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بعث أفريقيا الغد في سياق التحولات المعولمة :

رهانات و آفاق

Does Democracy have a Future in Africa?: Complexifying a Dualism

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“In order for African democracy to be relevant and sustainable it will have to be radically different from liberal democracy” (Ake, 1993a: 241).

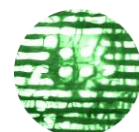
“Africa is probably the most problematic region. Despite some significant successes, moves towards democratisation have all too often foundered on the resistance of dominant elites, the persistence of ethnic conflict, the role of corruption and the like” (Cerny, 2009: 773).

Abstract

Neo-liberal democracy became triumphalist in the morrow of political transitions and “democratisation” in Africa. To be sure, there has been a remarkable shift from one-party system and military rule to electoral politics in Africa in the past two decades. But this has not resulted in democracy.

There is an emerging and dominant view that neo-liberal democracy is what Africa needs, and that “democratisation” has worked in Africa, however, I argue that there is a difference between neo-liberal democracy and its secularist content, and democracy; and that Africa neither got democracy nor has it democratised. Whilst neo-liberalism in Africa embraces the market, it rejects secularism and liberal ethics or liberal morality. Rather than democratise Africa is de-democratising based on the disempowerment of working people, youth and women; authoritarianism has been unleashed through electoralism and new forms of multi-party censorship and control that pervade the political space. There is now a need for focus on democratic politics rather than on electoral politics, and popular sites of politics as against multi-party politics and spaces of political participation, by women, youth, artisans, new social movements, through alternative-media, popular culture and terrain of political contestation, all geared towards the expansion of the frontiers of democracy.

Party politics in many parts of Africa have worked to de-democratise the polity; and electoral politics stand in antinomical relationship to democracy. This dualism has severe consequences. As a result, people are seeking various and alternative modes of popular participation and political inclusion. They are seeking political relevance outside mainstream party structures using alternative sites of political contestation, and becoming critical of party politics. It is these sites and spaces that need to be focused upon in the discourse of the future of democracy in Africa. In making this claim, I am merely re-echoing the claim by Wamba-dia-Wamba on the need for “new mode of politics in Africa”. The greatest challenge to democracy in Africa today, is not liberal democracy as such, but lack of recognition of its principal content viz liberal ethics. But what are the specific manifestations of liberal ethics and in what ways do they help to de-democratise the polity in Africa?



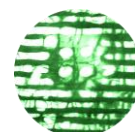
1. Liberal Democracy: externalities and the origin of a dualism

Africa has come to represent some laboratory for vivisectionomy 'effective' economic and political policies are tested for replication and/or confirmation. First, the colonialists claimed to be on a civilising mission to modernise the 'Dark continent' along the lines of Europe. The socio-economic and political result of this incursion has been devastating, and the legacies still endure (see for instance, Ake, 1981; Ekeh, 1983; Rodney, 1976). Second, the new African leaders, who had taken over the reins of power from the colonialists publicised series of national and regional 'blueprints' to develop and improve the standards of living of the people, but the western path to development remained the model. Development was conceived in unilineal and teleological and sometime in Rostowian sense. Theoretically, scholars such as Peters Evans and Thandika Mkandawire have vigorously canvassed the concept of the developmental state; but such states no longer common place and Africa has not produced the same number of Tiger economies as witnessed in Asia (Ake, 1981; Mkandawire, 2001).

Economic adjustment reforms of the 1980s created a new philosophy for the state in Africa and marked an ideological shift from state social responsibility to corporate responsibility; it further meant an abnegation of state responsibility to citizens, in a specific way. The shift towards the theology of the market was both ideological and political. Such a shift had severe consequences for democratic practice in Africa. With specific reference to democracy in Africa, the hydra-headed and multi-dimensional failures have been obvious (Ake, 2000; Chabal, 2002).

When the sun was setting on one-party dictatorship and military rule, social movements and popular struggles were also being subordinated, disintegrated and in other cases transformed into civil society organisations. Their ideological bend became compromised as well as their politics. But a related development was taking place viz is liberal democracy worth struggling for? This debate came in the context of the Third wave of democratisation ably led by Samuel Huntington and Crawford Young. Radical African scholars and Africanists joined in this debate. For instance, Bjorn Beckman and Yusuf Bangura argued that, because liberal democracy guarantees freedom and free reign of the market it is worth the while to develop capitalist relations and proper liberal democracies in Africa. But this led to another debate between whether democracy necessarily must result in development or democracy is good in itself-put differently, a debate between whether we should instrumentalise or essentialise democracy. My sense is that the binary relationship created by the debate was not helpful, and Amartya Sen has demonstrably proven this; democracy is inherently good and better than autocracy and totalitarian systems, it brings freedom which is key to development, and in voting for democratic government, people have expectations of their leaders.

To be sure, there is an emerging and dominant view that neo-liberal democracy is what Africa needs, and that "democratisation" has worked in Africa; however, I argue that there is a difference between neo-liberal democracy, its secularist content, and democracy; and that Africa





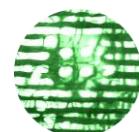
neither got democracy nor has it democratised. Africa is currently de-democratising (Momoh, 2006).

None of the scholars advocating liberal democracy have tried to capture or understand why liberal democracy could not be instituted and practiced in Africa. I will argue that it is because *scholars have tended to separate liberal democracy from liberal ethics or put differently, there is no analytical correlation between both in most studies*. The philosophical definition of liberal democracy did not extricate it from its ethics. *This is what I call the dualism and infraction of neo-liberal mode of self-writing*. Such writing seeks to find nothing wrong with the liberal democratic project in Africa but with the behaviour of the political elite, and their core values and ethical practices which are strange and analysed in externality to liberal democracy. *My claim is that to treat liberal democracy and liberal ethics in Africa as two separate spheres in contradiction to each other is both ahistorical and theoretically misleading*. This is because liberal democratic practices in Europe and North America do not separate the two spheres; and the theory of western liberal democracy does not separate both spheres either.

I will highlight the manifestations and representations of liberal democracy within a dualism. By this dualism, I will argue that on the one hand, African countries like others elsewhere, have been pressured – both internally and externally – to adopt liberal democracy which is considered as the only “game in town” (see Bilodeau, 2014; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Sin and Wells, 2005 for some interesting discussion of this phrase in non-African context); on the other hand, even where they claim to adopt market liberalism, African politicians have failed to inculcate the liberal ethics that is expected to go along with liberal democracy. In explicating the nature of this dualism, I will ultimately attempt to comment on the future of democracy on the continent.

2. Liberal Democracy: Conceptualisation and Contextualisation

More than 200 adjectives have been used to qualify democracy. However, democracy and its meanings have generated a robust debate. Not only are definitions and conceptualisation rooted to some traditions and ideology, but an appreciation of the taxonomies, classificatory schemas, and types of democracies remain a feature of attempts at understanding what democracy means. A simple survey shows strands, types and labels such as direct or participatory democracy, liberal or representative democracy and the Marxist tradition (Held, 1993); majority rule democracy and polyarchy (Dahl, 1972); delegative democracy (O'Donnell, 1994); illiberal democracy (Zakaria, 1997); social welfarist democracy, feminist democracy, green democracy, radical models of democracy, and cosmopolitan democracy (Cerny, 2009; Kurki, 2010), electoral democracies (Brownlee, 2009), and minimalist and maximalist conceptions (Mangu, 2014). But in spite of the multiple labels, liberal democracy has enjoyed the most support from Western states and their financial institutions. I will return to this point presently.

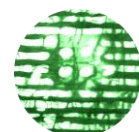




Although democracy remains a contested concept on many grounds and it “now means too much and too little” (Ake, 2000: 29), it is generally viewed as a competitive system of government marked by certain processes, practices, attitudes, behaviours and institutions that guarantee that power and representation is ultimately determined by the people directly and/or through their representatives (Appadorai, 1975; Linz and Stephan, 1996; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997; Schumpeter, 1950).

With its international and financial influence, Western states have elected to promote a brand of democracy that originates in the thought and political economy of their peculiar history (Ake, 2000; Mouffe, 2000 and 2009). As noted by Chantal Mouffe (2009: 556), it is “the articulation between two different traditions: liberalism, with its emphasis on individual liberty and universal rights, and democracy, which privileges the idea of equality and ‘rule by the people’, i.e. popular sovereignty.” Delicately crafted into the Washington and post-Washington Consensus, neo-liberal democracy enunciates the need for states to embrace democracy albeit with market characteristics. Following the end of the Cold War, neo-liberal democracy became triumphalist in the morrow of political transitions and “democratisation” in Africa. It was pushed by Western scholars and by Western governments and their financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who had extended their original responsibilities in post-World World II Europe to include monitoring and directing growth in African countries. African countries had to adjust their economies and politics to reflect liberalism.

Even if democracy does not necessarily have to be liberal (Mouffe, 2000 and 2009), “conventional liberal thought is that, democratization undertaken outside the context of liberalisation is not likely to be successful and enduring” (Osaghae, Isumonah and Albert, 1998: 33). To be sure, there has been a remarkable shift from one-party system and military rule to electoral politics in Africa in the past two decades. But this has not resulted in democracy. Perhaps the greatest critic of neo-liberal democracy from African academic community, is Claude Ake. A few of his criticisms suffice. For one, Ake believes that liberal democracy is foreign and unsuited for Africa as it is based on liberal individualism, “but there is little individualism in Africa” (Ake, 1993a: 243). Second and by extension, Ake notes that “Instead of collectivity, liberal democracy focuses on the individual whose claims are ultimately placed above those of the people. Instead of the sovereignty of the people it offers sovereignty of the law” (Ake, 2000: 10). Third, he contends that to the extent that liberal democracy advances the rule of law as against rule of the people, it will ultimately lead to the rule of the bourgeoisie and the minority (Ibid: 9-10). Fourth, Ake avers that between the market and polity, liberal democracy prioritises and privileges the market. For him, “It is not the economy that gets politicized, it is the polity that gets economicized” (Ibid: 25). Liberal democracy “allows the subordination of politics to economics and the state to the market by offering a concept of politics which nullifies the very *raison d’être* of politics” (Ibid).

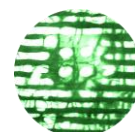


Fifth and most importantly, Ake contends that liberal democracy “offer people rights they cannot exercise, voting that never amounts to choosing, freedom which is patently spurious and political equity which disguises highly unequal power relations” (Ake, 1993b: A9). Sixth, Ake notes that liberal democracy by design seems to paradoxically promote authoritarianism. On this point, he poignantly states:

Democracy is being supported variously by economic liberalisation, Structural Adjustment Programmes, political conditionality, the cutting-off of aid to dictators as a sanction, the continuation of aid to avoid causing economic conditions which encourage extremism, the weakening of the state and the strengthening of the state. Equally, democracy is been supported by urging the need for consensus-building for policy as well as urging political will (a euphemism for authoritarianism) for implementing adjustment programmes, by advocacy of the democratization of development so that the people possess development, and also by top-down approaches, to overcome the resistance of vested interests (Ake, 2000: 30).

Obviously, Ake’s position is that democracy will remain a challenge in Africa if the continent continues to caricature liberal democracy (Ake, 1993a and 2000), this does not in itself excuse African leaders of their tendency to neglect the principal components of neo-liberal democracy. Even where one is blinded to the weaknesses of liberalism in a developing countries’ context, African leaders have also not accepted the ethical component of neo-liberal democracy. For one, they were quick to embrace the market component but fail to fully pursue its political component.

Beyond the disparity in the tendency of African leaders to embrace the market that the polity, politically, neo-liberal democracy became dualist, with reference to their interest, into liberal electoralism and liberal ethics. The former is to be partially accepted or reluctantly implemented, whilst the latter is to be jettisoned or viewed as anathema to the interest of the political elite. It is within this context that I locate the principle of dualism. By liberal electoralism, I mean the political component of liberal democracy that is chiefly marked by the conduct of elections. It seeks to essentialise elections rather than instrumentalise it. Elections have become popular in Africa in the era of the politics of transitions and beyond. This popularity in itself does not mean that elections have become fair, credible and peaceful. Indeed, there are several instances where elections have been conducted with such elections leading to country-wide violence such as in Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe (Matlosa and Shale, 2013). The reasons for this are both structural and attitudinal. The character of the colonial state as an instrument of violence has not been transformed, rather it has been used to serve the interest of the emergent African political class at independence. Military rule and militarism did not help matters, further reinforcing the authoritarian character of the state. Basic freedoms, including the freedom of speech and of the press were denied or violated. These values impacted negatively on the implementation of the

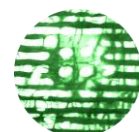




liberal democratic project in the 1990s. Hence the cliché and qualification of “political transitions” and of democratisation to African polities. The second major plank to understanding the limits of electoralism is the character of the emergent political elite in the era of so-called democratisation in Africa. The political elite could not transform into a political class. It therefore came with huge baggage which weighed heavily on the character and quality of democratic values and practices. The social background of many of these political elites was rooted in limited education, concealed social identity, dirty and black money (including corruption, drug deals and money laundering), lack of public and community acceptance or recognition, lack of political pedigree, lack of dignified vocation before venturing into politics (or what I call “a vocation before politics as vocation” e.g., teacher, professional, merchant, and so on). This makes them untutored and unwilling to accept the legal and legitimate ways of practicing electoralism and electioneering.

By liberal ethics, I mean those components that are designed to guide the processes and practice of liberal democracy. These give liberal democracy its fancy and beauty in Western Europe and North America. It goes beyond liberal electoralism because it represents the canonical basis and commandments that characterise both the electoral and non-electoral spheres. The Ethical components of neo-liberal democracy is often listed to include administrative transparency, press freedom, independent judiciary, equality, sovereignty of the people, respect for human life, the rule of law, laissez-faireism and liberty of the individual (cf. Cunningham, 2002; Fatton, 1990; Venter, 2010). Not only is democracy expected to continuously promote human rights and civil liberties, it is most importantly a “process through which people strive to expand these rights, together with the political space necessary for promoting and defending them effectively” (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997: 12). Yet, all this seems to speak to a very limited aspect of liberal ethics. I will return to this, presently.

If we are therefore to adopt the position that “no regime should be called a democracy unless its rulers govern democratically” (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 15), then it means that a number of African countries do not qualify to be referred to as a democracy neither can they be referred to as neo-liberal democracy. Similarly, if democracy is said to compose of three elements, ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people,’ then “if one of these elements is missing, it ceases to be a true democracy” (Imobighe, 2006: 15). But is the Lincolnian conceptualisation truly correct or is it a mere rhetoric? With neo-liberal democracy and its Omni-competent markets, the people might become secondary or even irrelevant in the face of volatile markets. In foisting structural adjustment on the people, for instance, the people may not only become victims of their leaders’ ruthlessness but democracy in that sense becomes something else. Neo-liberal democracy does not accept that the state is active actor and protector of the masses in the market. At the detriment of the state, liberalism advocates that the private sector be promoted. But in what specific manner has African leaders failed to adhere to liberal ethics?



3. Democratisation, De-democratisation and the Tragedy of Liberal Democracy

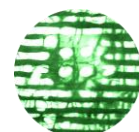
Two points are worth recalling. First, liberal democracy is a tradition that developed in Western economic and political thought. Second, while western economic thought is marked by the seemingly Omni-competent of the market, the political thought is marked by the rule of law and other civilised practices in competition. For African leaders, the political component must be dualist to ensure and protect their hold on power. This dualism differentiates Africa's liberal democracy from its Western forbearer. By this,

Democracy has meant political liberalisation and pluralism or multi-partism for the Western donors and leaders, laced with the principle of Third Wave of Democracy. For the African leaders democracy meant that the African people had no right to wage further struggles, or to ask further questions about their existential realities, but to simply obey and embrace the leaders- the new democrats (Momoh, 2006: 62).

This means that rather than democracy, the African masses are presented, at best with democratisation, and at worst with *de-democratisation*. To be sure, and for the sake of clarity, de-democratisation differs from democracy or from what might be viewed as democracy's inferior nephew, democratisation (cf. Momoh, 2006). Between the latitude of democracy and democratisation is the trivialisation of democracy and its adulteration as 'democratisation' by both international and national principalities. Simply put: while democracy, "whether classical or social democratic, popular or socialist, talks about representative government and empowerment of the people" (Ibid: 63), "democratization is a process leading to liberal democracy more of a carasoule for neo-liberal fundamentalism or market democracy prescribed for the Third World" (Ibid: 62). De-democratisation, on its part, is represented by the (in)actions of politicians and others "saddled with the political responsibility of expanding the democratic space under the civilian era, whose actions, however, have led to shrinking the democratic space and the imposition of authoritarian culture" (2006: 63).

Whatever the case, democratisation or de-democratisation, neo-liberal democracy is bifurcated. This dualism, at least if we adopt the logic that "only democracies can become consolidated democracies" (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 15), means that majority of African countries are not yet democratic even if they continue to hold elections. It is this reality that Cyril Obi (2008) limits the option left to us by noting that there is "No Choice, But Democracy."

While it is unnecessary to restate the points that have already been made on the failings and challenges of democracy and/or democratisation (cf. Ake, 1993a and 2000; Obi, 2008; Chabal, 2002 among several others), here, our goal is to draw attention to the contradictory dualism in Africa's neo-liberal democracy. What are the representations of this dualism? What logic and forces promote them and benefits from their existence and entrenchment?





4. Aspects of Liberal Political Ethics

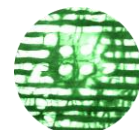
I wish to distinguish liberal ethics in general from liberal political ethics. My preoccupation here is to discuss liberal political ethics and how they are organically connected to liberal democracy and how this helps to deepen and build democracy. I begin by discussing the more well-known liberal political ethics before I examine the less known ones.

Peaceful conduct at elections is a mark of and an extension of civility associated with the civic culture. But this has eluded the African political elite. Violence is often deployed in electoralism, thus making “political competition now assumed the character of warfare” (Ake, 2001: 6). As noted by Downs (1957), in a democracy, ‘losing’ political parties do not use undemocratic means to reclaim power as was the case in Ivory Coast where Alassane Ouattara, with the support of armed militias, gained political power following the violence deposition of Laurent Gbagbo or in the recent Egyptian case where a serving military administration that benefited from a coup to get into power has taken advantage of its attendant political benefits. Violence is also perpetuated by mobilising ethnic loyalty as was the case in Kenya in 2008. In Nigeria, since the 1999 transition to civil rule, over ten top politicians have been killed and their killers are yet to be arrested or prosecuted. A serving minister was killed in his house and nothing happened. Violence has therefore become a strong tool or weapon in the hands of those who are unwilling to play by the rule; hence violence empowers weak political elite, and disempowers those politicians who wish to play by the rules. Fear-mongering become huge political capital in winning and sustaining power. Hence many political elite invest hugely in the infrastructure of violence rather than mounting the soapbox.

Aside the use of violence, the polity is characterised by corruption in all forms. Sources of party funding are often not disclosed to Electoral Management bodies. Campaign finances are shielded in secrecy neither is full scale report written to EMBs. Asset declarations by politicians are often dubious. All these ethical issues are criminalised in many polities of Europe and North America and they are jailable offences. But they are often taken for granted in Africa even where the Electoral Laws explicitly criminalise such acts.

There is vote-buying and what is now called “community rigging” where by whole communities decidedly sway votes for a candidate at elections, this is not the same as gerrymandering. This has made the elections heavily monetised with a lot of the money going into vote buying rather than actual campaign expenses.

There is also the issue of administrative transparency and public accountability. Budgets of many African countries are not considered as Acts of parliament and therefore laws that must be obeyed or implemented to the letter. Public institutions of accountability are weak and therefore incapable of deepening democracy. Where an institution is a pocket of effectiveness and threatens the survival of ruling elite, it is almost certain that such institution would be attacked by the executive by having a reduced budget or by the removal of its head. Routine legislative



oversight may also be used to erode the effectiveness of such agency or department. Rather than ensure accountability, oversight has been used to deepen corruption in public life in Africa.

If human rights are accepted, and they are, as inseparably linked to democracy, then African states, even some of the most respected, will most likely fail. State security agencies remain militarised and used to hound opponents into jails on trumped up charges. Executive recklessness seems to characterise the democratic space, with the “African Bigman” demonstrating insensitivity to the rights and entitlements of citizens. From the killing of protesting Marikana mine workers in South Africa in 2012 to the sponsoring of violence by some African states, such as “Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda in the DRC, Sudan in South Sudan and Chad, and Chad in CAR” (Mangu, 2014: 66), the lives of Africans seem to matter less. The extra-judicial killings by the Nigerian security force have been documented (See Amnesty International, 2009) and suffice to say that one of the reasons adduced for the insecurity in the north-eastern part of the country was the extrajudicial killing of Muhammed Yusuf, the former leader of the Boko Haram terror group. Unquestionably, to the extent that the group has committed some of the most gruesome killings of innocent Nigerians and destruction of property in the country’s history is in itself ‘de-democratisation from below.’ This de-democratisation from below is the dangerous disregard for democratic principles in conflict resolution in societies and an embrace of undemocratic means in making claims on the state that groups may or may not accept. While de-democratisation from below explains some aspects of events in sub-Saharan Africa and post-uprisings Libya and is a subject of future discourse, it is sufficient to mention that in the same manner that Yusuf was killed by the police in 2009, the Nigerian army recently opened fire on peaceful protesters in Zaria in July 2014 killing more than 30 protesters including three sons of a prominent religious cleric, Sheik Ibrahim El-Zaki Zaki. In order not to lose focus on the key point, executive recklessness and violation of basic rights of citizens have resulted in a creeping militarism in many democracies in Africa. These characteristics are ethical issues that are incompatible with liberal political ethics.

Meanwhile, once African leaders gained the reins of power, they do not play by the rules of the game, redefine those rules outside the parameters of constitutionalism. Extension of rule outside permissible constitutional framework is one clear illustration. As Imobighe (2006: 15) notes, “Once a government emerges through an ‘election,’ it is automatically adjudged to be a democratic government, irrespective of what it does with the political power so acquired.” And since election seems to be the criteria, “unrepresentative elites have learned how to remain in power while allowing opposition parties and election” (Friedman, 2007: 90). Both ways, the post-election reality, beyond violence, is also characterised by the quest to corrupt the polity for specific interest. For instance, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal had sought to change the law to allow them stay in power. Other leaders such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe had mastered the skill of staying in power and ruthlessly quashing opposition. There are long standing leaders who continue to hold elections in which they alone can win, such



as Paul Biya in Cameroun. Officials of electoral management bodies are sometimes corrupted or compromised or become partisan to allow certain parties emerge victorious at elections. Hence, it is not often the case that incumbents truly won elections or that opposition in Africa are weak, it is often the case that ***the people vote, the votes are counted, but the votes do not count: hence they do not reflect the outcome or preference of the voters.***

Lack of political tolerance also manifests in Africa. Ruling elite in most cases do not allow critical opposition. The instrument of the state is mobilised against them to intimidate and cow them. In other instances, ethnic sentiment is mobilised with severe consequences as was seen in Kenya's 2007 election where contest between Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Party of National Unity (PNU) led to ethnic violence with more than 1000 deaths and over 300,000 displaced. The existence of strongmen and godfathers, rather than strong institutions, further shrinks the democratic space. In addition to the violence, intolerance and disregard for rules, the embrace of market ideology in the face of mass poverty means that the toiling masses of Africa, who already cannot relate to 'democracy' that seems to better the lot of the political elite, are further disempowered, economically through such policies as removal subsidy, liberalisation and de-regulation.

Paradoxically, Africa has witnessed a number of violent protests in the era of neo-liberal democracy. Expectedly, rather than accept the tendency for self-serving individualistic behaviours in neo-liberal democracies to distort Africa's economies and politics giving room to such protests, the usual culprits are listed to include greed, grievances, institutions, ethnicity, resource curse, and even inequalities (see the edited Brown and Langer, 2012). Very few have accepted that neo-liberal democracy, to the extent that it has infractions and distortions is one cause of its unattractiveness in Africa.

The less known ethical issues and factors that do not feature in the liberal political ethics of African political elites include family background and values, religious commitment, service to community, previous records of doing drugs or being a drug-baron, past record of alcoholism and battery, tax evasion, and having children out of wedlock or extra-marital affairs or some controversial social and economic past. Other issues include proven past record of community service, and public service, hedonistic practices and the blurring of the private and public sphere in governance or outright abuse of office (e.g. using public funds to support the private needs of the President or members of his family, inculcating the culture of what Richard Joseph calls prebendalism).

The cardinal objective in valorising liberal political ethics is to create benchmarks and standards for constructing political trust in a polity and a definition of what stands as public stands for measuring political morality of the political elite. This has the capability of reconstructing the covenant and making it a solemn pact between the political elite and the citizens. However, it is apparent that if the Political elite of Africa were to pass the public benchmarks in addition to being ideationally-driven, they are most likely to mutate from being a political elite into a





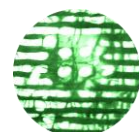
political class. At present, the reality on ground makes this a mirage or an impossible desideratum. The critical question here is what is the future of neo-liberal democracy in this ethically distorted form on the continent of Africa?

5. The future of neo-liberal in Democracy: can liberal political ethics be brought back in?

The neo-liberal democratic project as opposed to the liberal democratic project is an utterly reactionary one rooted to post-Washington Consensus. Its inheritance is the construction of new political elite in Africa whose interests are unanimously opposed to those of the toiling people of Africa. There are two options left: either a resort to what Bjorn Beckman and Yusuf Bangura so forcefully clamoured for viz liberal democracy or a resort to developmental democracy. It should be stated and with emphasis too that the political elite cannot build liberal democracy in Africa because they lack the requisite and attendant liberal ethics. And unless the political elite transforms into being a political class it is unlikely to acquire those values, nuances and characteristics; its therefore less likely to build the liberal democratic project in Africa. It frustration with neo-liberal democracy, inability to build liberal democracy because of the absence of liberal ethics, that has resulted in the clamour for developmental democracy in Africa. The debate on whether democracy means development has been fairly settled, yet majority of Africans want their 'democratic' governments to be developmental. In 1983, Richard Sklar had been on point when he noted that "the imperatives of development are far more demanding than the claims of democracy" (Sklar, 1983: 11). So any meaningful democracy must first be aimed at prioritising the urgent needs of the people. Nzongola-Ntalaja (1997: 22) impressed the need for a developmental democracy thus:

The question is whether or not democracy is sustainable under the current conditions of economic crisis in Africa. There is the notion that under poor economic conditions, it will be difficult for democracy to take root. The poor will make demands that the state cannot meet. Military elites, no longer receiving the privileges they had during easier times, will turn on elected leaders and remove them from office. Given the rising tide of regionalism and ethnic particularism, the various ethnic communities are likely to perceive political power in zero sum ways and thus engage in interethnic competition for power (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997: 22).

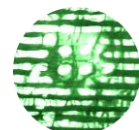
The need for development in a democracy becomes obvious from another perspective. Democracy, by implication, is based on the assumption that the people who will make choices of who governs, also possess certain level of political education). It is this these people, in the words of Appadorai, "thinking human beings, men and women, who will take an intelligent interest in public affairs, and will be critical of the Government, who will be tolerant of views



different from their own, and who will not pervert public power to private interest” (1975: 140). Proponents of liberal democracy had promised this development. Inherent in liberalism is the doctrine that the market promotes development; this is an utterly false claim-the market disempowers majority of the toiling people of Africa. And because North America and Europe – perhaps before the recent recession and state interventions – is a good example of the developmental potential of the markets, Africa can only expect a repetition of this growth and development. So far, this expectation has failed to materialise. Today, the logic and promises of the Washington/ post-Washington Consensus are challenged by a Beijing Consensus that advocates, among other things, a strong state presence in the economy.

The point must be made that neo-liberal democracy is also favoured by the African Union (AU). In promoting its New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which, advocates the strengthening of the markets within a market context (Adésinà, 2001), the ‘blueprint’ set itself against the African people at least by discarding lessons from the failings of the same policies – Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) – that had sapped the energies from the toiling masses of Africa some decades earlier. Beyond the valid criticism that NEPAD is not philosophically or ideologically African in origin (cf. Adésinà, 2001; Olukoshi, 2002), drafters of NEPAD intended to promote (liberal) democracy, by among other things, promoting African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). With this *hope*, it is expected that, rather than the people, African states and their leaders, will someday take democratic principles serious by being peer-reviewed. So far, this hope of an effective peer review, is at best unfounded and at worst dwindling. This point can be buttressed by the Obasanjo-Wade paradox. Olusegun Obasanjo and Abdoulaye Wade immensely contributed to the emergence of NEPAD, which in this case is the continental neo-liberal project. Obasanjo, while not being bothered that NEPAD’s peer-review, by implication, frowns on sit-tight syndrome, decided to extend his stay in office by another four year in violation of the constitutionally accepted maximum two-terms of four-year tenure. Obasanjo was unsuccessful in this bid but he was soon to be appointed by AU and ECOWAS to pacify Abdoulaye Wade not to take the same route. Unsurprisingly, he failed. The point is not really that he failed to pacify Wade, even if that was the honest aim, the point is more in the reality that the people, regardless of the assumptions of their leaders and some of their intellectual supporters, are the most critical and decisive elements in democracy. APRM is, however, a “toothless” (Mangu, 2014: 69) ‘instrument’ based on the voluntary choice of respective governments.

It is apparent that rather than democratise, Africa is de-democratising based on the disempowerment of working people, youth and women, authoritarianism unleashed through electoralism and new forms of multi-party censorship and control. This situation underscores the need for focus on democratic politics rather than on electoral politics, and popular sites of politics as against multi-party politics and spaces of political participation, by women, youth, artisans, new social movements, through alternative-media, popular culture and terrain of

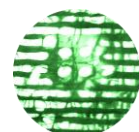




political contestation to expand the frontiers of democracy. Essentially, party politics in many parts of Africa have worked to de-democratise; and electoral politics stand in antinomical relationship to democracy. This dualism has severe consequences. As a result, people are seeking various and alternative modes of popular participation and political inclusion. They are seeking political relevance outside mainstream party structures using alternative sites of political contestation, and becoming critical of party politics (Addah et al, 2012). It is these sites and spaces that need to be focused upon in the discourse of the future of democracy in Africa.

6. Conclusion

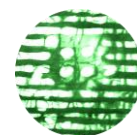
In conclusion, it is apparent that Africa needs to rethink the projects of neo-liberal democracy, liberal democracy and development democracy. Analytically, they must not be mixed up or confused with each other; none of these comes without its challenges. Electoralism has posed serious setback for neo-liberalism, but in the process it has foisted neo-liberal democracy that has also come with deeper and complex problems, the one major problem is the creation of a political elite with no sensitivity to liberal political ethics. This has negatively impacted on the deepening of electoralism, hence has resulted in de-democratisation in Africa. The votes do not count and electoral outcomes have been quite frustrating so are the values of the political elite which have resulted in lack of political trust. All this have led to a clamour which goes beyond the claim of Nzongola-Ntalaja's "second independence"; the people are now demanding for a developmental democracy. Even the accomplishment of this project requires the toiling people rethinking citizen and political activism. This is the only way of not only transcending the dualism of liberal democracy but also realising the dualism of the toiling people: democracy and development.





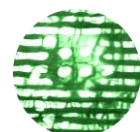
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