

## INTERNATIONALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY: A HOPE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

NWANEKWE VALENTINE CHUKWUEMEKA

Department of Political Science,  
Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo.  
Ebonyi state, Nigeria

AND

NJOKU MARCELLINUS OZOEMENA

Department of Political Science,  
Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo.  
Ebonyi state, Nigeria

---

### Abstract

Internationalization of democracy remains a significant theme in international politics. The basis of a democratic state is liberty where individual participation and fundamental human rights are guaranteed in addition to the enthronement of an enduring atmosphere for peaceful change and the creation of a conducive atmosphere for socio-political and economic development and transformation. The discourse shows to a large extent that internationalization of democracy remains not only a viable but a significant tool for the much desired growth and development of developing countries of the world. This article discussed lucidly the conceptual, characteristics and prospects of internalization of democracy and some tentative suggestions which includes enthronement of peaceful transition of government, citizens participations and credible election for improvement on the already existing status quo in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, Democracy and Developing country.

---

### Introduction

In this millennium, the emphasis has more than ever before increased on the demand for a government in which the people will be the source of power. In other words, the demand for democracy and democratic government world over has taken a national and international dimension. This is as a result of the attendant benefits inherent in democracy and democratic government.

Moreover, the emphasis on globalization of the world because of scientific revolution in communication technology has given vent to the internationalization of democracy which will not only prepare a smooth ground for conducive economic, political and social development of the country, but will also allow the citizens to develop and realize themselves, especially those in the third world since according to Aristotle, the basis of democratic state is liberty.

### Democracy a Conceptual Meaning

Democracy is a form of government, a way of life, and a goal or ideal. The word democracy means rule by the people. Abraham Lincoln described such self-government as “government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representative periodically elected by them. This means that a state may in political science be termed a democratic, if it provides institutions for the expression and in the last analysis, the supremacy of the popular will be basic questions of social direction and policy. (Bishop 1956; Born 1982, Mayor 1952; Appadoral 1961; Nwabueze 1993; Sinclair and Saunders 1967; and the World Book Encyclopedia (1973).

## **Internationalization of Democracy**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, democracy developed steadily throughout the world. Many countries followed the American and British examples. Such democratic institutions as elections and legislature became common. Where kings still ruled, they lost much of their powers and performed ceremonial duties. The industrial revolution brought political changes of great significance.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the working classes demanded and received greater political rights. New laws gave more citizens the right to vote. The fundamental freedoms of speech, the press, assembly and religion were extended and enlarged. It should be noted however that democracy did not take root everywhere or in all parts of the world. Some countries that adopted constitution modeled after that of the United States of America later became dictatorships. These nations found that a constitution alone did not guarantee democracy. In Russia, a small group of revolutionaries set up a communist dictatorship in 1917 and halted that country's progress towards democracy. Germany adopted a democratic form of government, but Adolf Hitler's rise to power brought a fascist dictatorship in 1933. Many newly independent nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America also experimented on democratic form of government, but greed, avarice and the inexperience of their leaders truncated the democratic process as some of them went into military dictatorships. (Bryn-Jones, 1945 and Pinkney, 1990).

Today, the demand for internationalization of democracy has increased more than ever before the world over and indeed in Africa the sweep is enormous. The various dictatorial regimes are being forced out of power through counter coups and economic sanctions cum sabotage, while most have transformed from military to a purely democratic government. Burkina-Faso and Uganda remains a good example, Nigeria would have followed the trend but for the death of General Sani Abacha. The question remains why internationalizing democracy and what is its prospect. See Nwanekwe (2008), Tar and Shettima (2010) and Smith (2011).

## **Why Internationalization of Democracy**

Internationalization of Democracy has become glaring inevitable in lieu of the following:  
Preservation of Human Rights

Democracies attempt at preserving individual freedom and to promote equality of opportunity. The United States, the doyen and champion of internationalization of democracy in her declaration of independence expressed the belief that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", the declaration added that the people may change or abolish the government if it interferes with those rights. It is believed that the greatest obstacles to individual freedom and equality were political. This was exemplified in Nigeria, during the military dictatorship especially under the late dictator General Sani Abacha that hunted the members of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) and other pro-democratic group. Many of them were killed, among them were Pa Rewane, Kudirat Abiola and many others who fled the country. The botched third term tenure for dictatorial regime of Obasanjo was equally halted by pro democracy elements. It was also believed that these pro democratic elements could preserve freedom by changing the form of government from dictatorship to democracy. The democratic form of government today plays active role in removing inequalities and promoting freedom for all. Democracy has welfare programmes to promote economic security to ease suffering, and to develop human potential. Such programme include old age pensions, health insurance, civil right laws and aid to education and most currently monetization policies and other fringe benefits for workers in Nigeria. See Ode (2005).

Many modern day democracies aim to provide a minimum standard of living and adequate medical care for all. It is important to note that their goal is not perfect equality, because people differ in ability and some work harder than others but equality of opportunity sometimes called social democracy. Nwanekwe (2008), Sheriff and Aliyu (2018).

## **Ensuring Peaceful Change**

Those who favor internationalization of democracy believe that democratic procedures for bringing about change make non-violent revolutions necessary. The history of most third world countries makes it imperative that some measures of order and peaceful changes must be found. The revolutions and counter-revolution and

coup and counter coup d'tat prevalent in the third world countries calls for serious concern. Therefore, the supporters of internationalization of democracy posit that, it meets the just demand of the people more effectively than any other form of government. They point to sweeping economic and social changes that have occurred in the United States of America and Great Britain during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most of these change have taken place peacefully, within the framework of existing political institutions, (Bryn-Jones D. 1945; burn P. 1982 and Eboh S. 2003; Vanguard March 13, 2000; This Day July 20, 2007).

### **Prospect of Internationalization of Democracy**

Nwanekwe (2008) and Pinkney (1990), the prospect of internationalization of democracy is guaranteed if the following conditions remain constant:

- (i) Citizen Participation: Democracy calls for wide spread participation in politics by the people. It is the duty of all adult citizens to vote in local, state or provincial and national elections. Qualified individuals should be allowed to run for public offices, to serve injuries and contribute to the welfare of their country to the best of their ability. Citizens should help shape public opinion by participating in important issues and by supporting the political parties of their choice and ensure the elections are credible.
- (ii) The phenomenal improvements in means of communication, transportation and technology: This has brought the world into closer contact and consequently ideas, information, products and services which originated from one part of the world found their way into far distant places in record times. In the time past, poor means of communication, understanding, ignorance, time and space, made hatred and intolerance to be on the increase. Thus, ethnic nationalities, religious groups and sometimes races who have lived together in harmony over the years are suddenly wakig up to discover that close door neighbours are deadly enemies who must be dislodged or better still annihilated. Such terms as ethnic cleansing have gradually crept into the glossary of social relation. They were seen in action in some places as Somalia, Ruwanda, Burundi, and Yugoslavia etc.
- (iii) Economic Development: History shows that democracy has the best chances of success in countries that have a stable, growing economy, and few extremes of wealth and poverty. Some scholars believe democracy works best in countries with a large middle class.
- (iv) Education: Widespread participation in politics does not necessarily ensure good government or governance. The quality of government depends on the quality of participation. Well informed and well educated citizens are more disposed to participating more intelligently in their government; history shows that democracy is most likely to succeed in countries with high levels of literacy and good educational opportunities. However, the result is quite different from what obtains in most emergent democracies where the bulk of the citizens are illiterates and these people allow others to think and act for them.
- (v) Social Mobility: This is the movement of persons or groups from one class or social group to another. It is vital to internationalization of democracy. For a person to have genuine equality of opportunity, he must be able to improve his income, occupation or social position. A society with a strict class system cannot provide opportunities for individual advancement which democracy calls for. Democracy and indeed internationalization of democracy cannot work, if some people are excluded from certain job because of their race, religion or nationalities.
- (vi) Agreement on Fundamentals: This is the basis of internationalization of democracy. Majority of people in a democracy must believe in the fundamental dignity and equality of all persons. Although democracy stresses the importance of the individual, leaders must be willing to place the welfare of their citizens ahead of their own personal interests. The people also must agree generally on the purpose of government. The situation in multi-ethnic society where a particular section of that society sees itself as the ruling class and other sections as second class citizens breeds

anger and acrimony among different sections of the society Nigeria, Burundi and Rwanda are clear cases where a particular section have continued to dominate the centre stage of their countries political life and this has increased the ethnic rivalry and hatred among them, Ode (2005); Eboh (2003), Esheya (2006), Burn (1982) Bishop (1956) and Rasheed (2017).

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Certainly, internationalization of democracy has a good future since democracy ensures popular participation in the process of government and development. However, much still need to be done globally to ensure its survival in terms of improving the socio-economic conditions of the citizens the world over. Emphasis should be placed on citizen participation, peaceful transition at government and credible elections.

Consequently, thus, there is need for the countries of Western Europe and the United State of America in particular to increase their aids to the new emerging democracies of the third world countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America in addressing their socio-economic and political problems, this, not doubt calls for sober reflection.

### References

- Appadorai A. (1961). *The Substance of Politics*. London: Oxford University Press
- Bishop M (1956). *Basic issues of American democracy*. New York: Appleton Century Inc.
- Bryn-Jones D. (1945). *Toward a democratic new order*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesato Press.
- Burn P. (1982). *Government by the people USA*: University Press.
- Eboh S. (2003). *Human rights and democracy in Africa*, Enugu Snaap Press Ltd.
- Esheya G. (2006). *Democracy and the Quest for responsible governance in Africa*. A Philosophical investigation, Enugu: Victojo Production.
- Mayor M. (ed) (1967). *The tradition of freedom*. New York: Occana Publications
- Nwabueze N. (ed) (1993). *Democratization*. Ibadan: Spectrum Publications.
- Nwanekwe V. (2008). *How would you describe a deeply democratic society Imo State University Unpublished Seminar paper*.
- Ode J. (2005). *Democracy, our crazy dream and Lofty ambition*, Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd.
- Pinkney S. (1990). *Evolving new faces of democracy*. New York; Halt Publications.
- Rasheed, O. (2017). *History for Senior Secondary Schools (Based on NERDC Revised Syllabus)*. Bounty Press Limited.
- Sheriff, G.I. and Aliyu, I.M. (2018), the dichotomy between western and Islamic democracy: an insight into the thematic tenets. *Social science journal*, Vol. 2, PP.1-17, <http://purkh.com/index.php/tosocial>.
- Smith, P. (2011), "After the Revolt, the Change". *The Africa Report*, No.
- Sinclar T. and Saunders J. (eds) (1967). *Aristotle Politics*. Harmon smooth: Penguin classics.
- The World book encyclopedia (1973) Vol. 5 New York: Honston Inc.
- Tar, U. & Shettima, A.G. (2010). "Hegemony and Subordination: Governing Class Power Pol Contested Electoral Democracy in Nigeria. "Information, Society & Justice Vol. 3 No. 2: 135-149.
- This Day Newspapers, July 20, 2007.
- Vanguard Newspaper, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000.