some of the most violent conflicts in West Africa. Article 27 enjoins member states to fight poverty effectively in their respective countries and within the community, by among other things, creating an environment conducive to private investment and the development of a dynamic and competitive private sector. This article therefore acknowledges the significance of the private sector in promoting development that would lead to improved living standards of people in West Africa.

Section 6 dwells on education, culture and religion. Tolerance of religious differences has historically been quite problematic in West Africa, especially in Nigeria. In reference to Nigeria, Momoh has observed that, "if anything will split this country irretrievably, it is religion. Why, because we do not understand it. We adherents of all colors of religious rainbow pour into the streets at any and every opportunity and want to kill, or even to die, supposedly in the name of God" (Momoh 2003, 59).

Section 7 addresses the issue of rule of law, human rights and good governance. In Article 32, member states agree that good governance and press freedom are essential for preserving social justice, preventing conflict, guaranteeing political stability and for strengthening democracy. There have been massive violations of the rule of law and gross violation of human rights in some ECOWAS states which has resulted in political instability and in some extreme cases, civil war. Such cases as Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire easily come to mind.

Section 8 deals with women, children and the youth. Member states in Article 40 agree that the development and promotion of the welfare of women are essential factors for development, progress and peace in the society. Consequently they undertake to eliminate all forms of discrimination, harmful and degrading practices against women. This article aims at bringing gender issues to the fore front, against the backdrop of unwholesome practices against womanhood. It is in line with this that Article 41 was promulgated in order to address issues of children access to basic education, child trafficking, prostitution and child labor.

There is no doubt that the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol would enhance democracy and good governance. It is therefore a road map to democracy and good governance. By endorsing this document, democracy seems to have scored a historic victory over socialism and other forms of governance in West Africa. However, it still remains unclear whether the current form of democracy can be regarded as liberal democracy. With the variations of democracy across the sub-region, the apparent difficulty lies in the ability to adequately differentiate between democracy and liberal democracy.

The Concept of Democracy

The word democracy derives its origin from the Greek word “Demokratia,” formed by combining the two words demos meaning people, and kratos, meaning rule (Walter 1998, 5). Lincoln saw democracy as “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Walter 1998, 5). In this case, democracy is a participatory form of governance where the governed are involved in the decision-making process. Over the years, just as society and politics got transformed, many analysts and scholars have also advanced more elaborate definitions of the concept of democratic governance. For instance, Schumpeter defines it as “a political method, that is to say, a certain type of institutional arrangement, for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decisions. A method, by which the individual, requires power, to participate in decisions by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Schumpeter 1942, 46). From Schumpeter’s definition, certain interrelated elements are discernible.

The first element involves competitive multi-party politics pursued in the context of periodic elections that are free and fair, conducted under universal adult suffrage, and whose results, according to Przeworski, are uncertain and indeterminate beforehand (Przeworski 1995, 10). Other components of the definition include parliamentary or legislative oversight, either under a parliamentary or presidential government and the guaranteed protection and enforcement of civil and political liberties, including the customary human rights, even against government (Tunji, Adele and Sam 1993, 11). Schumpeter’s assertion on “competitive struggle” is supported by Schattschneider who states that democracy connotes: a competitive political system in which competing

leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process (Schattschneider 1975, 141-142).

In this interpretation of democracy, Schattschneider views it less as an institutional arrangement, but more in terms of a political culture involving several basic and constituent elements (Schattschneider 1975, 141-142). The three most important elements, according to Dahl are: political equity by which every citizen is guaranteed equal right to participate in decision-making. The second is popular sovereignty by which those who hold public office are required to always obey the will of the citizenry. Finally, popular consultation and majority rule which imply that every member of the electorate has a right to participate in public dialogue but that the majority must always have the final say (Dahl 1971, 23).

Lijphart observed that democracy is a concept that virtually defies definitions (Lijphart 1984, 2). Even the fascists and the Nazis have claimed that their dictatorship embodied organic or true democracy. Also, North Korea, a communist totalitarian regime, embraces what it calls democracy. This suggests that democracy depends on who is defining it. According to Gitonga, democracy is first and foremost an idea, an abstract concept, a hypothetical reality or state of affairs conceived of in the mind of the people. It is an intellectual creation, a mentally visualized reality postulated as a model of the possible, the desirable in matters of social co-existence and governance of the people in society (Gitonga 2004, 7).

There are three basic types of democracies namely; direct, representative and constitutional. To Shafritz, direct democracy is any governing system in which decisions are made directly by the people, as opposed to being made by elected representatives

(Shafritz 1998, 162). The ancient Greek city states are good examples of direct democracy. He further defines a representative democracy as a form of governance in which the citizens rule through representatives who are periodically elected in order to keep them accountable (Shafritz 1998, 164). The US and Nigeria as republics are forms of representative democracy. Shafritz also sees a constitutional democracy as any system of democratic governance that places formal limits, by means of a constitution, on what governments can do (Shafritz 1998, 163). Thus the US has a representative constitutional democracy.

While there is no single ideal model, democracies have common features. Its essential characteristics are generally considered to include:

Accountability of government and control over government decisions and policy. Constitutionally, it is vested in elected representatives, chosen in frequent and fair elections. All adults have the rights to form associations, vote and be voted for at elections. Citizens have the right to sources of information and express themselves on issues. In order for these basic elements of democratic culture to be upheld in the daily political life of a country or community, its citizens must enjoy certain rights and freedoms, notably freedom to form and join any lawful organization of their choice, freedom of expression, and the sustenance of institutions for ensuring that government policy is a true reflection of public preferences. (Foreign and Commonwealth Office for Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights Report 2006, 1)

In this thesis, the author defines democracy as a rule by the people's representatives, whose political party wins majority votes after competing with other parties in a free and fair election for the popular votes. It also protects the rights of the minority which are recognized and protected within the tenets of the rule of law, and at the same time ensures political and social pluralism, equal citizen rights, civil and political liberties, a free society, a vibrant civil society and a free market economy.

Liberal Democracy Defined

Along the same line of thought, liberal democracy is a form of representative democracy where elected representatives that hold the decision power are moderated by a constitution that emphasizes protecting individual liberties and the rights of minorities in society, such as freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of religion, the right to private property and privacy, as well as equality before the law and due process under the rule of law, and many more (www.wisegeek.com). Liberal democracies also tend to be characterized by tolerance and pluralism. Such tolerance and pluralism accommodates widely differing social and political views, where even those viewed as extreme, are permitted to co-exist and compete for political power on a democratic basis. Liberal democracies periodically hold elections where groups with differing political views have the opportunity to attain political power. Another definition of liberal democracy is:

A system of governing a country in which the citizens of the country have total freedom and equality. The legislature, executive and the judiciary are kept separate to avoid power resting in one place. Its features include free and fair elections and a choice of political parties with different views, opinions and policies. A secret ballot must be held so that the voter does not feel pressured into casting a vote for a political party that they do not want to. The government and parliament must be elected by and accountable to the voters. The elections must be regular. The government must call referendums on important issues. Finally, the outcome of the elections must be respected thus allowing power to change according to public demand. Another feature of a liberal democracy is a state where citizens enjoy a high degree of civil liberties, like freedom of speech, assembly, movement, property, and conscience. (www.directes.com 2008, 1)

In West Africa, it is not enough for liberal democracy to thrive simply by having regular elections amongst only a couple of viable parties.

As such, the working definition of liberal democracy in this thesis is one that ensures free and fair elections competed by many political parties, and such election are held regularly and all citizens (usually 18 years or older) are allowed to vote and core

values such as the separation of powers, commitment to fundamental human rights, equality, rule of law, individual freedom, private property and a free market system and practiced. Nonetheless, in West Africa the debate on liberal democracy cannot be fully dealt with, without discussing the issue of good governance within ECOWAS.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defines governance as “The exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences” (UN Policy Document on Governance for Sustainable Human Development, 1997). But in young democracies, such as exist in West Africa, the emphasis must be on good governance which the World Bank defines as “a political system epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law (World Bank Report The World Bank’s Experience in Governance 1994).

To say that good governance has a direct correlation with economic prosperity in West Africa is stating the obvious. Recent empirical analysis suggests a positive correlation between democratic governance and the levels of economic prosperity in society. Indeed, majority of political analysts agree that good governance and its aspects of democratic consolidation is an important pillar for development. Consequently, the new maxim for Africa in general, and West Africa in particular, in the twenty-first century should be no democracy, no development (Hope 2003, 3).

This immediately poses a challenge for ECOWAS countries as to how successfully they can transition from the era of dictatorship and authoritarianism and fully embrace the tenets of good governance within a liberal democratic era. In this regard countries within the sub-region would have to “begin implementing a full range of actions aimed at creating more open, participatory societies, and promoting greater accountability and transparency in public affairs” (Hope 2003, 6).

Problem Statement

There have been several false starts in West Africa since the 1960s, when most countries in the sub-region achieved independence from colonial rule. Decades later the sub-region still appears chaotic and lacking any consistently democratic political future. After experimenting with socialism, West African countries now strongly advocate political pluralism through liberal democracy. Though all member states, except Mauritania, Guinea and Guinea Bissau at the moment, have democratically elected governments in place, it is difficult to say whether governance in the sub-region is in line with liberal democracy or governments are only paying lip service to its tenets. This makes the problems of governance and political instability in West Africa states an arguable issue.

It is encouraging that pro-democracy forces in West Africa are unrelenting in their push for full-fledged democratic transformation. All the same, it is evident that reconstituting the political order in West Africa needs to be better understood in its own right. This obviously cannot be achieved without advocating the proper roles for citizens within their political system, their relationship to the state and understanding the various contradictions between traditional and current liberal-democratic concepts in the sub-

region. By advocating for a liberal democratic system of governance, popular democratic movements in West Africa may have already given the correct verdict. Nevertheless, the correct route for full implementation is yet to be found.

Proposed Research Question

What essential elements of liberal democracy can be better applied to West Africa's forms of governance to result in a more effective liberal democratic form of governance?

Secondary Questions

1. What are the distinctions between liberal democracy in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa countries?
2. What should be the basic elements of good governance in West Africa, as opposed to personal leadership, in developing liberal democracies in West Africa?
3. What is the relationship between good governance and democracy in West Africa?
4. How can a realistic liberal democracy reshape governance and the economies in West Africa?

Significance

For a long time, true democracy had remained a foreign concept to West Africans. Just like all other areas in Africa, the sub-region is blessed with almost all the ingredients necessary to create an economically viable society. However, the absence of good governance has contributed significantly to foster policies that allow the suppression of human development in the sub-region. The current quasi-liberal democracies in West

Africa, though represent significant improvements over their predecessors and appear to provide an increasing measure of stability, this superficial stability is masked by a host of problems and unsatisfied demands that needs to be dealt with lest they lead to future crises.

Despite the growing importance of sustaining democracy in West Africa, the performance of politicians in the area of governance has only received little attention. This thesis would not only assist policy makers in the ECOWAS Secretariat in fashioning out, monitoring and reviewing policies on democracy and good governance in West Africa, but could also augment the existing body of knowledge on the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in particular. Additionally, the study could be useful to the member states of ECOWAS in the formulation of policies on democracy and good governance in their respective countries and could stimulate further research and interest on the subject.

Assumptions

This thesis is based on three underlying assumptions. First of all though the sub-region will continue to embrace liberal democracy as the preferred concept of governance, governments in power will continue to adapt new ways of manipulating the electoral process in order to stay in power.

Another assumption is that, the expulsion of countries whose military overthrow constitutionally elected governments in coup d'états from ECOWAS is not a strong deterrent for member states. Therefore, unless ECOWAS is willing to forcibly oust such military leaders, the canker of coup d'états will continue to resurface in the sub-region.

Lastly, West Africa does not only lack the appropriate structures to support the democratic transition, it also does not have the expertise to deal with the numerous problems associated with the process. It will therefore still depend on international donors as well as international experts on democracy and good governance to assist her to formulate, implement and monitor the democratic transition in the sub-region.

Limitations

The limitation of this research is the inability to conduct interviews with knowledgeable West Africans on the subject matter from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Delimitations

The challenges of solving governance problems within a liberal democratic framework in the entire West African sub-region are beyond the scope of this thesis. The study will therefore be based on only the political transitions in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal from the period 1990 to 2007.

Summary and Conclusion of Chapter 1

West Africa may have missed the opportunity of choosing the best developmental paradigm just after independence. However the current world political order offers a fresh start. The desire in the sub-region for a genuine democratic transition with liberal democracy as the engine of political emancipation and economic prosperity is more dominant than ever.

Regrettably, governments lack the requisite resources to provide for these demands. As a result, this has created a process of permanent agitation for change in the

sub-region, making it a flash point of political, economic and social agitation. Emerging governments from this scenario have therefore tended to be autocratic and repressive.

Today, most ECOWAS states have introduced political reforms and have become either democratic or in the process of becoming so. Electoral politics and constitutional changes of government are more common as many countries are already into their second or third round of multiparty elections. These reforms points to a new model of democracy, an emerging liberal democratic concept of governance within the sub-region.

Despite these political changes and the high hopes of prosperity for the people, the extent to which countries are progressing towards the consolidation of liberal democracy remains a source of concern. The immediate challenge posed within West Africa therefore is how successfully member states can transition from the era of dictatorship or authoritarianism and fully embrace the tenets of good governance within a liberal democratic era by implementing a full range of actions aimed at creating more open, participatory societies, and promoting greater accountability and transparency in public affairs. The review of various relevant literatures on the prospects and challenges of liberal democracy in West Africa therefore provide an appropriate starting point for a thorough and in-depth scrutiny of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of literature on liberal democracy in West Africa is growing rapidly with varying opinions. This chapter reviews literature that is relevant to the thesis with emphasis on the secondary questions. The research and literature review included relevant publications, journals, reports and case studies by international scholars and practitioners focused on the consolidation of democracy and good governance in Africa in general and West Africa in particular. However, the general trend indicates a strong advocacy for the prospects of liberal democracy in the sub-region despite a few pessimists.

Distinctions between Liberal Democracy in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa Countries

John F. Clark and David E. Gardiner in the book, *The Political Reform in Francophone Africa*, trace the origins and evolution of political reforms movements in several Francophone African states. It establishes the fact that, after France granted independence to its colonies in Africa, it showed no consistent interest in the promotion of democratic governance. The book rightly notes that due to this inconsistencies, the influence of France often swung between endorsement of single party politics in the early 1990's, to the imposition of multiparty democracy through provision of aid, and latter to a policy of non-interference in the political affairs of its former colonies. The observation by the book that sovereign national conferences became the critical aspect of the political reform in Francophone states is further buttressed by the lead role played by Benin in Francophone's desire to find their own political rhythm for reform and political change.

In their view therefore, the distinctiveness of liberal democracy in Francophone West Africa, is based on the distinct political culture France bequeathed to its former colonies and its continuing influence in the reform process.

In an article entitled *The National Conference Phenomenon in Francophone Africa* published on February 19, 1990, authored by Pearl T. Robinson who is a world renowned political analyst from the Tufts University, he argues that the peculiarity of liberal democracy in Francophone West Africa stems from the novelty of the national conference concept held in Benin. At this national conference, delegates adopted plans for the embracing multiparty elections which eventually led to the election of Nicephore Soglo as Prime Minister, over the incumbent General Mathieu Kerekou. The author notes that instantly the story of Benin was held up as a model of political reforms by most Francophone West African countries. Between March 1990 and August 1991, the rulers of Mali, Togo, Niger, Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso and other African Francophone countries mobilized to press their demands for national conferences. In his view, although the innovational impetus rests squarely with the Beninese, the notion of a sovereign national conference as an instrument for regime change is grounded in Jean Jacques Rousseau's ideas about popular sovereignty and the right of the people to renegotiate the social contract. He further notes that the theory was practiced during the French Revolution in the Estates-General of 1789.

The ubiquity of demands for convening a sovereign national conference as a transition mechanism in Francophone West Africa according to Robinson indicates the continuing political and cultural influence of that colonial heritage. He asserts that such conferences in the former French colonies in West Africa have been central to the process

of regime change and democratic transition. The author concludes that the outcomes of the sovereign national conference as a strategy for democratization in Francophone West African countries have however varied. According to him, in some cases the incumbents have retained control by manipulating the conference proceedings or by rigging multiparty elections and in other cases the opposition prevailed at least in the short run.

Jibrin Ibrahim, a research fellow writing in a CODESRIA monograph series on the topic Democratic Transition in Anglophone West Africa, describes the significant characteristics of political life in Anglophone West Africa as a situation where military regimes have turn democratization and elections into instruments for perpetuating their rule. As a result he attributes the difficulties of current political reforms to the influence the military has had in shaping and misshaping political systems throughout the sub-region. The basic outcome of militarism in Anglophone states, according to him, has contributed to the decomposition of state and society, centralization of power and authoritarianism. Even though political actors in civil society have become more active, he believes that those in control of state power are engaged in desperate efforts to rein in and control these actors.

Claude Ake in his book, *Democratic Transformations in Anglophone West Africa* also highlights the type of democracy that was envisaged by the former British colonies in West Africa. He argues that after independence Anglophone states in West Africa believed that a unique African democracy is not something which would emerge from a rational blueprint. According to him it would emerge from the practical experience and improvisation in a cause of a hard struggle. He asserts that the rational blueprint that Anglophone West African countries had in mind was the liberal multi-party democracy in

which political participation stemmed from the periodic elections with many parties contesting for the votes cast on individual basis. In his view, Anglophone West Africa's experimentations with democracy and other forms of political systems, such as Marxism, have created a situation where it is impossible to decide the type of democracies in operation in those countries. He rightly observes that terms such as social democracy are gradually gaining grounds in Anglophone West Africa to the detriment of the tenets of liberal democracy.

Marina Ottaway, a senior associate and co-director of the Democracy and Rule of Law project at the Carnegie Endowment in contrast observe in her book *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* that no distinction exist in the democracies practiced by both Anglophone and Francophone West African States. She therefore claims that governments from third world countries like in West Africa are not practicing liberal democracy. Describing the majority of governments in West Africa as semi-authoritarian regimes she makes the point that such regimes only pay lip service to the tenets of liberal democracy. According to her, incumbent governments stand no risk of losing elections not because they are popular, but rather in her view, they have learned to play the game of democracy and still retain power against the will of the people.

The Basic Elements of Good Governance as Against Personal Leadership in Liberal Democracies in West Africa

In a "Foreign Affairs" article titled Strengthening African Leadership, published by Council of Foreign Relations in 2004, the author Robert I. Rotberg, Director of the Program on Intrastate Conflict at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and President of the World Peace Foundation, makes the contention that

poor leadership has been the depressing norm in Africa for decades. According to the author, by some measures, 90 percent of West African nations have experienced despotic rule in the last three decades. Such leaders use power as an end in itself, rather than for the public good, always shifting blame for their countries' distress. In his view, under the stewardship of these leaders, infrastructure in West African countries has fallen into disrepair, currencies have depreciated, and real prices have inflated dramatically, while job availability, health care, education standards, and life expectancy have declined. As a result, ordinary life has become stressed, general security has deteriorated, crime and corruption have increased, much-needed public funds have flowed into hidden bank accounts, while officially sanctioned ethnic discrimination sometimes resulting in civil war has become prevalent.

The author portrays bad governance exhibited by authoritarian leaders in sharp contrast to a few but striking examples of effective African leadership in recent decades. Rotberg extols the personal leadership qualities displayed by such leaders, attributing it to their strength of character, their adherence to the principles of participatory democracy and good governance, and their ability to overcome deep-rooted challenges. He cites the government of Mozambique for example, which brought about economic growth rates of more than ten percent between 1996 and 2003, following the economic catastrophe wrought by that country's civil war from 1977 to 1992.

In Kenya, President Mwai Kibaki strengthened civil society, invested in education, and removed barriers to economic entrepreneurship instated during the repressive rule of Daniel Arap Moi. The best example of good leadership in Africa however, is Botswana. According to Rotberg, long before diamonds were discovered in

Botswana, this former desert protectorate, which was neglected by the British under colonialism, demonstrated a knack for good governance through participatory democracy, integrity, tolerance, entrepreneurship, and the rule of law. The country has remained democratic in spirit, as well as form, continuously since its independence in 1966. It has also defended human rights, encouraged civil liberties, and actively promoted its citizens' social and economic development.

Relationship Between Democracy and Good Governance in West Africa

In the book, *Nigeria in The Twenty-First Century: Strategies for Political Stability and Peaceful Co-Existence* edited by E. Ike Udogu, the author argues that there is an interlacing relation between democracy and good governance in West Africa. Stating a conceptual definition of good governance, he concedes that despite the fact that most members of the informed public in West Africa accept the idea that good governance is good for democracy, there is still an outstanding issue. He claims that the outstanding issue is the difficulty states in the sub-region have in effectively implementing good governance regimes in a political environment that has long suffered from military autocracy and authoritarianism. Summarizing the tenets of good governance that enable viable liberal democracy in West Africa, he singles out the rule of law, transparency in governance and accountability as the most critical tenets that needs special attention in the sub-region. In his view, in order to achieve any meaningful level of good governance in the sub-region, governments must make a concerted effort of institutionalizing those three critical element of good governance mentioned earlier.

In a paper presented March 1, 2005 on the topic *Democracy, Development and Good Governance: The Inseparable Links* at the maiden lecture on Annual Democracy and Governance organized by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Professor Larry Diamond, alluded to the growing body of empirical evidence and statistical research within Africa which demonstrates the inseparable link between democracy and good governance. According to him, only two African countries, Botswana and Mauritius, have achieved a relatively good development performance in the past three decades. Not coincidentally, these are the only two African countries that have been continuously democratic since independence, and have fairly institutionalized liberal democracy. Diamond concedes that it might be too general to make a case for the economic benefits of democracy by comparing only two small countries with the rest in Africa. Yet, the data not only show that Botswana and Mauritius have had dramatically better development performance than the rest, they also suggest that the African countries that democratized during the 1990s made some development progress during the decade while the semi-democracies and autocracies performed much more poorly.

In the book, *Good Governance Issues and Sustainable Development: The Indian Ocean Region*, edited by Robin Ghosh, Rony Gabbay and Abu Saddique, the author Agostinho Zacarias argues that good governance without a good state is impossible. According to him good governance is premised on understanding of the needs of, and sense of justice for the people, things which under the current international system are to be granted by a legitimate state. But surprisingly, in his view, legitimate states are yet to be created in Africa. His contention is that the nature of colonialization that African states

was subjected to has not allowed the assimilation of the basic concepts underpinning modern political thought on liberal democracy.

Therefore in his analysis, the Western agenda for good governance in Africa is thus doomed to fail because it takes an ethnocentric view of legitimacy, human rights and democracy which has tended to create more problems than it has solved. He further explains that the difficulties facing African states in reconciling the priorities for maintaining the international system is one factor responsible for undermining the process of building viable liberal democracies. According to him democracy is often used as a euphemism for liberal democracy. Unfortunately, Africa has found Western conceptions of liberal democracies different and irrelevant from its conceptions and priorities on human rights in their domestic arena.

Can Liberal Democracy Reshape Governance and the Economies in West Africa?

In a report on *The UNECA and Good Governance In Africa* presented by Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr. Director, Development Management Division United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in 2003, Hope argues that good governance, in all its facets, has been demonstrated to be positively correlated with the achievement of better growth rates, and particularly through the building of institutions that promote the economic and social development of countries, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. According to the report, some analysts have successfully argued that good governance, and particularly its aspects of democratic consolidation, is a sine qua non for development. Similarly, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is attributed in the report to have said that “good

governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development in Africa.”

On March 1, 2005, Professor Larry Diamond in the same paper on *Democracy, Development and Good Governance: The Inseparable Links* as mentioned earlier, conceptualized that democracy and good governance promote economic development. Real democracy, according to him, is competitive, open, participatory, and responsive and provides a means for citizens to monitor and evaluate the performance of government and to remove officials and representatives who do not serve the public interest.

He asserted that by generating and defending a broad commitment to the public welfare, a high-quality democracy with good governance or what he called liberal democracy increases the likelihood that public resources will be used to generate public goods that stimulate investment and commerce and raise the quality of life. A manifest commitment to the public welfare on the part of government also breeds a civic spirit in society, including a willingness to pay taxes and obey the law. Ordinary citizens will sacrifice immediate advantages for the longer-term common good only when they believe that their fellow citizens will do so as well. When government itself is transparent and disciplined in its commitment to the public good, it provides credible signals to the rest of society about what types of behaviors can be expected. More capable and knowledgeable government also generates the capacity to enforce the law, mediate disputes, keep order, collect taxes, promote trade, maintain fiscal stability, attract investment, and so foster economic growth.

Diamond postulates that in defending human rights and property rights, in promoting equal access to opportunity based on talent and effort rather than power, and

in providing a fair means for the resolution of disputes, the rule of law generates an enabling environment for economic growth. In his opinion, incorporating groups that historically have been confined to the margins of society, good governance mitigates social conflict and harnesses the full range of talent and resources in the society. In fostering the accumulation of social capital, good governance cultivates trust, cooperation, compliance with the law, and confidence in the future. Social and political confidence also breeds economic confidence, and a willingness to invest for the long run.

The *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Volume 3, and No.1: 29-62 on *Democracy, Good Governance, and Economic Development*, by Shalendra D. Sharma, also provides a framework for analyzing how liberal democracy is able to reshape the governance and economies of countries. The Journal acknowledges that there are extensive econometric studies that show strong correlation between long-term economic performance and good governance. In other words, the quality of governance fundamentally determines long-run developmental outcomes. The author conclude that good governance is not only critical to development but also it is the most important factor in determining whether a country has the capacity to use resources effectively to promote economic growth and reduce poverty.

Similarly, Roll and Talbott, in a book, *Political Freedom, Economic Liberty and Prosperity* estimate that governmental institutions and policies explain most of the variation across nations in terms of economic development with liberal democracy and good governance which secures property rights, business transparency, political rights, civil liberties, and stable rule of law to be significant factors accounting for developmental success. According to the Journal, the importance of good governance has now become an article of faith where multilateral organizations, donors, and lenders

increasingly based their aid and loans on the condition that policies which ensure good governance are adopted. Since creating the political and social framework conducive to economic growth is often the greatest challenge many countries face, the Journal also address the types of policies and institutions which have the most positive and measurable effects on improving governance.

In the authors' estimation, the term governance encompasses all aspects of the way a country is governed. Good governance has several characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable, and inclusive and follows the rule of law. At a minimum, good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially by an independent judiciary and its decisions and enforcement are transparent or carried out in a manner that follows established rules and regulations. Since accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law, accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions, but also private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Moreover, given that a society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it, good governance requires that institutions serve all stakeholders fairly.

Also in the book *Inequality, Democracy, and Persistence: Is there a Political Kuznets Curve*, by Alberto Chong, he argues that not only are political institutions necessary for economic development and more likely to exist and function effectively under democratic rule, but also their adaptive efficiencies are best sustained in democracies because institution building to promote good governance and economic

development is conterminous with democracy. The author goes on to say that it is no accident that countries that have reached the highest level of economic performance across generations are all stable democracies. In fact, one of the most robust findings of some two decades of research on democratization is that durable democracy is strongly correlated with economic development, albeit, as Chong points out, there is some evidence in which the immediate effect of democracy is to exacerbate inequality, while the long-run effect is to diminish it.

Governance Indicators and Issues

The *World Bank's Governance Indicators* (WGI) assesses individual governance indicators for 212 countries worldwide, over the period 1996–2007. The assessment covers the under listed six areas of governance and serves as an invaluable tool for policy makers as well as researchers.

1. Voice and Accountability
2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence
3. Government Effectiveness
4. Regulatory Quality
5. Rule of Law
6. Control of Corruption

These indicators combine the views of a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. The individual data sources underlying the aggregate indicators are compiled from a diverse variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

Most importantly, they are critical for monitoring governance and the quality of state action and growth. The WGI can be used as a credible basis for comparison in any research on assessing liberal democratic governance.

Another research institution in the field of governance is the *Ibrahim Index of African Governance*. This is a comprehensive ranking of sub-Saharan African nations according to governance quality. The Ibrahim Index assesses national governance against 57 criteria which are further grouped under five over-arching categories that serve as a cornerstone of government's obligations to its citizens. These five criteria are;

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

The Ibrahim Index is a progressive and responsive tool that is designed to accommodate feedback and critiques from stakeholders, as well as changes in the governance context in sub-Saharan Africa.

It was created in recognition of the need for a comprehensive and quantifiable method of measuring governance quality in sub-Saharan Africa, and is aimed to:

1. Provide a tool for civil society and citizens to hold governments to account

2. Stimulate debate on governance, in particular by providing information about leadership performance
3. Provide a diagnostic framework to assess governance in sub-Saharan Africa

Unlike others research institutions, the Ibrahim Index is not based exclusively on perceptions or the judgments of experts. Instead, it represents a methodological departure from other attempts to measure governance, especially for Africa. Thus, the Ibrahim Index provides more than single indicator assessments of the performance of African countries, thus making it difficult for governments to ignore failures, and at the same time empowering reformers to persuasively articulate the need for change.

Summary and Conclusion of Chapter 2

The review of the literature in this chapter has established a list of references and data that serves as the building blocks for this thesis. This list reference material includes books, publications, journals and internet sources.

The literature reviewed on the distinction in the liberal democracies in both Francophone and Anglophone West Africa countries is inconclusive. However one converging area is the fact that the distinct political cultures bequeathed by Britain and France to its former colonies continues to influence the democratic reform process.

The basic elements of good governance as against personal leadership in liberal democracies West Africa is well articulated in the NEPAD framework document. This document amongst others impresses upon African leaders to recognize the salient importance of good governance for achieving sustainable development in Africa, setting

out principles pertaining to the strengthening of liberal democracy and political governance as well as economic and corporate governance.

There is no doubt that there is an interlacing relation between democracy and good governance in West Africa. The outstanding issue is the difficulty states in the sub-region have in effectively implementing good governance regimes in a political environment that has long suffered from military autocracy and authoritarianism.

The next chapter evaluates the methodology employed to evaluate the extent at which liberal democracy has been consolidated in West Africa. The general trend however indicates a strong advocacy for liberal democracy in West Africa. What remains to be address is how to entrench and consolidate the gains made so far.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the design method used during the conduct of the research into this topic. The methodology used is the qualitative method using case studies. By using both primary and secondary sources of data and information, the thesis evaluates the prospects and challenges of liberal democracy in West Africa. As put forward in a study by Anne-Marie Ambert et al., qualitative methods trade comparative objective studies of a broad range of subjects for depth, to facilitate understanding on a more finite sampling. It is centered on “how and why people behave, think, and make meaning, rather than focusing on what people do or believe on a large scale.” Another benefit, according to Ambert, is that qualitative research enables the researcher to analyze data from the macro to the micro level without risking analytical integrity by comparing the proverbial apples to oranges (Ambert 1998, 880).

The congruence method, which is a subset of qualitative analysis, allows for contested data to be analyzed and compared within each individual case study. By doing so it allows a researcher to extract the impact of the various relational characteristics without necessarily finding multiple case studies that are compared on an even plane in order to objectively measure the accuracy of the hypothesis. The congruence method tests a hypothesis’s ability to predict “whether the variables vary in the expected directions, to the expected magnitude, along the expected dimensions, or whether there is still unexplained variance in one or more dimensions” (George 2001, 181-183). It therefore facilitates the formulation of an initial hypothesis on a subjective topic for future confirmation and testing as data becomes available. With the main thesis being “The

Challenges and Projects of Liberal Democracy in West Africa”, the next step which entails transforming the hypothesis into a theory, according to the scientific method, involves the application of five selected variables of liberal democracy to the case studies chosen in order to confirm or refute the hypothesis or to make necessary modifications.

Variables Selection and Explanation

The variables were identified after a thorough examination of available background materials on the so called “third wave” of the democratization process in West Africa. To capture the quality of services expected to be provided to citizens by liberal democratic governments in West Africa, the five variables selected, are; safety and security, strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights, promoting more genuine and competitive elections and political processes, increased development of a politically active civil society and more transparent and accountable governance. By using a subjective ranking criterion in a matrix form, the study refers to already prepared data by renowned research institutions on democracy such the MO Ibrahim’s Index, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Country Watch reports as well as UNDP reports to assess how the selected countries will fare. In particular, the assessments from the MO Ibrahim’s Index for applicable variables will largely influence marks each country score. The basis for validation of the thesis analysis will be to directly compare this study to the assessment of the World Bank’s (WB) Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI).

Subsequent analysis of each country includes an overview, which provides historical background and a brief description of major political developments in that country. Later sections then summarize the current state of each of the selected variables

and assign each variable for each country with a numerical rating. A closer look at each variable and why it was selected is briefly explained next.

Safety and Security

West Africa is among one of the most unstable regions in Africa. In the last decade, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Senegal have been embroiled in an interconnected web of conflicts that have seen refugees, rebels and small arms spill across the existing porous borders (Aponga-Yella 2005, 1). Additionally, coup d'états are common occurrences and so is violent crime. Despite these setbacks, some successes have been achieved in the area of democratization. But without safety and security and good governance, the consolidation of democracy is impossible. Safety and security in the sub-region is judged by the prevalence of common violent crimes, attacks on civilians that have political undertones and the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means. Such threats impede the ability to govern, and they also undermine peaceful changes of government. Safety and security is measured on a scale of 1 to 4, with the higher scores indicating better governance and lower scores indicating poorer governance in the countries observed.

Rule of Law and Human Rights

Changes in human rights environments in West Africa over the past decade have been facilitated by political transformations: the rise of mass movements and revolts driven by democratic ideals, as well as mass murder and poverty perpetuated by despotic and desperate regimes. To make sense of the state of human rights in this sub-region

there is the need to acknowledge its triumphs and tragedies, its uneven developments and the obvious complex demands that are associated to it. This makes democratic and human rights issues products of social struggles.

Against the background of West Africa's recent political history, respect for human rights deserves all the urgency that it can be given. Ethnic minorities, women and children have borne the brunt of conflicts within the sub-region, but the most significant violations of human rights in Africa tend to be related to the exercise of political rights, especially dissent and freedom of association. Criticism of government actions and policies is often seen as a challenge to existing authority. Open disagreement with government on key issues of governance is perceived as unpatriotic, treasonous and is often violently suppressed. While many West African countries have overwhelmingly subscribed to most international and regional human rights norms and standards, ratified numerous major human rights treaties and enshrined these norms and standards in their constitutions and national legislations, a significant gap remains in their realization.

On the rule of law, though it is generally respected in most countries in the sub-region, doubts continue to exist regarding the level of commitment of government agencies in respecting and implementing the rule of law. On the whole, one may be tempted to say that at present, governments in the sub-region do not systematically violate the fundamental freedoms of the people as has occurred in the past; rather most violations are the result of an administrative dysfunction involving negligence, particularly with the law enforcement agencies. The rating of this characteristic is based on the protection countries provide for each individual citizen and for the vulnerable and

disadvantaged groups. A maximum score of 4 is awarded to countries with relatively exemplary human rights and rule of law credentials and a score of 1 to the worst.

Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections

Elections and democracy have become virtually synonymous in Africa's political thought and analysis. Therefore the most influential formulations of democracy emphasize the opportunities for the electorate to choose periodically among the elites competing for political power. However the emphasizes on elections has made some incumbent governments in West Africa unwilling to relinquish power by extending their stay through manipulating and rigging elections in order to stay in power. Ranking each case according to this characteristic requires the assessment of this criterion based on whether official international observer missions judged the results of the elections in those countries to be "free and fair," and whether or not the elections were contested by the main opposition actors. Additionally, it also gives an indication of how often power shift from the incumbent to the opposition in elections in those countries. The highest mark of 4 is awarded to a country which has consistently held free and fair elections and the opposition has had the chance of winning power in an election. A score of 1 represent a country with serious deficiencies in their electoral process and therefore does not meet the international standards of election credibility.

Promoting a Vibrant Civil Society

The idea of a vibrant civil society is central in any discussion involving democracy. Alluding to the importance of civil society in a democracy, Woods states that: "The emergence of civil society does not guarantee the development of democracy;

however, it is highly unlikely that a viable democracy can survive without a vibrant civil society” (Woods 1992, 94). The revival of civil societies in West Africa following years of neglect coincided with the renewal of political demands of the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

However, current perceptions regarding the performance of civil societies in the sub-region indicate a struggle between them and their governments. This reinforces the fact that in West Africa, the two realms are often hostile spheres where engagement between the two are constantly contested and negotiated. According to Chandhoke, four components of civil society are essential to democracy: first, autonomy from the state; second, the access of different sectors of society to the agencies of the state and their acceptance of a certain commitment to the political community and the rules of the state; third, the development of a multiplicity of autonomous public arenas within which various associations regulate their own activities and govern their own members ;and fourth, accessibility of these of these arenas to citizens (Chandhoke 1995,51). The keys to ranking this variable lie with the extent to which these components play out in the democracies in West Africa. The highest score awarded is 4 for the country with the relatively most vibrant civil society and 1 for the least vibrant civil society.

Transparent and Accountable Governments

Transparency and accountability of governments are important mainstays of good governance. At a minimum, transparency refers to an environment in which the objectives of policy, its legal, institutional, and economic framework, policy decisions and their rationale, data and information related to monetary and financial policies, and the terms of agencies’ accountability, are provided to the public in a comprehensible,

accessible, and timely manner (OECD Glossary of Definitions 2005, 1). It therefore demands that citizens be informed of decisions taken by the state so that they can participate in the monitoring of the implementation of those decisions. On the other hand accountability is the obligation of an individual or organization, elected or appointed and vested with a public mandate, to render an account to the people who vested him/it with such powers for actions and decisions taken in exercising such mandate and is assessed at the political, administrative and economic levels (UNDP Country Report 2005).

Unfortunately, in West Africa, where some countries are coming out of authoritarian regimes, governments are less transparent and accountable to their citizens. In a sub-region blessed with abundant natural resources, one would have thought that governments would ensure that such resources are harnessed and properly managed for the benefit of the whole population. Unfortunately events in Liberia, Sierra Leone and in the Delta State in Nigeria have shown otherwise. The misuse of public funds by public officials for private gain has become so endemic in West Africa that it is undermining democracy and good governance. Scoring in this category is based on the how transparent and accountable governments are to the people they govern. A highest score of 4 is awarded to the most relatively transparent and accountable country and score of 1 is given to the least country.

Case Study Selection

The next step in developing this hypothesis was to test the five identified variables against the known facts of the democratic transition process in West Africa. To provide a reliable test of the hypothesis, three case studies (Benin, Ghana and Nigeria) representing small, medium and large countries respectively by size and population are

selected. Though it is recognized that these countries may not have similarities between their approaches to the current democratic political discourse in the sub-region, they provide a suitable base line to test the hypothesis of the thesis.

Benin, with a population of 9 million people and perhaps one of the poorest countries in the world (UNDP 2002a) reveals a positive trend in West Africa's checkered path to democracy as it is often cited as a model democracy in the African context. Known for its chronic instability, Benin's political institutions have steadily become stronger and more independent. After more than eighteen years of Marxist-Leninist rule under Mathieu Kerekou, Benin became the first African country to launch the process of democratization by organizing a National Conference in 1990. This Conference gathered 488 representatives from the ruling and opposition political parties, the private sector and civil society, and served as the basis for debating the outlines of a new democratic political order locally referred to as the "Democratic Renewal" (Schraeder 2000, 274-275; Bierschenk et al. 2002, 25-26). The new constitution adopted in December 1990, which was based on the principles of liberal democracy, has created an atmosphere of peace and political pluralism in a multi-party context marked by political stability.

In spite of this political stability and the effective establishment of all democratic institutions provided by the Constitution, the State is not fully effective. Hence, 20 years after setting the pace for the democratization process in West Africa, Benin is still struggling to adequately consolidate its democratic gains.

Ghana has been in the forefront of political changes in sub-Saharan Africa since gaining independence in 1957. The first state in the region to be free of colonial rule with

a popularly elected government, Kwame Nkrumah's regime soon turned the country into a one-party system marked by governmental authoritarianism (Haynes 1993, 451).

The overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 ushered in a quarter century of almost unrelieved undemocratic rule, with only brief periods of elected government (Busia regime, 1969-72; Limann regime; 1979-81). A further period of constitutional rule began in 1992, following presidential and legislative elections which were triumphs for Jerry Rawlings and his party, the National Democratic Congress.

This was the culmination of a democratization process which begun in 1990 with the popular election of district-level assemblies (Haynes 1993, 451). Today, Ghana with a population of about 24 million people may be described as a star of democracy in West Africa. This is because of its comparative degree of liberal democratic strengths of having experienced constitutional change of power through free and fair elections between ruling parties and the opposition on two occasions. Yet, the issues of governance in a liberal democratic era continue to pose grave challenges in the political transition in the country.

Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain in 1960. But like most West African countries, the intervention of the military in governance in that country created the disequilibrium in the country's democratic growth. The country has experienced more than twice as many years of military rule as civilian rule. With a population of over 140 million and abundant natural resources, including crude oil, Nigeria is an important country due to its political influence and leadership role not only in West Africa, but throughout the affairs of Africa.

With such a huge population, Nigeria has a unique opportunity of championing the deepening of democracy in West Africa. At the same time, associated with such a huge population is the relatively greater challenge of living up to the expectations of the tenets of liberal democracy. Unfortunately, Nigeria appears to have succumbed to the challenges and has become a contradiction to the practice of liberal democracy as successive governments, especially democratic elected ones continue to fail to live up to the basic requirements of liberal democracy.

The Significance of Analytical Rigor

The debate on the democratization process in West Africa has received extensive attention worldwide. Data available for each country in this thesis is therefore adequate to allow for an equitable comparison of the cases and also facilitate a qualitative evaluation in order to validate the hypothesis. By using the WB data to either confirm or dispute the authors analysis, this will facilitate a relatively objective method that will study a subjective environment in order to predict and portray the right picture on the progress of liberal democratization in West Africa.

In adopting this approach, the author had to synthesize a vast amount of information and material. Using the comparative method of analysis therefore facilitated the choices of the case studies introduced. It is inevitable that such an approach will occasion certain criticism and controversy, but it does represent a vibrant and immediate way of understanding and conveying historical truths. But, Nugent refers to the unavoidable elements of subjectivity and generalization inherent in such a nonlinear historical approach, and acknowledges that it can create problems from a strictly academic/scientific point of view (Nugent 2001, 205).

George and Bennett; Ambert et al.; and Crawford et al. each warn about the challenges of maintaining the reader's confidence with respect to the author's analytical integrity in a qualitative study. According to them, because samples are often small, the criteria are usually subjective and immeasurable and hypotheses often include analytical data instead of data obtained through controlled tests (George 2001, 106; Ambert 1998, 888; Crawford 2002, 2). Even with the explanation of each variable score, this comparison has many factors that inevitably affect each rank, preventing a purely objective analysis of the characteristics. By scoring the matrix below horizontally, the final results of the validity test remains hidden until each characteristic's assessment is completed to reduce the author's ability to influence the results.

The table below (Table 1) portrays the layout of the results of the analysis. By using additional relevant data from the other sources mentioned earlier as evidence, each score will then be justified. Additionally, the total in the last row for each of the three countries ranges between 5 and 20, with 5 as the worst and 20 as the best liberal democratic country. By extrapolation, the totals will also serve as a yardstick for a general assessment of the current state of liberal democracy in West Africa.

Display of Results

Table 1. Sample Table of Matrix for Scoring Thesis Variables

	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	Remark
Safety and Security	(1-4)	(1-4)	(1-4)	
Rule of Law and Human rights	(1-4)	(1-4)	(1-4)	
Elections	(1-4)	(1-4)	(1-4)	
Civil Societies	(1-4)	(1-4)	(1-4)	
Transparency and Accountability	(1-4)	(1-4)	(1-4)	
Totals	(5-20)	(5-20)	(5-20)	

Comparing Thesis Variables with WGI Analysis

As mentioned earlier, after the thesis variables have been analyzed and scored, the results are compared to the WGI research done by the WB. This is to determine whether the WB data that are applicable and comparable to the thesis variables will confirm or dispute the analysis of the thesis. The WGI are: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.

The comparison will also serve as criteria to adequately test the validity of the hypothesis in order to find answers to the thesis sub-questions which are repeated as follows:

1. What are the distinctions between liberal democracy in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa countries?
2. What should be the basic elements of good governance in West Africa, as against personal leadership, in developing liberal democracies in West Africa?
3. What is the relationship between good governance and democracy in West Africa?
4. How can a realistic liberal democracy reshape governance and the economies in West Africa?

A sample table below (table 2) matches the WB WGI and the thesis variables to determine which of them are comparable.

Table 2. Matching WGI and Thesis Variables

WB WGI	Thesis Variables	Remark
Voice and Accountability	Vibrancy of Civil Societies	Comparable
Political Stability and Lack of Violence	Security and Safety	Comparable
Rule of Law	Rule of Law and Human Rights	Comparable
Control of Corruption	Transparent and Accountable Governments	Comparable
-	Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections	Not Comparable
Government Effectiveness	-	Not Comparable
Regulatory Quality	-	Not Comparable

Summary and Conclusion of Chapter 3

The methodology used in this thesis is the qualitative method using both primary and secondary sources of data and information to evaluate the case studies. This method trades comparative objective studies of a broad range of subjects for depth, to facilitate understanding on a more finite sampling and enables the researcher to analyze data from the macro to the micro level without risking analytical integrity.

Five variables representing key indicators of liberal democratic tenets that are considered relevant in West Africa are assessed. These are namely, safety and security, strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights, promoting more genuine and competitive elections and political processes, increased development of a politically active civil society and more transparent governance are evaluated against the case studies selected and the results displayed in a matrix form.

The three case studies of Benin, Ghana and Nigeria, representing small, medium and large countries respectively by size and population, are selected. To ensure reliability, it is conceded that these countries may not have similarities between their approaches to the current democratic political discourse in the sub-region, yet they provide a suitable base line to test the hypothesis of this thesis.

In addition, to measure the reliability of this thesis, the results will then be compared to a similar assessment done by the WB to determine whether there are any significant deviations or the analysis of the study follows a similar trend. Any deviations will then be explained in the analysis as the case studies are evaluated in relation to the selected five variables in Chapter 4 to determine the liberal democratic status of each country.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the data gathered during research on the challenges and prospects of liberal democracy in West Africa. Using the five variables identified, each selected country is assessed based on the variables and then compared to the WB WGI. This will lead into Chapter 5, outlining conclusions and recommendations.

Assessment of Benin

Benin gained its independence from France in August 1960. Benin (then Dahomey) went through a decade of political turmoil that was characterized by military takeovers. By 1972 Benin held the African record for the number of successful coups d'états, all of which occurred during the first 12 years of its independence (Joseph 1999, 217). The last of such coups d'états was led by a Marxist-Leninist regime in October 1972, that ousted the civilian government and managed the country badly until its economy collapsed 17 years later.

However, in February 1990, the political environment in Benin changed drastically when a national conference was held to usher in an interim civilian-led government. Since the National Conference of 1990, democracy in Benin has made significant progress and experienced considerable development. Benin is now one of the few countries in West Africa carrying out comprehensive political and economic reforms as a result of a consensus politically based system (Houngnikpo 2007, 64). Despite these positive developments, one cannot rule out the inherent democratic imperfections that continue to confront the country as a result of domestic insecurity.

Safety and Security

Benin is a relatively peaceful country and does not have a history of any armed conflicts. An existing border dispute between Benin and Niger regarding the Lété Island though is currently the only potential security implications for the country and this dispute cannot be underestimated. Parc W of Niger, north of Benin, which is a disputed area, has been a source of conflicts between farmers and ranchers for many years (Republic of Benin Country Governance Profile Report, 2005). Such threats of social and political stability usually affect the peace and the security of the country.

Petty crime and violent crimes such as armed robberies, murder, and carjacking are common and occur at a high rate nationwide (OSAC 2007 Report on Benin). Armed robberies are usually committed at knife- or machete-point, but frequently automatic AK-47 weapons and handguns are used by the criminals. Weapons and drug trafficking through Benin remains widespread, with more and more weapons and drugs remaining in the country (OSAC 2007 Report on Benin). Increasing poverty levels and poor economic conditions, as well as the growing desperation of people who are unable to afford their basic needs, is expected to make such criminal activities to continue to be high.

Political violence in Benin is quite negligible even though there are known groups who oppose the current government. All the same, protests and demonstrations over economic conditions and local politics occur on an occasional basis and sometimes have been the source of violence between the protestors and the police. Explosions of ethnic conflict are usually caused by ethnic competition. Benin has been able to manage this successfully through the engineering of rules of political participation and institutional

arrangements that allow the legitimate re-negotiation of those rules (Magnusson 2001, 211-230).

Military intervention in Benin's political history makes the military a formidable force to reckon with and therefore its role in the politics of the country cannot be taken for granted. Following the introduction of democracy, there has been a visible withdrawal of Benin's Armed Forces from political affairs and therefore the army can be said to be submissive to civilian power. The possibility of the army interfering in politics through coups d'état or the use of force is therefore remote. However, what may keep the military permanently out of politics is to treat it as an important institution and a key actor in policy making and cordial civil-military relations. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance on security and safety category scored 86.1 out 100 marks for Benin from 2000 to 2006 (www.moiibrahimfoundation.org). For this variable, Benin is awarded 3.5 out of 4 (Table 3, pg 95). This score reflects the fact that Benin has recorded no significant conflicts or episodes of violence that threatened democracy in the country. Nonetheless, additional security-related challenges associated with crime, for instance, are also not yet completely eliminated.

Rule of Law and Human Rights

With regards to the entrenchment of the rule of law, Benin's governance profile underlines the constraints faced by citizens in the area of protection of human rights. This situation is all the more disturbing because persons most vulnerable are those who are poor and ignorant. Public servants, who attach little importance to the law, are often tempted to use or even misuse their authority, which accentuates corruption in relations between the administration, citizens and persons subject to the jurisdiction of the courts

(Republic of Benin Country Governance Profile Report 2005, 38). Since the country's return to constitutional rule, its successive governments have generally obeyed the laws of the land and have abided by court decisions and rulings which do not favor it. Though judges are still appointed and can be dismissed as well by the executive, the issue of executive manipulation of the legal system is not a threat to the separation of power in the country (Republic of Benin Country Governance Profile Report 2005, 20).

The human rights situation and the ability of citizens to seek redress for human rights abuses in Benin has improved since the passage of a new constitution in December 1990. Also, the fact that human rights issues are closely observed and upheld by the constitutional court has resulted in a notable improvement in human rights in Benin over the years. Benin's human rights commission, the Commission Beninoise des Droits de l'Homme (CBDH), created in 1990 as a result of the political liberalization in Benin, is the legally constituted body for the protection of human rights. This commission enjoys genuine autonomy from the government, stable leadership and a broad mandate, yet its performance as a national human rights commission since its existence has been abysmal (Nowrojee 2001, 104).

The CBDH can boast of championing the abolition by the government of unjust laws including discriminatory laws and regulations permitting solitary confinement in prison; the ratification of several international human rights instruments; the translation and dissemination of the universal declaration of human rights into eight national languages. Yet critics, like the legal and human rights community in Benin, are of the opinion that the CBDH is complacent. According to them the CBDH does not command public confidence and therefore has little impact and is less known by the population.

All the same, it is important to mention that the efforts of the CBDH are complemented by the more powerful role that the constitutional courts as well as local NGO's have played in the protection of human rights in Benin. Under Benin's 1990 constitution, the court on its own initiative can examine the constitutionality of any law which it believes may infringe on the fundamental rights and liberties of individuals. Most importantly, the fact that the court can directly receive individual claims from victims of human rights violations, on which it must rule within fifteen days, is a sign of undeniable progress in the rule of law. On the other hand, the activities of NGO's are generally focused on promotional and educational activities such as training seminars, radio broadcasts and publication of brochures on human rights (Nowrojee 2001, 105). In the Ibrahim Index of African Governance on the human rights category alone Benin scored 66.7 out 100 marks in 2000, but improved in the years that followed up to 2006 with a score of 83.3 points, from the maximum of 100 marks (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). A score of 3.3 out of 4 is awarded to Benin in this category.

Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections

Since the national conference, significant progresses have been made in successive elections in Benin. The defeat of the incumbent Mathieu Kérékou in 1991, by Nicéphore Soglo, made the country the first in West Africa where an incumbent ran for re-election, lost and graciously bowed out. In 1996, Kérékou returned to wrestle power from Soglo in a dramatic election that again made Benin the first country where a former president reclaimed power after losing out earlier on.

This action has since not only made Benin a model of democracy, where changes of power between opposing political parties have been peaceful, but has also empowered political pluralism and even the style of governance. On March 5th, 2006, after Kérékou had exhausted his mandatory two terms of office, Benin went to the polls for the fourth presidential election since multi-party democracy was introduced in 1990. Even more impressive was the fact that President Kérékou did not stand for re-election, nor did his rival, Soglo, who was president from 1991-96. Not only has voter turnout increased successively from 64.1 percent in 1991 to 77.6 percent in 1996 to 87.7 percent in 2001 but dipping marginally recently to 81.7 percent in 2006, the number of political parties participating in the electoral process also increased to 150 (africanelections.tripod.com). This positive trend is further buttressed by the results of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance on the conduct of free and fair elections in Benin which awarded Benin 100 marks in 2006 (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). This is an indication that the people have faith in the country's electoral process and makes Benin's democratic credentials in West Africa exemplary. This feat earns Benin a score of 3.5 out of 4 for this variable.

Promoting a Vibrant Civil Society

One of the consequences of Benin's transition to democracy has been the sudden increase in the activities of civil societies prior to the democratic transition process. The recognition of such freedom of association is stipulated in Article 25 under title 2 of Benin's constitution that was approved in December 1990. As a result, more than 140 associations were recognized during 1990 (UNDP 2000a, 66). In 1999, an estimated 5000 NGOs existed in Benin, out of which 3000 were officially registered (UNDP 2000a, 66).

Benin has therefore made significant progress in ensuring a vibrant civil society in the country.

The majority of these civil societies focus their activities on entrenching democracy in Benin. Other major political areas civil society continues to focus on their commitments to public affairs issues such as community groups, interest groups, human rights organizations, religious groups, and others (Malenfant, Trudel and Legendre 2006, 98). Unfortunately, though there is increasing role and awareness of civil societies in Benin, increase transparency through participatory monitoring and evaluation of public reform processes, and improved access to information by civil societies remains a challenge. A score of 3 out of 4 is awarded to Benin for this variable.

Transparent and Accountable Governments

Transparency and accountability in Benin are perceived mainly within the context of corruption which is endemic in the country. Despite the progress made in democracy, the notion that one should be answerable for one's actions is not a part of Benin's values and management culture. According to The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSI) report on transparency and accountability in Benin:

The non-transparent management of the Benin's resources against a backdrop of personal aggrandizement through embezzlement of public funds and corruption has been virtually constant since independence in 1960. By opting for a state-controlled economy in 1974, the government considerably inhibited private initiative. The situation of a state monopoly over the economy, coupled with a system in which freedoms were suppressed, ultimately fulfilled all the conditions for the development of corruption. The officials of Benin's public services are therefore scarcely accountable for their acts. In general, there is no regular auditing of public services and the oversight bodies that have been established do not function appropriately. (Report on Transparency and Accountability in Benin 2007)

Accountability of Benin officials is particularly weak in the public finance sector. A majority of public accountants who record public revenues and effect public expenditure do not provide transparent accounting of their management. These anomalies in the functioning of the public services are due to the fact that relevant legal provisions do not exist or are obsolete since most of the rules that apply to public accounting in Benin are still those directly produced or inspired by the provisions governing state-controlled economies of the past (Report On Transparency and Accountability in Benin, 2007).

The intervention of the National Conference in 1990 though laid new ground rules by opting for economic liberalism; many signs of the ills of the past state-controlled economy are still present today. Benin received an overall "moderate" rating in the 2006 Global Integrity Index and was rated fifth in West Africa by the 2007 CPI report on Africa (www.africapedia.com). However, it will take the mobilization and organizational strengthening of civil societies as part of efforts to establish transparency and accountability in Benin (Global Integrity Index Report, 2006). A score of 2.5 out of 4 is given to Benin.

Assessment of Ghana

Ghana is the first African nation to gain independence from British colonial rule in 1957. The country's post independence history started in March 1957 with a liberal democratic rule which soon deteriorated into a quasi dictatorship, leading to the first military coup of 1966.

In the subsequent one and a half decades, Ghana made two other brief attempts at liberal democracy between 1969 to 1972 and 1979 to 1981. But each was overthrown. In the later instance, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who assumed power in 1979 in a

coup d'état, handed over to the civilian administration of President Hilla Limann and his People's National Party(PNP) but staged a comeback on New Year's Eve of 1981. The new ruling junta, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), under Rawlings in spite of its name, held on to power for eleven years until 1992 when Ghana embarked on the current democratic experiment under the 1992 constitution.

The PNDC, unlike military regimes before it, had, from the onset, given strong indication of wanting to stay much longer in power. It refused to commit itself to time, choosing to refer to its actions as part of an indefinite political process ostensibly to implement the so-called participatory, grassroots democracy that had a disdain for multiparty politics (Gyimah-Boadi 1991, 35). Not surprising, for the first time in Ghana's political history the leader of the out-going military regime, Rawlings, contested the presidential election, while the ruling junta, the PNDC metamorphosed into a political party, National Democratic Party (NDC), to provide him with a vehicle for the contest.

This move in 1992 from authoritarian rule to elected civilian rule represented an important shift in the country's history. Since then Ghana has experienced regularly scheduled elections (1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008). However, the elections in 2000 and 2008 marked important milestones in the consolidation of liberal democracy in Ghana (Gadzekpo 2003, 267). In the 2000 elections, power was transferred through the ballot box from the incumbent NDC government to the opposition National Patriotic Party (NPP) in a first electoral turnover. Then, in the recent closely contested fifth multi-party elections (in December 2008), the second electoral turnover was again experienced, when the ruling NPP government lost the elections to the opposition NDC.

By these feats, Ghana's experience so far makes the country one of the rare cases of stable and a reasonably functioning liberal democracy in West Africa (Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 51, June 2008). In spite of these feats, the country cannot be said to be fully democratic in nature.

Safety and Security

Though Ghana is surrounded by countries which have experienced conflict, it has remained a relatively peaceful country. The porosity of its borders has resulted in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the influx of refugees as well as local anti-social elements. These anti-social elements have been fast in taking advantage of the loosening of social controls that accompanied the democratization process in the country (Bratton, Lewis and Gyimah-Boadi 2006, 106). As a result, some of the important safety and security issues that continue to face the Ghanaian society are crime, such as armed robbery, chieftaincy disputes and ethnic conflicts which prior to the democratic process had been somehow suppressed. In particular, armed robbery is assuming alarming proportions. Prof. Ken Attafuah in his book, "Fighting Armed Robbery in Ghana," indicates that, between 1997 and 2006, there were 7,471 reported cases of armed robbery in Ghana (Attafuah 2007, 42).

On conflicts, even though the country has not experienced any large-scale conflicts, some small-scale conflicts exist in certain villages and towns which have to be tackled adequately and promptly, to forestall any escalations into potential national crises. Such small-scale conflicts in Ghana are the result of chieftaincy, ethnic and identity conflicts, conflicts over land and political conflicts. Even if these conflicts do not eventually result in crisis of national dimension, they could very well result in the loss of

lives and property (Birikorang 2007, 1). An assessment by The Ibrahim Index of African Governance on security and safety category scored 86.1 out of 100 marks for Ghana in 2006, recording an improvement from the 86 marks it scored in previous year (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). Ghana is awarded 3.4 out of 4 for its relative greater sense of personal and public safety and security in the country. But if the fragile emerging democracy is to be consolidated then there must be freedom from violent, predatory crimes and freedom from the devastating effects of the worldwide drug trafficking menace (Akufo-Addo 2008, 3).

Rule of Law and Human Rights

The protection of human rights in Ghana has seen vast changes since multi-party democracy was introduced in 1992. As a result, successive governments have made significant improvements in the protection of human rights. Ghana's commitment to human rights protection is demonstrated through the ratification of key UN human rights instruments. In addition to Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution on the Bill of Rights, laws now exist in Ghana to provide protection for some minority rights. For example, there are the Domestic Violence Act, the Children Act, the People with Disabilities Act, and the Human Trafficking Act (State of Human Rights in Ghana - International Human Rights Day Lecture 2008). In 2006, Ghana was nominated among 13 African states constituting the UN Human Rights Council and in 2008 became the first West African country to be reviewed by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) under its Universal Periodic Review system. This assessment showed that Ghana has progressively sought to ensure the respect and protection of human rights (UNHRC Universal Periodic Review Second Session, 2008).

The assessment also revealed that the human rights situation in Ghana had improved especially in the areas of minority empowerment for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. Media freedoms have also been notably progressive with the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law in 2001 (UNHRC Universal Periodic Review Second Session, 2008). Nevertheless, there are still social injustices and human rights violations that have been identified by Ghanaian human rights activists. Such violations include:

1. Deaths resulting from the excessive use of force by police;
2. Vigilante justice;
3. Harsh and life-threatening prison conditions;
4. Police corruption and impunity;
5. Prolonged pretrial detention;
6. Forcible dispersal of demonstrations;
7. Corruption in all branches of government;
8. Violence against women and children;
9. Female genital mutilation, societal discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, homosexuals, and persons with HIV/AIDS;
10. Trafficking in women and children;
11. Ethnic discrimination and politically and ethnically motivated violence; and child labor, including forced child labor. (US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights in Ghana 2008)

On rule of law, the government generally obeys the laws of the land and abides by court decisions and rulings of quasi-judicial bodies to reinforce the separation of powers between the three arms of government as emphasized in the 1992 Constitution. However,

in some cases, the constitutional separation of powers is compromised by the fact that the Attorney General is both the government's head of the prosecution service and at the same time, its chief legal adviser. As a result, opposition parties usually complain that prosecutions of former ministers are politically motivated. This perception of executive interference is further strengthened because sometimes investigations of cases involving incumbent government officials have been characterized by undue delays while those involving the opposition are fast tracked. Human rights assessment by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance on this category alone recorded marked improvement in Ghana's performance from a score of 33 in 2000 to a maximum of 100 points in subsequent years up to 2006. This seeming perfect score, according to the Ibrahim Index, is however due to rounding up. (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). Ghana is scored 3.5 out of 4 for this variable.

Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections

Regular elections have taken place in Ghana since the first one was held in 1992. In the 1992 maiden elections, which was contested by five political parties, the incumbent military government which had transformed itself into a political party and won the elections by 58 percent in an election that recorded a low voter turnout of 50.2 percent (Electoral Commission of Ghana (ECG) Post-Election Report 1992). The parliamentary election that followed was boycotted by three of the main opposition parties for perceived rigging, thus putting the legitimacy of the entire process in doubt. The low voter turnout alone was an indication that the populace did not trust the democratic process. In its efforts to improve the electoral process and enhance the transparency of its operations, the ECG introduced many changes. First was the

compilation of a credible electoral roll with the active collaboration and participation of the political parties in 1995 and then putting an end to the use of opaque ballot boxes.

Consequently, in 1996 transparent ballot boxes were introduced. The result of this innovation was the increase in voter turnout from 56.2 percent in 1992 to 78.2 percent in 1996 (African Elections Database). Though the incumbent still won, its margin was marginally reduced to 57.4 percent. The 2000 election was, however, the defining moment for elections in Ghana which saw a shift in electoral fortunes between the two main political parties (NDC and NPP) in a “free and fair” electoral process. The fact that the opposition was able to unseat the incumbent was an indication that Ghanaian voters were discerning enough to choose between parties and candidates when deciding on an election. The elections were also important from the standpoint that for the first time in the history of Ghana, government has been transferred to the opposition via the ballot box.

In Gyimah-Boadi's view, the 2000 elections presented the first test of the workability of the constitutional limits on presidential tenure, as well as the real opportunity to achieve a peaceful change of power through the ballot box (Gyimah-Boadi 2001, 103). The peaceful transfer of power to the opposition therefore marked a significant departure from the norm in most West African countries where such scenarios could have degenerated into mayhem. The election results themselves suggest continued progress towards a more competitive, free and fair party system in Ghana. The 2004 election, though uneventful, saw the retention of the NPP government in power and the further entrenchment of democratic elections in Ghana. However, the significant progress made by political parties regarding electoral politics in Ghana was manifested in the

increase in voter turnout, showing an indication of mass participation, resulting in keen competition among political parties.

From a low of 29 percent in the 1992 polls, voter turnout was 78.2 percent in 1996, 61.7 percent in 2000 and 85.1 percent in 2004 (Frempong 2004, 194). Consensus building among the political elite has created confidence among their followers and this has been manifested in the sustained high voter turnout. That in itself underscores the importance the electorate in Ghana now attaches to elections. In the 2006 assessment by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance on the conduct of free and fair elections in Ghana, the country's score was rounded up to a maximum 100 marks in this category (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). The subsequent 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections held in Ghana further broke new ground in many ways. It was the most keenly contested election in the country's history, with record-breaking campaign expenditures taking three rounds of voting for a victor to emerge. The first round was arguably the most peaceful and transparent election in Ghana's history. But the second round was characterized by alleged fraud and electoral malpractice, a situation that tested the nerves of Ghanaians, who are known to be peace-loving.

Ultimately, peace and democracy prevailed. The election not only culminated in a peaceful transfer of power and the emergence of a minority as a new majority in parliament, but also reminded Ghana that democracy in the country was still in a fragile transition. Ghana therefore succeeded a second time, since returning to democracy in 1992, in transferring central government power to an opposition party without any disruption of the constitutional process. Indisputably, Ghana passed a major political test

of stability and democracy. However, such success is not indicative of consolidation of unity and democracy that can stand the test of time. The score for Ghana is 3.8 out of 4.

Promoting a Vibrant Civil Society

Among the forces that dislodged authoritarianism in Ghana and initiated the advent of democracy in 1992 were the country's civil societies. As a result, civil societies in Ghana can take the credit for beginning the debate on a new political direction involving the acceptance of pluralist politics. After this achievement, attention is now shifting to the challenges of consolidation, where civil societies are expected to influence government policy and legislation and also facilitate the opportunities available for citizens to participate in public affairs, promoting a culture of accountability and challenging the power of the state to dominate decision-making. However, it is obvious that without a strong, vigilant, transparent and highly resourceful civil society organization, Ghana cannot sustain and strengthen its democracy.

Perhaps the most innovative contributions to Ghana's electoral politics have come from civil society organizations (CSOs) in terms of voter education, election observation/monitoring and other strategies for peaceful elections. From 1996, civil society groups have been very active in voter education efforts. Human rights advocacy and policy think tanks, like the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the Ghana Center for Democratic Governance (CDD-Ghana), have liaised with other civil society bodies like the trade unions, business and professional associations to create formidable networks of private institutions that have facilitated democratic development and reduced election-related violence to a minimum (Gyimah-Boadi 2004, 108).

Publications, opinion surveys and studies and independent research by the IEA, CDD-Ghana, the Department of Political Science and the School of Communications Studies (both of the University of Ghana) have also provided some of the best information on politics and elections since 1992 (Gyimah-Boadi 2004, 106). In the 2000 election, live broadcasting of public debates by presidential candidates, on television and radio, were introduced. It was organized by the Ghana Journalist Association in collaboration with an American NGO, Freedom Forum. This unprecedented experience enabled the electorate to assess further the qualities of the potential presidents. It also brought a new dimension of giving voters the opportunity to judge candidates on the basis of their position on specific issues, introducing quality in a structured fashion for the first time into Ghanaian presidential campaigns (Agyeman-Duah 2005, 24).

Another area that civil society participation has been very prominent is in the preparation and implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), which focuses on private sector development, good governance and civic responsibility, as well as human resource development. (GPRS Paper Analysis and Policy Statement 2003). The process, which involves multiple planning groups, meet with stakeholders such as parliament, government ministries, departments and agencies and donor partners, to find ways of achieving growth, accelerating poverty reduction and the protecting the vulnerable who are easily excluded within a decentralized, democratic environment (Adjei 2008, 21).

Another important role civil society in Ghana plays is the critical watchdog role over government policies and actions. A typical example is the monitoring of public

financial management and expenditure which is coordinated by the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (Adjei 2008, 32). Ghana is awarded 3.2 out of 4 for this variable.

Transparent and Accountable Governments

In Ghana, it is not possible to talk about transparency and accountability without mentioning corruption. Corruption has therefore become an endemic social and ethical problem confronting Ghanaians. Corruption in Ghana can be classified into three levels. These levels are the public, business and the individual levels of corruption. The public level is the corruption found in the activities of sitting governments such as over pricing of government contracts, diversion of state funds to fund political activities, and misappropriation of public funds. The private level corruption is found in the private sector. The most pervasive one is the individual level corruption which is characterized by police officers collecting bribes from commercial drivers, parents bribing headmasters and headmistresses to get academic placements in elite schools for their wards and customs officers demanding bribes from traders at ports of entry.

The unfortunate scenario about corruption in Ghana is that institutions mandated to be custodians of transparency and accountability are themselves involved in the act. The judiciary, police and even some civil societies are tragically caught in this web of corruption. Recent findings from the Ghana Integrity Initiative and CDD painted a terrifying picture of corruption in Ghana. According to the CDD 2007 Governance and Corruption Survey report on Ghana, approximately 75 percent of households see corruption as a serious problem in Ghana, with a majority (66 percent) paying 10 percent of their incomes in bribes to public officials. It was reported that 44 percent of firms admit to making unofficial payments to public officials, with 27 percent frequently or

always making such payments (CDD Governance and Corruption Survey on Ghana, 2007).

The good news, however, is that not only has the problem been officially acknowledged by the government, but also public institutions and civil society advocacy groups have been established purposely to combat the menace. By Article 218(e) of the 1992 Ghana Constitution, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has the duty to investigate all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public moneys by officials. The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) Act, 1993, was designed similarly to detect corruption and economic crimes, such as procurement fraud. The SFO is a specialized agency to monitor, investigate and, on the authority of the Attorney General, prosecute any offence involving serious financial loss to the state. Indeed, the 1992 Constitution makes better management of the Ghanaian economy a political imperative (Transparency and Accountability Initiative in Ghana, 2007).

The crucial arrangement for achieving this directive might however be a national budget process that is participatory, transparent, and accountable that would lead to effective management of resources and sustainable economic growth (Agyeman-Duah 2007, 75). Additionally, new legislation has been introduced recently to enhance transparency and accountability in the conduct of official financial transactions. Examples are the Public Procurement Bill and the draft Whistleblower Bill and Freedom of Information Bill. From the constitutional and legal framework, therefore, the country seems primed to ensure good economic governance. Civil society advocacy groups, including the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), have emerged in recent years to buttress the

anti-corruption drive. Under the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), the GII, CHRAJ, SFO, IEA and the CDD-Ghana have coordinated and unified the campaign to curb corruption (Agyeman-Duah 2007, 75). In West Africa, Ghana was rated second behind Cape Verde by the 2007 CPI report on Africa (www.africapedia.com). Ghana is scored 3 out of 4 for this variable.

Assessment of Nigeria

In 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the Great Britain and became a Republic in 1963. This was followed by series of political crises which resulted in the loss of control by the elected civilian government. The first coup d'état in Nigeria happened in 1966 which set the stage for the subsequent series of military coups. Between 1960 and 2000, Nigeria experienced seven military takeovers, including the civil war that took place from 1967 until 1970 when oil was discovered in that country (Falola and Genova 198).

During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria generated billions of dollars from the proceeds of oil in the Niger Delta State. However, increasing corruption and graft at all levels of government squandered most of these earnings. In particular, only a few cliques benefited from the oil boom to the detriment of the vast majority of the Nigerian people. Not surprising, the oil revenues fuelled the rise of federal subventions as the Federal Government soon became the threshold of power in the country and a centre of political struggle (www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Nigeria 2000). To worsen matters, the military governments during these periods created a dangerous situation as they became increasingly dependent on oil the revenues for development instead of diversifying the economy to ensure growth and prosperity.

Politically, the dramatic turn of events following the death of the last military dictator in Nigeria, General Sani Abacha in 1998, presented a good opportunity for the transition towards the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999. Subsequently, the election of Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military head of state, as the new President in 1999, ended almost thirty three-years of military rule (between from 1966 until 1999) excluding the short-lived second republic between 1979-1983. Although the elections which brought Obasanjo to power in 1999 and again in 2003 were regarded as not free and fair, the process was considered as a good beginning and democratic learning curve for the country. Unfortunately, Nigeria since then has shown little improvement in terms of producing a responsible government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the majority.

Safety and Security

The advent of democracy in Nigeria has not in any way alleviated issues related to safety and security in the country. The risk of kidnapping, crime, militant activity, or armed attacks continues unabated generally across most parts of the country and in the Niger Delta State in particular. The UNDP has described the situation in the Niger Delta as one that ‘could tip towards outright warfare’ (UNDP 2006, 18). In other parts of Nigeria violent crime, sectarian violence, or student and political demonstrations or disturbances are common features.

On violent crime, these are usually committed by individual criminals and gangs, as well as by some persons wearing police and military uniforms. Unfortunately, law enforcement authorities usually respond to crimes slowly or not at all and provide no results even when those incidences are investigated. Nigeria has been noticeably divided

since the 1999 election on issues of religion and ethnicity (Tayo 2007, 4). This has often resulted in violent clashes particularly between the Muslim north and the Christian south. The ease with which arms are acquired in Nigeria further exacerbates the situation. With an estimated three million illegal small arms in circulation in Nigeria, these weapons pose a significant challenge to law and order and a high risk to personal security (Hazen and Horner 2007, 25).

Nigerian-operated fraud scams, known as 419s, that target foreigners are also a common crime in Nigeria. These scams generally involve false offers of either outright money transfers or lucrative sales or contracts with promises of large commissions or upfront payments, or improperly invoke the authority of one or more ministries or offices of the Nigerian government and may cite, by name, the involvement of a Nigerian government official. In some scams, government stationery and seals are also improperly used to advance the scam (State Department Report 2007).

The improvement of law enforcement though has resulted in numerous raids on commercial fraud premises. Reducing the overall level of overt fraud activity has become virtually impossible as new types of sophisticated scams are introduced daily. Nigeria's assessment in this category by Ibrahim Index of African Governance on security and safety category shows inconsistent scores of 63.8 out 100 marks from 2000 and deteriorating to a score of 63.7 in 2006 (www.moiibrahimfoundation.org). In view of the precarious security implications in Nigeria, it is awarded a score of 2.5 out of 4.

Rule of Law and Human Rights

Despite the transition to democracy, Nigeria's human rights record continues to be abysmal. Officials at all levels continue to commit serious abuses while several

criminal cases sometimes take place without investigations being conducted. The growing level of impunity in Nigeria's human rights records, as captured in the country's Human Rights Report for 2008 that was released recently in Washington, D.C., expressed worry at the seeming lack of progress by the Nigerian government.

The report revealed that in Nigeria, the "most significant human rights problems included the abridgement of citizens' right to change their government through the electoral process due to vote rigging and political violence" (US Department of State Report on Human Rights in Nigeria 2008). The report further focused on the abuse of power by the police, deprivation of life and infringement on individual's freedom among several other elements of human rights and cited several cases where impunity reigned without further investigations of serious abuses. For instance on 25 February 2008, the "police killed approximately 50 persons, burnt nearly 100 homes, and destroyed more than 150 market stalls in Ogaminana, just outside Okene, Adavi Local Council of Kogi State" (US Department of State Report on Human rights in Nigeria 2008).

Apparently, this was a reprisal attack by the police to avenge the alleged killing of a colleague by local youths earlier on.

This reign of impunity could have been mitigated if the rule of law was functional in Nigeria. Unfortunately, there are several instances where such abuses have never been investigated let alone putting the culprits before a competent court of law for trial. In June 1999, soon after assuming office, then President Obasanjo established the Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission, otherwise known as the 'Oputa Panel' to look into past cases of human rights violations, in order to start a process of reconciliation between victims and perpetrators. The full seven-volume report was subsequently submitted to the

President and a committee was set up to implement the committee's recommendations. Even though the President had earlier given his word that the Oputa report would not go the way of past reports that are read by an inner circle, analyzed for political gains or damage and then discarded, the report was never fully implemented even up until President Obasanjo left office in 2007 (Africa Policy E-Journal, April 11, 2008 (030411) Nigeria: Elections Briefing Paper). Currently, President Yar'Adua is yet to fully implement the recommendations as well. Adherence to the rule of law in Nigeria therefore has to be in a manner that protects personal and civil liberties and gender equity and ensures public safety and security with equal access to justice for all.

In 2007, despite President Yar'Adua's directive to the Inspector-General of Police to reopen all unresolved cases of killings of political figures, there have not been any developments (Africa Policy E-Journal, April 11, 2003 (030411) Nigeria: Elections Briefing Paper). The Nigerian Bar Association, in particular, have been consistently worried over the frequent disobedience of court orders by government functionaries, pushing the country into a state of lawlessness where politicians and individuals often refuse to obey court orders rendering due process dysfunctional. (On the Rule of Law or the Lack of it in Nigeria" by Professor Victor Oguejiofor Okafor). Credit should however be given to the new Nigerian administration which is trying very hard to revert governance to the rule of law and due process. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance on the human rights category alone scored 83.3 out 100 marks for Nigeria in 2006. This marks an improvement considering the fact that from 2000 to 2005, Nigeria scored 66.7 points (www.moibrahimfoundation.org). Nigeria is scored 3.3 out of 4 in this category of rule of law and human rights.

Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections

Nigeria has had a long history of electoral fraud which significantly accounts for its difficulty in attaining the aspirations of liberal democracy throughout the country. Perhaps the relatively most free, fair and peacefully conducted elections in Nigeria were those in 1959, 1979, 1993, and 1999 (Africa Policy E-Journal, April 11, 2003 (030411) Nigeria: Elections Briefing Paper). While those held in 1964 and 1983, 2003 and 2007 remain the most chaotic, violent and disputed ones. This trend could be attributed to the fact that those regarded to be relatively free and fair were 'transition' elections, where the incumbent regimes were not competing in the elections but responsible for organizing the elections to transfer power to a democratic civilian regime. In contrast, the other elections could be regarded as potential consolidation elections, in which an elected civilian government was responsible for organizing elections to hand over power to a successor regime. The failures of these elections to consolidate democracy have been due to the reluctance of the incumbent regime to allow a level playing field that will ensure fair electoral competition.

In 1999, the third republic was sworn into office and the expectations were that democracy was about to be entrenched in Nigeria. When the conduct of the 2003 elections was devolved to the Independent National Electoral Commission many were those who thought the supposedly independent body could withstand the likely political manipulations and influence. Unfortunately, the conduct of the elections that ushered in the fourth republic in 2003 once again showed that Nigeria was faced with a systemic and structural problem. As a result, the value of fair electoral competition does not exist in the country, leaving citizens with no choice of electing their preferred candidates in electoral

competitions. Even reputable research bodies like the Ibrahim Index of African Governance by 2006 could not assess Nigeria's performance in its research for this category due to unreliable electoral results (www.moibrahimfoundation.org).

The 2007 elections once more presented a good opportunity for Nigeria to conduct a second consecutive peaceful and successful election that would have symbolized an important milestone in Nigeria's political history. This was to mark the first time in the country's history an incumbent was going to hand over power to another democratically elected government. But this time, the unprecedented vote rigging that characterized these elections compelled both local and international observers to declare the whole exercise as flawed and not credible. However, what was most significant about the 2007 elections was not the detail, but the trend. What is most troubling is not that some specific things went dramatically wrong, but that, as Madeleine Albright said, on behalf of the Washington based, National Democratic Institute (NDI) delegation, the 2007 polls represent a significant step backward in the conduct of elections in Nigeria (Clark, 2007).

Despite these setbacks, a great majority of Nigerians still value the current democratic system and preferred it to any other form of government. As John Clark puts it: "the institution and maintenance of democracy depends largely on favorable attitudes toward democracy by elite and ordinary citizens." He further argues, "democracy is a state of mind: if people deeply believe that democracy will work and are committed to democratic forms, then, no matter what the material or social circumstances, democracy can work" (Clark 1996, 3). A score of 1 out of 4 is awarded to Nigeria.

Promoting a Vibrant Civil Society

The growth and development of civil society in Nigeria has been intermittent and is still in a nascent process. However, the current democratization process in the country makes the importance of civil society a pressing need in order to sustain democracy and stabilize the system of governance in Nigeria. Historically, Nigeria, since its independence in 1960, has played enormous roles in the development of its civil society through co-optation, manipulation, and oppression. As noted by Adigun: developing and nurturing pro-democratic values, at the elite and mass levels in Nigeria, is likely to depend more on the growth of associational life and the further empowerment of civil society than on the actions of the state and its managers (Adigun 1997, 162). In light of the above, it is imperative that the country rethink the importance of civil society to its fledgling democracy since the conditions needed for sustaining such civic values are still only partially developed.

In the past, civil societies in Nigeria have experienced setbacks. A report in 1997 on the State of Civil Society revealed major constraints on their role in Nigeria. For instance, there was inefficient utilization of resources and dissipation of energy in the ways in which many Nigerian civil societies have been operating due to the repetitive manner they focused on the same issues. Additionally, the divide-and-rule tactics of the state and the ruling classes constrained the vibrancy of civil societies by either inciting petty squabbles at the leadership level, or by stigmatizing them (Imade 2000, 15).

Since 1999, when Nigeria transitioned from military dictatorship to civil governance, civil society organizations have tried to make a sustainable impact in the management of the Nation's resources. Such efforts have led to the formation of several

coalitions with a view to improving the influence and impact of civil society. Recent trends in the democratization process show that the nascent democratic institutions are being consolidated, considering the timely manner the judiciary was able to respond to electoral complaints following the 2007 polls (www.ndi.org/nigeria).

The civil societies also played a key role in defeating attempts to amend the constitution to allow the former president and state governors to compete for a third-term in 2006. This is yet another indication that civil society organizations remain Nigeria's best resource for sustaining democracy. Today, Nigeria can pride itself for a vibrant civil society that is actively participating in the ongoing electoral and constitutional reform processes. The vibrant media that has created new channels for the expression of diverse views and the dissemination of information is also laudable. Perhaps by taking an active role in the annual budget review process through the initiation of far-ranging probes of executive agency's budget expenditures, civil societies in Nigeria are now well poised to do more despite their weaknesses. A score of 2.5 out of 4 is therefore awarded to Nigeria.

Transparent and Accountable Governments

Lack of accountability and transparency in Nigeria is a challenge that threatens the democratic gains so far made in that country. The canker strife, through the insincerity of leaders at all levels including officials holding public trust, who by their actions, have failed to lead by example. This has resulted in widespread corruption which has engulfed the country since independence in 1960. The oil boom in the 1970's presented a good opportunity for the country to embark on economic growth and development. Unfortunately this opportunity was abused and continues to be one of the

key sources of corruption in the country as the challenge of channeling the wealth accrued to achieve socio-economic development remains daunting.

Not surprising, there is therefore general agreement among Nigerians, and world commentators on Nigeria affairs, that political and economic corruption primarily explains the widespread poverty in Nigeria. As revealed by former World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, "Nigeria has lost U S\$300 billion to corruption in the last four decades"(Country Watch Report on Corruption in Nigeria 2007). Successive governments since 1999 have been committed to fighting corruption especially with the formation of Nigeria's anti-corruption body and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Yet global anti-corruption body, Transparency International, rated Nigeria 148 out of the 180 nations surveyed in its annual corruption perception index for 2007 (Transparency International CPI 2007). This may be regarded as a remarkable progress in the fight against corruption in Nigeria considering that in its 2004 report, Transparency International ranked Nigeria as the third most corrupt country out of the 145 country it surveyed (Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2004). The 2007 CPI report on Africa however placed Nigeria at the eleventh position in West Africa (www.africapedia.com). Nigeria needs to strengthen its public sector legislative and administrative institutions, including efficient parliamentary oversight, judicial independence, and adequacy of the audit machinery to provide and verify government decisions. The score for Nigeria for this variable is 1 out of 4.

Display of Results

A summary of the results of the analysis is as displayed in table 3 below.

Table 3. Summary of the Scores of Analysis of Thesis Variables

	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	Remark
Safety and Security	3.5	3.4	2.5	
Rule of Law and Human rights	3.3	3.5	3.3	
Promoting Genuine and Competitive Elections	3.5	3.8	1.0	
Vibrant Civil Societies	3.0	3.2	2.5	
Transparent and Accountable Governments	2.5	3.0	1	
Totals Score	15.8	16.9	10.3	
Percentage Score	79%	84.5%	51.5%	

Interpretation of Results

The assessment of the level of liberal democracy in West Africa has revealed mixed results. Ghana appears to be leading the pack in West Africa, but more work needs to be done in order to inculcate the tenets of the liberal democratic system of governance in the polity of the sub-region. With most countries claiming to embrace liberal democracy since the early 1990s, one would expect that many West African countries by now would have embarked on a truly liberal democratic path that will eventually lead to economic prosperity. Unfortunately, the indicators point otherwise.

The challenge of maintaining a more effective liberal democratic form of governance in West Africa does not lie in the holding of routine general elections. Rather, it will involve long and difficult structural reforms of the polity of the sub-region. This point is aptly made by Larry Diamond in two decades ago that;

It is unrealistic to think that countries in Africa can suddenly reverse course and institutionalize stable democratic government simply by changing leaders, constitutions and/or public mentalities. If any progress is made at all toward developing democratic government, it is likely to be gradual, messy, fitful and slow, with many imperfections along the way. (Diamond 1989:24)

The implication is that different approaches are needed to address the critical elements left out by theoretical definition of liberal democracy. For instance, while liberal democracy upholds the principle of equality of all citizens in the eyes of the law, it does not address the question of social equity. Phenomena such as poverty and social inequality among citizens and nations are therefore seen as a natural outcome of the right of the individual to choose. As a result, liberal democracy as it exists now is unable to deal decisively with some of the major issues like increasing poverty and intolerable social injustice in the sub-region. The elements of liberal democracy can be applied to West Africa, however, they should be adapted to focus on social agendas that target the interest of the deprived in society, rather than individualistic interest.

Both Anglophone and Francophone countries in West Africa may have chosen different paths to liberal democracy, however, there are no significant distinctions in the way both blocs practice it. The exception, however, is that individual Anglophone and Francophone countries have tried to adopt various variations of liberal democracy in a way that best suits the peculiarities of each country. Irrespective of the political and ideological legacies bequeathed to West Africa by former colonial powers, it appears that

both blocs are confronted with similar tests of governance so far as liberal democracy is concerned.

Without denying the fact that the political instability that formerly characterized the sub-region seems to be a thing of the past, there are strong indications that some other challenges are emerging. In the analysis, the marginal ratings scored in the area of safety and security attest to this fact. The proliferation of small arms and the escalating increase in violent crime, such as armed robbery, has become a common feature in West Africa. The most worrying threat however, is the usual violence associated with elections in the sub-region. Such violence not only leads to loss of innocent lives and property but also has the potential of once again causing instability in West Africa, thereby derailing the gains made so far in adopting liberal democracy. West African countries need to expand the level of cooperation among member states to develop mechanisms in the form of a regional “Interpol-like organization” that will ensure the sharing of information on security related matters. This could help curb the worsening of violent crimes and other social vices in the sub-region.

In the area of human rights and the practice of the rule of law in West Africa, progress is rather slow. While Benin and Ghana appear to be relatively better off, the situation in Nigeria remains abysmal. Governments in West Africa may generally not be violating the fundamental freedoms of their people as in the past, yet violations perpetuated by law enforcement and other security agencies remain rampant as a result of administrative dysfunction involving negligence and lack of understanding of the importance of rule of law and the need to protect peoples’ human right.

Elections are now routine in most countries in the sub-region. What is yet to be achieved is for member states to meet the international standards of credibility. Ghana, followed by Benin, may have carved a niche for themselves when it comes to organizing credible elections. Unfortunately, Nigeria, in this case appears to have serious problems in organizing credible elections. This makes one doubt whether any opposition party would ever win an election in that country, considering the extent to which the incumbent had held on to power since the country's transition to democracy in 1999. Regrettably, the situation in Nigeria, which is a stain on democracy, is common in many countries in the sub-region.

Consequently, in West Africa, democracy does not strictly guarantee good governance just as bad governance is quite possible under formal democratic structures. The introduction of democratic institutions in the form of more political rights, civil rights, and freedom of the press, among others, therefore, may or may not be associated with improved governance.

First of all, democracies through free, fair, and competitive elections may allow the electorate to remove bad or corrupt political leaders, while allowing people to keep more efficient, successful regimes. This compels leaders to explain and justify their decisions and to consult a broad range of constituencies before making decisions. Such participation and debate give the public a stronger sense of policy ownership. As a result, political leaders govern more effectively in the public interest. In addition, policies are more sustainable thus improving the quality of governance in the long run.

On the other hand, the fact that electoral vote can be purchased, as has been the case in many elections in West Africa, may allow wealthy individuals or parties to control the electoral process in much the same way that an authoritarian regime would.

What countries in West Africa should focus on is to identify ways of making democracy more mature, by better facilitating good governance. If done correctly, resources can be used to advance the public good. It is refreshing to note the extent to which civil societies are making inroads in the democratic process in West Africa as indicated by the high scores achieved by all three countries. Such positive trends, as compiled by the WB WGI data over a period of time for each country in its 2007 report after decades of marginalization, is very crucial in West Africa. This is because of the important role that civil societies can play in compelling authoritarian regimes to undertake reforms that will encourage political pluralism, state and leadership accountability and freedom of the press.

Transparency and accountability remain the bane of governments in the sub-region. Despite attempts to instill this in the society, corruption continues to frustrate the member states because of the lack of the political will to deal decisively with the problem. The loss of revenue to the government that should be utilized to promote economic growth and improve the lives of the masses continues to be misappropriated and unaccounted for in West Africa. Nigeria, which scored a low mark for this variable, has consistently been rated to be a highly corrupt country in the sub-region by almost all organizations conducting such analysis.

Liberal democratic systems in West Africa can only increase economic growth through the implementation of good policies by governments. As a result, if liberal

democracy is associated with improved governance, then eventually it stands a good chance to lead to accelerated economic growth and prosperity. Thus, liberal democracy could reshape governance to become a key facilitator of growth and prosperity if stronger policies on formal political participation and representation through political parties and the electoral systems are properly developed. At the same time, it is also important to ensure checks on arbitrary power by separating powers among the executive, judiciary and legislature, and by creating effective independent entities.

Comparisons of Results

One of the purposes of this thesis is to increase the awareness on the trend of liberal democratic transition in West Africa by comparing the patterns of assessments conducted by reputable research bodies in this field. The works of one such trustworthy research institutions is the WGI whose research in the area of governance has become widely used among policymakers and academics. Out of the six WB WGI, four indicators provide adequate grounds for comparison to four out of the five variables used in this research for the selected countries. The WGI are: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. Table 4 below shows the WGIs indicators and their comparable and corresponding variables as used in this thesis for the case studies.

The only variable in the research that is not directly comparable to the WB WGI is elections. However, most research institutions on elections in West Africa generally agree that Ghana, followed by Benin have organized more credible elections than Nigeria.

Table 4 below shows the performance of the case studies regarding the WGI indicators.

Table 4. Comparable WB WGI and Thesis Variables

WB WGI	Thesis Variables	Remarks
Voice and Accountability	Vibrancy of Civil Societies	
Political Stability and lack of violence	Security and Safety	
Rule of Law	Rule of Law and Human Rights	
Control of Corruption	Transparency and Accountability	

Display of WGI Research Results

A summary of the WGI research is as displayed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. 2007 WGI Summary of Country's Percentile Rank (0-100)

	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	Remark
Voice and Accountability	60%	62%	35%	
Political Stability and lack of violence	62%	59%	10%	
Rule of Law	38%	54%	10%	
Control of Corruption	40%	60%	24%	
Average Percentile	50.00%	58.75%	19.75%	

Source: Extracted from www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance.

WB WGI Versus Thesis Analysis

By comparison, individual scores of the case studies for each variable differ for both the WB WGI and the thesis analysis. This is obviously due to the differences in the methodology used. However, both WGI assessment and the evaluation done by this thesis portray the same general trend of affairs in West Africa, so far as liberal democracy is concerned. Table 6 below, directly compares the results of the thesis and that of the WB WGI assessment. By using the congruence method, the two show the same pattern and portrays the fact that Ghana, closely followed by Benin, appears to be setting the pace regarding liberal democratic governance in the sub-region, while Nigeria still has a lot of work to do.

Table 6. Comparing Summary Results of WB WGI and Thesis Variables

	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	Remarks
Totals of Thesis Variables	79.00%	84.50%	51.50%	
Average Percentiles of WGI	50.00%	58.75%	19.75%	

Summary and Conclusion of Chapter 4

This chapter analyzed data gathered from research on the challenges and prospects of liberal democracy in West Africa by analyzing each of the case studies using the five variables identified by the author. To capture the quality of services expected to be provided to citizens by liberal democratic governments in West Africa, the following variables were selected; safety and security, strengthening the rule of law and respect for

human rights, promoting more genuine and competitive elections and political processes, increased development of a politically active civil society and more transparent and accountable governance.

A summary of the assessment of liberal democracy in West Africa revealed mixed results that suggest that the tenets of the liberal democratic system of governance in the polity of the sub-region is uncertain. In the area of safety and security for instance, there are still emerging challenges, such as proliferation of small arms, and increases in violent crimes, such as armed robbery, in West Africa. The most worrying threat however remains the violence often associated with elections which has the potential of once again causing instability in West Africa.

Though unlike before, governments in West Africa are generally not violating the fundamental freedoms of their people as they use to, but the rate at which the practice of human rights and of the rule of law is developing is rather slow. Despite the fact that elections are now regular in most countries in West Africa, the quality of the elections usually fail to meet the international standards of credibility. It is also refreshing to note the extent to which civil societies are influencing the democratic process in West Africa. However, transparency and accountability continue to be the bane of governments in the sub-region, as revenue that could have been utilized to improve the lives of the masses by those in authority continues to be misappropriated and unaccounted for in West Africa.

By comparison and using the congruence method, the evaluation done by this research as compared to similar analysis done by the WB WGI indicates corresponding trends. These trends show a slow process of transition towards accepting liberal democracy in West Africa. Additionally, both reinforces the fact that Ghana, followed by

Benin, appears to be setting the pace regarding liberal democratic governance in the sub-region, while Nigeria is still struggling to catch up.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Liberal democracy in West Africa is the best way to address the political and economic problems facing the sub-region. However, recent democratization efforts have not been completely successful partly due to the slow pace of the transition and the lack of political will by incumbent governments to fully embrace the tenets of liberal democracy.

Recommendations

In view of the limited capacities of countries in the sub-region, dealing with these limitations will require selfless sacrifices not only from the leaders, but also citizens alike. In this regard, the following recommendations are made in order to sustain the growth of liberal democracy in West Africa:

1. West African countries should expand the level of cooperation among member states to develop mechanisms that will ensure the sharing of information on security related matters to curb the worsening of violent crimes and other social vices in the sub-region.
2. West African countries need to promote political systems which provide opportunities for all its citizens, by encouraging all elements of civil society, and to create conditions that guarantee broad input in governance and decision-making.
3. Countries in the sub-region should encourage political systems that provide for the effective transfer of power and periodic renewal of leadership through competitive and credible multi-party elections.

4. West African countries need to strengthen their public sector legislative and administrative institutions, including efficient parliamentary oversight, judicial independence, and adequacy of the audit machinery to provide and verify government decisions.

5. Public institutions and public officials need to be accountable for their behavior, actions and decisions, and there should be greater transparency, predictability, and accountability in political oversight through government policies that are actively adhered to.

6. In order to create conditions for economic prosperity, governments in the sub-region should increase their responsiveness to citizens by ensuring effective public sector management with stable macroeconomic policies, effective resource mobilization and efficient use of public resources.

7. Adherence to the rule of law across West Africa needs to be in a manner that protects personal and civil liberties and gender equity and ensures public safety and security with equal access to justice for all.

8. West African states must adopt a national budget process that is participatory, transparent, and accountable in order to lead to effective management of resources and sustainable economic growth.

Recommended Area for Further Study

This thesis has only presented the potential of liberal democracy being the engine of political and economic growth in West Africa. However, other areas that could still be researched on as West Africa continues its search for suitable forms of governance should be how to mitigate the shortcomings, if any, of liberal democracy in West Africa.

The analysis revealed low scores for transparency and accountability. In addition, further investigation into the reason for this phenomenon and why corruption is so pervasive in West Africa is recommended for further research.

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