

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

State Nations and the Fate of Western Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract:

This research work is premised on Western liberal democracy and its applicability to African political scenarios. Increased political violence immediately before, during and after elections in most African states south of the Sahara has raised so many questions regarding the feasibility of introducing the western conception and version of multi-party democracy to societies that are comparatively poor and vulnerable to a hodgepodge of vicissitudes. Political party formations and affiliation mirror a diversity of irreconcilable ethnic identities that are as old as African history itself. Inter-ethnic hostilities within the colonial territorial framework of states were only temporarily pacified by colonialism, but were earnestly revived under the guise of democracy. Even those western states that claim to epitomize the principle of exercising political power by elected governments through the consent of the governed have themselves not been able to convincingly practically demonstrate and uphold democratic values admirably. Rather, they have prioritized economic self-interest to the point of fuelling ethnic discord within states by rendering financial support and military backing to ethnically motivated political parties- all in the name of democracy! This paper analyses colonial and post-colonial challenges confronting Sub-Saharan Africa which stifle its efforts at substantive democratization. It highlights that territorial entities south of the Sahara are state nations and not nation states as a result of colonialism, and that ethnic homogeneity, even through the most brutal forms of authoritarianism to maintain cohesion and coerce people into unanimity, is bound in the long run to face serious disintegrative and separatist tendencies.

Keywords: State, nation, democracy, ethnicity, nation-building

1. Introduction

Before the onset of colonialism, Africans were deeply engaged in local and long-distance trade. This economic activity was not always peacefully conducted. In some parts of Africa, there was a heavy concentration of people in areas pregnant with resources and items of exchange. A Hobesian state of nature existed where human beings were hunted down and captured into slavery as special trade items. The situation worsened when Europeans saw the need to engage free African labour to work in their cotton and sugar plantations until the Industrial Revolution in Europe rendered the slave trade a non-viable economic proposition. The Great Triangular Slave Trade Route in West and Equatorial Africa, and Omani Slave power in East Africa demographically altered the pattern of African existence as these created an array of trade networks and interactions. The trade in human beings intensified irredeemably with very active European participation. Some Africans died resisting capture. Others died of hunger on the way to the coast or as a result of other horrible causes. When the slave trade was officially abolished and replaced with legitimate trade, new socio-economic conditions for European colonization were created.

The 1884-5 Berlin Conference, which was entirely a European affair with the objective mission to work out modalities on how Africa could be parceled out amongst themselves without the knowledge of the Africans, heralded in a stroke, the commencement of a political trend that would in later years regard Africans as being incapable of making independent decisions on matters that affect their lives. The rush by European powers to grab territories in Africa, in most cases through very unorthodox means, culminated in the establishment of colonial rule over territories colonially defined by boundaries that only made sense if interpreted in terms of capitalistic calculations. Since the wave of decolonization that swept across the length and breadth of Africa in the 1960s, the former colonial masters have ever since continued to show interest in African governance matters by advocating a form of democracy for Africa measured on their European standards and values.

Western democracy, from an African perspective, is incompatible with the political realities that obtain in Africa. Not surprisingly, many contemporary critics have boldly criminalized it for the incessant fratricidal wars that have robbed Africa of its potential continent developers through civil strife and the politicization of ethnicity in the guise of multipartyism. The one size fits all type of democracy being prescribed to Africa ignores the fact that Africa was the last continent to relieve itself of colonialism, and that

colonialism, indeed, reversed the natural course of history by creating states before nations (Legum, 1985) (Conner, 1978). The arbitrariness of colonially inspired boundaries, drawn in the chancelleries of Europe to tactically facilitate the colonial mechanics of divide and rule, was potentially divisive and explosive in the long run. Regrettably, on assuming power, the new African ruling elite erroneously made use of the colonial framework of existing territorial boundaries to campaign for their freedom and independence as African states. Most of these boundaries have, however, survived precariously, whereas unabated sporadic outbursts of violence of a high magnitude have painted a very bleak picture on future prospects for democratic governance in Africa.

After the Second World War that ended with the defeat of the Axis powers comprising Germany, Japan and Italy, African nationalist historiography and the consequent rise of African nationalism took centre stage throughout Africa after 1945. Returning soldiers were armed with radical ideas of liberty and equality and these played a pivotal role in creating a political climate conducive for the rise of African nationalism. Yet 'nationalism' as a concept is shrouded in ambiguity because not only is it generally used imprecisely, but it is also misunderstood in contemporary history as reference to loyalty to the state. A nation is not a state, and therefore nationalism, contrary to being loyalty to the state, is allegiance to the 'nation'. Such terminological carelessness makes very interesting, any study of democracy in Africa given that a tribe, or an ethnic group, constitutes a nation. Not surprisingly, African independence reawakened national, sub-ethnic and ethnic political sentiments to the extent that very few African states today can unquestioningly qualify to warrant description of stable polities as a result of ethnic politicization. No continent is as ethnically cleaved as Africa. The current appeal for democracy has ironically helped to fuel ethnic particularisms and secessionist tendencies unprecedented anywhere in the world.

In the absence of a generic interpretation of democracy, and given that the term itself is very relative and evasive, the one size fits all approach has failed to work in Africa. The universality of its appeal is frighteningly undeniable, but its implementation with regard to Africa must take realistic cognizance of the ethnic factor, and, above all, the irreversibility of the key constraints acquired at independence in order for it to find meaning and relevance.

The thrust of this paper is to explore challenges that confront Africa's attempts at democratization. It focuses on state nations - as opposed to nation states - as products of colonialism, and on how successive African regimes have unsuccessfully grappled with ethnic power politics in order to meet the Western standard criteria for democratic governance and juridical acceptability. It also examines whether democracy as conceived by the West can be sustained in the African continent, historically characterized as it is by a vast array of irreconcilable ethnicities only brought together to belong to particular geographical entities by colonialism. Personal rule, tyranny, dictatorship and autocracy among other leadership styles in Africa will be discussed in the context of attempts by African leaders to manage diversity and thwart ethnic competition and, in the process, intentionally sacrificing people's liberties on the altar of order and stability. To what extent should African leaders tolerate dissenting or alternative political voices without themselves risking their own privilege of office? On account of the lack of economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa which, if present, would inevitably give rise to class consciousness, is a multi-party strategy coterminous with social, cultural, historical and political past and present realities that define Africa's uniqueness in relation to other world continents? Or is the present phenomenon of 'democratic' party formations not reflective of the politicization or polarization of ethnicity that leads to further instability, poverty and ruin? Do poverty-stricken African countries need the kind of political democracy that comes in prescriptive exotic packages?

Liberal democratic traditions modeled on the western conceptual framework are relatively new to Africa. In itself, democracy is an idealism for which most, if not all, regimes in Africa are not yet prepared to embrace, not only because of the heavy, prescriptive and unrealistic demands it imposes on the African political elite to create a free-for-all political space, but largely because the sociological and cultural conditions for its sustenance are almost literally absent. The ongoing trend by western countries and their affiliate institutions of imposing sanctions in their various forms on African governments deemed undemocratic is to ask for too much on states where the conspicuous salience of ethnicity and poverty dictate that high-handedness on the part of incumbents is the surest guarantee for social cohesion. It can be intimated that some leaders arrogate to themselves indefinite tenure of office as a mechanism to limit the frequency with which leaders come and go so that continuity prevails. After so many years of colonial rule, it would only make sense if African states were left unimpeded in their efforts at nation-building. This means creating new nations from people formerly colonially defined as belonging to the same state, and the concerned states mutually agreeing on possible practical modalities to redress existing ethnic distortions and fragmentations without necessarily redrawing Africa's political boundaries anew.

2. Conceptual Framework

A state is a geographical expression. It is distinguished by the existence of such attributes as an effective government, independence, the right to enter into relations with other states, a permanent population and a defined territory (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982). The challenge that confronts most Sub-Saharan African states is that their populations are historically balkanized and fluid. As such, the social conditions for population permanence in most of them are difficult to fathom because state nations were bequeathed to them by the departing colonial masters. (Conner, 1978) conceives of a nation as reference to a social group which shares a common ideology, common institutions and traditions and a sense of homogeneity. He further posits that there is too, a sense of belonging associated with a particular territory. By implication, if not politicized, the concept of a nation connotes sameness, oneness or group consciousness. It was for that reason that Bismarck in Germany during the time of German unification made exhortations to the Germans to think with their blood (Conner, 1978). From the Latin word 'nasci' meaning to be born, it can be deduced that common blood ties constitute a human collectivity that identifies itself as a nation. The state of African states south of the Sahara is such that colonial state engineering resulted in one nation extending beyond the borders of a single state. Put simply, colonialism resulted in many African states containing more than one nation. For that reason, the appeal for nationalism during the decolonization era was, and perhaps still is, quite misplaced.

Like the concept nation, an ethnic group entertains a subjective belief in its common descent for the propagation of group formation, whether or not an objective blood relationship exists (Conner, 1978). Arguably, the foregoing subjective and objective elements in ethnic group formations are also the key distinguishing characteristics of a 'nation', for which reason 'nation' and 'ethnic group' are equated with each other in a symbiotic juxtaposition.

Most problematic of all is the concept of democracy. It can be explained in behavioural and structural terms. (Bratton and Van de Watte, 1992) intimate that in behavioural terms, democracy is understood to mean meaningful competition, participation and liberties whereas at structural level, it means the existence of an electoral system, multi-party organs and an independent legislature. They further argue that institutional pluralism is in Africa simply a recipe for intensified particularisms [selfish group interests] and therefore antithetical to transition to democracy (Ibid.p.97). At a practical level, most regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa regularly conduct elections in terms of constitutional requirements, but these elections have widely been manipulated to re-endorse the ruling establishments because meaningful competition is stifled, participation is generally selective and people's freedom is curtailed. At a structural level, most electoral systems are chaotic; the opposition's organisational capacity is so terribly circumscribed and political correctness is demanded of the judiciary.

More often than not, the concept 'pluralism,' if politicized or abused, is confused with, and confined to, multi-partyism. Webster's New International Dictionary meaning of pluralism is that it is a state or condition of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial and religious social groups maintain an autonomous participation in the development of their traditional or special interests within the confines of a common civilization. This definition is suitable for European countries where the state followed the nation, and where the nation has and had a clear set of values that are highly collectively honoured.

In the African context, appeals for democracy and pluralistic politics led to political independence which did not automatically translate into political freedom for the electorate (Legum, 1985). Internationally, the concept of democracy has acquired a diversity of meanings (O'Malley and Mtimkulu, 1994). It means many things to different people, for which Dahl in O'Malley (1994:113) comments that a term that means anything means nothing. If democracy is taken to mean governing through the consent of the governed, a re-examination of USA policy with regard to it might help to make some clarifications. During the 1992 Gulf War in Iraq, the USA Vice President Dick Cheney, on behalf of a government internationally acclaimed to be the epitome of democracy, remarked that "it does not matter what the US public thinks of the war in Iraq. The administration does what it wants, not what is popular." (Gowans, 2008). From the foregoing, conceptual variations from continent to continent, and from one community to another, give rise to a conversion of complexities over which the whole creation is never agreed.

3. Methodology

This work is largely the result of a qualitative research paradigm. Historians and political scientists alike unceasingly provide invaluable data on the fate of democracy in Africa. Contemporary historical and political developments in Sub-Saharan Africa are replete with heightened secessionist maneuvers that threaten the stability and credibility of states on a grand scale. In this regard, this research work relied so much on already published materials that focus on states and nationalism. An analysis of research reports and journals with a clear focus on tribe, ethnicity and democracy as dependent variables was made. These variables were problematized in a bid to understanding and appreciating the challenges that impede the meaningfulness and sustainability of democratic transition processes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Of great concern are the frivolous efforts being made by many African regimes to constitutionally accommodate ethnicity. That is clear admission that the survival of any such states depends almost exclusively on the regimes' capacity to manage ethnic/tribal diversity without them losing legitimacy. Therefore, an analysis of constitutions and their rampant manipulation by the incumbents helped to illuminate the on-going crises of legitimacy that border on ethnic politics and ethnic (communal) solidarities.

Online publications, especially those on current democratic debates in Africa, were consulted. These shed light on the pros and cons of the most recent attempts at democratization in selected countries, and on how, over time, the concepts 'democracy' and 'nation' have been accorded different meanings by different people to suit particular historical circumstances and satisfy ulterior political objectives.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1. Background

In the words of the British Foreign Secretary in the 1960s, Lord George Browning, democracy means that "there shall be no one to stop us from being stupid if stupid we want to be" (Gylfason, 2013). Implicit in the statement is the fact that democracy is not a monopoly of any one member state in the world and that it cannot be dictated to any member state by another under any circumstances. Put simply, he affirms the position that it is the people themselves who are responsible for the choices they make on who they want to rule them and how they propose to be ruled. The Tory party in Britain ruled from 1783 to 1830 and that translates to forty-six years [Taliks magazine] of uninterrupted rule. The United States of America (USA) was, from 1776, a constitutional republic where more than half the white population failed to meet the voting qualifications until the introduction of universal suffrage in 1965 (ibid). This, too, translates to a period of eighty-nine years during which the Americans were still grappling with issues of democracy. The United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland were the only functioning democracies by 1943 (Gylfason, 2013). This was because even if race (or nation) and state were coincidental with the former preceding the latter, democracy evolved in Europe over a very long time.

There can be no doubt that the USA and Britain took a comparatively very long time to become established and well-functioning democracies. It is also suggested here that democratic traditions can hardly be built overnight, nor can they be fast-tracked in any manner, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where they are a recent phenomenon. No sooner were some African states such as Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria independent in the 1960s than they were put under immense pressure by western countries to introduce democratic practices in tandem with their own. Nyerere, cited in (Napier, 1994) argues that people in Africa have no more need of being converted to socialism than they have of being taught democracy because both are rooted in their past- in the traditional life which produced them. With that conviction, he won a lot of disciples from most African leaders who felt equally the same, arguing that Western democracy is not suitable for African countries which had their own version of democracy in place well before the advent of colonialism (O'Malley and Mtimkulu, 1994). This perception holds sway among most African leaders who, under the banner of the African Union (AU), have deliberately chosen a confrontational path with the west over the kind of democracy the latter say they want to see in Africa. The political rifts that frequently arise from the West's engagement with African countries south of the Sahara can conveniently be traced to, or emanate from, the west's inability, not only to fully comprehend the uniqueness of Sub-Saharan historical, religious, economic and cultural dynamics and backgrounds over time, but also to its failure to seriously consider the incessant quest by African states for democratic participation, recognition and equality in decision-making processes that affect comprehensive globalization. It is to these that I now turn.

4.1.1. The African Argument

It must be borne in mind that the European partition and colonization of Africa interrupted the ongoing African partition. In the Mandinka Empire, Buganda, Lesotho and Abyssinia existed well established and respectable political systems that could equal European ones, and that Africans themselves were content with. The internecine civil wars that characterized African polities in the second half of the 19th century came to an end once European colonialism had carved up African territory, but there was always tension among the ethnic groups that still wanted to settle old scores. This societal disequilibrium was projected into the evolving independent states of the 20th century, coupled with the concerted drive towards democratic rule. From an Afro-centric perspective, the first wave of political independence, as was the case with Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana among others, had to adopt the one-party strategy as an effective mechanism of imposing unanimity among various ethnicities. Needless to say, authoritarian rule was exceptionally convenient to bring about the political unity necessary to govern the fragile inherited states. It can be argued that the maintenance of the colonial sub-divisions of African territory needed authoritarian regimes to back them up. The application of force became an ingrained trait in the African governance realm particularly when, due to poverty and the conspicuous lack of development, political conditionalities with the potential to worsen the plight of African, were attached to countries seeking external assistance to resuscitate their economies. (Adedeji, 1992) believes that for democracy to be sustained in Africa, financial assistance is necessary because democracy cannot thrive on empty stomachs and under conditions of abject poverty in societies where poverty has a brutalizing effect. He concurs with Bratton et al (1992:439) who argue that democracy is difficult to maintain in impoverished economies.

As more African states attained independence at different times and under unique political circumstances, some European powers could not relinquish their economic control over their former colonies. The circumstances under which each of the African states acquired independence varied considerably. Some, for example, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, got independence through protracted armed struggles that were very costly in terms of human lives lost, whereas Zambia, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and others simply 'made a little noise' and got their political independence almost on a silver plate.

The multi-party definition of democracy is too limited in scope to cover its broader implications. It ignores contemporary struggles by the so-called 'African democrats' to unseat their unrepresentative governments on one hand, and the determination by Africans to liberate their economies from western 'predators' on the other. Of great concern to most African states is the manner in which democracy is portrayed as a revelation, yet it must be concretely expressed in different contexts (Decalo, 1986). Although the sheer weight of democratic forces has made African regimes to concede to democracy, a few case examples suffice to demonstrate how multi-party strategies have heightened ethnic emotions and unprogressive solidarities with serious negative political effects on inter-state unity and ethnic relations. According to Diamond et al (1988:11) voting follows ethnic lines and once in office, leaders favour their clansmen in resource allocation and privilege and ignore or suppress other groups. With time, each group seeks to elevate its own leader to the effect that democracy becomes linked to changing leaders and nothing more. On the contrary, the mere act of changing leaders has not been able to transform societies and institutionalize stable democratic government.

Sub-Saharan Africa was convinced by the biblical notion that God himself does not want opposition; that is why Satan was chased away (Decalo, 1992). On the basis of this perception, Jackson and Rosberg in (Decalo, 1992) postulate that the problem of establishing democracy in Africa is only secondary to the problem of establishing order and stability. This is used as a justificatory myth for the bloated military budgets of most African countries even when relative peace and tranquility prevail. (Weiland, 1991) intimates that lasting democracy in Africa is a façade due to the lack of democratic traditions, the appalling economic situation and ethnic loyalties.

4.1.2. Political Implications of Ethnic Party Formations

It is important to note that political organizations, some of which later transformed themselves into revolutionary movements to fight colonialism, were essentially firmly rooted in ethnicity. In Kenya, Kenya African National Union (KANU) represented Kikuyu sectional or particularistic interests whereas, its rival, Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), was the political mouthpiece of the Luo. In Zambia, the United National Independent Party (UNIP) was for the Bemba and Lozi what the African National Congress

(ANC) was for the Ila Tonga. The Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was predominantly Ndebele, for which reason a splinter organization, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), was oriented towards the Shona people. The Zimbabwean constitution was amended after the 1988 Unity Accord between ZANU (PF) and ZAPU to allow for two vice presidents- one Shona and the other Ndebele. That was 'politician politics' because the ordinary Ndebeles, who were not consulted, felt that they had been betrayed by their leaders. The uneasy ruling coalition was accordingly threatened by the death of Joshua Nkomo in 1999 and that development saw Dumiso Dabengwa abandoning ZANU (PF) to revive the old ZAPU with calls for the establishment of a separate Ndebele state called Mtwakhazi. ZANU Ndonga, initially led by Ndabaningi Sithole in Zimbabwe, was overwhelmingly voted for by the people in Chipinge at every election despite the fact that it always had the slimmest chances of ever winning and ruling the country.

The Batwsana Democratic Party (BDP) battled it out with the Botswana National Front (BNF) in very neatly defined ethnic categories. In South Africa, Inkatha Freedom Party defied all odds against nationalistic appeals of the African National Congress (ANC) to remain a Zulu tribal organization throughout the long history of the struggle against apartheid, and even after independence. The Hutu and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi enjoy a brief respite after the 1994 bloody genocidal conflict that can unequivocally be historically linked to Belgian paternalism. The list of such scenarios is inexhaustive, which suggests an existing thread that is embedded in all attempts by African regimes to democratize the political space to allow for new political players to compete for positions of authority and power.

In Nigeria, the 1979 constitution was a drastic amendment to preceding constitutions. It sought to create a Nigerian identity and acted at a mechanism for social and national engineering to integrate the Hausa-Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba. The principle of 'Federal character' in terms of resource allocation within the states that had risen constitutionally from four in 1960 to thirty in 1991 (Suberu, 1992) was idealistically designed to meet the ever-growing concerns of Nigeria's four major ethnic groups. The Biafran war of 1966 exemplifies the first –ever unsuccessful attempt by the Ibo to secede primarily over distributive concerns. That development led to the realization that respectable constitutions in future in Nigeria had to have a distributive imperative enshrined in them to ensure the indivisibility of the federal state. Given the fact that Nigeria is the most populous state in the whole of Africa, even the best constitution can hardly satisfy the aspirations all the ethnic groups. The rich oil resources, being a major source of conflict, have had influence on the selection and election of political leaders leading to the Boko Haram phenomenon that apparently seems to be more political and ethnic than economic. Boko Haram, which means 'Western Education is forbidden for Muslims,' has created political instability throughout West Africa since its founding by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002.

Ghana has had its fair share of problems of ethnicity in its attempted transition to democracy. The Ewe under Kotoka were the beneficiaries of the new order after the fall of Nkrumah in 1966 (Saaka, 1994). Archeampong's system of representative government to legitimize and institutionalize his unpopular leadership backfired with a palace coup in 1978 (Ibid.277). Bloodless military coups in Ghana, starting with Nkrumah himself up to the era of Jerry Rawlings up to 1983, are clear evidence of the disruptive role of ethnicity. To emphasize on liberal democracy would be untenable on account of this diversity. During Rawlings' tenure, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes that he was compelled to adopt had negative political and economic ramifications that brought more poverty than affluence.

Within the confines of an article, it might not be possible to detail how attempts at democracy have impacted negatively on African states. The most recent failed attempted political transition processes in Zimbabwe and Kenya in 2008-2009 make very explicit, the devastating impact of introducing western-type democracy to societies that are traditionally ordered along tribal lines as a lot of innocent lives were lost due to inter-party feuds. The new experiments in coalition governments are indicative of the failure of democracy in the two countries, and, in each case, elections five years later spelt disaster for the so-called democratic forces.

4.1.3. Double Standards

The legacy of colonialism still haunts most African states south of the Sahara. Equally significant is the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989 leading to a unipolar world dominated by the USA. Skepticism towards the western countries, most of which were directly involved in the colonial conquest of Africa, resulted from the Cold War era where most African states sided with the USSR for their ideological and material support in post-colonial reconstruction. The leading role of the western world in the worldwide thrust for democratic governance ignores peculiar structural and social conditions of African societies. This is because not all cultures are equally capable of building harmonious democratic institutions. What appear to have complicated the situation are the double standards demonstrated by the USA, Britain and other western countries in Africa's transition processes.

Classic dictatorial regimes of Mobutu of Zaire and Siad Barre of Somalia received support from the USA and the British assisted Milton Obote in Uganda to train a ruthless army that the president later equipped to establish the worst record with Amnesty International than Idi Amin (Crowder, 1987). Sudan did not qualify for further economic aid and debt relief from the west for supporting Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War debacle of 1992 (Bratton and Van de Wate, 1992). When ethnic conflict erupted and intensified in the Darfur region in Sudan, western support and effort to terminate the crisis were hardly conceivable in light of Sudan's political 'mistake' in the Gulf war. It can also be argued that the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region was an opportune development for the west to showcase their ambivalence in African crisis situations, and to teach recalcitrant regimes that western consent on international military engagements can only be ignored at a great risk. In West Africa, the USA Secretary of State praised Samuel Doe for his human rights record and trivialized the massive evidence of vote-rigging in the Presidential election (Riley, 1992). This show of political ambivalence has cast doubts on the sincerity of the chief exponents of democracy and has even created challenges on the road to genuine African democratic dispensations.

Democracy ought to be all embracing. It, of necessity, must be contextualized in the global framework to include not only political participation, but also the economic fundamentals that cut across states and nations. Given that politics and economics are very inextricably linked, not much emphasis has been laid on the need to address the pertinent concerns of the African countries beyond the alien economic formulae that cloak unfair trade practices reminiscent of modern imperialism. Global networking systems remain relatively poor in Sub-Saharan Africa, but are quite indubitably well advanced elsewhere. Countries south of the Sahara are still technologically in the 20th century: they emit a negligible percentage of the total greenhouse gases that threaten to obliterate the world through the erosion of the ozone layer. It can be argued that democracy must extend to include the provision of equal opportunities and capacities to all countries in the world to pollute the world environment so that they perish together.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article has highlighted that state nations in Sub-Saharan Africa are a legacy of colonialism. States and nations have quite often been used interchangeably to refer to the same thing. Africa harbours heterogeneous collectivities of ethnic groupings that are, by definition, nations in themselves. The colonial mechanics of divide and rule created political boundaries and established states, each of which had a tremendous mix of different nations. Most of these boundaries have survived up to this day because the new African elite that took power were happy to work within the colonial territorial framework for various reasons. To many African leaders, allowing any alterations to existing political arrangements entailed losing opportunities and power. Authoritarian rule seemed to be the best of options for state management up until irresistible western appeals for democratic governance opened the floodgates of ethnically motivated party formations masquerading as credible democratic opposition political groups. The devastating effects of such ethnic parties are quite revealing. Elections have become the basis for vicious confrontations and inter-party conflicts with the capacity to flare up into internationalized crises. Although it might not be possible to really tell what Africa could have been like had colonization not occurred, the discordant nature of African power politics, characterized as it is by a host of attendant tendencies towards separatism, originated from the political boundaries arbitrarily drawn and inherited. The African partitioning process, far from being endless series of tribal/ethnic wars, was a necessary phase in the constitution of stable polities that might have produced nation states the equivalent of those found in Europe.

Western-type democracy is incompatible with cultural, social and political realities that define Africanness. In the absence of statistical data, the probability that fewer people died under dictatorial rule than under the current era of multi-party politics is hard to refute. It would seem to suggest that the only contribution democracy has had on Africa is the unqualified number of human losses as a result of heightened ethnic conflicts, party rivalries and loyalties and clan-based office-seeking appeals by aspirant politicians. Since democracy cannot be standardized, Africans and their governments must be left alone to determine their own destiny rather than sacrifice whole generations on the altar of democracy. The sustainability of democracy is dependent on a government's ability to meet the socioeconomic needs of its people, and theorizing on the word does not improve the living standards of the general populace. What this suggests is that there is need for the world, particularly the developed countries, to acknowledge the historical genesis of African poverty and unconditionally cancel Africa's debt obligations which are the biggest obstacle to democratization and development (Chikulo, 1993).

Home-grown African solutions that emanate from their collective intrinsic desire for a peace dividend appear to be the cornerstone for sustainable democratic practices only if and when they are accorded due international respect, recognition and adequate time to evolve unimpeded. The western countries and world organizations must reckon with the legitimate authority and powers vested in the African Union and unreservedly confer on it its democratic right to be listened to as Africa's sole representative at international level. The election of president Mugabe of Zimbabwe as chairman of the AU in 2015 is a case in point. Having fallen out of grace with the western countries over land redistribution and his anti-western rhetoric, his choice by a majority of African leaders testifies to political ideals working at cross purposes between Africa and Europe and is an expression of African solidarity. The post-colonial economic, social and political relationships between Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world must be based on, and driven by, such values as mutual respect, equality, honesty and reciprocity. It is when a specific form of democracy external to Africa is imposed that ethnic appeals become a channel for the dispensation of patronage leading to political upheavals, lawlessness and economic stagnation.

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