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Democracy in Third World Countries: A Historical Analysis of Democratic Practices in Third World Countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa

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Abstract:

Democracy is the most acclaimed system of governance today such that it has become the template for measuring civilizations around the world. The concept of democracy is understood and practiced differently in different regions of the world. The scope of Democracy as practiced in Western countries goes beyond periodic elections: It entails respect for fundamental rights and freedom of citizens, greater liberalization of the economy, good governance, and the rule of law. In Asia democracy, it is understood as equitable distribution of wealth and economic development. In Latin America, it is more of electoral and constitutional democracy with more power wielded to the presidency while today's African Democracy has been described as Neo-patrimonialism or personal rule. A type of governance characterized by a very powerful executive and weak legislative and judiciary systems. This paper aims to shed light on the understanding and practices of democracy in Third World Countries with specific references to Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The study has been built from secondary sources and employed a qualitative research approach.

Keywords: Democracy, third world, Africa, Asia, Latin America

1. Introduction

The notion of democracy has received much scholarly attention from different quarters with each writer writing from a particular perspective. Third World countries or developing countries as there are often called has a unique history different from that of other regions of the world. This is because Third World countries have gone through a lot of experiences beginning with the period of the slave trade (trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic slave trade), colonization, and neo-colonization. These experiences subjected the Third World countries of Africa in particular to untold exploitation from different European powers (Portugal, Dutch, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, etc.) colonial powers left behind different colonial legacies in the continent. Most Third World countries before colonization were organized into independent states having hereditary kings/monarchs or chiefs at the helm of power. The colonial powers could only consolidate their rule in Africa by merging independently existing entities into one single political unit and leadership. Some writers think that the fusion of these incompatible units is responsible for the challenges faced in some African democracies like Nigeria (Ofili, 2016) Latin American countries like their African counterparts have been experiencing undemocratic practices like a military takeover, longevity in service, uncontrolled executive powers, just to mentioned a few. China and other Asian countries have maintained strong control over its economy; non-governmental organizations are not allowed to challenge the state, China limited freedom of expression in a bid to consolidate its leadership.

Even with all these variations in Democratic practices, most independent states no matter the type of regime in place have often claimed to be democratic. For instance, even though the Republic of Cameroon has been ranged twice by transparency International as the most corrupt country in the world, (1998 and 1999) Cameroon's government officials under the Biya's regime maintained that the country practices an advanced form of democracy "Democracies 'Advance'", despite its poor human rights records.

The march for a democratic world was spearheaded by the events which led to the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe and the Bolshevik regime itself in the former Soviet Union. The events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had adverse effects in the Third World countries. This is because the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and communist China propagated the socialist idea of development as a panacea for Africa and Asia. Since it proved unworkable and was discredited, democracy has become the new idea to embrace, or sometimes it's only a slogan as the case in so many countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia (Kilocurie, 1994). Faced with enormous developmental and security challenges some commentators think that the solutions for Third World countries lie in the implementation of liberal democracy. To this end, we are going to answer the following questions; what is democracy? What is Africa's perception of democracy and how is its practice in Africa? How do Latin Americans perceive and practice democracy? How is democracy understood and practiced in Asia? How is Third World democracy different from other democracies? This paper attempts to answer these questions and many.

1.1. Some Definition of Terms

1.1.1. Democracy

The notion of democracy is contentious this is because the wide popularity of the term conceals some ambiguities. For example, Iran interprets democracy to mean that the government in power must implement some particular religious teachings in the Qur'an while the Western World sees democracy in terms of greater liberties for citizens, free and fair elections just to mention but a few. Despite the many debates about the meaning of democracy, a rough consensus has emerged among contemporarivists. It is generally agreed that for a political system to be qualify democratic:

-Selection to highest office should be on free and fair elections: for an election to be qualified as free and fair, votes must be counted accurately with winning candidates selected according to preexisting rules.

- All citizens must possess civil and political rights
- Political parties must be free to organize, present candidates for public office, and participates in elections.
- Minority parties or parties not represented in government must enjoy adequate rights of contestation that is to organize them and criticized the incumbent government.
- Lastly, the political system should contain a judiciary with powers independent of the executive and legislature, charged with protecting citizen's civil rights and liberties from violation by government and other citizens. (Kesselman, 1996)

Hwogu cited Popper to have defined democracy in contrast to dictatorship or tyranny. He emphasizes the availability of opportunities for people to control their leaders without recourse to a revolution. Popper's opinion is built on the fact that there are many variants of democracy today. The most dominant variant is what he termed direct democracy in which all citizens of a country participate directly and actively in the decision-making process of their country. Another variant is representative democracy in which the whole body of eligible citizens remains the sovereign power but political power is exercised indirectly through elected representatives. (Hwogu, 2015)

One of the widely used definitions of democracy is that put forth by Abraham Lincoln. He defined democracy as "Government of the people, for the people and by the people. This means that the governed are supposed to play a vital role in the management of their affairs. Government, in this case, emanates from popular sovereignty. Democracy has only one essential or real definition, other definitions arise because there is a difference between the real and essential meaning and actual practice of democracy that leads to nominal and operational definitions. While real philosophical or essential meanings of democracy remain the same the actual practice of democracy may be different. The essential or real meaning of democracy is derived from two Greek words *demos* means the common people and *Kratos* means the rule. Thus democracy essentially refers to the rule of the common people. Defining what constitutes the common people and rule has been debatable and each country applies it differently. Robert Dahl questioned how people are designated (Dahl, 1989; p3). For Rustow, democracy is preceded by national feelings or feelings of national unity "the people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people" (Rustow, 1970; pp 337-367) in the case of Ancient Greece, slaves, prisoners, women, and children were excluded. In the case of modern democracies, children and foreigners are also excluded.

There exist different types of democracy and two main approaches to the understanding of democracy. Some scholars argue that certain preconditions make democratic transitions possible such as material prosperity, urbanization, a culture that encouraged tolerance and participation. On the other hand, there is the political approach that has to do with political actors within and outside government and their rule in the political game. These approaches, however, are not satisfactory because some countries like Singapore which enjoyed many of the preconditions failed. After all, it lacked sufficient actors while Benin on its part achieved a transition in the absence of the above-mentioned preconditions.

1.1.2. Third World Countries

The term Third World was used by historians and social scientists in the second half of the 20th century; it grew out of the rhetoric of the Cold War in the late 1940s and 1950s. Its origin could be traced from the "third force" or "third way" in world affairs (distinguished from American capitalism or Soviet Socialism). The term was coined in 1952 by the demographer and economic historian Alfred Sauvy in an article in French socialist newspaper *L'observateur*, entitled "Troismondes, uneplanete (three worlds in one planet). It refers to the disempowerment of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa, concluding that the Third World has, like the Third Estate been ignored and despised and it too wants to be something (Tomlinson, 2003).

Third World Countries equally makes reference to developing Countries, Underdeveloped or Emerging Markets, or Economy. It refers to Countries characterized by greater poverty, low per capita income, high illiteracy, low life expectancy, unsafe drinking water, etc. this social and economic circumstance together with unequal relations with the developed world; in many cases, most of these countries experienced colonial rule. These features among others give the Third World countries distinct characteristics. Besides it has been argued that these countries are least likely to sustained democracy; politics is more of a life and death struggle, a scenario where those in control of resources are not ready to accept changes that might jeopardize their grip on power (Pinkney, 2004).

This paper attempts to study the concept of democracy while making reference to Third World Countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Much has been written on the concept of democracy as a broad term but little attention has been paid to its understanding and practices in Third World countries. This paper would add to existing literature especially at a time when Third World countries are in dying need of good governance to reverse the current trend characterized by dictatorship, corruption, insecurity, underdevelopment, unemployment, military take over just to mention a few. It is believed that a holistic study of democracy in Third World countries vis-à-vis Western countries is needed to be able to

charter a way forward for the Third World countries. Our work is organized into four parts; in part one, we will attempt to examine the practice of democracy in pre-colonial and postcolonial Africa for a better understanding of African democracy, the case of Cameroon is illuminated. Secondly, we will briefly study the concept of democracy and its practices in Latin America with a brief presentation of the case of Brazil. In furtherance, we briefly looked at democracy in Asia with a brief presentation of the case of India. In the last part, we tried briefly to compare Third World democracy and Western democracy.

2. The African Model Democracy

Before the advent of colonial rule in the continent, the political system that existed in African societies had some features that are identical to modern democratic norms. The birth of democracy in Africa could be traced as far back as 1900 when a group of African scholars "Cultural Nationalists" asserted the democratic rights of Africans concerning their traditional norms and practices (Yakubu and Iyortange, 1997).

In support of the democratic nature of pre-colonial African societies, Jan Vansina in his series on the political history of Pre-Colonial Central Africa, the Republicanism of the lineage system of governments and various efforts made by the people to counter domination by centralized states. (Vansina, 1966) even within centralized kingdoms, there existed a prominent mechanism within which citizens could challenge the royal and their bureaucrats. In some cases, the office of prime minister was reserved for commoners while the council provided a check on the administration. In other societies, there are secret institutions like *Asofo* which were a public organized defense for the commoner's interest.

Governance aimed at promoting public goods in Pre-Colonial African systems. The societies were guided by customary rules of life and the absence of absolute rulership (Wiredu, 1997; Eze, 1997; Olofson, 2015). Constitutionalism in this sense entails the respect of the rules and customs commonly known by the people and any violation was met with communal reprisal. The lineage and age-grade system were the two prominent institutional structures upon which the constitutional principles operated. The organized institutional structures function effectively as meeting points for decision making, equally trained and recruited leaders. These structures help to maintain stability in Africa. The saying that the king is absolute or supreme meant that he has absolute power to carry out the will of the people (Williams, 1974). Rulers in this sense acted according to the customary norms of the people without which they were sanctioned.

In Pre-Colonial African societies, there were checks to control corruption and ensure accountability. Traditional African religion expresses the belief in the potency of the guardianship of the ancestors in terms of the composition of government as well as administration of activities of the society (Igbain, 2016). The fear of regrettable repercussion of uncharitable behavior serves as a template for moral conduct among the citizens. Some authors argue that colonialism was harmful to Africans because it eroded African values and made leaders not to be accountable to the masses. This was the case of the British policy of indirect rule introduced in Africa. In many instances, the existing traditional rulers were deposed and replaced by warrant chiefs who were answerable only to the British authorities and not to their subjects.

2.1. Modern Democracy in Africa

Modern African democracy is said to have started in the 1990s. The year 1990 was an important threshold for democracy in Africa. Between 1990 and 1994, thirty-one of forty-one countries that had not held multiparty elections did so (Jibrin, 2003). This was spearheaded mainly by external happenings like the fall of the Berlin wall of 1989, the collapse of communist regimes in Europe, and pressure from the World Bank and IMF. They brought pressure to bear on African governments who were left with no choice but to embrace multiparty politics in governance. However, the actual practice of democracy in Africa leaves much to be desired. It is observed that regime transition in Africa does not resemble what is achieved in other continents that have undergone fundamental changes.

Looking at the practice of democracy in Africa, it has been described by some authors as Neo-patrimonialism a term used by Max Weber to describe a system of personal rule. Micheal Bratton and Nicholas Van Des Valles explain Neo-patrimonial rule as "those hybrid political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with and suffice rational-legal institutions (Bratton and Valles, 1997; p.62). The Patrimonial Regime is very common in Africa; a system by which power is concentrated in the hands of a single ruler and ordinary citizens are at his mercy with no rights and privileges, the ruler has the prerogative to decide whom to favour or disfavour having little or no regards for the (Bratton and Walle, 1997; p.61). The state is run as a personal property of an individual with little or no regards for the constitution man "The Strong Man or Big Man" often a president for life dominates state apparatus and stands above the law. The big man creates a network made up of a favoured few officials whose sole desire is power and wealth and not to provide public services. This style of governance is also characterized by clientism-a powerful network of loyalists created by the big man in charge. Strongmen like Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Sekou Touré of Guinea, and Felix H. Boigny of Ivory Coast were very influential as they personalized powers in their countries. It is noted that an average African leader from independence to 1987, still retained power considerably longer than their counterparts in Latin America and Asia.

Neo-patrimonialism in Africa promotes a cult of personality, dominates the media, and their portraits are hung in every public building. For example, Mobutu of Zaire and Eyadema of Togo dominated every aspect of their countries they were feared and it was believed that their governments were endowed with Supernatural Authorities. One of the principal features of African democracy is the existence of a high level of corruption that has hampered socio-economic development, increasing violence at times caused by the desire by the incumbent to change the constitution and remain in power. This was the case of Burkina Faso in 2014 and Burundi in 2015. The continuous interference into African politics by the West has created more problems than solutions. In most cases, the West comes in to protect their interest does undermining the institutions of the state. For instance, the last presidential elections that took place in Ivory Coast in 2011

led to the death of thousands of Ivoirians because the French supported the candidacy of Alassane Watara against Laurent Gbagbo who enjoyed popular supports from the people. Attempts to replace Gbagbo with Watara sparked a nationwide conflict leading to the death of many civilians.

One of the characteristics of African democracy today is electoral violence. it refers to all forms of organized acts or threats, physical, psychological, or structural aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during, and after an election to determine, delay, or otherwise influencing an electoral process (Albert, 2007). Since the reintroducing of multiparty politics in Nigeria in 1999, physical violence has been on the rise during elections. The 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria for instance witnessed the height of electoral violence with more than 800 fatalities, besides properties that were destroyed in core northern regions.

Corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Africans. It is observed that one million more Africans live in extreme poverty today compared to the 1990s. Corruption continues to harm the efforts to bring people out of poverty: Global Corruption Barometer reveals that institutions meant to control corruption in Africa remain weak: citizens across the continent have to pay a bribe to access most basic services like health and education. As if this is not enough, global trading companies operating in Africa resort to bribery to receive deals with public officials and governments. This is often done to secure mining rights; construction contracts just to mention a few. Transparency international recent reports exporting corruption found that or exporting countries accounting for about a third of the world's exports have active or moderate laws against companies bribing abroad. The rest fail to investigate and sanction companies that pay bribes overseas. For example, several Chinese companies including the China energy fund committee, the telecommunication firm ZTE and china road and bridge construction companies have been accused of bribing senior government officials in Chad, Uganda, Zambia, and Kenya. In 2019, the US government indicted three formal government officials from Mozambique and five business executives over a lion dollar fraud and money laundering scheme. As part of this, more than 200million US dollars in alleged bribe and kickbacks was paid to Mozambican government officials and investment bankers.

Some African countries however have registered some progress in their democratization process. For example, Mauritius has a fully democratic status as fully a strong achiever with rule of law according to fully the economist unit's democratic index 2016. In Nigeria 2015 was the first year an opposition gained power through a fully election. Botswana, Ghana, Cape Verde, and Benin are also lauded as democratic examples.

2.1.1. Neo-patrimonial Style Democracy in Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon gained independence in January 1960, on the 11th of February 1961, British Southern Cameroons voted in a United Nations Plebiscite to join their brothers in French Cameroon. Since independence Cameroon has had two presidents, President Amadou Adhidjo was its first president until 1982, while the current president Paul Biya has been in power since 1982. From 1966, Cameroon became a one-party political system under the incumbent president Adhidjo. His lone political party –the Cameroon national union (CNU) dominated the political scene unchallenged following the dissolution of existing parties in West Cameroon. Those that opposed the one-party project were punished severely; Okala, Mbida, MayiMatip, and BeybeyEyidi were all arrested under a new anti-subversion law which provided for imprisonment between one to five years with fines between two hundred thousand to two million CFA francs. They were charged with interference with state authorities, incitements of hate against the state government, and the passing of false information. Consequently, they were each fined \$950 with two and a half years of imprisonment. President Ahidjo created a Neo-patrimonial system of governance in Cameroon; everything centered on him, he was the father of the nation, he had the powers to appoint dismiss ministers.

Clientism in Cameroon seems to have started with the first president Amadou Ahidjo. At independence, the country became a federal state of two equal statuses, west Cameroon (former British colony and east Cameroon (French colony). It was as a result of Ahidjo's dictatorship that the country was transformed into a unitary state in 1972. This was achieved by using the services of some English-speaking networks and some national bilingual networks all attached to the central government. (Sergui, 2020). Even when president Ahidjo left the scene, his successor president Biya continued through the same single party dominant which allows him to appoint and control the system at various levels. President Biya barely changes the name of Ahidjo's party from Cameroun National Union (CNU) to Cameroon People's Democratic Movements (CPDM). It appears Cameroon has been under a single-party rule still date; the existence of many opposition parties is simply a political strategy to satisfy the international community. This statement is justified by the fact that only CPDM members are entitled to certain privileges; during elections. They freely make use of state media for campaign purposes, unlike the opposition whose campaign meetings are frequently interrupted; besides, CPDM militants enjoy protection from the military. Yanou thinks that the reason for the failure of Cameroon's democratic experience was the fact that constitutional reforms were hijacked by incumbent political elites unwilling to open up the political space for genuine competition. On his part, J.W Forje attributed the undemocratic nature of the country to a complex hierarchical nature of governance structure and institutions which are further hijacked by ethnic hegemonic forces, patronage, and nepotism. Forje affirms that the government failed to put in place a democratic system but went ahead to create an autocratic centralized system; which boils down to the fact that "Cameroon has a constitution without constitutionalism and election without democracy". (Yanou, 2013)

In the semi-authoritarian regime of Cameroon, all major appointments or elected public offices are designated by the President of the Republic who is same time the national president of his party, Cameroons People's Democratic Movement (CPDM). He nominates candidates from his party for parliament and local elections. In this sense, Paul Biya is a "creator" and consequently, they are his "creators". Cameroon counts about seventy-one "creators" who are top members

of Biya's government, ranging from ministers, deputy ministers, and secretary generals. On the other hand, there are about four hundred and fifty-six creators in the second rank of ministers. Out of 180 members of parliament elected in February 2020, 152 belong to the ruling party CPDM to these added 3 members of the Assembly Bureau appointed by presidential decree including the secretary-general and 2 deputies, making a total of 155 creators at the National Assembly. While at the level of the Senate, out of 100 members, 30 are appointed by the President of the Republic while 70 are voted by municipal councilors. In addition to this, the President of the Republic appoints 3 members of the chamber bureau of the senate making a total of 96 creators at the senate. Even the electoral apparatus is under the control of the creator he appoints members of the commission and members of the constitutional council responsible for settling electoral disputes (Sergui, 2020).

According to the 2008 and 2019 administrative law, there are 10 governors of the regions, 58 divisional officials, and 360 sub-divisional officials, 360 mayors of municipalities, and 14 mayors of cities making a total of 758 local and regional administrative officials created by President Biya, Making a total of 1536 creators. These clients continue to sustain the system; they mobilized local and regional networks for elections, they act as negotiators' between the central and local stakeholders. Some of these officials are empowered to use certain laws to frustrate democracy in the country. Even laws that were enacted and styled as liberty laws to facilitate democratic freedom are used by the district officials to frustrate officials of the opposition party. For example section 8(3) of law NO. 055 of 19th December 1990 empower the sub-divisional official to prohibit public meetings, rally or processions which in his opinion will disturb public peace. This law is anti-democratic because it allows the sub-divisional official the free will to interfere with freedom of association (Yanou, 2013).

Despite the enormous natural resources and wealth in the country, Cameroon has been unable to improve upon living standards. Most Cameroonians are still living below the poverty line because resources meant for socio-economic development earn up in private pockets. This situation has been decried by the international community, on two occasions Transparency International ranked Cameroon as the world's most corrupt country (1998 and 1999) while in 2015, the Country featured in the list of most corrupted country in Africa (34th) position according to World corruption perception index.

2.2. Latin American Model Democracy

Democracy in the Latin American continent started in the 1970s. Most countries in this region before this date had written constitutions in favour of liberal democratic principles. However many of these countries failed to live up to their owned legal norms and principles. Undemocratic elites controlled most of the politics of the region largely ignoring democratic principles in governance. This practice led to widespread violations of fundamental Human Rights since many leaders became autocratic and discouraged meaningful citizen participation in the rule. It has been observed that some changes have been taken place in this region since 1970. In most of this region today, a constitutional democracy has been put in place. Since the years 2000, a citizen in this region has participated in democratic activities in their country more than ever before.

The year 2013 was symbolic in the history of Latin America because it celebrated the 35th anniversary of the third wave of democratization in the region. This process started with the Dominica Republic in 1978, later Uruguay in the 1980s, Paraguay and Chile in 1989, and finally Nicaragua in 1990 with Cuba been the only exception. 2013 witnessed the start of a new electoral cycle from 2013 to 2016, 17 countries held presidential elections in this region. It was noted that alternation to power was done without violence unlike in the past. Also, the level of poverty in this region has fallen drastically with more and more people having access to education. According to World Bank reports, the middle class for the first time represents 32% of the population in the region. Poverty in Latin America has fallen from 48.4% in 1990 to 27.9% in 2013. It is noted that more and more citizens are empowered in the region than ever before with about a 70million people said to have moved out of poverty to the status of the middle class. Citizens now organized themselves to demand their rights through public protest as a contrast to the formal ways where demands were channeled through traditional political parties.

However Latin American democracy still faces enormous challenges as the presidency in most cases is too powerful to the extent that they control the other arms of government. These features could be identified in Latin American countries like Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. In addition to this, undemocratic practices are still common in this region for example in 2009, there was a coup d'état in Honduras that forced president Manuel Zelaya out of power. These and many others could be identified as obstacles to effective democratic practices in the Latin American continent.

2.2.1. The Case of Brazil

Since the country gained independence from Portugal in 1822, the Brazilian elites embraced liberal ideas; inspired by the French revolution and the USA constitution. There was the separation of power between the executive, legislative, and judiciary, freedom of speech, and the rights to votes for citizens. These ideas were expressed in most of the Brazilian constitutions enacted during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, this was not practiced because equality of opportunities and citizenship did not historically did not include the majority of Brazilians a situation that led to the establishment of military authoritarianism in 1964. The country was under the rule of the emperor from 1822-1889, the sole hereditary constitutional monarch in Latin America. There was the centralization of power and the monarch stood above the other arms of government, he appoints and dismisses ministers and had powers to dismiss the legislative assemblies. The Brazilian empire came to an end in 1889 with the collapse of the institution of slavery and monarchy. The land-owning

oligarchy mainly from the coffee region advocated for a more decentralized government with more influence over decision-making. A liberal constitution was adopted in 1891, inspired by that of the USA. It calls for a directly elected president as head of government, the state was separated from the church, and there were equal rights for citizens. However regional politics was dominated by elites from coffee and cattle regions. They influenced policymaking and the choice of presidential candidates. The presidency alternated almost on regular basis between Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais, this period in Brazilian politics was called the rule of 'coffee com Leite' (coffee with milk), (Kasselman, 1996).

23. Asian Democratic Example

South Asian countries consider development as the primary concern of the state. One of their main ideologies is that of Egalitarianism which is fundamental in planning. Emphasis is placed on income and wealth to ensure equitable distribution of means of production. Lee Kuan Yew former Prime Minister and leader of Singapore vehemently stood against the ills of Western societies especially America and advocated for Eastern ways of political and economic development. He stresses the importance of Eastern culture and values based upon family solidarity. According to him paying much attention to individual freedom will be at the detriment of the community which to him is the source of moral decay in America. To the Easterners, social order and political stability are more important than individual freedom and democracy. They assert that Eastern values based upon the teachings of Confucius are superior to Western values for the realization of order in the society, abiding by tradition, and respect for authorities. The yardstick for measuring democracy in Singapore for instance is a periodic free and fair election and not respect for Human Rights and Freedoms (Yung-Myung, 1997).

2.3.1. The Case of Indian

Indian is the world's largest democracy; it is also the oldest democracy amongst the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Indian has functioned as a democratic country with full universal suffrage since 1940 when it emerged as a sovereign state following the end of British rule. Indian is a country with a huge population of 900 million people. Out of this population, there are a small group of wealthy and influential class (100 million) who have made their fortune in business and industry; the Tatas and Birlas are two of Indians' largest business houses whose wealth rivals that of business executives around the world. While about 500 million of its population is mainly farmers or urban workers; relatively poor by global standards they barely eke out a living while at the bottom of the class structure are about 300 million people who are extremely poor and are concentrated in villages. The rural area is characterized by primitive technology, high illiteracy while on the other side of the spectrum high sophisticated technology, nuclear energies, developed industrial sector that produces varieties of goods, military as and computer technology is visible in the urban areas. (Kasselman, 1996)

According to Kasselman et al, Indian's democracy was stable during the era of Nehru, powerful groups in the society the elite bureaucrats; land-owning wealthy groups; and leaders of well-organized ethnic groups; and businessmen were all accommodated with the new system. Nehru adopted a system of government largely based on private properties. The government levied high taxes on imports that went a long way to discourage importation and protected home industries. This strategy was successful as it made Indian an impressive industrial base.

South Asian countries are ruled by compromises between the upper various groups that constitute the bulk of the upper class. In Indian for instance the government to reduce the powers of the Maharajas, the landlords, and tycoons of industry and finance, put in place a progressive tax system to ensure equality in the society although it has not been a complete success (Gunnar, 1997).

In the case of South Asia unlike other parts of the world, political rights were never fought for. They were granted from above without the masses demanding it. Ironically the masses never had the will to use these rights to promote their interest. South Asian countries faced the problem of getting their people to participate in the nation-building process. Indian for instance practices a parliamentary system based on universal suffrage and a comparatively high turnout of electorates. Despite this, the masses are more of objects of politics than their subjects because they remain passive and unconcerned (Gunnar, 1997).

The situation in South Asia is much similar to that of East Asia. According to reports from the East Asia Barometer survey carried out between 2006 and 2007, many people in this region consider socio-economic benefits to be more essential to democracy than both political freedom and popular elections. Communitarian democracy is an essential characteristic of democratic practice in this region.

2.3.2. China

China never developed the rule of law like the case of other civilizations. The legal code of the Qin, Han, Tang, and Ming dynasties are all species of positive laws and administrative enactments of the emperor. China has prevented the emergence of new social actors that will challenge its powers like the case of Western Europe where social actors are permitted to operate outside the state to resist state powers and force the state into constitutional compromise. The Chinese model of governance has set the pattern for the rest of East Asia, Japan, and Korea. The politics in East Asia are under Chinese cultural influences which inherited the Confucian traditions of centralized states. East Asian democracy put in place strong and coherent states. The major problem with this democracy lies with the society because strong institutionalized social groups are absent. Although the masses in most parts are not satisfied with their predicaments, there exist no avenues where an individual can protest effectively. (Gunnar, 1999)

2.4. How Third World Democracy is the Difference from Western Democracy

Corruption is very high in Third World countries especially in the African continent; Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, and many African states have been unable to stop corruption which is responsible for poverty in these countries. Besides the lack of adequate mechanisms to control those holding public offices has given a green light for corrupt officials to illegally transfer state resources to their private accounts at home and abroad. The level of corruption is minimal in other parts of the world. In China for instance a crime of corruption attracts a death penalty. This has gone a long way to limit corrupt practices in that society. In western societies the legislative and judiciary function independently as checks on excesses committed even by top executive agents. The impeachments of President Donald Trump twice in 2020 (for obstruction of Congress and incitement of violence) are a clear indication that American institutions stand above individual interest.

Arab governments curb political participation, limited freedom of expression, election manipulations all these are done because they do not want their powers to be challenged. Tar thinks that oil wealth which was supposed to be the driving force for democracy in the Middle East has worked against democracy because states used oil wealth to crack down on any internal mobilization for change and to resist external pressure (Tar, 2010). This is a common practice in Africa where long-serving leaders go the extra mile to retain power. The recent presidential elections that took place in Cameroon in 2018 and Uganda in 2021 were characterized by human rights abuses, suppression of fundamental rights guiding elections like rights to peaceful assembly. Opposition leaders were restricted from holding public meetings; both opposition leaders (Maurice Kamuto for Cameroon and Bobi Wine for Uganda) were kept under house arrest under severe military surveillance. At the end of the day, both presidents Paul Biya 88 years and Yoweri Museveni 76 years were declared winners in elections marred by irregularities. This is not a common practice in Western democracy where fundamental rights of citizens like the freedom of association; expression is respected with high turnouts during elections.

3. Conclusion

The Third World or underdeveloped nations understand and practice democracy differently. In African democracy is more of personal rule in other words known as Neo-patrimonial Rule characterized by a powerful executive having a tremendous influence on the legislative and judiciary. Corruption, poverty, and underdevelopment are the underlying features of Third World Nations. In Latin America electoral and constitutional democracy is the practice by the majority of countries especially after 1970 although the presidency still wields tremendous powers, Latin American countries recorded improvements in standards of living since the 1970s. On its part Asian perception of democracy is linked to economic development and equilibrium distribution of wealth. Politics in this region are under the influence of Chinese Confucius ideas. South-Eastern countries like China practice a centralized form of governance whereby citizens have limited freedom of expression. To have strong control over state affairs Chinese leaders prevent the rise of social actors to challenge the state. Interestingly, Third World Countries especially the African continent are endowed with abundant natural resources. The absence of a political will, alienation of leaders from the population, corruption, and foreign influence in the case of Africa, in particular, has hampered developmental efforts. Broad base consultation is necessary for Third World countries to put in place all-inclusive governance that can meet the demands of its citizens. Third World countries need a mechanism that will ensure greater accountability on the part of leaders and ensure that citizens have a say in governance, this is not only limited to elections but there is need to involve young people in the managements of state affairs.

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