

**DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: THE STUDY OF POST-THIRD WAVE DEMOCRATISATION IN GHANA AND NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The practice of democratic consolidation in Nigeria and Ghana is primarily based on performance of political system in the West African sub-region. While many studies have strongly affirmed this assertion, the incumbent political party and the opposition parties contested for power by election. Democratic consolidation is an institutional arrangement that reflects upon competition with the aim of changing leadership consistently in the political system. The opposition parties in each country have formed an alternative government (power) in the post-third wave democratization. Consequently, the assertion that the performance of the ruling party corroborates the practice in Nigerian and Ghana that the legitimacy of rulers usually depends on the extent to which the contestants meet the expectations of the voters determine who the vote for as their rulers. In this study, the qualitative research method is adopted. Ghana perfectly consolidated with little electoral challenges, while Nigerian is lagging behind due to inter and intra party crises that resulted in party disunity. The study finds that the practice of democratic consolidation requires electoral setting fashioned along the line of allowing peaceful changes in government where the people so wish. The study concluded that the politicians and electorates must allow democratic tenets to thrive; and recommended that African nations need in the present time to charter a course that will allow democratization and guarantee development of genuine institution of democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

This study centres on African democratic consolidation which pave ways for the assessment of the political institutions in Nigeria and Ghana. This ensures the character that consolidated democratic system perfectly fit in as against the backdrop of pseudo-democracy or semi-democracy. However, the significance of democratic consolidation is to explore the alternation of electoral power with reflection of political parties. Why is this argument important in this study? Over the years, Africa had witnessed various undemocratic characters which changed the democratic rule to either military or one party system. Democratic consolidation is a relative term of procedural legitimacy in the leadership selection after the post-third wave democratisation. It offers a paradoxical political outcome to either the losers or winners after contesting for elections. Democratic power is based on the alternative government (power) and that is how it occurs everywhere and elsewhere Huntington (1991). African political elites are not left out in the distribution of leadership by elections. Competitive election in Africa has become a barometer for assessment of the citizen's political behaviour in the political environment and the process starts after the transition to democracy. It translates the procedural practice to enterprising democracy as the political elites and the electorates participate in democratic norms. However, African transition to democracy informs the trending political issues that interfaced with democratic consolidation or alternative power. One of them is competitive elections which integrates the entire populace on the process of alternative government. Therefore, transferring of power between the incumbent political party and the opposition political parties responds to alternative government in Africa.

Elections have been conducted over the years to change leadership among the contending political parties in Africa. Sometimes, the electoral competition and participation neither complies with democratic norms nor working with the principles of democracy. The evidence of Ghana and Nigeria offer a snapshot of alternative power after a-two-and-half decades in the West African Sub-region. Democratic consolidation is grounded on the turn-over-test underlying high-quality of candidates in contesting election that should be free and fair. The conduct of election are regulated by the Electoral Act of each country which designed four years limit for the constituent office-holders vis-à-vis president, governor, and parliament to hold office. The consistency in the successive elections inform the leadership selection in the plural society that is heterogeneous. Bowles and Marc (2022) submit that change in power is a democratic norm that premise on leadership performance including accountability. Constitutional democracy dictates electoral sanction for the public office-holders to perform effectively at a time-frame. The spectrum of electorate votes is to decide for the contestants based on their choices for the leadership selection in Africa.

Democratic leadership is based on the expectations of electorates in the society with procedural performance of the party system. The process reveals that consistence in the operation is supported by the effective contending political parties with electoral ideology. The process of democratic consolidation recognises the general principles of periodic elections Egodi et al (2010). The transfer of power periodically by elections to the opposition political parties is challenging after the post-third wave. Many elections have taken place in West Africa but, recently only few are peacefully transferred of power to opposition political parties smoothly. The international observers have uncovered the electoral irregularities that occurred before, during and after the elections. However, the factors that marred democratic consolidation ranges from election rigging, ballot stuffing, and the multiple thumb printing are usually evolved in the transfer of power. These challenges are setback that affect the electoral competition as a do or die affair of the politicians in West Africa. Only few elections among the Africa society are free and fair which has actually changed the high top rulers and the ruling political parties Roceray and Byiers (2019). In another perception, the incumbent political party overstay in the office (power) is considered as authoritarianism. Within the post-third wave, series of election crises exacerbate high tension, dispute, chaos, and violence in African politics based on overstay of a political party in power Kambudzi (2008).

The approach to politicking has actually frustrated the conditions that would promote democratic consolidation in the West African sub-region. Indeed, periodic election is to serve as democratic culture for a perfect access to power or exit at time-frame. In West Africa, there have been a significant gain on democratic rule because elections have been conducted periodically to access power among the political parties. Nigeria and Ghana are recognised as successful ones in the competitive selection of leadership in the region IPI (2011). In view of these outcomes, the two countries have not regressed to authoritarian regimes. But, recently power was not smoothly transferred to the opposition political parties due to some unethical happenings. The fundamental objective of the study is to illuminate the character that pave the way as well obstruct democratic consolidation in the two countries. In this sense, the factors that promote alternative government (power) is not necessarily responsive for the transition of democracy in Africa. Therefore, democratic consolidation is a consequence of procedural elections which is instrumental to successive leadership in the new democracy. The other factors that are entrenching democratic consolidation are: long democratic experience, economic stability, international support by developed democracies, conscience of the indigenous citizens, peaceful transition to democracy, and immediate resolution to internal problems Huntington (1991).

The prospects for and reversal of the fledgling democracy in West Africa interplay within the political stakeholders that are committed and non-committed to democracy. In view of this, democratic breakdown occurs when the procedural elections are not conducted according to the norms and values of competition for power. Political parties sometimes contest elections by ethnic ideology and the political norms exacerbate into uncontrollable violence. Therefore, unethical practice invited the military cabals to overthrow democratic governments that are corrupt after the post-third wave. For example, between 2007 and 2022, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali backslide to authoritarian (military) regimes through the coup d'état due to ethnic rivalries in each country Bratton and Van de Walle (1997). At this point, there is a need to reflect on the practice of democracy in Africa. The rationale is frequent intervention of the military which is an unending practice in Africa. The institutional framework is weak at the tune of turn-over-test. The concept of turn-over-test connotes the political party or groups that won the transition elections and lose the subsequent elections to the opposition political parties. And the procedure continues to operate such that distribution of power is legally heighten in the society Bratton and Van de Walle (1997). In the course of this, the new democracy have failed to operate democracy in line with the neo-liberal principles.

Achieving a long success in democratic consolidation involves institutional performance. The party system entrenching democratic institution integrates the society in different participations. Amongst is the recruitment of the people into politics, representing the constituencies, forming effective government, and integrating people into democratic process Diamond (1997). These values have consistently engaged Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa Sub-region. The two countries have experienced changes of power in electoral settings. In view of this achievement, the transitions elections serve as the background to the subsequent ones after the post-third wave. Therefore, the alternative government or democratic consolidation is typology that informs distribution of power on the basis of party system.

The practice of democratic consolidation is akin to party system addressing liberal representativeness on the principles of alternative power (party opposition). This mechanism implies that without party opposition, there is no democracy and development and both have become issues in African democratic systems. Basically, these are issues for democratic representativeness by the multi-party system in deepening the policy framework in line with transparency and accountability of the public institutions. In the past, the electoral representation in Africa is vulnerable for the fact that the elites only invested in power for selfish reason and this engender political acrimony among plural groups and this trend seriously undermine the quality of democracy. The research objective focuses on the entrenchment of governance after the fall of military regimes in Africa and this form the arguments of the political scientists. First, this study wants to find out if

the political participation and contestation will not reversed to military rule after the post-third wave. Second, to determine if democratic systems are perfectly consolidated through the party system.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The objective of this sub-section is to review relevant literature on the meaning of democratic consolidation. The significance of the term would explain the behaviour that obstructs as well promotes the new democracies in Africa. Many scholars have produced a long thread of arguments on the semantics which are premised on the political contestation and participation. The term democratic consolidation becomes a sweeping argument and most of the contributors have converged on a discernible process that informs the rules, legal institutions, and constraints of the new democracies to adaptive as the only game in the society. The behaviour of the citizens should conform with attitudes toward good governance. The deepening of the new democracies after the transition in Africa is to achieve appropriate institutional performance. Perhaps, until when the political conflict is settled amicably among the political stakeholders in the state Diamond (1997). Therefore, Africa new democracies are categorised into perfect and imperfect consolidations. Perfect consolidation interfaces with the principles of free and fair elections and imperfect consolidation is disposition to the principles of democracy.

The experience of the first, second and third wave democratisation is responsible for democratic consolidation on the perception of democratic norms. The stance demands for political development and it paves the way for entrenchment of the new democracies. The implication of this responds to variables that determine the success and failure of democratic consolidation. In this view, the student of politics should illuminate more on the process and practice of democratic consolidation (CD). Inability of the government to respond swiftly to problematic issues could trigger political instability which will affect the process of democratic consolidation Huntington (1991). However, the process of democratic consolidation is different from transition process that works toward initiation of democracy. The initiation of democracy embeds on democratic procedures in an open system with overwhelming commitment of the citizen on leadership selection. The condition that determines democratic consolidation is the changes of government through free and fair elections under the rule of multi-party system in Africa Gill (2000).

Democracy is an ideal form of government and democratic consolidation (CD) entails circulation of leadership (elites) by periodic elections. In the post-third wave, the operation of democracy is between healthy and unhealthy politics depending on the political behaviour that is evolved in the environment Saliu (2010). Democratic consolidation is a multi-dimensional practice for the new democracies in Africa to build a dam

that repeals any crises of democracy. Democratic consolidation is a reflection of party system in both Nigeria and Ghana. The two countries have conducted successive elections with electoral institutions that cannot regress to authoritarianism. It indicates that sustainability of African fledgling democracies depend on perfect consolidation by robust competition of political parties Bratton and Van de Walle (1997). In another term, democratic consolidation connotes a long task that influences the effort of the people to achieve the institutional goals. It entails environmental understanding of the political stakeholders irrespective of ethnic background in Africa Schedler (1997).

ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT

The alternative government (power) stands for procedural method of sharing leadership by election and the party system is structured in a way that conforms to the principles of democratic government. And each political party is eligible to present candidates in the series of elections with their manifestoes. By this virtue, Huntington (1991) mentioned the procedural method of leadership selection with process of party system and the opposition parties contest with the incumbent party to establish representation. The party that loses is defeated in an election and the party that wins elections form an alternative government (power). Ronceray and Byiers (2019) supported with views that elections in Africa bring about leadership by alternative government and the process transforms to change the top rulers and ruling party at all levels. Therefore, election is either instrumental to transferring of power to the opposition political parties or the ruling party is reelected for continuation. The trend in alternative government is attributed to turning election into developmental assets in Africa. In this stance, alternative election implies that both the ruling party and opposition parties are on the track to establish the government of the people. It maintains democratic orderliness either on the basis of access to power or exit of power on the time frame Kambududzi (2008). However, there have been remarkable gain in the recent elections in West Africa sub-region as power is accessible to the contestants by the principles of multi-party system. In West African sub-region, the ballot box has not become the only parameter for leadership selection in Nigeria and Ghana. In fact, elections have been indispensable practice and acceptable way to power. The trend in Economic Community of West African States is commendable to democratic framework and governance in the region IPI (2011).

In the post-third wave democratisation, competitive election underpins formal procedures of changing political leaders in power. In the practice, one party system was faced out by the multi-party (election) democracy in Africa. As a result of waving the authoritarian governments (one party or military), the election is saturated in the legal procedures that operate and govern representation in Africa. The general support for election by

the international observers in Africa compelled the member states to improve more on the quality of democracy Bratton and Bhoojedhur (2019). Therefore, the African new democracies support the alternative power and is a paradigm shift in governance. The deepening of democracy clearly aligns with democratic consolidation with reference to free and fair election at the point of power transfer. In this scenario, periodic election holds to make democracy feasible. The practice compels the office holders to connect their political values to electorates after the competitive elections. They should also agree to leave power as at when due particularly when they are defeated in the next elections Cho and Logan (2009). Africa is not neglected in the alternative power since embracement of democracy. There have been regular elections with non-feasible practices and this perception has deeply affected the quality of democracy after the post-third wave.

There have been dearth of discussions on the alternative elections across African countries and the international electoral observers have confirmed illegal process that leads to massive irregularities in African elections. One of such, the incumbent party has political leverage over the opposition parties in the management of election. In the struggle for social justice by the opposition parties' supporters, many have been shot to death in Africa and there are troubles and political unrests in the electoral contest after the post-third wave democratisation Cyllah (2014). The unethical practices have marred the quality of democracy in Africa. Therefore, alternative election is based on building of trust in the political stakeholders. In contrast, election irregularities is acronyms of breaking the trust of the plural society in Africa Lamin (2011). The evidence has shown in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger elections have been eroded by military intervention. The intervention was based on the character of the politics which triggered into critical violence. Democratic breakdown in West Africa is attributed to lack of governance in the leadership selection of the aforementioned countries.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study mentioned from the outset that democratic consolidation has been problematic in Africa due to the undemocratic practices among the electoral stakeholders. The factor that influences the trending issue usually caused by the tussle for power among political stakeholders or political ethnic group to retain power against all odds. This explains the major impediments which restrain development in Africa. It is important to start explaining this from the context of patron-client network as the system became a new phenomenon in African political competition and participation, particularly after the post-third wave of democratisation. Patron-client network is defined as African new idea in the distribution of resources to the people are operated through moral ethnicity. The rich and powerful are to use their success to improve other individual and

community as norms Ndegwa (2001). Neo-patrimonial rule in Africa is also associated with governments which is ascribed to an authoritative patron (person) who dominates the state apparatus and stand above the laws with a sense of circulating electoral position among the loyalists or clients Bratton and Van de Walle (1997). This illiberal character stimulates undemocratic norm as it is pervasive in Africa and it also accounts for corruption and poverty. This political setting is such that Africa does not plan for development that would emasculate poverty and corruption in the current democratic dispensation.

Both poverty and corruption are the major impediments that obstruct governance in Africa after the post-third wave of democratisation as successive governments lacks policy framework to remove the epidemic Hyden (2006). Developed countries such as United States of America, British and African leaders are wondering about the future of Africa under the new democracies. This is because there has been political decay which undermines the new governments in Africa long ago Tar (2009). In addition, within the post-third wave, few African countries recently witnessed reversal to authoritarian regimes through coup d'état, such as Burkina Faso 2015, Mali 2020, and Niger 2021. These coups were attempted against democratic government and is a lesson learned for Nigeria and Ghana including other new democracies in Africa.

The reversion to military regimes have frustrated the distribution of governance in West African countries. This compels the need to make inquiry into the West African sub-region's current democratic projects in order to confirm the process of electoral participation and competition. Another issue which provokes this study is the entrenchment of governance after the fall of military regimes in Africa and this form the arguments of the political scientists and legal scholars. First, this study wants to find out if the political participation and contestation will not be reversed to military rule after the post-third wave. Second, wants to determine if democratic systems are perfectly consolidated through the party system. In view of this context, this study is also interested in making inquiry into current democratic projects of Africa to find out if it can conduct credible elections with expectations of the Western and African leaders after the post-third wave of democratization/? Apart from these views, the study is also interested to explore if campaign promises, leadership performance and the deepening of democracy are effectively maintained in Africa.

GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE

The inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1993 with the founding elections of the presidential and representative that were conducted successfully by the Ghana Electoral Commission. These elections transformed to smooth democratic transition as it resulted in free and fair representation. Except the presidential results that were queried by the electoral observers. Therefore, to understand the process of

democratic consolidation (CD) in the Republic of Ghana, the party system underlies the change of power. The process also serves as instrument of leadership performance and the deepening of democracy. Conducting competitive election requires the victors (party) that cross the hurdle of first-past-the-post and the losers (party) accept the electoral results after the poll. The multi-party system is the synergy as well as practice of procedural legitimacy which paves the way for the alternative power in the country. The selection of leadership is based on the two popular political parties in the distribution of power and it became ritual after the post-third wave democratisation. The electoral norm induces the system of alternative power and the new government is established the electorates. The system of alternative power also connotes perfect consolidation, that is, when the incumbent party loses an election. The opposition political parties take over the leadership by election for the limited of four years.

In this effort, it is significant to explain the conditions which promotes the performance of democratic institution as well responsible for democratic consolidation (CD). The study ask: what character is expected in smooth consolidation of the political system after the transition to democratic rule in the Republic of Ghana? In view of this assertion, the competitive election is required for the alternation power in the current democratic dispensation. Therefore, consolidation of the new democracies in Africa rely on prospects for democracy such mechanisms as economic structure, institutions, and effective civil society. These mechanisms are factors which support consolidation of the political system with reference to institutional and leadership performance and has been aptly opined to by Bratton and Van de Walle (1997) when they said,

Democratic government as having been consolidated after two electoral turnovers – that is, when the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of the transition loses a subsequent election and turn over power to those winners of a latter election.

The practice of democracy which are reflected in free and fair election are adopted as perfect and smooth consolidation of the political system. The institutional approach largely informed leadership performance of the political structures such as political parties, the legislative, the executive and the judicial arm of government. The performance of political institution compels the standard of modern democracy. Democratic consolidation is either short or long-term process depending on the character of the political stakeholders and the electorates (voters) are more selective in changing the leadership direction of the country. However, the campaign promises indicate the dividends of democracy which come in form of basic infrastructures. In a real sense, the campaign promises always pave the way for leadership performance under the multi-party

system. The party that loses power after failing the people is punished by election and the alternative party takes over power by the electorate's votes to form a new government.

At this juncture, the Republic of Ghana after the founding elections (first) of 1992 has maintained two popular political parties under the multi-party system. The competition between New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) both parties are nationally outlook as against the backdrop of ethnic voting system of the past. The practice is characterised into three-fold: first, the NDC as a political party was established by the Rawlings who was the head of military junta between 1981 and 1992. Second, the founding election established the electoral victory of Rawlings who also emerged as the first democratic authority in 1993 under the Fourth Republic. Third, NDC is neither a dominant political party nor hegemonic party because the members accept democratic principles. And this alludes to successful change of power in 2000 to an alternative party. Lastly, Ghanaian elections have witnessed successful change of power from NDC that ruled the country for eight years to the new political party NPP. Therefore, the outcome of elections always maintains that democratisation process was perfectly consolidated by the electoral victory of John Agyekun Kufur, Morrison (2004).

Electioneering principles are processes of selecting leadership into electoral offices. One of such is the Ghana Electoral Commission that has been conducting free and fair election after the post-third wave in the country. The electorates and the political elites have maintained zero violence during the elections as it reflected the international benchmark. For example, the 2004 general elections were preface to campaign promises, leadership performance and good governance. The values of good governance are: poverty reduction, party ideology, sustainable programme, stable political party and electoral value of the candidate altogether promote consolidation (deepening of democracy) of the political system after the post-third wave. In the stance of democratic process, the 2004 general election was a multi-party system and it paraded four political parties contesting for the constituent powers such as NPP, NDC, CPP and PNC. The outcome of the re-election of President John Agyekun Kufor under the NPP was as a result of the majority votes in the presidential election. The party also won the majority parliamentary seats in the same year, NPP 128 seats by NDC 91 seats, CPP 3 seats and PNC 4 seats as revealed by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (2005).

Continuous electoral process recognises the principles of participation and competition in the country. For example, Ghanaian elections in 2008 turned the country into open representative in decision-making process at legislative level. This is because there was a second turn-over-test in the representative democracy as the NDC took over democratic power again from NPP on the principles of free and fair election. The *modus*

operandi became the hallmark that maintained the success and prestige in the Republic of Ghana; as well a shining country after the post-third wave of democratisation in the West Africa Sub-region Whitefield (2009). However, it was observed in this study that there was a serious competition among the political parties after the founding elections in 1992. Apart from this outcome, the international and internal electoral observers admitted with a view that the opposition party NPP (loser) later challenged the electoral victory in 2008 for rigging the elections. Meanwhile, the electoral observers later proved the validation of the electoral results by the opinions of the people as the elections were free and fair in all circumstances (Parku (2014).

The struggle between two popular political parties under the multiparty system usually maintains the alternative power in the country. In view of the practice, the NDC and NPP both political parties opposed each other in a manner that reflected smooth democratic consolidation. The 2012 Ghanaian elections was another scenario in the history of electoral competition. The outcome of the elections also reflected perfect consolidation of the political system in the country. Beforehand, preparation for the election improved upon electoral reforms as the new development on the electoral matters. Such development are biometric voter's registration, increment of the parliamentary seats from 230 to 275 seats. These political reforms overwhelmed the electoral turn-out as 79.43% in the same year. In afterword, the elections was proven to be free and fair with reports that the constituent power was maintained by the NDC as the winner of the opinion polls Aiyede et al (2012). John Dramani Mahama was declared as the winner after the death of the sitting President Atta Mills. Competition for power under the multiparty system is an arrangement towards alternative government (power). More often than none, the elections results of 2012 was contested by NPP. The electoral petition was issued against the NDC in the court of law. Despite the electoral trial, the winner of the mandate NDC was publicly announced in Ghana. The international and local observers also acknowledged the outcome of the elections as transparent in all ramifications Asante and Asare (2016).

In addition to consolidation of the post-third wave in the Republic of Ghana. The election of 2016 was also conducted under the multi-party system as it involved several political stakeholders' participating. The process led to electoral victory of the opposition party NPP and the incumbent party NDC accepted electoral defeat with the reports of the international and national observers Van Gyampo et al (2017). The success of the election was attributed to several political institutions, such as Electoral Commission, National Peace Council, Ghana Judiciary (the Court), Civil Society Group, and the Media and Development. The pressure which filled the atmosphere after the election was un-relented efforts of the opposition parties and incumbent party over the outcome of electoral results. The electoral pressure was controlled and managed by the international observers proofing that the outcome of the election was credible enough in the history of

electoral management Aniekwe (2017). In the end, there was a peaceful transfer of power and this paved the way for perfect consolidation of the political system between NPP and NDC. The institutional changes by election also engages multiple reforms in the country as every successive democratic government improves on socio-economic development. The campaign promises and leadership performance always inform the votes of the people periodically. Therefore, if the electoral leaders performed below the expectations, the people remove their legitimacy and power is given to the opposition parties (procedural legitimacy) Aniekwe (2017).

NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

With transition to civil rule in 1999 and the activities challenged the autocratic leadership of the military regime in different forms. Part of the process was organised elections that made the contestation and participation more significant across the country. However, the Carter Centre (1999) observed the processes of elections and submitted the reports with the extent of electoral irregularities, such as ballot stuffing, inflation of results, and voter's intimidation including political apathy and therefore, the founding elections (first elections) had low turn-out in the voting. In a real sense, democratic experience underpins the process of credible political parties contesting in Nigeria. In this view, democratic consolidation (CD) connotes alternative power and it makes democracy more enterprising with reflection of free and fair elections. The experience of Nigeria in 2003 involved the process of power change by election in the same year. The elections were conducted and marred with irregularities for the leverage of the incumbent political party (PDP). The ruling party won excessively in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly elections. In the outcome, the opposition parties challenged the electoral results at all levels. EU (2003) justified the polls with bad precedence in the history of Nigerian election. In addition, the opposition parties publicly criticised the ruling party to redress electoral justice in the country.

The alternative power is subjected to democratic consolidation as well as procedural legitimacy (power change). The 2007 contestation was a syndicate of alternative elections that were conducted and it favoured the ruling party (PDP) with a smooth transfer of power between President Obasanjo and president elect Umar Yar'adua. The leadership change in 2007 was based on hegemonic power of the PDP being the ruling party circulating leadership across the country. Meanwhile, the political system was not consolidated by alternative government due to political leverage of the ruling party. On this politics, Monica (2012) mentioned the political parties that featured in the past and present election then. Apparently, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), and All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP). However, periodic election maintains

the principles of leadership selection in 2011 and it resulted in alternative government (power). The fourth election was a signing experience because it changed the political wheel and representation Okolo and Onunkwo (2011). The factors that contributed to the success includes adequate training, voter's registration was accurate and experience elections observers gave adequate reports Bekoe (2011). The gain in it was attributed to transparent and credible election in the presidential poll. The major contestants and parties which featured in the elections include President Jonathan PDP, Muhammad Buhari CPC, and Nuhu Ribadu ACN. The PDP has the majority with leading votes in all the elections conducted in Nigeria INEC (2011).

Democratic consolidation is a relative term of representative democracy with political parties contesting for the electoral seats in the country. Therefore, the transfer of power in 2015 general elections and as such it witnessed party disunity in the ruling party PDP. Party disunity is an internal crisis among the party members on the leadership selection and the process divided them into two camps. The first camp remained in PDP and the second camp formed the grand coalition with the opposition parties. Before the grand coalition, Oluwaseun (2012) revealed that the PDP and ACN both political parties are the dominants in the politics of Nigeria and they cause major electoral crises in order to favour their party in every election. However, political alliance became an instrument of balancing power in the multi-party system. To start with, political alliance was established among four dominant political parties, PDP, ACN, CPC and ANPP altogether formed All People Congress (APC). The grand coalition was formed in order to defeat the ruling party at all costs particularly President Jonathan. In this trending politics, Muhammad Buhari became a flag aspirant for the APC and being the military head of state in 1983, he defeated President Jonathan in 2015 poll and the election resulted in change of power. Nigeria Civil Society (2015) aptly reported:

The 2015 Nigeria general elections represented a milestone in the country's democratic development. For the first time in Nigeria's history the main opposition candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari won the presidential elections defeating incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan who conceded defeat and congratulated Buhari on his victory

The ruling party, PDP, maintained hegemonic power from 1999 to 2015 in the history of elections. However, the election of the year was perfectly consolidated at the Presidential, Gubernatorial, National House of Assembly and State House of Assembly polls massively witnessed electoral rigging and violence across the Federation. Periodically, alternative election was conducted to select new leadership by party system Nigeria Civil Society (2019). Therefore, 2019 election was a continuation of the APC in government and the power was not consolidated by the opposition parties. The elections were conducted between February and March

for the Presidential, National Assembly, Gubernatorial and State Assemblies Elections. The contesting political parties included: APC, PDP, APGA, ADC, PRP, AA, SDP, ADP, LP, and APM. The Presidential election was reported as free and fair in all the states and the outcome of the election gave the APC (ruling party) another tenure for President Muhammad Buhari. The PDP as the strong opposition party became second and won 15 (states) gubernatorial election and APC 16 (states) gubernatorial election Babayo and Sambo (2020).

CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

African scholars have shown so much interest in studying democratic breakdown of some countries after the inauguration of democracy. The question that always comes to mind is ethnic pluralism which serves as background to electoral crisis in Africa, mostly after the colonialism. The practice is persistently obstructing democratic consolidation in different forms. Part of these challenges was discussed by Bratton (2008) that: first, elections are struggle over access to resource control, second African leaders are political demagogues, third, African electoral campaigns were mainly for politicians to engage in mass manipulation of electoral rule, fourth, campaigns strategies in Africa feature material inducement and political intimidation, fifth, *modus operandi* of election in Africa is opened to vote buying, sixth, African election is prone to large scale violence, last, denying of citizen's freedoms to express their electoral preference clearly work against the tenets of democratic consolidation. In view of these challenges, should we say that democracy is expensive for Africa? Rather, democracy is not expensive in Africa, but the method of power change frustrates the process of democratic consolidation in the region.

African elites have invested more in power and makes it resembles estate building in this dispensation. The few elites in politics formed a political party in line with their interests and embedded on corruption and electoral irregularities. Repetition of the character in every republic invited the military cabals to seize power until recently both settled on the platform of civil-military relations after the post-third wave Tar (2010). Corruption and electoral irregularities are inseparable in African practice and there are commonalties and differences between Nigeria and Ghana after the transition to democracy. In Nigeria, it is highly pronounced in the institutional framework and Maier (2000) submitted that the economy depression in the country is the cause of volume of corruption by politicians and high ranking officers in different positions. More so, elections have failed in Nigeria couples with many reasons; Enojo (2010: 89) mentioned one of the reasons as electoral violence has always been part of the political process since independence.

Anifowose R. and Babawale T. (2003) added that 2003 general elections were rigged by the elites in power, while Ojo (2008) and Okolie (2010) are of the view that 2007 elections were the worst in the history of election administration in Nigeria, with both local and international observers concluding that it was badly flawed. Not only this, Awopeju (2011) and Obakhedo and Imhanlahimi (2009) claimed that the presidential election accommodated low political participation due to loss of confidence by the people. Omotola (2010) opines that Nigeria presents a standard laboratory in the experiment of political instability. Omotola (2010) maintains that the road to 2003 general elections was full of obstacles, while Rawlence and Albin-Lacey (2007) argue several points that discredit Nigerian elections as stolen election because they were marred by extraordinary displays of rigging and intimidation of voters in many areas throughout Nigeria. In many states of the Federation, very little voting took place as ballot papers were diverted to the offices and homes of government officials to be filled with fake results. Furthermore, ethnic-militias which are products of tribalism pervaded the national landscape and were threats to Nigerian democracy. Otite (2012) explains that these groups are purportedly representing and seeking to protect their ethnic interests through force. Some of these ethnic militias are: Odua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP), Arewa Consortative Forum (ACF), Independent People of Biafra (IPOD) and a host of others. Ojo (2008) explains historically that succession crisis started in 1966 which later metamorphosed into a civil war 1967-1970. The issue of Boko- Haram and security collapse has remained a recurring decimal posing great challenge to Nigerian political landscape.

In Ghana, over the years, seven democratic elections were conducted between 1992 and 2020 Dartey-Baah (2014) and therefore, there have been several challenges that ravaged the practice of democracy in the country. Such challenges are corruption in all branches of government, massive unemployment, political indiscretion in the provision of basic infrastructures, political apathy, weak checks and balances and over investment on elite's power. All of these issues marred democratic consolidation in relation to the conduct of periodic elections. In addition to this fact, electoral representation and participation lacked political ideology that could drive policy framework for socio-economic development Botchway 2018). Democratisation starts when the political reformers prepare to transform from authoritarian regime to democratic system. This was realised in Ghana, the practice, however, was equally met with obstacles in the area of ethnicity, marginalisation of the Northern political group in the provision of basic infrastructures. High level of ethnic voting pattern that paved the way for biasness in the electoral participation, and the recurrent political violence have weakened the quality of democracy in the country Afolayan (2010).

After the initiation of democracy several issues have also been militating against electoral participation and competition in the country. The reference of influence and double registration under the multi-party system and inadequate funding have contributed to failure in the process of democratic consolidation in some regions. Apart from these challenges, electoral violence, irregularities before and after elections have suffocated the quality of democracy in Ghana. For example, communal conflicts have led to loss of life and property, particularly in the 2004 elections and other subsequent elections. The affected areas are Upper Volta, Tamale Central, Tamale North, Saboba and Northern Region Yiryel et al (2015). The recruitment of party members is based on selective incentive the party dispense to their members. Meanwhile, the two major political parties NDC and NPP were both instrumental to change of power and against other opposition parties ability to access power. The practice was an evidence of patron-client networks and it engenders the collective efforts of the key elites in the political environment. It also underpins interest which dominate the party ideology in electoral system Bratton and Walle (1997).

The post-third wave is noted in the intellectual argument and it became an hypothesis in the present African democratic system that failure of governance was apparent in economic enterprise and policy framework Ake (1996). In the light of this intellectual fact, "Ake" forget that some African scholars have been querying democratic institutions on the failure of governance particularly the needs of people after the transition to democracy. Such scholars are (Gill 2000), (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997), Grugel (2002) and (Momoh 2006).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comparative study of Nigeria and Ghana after the post-third wave of democratisation shows that both countries have not backslided to authoritarian governments of the past, which was military. This is evidenced in the political competition and participation among the citizens of both countries. The concept of democratic consolidation is akin to party system addressing liberal representativeness on the principles of alternative power (party opposition). This mechanism implies that without party opposition, there is no democracy and development and both have become issues in African democratic systems. Basically, these are norms developed for democratic representativeness by the multi-party system which would deepen the policy framework in line with transparency and accountability of the public institutions. After independence, African democracy resembles hybrid representation and this process synchronises one party system and ethnic morality dominating the affairs of the state. This era creates economic failure which also withers away governance in some African countries. Could we say that African nations do not stand for governance or

does not understand the norms which paves the way for adequate representation through alternation of power? The principal argument of the Western and African leaders is that democracy was feasible in European countries as it meets the expectations of the people, whereas in Africa it has not been achieved due to undemocratic norms. The electoral representation in Africa is vulnerable for the fact that the elites only invested in power for their selfish interests and this engender political acrimony among plural groups and this trend seriously undermine the quality of democracy.

Lack of governance is the basic issue after the transition to democracy in Africa. The context of governance is directly linked to the leadership performance integrates political parties alternating power among the elites. Equally, democratic consolidation and liberal democratisation are intertwined basically on the representativeness which forms an issue on party opposition. It is recommended that what Africa needs in this era is to charter a course that favours liberal democratisation and also recognises the process of democratic consolidation. The practice of democratic consolidation requires the electoral principle that is structured in line with an alternative power. This practice stands on performance of the party for a period of time with procedural legitimacy. The procedural legitimacy is lost when expectation and utility of the people disappear in the political system. In this electoral system, it is recommended that the voters shall be the gatekeepers for changing the representative seats according to the rule of the game

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