A Philosophical Enquiry into the Problem of Democracy in Africa

by

CYRIL-MARY PIUS OLATUNJI

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Submitted to the Faculty of Arts in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Zululand

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Promoter

Wait, E. C.

Date..

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that the contents of this thesis constitute my own original work, which has not been previously presented to another institution, either in part or whole for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

....

Signature   **Date**

C. P. Olatunji

Dedication

My Mother, Margaret Olanike Mosunmọla Ọlatuŋjị (Onu'Ijéndé) (aliѵe for ever)

and

My Father, James Dahunsi Olatunji (Doctor) (aḷiѵe for ever)

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Abstract

TITLE OF THESIS	**A Philosophical Enquiry into the Problem of Democracy in Africa**
AUTHOR	**Cyril-Mary Pius Olatunji**
DEGREE	**Ph.D. (Philosophy)**
DATE	**March 2011**

The study acknowledges that there have been attempts by scholars of African politics to explain the problems impeding the smooth running and consolidation of democracy in Africa. The acknowledgement of these previous efforts notwithstanding, the thesis sets out to show the value of a philosophical reaction to the positions of scholars on the issue, as a shift towards a better approach to it. It makes an examination, which exposes the inadequacy of the previous approach to the explanation of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa.

The thesis is not therapeutic. It is primarily diagnostic. Therefore, it did not set out to prescribe some procedural steps to change the ailing political system in Africa. Rather, it has identified the shortcomings of previous approaches to the problem of democracy in Africa, which, has portrayed Africans as mere effects of causes, and incapable of taking control of their own life situations.

In the analysis, the scholars had argued that the unstable state of democracy in Africa has been caused by some internal and external factors. That is, by implication, Africa has been caused to be what it is. This study rejects the causal model of explanation taken uncritically from the Newtonian physics by the scholars of African politics in their explanations of the political challenges of Africa. This study argues that by applying the causal explanation, the scholars have implied that Africa is not more than a mere effect of causes, and therefore, incapable of a self-motivated and a free action. They have also implied that their own analyses were either caused or false.

Consequently, the study proposes that any reliable explanation of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa must be non-causal in structure. That is, an explanation in which my explanations, as an African, are my own wilful actions.

By so doing, the study has initiated a new consciousness of who I am as an African. It initiated the consciousness of the fact that such factors as colonialism and corrupt leadership in Africa may have had serious influences on the trajectory of my own history as an Africa, but they do not determine my situation in the deterministic cause and effect relation in the manner in which the scholars intended.

Promoter: **Professor E. C. Wait.**

Number of Pages: **208 Pages.**

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   **Motivation**

Using the examples of Jesus, Socrates, Orunmila, Thomas Jefferson and many of the great thinkers, I had taught in a "first year" undergraduate class in 2006 how philosophy and philosophers could contribute positively to the development of society. I argued that the contributions of philosophy and philosophers are most noticeable in aspects, which most disciplines and people have taken for granted, ignored or failed to notice. A few weeks later, a student came to me, and asked, "Sir, can you tell me how and where specifically you have made your own noticeable positive contribution that your students can point to?" I tried to escape the question, but the student insisted. Perhaps I was able to convince the undergraduate student at the end, but the question never stopped propping up in my mind thereafter. Among other things, this study gives the opportunity to show that philosophy is not just about abstract analysis or a mega intellectual reservoir of ideas and theories from other disciplines, but a discipline, which according to Strauss (2009:3), gives direction in society and to other intellectual disciplines. That being the case, I expect this study to offer the opportunity to make my own contribution to my society in an aspect that had hitherto been taken for granted or ignored by scholars.

Specifically, I am an African and an academic, in touch with the situation in African society and with the existential condition of the ordinary African on the street. The ordinary African on the street is in need of explanations for the situation in which he finds himself. Like the ordinary African too, I am in search of answers to many questions concerning my existence and the conditions of my life.

The search is particularly urgent and important because, like the ordinary African on the street, I have heard and read many competing explanations developed by scholars trying to account for the state of chaos and the backwardness of Africa today. Nevertheless, the accounts do not seem to speak about me or about the African society that I experience daily.

Broadly speaking, there are two traditional accounts given by scholars to explain the political problems of Africa. Scholars have argued that forces that are external to Africa, such as colonialism, have caused the many problems of Africa. When these scholars identify colonialism, they are quite aware that the era of colonialism has come and has gone. However, they mean that the situation in Africa is the result of mental colonisation, or an after-effect of the event of colonisation.

The problem with the position of these scholars is the paradox involved. They argue that external forces are responsible for the problems of Africa. They explain human rights violation, corruption, nepotism and leadership incompetence in Africa as consequences of the colonial past. Though many of these scholars are Africans, they tend to assume that they themselves, and consequently their analysis of the problems of Africa, are not being influenced by colonialism or mental colonisation as well. How then are the rest of Africa and their leaders so affected and determined by the colonial forces while the scholars are not? If the scholars are able to escape the influence of colonialism, how then does colonialism necessarily cause the situation in Africa? If these scholars, and consequently, their analyses, are causally affected, to what extent can their analyses be trusted?

Other scholars have argued that the problems in Africa are caused entirely by postcolonial factors within Africa. They have treated Africa ahistorically. By so doing they tend to assert, that the colonial intervention in Africa has no effect on the African society of today. Are these scholars saying that their own efforts of today will have no remarkable impact on future events in Africa? By saying that colonialism has no impact on the situation

of Africa today do they mean to say that Africans of today have nothing to gain from their historical experience, and have no legacy to offer to future generations?

An ahistorical explanation is self-annihilating because, before the completion of its analysis and the implementation of its recommendations, the Africa of that analysis has changed from what it was at the beginning of the analysis. Since the past has no effect on the present, then the analysis of these scholars is never about the current situation of Africa. Consequently, following their own logic, it is not possible to have any solution to the problems of Africa, because, at every point, a new state of Africa has replaced the former. I do not find myself in such an ahistorical existence. Consequently, the analyses of these scholars do not represent the Africa in which I find myself and my fellow Africans.

Furthermore, scholars who attribute the woes of Africa entirely to internal factors also assume some sharp demarcations between the leaders and the common people, and between political leaders and leaders in other spheres of life in Africa. They apparently believe that they themselves are neither part of the common people nor part of the leadership. If the political leaders are so corrupt, violent and incompetent, does anything guarantee that the intellectual leaders (some of who are also political leaders) cannot also be corrupt, violent and incompetent? If the political leaders are totally incompetent and incorrigible, does anything guarantee that even if the political leaders are changed a hundred times the new ones will not be as bad as their predecessors? If, on the other hand, there are some natural tendencies in African leaders that create chaos in African politics, how do these scholars suppose that they themselves are free from these tendencies? Does it not mean that Africa is irredeemable?

Non-African scholars have also offered their explanations for Africa's ongoing political crises; but these are also not acceptable because they, like their African counterparts, have adopted an approach, which is typical of the social sciences. In the characteristic manner

of such sciences, the scholars, both African and non-African, have adopted the scientific or the mechanistic approach in their investigations of social phenomena. They have explained African society as a mere effect of causes.

There are several problems associated with this sort of explanation. By applying the cause-effect explanation to the problems of Africa, these scholars portray Africa as a mere product of circumstances of insurmountable causal forces, a predictable object such as an ant or a machine, studied and analysed by scientists. This sort of explanation is inadequate because it portrays Africans as incapable of choosing their own destiny.

By so doing, the scholars assume the position of 'consultant priests', with ready-made answers to the problems of their clients. Unfortunately, like the 'consultant priests' these scholars have no contact with the real Africa of history, only the Africa of their own minds. Their analyses can yield neither knowledge of, nor lasting solutions to, the problems of Africa. Consequently, there is the need, not for an additional competing explanation of the problems of Africa, but for a radical change of approach altogether.

1.2   Preamble

The topic of this study is "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Problem of Democracy in Africa." The problem is not a new one in Africa. Scholars have written and people have spoken about it for many years. Before political independence in Africa, the earliest set of African political leaders had promised that political stability, enhanced living conditions, respect for the rights of citizens and equality before the law would all be necessary dividends of independence (Nkrumah, 1963:50, Whitaker, 1988:30). After political independence, African leaders were faced with choosing the model(s) of democracy most suitable for Africa (Offor, 2006:265-77). Political leaders in Africa have attempted several systems of governance since the African states began to gain political independence. However, the new

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democratic systems have remained chaotic and unstable (Offor, 2009:299-312; Awolowo, 1985:35).

This study is not another competing cause-effect explanation of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. It is also not a new investigation, identifying yet another reason for the failure of democracy in Africa. Rather, it is a reaction to previous studies recommending a shift in the paradigm of explanation, which it is the task of philosophy to do. It is the primary responsibility of a philosopher, according to Karl Marx (Wolff, 2010), not merely to interpret the world, but to change it. In response to Marx's recommendation, but without necessarily adopting his theories, this study intends to make a critique of the current dominant approach to the investigation and explanation of the political challenges of Africa as a way of changing it and consequently initiate a new consciousness of who I am as an African.

This study intends to raise and find answers mainly to the following questions:

1. What are the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa?
2. How did scholars of African politics previously explain the political problems of Africa?
3. Why were their explanations inadequate? - Have they merely identified wrong causes, or, have they adopted a wrong model of explanation?

It is therefore a philosophical reaction and contribution to an ongoing debate.

The purpose of this first chapter is to establish the objectives of for the study and to outline the procedure and methodology to achieve those objectives.

1.3   Statement of the Problem

Some African countries adopted versions of modern democracy after independence. But in spite of democracy and all it stands for, many African states have remained politically unstable (van Rensburg: 2007: 20-21). In fact, none of the democracies in Africa can be

regarded as consolidated[1] and, of course, an unconsolidated democracy is an unreliable democracy.

Scholars have previously attempted explaining to explain why African democracies are having problems. Scholars of African politics have adopted the cause-effect models to explain why the postcolonial African states are experiencing challenges with the practice of democracy. Consequent to their search for the causal elements, the scholars have distanced themselves from their object of scrutiny. They have also compromised the logic of their own methods in favour of a preconceived conclusion.

By arguing that the political situation of Africa is caused, some scholars of African politics tend to portray African society like people whose lives are predictable in the manner of objects, and manipulated by forces beyond their control. The use of the cause-effect analysis implies that the problems have defiled every solution consequent to the invasion of some insummountable causal forces. On the other hand, it implies that even if there may be some solutions, it would still mean that African states must rely on some causal elements to impose the solutions or the freedom from the problems on them. The questions therefore could be asked; should African continue to rely on such cause-effect explanations, which imply a cause and effect solutions, about their own life situation? Is the African political situation beyond remedy?

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[1]One of the earliest theoretical acknowledgements of the political crises in Africa can be found in Busia (1971), and one of the most recent in Biegon & Killander (2009:295-311). Consolidation, roughly defined, means, bringing a democratic regime to a state where its reversion to other alternative form of governance becomes improbable, in view of the level of legitimacy it enjoys with all stakeholders.

1.4   Research Objective

This study is a response to previous explanations given by scholars who previously attempted to give explanations on why there are problems militating against democracy in Africa.

1)   The main objective of the study is to show that their methods are inadequate.

2)   It is also to elucidate the need for an alternative approach to explaining the political challenges of Africa.

3)   The study is also to initiate, as a necessary consequence of (1) and (2), a new consciousness about who I am as an African.

1.5   Thesis

The main thesis of this study is that the cause and effect explanations so far given for the problems of democracy in Africa are not appropriate explanations of the problem.

The thesis is hinged on other sub-theses that the colonial factors on their own are not capable of causing the present challenges of democracy in Africa.

That postcolonial factors on their own are not entirely responsible for these problems. At the same time, historical events such as colonialism cannot be ignored as the internalist scholars have done in their analyses.

That scholars are not logically consistent in applying even their own model of causal explanation.

Therefore, either the cause-effect explanation is not a viable explanation of the problems of democracy in Africa, or it is viable if and only if it is clear that Africans are mere objects like ants and machines.

1.6   Significance of the Study

The problem of democracy is not a new issue in many parts of the world; nevertheless, it is still a living problem. This study is a novel attempt towards finding a theoretical solution to the problems militating against democracy and democratic consolidation in Africa. The focus of this study is to examine what the scholars have said about why democracy has had problems in many parts of Africa. It will also be argued that though there have been many attempts at explaining the problems, the previous attempts tend to exclude philosophical method[2]. They have excluded it not only because they have largely employed some haphazard logic, but most of all because they have conducted their investigations on the models of the Newtonian physics. Consequently, the scholars end up identifying isolated causes and solutions, which sometimes have no real causal connection with the problems. This study therefore challenges the previous models of explanation. It proposes a change of approach in explaining the problems that prevent good democratic governance in Africa.

It is significant for a number of reasons. First, it represents the contribution of theoretical philosophy to finding solutions to African social issues. Second, it puts social factors like political leadership and events like colonisation into proper perspective. Third, it provides a logical critique of previous explanations for the challenges of democracy in Africa.

1.7   Methodology

Previous explanations for the problems of democracy in Africa have adopted the empiricist models of explanation underlying social science investigations. It may be admitted, though, that it is hardly possible to rigidly demarcate a philosophical approach from the approaches of other fields. However, some primary distinctions could be identified. Researches in other

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[2] A method which is logically consistent and does not conceive human factors they way they would conceive non-human factors. It is also a method in which scholars do not demarcate between themselves and their own society which they study (see section 6.2).

fields also employ the philosophical method. A philosophical approach is, however, more primary rationality test. The social sciences, like the natural sciences, also have procedural laws and theories to which their investigations must adhere (Jones, 2009:621-650; Ludwig, 2004:2-40; Ekstrom, 1992:107-122). The philosophical method allows for a more relaxed and elastic approach, provided the arguments used are logically valid. Consequently, this study will primarily employ the tools of logic and epistemology. Also, to expose the weaknesses in the arguments of previous scholars is to have engaged them in their theoretical strongholds. Since some of the scholars appeal to history in their arguments while others dismiss the relevance of history, it becomes necessary bring in the analysis of those historical issues as shall be found in chapter 5.

This study represents a methodological shift from previous research on the political problems of Africa. Most scholars have adopted the deterministic cause-effect models of explanation using the approaches of empirical sciences (Mantzavinos, 2009). This study, however, advocates an alternative approach in which African society is not denied its true nature as a human society.

Efforts are also made in this study to avoid some distempers[3] (Russell, 2001:528-529; Stumpf, 1988:222-223) resulting in or from racial prejudice. It avoids the prejudice that an idea or scholar that is not well known in Europe or America is not a recognised or a world-class scholar, whereas every idea or scholar from Europe and America is automatically international, and consequently highly placed. The criteria for such judgements are shifted from the quality of ideas to censorship and the psychology of the critic. Perhaps such biases result from geographical and racial politics, and possibly a gate-keeping imperial strategy. In

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[3]Distempers of learning are described by Francis Bacon as diseases of learning which distort knowledge. Idols of the mind, like the distempers, also corrupt the mind and prevent it from attaining true knowledge. Bacon names three of the distempers as fantastic learning, contentious learning and delicate learning, and the idols as: idols of the tribe, idols of the cave, idols of the market place and idols of the theatre. Further reading on each of the distempers of learning and the idols of the mind and how Bacon describes them, and how he claims they could prevent scholars from attaining true knowledge, can be found in Stumpf, 1988:222-223.

this study, therefore, the ideas of an African scholar who has probably never been outside Africa; and probably, does not have articles on the Internet, could be considered, provided the facts offered are not devoid of intellectual credibility and the research addresses issues critically and logically.

I wish to draw attention to the following conventions that I have also followed in consultation with my promoter:

1) I have used one of the abbreviated and adapted versions of the Harvard style of referencing, such as in 'Eswaran' (cited in the text as Eswaran, 2002:749-774, instead of Eswaran, 2002: pages 749-774) and appears in the bibliography as: Eswaran, V. (2002) 'A Diffusion Wave Out of Africa: the mechanism of the modern human revolution?', *Current Anthropology*, vol. 43, pp. 749-774.

2) I have endeavoured to use footnotes in a manner that facilitates easy reading of this study.

3) I have used the pronouns 'I', 'my' and 'me' where necessary to distinguish this study as something that affects the author, and in which personal sincerity and intellectual honesty and accuracy coincide and are required.

This research is a qualitative investigation, and thus does not require collection and quantitative analysis of data. In addition, there is neither fieldwork nor interview. Instead, classical texts as well as current scholarly works will be used.

1.8   Contribution to Knowledge

The study is a novel attempt at an alternative approach to the problem of political crises in Africa. Though scholars have previously raised related questions regarding the causes of the political problems of Africa (Nhema, 2008; Zounmenou, 2009:72-73; Souare, 2009:1-13), they have adopted methods that are inappropriate. Their methods fail to provide a deep and holistic awareness of the problems.

The main contribution to knowledge in this study, therefore, lies in its presentation of a new consciousness of who I am, and in its critique of the previous approach to the explanation of the problems affecting the democratic project in Africa.

1.9   Outline of Chapters

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter. It sets the objectives of the thesis, the significance of the research, the main thesis of the research as well as the approach and methodology of the study. It also defines and clarifies some important concepts employed in the study.

Chapter 2 takes on the theoretical framework of the thesis and establishes the reason why the study is necessary.

Chapter 3 is devoted to identifying and explaining the ailing components of democracy in Africa as a whole and within the African states.

Chapter 4 is a general exposition and review of previous works of scholars on the causes of the political crises in Africa.

Chapter 5 diagnoses the central political problems of Africa and makes a historical investigation into the problems in other to assess the popular appeal to historical sequence or otherwise by the externalists and the internalists respectively.

Chapter 6 evaluates the causal explanation, which is the theoretical foundation of the previous explanations on the challenges of democracy in Africa.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarising its major points and arguments, and suggesting areas for future research.

1.10   Clarification of Concepts

The main concepts that require clarification in this study are Africa, political problem, philosophical enquiry, cause, democracy, and problems of democracy in Africa. The clarification is necessary for two reasons. First, it is the usual starting point in intellectual discourse. Secondly, in applied fields, there is always the possibility of muddling concepts,

because the various contexts in which they are used can affect their meaning (Olatunji, 2007:90-104; Mazrui, 2004:472-482).

1.10.1 Philosophical Enquiry

A philosophical enquiry is an enquiry, which, is philosophical. This definition sounds simplistic and circular. It is, however, profound. All that is required in addition to this is to elucidate what it means to be philosophical. There is no rigid demarcation between enquiries in philosophy and those carried out in other intellectual fields. At the same time, there must be some distinction between a philosophical enquiry and a non-philosophical enquiry on the one hand, and between a philosophical enquiry and enquiries carried out within other disciplines on the other (Stroll & Popkin, 1979:15).

Perhaps, to identify an enquiry as philosophical in comparison with others considered as non-philosophical is a matter of degree rather than of kind. This is because "both the ordinary man and the professional philosopher govern their lives in the light of principles" (Stroll & Popkin, 1979:16). The difference, however, is hardly obscure when it comes to degrees of explicitness. The professional philosopher is expected to be more articulate, coherent and explicit in approach while from time to time reviewing the coherence and validity of his principles and values. The philosopher is not expected to hold any principle or value as the ultimate truth. Instead, he should constantly review them and subject them to verification and justification, sometimes in the form of arguments and debates beyond what an ordinary person would do. An ordinary person may do the same thing the philosopher does, but may do so in lesser degree and may hold certain rules and principles rigidly, as sacred truths beyond questioning or with little reflection. In this case, therefore, there is hardly any difference between the ordinary person and the philosopher on the basis of the kind of things they do, but more on the degree to which they do them (Stroll & Popkin,

1979:7-16). If in fact there may be no single philosopher who is able to match up with the expectation of a philosopher, it does not remove the fact of the theoretical expectations of being a philosopher. That is, even if there is no philosopher who is able to meet the day-to-day expectations of being a philosopher, there remain the theoretical expectations of the calling. Consequently, an ordinary person can act philosophically, if he is governed by principles, which are organised and can be made explicit while constantly reviewing them critically.

In the same vein, there is no universally agreed demarcation between a philosophical enquiry and an enquiry carried out in other intellectual fields. Philosophy as an intellectual discipline is a not a 'self-contained' discipline (Oladipo, 2004:10). This means that it is a generic discipline, and therefore it is not expected to have universally agreed content of enquiry, unlike other disciplines such as physics, chemistry, computer science or psychology. According to Aigbodioh (1997:9), even though elements of philosophy may exist in other disciplines, while an issue in another discipline may also be the subject of philosophical enquiry, scholars generally agree that most other intellectual disciplines, like the natural sciences, are systems of accumulated knowledge claims.

In addition, in most other disciplines such as the natural sciences and science-related fields, investigations are often expected to follow some specific patterns and rules; but philosophy is more generic and less procedurally rigid. Philosophy consequently allows for wider and freer imaginations. On the one hand, the eclectic nature of philosophy empowers philosophical enquiries to come up with novel ideas that sometimes challenge conventional assumptions. It equips and allows philosophy to challenge the conclusions made within its own domain and within the domains of other disciplines without undermining the authority of those disciplines and their experts. On the other hand, it has empowered philosophers

throughout history to suggest aspects of issues, which hitherto have been taken for granted, or have been unimaginable, unnoticed, ignored, or unknown.

Distinguishing philosophy from other disciplines especially the natural sciences and the social sciences does not indicate that there is any standing consensus about the relationship that philosophy bears with other disciplines. There are scholars such as Kuhn (1970), Naffadi (2002: 109-129) and Spurrett (1980:151-163). More than any other academic discipline, however, philosophy employs logical reasoning as its first tool. Usually, other disciplines tend to content themselves with the mere giving of empirical justifications or conforming to some approved paradigms for their knowledge claims (Atkinson, 1986:1-9, 13-32, Aigbodioh, 1997:22-25; Gjertsen, 1989:10-38). Philosophy analyses and logically evaluates the basis of the claims made within its own domain and within the domain of other disciplines. While other disciplines, especially the natural sciences and the social sciences, rely more on inductive reasoning and giving factual evidence (Blanche, & Durrheim, 2007:4-9), philosophy moves more by the deductive procedure and giving rational premises for its claims. To validate its conclusions, philosophy prefers logical deduction to empirical evidence. Any intellectual enquiry, which deductively infers conclusions consistently and objectively without preconceptions, may also qualify as philosophical, regardless of the professional field of the scholar or researcher (Ogungbemi, 2007:15). Consequently, philosophical enquiry is more of a diagnostic nature; it is a reason-seeking enquiry, rather than merely identifying and consequently prescribing. As a reason-seeking rather than evidence-gathering discipline, it addresses itself more to the "Why" more than the "What" or "How." A philosophical enquiry is consequently expected to be one that gives deeper and more holistic reasons for why a thing is the way it is.

Given the foregoing, the term 'philosophical enquiry' means a less conventional but in-depth theoretical approach, with preference for the deductive method in support of its reasoning process towards conclusions that are not preconceived.

1.10.2 Africa

Africa has always been a controversial continent. Even the concept 'Africa' itself is not uncontroversial. This is evident in the Latin saying, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi,* meaning that there is always something new (strange) from Africa. Among scholars, however, the controversy begins even from the name "Africa." While some argue that the name is from the Latin term "Aprica," or the Greek word *Αφρική* (Aphrike), meaning "not cold," "hot" or "sunny" (Crawford, 2010), others believe that the name originates from the Phoenician word "afar" meaning "dust", or the Berber term "Ifri" used to describe the cave dwellers (du Plessis, 2010). Perhaps, the suffix "ca" or "ka" could in some languages mean "people."

Other controversies centre on "who is an African?" or "who qualifies to be called an African?" and "what is authentically African?" These questions arise because of the debates on whether there is an African philosophy, and whose philosophy could or should be classified as African (Hallen & Shodipo, 1986:5-6). It even becomes more complicated with the recent resurgence of intellectual interest in people of African descent living outside the continent of Africa (Banjo, 2004:42-43).

The reasons behind some of these controversies are numerous. First, does the name refer to the geographical entity or to the people therein? If it refers to the geographical entity, should it mean that all people of African descent living outside the designated frontiers are excluded? If it refers to the people, it would mean that a certain demographic and anthropological designation must be given to designate the African identity (Banjo, 2004:42-43). Secondly, it is commonly held among scholars that the landmass now referred to as

Africa is the cradle of human existence (Comas et al., 1997:443-449; Eswaran, 2002:749-774). However, the long period of human existence in the region did not produce any homogeneity in terms of common language, common culture or common historical experience. The colonial experience and the influx of immigrants and settlers from other continents, which have further imparted cultural and racial pluralities, make it even more difficult to talk of Africa as a single entity. Suffice it to say, that scholars are still far from reaching any conceptual agreement concerning African identity.

The enormity of the controversies notwithstanding, some specifications have the immediate advantage of helping to bypass some disputes and capture those that are of specific relevance to this study. The name 'Africa', which was initially meant for the region covered by Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya (Crawfurd, 2010), has come to refer to the entire continent (Crawfurd, 2010). That is, Africa now refers to the continent of predominantly black people, south of Europe and between the Americas and Australia. This descriptive definition is necessary, because, it is the only option, which allows for a reference to precolonial and precontact societies within the continent as Africa, covering even the period when the name 'Africa' had not been given. This is because, even though the name 'Africa' was a later development, the geographical entity had always existed prior to external contacts.

In this study, however, reference to Africa will cover only the sub-Saharan region of the entire Africa. The choice is on the basis of social, cultural and political similarities shared among the people, tribes and modern states in the region as shall be discussed in the study. Only in a very few instances will the concept 'Africa' refer also to the Arabian Africans in the north of the continent, and the context will indicate the application.

However, reference to precolonial Africa in this research work implies the people, tribes, and societies therein within the same geographical region in the period before the

colonial intervention in the place that came to be named 'Africa'. The context in which the term precolonial 'Africa' is used will indicate whether it applies to the entire continent or just to the sub-Saharan region. Similarly, the context in which the concept 'Africa' is used will also indicate whether it refers to precolonial, colonial or postcolonial Africa.

In addition, reference to scholars of African politics does not necessarily imply that they are of African descent. That is, the term scholars of African politics, does not exclude scholars who are not of the African descent, but who wrote about African politics. When specific reference is made to African scholars, it means scholars of African descent who live or who have lived in Africa and who, by implication, are directly in touch with the realities of Africa.

1.10.3 Cause

A potentially controversial concept in this thesis is 'cause.' In the natural sciences, when an event occurs, the scientists set out to investigate its cause. It is believed that the cause will be found at the end of the investigation. However, the concept 'cause' (sometimes referred to as the problem of causation (Jones, 1970:224), or causality (Honderich, 1995:126; Oredipe, 1991:17-30), has always been controversial in all fields, including the natural sciences (Cupta & Komen, 2009:13-24; Atkinson, 1986:140-145), and throughout the history of philosophy. Aristotle identifies four different types of cause: the 'efficient' cause, the 'final' cause, the 'material' cause, and the 'formal' cause (Jones, 1970:224-227; Faure, 2009:77-108). Aquinas adapted Aristotle's formulation in his defence of the existence of God and consequently portrayed God as the Unmoved Mover (Iroegbu, 1995:164-182, 382; Oredipe, 1991: 17-30).

Since Aquinas, the concept cause has remained a controversial one (Iroegbu, 1995:364). While the debate endures, It is obvious that the concept cause implies bringing into existence another state of affairs which could never had occurred without the

intervention of the cause or causal factor. As long as the new state of affairs could never have occurred without the cause, it means that the said cause has determined the effect. The said cause can be a single factor and it may also be a combination of several factors (Cartwright, 2000:47-58). In the case of multiple factors however, it means that all the factors must be present in other to have the effect. That being the case, if *p* is said to have been caused by *q, r,and s,under the condition t,* then either *q, r, s, or the condition t alone* cannot be said to have caused *p*, because, none of them brought the state of affair called *p*. However, if the whole of *q, r, s,* and *t,* occur and *p* necessarily results, then it could be inferred that *p* is caused by *q, r,and s,under the condition t*. The implication is also that the state of affair *p* is determined by *q, r, s,* and *t*. This dependency of an effect of the cause has motivated Faure (2009:77-88) to argue that every case of causation involves determinism.

Also, since it is logically unthinkable for a thing to cause itself into being or to become what it is not, then every instance of causation also involves an interaction between separate objects or states of affairs, which, properly described, one object is the subject, acting upon the other which is the passive object.

Given the supposed passive nature of objects, natural scientists usually tend to explain causal connections in a sense, which identifies a directly observable and physically verifiable interaction between an alleged cause and an alleged effect (Gjertsen, 1989:228-233). This sort 'verifiability criterion' is difficult and logically impossible in a normal human situation. First, in a normal human situation, it is difficult to identify all factors contributing to the occurrence of an event. Even if it is ever possible to identify all the factors, the only condition under which the result of the social scientist can be comparable with that of the natural scientist is if the human factor is as predictable as the objects of the natural scientist. This deterministic implication has motivated Anscombe (1981: 133-47) to insist that the core and common feature of causality in its various kinds is that it consists in the derivativeness of

an effect from its causes. That is "effects derive from, arise out of, come of, their causes" (Anscombe 1981: 136). Whether it takes the form of psychological, sociological of historical explanation, it suffices to say, that a human action can be explained by the cause-effect model, if and only if the person caused is as determined,[4] predictable and mechanical as tables and machines under certain conditions.

Though the arguments relating to causality in reference to politics in Africa will be furthered in Chapter 6, it is worth noting from this onset that, every instance of cause-effect involves two things. `The first is that there is a subject and an object, as there is a cause and an effect. Also, every case of determinism implies that the effect is powerless or is not in control of its own actions. An effect entirely becomes what the cause makes out of it; it is only a reaction or a consequence of something else.

1.10.4 Democracy

Democracy has come to mean different things to different people (van der Vyver et, al., 1993:1-3; Beetham, 1999:1; O'Kane, 2004:22-28). As a concept, it is complex for two main reasons. Firstly, democracy as a political practice is not the same everywhere. There are different forms of democracy, and none is exactly the same. There is the presidential system in the United States of America, while Britain practises the parliamentary system. The parliamentary system is in practice in South Africa, but it includes the office of president. In the Nigerian presidential system, the office of the first lady is very prominent. Swaziland claims to practise a monarchical democracy. Britain also includes aspects of traditional monarchy in their modern political system and the Queen is well recognised, but it may not be exactly like the practice in Swaziland.

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[4]By implication, therefore, a cause is an agent or an action, which absolutely determines the occurrence of the other called the effect. If a cause exists, it is responsible for the effect and should be blamed or praised for it. A cause is not just a related factor. Therefore, a cause implies determinism, and determinism it cannot necessarily presuppose freedom.

Secondly, scholars do not seem to have employed the concept to mean the same thing. While some see democracy as synonymous with capitalism and liberalism (Weldon,1953: 86), others contrast it with neither liberalism or capitalism or both (Lawson, 1997:91; Carew, 2004:460-471; Hoffman & Graham, 2006a:102; Barry 2000:278-288). There are still scholars who see democracy as anything other than authoritarianism and nationalism (Lawson, 1997:91). However, the liberal, the military dictator, the monarch and the nationalist have all claimed to be democratic (Trend, 1996:7-18; Wilson, 1996:12; Teffo, 2002: para. 18; Barry, 2000:278). Giving a precise definition of democracy becomes a herculean or even an impossible task.

Democracy has been defined as the rule of the people, rule of the people's representatives, rule of the people's party, majority rule, dictatorship of the proletariat, self-government by the masses, elite competition for the popular vote, multi-partyism, a free society, and even a philosophy of economic prosperity, among other definitions (Beetham, 1999:1; O'Kane, 2004:22-28). While some scholars see democracy as an exclusively Western idea (Mangcu, 2009:13-15), others see it as a universal idea that takes shape within the sociocultural context of wherever it takes root (Owolabi, 2003:442). The word 'democracy' has become a general synonym for everything good and acceptable (Crick, 1982:56; Aluko, 2006a:82-100).

While democracy is believed to have been consolidated by revolution in places such as France and the United States of America, it is said to have been hindered by revolution in Germany and Russia (O'Kane, 2004:89-112). In East Germany, democracy is said to have emerged as a synthesis between revolution and totalitarianism (O'Kane, 2004:194-222), whereas in France, totalitarianism represents an antithesis to democracy (O'Kane, 2004:225-230). All these have made it difficult to give a precise and universally acceptable definition of democracy. Consequent to the various inconsistencies and complexities that attend the

attempt to define democracy, some scholars have even cast grave doubts about the real existence of democracy, or the possibility of defining it (Barry, 2000:285-286; Raphael, 1990:54-56; Grimsley, 1973:106-108; Orwell, 1957:149).

Perhaps, the easiest way to go about the controversies regarding the concept of democracy is to group the numerous conceptions and definitions. The definitions of democracy can be grouped roughly into two. The first conceives democracy as a kind of political arrangement for achieving the 'common good' and/or the 'will of the people' through the poll. All such commonly used definitions of democracy such as "the rule of the people by the people and for the people" fall under this category. They are sometimes referred to as the classical definitions of democracy, because they represent the conception of democracy to which a classical philosopher like Aristotle subscribe (Schumpeter, 1942:250).

The classical conception of democracy is usually based on the ideals of utilitarian rationalism. It describes democracy as an institutional arrangement or system of government in which the common good of the people, the sovereignty and 'interest of the people', or 'happiness for all,' or any of the utilitarian utopias could be achieved (Benn, 1967:338-41).

Another conception of democracy is that democracy is a political transaction for selecting political office holders, or it is a process of decision making through well-informed elected elites. First, this conception of democracy has limited democracy to elections, competition for votes, or a multiparty system. It means for instance, that beyond election, a society is at the mercy of the political acumen of an individual or a group of professionals who may not rule democratically (Schumpeter, 1942:268-69; see also O'Kane, 2004:24). Those who subscribe to this conception of democracy include Schumpeter (1942:250, 252-68, 269), Sartori (1965), Lipset (1959:71), Przeworski, Popper, and Hardin and Riker (Fayemi, 2009:101-26). The most prominent of that group is Schumpeter, and that is why

that conception of democracy has come to be called the Schumpeterian conception of democracy.

The Schumpeterian idea of democracy is a brand of normative elitism called representative or representational democracy (Hoffman & Graham, 2006a:113-15). He sees democracy as a system of competition for voters' support between political parties. It tends to ensure that besides selection of representatives, government decisions are made by educated and well-informed professional politicians rather than by the public. It considers public actions irrational and untutored opinion based on instinct and emotion unless they are made by the elected professional representatives. It therefore equates democracy with the elitist polyarchy, institutional rituals and procedures, minimal participation in governance by the public, multi-partyism and election into office (Beetham, 1999:3).

Perhaps a question to ask is whether election into public office, as found especially in polyarchy, necessarily implies democracy. Could several forms of undemocratic governance not adopt some of the various procedural features such as election into office? On the other hand, going by the argument in Plato's *The Republic* (Copleston, 1962:257), can aristocracy not corruptly metamorphose into democracy? Can the sovereignty of the people not become the dictatorship of the majority, or anarchy? While achieving the 'good of all' looks attractive but utopian, could the procedural and the institutional dimensions of democracy not produce tyranny? Therefore, electoral procedures alone do not necessarily imply or guarantee democracy (Diamond, 2004:21-35).

Though the two conceptions of democracy appear different from each other, they are extremely similar, and they all see democracy as an institutional arrangement (Schumpeter, 1942:242). In the two cases, democracy is either a type of state or a type of government.

There is a need for another conception of democracy. This leads to the third conception. It conceives of democracy as a system of shared values, and/or a way of life

which respects the rights and freedom of others and their human differences. Some of those who subscribe to this conception of democracy include Dewey (1990:327-28); Hook (1939:31-46); Held (2009:211ff.); and Busia (1971:162-72), among others. For instance, Dewey sees democracy as covering the entire domain of social and political human relations, such as ethical values, education, ethics and a synergy between the individual and society (Roederer, 2000:75-94).

Dewey's optimism seems too far away from the reality of issues at grassroots level in a modern democracy. It seems a bold assumption to hope, as Dewey does, that a high level of social harmony will be achieved by means of public deliberation, even in modern cosmopolitan settings. Faith in human nature and reason is a good thing, but then, political alignment does not often employ reason and rational principles. In addition, it is difficult to see how education and enlightenment alone would make the world democratic, as Dewey believes (Higgs, 2008:116-27).

Dewey optimistically opts for integrationism. He believes not only that society could be harmonized with individual interests, but also that democracy should be interiorized as a way of life (Dewey, 1985:349). Democracy should be the guiding principle of personal living, and thence translate into social norms. It therefore becomes a way of life because it is first a moral ideal (Covaleskie, 2004). As a moral ideal, democracy has to do with the very criteria of evaluating and making judgments and the very standard which the criteria of judgement should meet (Covaleskie, 2004).This explains why moral issues are epistemological issues moralised (Olatunji, 2006), and also suggests a link between politics and morality. Perhaps this latter conception of democracy could be right in a more significant sense because, if the society is not democratic, the government or any institution of governance cannot be democratic, regardless of the quality of the institutional arrangement. To put it another way, can a society achieve any good quality of democratic institutional

arrangement when the individual citizens and the society in general are undemocratic or uncivilized?

However, another question is, does the civility of the populace make a country necessarily democratic? Defining democracy only in terms of the way of life, moral idea or civility of the populace may not give an adequate picture of it. While the classical and the Schumpeterian conceptions of democracy are considered extreme because they identify democracy with institutional arrangements, the Deweyan conception is equally an extreme because it appears detached from institutions conventionally identified with democracy. If one is a thesis, the other is necessarily an antithesis. In that case, none of them could be viable within the context of a social dialectics because the thesis has only very limited viability when its antithesis has followed. The discovery of antithesis is soon followed by its own antithesis, which for the most part is the synthesis of the previous theses (Stroll & Popkin, 1979:163-64).

Based on the foregoing analysis, therefore, democracy in this study implies a synthesis of all complementary conceptions and elements of democracy. That is, a synthesis of the classical and the Deweyan conception. It means therefore that: Democracy is an institutional arrangement for achieving the common good, through the sovereignty of the people.

(1) Democracy is a party system of government where important decisions are made through the activities of professionals and a competent elite.
(2) Democracy is a party system of government where important decisions are made through the people.
(3) Democracy is a system of values or way of life.
(4) Democracy is a political system which ensures the establishment and sustenance of the basic political structures (infrastructure, techno-structure and superstructure of a society).

The different conceptions of democracy are not complete in themselves. They are also complementary in nature. None of them formulates a complete democracy without the complement of the others. To have one without the others is no more than a pseudo-

democracy. None of them is reliable and none can be consolidated without the complement of the others. A combination of the first four (as above), produces the fifth. The existence of the fifth enhances the first four. The cycle begins and continues in a spiral progression towards democratic consolidation. A democracy becomes consolidated when in the view of Linz and Stepan (1996:5), the institution and "components of democracy become the only game in town." Linz and Stepan's opinion is also supported by Diamond and Morlino (2004:20-31); Awopetu (2007:22-25); and Gitonta (1999:5-22) in their enumeration of the components and indicators of a good democracy.

All three scholars agree that any good democracy requires the existence of certain qualities. These include tolerance towards, and creative involvement in the political process, political awareness, and freedom of the press and the free flow of information. They also include sovereignty in the people through their ability to influence the decisions of their government or to change it, and regular free and fair elections that underpin the legitimacy of government. In addition, they include the safeguards of social justice, minority rights, equal access to justice, gender equality, child rights, and human rights.

Going by the logic of Linz and Stepan (1996:5), democracy as used in this study implies an ideal which can be realised to a greater or lesser extent. It means when the complementarity between the aforementioned components is sustained sufficiently well, freely and consistently, it necessarily consolidates a democracy. It must be added that there is hardly any way that it can be ascertained that a system is having problems with democracy without examining whether some of the specified components and indices of the democratic structures are missing. Consequently, to ascertain that the democratic project is having problems in Africa, the democracies in Africa would have to be evaluated against the democratic elements, ingredients, or by-products of democracy. To be specific, therefore, in

this study, democracy means a combination of democracy as an institution and democracy as a way of life and system of values.

1.10.5 Political Problem

In this thesis, the phrase 'political problem' refers to any political challenge that directly impairs the establishment, maintenance and consolidation of the political system. The political system in question is democracy in Africa. The political problem is thus also that of democracy. Why has it been difficult for African states to practise democracy smoothly, and why has it been difficult for them to consolidate their democracies without reverting to all sorts of undemocratic regimes like the military government?

When it is said that democracy or the democratic project is experiencing challenges or difficulties in Africa, it means a number of things. It means that the necessary components of democracy such as free and fair elections, the ability of the people to change their government, press freedom, the level of legitimacy enjoyed by the political system, human rights and democratic values are weak, or completely absent. It does not mean that there is a perfect democracy anywhere in the world against which the democracies in Africa are to be compared. At the very best, it may imply that some democracies are faring better than those in Africa, but not that they are ideals against which to compare African democracies. The concept of Africa as a political problem, therefore, is not necessarily the result of a comparative analysis. Rather, it is applied within the context of the belief that the political systems practised in the African states are, to a considerable extent, all forms of democracy.

1.11 **Summary**

This chapter states the thesis of this study. It establishes, the motivation for the study, the statement of the problem, the research objective and significance. It provides the outline of chapters and it also clarifies some concepts to provide for clarity and easy understanding.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Considerations

2.1   Introduction

Conventionally, this chapter ought to discuss the theoretical framework of the study. Such a framework is held to be necessary to clearly understand the positions the study takes on the issues it raises. However, since the main thrust of this study by implication, opposes theory-based explanations, it would be self-contradictory to propose yet another theory of explanation.[5] Consequently, this chapter posits a more or less metatheoretical framework. That is, its main objective is to critique the theoretical foundations of previous explanations offered by scholars on why the democratic project is experiencing problems in Africa.

It must be understood, on the one hand, that there is usually a link between the methodological framework to which an intellectual investigation subscribes and its theoretical outlook, where it subscribes to one. The theoretical outlook of an investigation depends on its foundational philosophy. Therefore, there is a nexus between the methodological framework and the foundational philosophy of an intellectual investigation. On the other hand, the first identity feature within the philosophical geography of a theory is its ontological position. The ontological position looks toward epistemology for a framework of rational justification. Therefore, the methodological, theoretical, ontological and the epistemological frameworks of an intellectual investigation are linked and are important (Faure, 2009:77-108).

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[5]Formulating competing theories of explanation is not the main focus of this study. If through the criticism of the existing theories a new approach emerges, it will only be by implication. As a work in theoretical philosophy, it does not begin by establishing a theory because, when a theory is established, whatever is built on it, following the prescriptions it provides, will necessarily conform with it. It would mean a preconceived conclusion. This study, therefore, attempts to begin from a presupposition-less position by not adopting any substantive theory.

In this meta-theoretical analysis therefore, I shall begin from the philosophical framework of previous researches, then the theoretical framework, and then their methodological framework. I shall also examine their ontological and the epistemological frameworks as well.

2.2   **Philosophical Framework**

This study is an investigation in the field of philosophy as a theoretical discipline. In philosophy, an accurate way to evaluate an explanation is in terms of its logical validity, and the effectiveness of the solutions it proposes. The previous explanations of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa, some of which were carried out by African scholars, were carried out within the framework of the social sciences. Consequently, the scholars tend to evaluate the viability of their positions in terms of their consistency with certain theories. While some adhere to socialism and Marxism, others uphold liberalism and capitalism. Each of them tries to demonstrate the validity of their positions by showing their consistency with the theories to which they subscribe. For instance, in *The Problems of Africa*, Awolowo (1985) tries to defend moderate socialism by trying to show that the solution to the problems could come only through moderate socialism. On the contrary, Diamond (1993: 1-36) subscribes to liberal and capitalist democracy. He consequently sees anything opposed to this philosophical basis as problematic.

In philosophy, however, theories like socialism, capitalism or even liberalism are applied or secondary level theories because they are theories only within the applied philosophy. Secondary theories are primary only within the relevant applied fields such as political science, linguistics or education. Primary theories in philosophy depend on the field of philosophy to which one is referring. At the same time, the philosophical position a person adopts depends on the basic ontological assumption to which a person subscribes. One person

like Augustine may believe that the world is a transient order with a teleological trajectory. Someone else like the early Wittgenstein may subscribe to the view that the physical order is all that exists. Another may even hold the belief that we cannot talk about the existence of a physical world because he or she believes that what we tend to see as existent are mere illusions. While some ontological positions are called physicalism or materialism, others are called immaterialism, spiritualism, monism or even pluralism. All these are types of basic ontological assumptions to which scholars subscribe in varying degrees. In theoretical philosophy generally, there are only two schools of thought, representing the two basic theories in philosophy. One is the sceptic school and the other is the non-sceptic school. The existence of these two schools of thought does not necessarily imply a clear-cut demarcation, let alone opposition between the two. The history of philosophy itself is a history of scepticism (Popkin, 1995:ix-xv). The present study is within the framework of theoretical philosophy, therefore it does not necessarily take a position among the rival ontological assumptions, except that it basically assumes that there exist some challenges militating against the democratic project in Africa. In spite of this assumption, the belief that democracy is having problems in Africa still needs to be verified, as shall be done in Chapter 3.

2.3   **Ontological Framework**

Most scholars of African politics and some scholars who try to evaluate the prospects of democracy in Africa acknowledge the existence of problems in establishing and consolidating democracy in Africa. That is, they accept that there are problems with the practice of democracy in Africa. At this basic level, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with their understanding.

Believing in the existence of a thing is one thing and accounting for its existence is another. Scholars have tried to account for the problem of democracy in Africa or the

problems confronting Africa in their practice of democracy. While some (the 'externalists')
argue that external forces are responsible for the problems, others (the 'internalists') believe
that the problems are caused by forces within Africa.

One problem with these theoretical positions is the fact that both of them have
compromised the logical consistency of their argument. For instance, the externalists have
mainly identified colonisation as the cause of Africa's political problems. Perhaps they
believe that the cause of a problem must precede the effect.

Perhaps because these scholars already subscribe to externalism, they fear to regress
or progress in their argument beyond the colonial intervention era, because doing that would
lead them to accepting that the cause of the problem is internal. Consequently, they tend to
blame colonialism entirely for the present postcolonial problems, regardless of whether the
same set of problems had existed before colonisation or not.

The internalists, on the other hand, feel that the cause of a problem and its effects on
society must be contemporaneous. As a result, the internalists treat players in history
ahistorically. As historical creatures, human beings and human societies are in the process of
becoming agents. That is, human beings and human societies have come to be what they are
through the history that they themselves have created. Internalists have no objection to the
fact that human beings and human societies are in the process of becoming.

On the one hand, the belief that a cause and its effect must be contemporaneous is
itself an adaptation of laws of classical physics to social situations. On the other hand, there is
strong scepticism against this sort of strong causality even in modern physics (chaos theory).
How, then, can we assume that such a theoretical model would be suitable for understanding
real human, especially social and political, situations?

Given the history/non-history divide between the internalist and externalist, it could
be inferred that the externalists have adopted the historical framework, while the internalists

like Hayford (1994, as used in Ayittey, 1999:47), (Omotola, 2008:33-51) and Agunlana (2006:255-64) are more analytic and relate more with current, rather than historical affairs in their discourses. The internalist scholars believe that whatever is happening in the postcolonial political system of Africa is entirely a product of Africa.s postcolonial political leadership. However, it is now common to see both the internalists, like Diamond (1995:417-92), and the externalists, like Mulinge & Lesetedi (1998:15-28) and Nzongola-Ntalaja (1997:1-14), incorporating aspects of history into their analyses regardless of their theoretical positions in the externalist/internalist divide. This study, therefore, does not intend to be different from the approaches of other scholars in that direction. That is, it incorporates aspects and tools of history as well as those of conceptual and logical analysis. Consequently, this study tends to be eclectic in approach

Beyond the history/non-history divide, the two rival theories (externalism/internalism) may have appeared opposed to each other, but both are within the frameworks of the mechanist conception of human action and consequently of human existence. In a certain sense, both of them are also externalist. The externalists and the internalists have argued (as we shall see in Chapter 4) that the threats to democracy in Africa have causes. By arguing this way, the scholars have conceded to the mechanist conception of the human person. They have also undermined the fact that every social event and action involves freedom and choices, and that human choice and causation are not compatible.

The Italian phenomenologist and philosophical anthropologist, Battista Mondinn, describes the mechanist's conception of human life and the human person as the belief that the human person is a well-contrived machine. Before mechanicism (as Mondinn puts it), the vitalist theory had dominated philosophical anthropology from antiquity and the Middle Ages (Mondin:1886:26). The vitalists had taught that life is a an original phenomenon irreducible to matter, but traceable to some spiritual beings (Mondinn:1886:26). Beginning from the

seventeenth century, and with specific reference to the mathematical and scientific paradigms of Descartes, Gassendi, Galileo, Copernicus and Newton, vitalism has progressively been replaced by its mechanist rival (Mondin: 1886:26-28). Among the distinguishing features of mechanicism is the belief that human actions are not free actions because they are mechanical, and are consequently caused by forces outside the human person (Mondin: 1986:26, 28-36).

It is not very important to examine whether or not the vitalist or the mechanist understanding of human life or action is most appropriate. What is important is the relation these understandings of human life bear to explanations of human actions. Mondinn thinks that the mechanist approach is wrong because it takes the human person and actions as mechanical. In my view, the vitalist school of thought is not less mechanistic than the mechanist in its approach, because, it also takes human action as being caused by some spiritual forces, and it has failed to explain the necessary connection between the human being and the said forces. That is, it has not told us that the actions of the spiritual forces are human actions. If the spirit-motivated actions are not necessarily human actions, then they are also external to the human person. If they are external to the human person and they causally determine the actions of the human person, then the relation they bear to human action cannot be less mechanical than in the case of the mechanist view, and the causal force is also an externalist phenomenon.

Given the foregoing, the implication of both vitalism and mechanicism is that every explanation of human action in terms of causes implies reference to external forces, and therefore, necessarily undermines human freedom and choice. Though a statement expressing the causal connection may not always employ the term 'cause', the meaning still remains, as do the implications. Other expressions such as x explains y, p is responsible for q, there is a because b, or n leads to or is a result of r could also be used to imply causal connections. That

is, most abstract generalizations are explicit or implicit causal statements (Ekstrom, 1992:107-22). Therefore this study rejects the theoretical foundation provided by internalism and externalism, and their implied mechanist ontological foundation.

Sometimes, there is the need to justify an ontological position. Merely having an ontological position is different from justifying the position. The level of enquiry and analysis for the purpose of rational justification is of epistemological concern. Consequently, having seen the ontological frameworks of previous explanations, the next section will be devoted to examining the frameworks of their rational justifications.

2.4   **Epistemological Framework**

Traditionally, epistemology refers to the science of knowledge claims. Debates in epistemology involve arguments on the nature and possibility of knowledge. That is, whether it is possible to attain knowledge or not, by what method one can claim to know or how one can justify claims to knowledge. This explains why there are primarily only two opposing schools of thought in traditional epistemology. One is the sceptical school. It rejects or doubts the possibility of knowledge and knowing. The other is the non-sceptical school, which accepts the possibility of knowledge and knowing. By implication, therefore, epistemology is involved in the question of whether the political problems confronting the democratic project in Africa can be explained or known.

The next level of epistemological concern in the problem is to specify by what method the problems confronting democracy in Africa could be explained. While some scholars have identified the causal influence of external factors, others have identified the causal influence of internal factors. The two seemingly opposing accounts subscribe to causal explanations. Such explanations presuppose that the cause is different from the effect. They usually demarcate irreconcilably between the cause and the effect of a phenomenon. The

cause-effect demarcation is in itself a framework, which derives from traditional epistemology. As a metatheoretical analysis, the realist epistemological framework of the previous explanations of the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa will also be given further examination.

In traditional epistemology, there are two main schools of thought: the sceptic and those who believe in the possibility of knowledge. The latter can be divided into two, the rationalists and the empiricists. Each of the two is further divided into groups and subgroups. What is common to the different schools of thought in traditional epistemology is that they all distinguish between the mind and the body and between the object and the subject. The cause-effect demarcation is thus an extension of the tendencies in traditional epistemology. However, whether as scepticism, rationalism, empiricism or even realism, the cause-effect dynamism is justifiable only within the dichotomist orientation. Thus, the conditions for causal explanation for the most part are theory dependent (Achinstein, 1985:219). They all depend on the theories of traditional epistemology, which, coincidentally, also support classical physics. There is therefore a link between the traditional epistemology, the classical (Newtonian) physics, and the cause-effect demarcation and explanation previously offered by scholars in relation to the problems of democracy in Africa. The rejection of one implies a total or partial rejection of the other.

2.5   **Framework of Theories**

The ontological position of the previous explanations given to the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa is that they hold that there exist some problems militating against this project. However, they are divided in their account of the origin of the problems. While the externalists believe that the problems are of external origin, the internalists argue that the problems are caused by internal factors and agents. The two seemingly opposing

positions subscribe to the belief that the problems with democracy in Africa are caused or that some insurmountable forces or agents determine Africa's situation.

The two seemingly opposing positions are expressions of the belief that the existence of the problems has been causally determined. However, because they subscribe to the causal theory, they also subscribe to the thesis of insolubility[6] by implication. The insolubility thesis is that the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa are beyond solution by Africans themselves (Kelsall, 2006:248–250, Schmidt, 2009), perhaps, because the conditions necessary for the elimination of the problems cannot be satisfied now. For instance, if colonisation is said to have caused the problems, it would also mean that the problems entirely dependent on colonialism for their existence. The implication therefore is that since colonialism already existed and cannot be caused not to have existed, then the problem caused by it will necessarily exist and remain insoluble except if colonialism had not existed.

In likewise manner, both the internalists and the externalists are of the view that the problems are caused. In other words, the scholars subscribe to the view that the causal factors and agents are completely responsible for the problems or that the causal factors and agents have fatally determined the situation of African societies. That means that nothing can be done outside the mercy of the said causal agents, to liberate postcolonial African societies from their political problems. Since in most cases these causal factors cannot be eliminated now, it means that the assumption of a causal theory is also a view that Africa is doomed to fail democracy.

The belief in cause-effect explanation itself results from some empiricist epistemological positions on the relationship that an objective physical world bears with its subjective mental image. In other words, the cause-effect explanation more specifically

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[6] Insolubility thesis implies that a particular problem is beyond solution.

originates from a realist fashion of empiricism, which, in traditional epistemology, supports the subject-object divide (Rathbun, 2008:294-321).

The two groups of previous explanations of the problems of democracy in Africa are causal explanations. That is, they are tainted with realism in different ways. This explains why scholars, most of whom are Africans, have tended to detach themselves from the influence of the causal factors, which in their analysis have causally determined the rest of African society. They consequently assume that they are able to escape the causal influence of the factors that forces that have determined the fate of other Africans. It also explains why scholars prefer to adopt the idea (originating from Newtonian physics) that everything that happens has a cause to social situations.

On the one hand, every subscription to causal explanation is by that very fact a subscription to hard determinism. This is because, if determinism holds, then there can be no chances, and if there are no chances, there can be no probability. The absence of chances or probability presupposes the absence of mild determinism. On the other hand, even within physics and the natural sciences, hard determinism has become less credible. Applying such principles to human and social situations seems misconceived because the analyses they lead to are unlikely to reflect real life situations. Rather, they would reflect hypothetical situations in the minds of the scholars.

The theoretical models associated with the study of previous explanations of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa are externalism, internalism, causal explanation, determinism and realism. It is however, the position of this study that these theoretical models do not account for the situation of African societies, because I cannot find my fellow ordinary Africans and myself in their explanations. This position will be given further scrutiny in subsequent chapters. Hence, in the analysis, the realist assumptions grounding the causal theoretical framework of

the previous explanations were noted. They were, however, rejected, without the proposal of a substantive alternative.

Further still, it is plausible that human understanding, even from childhood, perhaps, is built around the ontological category called causality; the idea of cause and effect. If this is true, then the previous explanations of the political challenges in Africa may not be exemptions to this. There are numerous theories of causality divided between the determinists and the non-determinists, the compatibilists and the incompatibilists. Explaining details of any of the theories of causality is of no particular relevance here in this study particularly because, it is difficult, if not impossible to stipulate what theories of causality or causation are being adopted by the scholars of African politics.

There appears to be some apparent inconsistencies in their logic of causal interaction. Neither the externalists nor the internalists have any clear-cut theoretical position on causality. For instance, both the externalists and the internalists would argue that democracy in Africa would have been productive and consolidated if the alleged causes had not intervened. That is, counterfactually, the situation would have been different in the absence of the causal factors. However, neither the externalists nor the internalists have accepted the logical implication of their positions; that if causality and determinism are true, then they themselves have mortgaged their access to the truth and validity of the knowledge that they claim. That is, they themselves would have been causally determined (for the scholars of African politics who are Africans) or the sources of their information would have been causally determined (for the non-African scholars of African politics) or have no access to the truth about Africa (for the non-African of African politics). If it is true that they are not causally determined, the rest of Africa could not have been causally determined. Then what they claim about Africa is also denied by the very act of causal determinism. It becomes obvious that the scholars have no consistent and sustained reflection on the meaning and

implications of causality before making their assertions about Africa and the alleged causal factors. Consequently, it will not be very relevant to this study to try to stipulate the theoretical positions of the previous explanations or to theorise further on the frameworks of their positions.

2.6   **Methodological Framework**

It must be called to mind that a theoretical framework may be specified, either to locate the theoretical position the research comes from, or to assess the suitability of a theory in a study. A theoretical framework may also be used to compare the explanatory power of a number of theories, or to apply a theory as the design of a study (Vithal & Jansen, 2008:17-18). While it is possible to have research without a spelt out theoretical framework, especially in areas without well-developed theories, a study may be carried out within the context of a theory, and, a theory may develop in the course of a study (Vithal & Jansen, 2008:19).

As established in the previous chapter, this study is an intellectual reaction to explanations given by scholars regarding the problems confronting democracy in Africa. In other words, it aims at exposing the inadequacies of previous explanations given to account for those problems.

This study rejects the rigid assumption that we can only make sense of the failure of democracy in Africa in terms of cause and effect. It equally rejects the assumption that any account of democracy in Africa must be in terms of some substantive theories. The study will show that the intelligibility of the political crises in Africa need not necessarily be found in the elements or structure of a theory into which it is assumed we must fit the phenomenon. Rejecting the theories of explanation, the ontological assumptions behind them and the causal theories to which they subscribe, does not imply an interest in subscribing to any rival theory.

The fact however, that this study does not share any rigid, necessary or substantive affinity with any theory does not in any way imply that the contents are not defined. Parts of this study that require specifications and clarifications have been outlined in Chapter 1. Beyond such specifications as provided by the introductory chapter, there is one important specification which needs to be advanced; that is, those aspects of the African democratic systems that are problematic. As will be discussed in the next chapter, it is necessary to identify what aspects of democracy are actually ailing when I say that democracy is having problems in Africa.

2.7   Summary

In this chapter, I have examined the frameworks establishing the previous explanations of the political challenges of Africa without necessarily establishing any rival theoretical position. Though, that (the stance of position) by implication could be interpreted as a theoretical position. However, that could be a later development of further researches and secondly, a philosophical work, in my view should begin, not from the point of view of a theory, but from a presuppositionless point.

Chapter 3

The Problems of Democracy in Africa

3.1 Introduction

'Problem' has been defined, 'democracy' has been defined, and Africa has also been defined in Chapter 1. The problems of democracy in Africa become easier to explain in context, as a single concept. By the term 'political problems' is meant certain challenges or necessary indicators of crises directly involved in establishing or consolidating whatever type of political system in practice. As has earlier been discussed (Chapter 1), the main problems of any democracy are those which necessarily affect the expected results of democracy such as have been enumerated in Chapter 1. They are the promises, and consequently the ideals of democracy (Bollen, 1991:9, Janda et al. 2006:4-7). A democracy does not necessarily experience a problem simply because a government official has embezzled some money or because over 50% of the citizens live below the poverty level. However, a low score on fairness of elections or legitimacy of government necessarily reduces the quality of democracy (O'Kane, 2004:22-28).

Having identified the various factors that must be present in good quality before a system can be accepted as a democracy, it becomes logical to assert that the quality and reliability of those factors in a democratic system will consequently determine the quality and reliability of the democracy. It becomes necessary, before examining the root cause of a problem, to examine whether there is a problem in the first place.

3.2 Free and Fair Election

In a democratic system, election means a device for determining or selecting political leaders and public office holders through choices by a designated legitimate body of people called

the electorate (Haywood, 2000:199-201). However, because an election can be democratic or undemocratic, it is necessary to differentiate between the two. A non-democratic election can be done in a number of different ways. However, scholars and practitioners tend to agree that a democratic election, either by consensus, or by unanimity in a small group, or by voting in a larger group, must respect certain principles. The principles include adult suffrage, one-man-one-vote, one-vote-one-value. In addition, the candidates and parties must have free and equal opportunities to compete for voters' support. That is, a democratic election must be free and fair. A free election is one devoid of violence and undue intimidation of any candidate. A fair election is one in which all the candidates and parties have an equal and fair opportunity to campaign and compete for votes. In a democratic setting, free and fair elections ought to be at regular and statutorily established intervals (Haywood, 2000:199-201).

A free and fair election ought to be a dividend of democracy; it is also a necessary condition for establishing and consolidating democracy (Salih & Hamdok, 2007:118-133). Unfortunately, elections have not significantly enhanced democratic tenets and good governance in Africa. Instead, elections in many African states are marked by controversies, rigging, disputes and violent intimidation of candidates and parties, which, in most cases, transform into outright violent conflicts (Mbugua, 2006:22-35; Steytler, Murray, De Vos & Rwelamira, 1994:xxi-xxii; Kura, 2007:118-133).

Unfortunately, election-related violence is still commonplace in Africa. Political violence between the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters in KwaZulu-Natal, which usually results in shooting and deaths, has not really stopped (Mbugua, 2006:22-35). It is common knowledge that the situation in the Republic of South Africa is also found all round Africa. Even the African countries with relatively longer experience of competitive democracy, such as Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mauritius and

Senegal, are not free from problems relating to elections and the electoral systems (Salih & Hamdok, 2007:118-133).

3.3 Ability of the people to Change their Government

The ability of the people to change their government means a situation where the government depends on the people for its establishment and continuing existence. In another dimension, it means the absence of dictatorship or authoritarian government or leader (Agunlana, 2006:255-264).

African states have often been burdened with absolutist authoritarian leaders sometimes named 'sit-tight' governments. If an important feature of a good democracy is that it should be an institutional arrangement for choosing or changing government through elections, then democracy in Africa has a problem. Examples of dictators in Africa are numerous: General Idi Amin Dada of Uganda (Situation Report -Uganda, 2006:52-53), General Sani Abacha's five years (1993-1998) in Nigeria (Osha, 2009:88-96), Omar al Bashir of Sudan (du Plessis, 2008:1-23), Ibrahim Babangida (Osha, 2009:88-96), still from Nigeria, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (Makgetlaneng, 2009:79-93) and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo (Cornwell, 2005:49-51).

3.4 Press Freedom and Alternative Sources of Information

Freedom of the press means first of all that there is free flow of information as well as alternative sources of information other than the media controlled by the government. It presupposes that all or most of the people are educated and are able to read and write.

Thomas Jefferson contends that if a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be (Dewey, 1982:123-24; Padover, 1946:164). It means that press freedom depends so much on personal or individual freedom and human development.

It may be true that press freedom has relatively improved in Africa. Perhaps, only a few African states like Sudan, have closed down all independent media in recent times (du Plessis, 2008:1-23). That notwithstanding, states in sub-Saharan Africa, where literacy and other advances like human quality, upon which press freedom depends for efficiency and meaningfulness have made insignificant progress, and are still, according to a recent record, at the lowest ebb of freedom and human development (Freedom House, 2009; Puddington, 2009:93-107; Basedau, 2007: 105-43).

3.5   Legitimacy of Democracy and Democratic Governance in Africa

A legitimacy crisis implies a total or partial rejection of a state, government or any political institution by the people. Legitimacy marks a spontaneous but rational loyalty to a system or nation (Mattes, 2006:105-15). It means that the citizenry are interested in the affairs of their own government (Schatzberg, 1997:113-35). Legitimacy is both a requirement for consolidating democracy and a dividend of democracy (Schatzberg, 1997:113-35). Since democracy as a system of government, is rooted in the quality of the people and its popular acceptance by them, then an appreciable level of legitimacy is required for a democracy to function properly (Akinseye-George, 2009:51).

The fact that African democracies are experiencing legitimacy crises is hardly in question (Diallo, 2006:13-22). Perhaps it is because most African democracies have failed, since independence, to adequately handle the challenges of formulating and implementing policies that will improve peoples' lives, especially as they relate to environmental alienation, poverty, disease and social exclusion. There are numerous scholarly testimonies to this effect. People have become apathetic to the system because they do not feel any reason to remain loyal to its institutions (Kura, 2007:118-33; Shale, 2008:109-23; Orewa, 2002:6, 29, 44, 68, 109; Gyekye, 1987:186-93). The result is that African states end up building 'democracies'

without democrats (Adejumobi & Kehinde, 2007:95-113), with mere rituals of election without democracy (Ogude, 2009:5-21).

3.6   **Social/Distributive Justice**

All democracies are systems in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. However, majority rule alone does not make a system democratic. A system does not become democratic in the full sense of the democracy until when justice towards the minority groups finds adequate protection in spite of majority rule (Aluko, 2006a:82-100). Justice in this sense implies "the idea of morally justifiable distribution of social goods and national wealth or responsibilities" (Haywood, 2000:134-136).

Social injustice is a pronounced problem in Africa; it is a major challenge to the democratic project. The despotic leaders tend to reward loyalty and obedience rather than efficiency and creativity. In this way they render the system unproductive (Obi, 2008). Most of the social and political conflicts in Africa are preceded by social neglect of or distributive injustice against a section of society (Ibeanu, 2000:45-65); Molomo, 2006:21-40; Ayittey, 2005:36). The cases of violent conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda (Meredith, 2006:141-161) and Liberia (Meredith, 2006:545-573) in recent decades can be linked with social justice. The same goes for the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria (Ayittey, 2005:39-40).

3.7   **Gender Equality and Child Rights**

Gender refers to the anatomical or other biological differences between males and females that originate in the human gene. As a biological concept, it refers to a classification used in making a distinction between the two sexes and the sexlessness of some human persons. (Adadevoh, 2003:16). Gender equality means that people should be given equal opportunities and be treated as equals before the law, regardless of their gender or sex (Adadevoh,

2003:24). It is founded upon the principle that all human lives are of equal value (Haywood, 2000:128). It is difficult to see how a system can be truly democratic where a cross-section of the population is marginalized, dominated and treated as mere acolytes. By implication, the principles of equality and freedom are violated by every instance of gender inequality. In another dimension, both the democratic principles of adult suffrage and one-vote-one-value are also violated. This is because discrimination on the basis of gender difference means that some people can vote but cannot be voted for, or that some votes have higher value than others.

Although inequality before the law is arguably a problem in most African states, this is very difficult to prove without citing specific legal cases, However, citing of references to particular legal cases in order to prove the existence of inequality before the law may compromise the integrity of the legal systems of the countries under examination. A better way to go about it is to assess it from the angle of group representation, equality and rights. The gender group most vulnerable to abuse and unequal treatment is the female gender.

Gender inequality is one of the biggest challenges to Africa in general and consequently to the democratic project in Africa. (Akinseye-George, 2009:97; Skaine, 2008). Van den Berg (1999:117-209) points out:

> …silence on women's subordinated status to men and their sexually determined roles is even more remarkable when one considers African philosophers' predilection to extract from the systematic and critical analyses of proverbs, myths, customs, beliefs and practices…from their literatures, there is no evidence that they have adequately thought about the discrepancy of a communitarian ethos and women's inferior non-egalitarian status and general lack of rights.

Generally, the issue of gender inequality has always elicited some unusual emotional reactions, and that has made it difficult to have objective discussions around the issue until recently (Johnson et al., 2001:218). As van den Berg put it above, some scholars and leaders defend unequal treatment of the female gender as indigenous to Africa. Some Afro-cultural

apologists hold that what had earlier been conceived by outsiders as injustice was sometimes the core of African culture and equality (Dzurgba, 2007:134-142; Mailu, 1988:118-123; Connah, 1987:2; Achebe, 1988:89; Aluko, 2006b:19-23). The Afro-cultural critics (Uchem, 2001:2-10; Jule-Rosette, 2002:603-05; Okumo, 2001; Bryceson, 2000:417-421), on the other hand, are often quick to point out that women are always relegated to a second position in relation to issues of governance (Adeleye-Fayemi 2007:1-6).

Consequent to this disagreement it is difficult to ascertain what the true social status of the female gender originally was in Africa. First, it would be naive for any scholar to accuse the African culture of being gender biased in favour of men, or for supporting the suppression and inhuman treatment of women by men. However, the reality to which the Afro-critics have reacted is an indication that gender relation and the treatment of women are in need of adjustment, either in African society in general or within the political sphere.

Given the present social and economic circumstances, it is obvious that for any successful political development and democratic consolidation to take place in Africa, the condition of women, who make up a large proportion of the population, should be substantially improved (Agomor, 2004:271-81), not least where their image and representation in African politics are concerned.

Closely connected with gender equality is the issue of child rights. The connection between the two is not merely the natural closeness of a child to the mother, but because they belong to the most endangered and vulnerable groups. They are vulnerable to the hegemony of masculinity and the patriarch, a thraldom that derives from myth (Adadevoh, 2003:2), and that needs to be resisted because gender inequality and child abuse undermine the human potential of women and children.

'Child rights' implies the rights due to a child, first as a human person, and as part of the highly vulnerable section of society. It is common knowledge that most countries[7] have legal provisions for child rights, in order to protect children against child abuse. Child abuse is defined as wilful neglect or "the inflicting of physical or emotional trauma upon a child, which prevents the child from attaining his or her full potential, or causes injury or death" (le Roux, 2000:36-40).

While many scholars would hardly associate child rights or child abuse with democracy, the fact is that the quality, education and training of children determine the future of democracy in any society. Does anything guarantee that children who from their early years have known nothing but social corruption and abuse would likely to work towards the social cooperation required for the sustenance of democracy?

The fact of child abuse in postcolonial Africa is hardly a debated issue. Though much of the problem revolves around the issues of child destitution, child labour and child soldiers, there have been cases of children serving jail terms with their parents (*Daily Times*, 1995:40). In addition, there is an inadequate legal framework for the protection of women and children in many African states. Girl child abuse, child trafficking, child abandonment, forced marriage, denial of formal education and child witch accusations are frequent in Africa (Akinseye-George, 2009:92-95). Orewa (1998 and 2002), using the example of Nigeria and some African countries, acknowledges the failure of Africa, beginning with family upbringing and education to blatant exploitation of children through involvement in commercial labour (Payne & Nassar, 2006:153), commercial sex, political thuggery and war (Kielland & Tovo, 2006).

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[7] Child Care Act 1983.Prevention of Family Violence Act of 1993, The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005. Children's Amendment Act No. 41 of 2007, Chapters 3 and 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No.32 of 2007 are examples of legal provisions for Child rights in South Africa.

3.8   **Human and Civil Rights**

Human rights include the general right of the people and the instrumentality of the rule of law to safeguard the rights to life, political participation, subsistence, peace, a healthy environment, freedom of expression and public debate over public issues (Piper, 2006:233-41).

Perhaps the umbrella name here should have been civil liberty. However, the concept of civil liberty is a very complex one (Lohia, 2009:203-219). It also covers a very wide area, some, like, "the ability of the people to alter their government," which has been examined under different aspects. Given the growing global concern about human rights, it is more convenient to examine the state of civil liberty in Africa under the name of human rights.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) began its process towards an African convention on human rights at its Monrovia summit in 1979 (Agbu, 2000:92-104). The African charter on human and people's rights finally came into existence in 1981 and became operational in 1986 (Agbu, 2000:92-104). It is worth noting also that the constitutions, bills of rights, and the legal systems of all African states make provision for the protection of human rights and civil rights. The rights in question are numerous. They include the rights to life, the means of economic sustenance, freedom of movement, creed, opinion and association. They also include freedom to own property, and freedom from arbitrary arrest or intimidation, genocide, homicide and ethnic and politically motivated killings in many African states, even in recent times (Mason, O'Brien & Greene, 1993:10-12; DeLaet, 2006:2; Voice of America, 2010; Mhlongo, 2009; Press TV, 2009, 7th July). Human rights activists gathered in Brazzaville to cry out to the African states to improve their record regarding the protection of human rights (Hallo Namibia, 2007).

As earlier specified in Chapter 1, this study is a reaction to the search for the causes of the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa. Using the Ockham's Razor

approach, the real problems have been identified on the basis of their necessary relation to democracy (Ockham's Razor because it shares no definite identity with any theory in particular). Both within the traditional system and the Western system, the factors identified are the necessary components of democracy, without necessarily taking a position as to whether democracy is universal or not. They are the only factors that can necessarily make a democracy good or faulty, weak or strong.

3.9   **Democratic Values and Way of Life**

The pillar, upon which any system is built is the culture and ways of life of the people. It is difficult to see how a democratic government can work if the ways of life and the culture of the people are undemocratic. According to Fayemi (2006:60), "fundamentally, in any of the models of democracy lies the respect, recognition and observance of liberty, equality, equity all levels and justice, in all aspects of humanity." If a democracy is to be successful, the first place to begin is the people's way of life. Their way of life and culture can be democratic without a practising polyarchy or any of the formal political institutions called democracy. However, no democracy can exist, endure or be consolidated when the people themselves are undemocratic (Dewey, 1990:327-328; 1985:349); Hook, 1939:31-46; Covaleskie, 2004). In Africa, while it is difficult to make a sweeping generalisation that African culture is undemocratic, it is equally difficult to say that the existing traditions and the actual ways of life in African societies (past or present) are adequately supportive of a democratic system. Post-election violence, extended family dependence, and the communitarian social system have their influences on the democratic status of the way of life in African societies.

In many of the African states, people tend to protest the results of every national and local election with utmost violence. In other words, people do not easily accept defeat. There are published evidences for the prevalence of violent contention relating to election results in

Africa. Kisekka-Ntale (2007:421-52), Dagne (2006:5) and Ajulu (1997:9) are examples among others. Adejumobi & Kehinde (2007:95-113) refer to it as building democracy without democrats.

Apart from election violence, religious fundamentalism and violence, and ethnic militia, violence against women and exclusion of women from some aspects of decision making, intolerance towards pressure and opposition groups, and intolerance of other people's freedom and rights of expression, as found in the social systems of many African societies (Maphai, 2000:303-354; Azavedo, 2000:355-391; Prah, 2000:392-410; Ibrahim, 2000:461-483) are all indicative of undemocratic cultures and societies (Almond, 1993:ix-vii). It is difficult to see how a society can be truly democratic and consolidate its democracy when a group within the society are treated as second class, or outcasts. Scholars have identified traditions and practices in Africa, such as bride price in marriage customary practices, discrimination against women or against a cross section of society, and intercommunity relations that contradict democratic principles. The practice among the Igbo, where some people are treated as Usu and consequently ostracised on the basis of their origin, the killing of twins and suspected witches, and the belief among the Yoruba that the Ijesa people were food for the deities,[8] are all common knowledge about the history of African communities. They are also indications of the quality and state of respect for others, and of intercommunity relations in African communities. We may think that many of these practices have been abolished, but deep-rooted tendencies and inclinations are transferred from one generation to the other. For instance, in *The State of the Nation,* a publication of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU, 2002:22-23), the dons identify similar polarities, divisions and acts of looking askance on others in Nigeria. For example,

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[8] that is, *ije* (food) for (deities)

there was once a motor accident in the neighbourhood of a certain village around Lokoja, an ancient Nigerian city at the confluence of the River Niger and the River Benue. As people who went to rescue the accident victims were returning, one of them was asked in the pigeon English language often referred to as 'Broken': *hao many iple mort for de accident* (how many people died in the motor accident)? He replied: *person no die, na only wan mala* (no person died, only one Malam (Hausa) died). Though the answer given by the witness of the accident may not have come from a deliberate attempt to regard the Hausa or other ethnic citizen as non-human beings, at the same time, it may have erupted from the realm of the subconscious or habit. It might have resulted from cultural-based arrogance, which makes people look down on others as inferior. In that case, the statement, "no person except one Hausa man," represents a deep-rooted tribalism, hostility, social schism, enmity, resentment (Olatunji, 2010a).

In addition to all these examples, it is also a common knowledge that the African world is a masculine world, dominated by men. Some, women such as the Idia of the Ancient Benin empire or the Moremi of the Yoruba Kingdom (AIemika and Agugua, 2001:11) may have performed a few heroic actions in the history of African societies it does not alter the fact that it is a predominantly masculine society. There could be explanations for masculinity as found in African societies, but it has grave implications for democracy.

In *We Are All Guilty* Orewa (1998:2002) explains how in African countries the domestic culture has been unsupportive of a good social system. In addition to Orewa other scholars such as Payne and Nassar (2006:153), and Kielland and Tovo (2006) also have acknowledged the failure of Africa, beginning with family upbringing and education to blatant exploitation of children through involvement in commercial labour, political thuggery and war. Every intolerance, whether in the form of electoral violence, violence against women or people from other tribes, ethnic groups, countries or races has grave implications for democracy, and is an impediment to it in the long run.

3.10   **Summary**

In this chapter, it has been established that Africa, is having problems with practising and consolidating democracy. When the situations of African democracies are examined with reference to the basic theoretical requirements of democracy, it becomes self-evident that democracy is not yet consolidated in Africa and that many democratic African governments are experiencing a legitimacy crisis. This state of affairs justifies serious effort to investigate the origin of the problems as a step towards discovering the solutions. The thesis therefore attempts to find possible solutions to Africa's ongoing battle in implementing democracy effectively among African states.

In the next chapter, the previous efforts of scholars to identify the root causes of the problems will be investigated. The examination will reveal whether the root cause(s) had been discovered earlier. An examination of that part will determine whether this study can proceed or not. There may be no point to proceed in this study if the root cause(s) of the problems impeding the democratic project in Africa has been properly identified in previous examinations.

Chapter 4

Previous Attempts to Account for the Political Problems of Africa

4.1   Introduction

Given the definition and description of democracy in chapter 1, chapter 3 of this study has identified the factors that necessarily affect the quality of democracy. The state of those factors in African states and societies was explained in chapter 3. Meanwhile, chapter 2 had examined the theoretical framework of the previous scholarly attempts to explain the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa. The analysis in chapter 2 was, therefore, a meta-theoretical analysis, because it examined the theoretical foundations of previous efforts on the political challenges of Africa without the intension to establish any rival alternative. In the analysis of that chapter, it was alleged that the previous theoretical attempts to explain the political challenges of Africa made unrestricted applications of the causal principles typical of the Newtonian physics. That allegation will further be substantiated in subsequent chapters. This chapter is, therefore, expected to explain how exactly the scholars have actually made the alleged application of the causal principles, that is, to specify the elements in their analysis that have amounted to excessive application of the causal principle.

The second part of that chapter examined the status of democracy in Africa. It helped to establish the fact that many of the democracies in Africa are experiencing problems and are consequently unreliable or unconsolidated. The result of that finding has formed the basis for continuing this study. Though democracy in Africa could still be a problem in philosophy, even if the democracies in Africa were perfect, the fact that democracy is having problems in Africa is an additional motivation for this study. It is an additional motivation because, if the democracies in Africa were perfect, many of the previous explanations may not have taken place in the first instance. If the previous explanations had not taken place, there would be no possibility of

reacting to them. Consequently, the findings of the second part of chapter two, that democracies in Africa are having problems, serve as additional motivations for carrying on this study.

In addition, it must be admitted though, that some of the scholars of Africa, whose works are to be considered in this chapter, did not theorise specifically on democracy or politics. However, their works relate indirectly to politics and democracy. In other words, some scholars whose works are reviewed in this chapter are from fields and professions other than political philosophy or political science. They neither theorise on politics, nor on democracy in Africa. However, their thoughts are linked with, and contribute to, the explanations of the political situation of the democratic African states. Their works relate to politics and democracy because, as noted earlier, there is a link between the ways of life of Africans and the way they rule themselves. Secondly, there is a general dearth of works directly relating to democracy as practiced in Africa. Thirdly, the politics in practice in most of the African states is democracy. Hence, any reference to political problems in Africa implies problems affecting democracy. In this study, therefore, some of their works are randomly selected and examined along with those whose works are directly related to politics and to democracy.

This chapter, therefore, concentrates on critically exposing previous suggestions as to why Africa is politically unstable, whether or not the scholars make specific reference to democracy. The main objective of this chapter, therefore, is to expose the suggestions of the previous explanations. A few relevant questions may also be raised.

4.2   **Some Initial Clarifications**

From the very outset, two possible extremes are excluded in this study. They are excluded whether or not anyone expresses them. The first extreme position is the argument that democracy, well practiced, necessarily results in economic prosperity (Smith, 1977). It is a misleading logical abstraction because, for instance, the fact that the establishment of a well

functioning democracy preceded the economic prosperity of the United States, does not necessarily imply that democracy is a sufficient condition for economic breakthrough. For instance, the current global economic crisis (Challet, Solomon, & Yaari, 2009), points to the fact that a viable democracy does not necessarily result in economic prosperity. The economic recession seems to hit the leading democracies like the United States of America and Britain even harder than it hit anywhere else.

The second is a version of fatalism. It is a position that the political crises of Africa are necessary and intractable consequences of democratisation, and therefore, Africans can do nothing about them. There seem numerous motivations to advance such a fatalist position. For instance, it could be argued that, like Africa, both Britain and the United States have had their turbulent periods before they had their democracies consolidated. From that position, it could be insinuated that Africa must necessarily pass through the same long, turbulent process for centuries in order for their democracies to be consolidated.

In addition, several efforts have been made to stop the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa, to no avail. The political crises in Africa also seem to surpass those elsewhere, including places that were once classified, with African states, as developing nations. For instance, it is an undeniable fact that democracy, as a formal political institution, is quite young in postcolonial Africa compared to Europe and the United States of America. It is also a well-known fact that both America and parts of Europe have had to go through hard times to stabilize and consolidate their democracies. The intractability of the political problem of Africa, therefore, seems like history repeating itself. It suggests that crisis is an inseparable part of democracy. That is, it appears reasonable to assume that the political challenges experienced by African states are the expected, common and unavoidable consequence of the developmental process of democracy as O'Kane (2004:169-122) argued. It, therefore, appears logical to assume that the situation is beyond control.

To say that the political problems in Africa are unavoidable and necessary consequences of democracy is a defeatist and fallacious argument. Firstly, the very concept of a problem presupposes the possibility or necessity of a solution. The solution to a problem may currently, and for several decades to come, appear elusive. That does not make it an unavoidable or an insoluble problem. It is unthinkable that there could be a problem that can never be solved. Even if it is thinkable, it is fallacious. The concept of 'problem' implies the need for a solution. Although, the need for a solution does not necessarily imply the immediate possibility of a solution, there is no way to know that a problem cannot be solved until all possible remedies have been applied. Unfortunately, there is no way to ascertain that all possible remedies have been attempted until there are no more possible solutions to try. It is also impossible to ascertain that there are no more possible solutions until the problem stops being a problem, or until infinity has been attained.

In addition, if problems beyond solution existed, it would contradict the spirit of academic study or research. The ultimate end of intellectual study is to find solutions to problems. If anyone proposes that some problems are beyond solutions, while others are not, the person must not only give an exhaustive list of problems that are beyond solution, but must also be prepared to explain what criteria demarcate unambiguously the realms of the solvable and the unsolvable. No scholar has specified the criteria to demarcate the boundary between solvable and unsolvable problems, hence, whether or not anyone espouses the view that the problem confronting democracy in Africa is unsolvable, I do not consider it necessary to the thesis of insolubility.

Furthermore, democracy may have a long history of turbulence in Europe and in the United States of America (Deane, 2009, 75-91, Thomson, 1966:686-701). Democracy may even still be experiencing crisis in Europe and in the United States as some scholars have noted (Trend, 1996, 1-4). The situation of Europe, or elsewhere, does not make it a necessity that

African states must pass through the same turbulent route other democracies had taken. If the essence of history is to learn from the past, and if it is true that learning about previous experiences can guide towards avoiding mistakes in the future, then it means that Africa can avoid the mistakes that Europe and the United States of America have made.

Consequently, it is the foundational assumption of this study that viable solutions cannot be preceded by an inappropriate explanation and understanding of problems. Hence, even though the primary objective of this study does not involve prescribing solutions, it does not subscribe to the insolubility thesis regarding the problems confronting democracy in Africa. Nor does it subscribe to the thesis that Africa must necessarily go the way of Europe or the United States of America to reach a solution to its political problems.

Scholars have offered numerous suggestions regarding the causes of political problems in Africa (Oke, 2006:332-343). This almost inexhaustible list of causes includes: corrupt leadership, institutional deficits, insufficient sympathy from the international environment, tribalism, electoral violence, economic backwardness, human rights violation, nepotism, militarism, inability of people to change their government, authoritarian leaders, illiteracy, lack of accountability, elitism, land disputes, social injustice, balkanisation of Africa, colonialism, imperialism and ineffective legal systems. Even if one manages to have a comprehensive and complete list, critically examining all of them sufficiently would be an unnecessary, herculean task.

Therefore, in this chapter, the factors identified in the analysis of previous explanations are grouped, and an appreciable number of the alleged factors are selected and discussed under each of the groups. A few scholars have attempted to group the causal agents and factors alleged to have bedevilled democracy in Africa in some ways (Chabal, 2009:13-14). However, this thesis adopts a grouping method proposed by George Ayittey (1999:37-48) because, apart from the fact that Ayittey's method has become influential among scholars (Lawal, 2006:637-641), it is also

convenient for the achievement of the objective of this study. Ayittey's grouping is appropriate because it better exposes the bipolar demarcation, which the scholars have maintained between Africa and the external causal agents and between the internal agents and the rest of the African societies.

George Ayittey (1999:37-48) groups the positions of scholars who try to explain the political crises of Africa into two types, namely the 'internalist' and the 'externalist.' The externalist group is made up mostly of African scholars and political leaders who subscribe to the opinion that the political crises of Africa are caused by forces and factors from outside of the continent (Ayittey, 1999:37-44). The internalists on the other hand are those who believe that the political crises of Africa could be explained only in terms of the actions and attitudes of the political leaders of Africa (Ayittey, 1999:44-48).

The examination of externalism in this thesis shall mainly consider African scholars. These include the views of African leaders, especially the Pan-African nationalist leaders who are scholars. Among all the external causal factors used to explain the political problems confronting the continent of Africa, the causes often referred to in these analyses are human exploitation, colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, and international politics. In sum, however, all these factors amount to one and the same imperial operations of colonialism.

To begin with, nationalists like Senghor, Nyerere, Menkiti and Cabral are roughly classifiable as belonging to the externalist group. Though some of these selected African nationalists were politicians, they were also scholars and they wrote considerable volumes of literature. Many of their works deal specifically with African philosophy, African culture, African history and African social systems, rather than politics or democracy. However, the theme of African philosophy, culture, history and metaphysics and the theme of the colonial experience and politics are hardly separable (Lumumba-Kasongo. 1993:86, Wiredu, 2008:332-330, Busia, 1971:35).

The factors, which the externalists have identified as the causes of the political problems in Africa include 'balkanisation,[9]' the imposition of the Western style liberal or multi-party democracy on Africa, majoritarian democracy, representative or elitist democracy, Western education, imperialism and cultural alienation, cultural domination, negro-phobic international politics. It also includes human exploitation from the time of slave trade to the time of actual colonisation, insufficient postcolonial reparations, and neo-colonialism. However, as numerous as these factors are, they are all united by their colonial source, which is sometimes claimed to have started with the human exploitation of slavery that culminated in the event of colonisation.

As in the case of the externalists, most of the internalists whose works are to be considered here are African scholars. By virtue of their professional training and nationality, most of the internalists are scholars, and they are supposed to have first-hand information as insiders.[10] In addition, the internalist scholars ought to have shared the same experience with every other African. Achebe, Okumu, Diamond, and Abuya are some of those to be examined in this chapter. The factors they have identified are even more numerous than those of the externalists. All the factors are united by the belief that the postcolonial African political leaders caused them.

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[9]The partitioning of the African geographical space into the modern nation-states with total disregard to already existing natural, social and cultural factors of demarcation (Busia, 1971:37).

[10] Insider/outsider divide is not necessarily based on nationality. African insiders, for instance are Africans who share the same experience with other Africans. Outsiders are those who, though may have been born in Africa, and may have lived in Africa as well, but assume that they have experiences different from those of other Africans or that they are able to escape the problems affecting the rest of Africans.

4.3   **Externalism**

It is arguably difficult to adequately examine the independence struggle and the postcolonial politics in Africa without reference to the African nationalists (Lumumba-Kasongo. 1993:86). As earlier noted in this chapter, some of the scholars do not write directly about politics or democracy, nevertheless, their works are relevant to the democratic politics and political philosophy of Africa. According to Wiredu (2008:332-330), the earliest crop of post-independence rulers of Africa had a keen sense of practical philosophy. In addition, Busia (1971:35) asserts that some elements in Africa's own past cannot be disregarded in relation to the contemporary political situation of Africa. Busia makes a link between African politics, African metaphysics, African worldview, and the value placed on human relations by Africans. The link between African politics, African metaphysics and the African worldview explains why the works of some African scholars, who did not write directly on democracy in Africa, are relevant to this study and specifically in this chapter.

The philosophic and general intellectual enterprise of the African nationalists is from the background assumption that colonialism is the cause of all the problems of Africa, including its political woes. Mazrui (1986:164-202) is a clear example. These scholars, though widely apart in their approaches, are focused on cultural emancipation for the Black people, who they consider as the indigenous Africans. Consequently, the nationalists try to forge a common identity, common front and common goal for Africa as a nation, and most of all for the Black Africans.

There are many African scholars, whose work could be examined within the externalist camp. Prominent among the externalist scholars is Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah believes that colonialism was responsible for all pre-independence political problems of the African state. This explains why he believes that the political independence should come first (Nkrumah, 2007b:202-209), and then all other social values, like justice and economic prosperity, would

necessarily come after it. However, in some of his post-independence writings, he believes that the persistence of the political problems in post-independence Africa must have been as a result of some continuing interference by external and colonial agents (Nkrumah, 2007e:415-418, 2007f:419-422). Consequently, as a solution to the problems, Nkrumah recommends a political and economic ideology (Nkrumah, 2007g:634-654), which he thought was radically opposed to those of the erstwhile colonial masters, whom he also thought had used the capitalist system to disintegrate Africa (Nkrumah, 2007a:202-209, 2007b:176-177, 2007c:344-346, 1962, 1998 and 2002, Awolowo, 1985:xv, Wiredu, 1995).

In Nkrumah's (2007g:57-60) own statement, "We (Africans –sic) have for so long been the victims of foreign domination." In another writing, he further explains what he means by foreign domination against which positive actions must be taken as suggested by the topic of his literature. According to Nkrumah (Nkrumah, 1973:91-95) they include: "the growing perils in Africa and on the international scene...the persistent border disputes in Africa, the increasing instability caused by interference and subversive activities, the continued defiance and insolence of the racist minority regimes in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia." Nkrumah sees African society as a victim of the colonial past. By so doing, he distinguishes between the object and subjects of colonialism. He sees the Western world as the active subjects while Africa is the victim, the passive object and victim. Thus the political crises of Africa are necessary consequences of the colonial events. Nkrumah means that the political problems of Africa are caused by colonialism in the same way as pressure from one object is assumed to be the cause of the motion in another object in the classical or Newtonian physics.

Like Nkrumah, other scholars, like Senghor (1964a:74, 1964b:24, 1967:72; 2007:590-602, 2007a:83-84, Potholm, 1979:87), Nyerere (2007a:327- 333, 2007b:334-336, 2007c:448-449, 2007d:478-481, 2007e:482-483, 2007f:524-533, 2007g:512-515 and 2007h:534-545), Menkiti (1984:171-182, Gyekye, 2000:317-336), Diop (2007:255-257), Memmi (2007:264-277),

Ki-Zerbo (2007: 61-66), Cabra (1969 and 1973), Rodney (2004) and Busia (1971) endorse the externalist thesis. They claim that colonialism, with its imperialist antics, is the root cause of the political ills of Africa.

While the above listed scholars could be classified as naive externalists, because they have identified colonialism as a chain of historical events with direct causal consequences on the trajectory of the political history of Africa, others could be classified as scientific externalists. The scientific externalists are those who see colonialism as a dynamic self-perpetuating and inherent self-sustaining force influencing the political systems of Africa, through mental disorientation of the Africans. The manner in which the externalists assume that colonialism perpetuates itself in the African postcolonial situation is often referred to as neo-colonialism in postcolonial discourses.

The externalist scholars believe that, even if there were no individuals presently and consciously acting directly against the postcolonial African states within the international community, the nature of the inherent dynamic and self-preserving colonial system would ensure the continued suppression of Africa, unless certain radical steps are taken. Among these scientific externalists are Fanon (2007a:258-263, 2007b:236-252, 1993:215-216, 1967), Awolowo (1985), Mazrui (2009a, 2009b, 2008, 2003, 2002:15-23, 2000, 1990 and Ohito, 2008), (2000:374-382, 1995b and 1992:59-70), Teffo (2004:443-449) and Biko (2000:360-363).

Among the scientific externalists, Wiredu and Teffo are of special interest. They are of special interests because, they wrote, not merely on politics in general, but specifically about democracy in Africa. According to Oladipo (1995:2), Wiredu's work has become definitive of an orientation in contemporary African Philosophy. Oladipo describes Wiredu's intellectual engagement as a critical and reconstructive engagement (Oladipo, 1995:2). Both Wiredu and Teffo have become renowned African scholars of international repute.

Wiredu's (1995) *Conceptual Decolonisation in Contemporary African systems of Thought,* in recent times, is well known by scholars of African philosophy, ethics and politics, both within and outside of Africa. He calls for a rethink of the current epistemic foundations of the African beliefs and political systems in order to bring about the good aspect and discard whatever time has disposed of.

In another writing Wiredu (2000b:274-382) advocates a non-party polity which, for him, should be the ideal democracy for Africa. Wiredu prefaces his argument for a non-party democratic polity with an acknowledgment of previous researches on related issues with specific reference to Kaunda and Nyerere. However, he endorses their view with caution. He disagrees with them on the degree of consensus that could be taken for granted as having existed in precolonial African politics. Wiredu (2000b:274-382) argues that though it could be true that decision making in African political life was by consensus, it does not mean that such consensus agreement was always guaranteed. However, Wiredu prizes consensus higher than any alternative, like voting or dialogue (Wiredu, 2000b:374-382). He consequently argues that the best democracy for Africa should be one which encourages and promotes decision-making by consensus.

He further argues that the political challenges of democratic governance in Africa are a result of changes that are not self-initiated, but which also contradict the worldviews and systems that are indigenous to the Africans (Wiredu, 1992:59-70). According to Wiredu critics who would want to argue that African crises are not consequent to colonialism, should not make the comparison of African states with states elsewhere (Wiredu, 1992:59-70). He believes that the mental, conceptual and cultural domination of Africa by Europe exceeds that of other nations. He argues that the extent of cultural domination of Africa by Europe explains why those other, previously colonised nations in Asia and Southern America, are not going through an equal amount of social and political problems as Africa. He claims that

colonialism in Africa was far-reaching and more devastating in its effect. He consequently believes that colonialism is the cause of the political problems affecting the democratic project in Africa. Wiredu (ibid) believes that Africans are mere passive victims and products of colonialism. In other words, there is nothing that could have been done to prevent the political crises of the postcolonial African democracies. That is, the situation has been determined to be the way it is, by forces that are beyond the control of the Africans.

Wiredu's position is that the only road to economic buoyancy, political stability, and socio-cultural independence is through mental and conceptual decolonisation and the adoption of a non-party consensus version of democracy. Though the event of colonisation has gone, Wiredu believes that colonialism is still as effective as it has ever been, because it has effectively installed itself in the mind of the colonised. By conceptual or mental decolonisation, he means purging of the African system of everything that makes Africa psychologically dependent on the conceptual scheme, mental categories and consequently the political systems that originate from the West, that is, theoretical moves to purge the African system of all superfluous and insurmountable Western epistemological influence. He believes that a project of mental and conceptual decolonisation would support a non-party consensus polity, which he believes is original and indigenous to Africa. By implication, Wiredu recommends a kind of cultural renaissance, as a remedy for the present and the future problems of Africa. He, consequently, advocates a mild return to the primitive systems.

As in the case of Wiredu, Teffo explains how the current Western style democracies in Africa came to Africa via the colonisers and created the difficulties experienced in some African nations (Teffo, 2004:443-449). He believes that external forces have promoted the western style democracy in Africa. Consequently, he warns that South Africa could suffer the same fate as that of other African states if the political leaders of the post-apartheid South Africa adopt the 'imported' democracy. Teffo advocates a return to the primitive precolonial

system of kingship. However, he advocates that the primitive system should be mingled with elements of the modern democratic state system (2002:*para*.18).

As characteristic of externalists, Wiredu and Teffo believe that colonialism has caused the problems militating against the democratic polity in Africa. They believe that the problems were caused by insurmountable external forces and were unavoidable. In other words, the political situation of Africa has been determined as the classical scientists, who think that forces from one object determine the state of another, would assume.

One other important element of colonialism, which the externalists have identified as the cause of the political problems militating against the democratic project on the African continent, and among African states, is the balkanisation (Busia, 1971:35) of Africa into nation-states by the erstwhile colonial masters. Those who endorse the balkanisation thesis also endorse the colonialism thesis. Sometimes these scholars give the impression that the balkanisation project was an irreversible one. They, therefore, do not see any reason for blaming postcolonial Africa for not reversing the balkanisation structures and policies since independence.

There have been several criticisms levied against externalism. The problem with many of the traditional criticisms levelled against externalism is that they are superficial and they blur the fact that both externalism and their alternative causal explanations are different sides of the same coin. Consequently, they do not alter the main weaknesses of the externalist explanations.

Scholars like Oke (2006:332-343), who oppose externalism, have argued that time-lag is one of the reasons why externalism is an unacceptable explanation for the African political crises. They argue that colonialism cannot be the cause of the problems, because it is now "fifty years after active imperialistic colonialism in Africa, but Africa is worse off than it was under the colonial rule" (Oke, 2006:332-343). The implication of this argument is that they

do not deny or oppose the view that, for everything that happens to Africa, there is a cause or there are causes. In other words, they accept that the political problems of Africa are caused. What they have problems with is where to locate the causes. Another implication is that whatever should be identified as the cause of a political problem, and the political problem itself, must be contemporaneous and must be chronologically and spatially proximate to one another.

The critics of externalism believe that a long gone by event cannot be the cause of a current event. Therefore, they believe that the cause of an event and the effect must be contemporaneous. One shortcoming of this criticism is that it is actually fallacious to take succession or contemporariness for causality. It is fallacious because they have associated events with no necessary causal link. That is, there is the possibility of associating two isolated factors as having causal connections. It is, therefore, fallacious to take proximity and succession for causal connection. By taking proximity, succession or contemporariness for causal connection, it is very easy to also identify isolated factors (factors that have no real connections with the political problems of Africa) as the causes of the political problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. The fallacy committed is called the fallacy of *non-causa pro-causa*. For example, if it is established that most of the people who have malaria are people previously exposed to mosquito bites, does it necessarily imply that mosquito bite is the cause of malaria? Could it not be that the mosquito is related to malaria only because it helps to transmit malaria? Can it not also mean that it is only by coincidence that a mosquito has also bitten all those who have malaria? In another example, if p actually causes q, does the time or distance between p and q really matter? In other words, if colonialism is actually a causal determinant of the current political crises in Africa, does the distance of time and space between the colonial intervention in Africa and the present time disprove it? The time lag criticism, therefore, is a weak criticism. It does not expose the real

shortcomings of externalism. It only shows that the critic's conception of causation is different from that of the externalist. It does not show that there is any problem with externalism itself.

The externalists have been criticised, also, for wrongfully blaming colonialism for all the political, social and economic problems of Africa, because colonialism has brought benefits to Africa. One such scholar is Pfaff (1995:2-6). He believes that colonialism has brought more benefits than losses to Africa. The political problems of Africa, in Pfaff's view, include the political independence itself. The emphasis of this criticism is the comparison between the loss and the benefits of colonialism.

The results of any comparison could be political. It could be political because it depends on the interest of the person making the comparison. While some, like Prah (1995), could see the formal educational system promoted by the colonialists as a loss to Africa, others like Pfaff could see it as a benefit to Africa.

Regardless of one's position with respect to the foregoing, the criticism is superficial. For instance, does it mean that Africa could not have achieved better physical and economic developments on its own if Africans had ruled themselves without external intervention? Does the end always justify the means (Olatunji & Laleye, 2005:258-266)? Does the level of physical and economic development justify the subjection of one people by another? Is colonialism, or denying some people the right to self-rule, ever justified in democracy? The criticism of externalism, based on the benefits of colonialism, is a weak criticism.

Another criticism against externalism is that most of the classical externalists, who themselves were political leaders of Africa, were merely looking for excuses to cover up for their incompetence and failures, or for their unpreparedness for the political duties they

performed in the postcolonial politics (Ayittey, 1999:44-48). The criticism is that many of the externalists are scholars and politicians at the same time. They, consequently, were accused of merely looking for excuses to cover up for their inadequacies in delivering the dividends of democracy and good governance to their people. I call this criticism a professional craft criticism. It is a professional craft criticism, because it tends to show that colonialism is not the cause of the problems or that the externalists have accused colonialism, not because it is true, but because the externalists are merely in search of something to blame for their own professional incompetence or corruption. In other words, the main thrust of the criticism is that by accusing colonialism, the externalists were only displaying some craftiness rather than telling the truth.

True as this criticism may appear, it is equally illogical. It may be true that many of the externalists are political leaders of the postcolonial Africa. It may also be true that postcolonial African politics have incurred abysmal failures or have been corrupt. Does the fact that the externalists were looking for justification make it necessarily false that, whatever they have identified must necessarily be false? Does that make it necessarily false that colonialism and colonial policies have caused the political problems of Africa? For instance, can it be held that the balkanisation of Africa and the forced migration policies of the colonial government have no adverse effect on Africans? Have the imperial methods of colonialism not suppressed the cultures and perceptions of the colonised? Is imperialism not capable of influencing self-rejection in the consciousness of its victims? Does the intention of an argument necessarily nullify or justify an argument? Given the questions above, are Teffo and some other externalists wrong to have advocated for what they thought was indigenous to Africa? Is the cultural nostalgia completely irrelevant? The professional craft criticism is, therefore, not as strong as the critics of externalism intended to make it.

The traditional criticisms against the externalists, enumerated above, do not actually reveal the weaknesses of the externalist positions. The externalist accounts of the political problems of Africa cannot be condemned by merely denying external influences on the political crises of Africa or by accusing the externalists of trying to save their own faces. External influences on the political problem are undeniable (Hyden, 2006:206-227) and the immediate intentions of the externalists (even if it were true that it was only a face saving device), does not nullify their arguments. The critics of externalists are criticising the externalists for acknowledging the influences of external forces, as if the external forces and factors were completely unconnected with the political situation of Africa. Acknowledging external inputs on the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa is not, in itself, wrong. Criticising the externalists for acknowledging external input would, therefore, be a shallow and superficial criticism. However, there are more profound criticisms that can be made of the externalist thesis.

The externalists have identified external factors and forces, mainly colonialism, as the cause of the political problems hindering the democratic project in Africa. In other words, the externalists are saying that the political situation would have been better if there had been no foreign or colonial intervention in the affairs of Africa or, if there had been sufficient postcolonial restitution. If the foreign intervention is necessarily a problem, and if the externalists argue that the problem with the democracies in Africa is that they are not responsive to the African culture, then it should be appropriate to ask the question, is primitivism indigenous to Africa?[11]

In addition, the cultural nostalgia has been the basis for the clamour for African renaissance (More, 2002:61-80). In the various arguments supporting the renaissance project,

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[11] See Olatunji, (2010). Is primitivism indigenous to Africa? For further explanations.

there is a clamour for a return to the cultural origin rooted in the past ways of doing things (Olatunji, 2010b:12-20). The renaissance scholars have not told us to which past to return, and no one has taken up the challenge to locate the alleged past. Perhaps they have taken it for granted that the past implies anytime within the precolonial era. Firstly, the precolonial era has different epochs that are not exactly the same. As we shall see in chapter 5, the period of anti-colonial resistance differs from the period of antiquity. Secondly, was Africa already lagging behind other continents, or not, on the eve of the colonial experience, as some historians have alleged (Johnston, 1913:154)[12]. What will the situation look like if Africa should return, now, to the ways of doing things in any of the precolonial epochs? Will it not amount to endorsing primitivism? Endorsing primitivism could be added to the list of the weak criticisms of externalism. This criticism begins on a premise that the externalists have a naive sense of the value of Africa's cultural past. That is, they romanticise and glorify every moment of the Africa's precolonial past, therefore, suggesting a return to the past way of doing things. As strong as the criticism is, it is only one of the weak criticisms against externalism.

The criticism appears strong because it lends intellectual support to certain questions which could, therefore, be asked. Do we return to oral record keeping alone? Can we rely only on the traditional medicine? Should we all return to the caves and the small autonomous communities? How do we reach and be reached by the rest of the world? The criticism is, however, weak because the call for a return to the past, in itself, does not prove that externalism is wrong or that external factors are not the causes of the said political challenges of Africa. If it is actually true that colonialism is the cause of the political problems of Africa, the call for renaissance could, in a certain sense, be justified. The real criticism against

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[12] While Rodney (2004) thinks that the precolonial Africa was a perfect society, Johnston (1913) sees it as the worst society ever possible.

externalism, is one that shows that it is wrong to be an externalist in the first place and, without trying to justify internalism or any other alternative positions.

Since the externalists conceive Africa's precolonial past as everything good, they also see every way of doing things in that period as the best possible way of doing things. They see everything primitive as impeccable. By arguing this way, they tend also to attribute to Africa, as cultural, everything that is primitive and archaic. This is coupled with the fact that some Western scholars have denied non-Western societies of the status of modern and scientific culture. Then, it becomes necessary to ask the question; is primitivism indigenous to Africa?

One of the major problems of the externalists has to do with their understanding of causality. There are evidences that most of the externalist scholars actually set out to identify the root cause or the efficient cause of the political challenges of Africa (Ayittey, 2005, 1999, Agunlana, 2006:255-264, Kisseka-Ntale, 2007:421-452, Awolowo, 1985). However, they are unable to achieve it. For instance, Awolowo tries to locate the root of the political problems confronting the continent of Africa in order to prescribe an adequate solution. Within his own analysis, he claims to be investigating the origin of the political problems of Africa. He acknowledges the weaknesses of the precolonial and postcolonial Africa, and he identifies the horizontal and vertical disunity (Awolowo, 1985:19, 20) among the precolonial African societies and people.[13] However, he does not see a causal link between the two (precolonial and postcolonial) epochs and the present postcolonial political problems, which he himself has identified. In spite of the identified weaknesses of the precolonial and postcolonial African societies and leaders, Awolowo holds to the opinion that the postcolonial political crises of Africa, which had existed prior to colonialism, should still be blamed on

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[13] Vertical division means antagonism or lack of social cooperation between the upper and lower social class, while the horizontal division means rivalry, antagonism or lack of social cooperation among community and leaders and communities within any specified area.

colonialism. Awolowo (1985) therefore believes that colonialism is the cause of Africa's political problems, through the imposition of the liberal version of democracy and capitalism.

Many externalists such as Diop (2007:255-257), Memmi (2007:264-277), and Ki-Zerbo (2007:61-66) have romanticised and painted the precolonial African systems as perfect. They also have the impression that the systems and values of the precolonial African society were necessarily opposed to those of elsewhere. The logic of the externalists seems to run as follows: Africa was a faultless society in the precolonial era, and its systems and values are unique. Since everything turns bad in the postcolonial era, therefore, the problems must have originated from colonialism. If the problem persists, colonialism must have also persisted in some ways (neo-colonialism, mental colonisation, negro-phobia, unfair international politics).

Anyone who begins from the above premise, that the precolonial African society was unique and impeccable, would most likely conclude that colonialism is the cause of the problems. In the first place, however, the argument commits the fallacy of invincible ignorance. The fallacy is committed whenwe argue that new evidence be rejected or, display unwillingness to accommodate any new fact resulting from further investigation (Bolarinwa, 2006:192-211). If the externalists had accommodated the fact that there could hardly be any faultless society, their conclusion would probably have been different.

Ironically, some externalists, like Awolowo (1985), Wiredu (1995) and Gyekye (2000) actually admit some of the weaknesses of the precolonial African society, but that does not stop them from concluding that the political challenges of Africa are of colonial origin. This attitude suggests that the externalist positions are less intellectual than political. It is an indication that colonialism is more of a preconceived conclusion. Consequently, the externalists prefer to give up logic and reason for political and ideological missions.

Perhaps the externalists have taken every aspect of the precolonial system as indigenously African. There are two kinds of political leadership systems in precolonial Africa. One is said to be by kinship and the other kingship. It is a well-known fact that the kinship system in most primitive systems is not limited to Africa. Most of the primitive societies had rested on communalistic economic systems and communalistic political structure, and consequently on kinship politics which, perhaps, was the only system of politics originally available in the primitive era.

In addition, even some African scholars like Oladosu (2006:45-63)) admit that the kingship could be a corruption of the earlier kinship and egalitarian communalistic systems. They agree that the kinship system is more or less the primordial type of republicanism while the kingship is monarchical. If these two systems are not unique to Africa, and the monarchical system is a corruption of the more ancient republican system, how then is the monarchical system indigenous to Africa? Given the foregoing, how is the monarchical more legitimately indigenous to Africa than the primitive republican system based on kinship? Why then are externalist scholars like Teffo (2004) arguing that the political problems are due to colonialism because it has imposed alien systems on African societies? After all, is the monarchical system indigenous to Africa? Ultimately, the externalists have identified the unfavourable contact between Africans and alien people from other places as the root cause of the problems militating against the political situation on the continent of Africa. The scholars have argued that the unfair treatment of Africans and the African communities have resulted in what we now see as political instability. That is, the cause of the problems militating against the stability and consolidation of democracy in Africa today is the imperial suppression of Africans beginning with the slave trade, but reaching its peak in the colonial rule, and continues till date in various forms.

The non-scientific externalists argue that even though the slave trade and the colonial rule have been abolished, the continuous interference in African politics by the colonial agents and the colonial consciousness implanted in the Africans have perpetuated the political problems affecting democracy in postcolonial Africa. In addition, they argue that the balkanisation of the geographical space of Africa has further helped to destabilise the political situation on the continent and among the people of Africa. The scientific externalists explain the colonial consciousness in terms of mental disorientation of Africans through the suppression of African culture, language, mental categories and initiatives through imperialism.

In their analysis, although the externalist scholars do not demarcate directly between the political leaders and the people, their argument suggests that the mental disorientation referred to was due to Western style education. This further suggests that the elite class who received the Western style education, regardless of the level, should be most affected. By so doing, they have indirectly alienated the elite from the rest of African society.

If the foregoing analyses are correct, then the following points are, therefore, true of the externalists and their explanations.

1) The externalists believe that to every event there must be a cause.

2) They believe that the cause of an event must precede its effect.

3) The externalists believe that colonialism is responsible for the political situation of Africa and there is nothing the Africans could have done to prevent it.

4) The externalists, who themselves are Africans, assume that they have escaped the causal influences of colonialism.

5) They are unwilling to proceed in logical regression beyond colonialism in the search for the root cause of the problems in question.

6) Their unwillingness to regress further has caused them to settle for a preconceived conclusion.

Beyond the traditional criticisms levelled against externalism, the main problems with externalism revolve around their understanding and application of causality and determinism, the logic of their analysis and the relationship the scholars assume that they bear to their own analysis. Consequently, even though some of the externalists are professional philosophers, they have excessively employed the methods of the social sciences in their analysis. However, these identified limitations of the externalists will be given further explanations along with the limitations of the internalist positions in chapter 5. Before then, the next part of this chapter will examine the internalist account of the problems militating against the smooth running and consolidation of democracy in Africa.

4.4   **Internalism**

The internalist school of thought is made up mostly of independent scholars and political activists. Though the internalists differ in style and focus, they are united by their belief that the root causes of all the political challenges of Africa are internal shortcomings and failures of its leaders (Ayittey, 1999:29-30). That is, that the African postcolonial political leaders cause the political problems.

Certain things make the arguments of the internalists appear plausible. Firstly, the arguments of the internalist appear logical considering the fact that Africa was exposed to only a short period of colonisation, and it has been over half a century since the wave of independence in Africa. It appears logical to say that colonialism is too short-lived to be completely responsible for the postcolonial political troubles of Africa. In addition, many other places, including Asia, America and parts of Europe, were also once colonised but they have recovered from their experiences and have become politically stable (Diamond, 1995:1-66). Also, South Africa, which is the last to gain its political freedom and accept racial

equality is currently more politically stable than some African states such as Ethiopia and Liberia that were arguably never colonised and many others like Nigeria that had gained their political independence earlier. It becomes tempting to assume that the internalist position is true. The position may justify the argument that colonialism is not the cause of the political challenges of Africa, but it does not justify internalism in the long run.

Secondly, Africa is a continent said to have peopled the world for several centuries and is it sometimes regarded as the cradle of humankind (ben-Jochannan, 1971:5-64). In spite of the several centuries of humankind and human societies on the continent of Africa, why does the rate and quality of social evolution in Africa not seem to reflect its long history? Why were the African people unable to stage a joint resistance against the colonial invasion in the first place? Why was the level of social cooperation among African communities still low at the time of the colonial invasion? Why were places like Europe, which perhaps were peopled much later than Africa, able to put up such unity of purpose as to colonise Africa, while Africa was unable? These, perhaps, are some of the reasons why some scholars have opted for the internalist thesis. Though the questions may have made the internalist thesis attractive, they do not offer any conclusive justification for internalism as a theory in the explanation of the problems confronting democracy in Africa.

Some of the protagonists of the internalist thesis are Diamond (1995), Achebe (2008), Oke (2006:332-343), Pfaff (1995:2-7), and Fagun (2008). There are large numbers of factors identified by the internalists as the causes of the political problems confronting the democratic project in Africa. They are far more numerous than have been identified in the externalist camp. The factors identified by the internalists include, but are not limited to, corrupt leadership, incompetent leadership, ethnicity, mixture of traditionalism or pseudo-republicanism, economic backwardness, nepotism and god-fatherism, self-perpetuation in

office, weak civil society, human rights violation, electoral violence and malpractice, social and distributive injustice, and political paranoia. As in the case of the externalists, the internalist factors are united by the fact that they are blamed on the political leaders and the elite. Like the externalists, the internalists believe that events must have causes and that all events, including human and social ones, must be explained in the manner of Newtonian physics. Unlike the externalists, however, the internalists propose no specific order in which the sub-factors affect each other. That is, one scholar identifies as the cause of the same thing which another identifies as its effect. For instance, in Mulinge & Lesetedi (1998:15-28), corruption causes poverty, ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, whereas in Mngomezulu (2008), ethnicity and self-perpetuation in office have caused ethnic conflicts, poverty, corruption and all the other economic and political problems of Africa.

For instance, Chinua Achebe, the author of the celebrated *Things Fall Apart*, has tried to give his own explanation of the political problems of Africa. Though he was referring specifically to Nigeria, he indirectly refers to Africa as a whole. According to Achebe, the trouble with Nigeria, as with many other African nations, is situated in a failure of leadership resulting from incompetence as well as the moral and psychological weaknesses of its leaders (Ayittey, 1999:29).

Giving an analysis of the character of Okonkwo in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (2008) might also help one to understand Achebe's position regarding the political crisis of Africa. Okonkwo's life was dominated by the fear of failure and weakness. The fear was far more intimate and deeper than the fear of the gods and the malevolent natural and supernatural forces. Okonkwo's fear was a deep-rooted fear of being or becoming like Nnoka, his father. He hated to be, or to be seen as, anything his weak father loved or stood for. Comparing Okonkwo with the postcolonial political leaders of Africa, it implies that the political leaders

of postcolonial Africa have become authoritarians and tyrants, because they want to be radically different from their precolonial and colonial predecessors who could not resist external invasion. By implication, therefore, the actions of the postcolonial African leaders, like those of Okonkwo, have led the African nation into despair like the case of Umuofia. In a naive reaction to the weaknesses of their colonian and precolonial ancestors and predecessors, as in the case of Okonkwo to his father in Umuofia, the postcolonial African leaders have made political choices and acted in a manner that has resulted in the political instability found in Africa today.

It could be true that the inability of Okonkwo to manage his reaction against the weaknesses of his father has brought hullaballoo and despair to Umuofia. Is it not also possible that if Okonkwo's father had not been the weakling that he was, Okonkwo would not have had reasons to fear being a weak leader? If anyone must give a causal explanation to the problems of Umuofia, How can we prove that the laziness and the phlegmatic nature of Nnoka, the father of Okonkwo is not the cause of the problem?

One of the leading internalists in recent times is Larry Diamond. Diamond (1988, 1995:20-37) acknowledges that almost all the "third world" nations that have recently gained their independence, have attempted governing themselves through Western style democratic institutions and have experienced political failures. In spite of the uniformity of this failure, Diamond does not see any link between the alleged causal factors. Rather, as it is characteristic of the internalists, many of whom are social scientists, Diamond attributes different causal factors to the political crises in different African states. He attributes political crises in Nigeria to ethnicity and corruption among the political leaders, while human rights violations, poor democratic functioning, social inequality, among others, were said to be the causes of the political problems in other postcolonial African nation-states (Diamond, 1995,

1-66). In other publications, Diamond (1991:73–85) describes the situation in Africa altogether as that of institutional defect as a result of leadership failure.

Leadership failure is the most prominent factor identified by the internalist scholars as the cause of the political challenges affecting democracy in Africa. Though the externalists also identify leadership failure, as earlier discussed, the difference is that the externalists see it as an offshoot of colonialism, while the internalists see it as an independent and exclusive attribute of the postcolonial African political leaders (Omotola, 2008:33-51). The internalists argue that the failure of leadership originates from corruption or incompetence. Some internalists argue that the earliest postcolonial political leaders of Africa were not fully prepared for the role they were to take in postcolonial African politics (Ayittey, 1999:47-48, 57). The internalists are of the opinion that the incompetence among the earliest political leaders had given room to the military regimes who, in the first place, were not trained for democratic political leadership. The military themselves sometimes only manipulated the systems to perpetuate their regimes and consequently handed over to those with whom they felt comfortable, rather than those that were competent or those that the people wanted.[14]

At first sight, the argument of the internalists appears convincing, that the immediate postcolonial leaders were not prepared for the roles they were to perform in the postcolonial politics and governance in Africa. However, since independence, the leadership of politics has changed hands in Africa, but the political situation does not seem to improve. In addition, except if the internalists are able to specify how to prepare for a political leadership role, which was not the case among African postcolonial leaders, the internalists would have committed the fallacy of wishful thinking or maralism (Bolarinwa, 2006:208-209). The arguments of the internalists is as good as saying that, because, the colonial leaders were

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[14] The former Nigerian military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida was once quoted as saying "we have decided those who will not succeed us" (Ibrahim, 1992:12).

successful, therefore they were prepared, and because the postcolonial leaders failed, therefore they were not prepared before they took over the mantle of leadership. If they had been successful, it would have meant that they were adequately prepared, even though they had not prepared less or more than the colonial leaders had.

Electoral violence is one of the factors the internalists have identified. While some of the internalist scholars see electoral violence and malpractices as by-products of leadership failure (Shenge, 2006:258-271, Olarinmoye, 2008:66-73), others see it as the very cause of some other political problems affecting democracy in Africa (Kura, 2007:118-133). Unfortunately, electoral violence and manipulation is also one of the problems affecting the democratic project in Africa. If electoral violence is the cause of the problems affecting democracy and electoral violence is also a problem affecting democracy in Africa, then, under what condition can it be said that a problem causes itself?

If, on the other hand, electoral violence and malpractice is a result of incompetent leadership, it means that electoral violence and manipulation is contingent upon leadership incompetence. In that case, leadership incompetence should rather be held responsible for the problems other than electoral violence and electoral malpractice. Unfortunately, the internalist scholars are yet to give a logically convincing argument to establish the meaning and cause of the leadership incompetence they have alleged in Africa.

Corruption is one of the factors often identified by the internalists. These scholars see the political leaders in Africa as a gang of corrupt people. In other words, the leaders exploit the ordinary citizens. By arguing this way, the internalists demarcate between the psychological disposition of the people and the leaders. To put it in simple terms; the political leaders, unlike the ordinary African people, are corrupt and mischievous.

It should be remembered that many of the internalists are radical scholars. They are not wrong simply because they are scholars rather than politicians. However, many internalists attribute all the political problems of Africa to corrupt and incompetent leadership. The first problem with their assumption is that they commit a logical fallacy. It looks like mere *argumentum ad populum* (Bolarinwa, 2006:108-197), because it only appeals to people's emotion or sentiment. None of the scholars has come up with a clear definition of corruption. Sometimes corruption is a generic name for everything unfavourable. Corruption is said to have caused political, economic and even religious problems. For instance, it is said to have caused the low and slow development of technology in many African states (Shaw, 2004:1-9). The inability of some countries to attract foreign investors is attributed to corruption, at the same time the domination of a nation's economy by foreign investors is also attributed to corruption, and the crime rate is high because of corruption. Just as the scholars are not able to specify what the term 'corruption' means, they have also not tried to find out the root cause of corruption. In addition, they have not tried to examine whether corruption would not still exist even if the political system were functioning well. In the alternative, the scholars fail to understand, as argued by Ehrenberg (1970:48-56), that nations are likely to be in danger of being ruled by tyrants when they are already having political challenges. These scholars see corruption as an attribute of the African postcolonial political leaders.

In sum, the scholars see corruption as an attribute of the African political leaders. They see the postcolonial leaders as the cause of the political crises of postcolonial Africa. Given the foregoing, some further questions could be asked. If the leaders are the causes of the problems, then a change in the leadership should have put an end to the problems. However, change in leadership in Africa does not seem to ameliorate the problem. For instance, the change in the political leadership in South Africa since Nelson Mandela has not

proved that the thesis of leadership change is a necessary truth. Otherwise, subsequent regimes after Mandela should have been remarkably better.

If African leaders are corrupt, does it not mean that Africans are corrupt? Can the leaders be corrupt without the people being corrupt? If African people are not corrupt, while their leaders are, how can the corrupt leaders be accounted for? Can good people always elect corrupt leaders? Secondly, if African leaders are elected from among the people then it could be asked, are Africans naturally corrupt? That is, is it as a result of genetic factors that African leaders are corrupt? If Africans are corrupt by nature, many of the internalist scholars are also Africans and they are leaders in their own right. How then can we rely on their analysis and explanations? How exactly are they able to transcend the influence of the natural tendencies?

In addition, if we accept that African leaders are different from the rest of Africans and change in leadership does not change the situation, does it not suggest that leadership might not be the root cause of the problem? Does it not also suggest that Africa is in a hopeless situation? Whether or not we end up in the insolubility thesis, it is at least certain that by endorsing the internalist thesis we are equally endorsing causal determinism. In this sense, causal determinism is a view that forces beyond the control of the Africans have determined the political situation of Africa.

Some internalist scholars have even argued that the root cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa is economic backwardness (Ayittey, 1999:48-51). They are quick to recommend economic programmes that would help to stabilise the political system. As specified in the introductory part of this chapter, the economic backwardness of Africa cannot be held responsible for the political instability of African democracies nor can the political situation be held responsible for the economic

backwardness of Africa. While it cannot be denied that politics and economy are closely related, and that the state of economy has some influences on the political situation, it can hardly be argued that the economic situation determines the political situation. Rather, it is arguable that an economy cannot be vibrant in the midst of political chaos. It means, therefore, that the root cause of the political problems in Africa could be traced to factors other than economy.

In their characteristic manner, the internalists blame the economic backwardness of the African states on the choices made by the political leaders. The assumptions of these scholars deserve some attention. Many scholars in Africa are quite good in the applications of the economic theories. However, they never challenge the theoretical assumptions of those theories. Nor do they seem to examine the practical implications of those economic theories on their own daily lives. An example of the unexamined economic theories is Adam Smith's theory of division of labour and specialisation (Smith, 1977). Division of labour is said to be the breaking down of the production process into smaller units, such that individuals or a group of individuals undertake each unit as specialists (Loasby,1996:299-323). In the same way, each country is advised to specialise in the supply of a certain service, commodity or industry, in which it has some competitive advantage. Following the said theories, many of the African states have specialised in the extractive and the agricultural industries. Given this scenario, the African states export their resources for meagre amounts and pay exorbitant prizes to purchase the finished goods when the raw materials have been mixed with labour and technology. By implication, the African states earn less and pay more in return. Hence, they get poorer and rely more on external aids. The internalist scholars, most of who are said to be radical intellectuals prefer to blame the political leaders for everything including things within the control of the academics. They prefer to be critics of the governments and the

political leaders rather than showing their competence in their various fields of specialisations.

If the scholars see incompetence as an attribute of the postcolonial African political leaders, then there are problems that are more fundamental. If the leaders are the causes of the problems, like in the case of corruption, a change in the leadership is expected to put an end to the problems. Change of leadership in postcolonial Africa has not demonstrated that the thesis of leadership change is a necessary truth. All that it seems to demonstrate is that the problem is beyond solution, because the leaders reflect the people that have elected them. On the one hand, the leaders are from among the people, and on the other hand, the people reflect the leaders they select because the elected leaders are the images of the people that elected them.

It is a well known fact that several postcolonial African leaders have attempted to perpetuate their regimes or perpetuate themselves in office. Idi Amin, and Sese Seko could be mentioned. Mugabe could be added, and Olusegun Obasanjo could be interpreted as having attempted to perpetuate his regime in the light of the 'third term agenda' saga (Ibrahim, 2006:36-59). Even if no scholar had defended the position that the challenges confronting democracy in Africa are caused by self-perpetuation in office among African leaders, the examples seem to justify the position. In Diamond's understanding, however, all such political defects as self-perpetuation are due to lack of democratic culture. Democratic cultures, in Diamond's view, are sedimentary geo-social historical legacies, sustainable through reliable and consistent political leadership.

Also, as expected of the internalists, they see the phenomenon of self-perpetuation in office as a behaviour among African political leaders, which offends the character and aspirations of the people they govern. In other words, the leaders are separate and different in

character from the people they lead. If, on the other hand, the leaders and the people are alike, how then are the analyses of the internalist scholars, who themselves are of African descent able to escape these causal influences.

Ethnicity is one of the factors commonly identified by internalist scholars as the root cause of the political problems of Africa. The Rwandan genocide, the Somalia crisis, the Biafran war (Adegboyega 1981) and even the crisis in the oil rich Niger Delta in Nigeria have all been attributed to ethnicity. Although some externalists have also identified ethnicity as the root cause of the contemporary political problems of democracy in Africa, but not exactly in the same way as the internalists are seeing it. The difference is that, while the externalists see it as a creation of the colonial powers, through various means including balkanisation, the internalists see it as a postcolonial development or, sometimes, as a divide-and-rule strategy employed by postcolonial African leaders to achieve their selfish political goals. In fact, an internalist scholar like Diamond (1995:417-491) has even admitted, in passing, the contribution of the colonial powers to the ethnicity problem in Africa. That notwithstanding, none of the scholars has made efforts to trace the problem beyond what arguably are preconceived conclusions. Were it not for preconceived conclusions, would Diamond not have tried to trace the problem to periods before independence in Africa? In addition, some scholars see ethnicity as a causal factor or as a tool in the hands of the political elite to achieve their selfish ends. In this case, the political problems in Africa are causally determined by ethnicity or by African leaders who have employed ethnicity. Whichever the case, like in the cases of previously discussed alleged causal factors, ethnicity implies admitting causal determinism and logical inconsistency on the one hand, fatalism and insolubility on the other.

Closely knit with the ethnicity factor is nepotism or god-fatherism (Diamond, 1993:411-436). Nepotism and god-fatherism could easily be associated with corrupt leadership. The association between nepotism and god-fatherism, on the one hand, and between each of the two and corruption on the other, suggests that both nepotism and god-fatherism might be contingent problems. Contingent problems imply challenges that depend on other primary and substantive problems for their existence. In other words, for instance, if the leaders are not corrupt, or there is no tribalism or ethnicity, there may be no nepotism.

The internalists have also identified nepotism as the root cause of the challenges of democracy in Africa. The problem of nepotism does not necessarily imply being partial in favour of people with whom we share consanguinity. Sometimes, it could involve people with whom we share the same social class, profession or political party. , as a contingent problem, becomes even more pronounced at this non-consanguinity level because the party system itself provides the platform for party-based nepotism. Perhaps the problem here is that the internalists have mistaken association for causal connection. For instance, democracy might be having problems in Africa while there is also the problem of god-fatherism or nepotism. Does it necessarily imply that nepotism is responsible for the political problems? Which one causes the other?

Social and distributive injustice have been traced to corrupt leadership (Obi, 2008) and at the same time been said to be the root of many political conflicts in Africa (Rwanda (Moghalu, 2005), Niger Delta (Aghalino, 2009:69-75). However, internalist scholars are yet to answer the question that, if there is no problem of social injustice, would that mean an end to the political problems militating against democracy in Africa? Social and distributive justice is certainly one of the problems. Could the problem have caused itself? Could it be an offshoot of other problems and defects? Until these questions have found adequate answers,

would it not be logically premature to say that the political problems of Africa are caused by social injustice, and that the social injustice is entirely a postcolonial development?

Some scholars of the internalist tradition feel that the democratic institutions in many African states are having crises because they mixed the traditional structures and figures, such as kings and chiefs, with democracy. Oladosu (2006:45-63) is one of such scholars. They are of the view that the traditional figures and institutions have been given some undue recognition to participate within the framework of modern democratic institution.

Oladosu (2006) is of the view that the continued retention of the traditional kingship institution, even in its most mild form, is a major impediment to the establishment of full-fledged republicanism in contemporary Africa. Consequently, Oladosu recommends a complete abolition of the kingship system, on the grounds that it was founded on historical injustice to begin with, and that it has no relevance and utility to the modern African states. In its place, Oladosu advocates a "fundamentalist" position for the adoption of an unmitigated form of republicanism.

Oladosu's argument sounds convincing. However, if a mixture of the traditional institution in modern democracy is causing some problems, is it the traditional system or the modern system that should be blamed? Some leading democracies such as Swizerland and Britain are those that have retained and combined their traditional systems with the modern democracies. What exactly is the problem with the African traditional system that makes it exceptionally and necessarily detrimental to democracy? Is kingship the only system indigenous to Africa? Perhaps it should be asked; what is indigenously African? Until Oladosu is able to provide answers to these questions, his conclusion that the inclusion of African traditional system in democracy is the root cause of the political problems in Africa might equally be an unfounded conclusion or a preconceived conclusion.

There are other factors identified by the internalist scholars. The factors are so numerous that the list can hardly be exhausted. They are, however, appreciably enumerated by Abuya (2002:315-324). They include:

1. Lack of accountability, and bad governance.
2. Bad economic policies which favour only the rich.
3. The irrelevance of Western democracy to the existential condition of Africa.
4. Alienation between the leaders and the people they govern.
5. Human rights violation.
6. Political paranoia.

As in the cases treated earlier in this chapter, these other factors identified by the internalist are sometimes like mere proliferation of other factors or over-contextualisation of them. That is, merely multiplying the factors of simply believing that every problem identified must necessarily be brought about by a context different from those of the other ones. Whatever their reasons, the internalists, like their externalist counterparts, have also made some contributions towards the search for the root of the political problems confronting the democratic project in Africa.

The internalists are not wrong simply because the factors they have identified are totally unrelated to the political difficulties experienced by the African states regarding the smooth running and consolidation of their democracies. Some of the factors they have identified are actually very relevant to the democratic project in Africa. For instance, issues like corruption, nepotism, and social justice are central to democracy everywhere including Africa.

Like their externalist counterparts however, a few observations could be made about the internalists from the examinations made:

1) The internalists believe that every event must have a cause, hence they see no problem giving causal explanations to human and social problems.

2) Though they rightly observe that some events are contingent upon another, they have tried to avoid the endless regress, which is imminent in causal explanations. Consequently, they identify the political leaders as the very root of the problems.

3) The internalists prefer to see both the cause and the effect as contemporaneous, hence the choice of some current problems as the causes of other equally current problems.

4) While the externalists proceed from premises to preconceived conclusions, the internalists proceed through the inductive reasoning with selective observations rather than through any logical order. By doing so, for instance, the internalists have identified numerous isolated factors, with total disregard for logic. They take proximity and similarity in property for causal link.

5) While the externalists demarcate between the subject and the object in terms of colonialism and Africa, the internalists have made the same demarcation between the postcolonial African leaders and the rest of Africa.

6) Like their externalist counterparts, the internalists project the African society like products of causes beyond the control of the Africans.

7) The internalists appear better as critics and intellectual activists than as elites representing the voices of the people.

8) The internalists, who themselves are Africans, also assume that they have escaped the influences of the causal factors that have determined the political leaders because, as typical of the social sciences, they detach themselves from the objects of their analysis. That is, they see themselves as the subjects of the analysis, while the rest of the African society are the objects of their analysis.

9) As distanced as the internalists are from their objects of analysis, they still assume that they are able to grasp a good knowledge of the supposed object and that their diagnoses and prescriptions are valid.

From the foregoing analysis, a few things become clear. It is the fact that both internalism and externalism have several things in common, or that they are merely two sides of the same coin. They are two sides of the same coin because, both of them subscribe to the causal explanation of the social phenomenon in question, they both distinguish themselves from their own analyses and they basically apply the same sort of logic. However, these identified limitations of the internalists will be given further explanations in chapter 6. In addition, I

shall examine whether the causal explanation is an adequate explanation of a social phenomena like the problems of democracy in Africa.

4.5   **Summary**

This chapter has exposed the previous efforts of scholars to explain the political problems confronting the democratic project in Africa. In summary, both the externalists and the internalists have made some commendable efforts trying to investigate the causes of the problems militating against democracy in Africa. The characteristics of both the externalist and the internalist schools of thought have been identified in this chapter. The viability of their investigation and the validity of their results will be examined in subsequent chapters.

In the next chapter, however, I will demonstrate the futility of the previous explanations in practical terms. I will demonstrate, in practical terms, how the previous explanations, even in their own causal logic have failed to achieve the objectives of their enquiry. It will be followed by chapter 6, which will then examine why such an enquiry could never have produced a better result.

Chapter 5

Inconsistencies in the Previous Explanations: Historical and Analytic Examination of Externalism and Internalism Using their own Parameters

5.1   Introduction

In Chapter 4, previous efforts of scholars who have attempted to explain the political problems of Africa (as defined in chapters 1, 2 and 3) were examined. It was discovered in that chapter that both the externalist and the internalist scholars have seemingly embarked on wrong missions and through the path of causal explanations. Among other things, they have employed some unscrupulous logic to arrive at their various conclusions. Consequently, they are unable to achieve their aim or reach the logical conclusion of the theoretical path they have taken.

This chapter takes up the causal arguments of the scholars in order, on the one hand, to show that even within the line of their own causal arguments, their conclusions are wrong; and, on the other hand, to expose the futility of applying a causal explanation to social situations, in the same way it would apply in classical physics. The objective of this chapter is to expose the inconsistencies in the previous explanations. In other words, the main question to be investigated is: if causal explanations were credible explanations of the political problems of Africa, would the colonial or the postcolonial factors, which the scholars have identified, be the most appropriate causal factors? An effective technique by which we can examine a chain of actions is through the historical method of investigation. Consequently, this chapter employs a description of historical events with analytical insight.

5.2   Postcolonial Political Situation in Africa

During the campaign for independence, African leaders had raised the hopes of the African people by promising to end oligarchic oppression and capitalist exploitation, and to lift Africans from the mire of dishonour and ignominy brought on them by years of slavery and colonialism (Awolowo, 1985:35). The Black leaders promised the freedom that was denied by the White colonialists (Awolowo, 1985:39). At the end, the Independence was achieved and many of the African states began to embark on self-rule. Unfortunately too, according to Awolowo (1985:37), "a number of avoidable errors were committed on the attainment of independence, hopes were dashed and expectations dimmed."

Specifically, African leaders failed to take cognizance of the fact that there were growing mechanisms for cooperation in other parts of the world, while Africa was disintegrated and still backward politically, economically and technologically. They also failed to acknowledge that world events had demonstrable effects on the lives of their own people (Awolowo, 1985:39). Today, though Africa is perhaps the richest area in mineral and natural resources, yet it is the poorest and one of the most politically unstable (Awolowo, 1985:46).

The current political situation in the African continent is no doubt a pitiable one, as acknowledged by many scholars of African politics (Shale, 2008:109-23; Oke, 2006:332-43; Olukoju, 2003:4; Moti, 2003:1-5; Ejiofor, 2003:6-28), and has been described in Chapter 1 of this study. Democracy and democratic practices in Africa as a whole and in many African states are engulfed in violent political crises, as also noted by many scholars (see Chapters 3 and 4). Notwithstanding the number of casualties and the quality of weaponry used in comparison with other places, there seem to be too many wars and intra-state conflicts in Africa, and even more worryingly, some of the wars seem either unending or frequently starting anew.

Democracies in Africa do not in any way match the ideals of democracy in terms of their ability to ensure and safeguard the democratic spirit, social justice, individual freedom, the rights of citizens and maximum participation in governance capable of ensuring free and fair elections (see Chapter 3), let alone achieving legitimacy.

South Africa, Botswana and Ghana seem to be the leading African democracies, given the length of time in their practice of democracy as well as their success in power change and regime succession in the political sphere. However, neither South Africa nor Botswana nor Ghana has attained the level of stability, legitimacy and maturity required of a consolidated democracy (Fayemi, 2009:101-26).

In the case of Ghana, the singular incidence of the 2008 election, in which an opposition candidate displaced the incumbent without any registered violence, is still insufficient for drawing definite conclusions about the maturity and legitimacy of Ghanaian democracy. Secondly, the recent discovery of petroleum in Ghana (Zounmenou, 2009a:54-57) may make the country suffer the same fate as Nigeria or Angola.

As for Botswana, the oldest surviving democracy in Africa, there is no doubt that it has got the homogeneity of Botswana society to its advantage. First, it is difficult to talk of party dominance in such a small population. Second, the size of the population of the country tends to make any political conflict in the country unnoticeable (Mogalakwe, 2008:105-17). It has also been noticed that the democracy in Botswana still suffers from an environment of weak civil society (Mogalakwe, 2008:105-17). Hence, Botswana's democracy has not been tested in any way.

The situation of South Africa appears not too different from those of Ghana and Botswana, because the maturity and consolidation of its democracy are yet to be tested. The withdrawal of President Thabo Mbeki from the presidency through a non-violent process by the African National Congress (ANC) (ANC NEC Statement 2008) is not a significant test

for democracy for a number of reasons.[15] A formidable and credible opposition, which is the decisive test for democracy, does not yet feature on the horizon of the African National Congress ANC in South Africa. There are no indications that credible and formidable opposition, secession, land politics or the undefined roles of traditional authorities might not eventually shake the foundations of democracy in South Africa (Ntsebeza, 2005:16-20, 58 & 289). Arguably, therefore, it is reasonable to discuss democracy as having problems in postcolonial Africa, including African states that got their political independence earlier, those that got theirs much later and even those that were arguably never colonized.

With the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia[16], all other African states were colonized, and with the exception of South Africa, most other African countries had their political freedom from the colonialists before 1990. It is a well-known fact that neither Ethiopia nor Liberia is politically stable, given their several civil and tribal wars in recent times (Agbu, 2006; Agbu, 2000:92-104). In addition, with the exception of a few countries such as South Africa, there have been military interludes since the inception of democracy in African states (Souare, 2009:1-13; Zounmenou, 2009b:72-73).

Most African states started their independent lives as democracies, but soon changed to non-democratic or less democratic forms of government, such as military dictatorship (Pretorius, 2008:1-8; MacDonald, 1989:76). Many postcolonial African states like Nigeria and Ghana are in their redemocratization process for the third time (Pretorius, 2008:1-8). All the African states in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted democracy in one form or another. Some have incorporated elements of traditional political systems into the democratic system,

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[15]First, Thabo Mbeki was engaged in a conflict resolution process in Zimbabwe and would consequently have had no moral justification to lead his country into a similar problem as the one he was trying to resolve in Zimbabwe. That might be the only reason why Mbeki did not ignite any significant violent resistance to the ANC. Second, the international community owes Mbeki some honour for the good job done in Zimbabwe in his reconciliatory efforts between the leaders of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). But he would probably have lost the honour if he had revolted against his party's verdict. Consequently, the fact that the removal of Mbeki from office did not result in violence is not itself a sufficient test of democratic consolidation.

[16]If one considers that though a significant percentage of Liberian population are former African-American slaves, the country itself was never colonised.

in which traditional kings and chiefs play prominent roles in governance. A few, like Swaziland, have placed the role of the monarch beyond the level of civil society; they simply practise monarchical democracy. While a number of African states have adopted the parliamentary system of democracy, others have adopted the presidential system. It is actually difficult to specify which country has adopted which method because in practice there seem to be many mid-courses between the presidential and the parliamentary systems of government in Africa. In South Africa, for instance, the parliamentary system is said to be in practice, but it has introduced some core features of the presidential system. In practice, the systems challenge the ability to make conceptual and theoretical demarcations.

Democracies on the continent are arguably experiencing legitimacy crises, not only because there are pro-communists or pro-traditionalists among the politically active, but most of all because the citizenry are developing some forms of apathy towards democratic institutions, governments and states in Africa. Perhaps they see no reason to be loyal to governments that claim to be democratic with no practical results to show for it. What there are in Africa's many states are mere pseudo-democracies that can slide into anarchy at any time.

Both states and governments are experiencing legitimacy crises from within. The first condition for democratic consolidation is legitimacy (Shale, 2008:109-23). Without legitimacy, therefore, there can be no consolidation of democracy in Africa. The efforts of any political institution and its leaders can assume historical importance only to the extent that they are able to meet the popular aspirations of the people and ensure their involvement.

Other requirements for democratic consolidation (Schedler, 1998:91-101) are largely missing in many of the African states. These include respect for human rights, freedom of the people to change their government, control it and participate in its agenda, freedom of association, freedom of the press and media, and access to information and literacy (see

Chapter 3). These are the formal and structural requirements of a democratic society. Secondly, the informal conditions, which include social cooperation and loyalty to the political and social system, do not seem readily available in many democratic states of post-colonial Africa. Though most African states have adopted electoral democracy, the people are yet to imbibe democratic values. Therefore democratic practices in many of the states of postcolonial Africa are overwhelmed by political crises and are unconsolidated, albeit to varying degrees. All these problems have been noted by different scholars and have been acknowledged in previous chapters.

There are regional bodies, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the 'Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Quest' (CEAQ), the Union Douaniere et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale' (UDEAC), the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC) and the Preferential State Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA). There is also the umbrella body for the whole of the continent, now called the African Union (AU) (Senghor, 1990:17-31). Although the regional organizations are in place, the regions remain disintegrated interregionally and intraregionally, and all are immersed in various political conflicts that make democracy unstable. In addition, many of these associations and organizations are no more than watered-down versions of what they are meant to be, and some are mere caricatures of what exists in Europe and other parts of the world (Awolowo, 1985:41, 45-46, 57).

Almost all the regions are involved in conflict and conflict resolutions at regular successions. Since 1960, there have been many wars, while several other armed conflicts are ever-present on the continent (Ayittey, 2005:369). Such conflicts include the wars in Nigeria in 1966, Sudan in 1972, Angola in 1975, Mozambique in 1975, Ethiopia in 1985, Liberia in 1992, Somalia in 1993, Rwanda in 1994, Sierra Leone in 1997, Congo DRC in 1998,

Ethiopia/Eritrea in 1998, Guinea in 1999 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2001 (Ayittey, 2005:370). None of these wars were against external forces as such; they were mostly intertribal and interstate disputes (Ayittey, 2005:370). Some of these wars are almost perpetual and never come to any meaningful end, while others restart at intervals (Ayittey, 2005:369). All arms supply and military assistance in terms of training of personnel and ammunitions have been employed by African states against one another and against their own citizens.

One of the characteristics of postcolonial African society is mutual suspicion among the people and between the people and their leaders. In addition to the wars and conflicts that have isolated peoples and communities from one another, from pre- to postcolonial Africa, the political leaders have vied with one another to build estates and palaces. They have embarked on bourgeois uneconomic projects, surrounding themselves with the myths and paraphernalia of divine potentates. The postcolonial African leaders have indulged in exhibitionism in order to demonstrate to the former rulers that Africa has been a success under their leadership (Awolowo, 1985:38). To cover up for their incompetence, 'African leaders put on a shield of arrogance rather than taking time to analyse their domestic and international situation and environment' (Awolowo, 1985:57). The result is not only a dwindling economy but also the impression that the foreign oppressors have only been exchanged for native tyrants. The oppressor-oppressed dichotomy remains unchanged, as has the leader-people alienation.

In Africa, the polarity and dichotomies do not merely make people recognise social diversity. They often degenerate into opposition, rivalries, social and political conflicts, and sometimes wars. The US is far more mixed than many African states. It is common knowledge that in the North American continent not only a tribal plurality, but also ethnic, lingual and racial pluralities exist. Yet in spite of all this diversity, opposition and disloyalty to the system is not as pronounced as in African states like Nigeria. It does not necessarily

result in violence and wars; at least, there exists no known record of such in recent times. Asia was colonized like Africa, and Asia is not monoethnic, monotribal or monolingual; not even China is monocultural. Yet in spite of the similarities with Africa in these other places, the political crises there are far less devastating than in Africa. The exception is probably the Middle East.

In the analyses of the postcolonial era, it could be inferred that the concern of the scholars on the political situation of Africa had been to prevent further deterioration. In other words, these scholars believe that failure to arrest the situation could cause further political crises, either now (as the internalists believe) or in the future (as the externalists believe). By implication, however, the two camps believe that everything that happens has a cause. Consequently, regardless of their theoretical affinity, all the scholars who have tried to explain the political problems of Africa believe that the mistakes of today will have some causal influences on the future. By implication, to everything that happens, there must be a cause. The difference between the internalists and the externalists is only about where to locate the cause.

The internalists argue that the problems militating against the democratic project of Africa are caused by problems located within the postcolonial era. The problems they have identified are many, but the most prominent, identified by most internalists, is defective leadership. Unfortunately, their arguments do not lead to this conclusion. The internalists believe that there must be no physical space or time distance between a cause and its effect. Time lag is one of the reasons why they have nullified the possibility of the colonial cause of the current political crises in Africa. For them, something long past cannot cause the present. Although it is doubtful if they will accept thet going by their own logic, the present cannot also cause the future. With their numerous interconnected and interdependent causes, it is difficult to identify which one is the cause and which one is the effect. By implication,

however, this means that the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa must be contemporaneous with the effects. If the causes and effects must be contemporaneous, it would mean that within all the problems identified with democracies in Africa, some are causes while others are the effects. However, since the internalists do not specify how to distinguish causes from effects, it means that every event qualifies to be cause and effect at the same time. Such reasoning leads to a vicious cycle and metaphysical discontinuity rather than helping to identify a cause.

Though defective leadership is prominent in their arguments, the internalists cannot logically trace the numerous factors to it. Within their own parameters also, they cannot necessarily trace problems to the postcolonial African leaders within their historical analysis of Africa. Even if leadership crisis is taken to be representative of the internalist position in this study, it does not in any way imply that it is the only fact that the internalists have identified. It also does not mean that the internalists have been able to logically or historically justify leadership crisis as the cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. It only means that leadership crisis is prominent in their analysis.

There could be two reasons why the internalists must insist that internal factors have caused the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. One is that, according to Ayittey (as earlier noted in Chapter 4), the internalists are mostly radical scholars and activists. It is understandable that they would want to oppose the externalist camp, made up mostly of politicians. The other reason, as we shall see in this chapter, is that the externalist alternative leads to an endless regress, which the internalists would want to avoid.

The externalists have argued that the political challenges of Africa are caused by colonialism. To examine the truth-value of the position of the externalists, I need to examine the colonial period of Africa. No final judgement could be made on externalism until it is

established that the arguments of the externalists cannot justify the conclusion that colonialism is the cause of the political problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. In order to evaluate the position of the externalist scholars, we must examine the period of colonial rule in Africa in order to establish if in fact there is anything in colonial rule itself that can qualify it to be the cause of the postcolonial political crises in Africa.

5.3   Colonial Rule in Africa

There are various, and sometimes seemingly conflicting, conceptions of the nature and mode of colonialism in Africa. While some see it as a positive event that has helped to liberate and civilise the people who had hitherto been enslaved by ignorance, others conceive of it as evil, because they believe that African society was well developed and at par with other parts of the world.

Those like Hegel (1975:190), who believe that Africans are a people without a history of their own would necessarily see colonisation as a positive event in the lives of Africans, especially because it has led to the construction of a few roads, railway lines and some other tangible and intangible developments (Oke, 2006:332-343, Seddon, 2008:133-150) that could be related historically.

Others scholars like Kanyandago (2003:30-50) have argued that colonisation obstructed the social, political and economic development of the continent of Africa. There are numerous other views, some of which are either that the interest of the Europeans in Africa was to have consumers for their growing industrial products (Awolowo, 1985:24-25) or that Europeans came in search of raw materials for their fast-growing industries (Kodjo, 1991:317-325, Johnston, 1913:153-154).

None of the above perceptions is of immediate interest, as each one depends on which side the viewer stands. Actually, these apparently opposing views complement one another.

For one thing, the fact that Europeans came to explore and exploit does not mean that all their actions would necessarily be harmful. For another, the search for raw materials does not negate the search for consumers: they are all commercial and economic ventures. However, any domination of others without their consent is 'exploitative, corrupt and violent.' The eventual gain to the dominated party is only accidental.

The very fact of domination for economic gain is in itself a violation of territorial and political rights of Africans, and consequently violent and corrupt (Cloete, 2008:84-99); Awolowo (1985:xv). A Nigerian political leader, an eyewitness of the independence struggle in Africa, believes that self-government with risk is preferable to servitude with tranquillity. This is regardless of whether or not the natives had a fair deal from the colonialists. Were it not for the nature of international politics and foreign domination of Africa, how else could kidnapping of human beings have been 'trade' and how could such unjust activity have continued as a legal business for so long (Awolowo, 1985:20)?

The link between the seemingly opposing conceptions is that in order to meet the demand for cheap labour in various parts of the world, the whole of Black Africa was exploited (Awolowo, 1985:19). To ensure a constant supply of raw materials such as palm kernels, palm oil, cotton, gold, ivory, wood and pepper for the growing industries of Europe, the whole of Black Africa was deforested and exploited (Awolowo, 1985:25). To guarantee a steady market for European consumer goods, the whole of sub-Saharan Africa had to be 'civilized' though colonization (Awolowo, 1985:25). At every point, the economic gains of European powers were ensured.

Not even the abolition of the slave trade could impede the economic gains of the imperial powers because it was followed in rapid succession by colonial domination in Africa. If freeing the slaves was sincere, why was it immediately succeeded by colonial rule? How could it be justifiable that Europe freed the African slaves, only to deport them to Africa

to be re-enslaved even in their own home countries (Awolowo, 1985:27), and at an even higher economic gain for Europe (Awolowo, 1985:xv)? In other words, Europeans were busy exploiting Africa only for the benefit of Europe. The corrupting influence of the European slave merchants and the imperial powers on Africa is hardly an issue for debate.

Apart from the fact of colonialism itself, and the denial of freedom for the colonised, the externalists have identified, as the main cause of political instability in postcolonial Africa, the partitioning, or balkanisation, of Africa into nation states with total disregard for culture, tribe and other natural boundaries (Busia, 1971:37). There is no doubt that the colonialists have balkanised the continent of Africa. It is also undeniable that those external influences have some impacts on Africa and on Africans. Perhaps, owing to the glaring and undeniable influences of balkanisation, the externalists assume that the political instability that has hindered the smooth running and consolidation of democracy in Africa is caused by colonialism.

Externalists also argue that the imposition of alien education, language, culture and political systems by the colonialists are the cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa (Prah, 1995; Diallo, 2006:15-22; Onyewuenyi, 2000:396-400). The educational, economic and religious systems in most African states are those that entrench the European hegemony. Externalists like Wiredu (2000a:186-204) refer to this as mental and conceptual colonisation. There is no doubt that the use of English, French or Portuguese as the languages of communication is an act of cultural imperialism, which may contribute to the professional incompetence of Africans, especially those whose first languages are indigenous African languages and different from any of the European languages. However, does that justify the thesis that colonialism has caused the underdevelopment of Africa, as well as its political instability?

It could even be added, to support the externalist argument, that Europe might have conspired against Africans in some ways. For instance, some Western economic theories are in fact political. In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of the Nations,* Adam Smith developed an economic theory called 'the division of labour.'[17] The theory of the division of labour goes beyond individuals and groups. In wealth creation, every nation should specialise in a particular aspect of the economy. In other words, some countries should specialise, respectively, in agriculture, others in extractive, manufacturing or commercial industries. Within the same theory, however, manufactured goods are to be priced far higher as a result of the accompanying labour and skill. The theory has seen to the development of the now industrialised nations, to such an extent that catching up with them has become difficult, especially in countries with natural resources. Most African states think it is easier and more advantageous to depend on their natural resources, but they exchange their so-called natural resources for a low income, and they import their agricultural experts, materials and the finished products at exorbitant cost and debts from foreign countries. In a simple analogy, it is like, a woman sells a bucket of fresh oranges for R5, but she has to buy a bottle of 100 Vitamin C tablets at R50. It means that she must get a loan of R45 each time that she needs to buy a bottle of Vitamin C tablets. The implication is that she perpetually depends on loan assistance, debt cancellation to survive.

The abuses of the colonial era notwithstanding, do they justify the assumption of the externalists that the inability of the African states to rule themselves democratically is caused by colonialism?

To answer the question, other questions may need to be asked. Why are the Asian and Latin American countries that once endured the same political crises as the African states

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[17]Division of labour is the breaking down of production process into smaller units, such it is assumed that it becomes easier for individuals or a groups to undertake units of the production process and consequently become specialist in their various units.

now politically stable? Why has it been difficult for Liberia and Ethiopia to be different from the rest of Africa in spite of the fact that they were hardly ever colonised?

Let us assume that colonialism has caused the rest of Africa to be, in various degrees, politically 'chaotic'. A few years ago a group of people were discovered close to the Adamawa mountains in Nigeria. They were called the Koma people (This Day, 2005:4). Let us assume that the newly discovered people represent the average uncolonised and precontact African community. Even by the standard of present-day Africa, the people in question were found to be politically disorganised, socially backward, and poverty-stricken. Given the political situation of the supposedly uncolonised African states and the general condition of primitive African societies as exemplified by the Koma people, can the argument still be sustained that it is colonialism that has caused Africa to be politically chaotic? Historically, has there been anything in colonialism itself to justify the contention that it alone has been responsible for the failure of democracy in Africa?

Supposing that we accept that the externalists are correct to think that the cause of a problem must precede its effect. Let us also assume that they have justifications for believing that colonialism has caused the postcolonial political challenges of Africa. These assumptions can only be logically and practically consistent if certain conditions apply. First, if there are no other places with a history of colonialism that are politically stable. India, South Africa and Botswana were also colonised. In fact, South Africa had the longest experience of the inhuman treatment by the colonialists, but relatively, South Africa is politically more stable than even the other African states that attained their freedom and independence earlier.

In addition, if the externalist scholars have identified factors like 'balkanisation', imposition of foreign doctrines and languages, and they further trace all these to colonialism, it means that those individual factors are contingent upon colonialism. At best, they could be contributing factors, but not primary factors. However, there is no reason to believe that

colonialism as it affects Africa is not also contingent upon something else. This point needs to be examined before inferring any further conclusion.

Unlike the internalist, the externalists have treated the African society historically. Using their own standard, a further test of the colonialism thesis is to find out if the political instability found in postcolonial Africa had not existed prior to colonialism. That is, we could accept that colonialism is the cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa, if and only if the sort of problems currently militating against the consolidation of democracy in Africa did not exist in the period before the colonial experiences. The most reliable way to ascertain this is through the investigation of history.

5.4   **Anti-colonial Resistance in Africa**

The period immediately preceding the colonial period is the period of the anti-colonial resistance. It was the period when Africans tried to resist domination by the colonial forces. To put it differently, causal explanation in the manner of the externalists presupposes that a current effect has been caused by a prior cause. That is, whatever happens today has been caused by a force or event that has earlier existed. To justify or to nullify the externalist logic, there is the need to regress further in history, in the search for a cause.

Historically, one of the fiercest anti-colonial domination was mounted around Egypt and Sudan. Between about 1820 and 1914 there was hardly any period without uproar and tension in that region of Africa, especially the Sudan. In that region, anti-colonial resistance was mounted by different movements: the *Urabi*, the *Mahdi* and *Sayyid Muhammad* movements, and the tribal movement of the *Azande* people (Boahen, 2003:39-45). Britain needed the strategically placed and militarily formidable Egypt and the region to protect her business interests in the Far East, and France equally needed the area to checkmate Britain (Egiebade, 2005:89-104). Hence, in addition to continuing armed resistance, the Somali

realised there was much rivalry between the British, French and Italian administrator and consequently attempted a diplomatic means to play the rival powers against one another by concluding treaties with one against the other. The diplomatic means failed in its objectives because the European rival powers quickly resolved their differences.

Abd al-Krim al-Khattabi, a Moroccan warrior, was said to have defeated some 60,000 Spanish troops with about 3 000 soldiers in the Northern Morocco. It took a combined Spanish and French army of about 80,000 soldiers to defeat Abd al-Krim al-Khattabi eventually (Davidson, 1990:24). There is probably no need to analyse the situation further in other parts of the northern Africa, especially Libya and Tunisia: the main geographical interest of this thesis is Sub-Saharan Africa. However, history has it that the Turks and locally recruited mercenary soldiers helped the imperial powers to surmount several parts of the North African region, and the internal unstable political and social conditions of the region made European occupation of the region possible (Egiebade, 2005:89, Boahen, 2003:44).

Within the neighbourhood of the region is Somalia. In Somalia, Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hasan was said to have organised attacks against the British and the Italian troops (Davidson, 1990:24) and to have been quite successful even with 5 000 men and 200 rifles at first. His initial success was attributed to his effort to build a united new Somali nation, while his ultimate failure was attributed to the several Somali clans who failed to join him (Davidson, 1990:24).

However, if the opinion of Boahen (2003:53-54) is anything to go by, then in spite of the seemingly strong determination of the people of the Northern Africa to rule themselves the whole of the *Maghreb* still fell to external invasion and colonial power. The defeat was said to have resulted from the inability of the people to take much time off from their orchard farming and stock-rearing for national defence. The people considered their personal

economic interest to be more important than national political interests or calls to national service. They eventually lost all, because in many cases the invaders launched economic warfare against them by obstructing their harvests (Boahen, 2003:33-54).

In West Africa, the region had been destabilised by tribal wars and forced migrations of all sorts prior to colonial rule (Ehinmore, 2007:241-251). The French colonialists were the first to have penetrated the region. They resorted to military conquest from the very onset. The Senegambians tried confrontational resistance. It is a well known fact that many communities, war lords and tribal groups also tried to resist individually. They were not only captured at the end, but some of them had to pay the ultimate price as well. There was a very long tradition of confrontation between Africans and Europeans in the Gold coast between the Asante and the British from about 1850 up to 1900 (Boahen, 2003:55-64). The Asante king was arrested at the end, and along with his family, deported to Seychelles. "The agencies and the method that the British adopted to bring the whole of modern Nigeria under their control varied, so also did the initiatives and reactions on the part of the Nigerians" (Boahen, 2003:65). Each tribe and ethnic group did their individual best independently, but their best could not prevent the external domination.

The question arises; would the whole of West Africa have been colonised if all the nations, ethnic groups and related tribes in West Africa had joined forces to combat the Europeans diplomatically? Given the rivalry between the colonial powers, would any conquest have been as easy as it was, if, there had been cooperation among the many tribes? There were Yoruba speaking tribes from Nigeria to the Gold coast, and there were Hausa Fulani forming the northern belt from Cameroun and Chad to Senegambia. These were not small nations. Perhaps, if the people had been committed to their own systems and if there had been dialogue and communications among African communities in the area, and if the communitarian ethos had been anything beyond intra-community politics, the situation could

have been different. Would it not have been impossible or at least, far more difficult, for a very insignificant number of European soldiers, who were not familiar with the terrains of interior African states to subdue the hundreds of thousands of the indigenous warriors, even if the Europeans had had superior weaponry?

In Kenya, the Nandi refused to surrender in to British colonial conquest for about a decade. According to Boahen (2003:73-74), Nandi society was divided into territorial units called *paroriat*. Warriors from each unit were responsible for the defence of their territory, but in a good network with those in other territories. For this reason, the warriors slept in a common hut. It was like a standing army under the leadership of an *orgoiyoy*, a traditional leader. Territory, instead of tribe was the centre of Nandi social life; this meant that clan rivalry was not pronounced. The result was a cohesive society that gave the Nandi military confidence and superiority. Their capacity to resist the colonial conquest was said to have lasted very long (Boahen, 2003:73-74). To prove the point further, the Waiyaki of the Gikuyu, the Lenana of the Maasai, the Mbaruk bin Rashid of the Mazrui family, King Mumia of Wanga and the Akamba tribe, were all said to have tried to stage individual clan based attacks and diplomatic resistance against the imperial powers, but none were effective (Boahen, 2003:74-75). Supposedly, many of these failed tribes were further employed to subdue the Nandi.

In Tanganyika, Abushiri mounted a fierce resistance. At his order, the Germans had to vacate the area for some time (Boahen, 2003:75). It was said that Abushiri was later betrayed and handed over to the Germans by the Uzigwa, where he had temporarily sought refuge from the Germans. He was said to have been sent to Hermann von Wissman, who eventually suppressed the resistance in 1889 (Boahen, 2003:75).

In Uganda, the reaction of the people was not significantly different from those of other parts of Africa. Mwanga, the *Kabaka* of Buganda, was suspicious of Europeans, mostly

missionaries at the time. He made a few attempts at military resistance, but relied mostly on diplomacy by playing the religious sects (Catholic, Protestants, Muslims and the Traditional religious denominations) against one another (Boahen, 2003:72-80). Mwanga was captured, exiled and died in exile in 1903 (Boahen, 2003:72-80). There were people and groups among the Baganda who were said to have allied themselves firmly with British imperialism. Among them were possibly the Catholic martyrs Charles Lwanga and his friends, and Kakunguru, who spearheaded the spread of British control to Eastern and Northern Uganda (Boahen, 2003:72-82). Like in many other African societies, the internal weaknesses of the system gave the intruders their opportunities against the Baganda (Boahen, 2003:72-82).

The strength of regional and national cooperation is mostly noticeable in the history of anti-colonial resistance in the central Africa between 1880 and 1918 (Boahen, 2003:83-84). The anti-colonial resistance efforts were said to have endured and succeeded for a long while because of the fact that it involved an organised, broad-based and multi-ethnic resistance (Boahen, 2003:83-49). The indigenous people were also reported to have had access to foreign and locally manufactured ammunitions that rivalled those of the colonial soldiers, but unfortunately, the weapons were apparently not evenly distributed throughout the land. At least for once, the commonly held belief that Africans are a naturally docile people was challenged, the Portuguese were driven away from the Ovimbundu highlands in 1904 and defeated by the Cuamato in Southern Angola in 1907 (Boahen, 2003:92-93).

Is it not imaginable that the various resistance initiatives could have resulted in a permanent check on the encroachment of the Europeans but for one main obstacle? The only obstacle could have been internal weaknesses due to social injustice? According to Rodney, 'it is often said ...that vertical political division in Africa made conquest easy....even more true of the way that Africa succumbed to the slave trade' (Rodney, 2004:89). First, as noticed by Boahen (2003:88), 'without African allies and mercenaries, it would not have been

possible for the Europeans to impose their rules at such minimal cost in manpower.' To the credit of Boahen's argument, more than 90% of the Portuguese armies that finally 'conquered' the Angola area and the Zambezi valley were said to have been African levies (Boahen, 2003:88). Second, earlier than the European intrusion, the leaders and elite in the central African region had enriched themselves through the slave trade. They had exchanged slaves for weapons and ammunition. As at the time of anti-colonial resistance, they were as equally militarily fit as the colonialist army (Boahen, 2003:88). Unfortunately, it is said that the commoners saw the colonial conquest as a way to liberate themselves from slavery and harassment by the rich elite. The Tonga and the Sena helped the Portuguese against their respective Shangaan and Barue overlords, while in the Congo a number of the captives cooperated with the Belgians to free themselves, especially from the slave raiders. In addition, some African leaders believed their alliances with Europeans could help them expand their states (2003:87-88).

From the very beginning, and about seventy years before the Berlin Conference that saw to the partitioning of the African continent, European settlers had begun the scramble for Africa, beginning with the Afrikaners and the British (Boahen, 2003:94). Unlike European settlers in other parts of the continent, the Southern African European settlers were resolute about making Southern Africa their permanent home (Boahen, 2003:94). There were different models of reaction to colonial domination in the Southern part of Africa. The first was that of violent confrontation, as exhibited by the Changahaha, Bemba, Yao and Ngugi people and by the Mangwende, Makoni and Mutasa paramountcies (Boahen, 2003:96).

The second was that of protectorate or wardship, as by the Sotho, Swazi, Ngwato, Tswana and Lozi who sought protection from the British against the Zulu, Ndebele, Bemba, Nguni and Boers; and the third was that of alliance adopted by the numerous small tributaries, raid victims and refugees, such as the Khoi-Khoi, Xhosa, Pondo, Thembu,

Nfengu, Hlubi, the Bisa lungu, Iwa and Senga, and the Cewa, Njanja, Nkonde and Tonga (Boahen, 2003:95-96).

Individually, under the leadership of Cetshwayo, the Zulu tried the option of confrontation and armed resistance, with which they dealt some heavy blows to the British colonialists' army (Boahen, 2003:95-97). However, about 90% of the British soldiers were said to be incorporated African mercenaries from various tribes, who helped to subdue the Zulu (Boahen, 2003:96-97). Individually too, Lobengula, the King of Ndebeleland, initially tried the option of diplomacy in the form of alliance and protectorate status with the British government to counter the German, Portuguese and Afrikaners. In response to this positive gesture and concessions by Lobengula, a number of agreements were reached between Lobengula and the British representative. This method helped, but only for a short while. Lobengula's expectations were not met. His expectations included an unwritten agreement that the British government in Southern Africa should donate firearms and a steamboat to Lobengula's kingdom and pay Lobengula and his heirs the sum of £100 sterling per month in perpetuity (Boahen, 2003:96-105). There were a few other revolts, but many of them were insignificant and consequently easy to suppress by the colonialists; the few that endured could be identified as coalitions and joint efforts (Boahen, 2003:102-107).

The characteristic internal weaknesses that facilitated the easy domination of Southern Africa by the colonialists, as in other parts of Africa, were corruption or selfish interests, internal rivalries among the Kings, chiefs and leaders, and lack of unity with neighbouring tribes and communities. According to Acheampong (1985:xiii), 'where and whenever there is oppression, there is also reaction against oppression… but the degree of success with which reaction against oppression meets oppression depends on the strategy and the tactics that are adopted and the nature and quality of leadership.' Therefore, exploitation is possible only where there are people who can be exploited.

In effect, the political situation on the continent presently is not completely new and in any significant way different from what it was during the struggles against colonial domination (Boahen, 2003:94-107). In the cases of Liberia and Ethiopia, a few reasons could be given for the inability of the colonialists to bring them under control. It is not as if there were no attempts to subdue them like other African states. In the opinion of Boahen (Boahen, 2003:94-107), both Liberia[18] and Ethiopia survived for a number of reasons. The first on the list was the very strong belief of the people that they were destined by God to survive resisting external domination. The second reason was the rivalry that existed between Britain and France, and, which gave the weaker Italy an upper hand in Ethiopia, to the advantage of the Ethiopians. Boahen also argues that the Liberians' experience of involuntary servitude in America and the Ethiopians' early exposure to the external world in the form of traders from other continents also helped to maintain their independence. These two forms of exposure to other people and to involuntary servitude are only partially defendable as explanations, because Egypt had also had early experience of relationships and interaction with people from other continents, yet, in spite of that, Egypt fell under colonial rule. Liberia did not have more experience of involuntary servitude than Sierra Leone. The returnee ex-slaves were meant to settle in Free-Town; some of them may have migrated to Ghana, Togo, the Benin Republic and Nigeria, especially Lagos, which perhaps was the African model city of the ancient time. Hence, the claim of Liberia's early exposure to involuntary servitude should have been equally applicable to all of the West African states and cities along the coastal line.

The prior experience of servitude may have contributed to the maintenance of Liberia's independence, and international exposure may also have worked in favour of Ethiopia; the most important factors were cooperation, patriotism, diplomacy and the belief in themselves. Prior experiences would still have amounted to nothing if the people did not take

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[18]An African state where former slaves from America are resettled in the regions around Free-town in Sierra Leone.

responsibilities of their own lives confidently, and if patriotism, social cooperation and diplomacy had been absent. Both Ethiopia and Liberia are reported to have played one European power against the other. It is argued that the patriotism of the local population served in favour of both Liberia and Ethiopia (Boahen, 2003, 120-131). Specifically, in the case of Ethiopia the patriotism of the people had been intensified by the fact that the Italians had been expropriating Eritrean land for the settlement of their colonists. The inhabitants were consequently willing to assist the Ethiopian troop under the leadership of Menelik. The strategic cooperation of the common citizens greatly enhanced the military performance and consequently the political autonomy of Ethiopia (Boahen, 2003:120-131).

In sum, a few inferences could be made from an analysis of African resistance against the colonialists:

(1) Many or most parts of the continent would not likely have fallen prey to colonial domination had there been unity (horizontal unity among communities, clans and kingdoms) and cooperation (vertical unity within the communities) among the inhabitants of the continent and its regions.

(2) That diplomacy was needed but not sufficiently available on the part of the precolonial African leaders. Reader (1997:544) argues that many African leaders appeared to be extra-ordinarily trusting of the Europeans.

(3) African leaders were easily cajoled into signing documents, believing that even if the Europeans did not fulfil their promises, they (African leaders and Kings) could easily revise the agreements (Reader 1997:544).

(4) There were traces of incompetence and lack of exposure among the precolonial African leaders and people, such that many of them were caught unaware by the invaders and seemed ignorant of what was happening in neighbouring African states. Probably they were informed about the situation in neighbouring states and communities, but could not anticipate the consequences of the divide-and-rule tactics which the colonialist would employ in order to gain access to the people and to subdue strong and volatile individuals and communities.

If the period of the anti-colonial struggle should be explained causally, then certain factors that could be identified as having worked in support of the external invaders were:

1. Lack of trust among precolonial African leaders and between the leaders and their people.

2. Rivalry and lack of unity between ethnic and tribal groups of Africa in the precolonial era.

3. Self-interest by the precolonial African political leaders who were incapable of defending their subjects and consequently resorted to serving self-interests and by the common people who were displeased by the selfishness of their leaders.

4. Lack of national interest and loyalty to the system by common people who felt betrayed by the selfishness and self-centeredness of their leaders.

The argument above does not in any way try to conceal the nature and consequences of colonialism. Colonial rule by its very nature is unjust. That notwithstanding, if the problems of disunity, communual rivalry, lack of national interest and mutual distrust had existed prior to colonialism, how could anyone blame them entirely on colonialism? If the problems cannot be blamed entirely on colonialism, it also cannot be said that colonialism caused the problem. To say that colonialism caused the problem implies that the existence of the problem is entirely dependent on colonialism. The historical evidences available do not seem to justify that the postcolonial political problem could have been entirely consequent to colonialism.

What is self-evident in the discussion about the period of the colonial resistance is that many of the problems experienced in the political arena of Africa today, already existed before colonisation. Some of the problems are; mutual distrust among African leaders; mutual distrust between the leaders and the common people. It is itself a significant political instability and crisis. Lack of trust and lack of social cooperation are themselves major setbacks to a democracy (Cocodia, 2008:9-26, Etzioni, 1968).

Another one is the problem of institutional legitimacy. There was also the problem of social justice. Even the problem of leadership incompetence, which the internalists think is peculiar to the postcolonial African leaders, has been established to have existed prior to colonialism. Were it not due to incompetence or limited knowledge, the African leaders would have recorded more success against the colonial invasion than they did.

Since colonisation by Europe was not the beginning of the lives of the African people, it is necessary to investigate what the situation was before colonialism. Perhaps, by digging further along the line of history, the primary cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in postcolonial Africa could be found. It should be repeated that the reasons for the investigation of these historical periods is that, following the logic of the causal model of explanation, the problems militating against the democratic project in Africa could be said to have been caused by the postcolonial African leaders or by colonialism if the problems had not existed prior to colonialism. It would be illogical to entirely accuse colonialism or the postcolonial African leaders for problems that had existed before them. There is therefore the need to investigate further into history.

5.5   The Eve of Colonization and Before

To this extent it has been established that what the Africans lacked but which would have helped them during the colonial invasion were unity, diplomacy, loyalty or patriotism, social cooperation, exposure to happenings in other parts of the world and social justice. In other words, if the present political situation of Africa must be explained causally, we have to investigate the cause of Africa's inability to cooperate against the external forces, lack of exposure, injustice and lack of patrotism during the colonial resistance. That is, unless the foundation of the problem is identified, any other explanation would be superficial. Any solutions based on a superficial cause is also bound to be superficial.

If social injustice, vertical and horizontal disunity and other crisis-enabling factors were already present at the time of the colonial invasion, that alone would have proved the externalists wrong. This would imply that their externalism is shallow and superficial. It would also have proved that internalism, which tends to identify certain isolated postcolonial factors as the cause of the intractable political problems of the continent, is equally wrong. To

say that both the externalists and the internalists in their traditional formulations are wrong, does not imply that there is completely no sense in their assumptions.

The traditional or classical internalists have identified postcolonial factors as the causes of the political ills of Africa. The externalists argue that colonialism or the postcolonial offshoot of imperialism, or both, are the causes of the political crises of the continent and its states. One might suggest a combination of both internalisn and externalism as a way out of the problem of explanation with regards to democracy in Africa. Unfortunately, a combination of both internalism and externalism would not be completely correct either. The combination would equally be unviable because, even though Africa as a geographical entity may have emerged from the colonial debut, the African people and nations pre-date colonialism. It would be totally inappropriate to talk about Africans with total disregard to their precolonial history and situations.

Currently, many controversies surround the issue and nature of genetics (Plomin, 1990). Genetics, therefore, cannot be a reliable basis for a philosophical enquiry on the nature of any person, let alone a group of people who are not likely to be genetically homogenous. Geneticists cannot offer a more reliable alternative explanation of the political problems of Africa. Whether or not it is true or false that Africans are naturally docile, corrupt, or authoritarian, it is still a matter of speculation and controversy. Until further research sheds more light on the issue, it may be difficult for philosophical research to rely on genetics for reliable information.

To know why a person has acted in a certain manner implies knowing what influences have a bearing on that person and who the person was, prior to external influences. A synergy of these historical and psychological factors come together to mould a person's mental and conceptual scheme. A mental and conceptual scheme is the very mental standard against which a person views reality. This implies that the conceptual scheme relates to epistemic

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standards of evaluating reality. It also means that most social issues involve epistemological issues at the bottom level. Examining the cause(s) of political crises in Africa would, therefore, be inadequate with total disregard for knowledge about how Africans are in themselves. The only way to know Africans in their uncontaminated state is to know about their pre-contact historical past.

The most credible option is to follow the historical route. There is no doubt that studying the historical past of a people with very limited written history could be excessively difficult. Such a work could involve a lot of conjectural information. History could even be more complex, because, sometimes it is a matter of how a particular researcher looks at issues and the angle from, which he or she intends to view it. For instance, a historian may want to look at the history of South Africa and all that he or she sees is a history of people living in abject poverty amidst diseases of different kinds. The researcher may also discover a people living in affluence amidst plenty of mineral resources in one of twenty most prosperous nations of the world. It all depends on the focus and the interest of the researcher.

It has been argued that Africa had experienced some notable revolutions during the first half of the eighteenth century and that it had made some progress towards centralisation, especially in Sokoto, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Buganda and Bunyoro Empires (Boahen, 1987:1-70). It has also been argued that there had been movements and possibly internal colonisations of a certain kind in Africa in the earliest dynastic times prior to European conquest and exploitation (Johnston, 1913:16).

In another historical analysis by an African, it is argued that within the Yoruba ethnic group, for instance, the *Egbas* had revolted against the *Alaafin* (Royal Majesty) of Oyo prior to the colonial conquest in the region (Atanda, 1979:13). In about 1881, the Dahomeans had started to raid the Oyo and Oke-Ogun areas (Atanda, 1979:46). On the eve of British occupation, the Oyo Empire had already lost its glory to Ibadan, while Ibadan had become

powerful and was engaged in wars against other Yoruba kingdoms (Akinjogbin, 1992:96-121) such as the Egba, Ekiti and the Ilorin.

The Alaafin also invited the British to come and help end the war and prevent the people of Ibadan from invading his capital territory. When eventually the relationship between Oyo and the British commissioners became strained, certain sectors of the Yoruba were happy about the development while others were just not too eager to join in any revolt against the colonialists who had earlier brought peace to the land (Atanda, 1979:46).

Prior to colonial conquest in Africa, apart from the trans-Atlantic trade in normal commodities, the main contact with the international world was via the slave trade. Before the Europeans, there had been various forms of slave trade and slavery, especially the victims of war (Perbi, 2001:7). The slave trade was, therefore, not totally an invention of the European slave traders (Perbi, 2001:7). Though there are arguments that some African groups originally had no place for slavery in their social system, scholars nevertheless, agree that certain forms of servitude similar to slavery existed even in those places (Anene, 1981:93). Whether slavery and the slave trade was introduced to Africa from external origins or not, the sale of slaves from Africa is said to have had started before the 1st century BC (Anene, 1981:93-94). It is also suspected that the people would have been familiar with exchange of goods or trading earlier than the commencement of the European slave trade in Africa from about the 17th century AD.

The precolonial slave trade was said to have dispersed over 40 million (about the present population of South Africa) Black Africans over Europe, the Americas and the West Indies alone. The number does not include those (including children and the aged people), who were killed, maimed and wounded during slave raids or in the process of transporting the victims. They do not also include who were sold in slavery to the Arabian world. Of this number, over 24 million are reported to have come from West coast of Africa alone

(Awolowo, 1985:19). The native chiefs were reported to have organised a steady supply of slaves through all sorts of manipulations (Awolowo, 1985:19-20).

Ogini (1978:123) reports that in Igbo-speaking West Africa, there was an oracle called the *Aro*. The *Aro* was nicknamed 'the long juju'. It was an oracle meant for settling domestic disputes, but it was corrupted and manipulated for supplying slave traders with slaves. The oracle was expected to adjudicate by identifying the guilty and declaring the innocent. When a person approached the shrine, the chief priest would request that the details of the case be brought before the oracle. These cult priests would then secretly investigate the case and identify a party in the dispute who could be declared guilty without generating an angry response from the community. On the day the judgement was to be made, one after the other, the parties to the dispute would be made to enter into a long subterranean tunnel at the shrine to perform certain rituals. Whoever went into the furrow and returned was considered innocent or not culpable in the case, while the others who went into the long underground tunnel and failed to return were considered to have been seized by the gods for their guilt. It was unknown to many people that the long tunnel terminated at a river bank in an 'evil forest'. It was said that agents of the European slave traders usually stood at the mouth of the furrow and would kidnap the victims and transfer them to white slave merchants. The 'long juju' was eventually banned and destroyed by the British government, whom it had served so well for decades. Around the period, the slave trade had already been abolished in several places. The abolishment and destruction of the shrine was consequent to the arrival of a prince who fell victim to the oracle, but found his way home from Europe (Ogini 1978: 123-124).

It is a well-known fact that in ancient traditional folktales in many of the African societies, the human person is usually represented with images of animals such as a tortoise, lion, sheep, leopard, snake or bird (Lawuyi, 1988:29-40, Babalola, 1973). There is also

another tradition of using human names and images for human persons. Folktales from this latter tradition are replete with stories of people being banished into evil forests, or tasked to bring parts of wild beasts from the forest, and who found their ways to strange lands, but were brought back through the intervention of the gods or ancestors, then vindicated and sometimes crowned kings. This latter tradition may have come with the abolition of slavery in parts of the world. Consequent to the abolition of the slave trade, some ex-slaves found their way back home or to some other settlements, where, as a result of their prior experiences of servitude and exposure to Christianity and literacy, they became leaders, important figures or kings in the communities from which they had earlier been banished or wherever they eventually settled.

It is also observed that soon after the abolition of slave trades, European Christian missionaries began to arrive in number in parts of Africa. In many African communities, the missionaries, upon arrival, usually tried to secure land through various means. As should be expected, the missionary would want to prove the omnipotence of his deity by cleansing the community of all demonic powers. Logically, the evil forests offered an opportunity to demonstrate such exorcism and at the same time to obtain sufficient acres of land, to build churches, mission houses, hospitals and schools in furtherance of his mission. In the light of persistent myths of the 'long juju' and the like, it is telling that missionaries never found it difficult, let alone impossible, to exorcise these forests of the alleged demons. Indeed, it could be suspected that the so-called 'evil forests' were nothing more than tranquil points of contact between the native slave raiders, suppliers and foreign slave merchants. The areas were probably named 'evil forests' in order to prevent common people from entering the areas and possibly discovering the secrets of corrupt kings and leaders.

If personal experience has any value in a study of this nature, I wish to relate my own experiences concerning a small forest in the valley town of Isua-Akoko in Akoko South East

Local government of Ondo state in Nigeria. Though I was not born prior to the colonial era or even before the colonial rule in Nigeria, I still grew up to find incidences of kidnapping and human trafficking allegedly for the purpose of slavery which were said to have long being abolished before the colonial rule.

The forest in question was rich in fruits of different types, especially mango. It was close to an elementary school founded about 1921. People who had attended the primary school, even in the 1930s and 1940s, testified to the fact that the said forest, called *ikpata,* had always been known as an 'evil forest'. The term *ikpata* in the Isua language fortunately corresponds to *ipata* in the Yoruba language. It means hooligans. One of the oral traditions of history has it that kidnappers frequented the place in the past; another source claims that it was purely an evil forest. Even in the 1980s, children from the neighbouring *Urovbho* community prevented fellow school children from going into the forest to search for mango fruits by claiming that ghosts of different shapes frequented the forest. All of these suggest the possibility that the forest was once a meeting point between kidnappers and slave buyers. Because of the richness of the place in tropical fruits, it soon became a hotspot for the kidnapping of children who came gathering fruits. The kidnappers probably also came from the neighbourhood and had to disguise themselves in order to prevent others from recognising them. Part of the forest was reported to have been given to the Church to build a school. A white priest supposedly exorcised the portion where the school was built, restricting the 'ghosts' to the un-exorcised side of the forest.

A few years ago, a maternity centre was built at the heart of the remaining part of the forest supposedly inhabited by the 'ghosts.' My mother worked in the maternity centre until she retired in 2007 and died in 2010. To the best of my knowledge, no one ever claimed to have seen a ghost in the neighbourhood of the maternity. The question is, if a tradition of

deceit could be maintained in a supposedly civilised postcolonial African community, much worse could have taken place in the more primitive precolonial era.

If the analysis given so far is anything to go by, then to a certain extent, the continent arguably was already in political chaos prior to the colonial invasion. Each tribe, town and group was suspicious and jealous of every other (Atanda, 1979:46-54). Seeds of hatred and mutual suspicion, not only within and among the various ethnic groups, but also among individuals and between the elite and the commoners had been sown. It could be seen that the manipulation of society by corrupt leaders and the elite, which started before the colonial conquest, has continued into the contemporary times.

The African slaves were said to be able to live independently and could care less about racial affinity. According to Harry Johnston (1913:151 – 2):

> ...the Negro, more than any other human type…does not suffer from home-sickness to the overbearing extent that afflicts other people torn from their homes, and…he has little or no race-fellowship – that is to say, he has no sympathy for other Negros; he recognizes, follows and imitates his master independently of any race affinities.

It is obvious that without race fellowship there can hardly be race (not racial) solidarity, race development, local cooperation and loyalty to the political system. First, many of the African slaves should have found out at the point of their capture that they had been betrayed by their own kinsmen. If by any chance the same slave was fortunate to have been given a less inhuman treatment by the master, he or she had no reason to join with possible traitors that would jeopardize his/her chance to freedom or to a better living condition as a slave.

The old Oyo Empire was an ancient and powerful one. Perhaps, at a time, it became too large and later came under the control of a weak ruler (Atanda, 1979, 42-43). Consequently, it lost control of its vassal states and eventually fell while some of its vassal states got their independence. As should be expected, a number of loyal territories, villages, clans and people would mourn the decline of the power of their ancestral throne. At the same

time, the fall of the old Oyo Empire, expectedly meant a struggle for power and rivalry among the leading Yoruba states. Perhaps, this explains why in about 1881, the Dahomeans had already started to invade Oyo and the Oke-ogun areas (Atanda, 1979, 46-48). The Alaafin and the people of Oke-ogun could not stop the Dahomeans, The Ibadan were the only people considered fit for such a feat. Unfortunately, the Ibadan people were engaged in the Kiriji war at that time. It became necessary then to find an end to the war that had engaged Ibadan. On the other hand, if Oyo had stopped the war in which Ibadan was engaged and relied on Ibadan for help against the Dahomeans and the growing kingdoms, Ibadan might eventually have overcome Oyo itself.

Prior to the restoration of Oyo, the Ibadan had become powerful and was engaged in fighting wars against other Yoruba Kingdoms, such as; the Egbas, Ekitiparapos and the Ilorin. The Ilorin (Atanda; 1979:43) had already taken many of the parts of the old Oyo Kingdom and could turn on the throne itself in the end. Hence, the situation became more complicated because Oyo was too weak to stand in the way of the revolution.

It became pertinent to invite an external power. The Alaafin of Oyo, who had already lost its hold on the territory and who merely relied on the age-long allegiance of the people to the throne of Oyo, therefore, invited the British to come and help them to bring about and maintain peace (Atanda, 1979:42 – 43). When Captain Bower took up his post as a British Travelling Commissioner, he had to direct his whole attention towards the pacification of a completely unsettled country (Atanda, 1979:54). The century-long wars among the Yoruba had produced such disunity that any joint resistance to an external invader was hardly conceivable. Each Kingdom, and in some cases, each town, had developed its own political and military system independent of the other. It would seem a philosophy of 'every Kingdom or town for itself'. The situation hardly changed until the colonial rule in Nigeria, even though the Yoruba wars had ended (Atanda, 1979:76). At the restoration of peace, many of

the weaker Yoruba states were too indebted and grateful to the colonial powers to resist Captain Bower's eventual attack on Oyo. Some others did not consider it a worthwhile enterprise to risk their lives resisting the captain for the sake of Oyo.

Many African tribes and societies have had very long histories of wars and violent battles before the eventual colonial invasion, resistance and domination. Scholars have argued that the original political systems of the African societies were democratic (Soola, 2009:25-35 and Owusu, 2009:369-396). However, whether they were democratic or not, the fact remains that they were already unstable and had been challenged by disloyalty, illegitimacy and violence prior to invasion by external forces. It would be wrong to hold the postcolonial African leaders or colonialism entirely responsible for problems that had always been there, but which is only manifesting in different sophistications.

If we must explain the political challenges of Africa causally, as noted earlier in this chapter, we can only be justified doing so, if and only if the problems had not existed prior to the postcolonial era (in the case of the internalists) or prior to the contact between Africa and the external forces (in the case of the externalists). In addition, colonialism could be held responsible for the postcolonial challenges of democracy in Africa, if there are no other places that are politically stable in spite of their colonial experiences. The United States of America has had one of the most functioning democracies, but the United States of America also has a history of colonialism and most of the Black Americans are descendants of ex-slaves. Canada, Finland and China were also once colonised (though China does not practise democracy). Even within Africa, though the democracy in South Africa could be argued to still be in tutelage, it is at least still functioning better than some of the long standing ones in Africa, yet it had the longest and worst treatment by the colonial forces. Ethiopia and Liberia we said not to have been colonised, but they are no less challenged than other African states that have had long histories of colonisation.

Perhaps, there is the need to go a bit further into the antiquity of Africa. Africa, in ancient times, was called the *Alkebu-lan*. How exactly this name came into existence, what its language of origin was, and how the term came to be twisted into 'Africa' in the English language, are still subjects of debate, and may not be pertinent to this research (ben-Jochannan, 1971:57-167). The name, however, did not, and, was not initially intended to cover the whole of the continent. It was said to be, initially, the name for *Kimit* (Egypt) and more or less the northern African region. Gradually it came to be used to refer to the whole of the continent by European explorers (ben-Jochannan, 1971:57-167). Prior to external influences, the continent was made up of separate kingdoms, empires, states and communities (Thomson, 2004:8-11). Each empire and kingdom was said to be independent of the other.

Prior to colonial intervention, too, there was no Africa as a single political entity (Kofi, 2005). This is probably what is meant by the statement that there was no Africa before colonialism, or when Hegel refers to Africans as a people with no history (Hegel, 1975:190). Whatever the case, it cannot be too wrong to say that the present day Africa, as a single political entity, did not result from the voluntary initiatives of the Africans, but from colonial intervention.

Since the ancient times, foreigners who visited Africa from outside of the continent had always praised the continent for various reasons. It is evident from the ancient Latin saying: *ex Africa semper aliquid novi,* meaning, 'there is always something new from Africa'. Arabian merchants who visited Sudan from about 1000A.D. and during the 8th century were said to have met well-arranged commerce and luxurious and prosperous monarchs (ben-Jochannan, 1971:64). In addition, 'Africa is…today accepted by many scholars as the cradle of the human species' (ben-Jochannan, 1971:64). There is also the controversy regarding the African origin of Greek philosophy and of Western civilization (Ehrenberg, 1970:25). Even if all the above analyses were false, there are at least some Jewish biblical records that have

older parallels in Egyptian writings, especially the sayings of the Pharaoh who ruled in c1300 BCE. These sayings are also found in the books containing sayings attributed to the Biblical King Solomon in about c970 BCE (ben-Jochannan, 1971:178-181). It is argued that a number of Roman emperors were of African descent, especially Emperor *Septimus Severus,* who was recorded by the Church to have martyred Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage (The Divine Office:744). It has at least been established that a person of African descent once ruled as an emperor in the Roman Empire (ben-Jochannan, 1971:160). From time immemorial, therefore, Africa, by any standard was not as uncivilised (Ehrenberg, 1970:25) as some scholars tend to portray it, and human and material resources have never been difficult to procure in Africa. Nature has always endowed the continent with variety and diversity. It has also been argued that metal works existed in Africa before 2000 BC, not only in Egypt but also in the sub-Saharan parts of the continent (Awolowo, 1985:3, 9-16). Around about 2000 BC, Egypt was said to have ruled over more than half of what is now called Africa (Gailey, 1981:26-32).

It is, however, noticeable that much of the praises about the earliest and precolonial Africa are usually about economic prosperity and military strength. For instance, rather than national unity, military prowess was said to be the basis of the Pharaohs' power (Gailey, 1981:26-32). The situation does not seem to be different in any part of Africa. African histories are usually documentations of military, economic and commercial activities. Much of the splendour that was praised in sub-Saharan Africa by the earliest foreign visitors was the grandeur of the royal palaces, warriors and chiefs. The grandeur and luxury of leaders, kings and palaces can easily catch the attention of strangers and visitors, but they did not reflect the true living conditions or economic standards of the people in general. Also, they were not necessary indications of peace or tranquillity. For instance, the beauty of the presidential palace of Robert Mugabe in the poverty-ridden and conflict-torn Zimbabwe

shows, at least, that a ruler could be at the peak of affluence in spite of poverty and war in a community.

Secondly, much of the commercial activities of precolonial Africa were controlled by kings, chiefs and loyalist soldiers. This explains why, in spite of great economic prosperity, lack of peace and unity, and rivalries among African leaders, could remain a problem to the precolonial African nations: in Katanga Kingdom as late as 1440 (Gailey, 1981:126-149), in the great Oyo empire in the 19th century (Gailey, 1981:107-109), and in almost all parts of Africa. Tribal sentiments, as in precolonial Africa, have never ceased their grip on the people and have always threatened national unity even in contemporary Africa.

People usually maintain natural bonds of unity and affiliation under oppression and threats. Such bonds are usually superficial. Because the activities of the kingdoms and empires centred on military expansion and defence, people held onto consanguinity and homogeneity as a source of unity and defence. With the few exceptions of Egypt and Ethiopia, many of the African kings in history were not necessarily feudal lords who waged wars to acquire lands for farming or for economic developments (Rodney, 2002:146).

Though the African kings and war lords waged wars to expand their empires, they probably only did so in order to expand their armies, fame and territories, because there are no indications that the precolonial African kings and warlords waged wars for primarily agricultural or economic purposes. If agricultural or economic purposes had been behind the military endeavours of African kings, continuous wars would certainly have jeopardised land cultivation and other agricultural activities, because soldiers who were also farmers were not likely to be psychologically disposed to go to war during the planting and harvesting seasons (Smith, 1976:28). Perhaps, as a result of the vastness of available fertile land, the kings felt there was no need to be too concerned about food and agriculture; it was always guaranteed.

Prior to the scramble for Africa by the European powers, there was no unified Africa as one people and continent. What existed were independent settlers grouped in lineages and tribes, scattered all round the hills, deserts and plains (Ayittey, 1999:1-9). Such precolonial brotherhood as pictured by Nyerere (2007g:512-515) existed, at the very best, only within each clan, lineage or among tribes whose genealogy could be traced to the same ancestors or progenitor (Nwala, 1985:163). It could also exist superficially under threats. Such brotherhood helped to hold a people together and at the same time fortified them against perceived intruders and neighbours. To extend the idea of brotherhood, family-hood and communal living beyond the boundaries of consanguinity, and projecting it as a long standing binding force in the precolonial Africa, might actually be an unfounded generalisation.

Perhaps, the projection of brotherhood by African nationalist scholars and pan-Africanists is only a deliberate means to find anchorage for their ideological choice of socialism within the African cultural heritage. Arguably, communitarianism and the attending spirit of brotherhood are socially admirable, but the present Africa and the Africa during and before the colonial and slave trade era hardly reflect considerable similarity with a communal epoch in living history. For instance, warlords of Africa were said to have often stormed communities for slave raiding in precolonial time. African levies were said to have assisted to subdue African communities during the colonial resistance when mutual cooperation was most needed. If Africa was truly communitarian, the many African ethnic crises and wars, the incidences of xenophobia in postcolonial Africa, even in prominent African states like Nigeria against Ghanaian immigrants (Koranteng, 2009) and South Africa against Nigerian and Zimbabwe immigrants (The Nigerian Voice, 2009; This Day, 2008) should probably have been avoided. The fact is that ethnocentric identity or ethno-centricism does not promote true nationalism in multicultural societies like Africa.

The result of such enforced and haphazard cohesion and conditioning on any society could be that:

(1) those who venture to migrate out would hardly want to return home, especially if the new environment offers them the level of freedom they never had in the former.

(2) Primitivism is maintained in the original communities by those who did not rebel, because those that never left home remained unexposed to novelties, while those who travelled and are exposed never returned.

(3) A point of rally is invented and employed by the zealous and over-protective rulers and leaders to perpetuate their leadership through a sort of 'us versus them' pseudo-unity. Over time, this collectivism becomes a cultural or social life-style.

(4) the pseudo-unity, which is only an exclusionist device of the rulers could easily be mistaken for communitarianism and brotherhood.

Evidence in support of this analysis could be found in the language distribution in Africa and in the language differences of many tribes with spatial proximity, and in the linguistic similarities between others geographically far apart (Ehret, 2006:86-111). There are said to be four major groups of language in Africa, namely the Niger-Congo; the Nilo-Saharan; the Khoisan, and the Afro-Asiatic (Wikipedia, 2010). The Niger-Congo group is said to cover over 55% of the languages in Africa (Norminton, 2008). It comprises of the Kordofanan, the Mande and the Atlantic-Congo. These too are sub-divided into Benue-Congo, the Atlantic, the Gur, the Kwa and the Ijoid (Nationsonline, 2010). Within the Benue-Congo is found the Zulu. Some Acholi languages under the Nilo Saharan group share spatial proximity with some members of the Afro-Asiatic, such as the Luo in the Kenya area and the Oromo in Ethiopia (Greenberg, 1983). On another hand, the Zulu and the Xhosa in Southern Africa are said to belong to the same Bantu language group with Efik Igbo and Yoruba in West Africa (Wikipedia, 2010).

Roskin (1982:347) argues that while the Trekboers were migrating along the coast of the Indian Ocean, they came across warlike African Negroes who were themselves moving south

away from tribal wars.[19] This explains why some languages in Southern Africa could have similarities with or belong to the same language family as other languages in distant regions of Africa. The flux of population and language distribution reflects relationships between cultural communities (Kapan, 1994:46-67). The numerous language groups and sub-families of languages scattered round the continent suggests either some ancient moments of scarcity, epidemic diseases and search for economic means of livelihood, or political chaos (Prah, 2004:1-28). Language dissimilarities and lingual plurality in Africa do not represent many years of mutual inter-relation let alone of communal living, which accommodated the whole continent or region of the continent. Urban settlement was reported to have emerged from the second millennium BC and in the Sahel savannah region south of Sahara as early as between 600 and 200 BC (Richard Hooker, 1996). In spite of this long history of urban settlement even in sub-Saharan Africa, there seems to be much dissimilarity among the languages. The economic means thesis is not likely a credible position in a land of abundance. There may have been outbreaks of epidemic diseases that should be seen in the light of the quality of medical practices developed over the centuries and in recent decades. The only credible and defendable position on the diversity of language in Africa is that there existed some political conflicts in the precolonial era that drove the people apart in their search for freedom.

The militarism that permeated the ancient precolonial Africa and which culminated in the colonial resistance, resurfaced in postcolonial military coups. Only very few African countries did not experience any military intervention or interlude since their political independence. A number of African states like Nigeria and Liberia combined military coups with civil wars.

Though many African states have now embraced democracy, their democracies could be described as nascent democracies. The democracies are not yet consolidated because they

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[19] This does not in any way prove that the Trekboers settled in Southern Africa before the Negroes, because the fact that they met some Negroes moving down South does not necessarily prove that there were no other Negroes who had earlier occupied the Southern parts of Africa.

suffer crisis and the necessary ingredients for sustenance and consolidation of democracy (see chapter 1) are at the minimal. Many African democracies can therefore still easily revert to autocracy. Many contemporary African political leaders see themselves in the image of precolonial African political leaders. They see themselves as fathers of the nation.

The mutual suspicion in the forms of tribal rivalries and conflicts, which had prevented national unity in the ancient past in Africa, has not changed. African states, ethnic groups and communities still maintain rivalries and go to war at the least provocation. There is yet no theoretical evidence that the situation has changed from what it was in the precolonial era of Africa. Perhaps, the situation has become more complicated. Unlike in many other parts of the world, precolonial Africa had no feudal lords who would have been more interested in controlling the land for predominantly agriculture and economic productivity per se.

In most precolonial African states, there were tribal and ethnic lords. Ethnic and tribal lords usually want to extol the superiority of their ethnic groups and communities, while subjugating others. Tribal lord would tend to coerce other people to submit to their authorities. The subjects pay tributes to the tribal lord in exchange for protection or adoption into the ruling tribe. Consequently, the tribal lord enforces the ciphers of nationalism and spirit of loyalty at the expense of agricultural development and economic growth. The tribal sentiments and selfish interests, rivalries and disunity of different forms as it is in postcolonial African states are therefore carryovers and hangovers of attitudes with an unbroken link with the precolonial era.

There might probably have been more wars in ancient Europe than in African antiquity; there might also have been more epidemic outbreaks in Europe or Asia than in Africa, yet those regions were able to forge formidable and reliable cooperation and unity. The feudalist past brought about peoples' revolutions (an antecedent to social cooperation)

and national unity (a sign of social cooperation) in those other places, while military coups and blatant political crises resulted in the case of Africa. Prior to the colonial debuts of Europe in Africa, for instance, though there were divisions among European nations, their divisions were resolved to allow for a unity of purpose. The unity of purpose created an enabling environment for the achievement of their interests in Africa (Fick, and Boucher, 1993:218-247).

The possibility of elements of communal living in the ancient African societies cannot be completely ruled out. Theoretical evidence in support of the African communitarian ethos are too overwhelming to be denied. In this sense, however, a distinction must be made between two forms of communalism: one, which can exist and flourish side-by-side with inter-tribal, inter-ethnic intra-state and inter-state rivalries, and the other which negates the possibility of any intra-national squabbles.

The former could be described as an exclusionist communalism because it inculcates a kind of nationalist spirit which unites the people against other non-nationals, perceived competing nations, immigrants perceived as competing with the nationals for the limited economic resources and, in fact, all neighbouring nations, states and tribes. It is also an isolationist communalism because a community isolates itself by excluding every other. The exclusionist and isolationist tendencies picture it as a negative concept of communalism. This negative communalism is one, which conceives of state security as a military based and institutionalised arrangement. The security of the state therefore is built heavily on its military strength and sophistication. Brotherhood in such a setting would mostly be based on consanguinity, because blood relations could be a more reliable means of effectively preserving nationalist loyalty than any other.

The latter type of communalism is one that focuses on developing the nation through interaction with other neighbouring nations, states and tribes. It could be described as an

integrative communalism. It is a positive, inclusive and wider conception of communalism because it has a radically integrative, accommodative and open view of national security, cultural preservation and social development. It is a less militarised society, and its security lies in the strength of its interaction with neighbouring communities, tribes and states.

There is no doubt that there were some forms of communal living in precolonial Africa (Soola, 2009:25-35). It has also been established that there were ethnic and tribal rivalries and wars. This would mean that communal isolationism could have been mistaken for communalism. There was the possibility of close relationship and brotherhood within communities, but it would not have been the same situation between communities and between tribes, especially those without common origin or homogeneity. The very fact of "sitting down under the big tree" (Wiredu, 2000b:374-382) to resolve issues is suggestive of the size of the community in question. Such an arrangement could isolate one community from the other. The isolationist tendencies in precolonial Africa is also evident in the fact that in spite of the conflict management and resolution system of "sitting under the big tree" to find solutions to issues, the precolonial African communities and tribes could not come up with joint resistance against the slave raiders and against the colonial invasions.

In addition, the 'sitting under the tree' arrangement by elders to resolve issues among themselves does not in any way remove the possibility of social injustice and of political manoeuvring. Youths and the women were not often said to have been part of the 'under the big tree' arrangement. Such an arrangement in which the youths, the weak, the poor or the minority do not take active participation could easily become a social manipulation mechanism in the hands of the majority, usually represented by the few elites, elders or chiefs. The few elites or leaders, as could be expected, were usually selected on the basis of heredity, consanguinity, social-economic status or perceived socio-moral qualities (Masolo, 2004, Gyekye, 1996:109), rather than on the basis of competence and public approval. The

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possibility exists that the selected few enlightened elders would manipulate other unexposed elders to concur to ideals, ideas or proposals inspired by corrupt and selfish interests.

It was never said that there were councils of kings and emperors in the ancient and precolonial Africa. Every king was therefore independent of the other. There was hardly any formal forum or institution for inter-tribal and inter-ethnic interaction and dialogue. Although one king might have visited another regularly, probably because they were business partners or they were genealogically related, or even because one owed allegiance to the other, such visits could not be deemed formal forums for deliberation among equals. Even if there were instances of formal forums for regional or national political leaders in African antiquity, this was not common.

Perhaps the 'glorious past' of Africa, as pictured by the externalist scholars such as Diallo (2006:13-22), Anyian-Osigwe (2005), Gbadegesin, (2000:292-305), Gyekye, (2000:317-336, 1996) and Nyerere (1968), is no more than mere a dream. Though a communal or communitarian lifestyle (or its implied brotherhood) is not completely alien to Africa, and there could be moments of peace in certain parts Africa, it does not justify the 'glorious' picture of precolonial Africa. Given the inter-tribal, inter-ethnic and inter-community rivalries, clashes and wars, it is logical that within each community, clan and tribe, there could be a kind of close brotherhood and welfare system, and probably justice and peace too. This kind of relative peace and harmony is not unexpected, especially within the dominant or ruling tribes or communities. It may also happen that some tribes and communities under the protective leadership of the king or ruler(s) might be assured of peace as long as the said communities maintained their loyalty to the ruling power or as long as they claim some sort of consanguinity or genealogical relation with the king.

On the whole, however, the known histories of Africa and the trajectory of events from antiquity to the present era do not give evidence of brotherhood and integrative

communalism, such as the ones which Nyerere (2007g:512-515) and Wiredu (2000a:374-382) have written about let alone formidable political tranquillity extended to all the parts of Africa.

There may actually have been a greater number of wars and revolutions in other parts of the world than in African history. There may have been a lesser number of casualties in precolonial African wars than elsewhere. There may also have been no equivalent in Africa's history to compare with Europe's First and Second World Wars. The fact, however, is that in most other places there were common external enemies, at least since the First World War (Zeleza, 2008:1), against which people had to join forces to fight or revolt against or liberate themselves from. This is unlike many cases in Africa. In precolonial Africa, because of the strong community hold on individuals, even mere cultural differences were hardly tolerated. They were feared as threat to community and therefore, vehemently combated. Change was feared by leaders who tended to see every change as a threat to the continuity of their leadership roles and positions.

Among other things, precolonial African conquerors and kings seemed to have retained their military posture as protectors and strong men, rather than as feudal lords. Perhaps, this was because neither the slaves nor the free men lacked food or water in precolonial Africa. According to Walter Rodney (Rodney, 2004:259), "'investigators who have studied the nutritional conditions of 'primitive' Africans in tropical Africa are unanimous in stating that they showed no clinical signs of dietary deficiency'". Consequently, the conquerors neither transformed to feudal lords, nor saw reasons to form or solidify machineries of unity and collaboration with people of other tribes, empires, states or kingdoms.

The result was that people tended to merely conform, and to offer blind obedience and allegiance to the authoritarian rulers in each community until such time as they found

freedom, or until they had migrated far away from the threat of overbearing and authoritarian leaders. Hence, in every community, many of the people appeared submissive, but their minds were never conquered; they only waited for opportunities to emigrate and to be independent. It would not be surprising therefore, that when the the Trekboers were migrating to the Southern Africa, they were said to have met with Black Africans fleeing southwards and away from tribal conflicts and wars (Roskin, 1982, 347).

A few clarifications need to be made here. The fact of traditional authoritarian leadership does not in any way imply that African leaders are pathologically authoritarian or that it is part of African culture to be authoritarian. Rather, as could be inferred from the arguments so far, if precolonial African leaders were actually authoritarian, their authoritarianism was most likely an aberration of the original African culture, even though there is still controversy as to what the original African culture was in precolonial Africa. There is no evidence to prove that the African authoritarian leaders of the precolonial era were acting from the cultural points. Authoritarianism may have become a tradition at any point in time, but tradition does not necessarily imply culture.

Consequently, the arguments of the previous scholars for the colonial origin of all the social, cultural and political defects of Africa do not have any reliable foundation. However, there are evidences as demonstrated in this chapter that many of the political defects that are experienced in the postcolonial Africa are continuations of social defects that had existed from the pre-contact periods. As noted earlier in this chapter, even though there are long-standing traditions of some of those social and leadership defects, there are no sufficient evidences to show that they were necessarily parts of the African cultures[20].

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[20] A phenomenon does not become a culture from when it was first practised (let us say in the precolonial era). It only becomes a culture after a long practice. Hence, some of the defects found in the pre-contact Africa may only have become part of the culture in postcolonial African society, if and only if many Africans believe strongly in them or practise them spontaneously without being conscious of them.

In sum, the first condition for accepting the causal explanation given by the previous scholars to explain the current political challenges of Africa would have been that the problems confronting the democratic project in Africa did not exist prior to the existence of the said causes such as colonialism or the postcolonial African leaders. Secondly, political instability as experienced by the African states should have equally existed in all previously colonised nations worldwide.

In addition, if the postcolonial political challenges could be traced to the colonial era (as the externalists have argued), it logically implies that it could be traced further as done in this study.

Very often, primary or root cause investigations like the ones embarked upon by the previous scholars in their attempt to explain the political challenges of the postcolonial democracy in Africa stops short of the final step. They often end up taking the contributing factors for the root cause. However, tracing that back a bit further often proves that the scholars have not discovered any reliable cause, let alone of the primary or root cause of the problems as I have demonstrated in this chapter. Given the underlying assumption of causal explanations, that, whatever happened must have a cause, tracing the problem further leads to an endless regress. Secondly, a further analysis often shows that there are other places with similar historical experiences, but with different results, and places with different and even opposite experiences but with similar results.

The externalists had thought they were digging into the very root of the problem by tracing it historically beyond the postcolonial era to the colonial era (Zeleza, 2008:1-5). If you are digging into the root cause of the problems, when a cause must precede its effect, then colonialism itself must be traceable to defects and forces in the precolonial era, and the precolonial forces must be traced to something prior to it. The enquiry necessarily leads to an endless regress, and the root cause is never found.

5.6   **Summary**

The political problems of Africa have been traced from the present postcolonial period to the precolonial era. It has been established that problems similar to those currently militating against the democratic project in the postcolonial African states had always been part of the political profile of Africa prior to the colonial contacts.

It has also been argued that there was nothing in the colonial relation itself to have necessitated the present political challenges of Africa. In addition, other places that have equally had similar history of colonialism in and outside of Africa do not seem to have similar political challenges. On the other hand, places even within Africa that have had no serious contact with the colonial forces alleged to have caused the postcolonial Africa to be politically challenged are themselves in deep political instability.

As I have argued in this chapter, there are no evidences to show that the precolonial African societies were united and related with each other politically as a people. Rather, there are evidences that they saw each other as autonomous communities, empires and kingdoms. That explains why there was no name (such as Africa) with which the entire continent was called before lately when it came to be named Africa. In addition, a number of other problems were identified even with the precolonial African society.

As argued by Ehrenberg (1970:48-56), places that are already in political crisis are most likely to fall into further political problems and be in the danger of being ruled by tyrants, regardless of their previous experiences. If causal explanations are anything reliable, even if the political leaders are changed severally, the people still end up having tyrants and corrupt leaders until the real problem is solved. The fact therefore, that the colonial forces and the postcolonial African political leaders appear on the scene at some points in African history does not justify the argument that they caused the political problems. Perhaps, neither the colonial forces nor the corrupt postcolonial political leaders would have had their chances

if the precolonial situation had been different. The possibily is also there that these forces were able to penetrate the political arena of Africa, simply because of already existing political crises. How then are they the causes of the problems that brought them in?

However, the precolonial political crisis itself is not a necessary cause without which the postcolonial political crisis could never have occurred. If a causal explanation of the political crises of Africa would be justified, not even the precolonial situation, let alone the colonial intervention or the postcolonial despondent political leaders will qualify to be the causes. Even the precolonial situation would need to be traced back to something else. At the very best, each of the factors (precolonial political crisis, unjust colonial intruders and postcolonial corrupt political leaders) is merely a sufficient cause. A deeper investigation could reveal other more primary causes.[21] For instance, the three stages enumerated above (precolonial, colonial and postcolonial crises) are contingent stages and are therefore avoidable, and one does not necessarily lead to the other. Therefore, neither one nor all of them can justifiably be identified as the cause of the postcolonial problems affecting the smooth running of democracy in Africa. At most, they can be referred to as notable events and remarkable contributing factors. In any case, the causal explanation does not appear to be an adequate explanation of the political problems militating against the democratic project in Africa. It does not discover the cause it sets out to identify, neither does it justify externalism or internalism in relation to the current political crises of Africa.

The next chapter, therefore, is meant to specifically identify the shortcoming of the causal model of explanation. It will explain the reasons why both scholars and the Africans themselves have been tempted to accept the causal models of explanation in their approach to the political challenges of Africa. It will also specify what philosophy can contribute towards the explanation of the problems of Africa.

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[21] Perhaps, many people stop at the sufficient cause or confuse it with the primary cause, because, after all it is the farthest they can go in the chain of causes. Otherwise, they end up in an endless regress.

Chapter 6

Causal Explanations and the Postcolonial Problems of Democracy in Africa

6.1   Introduction

Earlier, in chapter 1, I noted that the democratic project is experiencing some problems in Africa. I enumerated and explained the problems in chapter 3. In chapters 1 and 3, I equated the political problems in Africa (as defined in chapters 1 and 3) with the problem of democracy. I explained that, as far as Africa is concerned, political problems are problems relating to democracy. I have also acknowledged the fact that scholars have attempted to explain why Africa is having problems with its democracies or why democracy is having problems in Africa. In chapter 4, I made an analysis of carefully selected examples of previous explanations of why democracy is having problems in Africa.

In the analysis of chapter 4, I identified two broadly divergent schools of thought as externalism and internalism. To the list could be added a third, which is a combination of externalism and internalism. Let us refer to this combination as the eclectic school. Some features are common to these three schools. The first two schools appear, seemingly, to oppose each other, and the third school opposes them both. The sort of opposition created sets up conditions for what de Bono (1973:11) describes as PO and NOPO. That is, using the binary paradigm to conceptualise reality as being essentially and irreconcilably divided between the 'yes' and 'no' extreme positions; between mutually negating opposites which, in Hurst's view (2010:233-252), is exemplified by the law of excluded middle. The three schools are notable for their over simplistic understanding of human and social phenomena. That is, the scholars tend to ignore the complexities surrounding nature itself, which are even more pronounced in human and social environments (Hurst, 2010:233-252). Most obviously,

the three schools of thought have adopted the causal model of explanation. The two opposing schools of thought examined in chapter 4, and even the third that could be added, subscribe to the causal explanation of the reasons why democracy is experiencing problems in Africa. In that chapter, a few questions were raised and the various traditional objections to the two opposing positions were also examined.

As a corollary to the causal explanations adopted by both the externalist and the internalist scholars, chapter 5 examined the logical viability of their arguments within the parameters of their causal explanations. That is, it was investigated whether their positions and arguments were able to satisfy the conditions implied by their own causal explanations. Specifically, the investigation was that, if to every event there is a cause (as the causal explanation presupposes) would that have necessarily led to either of the two alternative conclusions of the previous explanations or to a combination of both of them? In other words, presuming that the causal explanations were the only true explanations of the said social phenomenon possible, and that we are prepared to believe and act as though a causal explanation leads to the truth about the issue in question, does that necessarily justify the conclusions that either colonialism, or the corrupt postcolonial African leaders, or a combination of colonialism and the postcolonial African leaders, have caused the political crises in Africa?

In the analysis of that chapter, however, it was exposed that the arguments of the scholars as to why democracy is experiencing problems in Africa, even within the parameters of their own causal explanations, fall short of logical consistencies. That is, their conclusions do not have the support of their premises or their premises fall short of giving conclusive support to the conclusions they infer - that neither colonialism nor the corrupt postcolonial African leaders nor even a combination of both, are the root causes of the inability of the African states to consolidate their democracies.

It was also demonstrated, in that chapter, that by applying causal explanations, the arguments of the scholars necessarily lead to either an infinite regress or a vicious circle. The externalists have identified colonialism as the cause of the problems, while the internalists have identified the postcolonial African leaders as the source of the problems. Let us assume that colonialism is the cause of the problem, and, as the externalists believe, the cause of a problem must precede the effect. If everything must be explained causally, then colonialism has been caused by something else preceding it, as demonstrated in chapter four. Whatever is identified as the cause of colonialism will equally need to be traced to something preceding it. Such reasoning necessarily leads to an endless regress.

If, on the other hand, we assume that the postcolonial African leaders are the cause of the problems and the cause must be contemporaneous with the effect (as the internalists believe), then it will also require another factor which is contemporaneous with the postcolonial African leaders to account for their behaviours which could, for instance, be said to be caused by corruption. Corruption, then, could be said to have caused electoral violence, and electoral violence could also be identified as the cause of other problems including the corrupt leadership itself. These back and forth analyses end up in a vicious circle.

Whether an endless regress or a vicious circle, the ultimate cause is never found. The implication is that the application of the causal explanation, in the first instance, does not lead to the discovery of the ultimate cause of the problem. The best it can produce is to identify an agent who could be responsible for the existence of the problem. That is, an agent to be used as the scapegoat and held responsible for the problems, and not necessarily the agent that actually caused the problems. It is, therefore, a case of an overstretched causation.[22]

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[22] Although there have been controversies among scholars over the relation between a cause and its effect (Achinstein, 1985, Hempel, 1965), to say that an object is caused would mean that the causal agent determines the effect. To assert that p is caused by q is to say that q determines p. In my view, the controversy has been on whether q alone could have determined p without other conditions. The controversy is hardly on whether or not p could be caused (there seems to be a common belief, though uncritically, that to every event, there is a cause). Since the controversy seems on whether a single factor or multiple factors can account for a phenomenon, it

Therefore, in the same way in which the arguments of the externalists have led to infinite regress, the arguments of the internalists end in a vicious circle. It becomes difficult to specify which of the events is the cause and which the effect of the other. Perhaps the internalists have taken similarity of properties or contemporariness for a causal link. If similarity of property or character, or contemporariness, is synonymous with causal connection, then all events that are similar in character or chronologically and spatially contemporaneous, should necessarily be causally linkable. There may be the need to specify how to identify which event causes the other.

Having identified, in previous chapters, some of the shortcomings of the earlier explanations of the political situation of Africa, in this chapter a few related issues will be addressed. I shall explain why the causal explanations are inadequate in explaining the social phenomenon in question. I shall also explain the reasons why some stakeholders thought that causal explanations were the appropriate explanations of the political challenges of Africa. In other word, I shall attempt to answer the questions: What is most importantly wrong with the previous explanations regarding the political problems of Africa? How must the African society exist in order for the causal explanation to be applicable? Why are scholars, and the African people themselves, tempted to approve of the causal explanation for the social and political situation in question? What can a philosopher do?

Before attempting to provide answers to these questions, however, it is necessary to identify the main characteristics of the previous explanations of the political challenges of Africa.

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means that if it is possible to account for all the detailed causal factors, then it is admissible that p is caused. In other words, there is no controversy that events could be caused, and that if there is a cause (or there are causes) the cause(s) must necessarily determine the effect. It is therefore contradictory to find a cause, which does not determine its effect. In other words, an influence is not necessarily a cause. There could be several factors influencing p, they are not causes. They only become causes when one, many or all the factors determine the condition of p. It is inadequate to apply causation to human actions and phenomena, except under certain conditions as shall be explained in the course of this chapter. Applying the causal explanation to human and social situations is an overstretching of the causal theory.

From the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, the main characteristics of the previous explanations of the political problems of Africa could be summarised as follows:

1) The scholars assume that to every event there must be a cause.

2) They believe that the causal models of explanation are the appropriate explanations of the social phenomena in question.

3) The scholars assume that a cause and its effect must be contemporaneous (the internalists' position) or that a cause must immediately precede its effect (the externalists' position).

4) The scholars assume that they, themselves, can transcend the object and result of their own analysis and be objective in their analysis at the same time.

5) The scholars appear to rank internal consistency higher than regard for the truth.

All of the five characteristics enumerated above amount to three different, but related, things. They all amount to haphazard application of logic in a bid to maintain internal consistencies with the theoretical preference of the scholars and to support their preconceived conclusion. Secondly, the enumerated characteristics amount to belief in the dichotomous principle, which is characteristic of the empiricist orientation (Giddy, 2009:359-376; Olatunji, 2004; Walt, 2002). Most notably, they all amount to the application of causality to human and social phenomena.

The three features are related. The principle of dichotomy is the empiricist principle upon which the possibility of scientific explanations is based. The dichotomous principle prepares the ground for the possibility of the causal explanation. Like any other theory of explanation, internal consistency, through haphazard application of logic, makes the causal theory appear attractive and convincing. The suitability and implications of the causal explanations, around which all the features revolve, will be examined further in this chapter.

6.2 Causal Explanation and the Challenges of Democracy in Africa

It is a natural tendency in people to blame the occurrence of an unwanted phenomenon on another person or agent (Sauer, 2010:65–68; Faure, 2009:77-108). This natural tendency is further supported by the Newtonian physics (Mundi, 1985:28-30) and the realist tradition that has dominated the 20th and the 21st century thoughts (Putnam, 1986:205). The Newtonian physics and the general explanatory ambition of the natural sciences (Faure, 2009:77-108, Williamson, 2002:1-21, Yilkoski, 2001:7-8, 68-76) support the natural tendency with a theory that everything that happens has a cause (Ducheyne, 2009:333-358; Outwaite, 1987:5-7). This 'scientific' position is often demonstrated by trying to show how force from one object is able to produce motion in another object. In the interaction of objects, the effect becomes a necessary product of the cause (Warfield, 2000:167-180). The causal agent is said to have produced the effect, whether or not the term 'cause' is used or implied (Sauer, 2010:65–68; Ducheyne, 2009:333-358).

Apart from natural events in the natural sciences, social and historical events are also explained with reference to causes. Events such as famine, civil war, inter and intra community hostility, inflation, coups d'état, political upheaval, de-forestation, proliferation of religious cults, failure of a marriage, change in fashion, technological development, increase in number of same sex marriages, and even the September 11 attack on the trade centre in the United States are all explained in terms of causal forces.

There are various types of causal explanation. While some look toward the future or antecedent events for explanations of a current phenomenon, others explain events in terms of some theories about human and social theories, especially in psychology and sociology. For instance, Akinnawonu (2006:188-194) points out that social scientists have two rival approaches to social explanations. One is the methodological individualism approach, and the other is the sociological holism approach. The former tries to explain social events in terms of

the actions of individuals. Following the methodological individualism method, for instance, the September 11 event could be explained in terms of the actions of Islamic extremists or of anyone else. The latter theory on the other hand tries to explain social phenomena in terms of laws and social theories. The same September 11 event could be explained in term of a law that states that violence precedes the fall of every empire, or that the process of globalisation necessitates violence.

Given the complexities surrounding explanations of social events, there seem to be problems distinguishing between causes and other related concepts. Causes are sometimes called the reasons for the occurrence of certain events. According to Akinnawonu (2006:188-194), the problem of causal explanations of social and human events raises the question of the relationship between reasons and actions, and between reasons and causes. Some scholars even argue that the only way to make reason meaningful is to equate reason with causal explanation (Davidson, 1968).

Common to all causal explanations is the belief that one event is explained with reference to other events and actions. Logically, however, if every event must have a cause, then, the event believed to have caused the effect, must also have been caused by another. Consequently, every cause is an effect of another prior cause.

Scholars have tried to explain why African democracies are in crises (see chapter 4). In their explanations, the scholars are divided into camps of explanation (See chapters 1, 2 and 4). The schools, however, have adopted the causal explanation. That is, they have tried to identify agents and factors that should be blamed for the political crises of Africa (see chapters 4 and 5).

There are a number of prospects and problems identifiable with the causal explanations of both natural and human phenomena. A number of scholars have done commendable scholarly work in that direction. The works of Hodgson (2004:175-194),

Woodward (2003), Lewis (2000:182-197), Makin (2000:59-72), Ekstrom (1992:107-122), Salmon (1997:461-477), Hume (1888:77-87), Achinstein (1985), Anscombe (1981:133-147), Goldman (1978, 67-87), Locke (1975), Agassi (1968:87-91), Mill (1965), Hempel (1965), Hempel (1960), Gellner (1959), Ewing (1960:201-215) and Russell (1912:13-26) easily come to mind, among several others. Hume (1888), for instance, proposes that causation involves mere empirically observable regular sequence. The theory was later improved by Mill (1970). Mill (1970:213-215) argues that causation does not involve a simple connection between events. In Mill's opinion, causation involves more complex events and conditions than Hume had earlier thought, which must all be accounted for before it could be said that an event is caused. Other scholars like Dray (1959:403-405) reject the regularity theory in favour of the entailment theory involving necessity or laws of nature. They argue that an event p causes q if and only if there is a law of nature stating that whenever p occurs, then, q necessarily follows (Walsh, 1966).

The qualities of those works listed notwithstanding, in spite of my understanding of the works, and my agreement with some of their positions, I am not necessarily going to represent the position of any scholar or theory nor regurgitate the position of other scholars about the causal explanations of the human phenomenon in question in this study. If this examination is to help to see the lacuna of previous explanations and serve as a turning point on the manner in which scholars have portrayed my situation in life as an African, it would be counter-productive to begin from any theoretical paradigm or to adopt the analysis of any scholar. Consequently, I wish to identify the feasibility of the causal model of explanation as it applies to me and to my experiences as an African.

Perhaps, the best place to begin this analysis is to set the background straight. To say that the political situation of Africa is caused, when the political and social system of Africa is democratic, is to say that the situation of democracy in Africa has been determined. That is,

the causes have exerted some insurmountable and excessively overwhelming influences on Africa. Therefore, applying the causal explanation to real human situations in general and to the political situation of Africa, in particular, carries with it some implications.

Practically, if we must accept that either colonialism or the corrupt postcolonial leaders are the cause of the political challenges of Africa, we must be willing to explain that the said causes are unavoidably overwhelming. Accepting the thesis of unavoidable and excessively overwhelming forces is to accept that Africa has been determined, by some insurmountable forces outside of itself, to be politically unstable in its practice of democracy.

Many scholars of African politics actually subscribe to the view, for instance, that the colonial or the postcolonial forces were so overwhelming that Africans could never have resisted them. Wiredu (2008:332-339, 1995:53-63, 1992:57-70), Kofi (2005), and Achebe (2008), Ogungbemi (2007), Diamond (1988), Mazrui (1990, 2000a, 2000b), Nkrumah (2007b, 2002) Rodney (2004) and Teffo (2004), comfortably subscribe to the thesis of overwhelming causal determinism. For instance, while Kofi believes that colonialism has caused all the political challenges of Africa, Achebe believes that the postcolonial leaders caused all the political challenges of Africa. As tempting as these positions appear, for a number of reasons, they are over-simplistic explanations of the political crises of Africa, as I shall explain.

1) Whoever accepts that the colonial or the postcolonial forces are irresistibly overwhelming, and that Africans themselves have contributed nothing towards the situation in which they find themselves, or that the contributions of Africans to their present political situation have amounted to nothing, must also accept that Africans are no more than mere puppets-on-a-string. It means that everything that Africans do, is done under the influence of the causal agents, and they are not responsible for their own lives.

2) If Africans are not responsible for their own lives, it would also mean that Africans are people without a history prior to the emergence of the said forces as

Hegel (1975) had insinuated. In his philosophy of history, Hegel had earlier described Africans as people without a history of their own. Hegel implied, perhaps prejudicially, that Africa is an unhistorical continent, which possesses no progress of its own except as imposed on it. That is, Africa is merely a cornucopia awaiting the benign assistance of others (Hegel, 1975 *as used in* Bello-Kano, 2004:36-46). An explanation of the present political situation of Africa would have assisted the scholars to refute Hegel's claim. If they argue, however, that the present political situation of Africa has been caused then, indirectly, they are accepting that Africa has been caused, or that Africa is an effect. Consequently, they are endorsing Hegel's view, that is, accepting that Hegel's claim is true, that Africans have contributed nothing to their present historical circumstance. I know however, that the very concept of human person and people implies a history, because it is the will nature of action that makes an action human, personal and historical. I know that it is contradictory to talk of a people without a history. It means that there can be no people without a history. Therefore, Africa could never have been caused, as the scholars have claimed.

3) If the present political situation of Africa has been caused, fatally determined, as implied by the causal explanation, it also implies that even the political activism, the self-reliance project, the anti-corruption efforts, the African unity drive and the decolonisation process initiated by stakeholders and scholars like Wiredu, (2000a:186-204), Anyiam-Osigwe (2005), Ogundowole (2007) and Teffo (2002), are equally caused. They are merely mechanical reactions to the actions of the causal factors.

4) It is unthinkable that people who are mere effects of causes are able to take responsibility for their own lives and make free choices. It would mean they could never think of undoing the causal forces. In other words, even if the caused people think that they are making efforts to undo the causal forces, the efforts cannot be their self-motivated or independent action. Rather, it would have been initiated by the insurmountable causal factor itself. That is, the very forces they are trying to undo have made them believe that they are acting on their own volition. Consequently, what appears like a self-motivated action would, necessarily, be a make believe to further manipulate the dependent effect.

5) Problem-solution by its nature implies planning and strategising. Such mental qualities are not attributes of people who are mere effects of causes. To be caused is to be without independence of reason (van Inwagen, 1997:373–381). That is, people under the influence of an insurmountable force cannot undertake any rational plan. It means, therefore, that people whose condition in life has been determined by another can never undo the insurmountable forces that have causally determined them.

6) Ultimately, if a cause appears to bestow freedom on the effect, can that be freedom? Can it not be a continuation and consolidation of determinism? Can a person be caused to be free? Can freedom be bestowed on a person as a gift?

I am an African, and like other Africans I meet in the streets, I do not see myself as an effect of causes. I am aware of life challenges, but the challenges do not prevent me from making free choices and decisions and taking responsibility for my choices. I make daily moral and personal choices, and I am justifiably praised or chastised for my choices freely made. It is contradictory, therefore, to think that I am able to make decisions in certain aspects of my life, but that I am causally determined in others in spite of the freedom to do otherwise.

Another major problem with the causal explanation of the political challenges of Africa is that the scholars assume that they can transcend their own analysis. Even though some of the scholars are Africans, they assume that they have escaped the causal influence of the insurmountable factor that has determined the rest of African society. For example, the externalist's position runs approximately as follows; colonialism has caused Africans to be unable to manage certain aspects of their own lives. The colonial forces were so strong that indigenous African people and societies could not subdue them. The said forces have maintained their hold on the mental scheme of Africans even after all the colonisers have left (Ayittey, 1999:29-39). In particular, the scientific externalist scholars believe that colonialism

has so much disrupted the psyche of Africans (see chapter 4). Therefore, they believe that colonialism still determines the political situation of democracy in Africa because it first controls the mind and heart of Africans in various ways. The same argument goes for the internalists who identify the postcolonial factors as the cause of the political challenges militating against any democratic project in Africa.

From the foregoing analysis of both the internalists and the externalists in relation to the causal explanation, it is worth noting that:

1) The scholars fail to specify how some people are able to escape the insurmountable force that has the capability to determine the rest of Africa.

2) Whether they specify it or not, the scholars have demarcated between themselves and the rest of African societies. In other words, they are no more than either of the two sets of 'outsiders' identified by Snow (Chambers, 1999:28). Snow names the two groups of outsiders as the negative social scientists and the positive professionals. In Snow's view, these 'outsiders' have alienated themselves, because even their analyses have distanced them from those communities they set out to analyse as distant objects.

3) Perhaps, the scholars have been influenced by Kant or by Cartwright (2000:47-58) or by both of them.
   a. Kant makes it clear that one of the preconditions for scientific objectivity is that the mind of the scientist, which he called the transcendental consciousness, is not itself subject to the laws of causality (Putnam, 1986:105-115). Therefore, the scholars have to claim that they are not subject to the causal influence. However, they are yet to tell us how they have escaped the said causal influence.

   b. Cartwright (2000:47-58), like many post-Copernican epistemologists, also argues that a good explanation must satisfy two conditions. Firstly, it must increase the possibility of the fact to be explained. Secondly, it must be an

objective, person-independent matter (Giddy, 2009:359-376; Achintein, 1985:219).

4) In the manner of Snow's 'outsiders' the African scholars who employ the causal explanations are outsiders because they try to analyse and make prescriptions regarding the political crises of Africa by which they are not affected.

5) If the scholars, who themselves are Africans, are wilfully able to diagnose Africa and make prescriptions on how to remake Africa, this would mean that they are not caused. If then they are not caused, and yet they are Africans, it would contradict their claim that Africans have been caused.

6) Cartwright argues (as stated in number 3b above), that "'the two conditions for a good argument are satisfied if and only if the explanation itself is 'caused'" (Achintein, 1985:219). If, on the other hand, it is true that Africans have been caused, and the scholars are also Africans and equally affected by the causal influence, it would mean that their reasoning, too, has been caused. It means they could not vouch for anything about the truth that they claim. If the reasoning of the scholars has been caused, it would mean that they have no access to the truth that they claim about Africa. That is, it would mean that they are mere effects and their reasoning has been determined. It means also that we cannot take their arguments seriously.

Unfortunately, scholars of African politics have to assume that they are able to escape the causal influence of the factor that has affected the rest of Africa. They need to make this assumption, not because it is necessarily true, but because without such a claim they would have relativised everything that they are claiming in a causal explanation. That is, they consequently would have agreed that their arguments were not objective analyses of the situation of Africa, but they are simply manifestations of the causal effects on their minds.

A similar argument could be made against the non-African scholars of African politics. By applying the causal explanation, their explanation, as a position, contradicts my

understanding about myself in the first place. Since the non-African scholars have no direct experience of the situation of Africa, they cannot claim access to the truth that I do as an indigenous African and living in Africa.

Secondly, because the non-African scholars of African politics lack direct access to information about Africa, it is expected that they would depend on the testimonies of Africans or consult with Africans before making any assumption. If the non-African scholars fail to consult with indigenous Africans before making their assumptions, their analysis cannot be taken seriously. If they consult with indigenous Africans then, in their consultation, the non-African scholars must take the Africans seriously. To consult is not merely to watch the Africans as the natural scientist observes the behaviours of insects. The non-African scholar must be sure that the Africans they consult with are serious about what they claim. That is, Africans that they consult with must be Africans who are responsible for whatever they claim and whose beliefs about themselves have not been caused by forces outside of themselves.

During such a consultation,

1) If the African says, "I am an African, but Africa has been caused[23]" it would mean that even the statement that he or she makes has equally been caused. It would mean that he or she is not uttering the statement out of his own volition, but is simply caused to utter them as mechanical consequences of the causal agent. That would mean that the said African is not responsible for what he claims.

2) If the statement that 'I am an African, but Africans have been caused' is a willed statement then the statement is false, because the statement 'I am caused' could never have been true when the African making the statement is free.

3) The non-African scholar could never be correct, if he bases his analysis on the testimony of someone whose opinions about himself are causally determined by another.

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[23]To say that the political situation of Africa has been caused is to say that Africa has been caused to be in a certain condition. To say that Africa has been caused is to say that the people and the societies in which they live as Africans have been caused. To put it differently, Africans cannot be caused without the people of Africa being caused.

Therefore, either the African is caused and his statement about himself is not taken seriously, or he is not caused and his understanding about himself is taken seriously, but false, that Africa is caused.

The question could be asked; why then are the scholars still insistent on the causal explanations of social phenomena in spite of the many shortcomings that attend the application of the causal explanation, especially to social phenomena? That is, why have the scholars of African politics always been tempted to apply the causal explanation?

On the one hand, since the 16th and 17th century success stories of the natural sciences, the paradigm of scientific objectivity has been the Newtonian physics. Since then, scholars in other disciplines have been trying to understand and emulate the Newtonian physics. Therefore, they assume that to be scientific is to have applied or attained what they have presumed about the Newtonian physics. As a result, the scholars have become motivated to try to achieve, in their various disciplines, what the natural scientists have achieved in theirs (Outhwaite, 1987:19-27).

Secondly, the scholars are tempted to adopt the causal model in their explanations because the causal explanation makes the scholars appear scientific and accurate. It affords the scholar the opportunity to draw some 'empirically verifiable'[24] lines of relationship, which he calls the causal link (Aigbodioh, 1997:5, Hacking, 1983:1-5), between the said cause and the alleged effect, without having to dialogue with the Africans themselves.

In addition, the causal explanation offers the scholars the opportunity to maintain their posture as experts, to analyse, diagnose and make prescriptions, even without having to ensure any reliable contact with the Africa which they assume is the object of their analysis (Putnam, 1986:5-15). For instance, the scholar who believes the Marxist theory that capitalism causes an increase in crime rate does not need to come to Africa to find out the

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[24]Though the scholars assume that they have drawn empirically verifiable lines of connection, they often take succession, chronology, proximity and/ or similarity of properties for causal links.

real cause of the high crime rate in Nigeria or South Africa, in order to presume that the cause of the crime rate in Nigeria or South Africa is capitalism. In spite of the fact that the scholar in question has never set foot on African soil, let alone Nigeria or South Africa, people tend to take him seriously (Aigbodioh, 1997:4).

By applying the causal model of explanation, the scholars of African politics, who are Africans themselves, are able at least to demonstrate that they themselves are not part of the cause of a problem. They assume that, to say the people are not caused, is to say that the people caused the problems. If the people are the cause of the problem, the best way the scholars could exonerate themselves is to separate themselves from the people.

The expertise of the scholars of African politics notwithstanding, the causal explanation appears to be attractive for many reasons. Firstly, it appears clear, impressive and attractive in professional terms. It simply pigeonholes societies and social behaviours into strata. By so doing, it makes it easy to interpret and explain human societies and behaviours from the point of view of the theoretical labels given to them. For example, a universal statement like, 'corrupt leadership causes war' helps to pigeonhole every war in Africa, especially in places ruled by dictators, as a consequence of corruption. Even without having to investigate the war, the expert would still be taken seriously, when he claims that the war in Sudan, for instance, is caused by corrupt leadership. Causal explanation becomes a fanciful and easy way out.

The temptation to believe in the causal explanation of the political situation of Africa is not limited to the scholars of African politics alone. For some reason, the causal reasoning and models of explanation have remained tempting as an explanation of social phenomena to Africans themselves. It shifts blame away from the people. By applying the causal explanation, the scholars, usually the scientists, give the impression that the people in themselves are perfect and have in no way contributed towards their own failures, while the

identified causes (colonialism or/and the corrupt postcolonial African political leaders) of the political problems carry all the blame. For instance, *p* is said to have caused the inability of *q* to win the contract, iff *q* itself had contributed nothing to its own failure. The causal theories are attractive to Africans themselves because, according to the theories, the Africans themselves bear no responsibility for the predicaments in which they find themselves.

The causal explanations do not represent what I understand about myself as an African. It is not the way I experience my situation in the world. I experience myself like anyone else anywhere in the world, where people take responsibility for their individual and collective actions. I accept the responsibility for my present political situation not less than the Americans take responsibility for their harsh treatment of the indigenous Americans, and the way in which Americans take responsibility for trade in African slaves, and the Germans for the holocaust. There is, therefore, the need for an approach to the explanation of the political situation of Africa other than the causal models of explanation offered, all the while, by the scholars.

The real life situation is both that colonialism has had an impact on the life of individual persons and on the political situation of Africans in general. Without understanding colonialism, I cannot actually understand myself in full. That does not mean in any way that the inability of Africa or the African states to maintain and consolidate their democracies is caused by colonialism.

The history of Africa can never be complete without mentioning the corrupt postcolonial African leaders. Nor does it mean that they have caused the challenges against the democratic project in Africa. If the political leaders are said to be the cause of the problems, what has been the impact of civil society or the people themselves? Accusing the postcolonial leaders of causing the political crises of Africa, is no more than shifting the

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blame from the lukewarm civil society, made up of Africans themselves. Could there be exploiters where there were no exploitable people?

Given the failures of the previous explanations, largely due to the extension of the principles of Newtonian physic, beyond its scope, to human and social situations by the empirically inclined scholars, especially the social scientists, there is the need for an alternative approach, a new approach to the explanation of the political challenges militating against the democratic projects in Africa. Apart from the fact that the unviable models underlying the previous explanations have emerged from the scientific inclinations of the social sciences, the best place to start a movement towards a fresh approach is in the field of philosophy.

Philosophy is the best place to start a movement towards a fresh approach, as typified by the activities of philosophers in history. Firstly, all through the history of philosophy, philosophers have always introduced new approaches by initiating new consciousness. Secondly, scholars even in other disciplines, who today are referred to as philosophers, are those who have initiated new approaches in their various fields. This study, therefore, has identified the shortcomings of the previous approaches to the explanation of the political challenges of Africa. It also identifies the need for a new approach to the explanations of the political challenges of Africa. By so doing, this study represents an effort towards the establishment of a new consciousness regarding how Africans should see themselves and approach their challenges.

A new, scholarly approach that takes root in philosophy is one that has the characteristics typical of philosophy in the history of ideas. The characteristics of the approach to the explanation of the political challenges of Africa, entrenched in the philosophical orientation and tradition, are as follows:

1) Preparedness to start anew.
2) Not assuming that the philosopher is able to transcend the analysis that he makes.

3) Bearing no rigid loyalty to any theory.

4) Analysing real situations rather than fixing real people into the theories.

5) Promoting self-motivated changes.

It is difficult to set a hard line of demarcation between philosophy and all or any other discipline. Perhaps the difference between philosophy and other disciplines is a matter of degree rather than of kind. By this, I mean that philosophy does not appear like a discipline of a different kind from other disciplines. Rather, it is different from other disciplines by the degree to which it generates, entertains and employs the said characteristics.

This is not to say that there is a universally agreed degree by which the said qualities must be measured. All the same, however, most philosophers in history represent a new beginning. They represent a new beginning, not because they have brought into being things or ideas that had been totally unknown before them. However, in most cases, the historical epoch in which the philosophers lived either had ignored the ideas, or had taken them for granted. Consequently, the philosopher's idea appears like a renaissance, a recall or a new awakening.

The history of philosophy is replete with examples of philosophers who ushered in such new beginnings. The history of philosophy itself is the history of revolutionary scholars who initiate new ways of seeing things. For instance, prior to Descartes it had been taken for granted and defended by the dominant scholastic and Theo-centric philosophers that we can come to knowledge of ourselves through our knowledge of God. Descartes revolutionises the status of human existence to bring about the possibility of subjective knowledge. He proposes that from the knowledge of the self, we can attain the knowledge of others, including God (Popkin & Stroll, 1993:134-150). Husserl (1962) introduces a new method of analysis supposedly free from presuppositions. Gettier (1963:121-123) questions the concept of knowledge which, prior to his four-page journal publication, had been taken for granted.

In the process of revolutionising human thought, the philosopher does not see himself as distanced from the object of his analysis. Unlike the social scientist, who sees himself as an expert coming to assist others to get out of a situation in which the social scientist is not in any way affected, the philosopher examines his own situation. Socrates examined his own life, the same goes for Sartre and Camus. According to Camus (1955:55) there are only two alternatives, 'either we are not free and God the all-powerful is responsible for evil or we are free, but God is not all-powerful.' In the statement, Camus is trying to examine his own freedom, not a case study of the freedom of other people. Camus himself is included in the people whose freedom he examines.

In the process of examining his own life situation, the philosopher does not begin from a theory, or at least he does not intend to, and he does not see himself as starting with a theory, unlike the approach by the natural and the social sciences. He begins from a life situation. As a result, a philosopher does not feel that he owes an allegiance to any ideology, theory, movement, discipline, method or even religion. For instance, Marcel (Omoregbe, 2005:76), refuses to see himself as an existentialist. He sees himself as an atheist, but he is referred to, even by some of his contemporaries as a Christian existentialist. Initially, Wittgenstein was more of a naturalist. In his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, he proposes a static picture of language and reality, and argues that language pictures reality. Wittgenstein (1974) later rejected the position he had defended all his life for another, even at the time when it was too late to publish a new position in his lifetime. That is, he felt no obligation towards any theoretical position nor compromised the truth for the defence of a theoretical position. He later opts for the language game theory in the 'Philosophical Investigations'.

The reason why the philosopher does not feel that he owes any allegiance to any theoretical position is because he does not see himself as a product of the theories that he makes. The theories do not always reflect real human situations. They only reflect case

studies and hypothetical situations. In other words, to make the theories appear suitable for real situations, the real human beings would need to be pigeonholed into the theories and hypotheses. That is, the human being and life situations have to be broken and fixed into the theoretical situations rather than the theories made to suit the human situation. Theories represent the ambitious efforts of the scientists to understand the universal order (Achinstein, 1985:102-130. Applying theories to human situations, and seeing the human situation in the mental mirrors provided by the theories implies a belief that, like rocks and ants, human beings would behave in a predictable manner. This explains the principle of *ceteris paribus* in the social sciences. The principle presupposes that certain cases are the same, and that the explanation, treatment and judgment on one would suit the other. This is only a professional assumption and, perhaps a professional craft, peculiar to the social sciences. There are no two cases, let alone human cases which, as the social scientists tend to assume, are exactly the same.

The most evident consequence of the philosophic method, from the foregoing analysis, is that the change which the philosopher engineers is a self-motivated one. For him or her, theorising is also an activity of the society he is studying, which opens up the way for a general change in consciousness. Therefore, a philosopher does not prescribe changes which he himself or she herself is not willing or prepared to undertake. The change in question is about himself or herself. The society in which he or she intends to effect the changes is also the society in which he has a part. Consequently, he does not see himself as an effect of causes moving him to change.

As an African and like a philosopher, I recognise the differences between my strength and my opportunities, and between my weaknesses and my threats. I understand that strength and weakness come from within, while threat and opportunities are from without. Consequently, the corrupt and incompetent postcolonial political leaders are mere threats.

Threats do not translate to intractable problems as the problems militating against democracy in Africa, or any other problems confronting Africa, without internal weaknesses. If the threats to Africa translate to intractable challenges, the threats or challenges should not be blamed for the problem. They do not cause the problem. Africa is only being challenged like any other nations of the world. The colonial event itself was only a means devised by the colonialists to confront the economic, political and, perhaps, psychological challenges of their own time. As long as Africans see themselves as effects of causes, they will perpetually remain redundant and reactionary to the causal forces, rather than actors in the trajectory of their own history, through positive strategies.

As an African and like a philosopher, I see opportunity as nothing other than what it is. For instance, postcolonial restitution and the international support (Oke: 2006:332-343) are mere opportunities. Lack of them, are mere threats. Opportunities become strength and consequently become useful and advantageous only when the internal strength is able to identify them, confront the surrounding challenges and harness them. The ability of the Africans to harness the opportunities in the trajectory of their own history, using the strength of their human and material resources, becomes their real strength.

I, therefore, reject the causal explanations and the search for a new explanation about myself as an African. If I may borrow from the view of Socrates that an unexamined life is not worth living and from the belief in the method of psychoanalysis, that it is therapeutic to discuss problems freely, this study is a critical self-examination. I believe that knowing the appropriate explanation to a problem, itself implies talking cure or a catharsis in the psychoanalytic terms. The new explanation by implication becomes a new consciousness of myself as an African and as a philosophy scholar, willing to learn in the humility exemplified by philosophers throughout the history of philosophy to start anew and to accept an alternative explanation that promotes a real and better image of myself as an African.

However, the specificities of the new and alternative explanation are subject to further researches.

6.3   **Summary**

The discussions in this chapter help to identify the weaknesses of the causal models which, over the years, have been employed by scholars in their explanations of the political situation of Africa in general and of the challenges militating against the democratic project in Africa in particular. In the analysis of the chapter, I have also explained why the scholars have often been tempted to employ the causal model of explanation, and I have subsequently examined why Africans themselves seem comfortable with the causal explanations. In the last part of the chapter, I have also explained the need for a change of approach to the explanation of the political challenges militating against the democratic project in Africa.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusion

7.1   Introduction

This chapter is intended to give a summary of the study and to crown it with a conclusion. The summary evaluates how well the promises of the research proposal in chapter 1 have been fulfilled in the course of the study, and how the arguments of the thesis have led logically to the statement of the final conclusion. This chapter is also meant to suggest areas where further research is needed in order to provide a lasting solution to the chaotic condition of the politics of democracy in Africa. Consequently, the summary, conclusion and suggestions for further research in this chapter are logically derived from the discussions in previous chapters of this thesis.

7.2   Summary

The study acknowledges that there have been attempts by scholars of African politics to explain the problems impeding the smooth running and consolidation of democracy in Africa (see chapters 4). Scholars and practitioners of African politics have also made recommendations regarding the solution to the problem of the grim realities of the political challenges of Africa (see chapter 4).

The acknowledgement of these previous efforts notwithstanding, this study examines and exposes the inadequacy of a certain idea of objectivity and causality taken, uncritically, from Newtonian physics by the scholars of African politics in their explanations of the political challenges of Africa. The study began with the establishment of the significance and objective of the study, and set the formal procedures of the study (see chapter 1). This was

followed by a clarification of the concepts employed in the course of the study, in the same chapter. The conceptual clarification was necessary to confer precision on the study and to serve as a key to the understanding of the study (see chapter1).

However, it was argued that the real problems of a democracy are the defects that necessarily affect the theoretical ideals of democratic governance. It was consequently explained, in chapter 3, that the real problems of democracy in Africa are human rights violation, inability of the people to change their government, electoral violence, social and gender inequality, legitimacy crisis, absence of social justice and the absence of democratic values and way of life in African societies.

In chapter 4, a critical exposition of the scholarly explanations of the problems militating against the practice, maintenance and consolidation of democracy in Africa was carried out. In the analysis, the scholars were considered in two groups: externalists and internalists. The various positions of the externalists were examined. The externalists generally identified colonialism as the cause of the challenges to democracy in Africa.

The internalist positions were also examined. The internalists generally assume that the present problem shares no empirically verifiable connection with the past. They, consequently, believe that the postcolonial political leaders of Africa caused the current political challenges of Africa (see chapter 4). The factors they identified included corruption, unsuitable models of democracy, nepotism, tribalism, political ignorance, distrust, human rights abuse, illiteracy, elitism, authoritarianism and self-perpetuation in government, and incompetence. In the internalist camp, all the above factors were blamed on the postcolonial African political leaders.

In essence, the two groups of scholars who have made efforts to explain the problems militating against the maintenance and consolidation of democracy in Africa, believe that the problems were caused by some irresistable forces. That is, both groups employed the causal

model of explanation in their efforts to account for the problems militating against the democratic project in postcolonial Africa. The only difference between the externalists and the internalists concerns where to locate the cause. Both of them believe that the chaotic situation of democracy in Africa is caused. In other words, Africa is caused to be what it is now, and it could not have been different, since Africans are not responsible for their present predicaments. Suffice it to say that for the externalists and the internalists, Africa is caused to be what it is.

An effort was made, in chapter 5, further to examine the consistencies of the two groups, even within the criteria of their causal explanatory models. The internalists had thought that a cause and its effect must be contemporaneous. In my analysis of the internalists, I argued that among the factors such as incompetence, corruption or nepotism attributed to the postcolonial African political leaders, the internalists did not specify the order by which the alleged causes and their connection could be identified. I therefore argued that even though all the causal forces were blamed ultimately on the postcolonial African political leaders, the manner in which the sub-factors were linked with one another did not follow any specific order. I argued further that any effort to establish an order or sequence would necessarily lead to a vicious circle.

Externalism was also examined in that same chapter. The externalists had identified several factors summarised under the external forces of colonialism. I argued that we cannot ascribe blame for a problem, which had existed prior to colonialism, entirely on colonialism. Insisting that colonialism has caused the postcolonial political problems of Africa means that the postcolonial problems are blamed entirely on colonialism.[25] However, the analysis in chapter 4 shows that the problems militating against democracy in the postcolonial era had

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[25]To say that p causes q means that p entirely determines q. Anything short of that would mean that p only influences q. If q merely influences q, it would be unjust for q to be blamed on p. The only way by which q could be blamed on p as the externalists have done is, if and only if, p entirely determines q. In essence, cause implies determinism, and cause cannot be real without determinism being real.

existed in Africa prior to colonialism. I argued that it is wrong to hold colonialism responsible for the current political problems except if colonialism necessarily exists. It is impossible for an historical event to necessarily exist. In the logic of the externalists, a cause must precede its effect. Then, by implication, the cause of colonialism must be traced to the precolonial era. I argued in that chapter that any effort to regress further than colonialism and the precolonial era would necessarily lead to an endless regress. By implication therefore, whether a vicious circle or an endless regress, the argument of the scholars did not lead to any necessary cause of the problems militating against the democratic project in postcolonial Africa. I concluded that even within the parameter of their own causal explanations, the scholars were not consistent.

Apart from the inconsistencies that attended the efforts of the scholars to explain the challenges militating against the democratic project in Africa, the causal models of the two seemingly opposing schools were also examined. The real shortcomings of applying the causal models in the explanation of the social phenomenon in question was exposed and discussed in chapter 6. As a result of the shortcomings of the previous explanations of the said political challenges of Africa, it became logically necessary to propose an alternative approach to the explanation of the problems militating against the political challenges of Africa.

7.3 Conclusion

Specifically, the following enquiries were made:

Why is democracy having problems in Africa? Why are African states having crises trying to consolidate their democracies? (compare chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5).

The following conclusions of previous scholars were challenged:

1) That it is because of some biogenetic makeup of the Africans that they are unable to sustain the democratic relations and governance required in a democracy. (see chapters 4 and 5).

2) Nothing can be done to remedy the situation; Africa is doomed. (see chapters 4).

3) That the problem with democracy in Africa originates from colonialism or its succeeding offshoot, called neo-colonialism (see chapter 5).

4) That the problem with democracy in Africa originates from the economic backwardness of the African postcolonial nation states (see chapters 4 and 5).

5) That the problems of democracy in Africa are caused by the leadership failures of the postcolonial African leaders (see chapters 4 and 5).

6) That, with time, the problem will necessarily solve itself with no effort, after all it has taken Europe and the United States of America several centuries to be where they are now. (see chapter 4).

The following points were made:

1) That the traditional criticisms of both externalism and Internalism are superficial (chapter 4).

2) That the shallowness of the traditional criticisms against externalism and internalism do not justify the positions represented by either or both of the previous explanations (chapter 4).

3) That neither the arguments of the externalists nor those of the internalists logically led to their respective conclusions (see chapter 5).

4) That externalists and internalists are two sides of the same coin, because both of them offer models of causal explanation (see chapters 5 and 6).

5) The causal explanation is not the appropriate explanation of the problems confronting democracy in Africa (chapter 6).

6) My main objection against the previous explanations of the problems affecting democracy is their application of the causal principle (chapters 5 and 6).

7) By applying the causal explanations, the scholars contradict my understanding of myself as an African, and as an African I cannot find myself in their explanations, neither do their explanations portray the real situation in Africa (chapter 6).

8) In spite of the shortcomings of the causal models, the scholars of African politics are nevertheless tempted to employ them in their explanation of the political problems of Africa and the Africans themselves feel comfortable with the explanation (chapter 6).

9) The various reasons for the causal explanations having been attractive to both the scholars and the ordinary people were also enumerated (chapter 6).

10) It was noted that the attractions to the causal explanations were not because they lead to any reliable truth about Africans or about the political situation in which they find

themselves, but because they appear more sophisticated, elegant and convenient and shift the blame away from the stakeholders (chapter 6).

The following conclusions were reached:
1) Because of the various limitations I have identified with the causal explanations of the social phenomenon in question, I reject the causal explanations and the underlying theories by which the scholars have portrayed and explained the political situation of Africa (chapter 6).

2) By rejecting the causal explanation, I recommend a new orientation and opt for an orientation, which I believe is truer to the nature of philosophy.

3) By rejecting the previous explanations, this study represents a new consciousness of who I am as an African and how I should see myself as an actor in my own history, rather than as an effect of causes.

This study therefore represents an intervention of philosophy and an original attempt at shifting towards a better explanation of the political problems of democracy in Africa. It is therefore an initiation of a new consciousness, that is a new understanding of how I should see myself and take responsibility for my actions.

Going by the advice of de Bono (1983:10-15):

To dissolve what we have into chaos is not a path to building something new.... To complain about the dissolution is also not a way of building something....We need to look at something basic to all our positions, and that is our thinking system. Pollution, population, political polarization, and the other problems that threaten humanity are going to get worse rather than better. In order to tackle these problems at the most fundamental level, we are going to have to improve our thinking and change our ideas before it is too late. There is no level of action more fundamental than our thinking habits.

The habit referred to is that of believing uncritically that whatever (both human and natural) happens must have a cause or must be explained by the cause-effect models.

Following on the implications of the causal explanation, as explicated in chapter 6, the precarious situation of democracy in Africa appears irredeemable and irreversible. It is so because the forces responsible for the problems are said to be separate from Africa. The causal explanations thus appear to have spelt doom for me as an Africa. This needs to be rejected. Like Orunmila in Yoruba literary corpus, it has to be possible for me to demonstrate

in thought and in practice that such eternal doom is not my portion, even if other wished it to be. Still like Orunmila when he found himself in similar situation, Orunmila preferred to decide his own fate, because, by other people's judgement and wish, Orunmila was doomed to die, but he believes that his fate and destiny that he should not be left in the hands of others. Hence, by Orunmila's own judgement (not by others'), he would continue to live happily for years[26].

If ever there can be an understanding of the predicaments of Africa, therefore, I, as an African, must see myself as an actor in my own history, rather than as a mere effect of another. I must accept that like people in other places, historical events may have posed certain challenges to my life, and to the institutions that I have created. While I do not see myself as a mere effect of causes, I must accept that those challenging events and forces remain simply as challenges that are bound to disappear when confronted with internal strength. My inability to confront the challenges should not be blamed on others. Hence, historical events and social forces are not to be seen in the Newtonian concept of the blind cause and effect relationship. Therefore, any authentic understanding of the political predicaments must acknowledge the impacts of all the contributing forces and, at the same time, convert the external challenges to opportunities.

Lastly, it should be noted that "Problem-solving," according to Magee (1977, 74), "calls for the bold propounding of trial solutions which are then subject to criticism and error elimination." Therefore, this study does not pretend to have found a final solution to all the challenges of democracy in Africa. Consequently, the specificities of the new and alternative explanation are committed to further researchers.

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[26]This is an Ifa oracle and it is commonly recited among Yoruba saying, *Oun l'o difa fun Orunmila l'ojo si. Won l'oti se odun yi, ko ni s'emiran. Orunmila ni t'o ba to nse t'oun ni, ti o kii se ni ti won, a sodun m'odun la s'odun, modun, a s'oro m'oro la s'oro moro...ogun odun l'eni, ogbon odun l'eni, ogorun odun l'oni...won yoo maa riwa t'owo, t'omo, t'alaafia* (Odu Ofun Meje and Odu Ogbeate, 1999, p. 105 and p. 185 respectively, and as attributed to Orunmila by the Yoruba people).

In the words of George Bernard Shaw (Chambers, 1990:140), "You see things and you say, 'Why?' but I dream things that never were, and I say, 'Why not?'" Though things may have gone wrong with the democracies of Africa for centuries, It is to be noted that democracy in Africa cannot be assailed, ruined or doomed without the consent or participation of the Africans themselves. Neither can the democracies in Africa be consolidated without the self-motivated efforts of the Africans themselves. The dream that produces this thesis is that Africa can rule the world, but not without self-motivated, free actions and responsibilities. The initial conditions for the realisation of such a dream are self-examination, knowledge and progressive determination through diversity and cooperation as described in the theme and trajectory of this thesis.

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