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Africa and the challenges of unipolar world: Sovereignty, civil society and women's rights as case studies

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Close to two decades after the emergence of unipolar world, more than ample opportunities are provided to access the impact of this phenomenon on Africa. It emergence ushered in what is known today as "global village". Happenings in any state are no longer the exclusive preserve of the 'village' or 'hamlet' concerned but that of the entire globe. Sovereign nations in Africa and indeed anywhere that were previously unchallengeable not least by external bodies but more importantly by the internal ones– civil societies, women groups among many other bodies – now have high degree of freedom to operate and connect one another locally, nationally and internationally to challenge despotic sovereigns. These are done in a way that the sovereigns in Africa, both traditional and modern, are powerless to do anything than to bow. The paper examines the ways and methodologies by which unipolar world and its allies in the African states, even if unwillingly, open up the political space for participation by all and sundry. Not least in their focus are the mechanisms by which these tyrants are challenged, corrected or possibly removed from office e.g. Sani Abacha and Charles Taylor. African women also regain their voices and actions. How these happen is what this paper sets out to examine.

Key words: Sovereignty, traditional state, post-traditional state, traditional rulers, monarchy, civil society, women.

INTRODUCTION

Before the emergence of unipolar world, bi-polar world, for decades, held Africa bifurcated into two rival camps marked by economic and political ideologies. On the right were capitalism and its political twin – democracy, bastioned by United States of America and her Western allies. Communism and its authoritarian political institutions on the other hand, occupied the left and were championed by former USSR and her Eastern allies. Although attempt at forming tripartite world was made by some third world countries to moderate the extreme positions of this bi- polar world, it failed (Akokpari, 1999). Despite the failure, it had sent powerful signals of objections to the extremisms of the then two dominant world powers and their allies. Although the formation of the nonaligned bloc failed in its mission of containing the excess of these two blocs because it lacked economic and military might to be independent of the two; it ignited economic and armed race in them as well. South Africa, India, Pakistan, North Korea to mention a few examples, not only possesses atomic weapons; Malaysia, India and indeed most Asian

countries are advancing economically.

After the fumbling, tumbling and crumbling of not only communism as an ideology but also the disintegration of Soviet Union as an octopus empire, bi-polar world and all it stood for, collapsed in 1990. Emerging from the ashes of communism and bi- polar world is unipolar world (championed by US and EU), capitalism, increased de-mocratization etc. accelerated by increasing globalization (kiely, 1998). While the policy of glasnost and perestroika hastened the collapse of bi-polar world, globalization hastened emergence of unipolar world that is becoming supra octopus, powerful and hegemonic. Leading this hegemony is the United States of America (and her Western capitalist system).

The opportunity does come for the Western capitalist system to moderate if not to total overhauls the models and practice of sovereignty in Africa. Nor is it long for the civil society organizations, women's right groups and other critical groups in the African societies to grasp this opportunity to tackle poor governance in Africa. This

issue of good governance, which virtually all African sovereigns (at the national and local levels) lacked, thus intertwined civil society groups, women's right groups and other disenchanted groups with United States and her Western allies. And this is made possible not just by international physical rendezvous of civil societies, women's right groups but more importantly by internet communication revolution.

How they (leaders of unipolar world, civil societies and women's right groups) set about confronting the old notion of sovereignty (Westphalia model of sovereignty in Africa) is the objective of this paper.

UNIPOLAR WORLD AND SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

Across the ages, the notion of sovereignty in Africa has undergone changes, sometimes, violent ones. African continent is an incorporation of pre-colonial disparate empires, kingdoms, caliphate and autonomous communities. These ancient societies, in the colonial days, were, according to Mazrui, enclosed in new states by the West (Mazrui, 1994). For instance, the colonial powers had enclosed the age-old Yoruba in the New Nigeria, the age-old Wolof in the new Senegal and the age-old Bangada in the new Uganda. But as the exact number of these traditional political units cannot be easily determined so are their sizes, characters and forms are not uniform. While some are as large and populous as some modern African states, the sphere of activities of others hardly transcend a village area. However, in some of these pre-colonial African societies, power was centralized in the offices of the monarchs or traditional rulers while in others it was dispersed to motley or minor units. But the most important thing is that during this period, the tradi-tional authorities, regardless of the sizes of their domains, exercised sovereign power over their subjects (Federal, 1987).

At the inception of colonialism, these sovereign powers were withdrawn from these traditional authorities and withheld by the colonial powers and later transferred to the emergent African leaders. While traditional leaders were no longer exercising sovereign powers during this period, they were part functionaries of the newly created traditional political units variously called Indirect Rule system, Native Authority system or Anglo- African govern-ments as Ayoade (1985) prefers to call it. It is so referred as Anglo-African government because it combines mo-dernity with traditional political values, even today, at the local government level in South Africa and Nigeria in particular. In brief, the structure of indirect rule system comprised of four main parts:

i) The British Resident who provided direction and control.
(ii) The Native Authority; usually headed by a chief who enjoy legitimacy under the indigenous political system, and often supported by a council of elders.

(iii) The Native Treasury.
(iv) The Native Courts; composed of representatives of the Native Administration (Olasupo, 2001).

Hitherto, these separations of powers, duties and functions were embodied in the absolute traditional authorities who were sovereigns of their various communities. Citing the example of Yoruba nation, the Ooni of Ife (the owner of Ife, also known as Olu Aye: 'owner of the world') is believed to be the successor to Oduduwa (Arole Oodua) the progenitor of Yoruba race. His 'sovereignty' in post-traditional state is therefore located in the fact that not only is his successor to Oduduwa but more importantly the occupier of the throne at "the Source and the dawn of civilization where the work of creation first began". The 'sovereignty' of Alaafin of Oyo in the post-traditional state on the other hand is located in the fact that his progenitor, Oranmiyan, was the greatest empire builder. Like the British Empire that collapsed due to decolonization but replaced by Commonwealth of Nations after decoloni-zation, the collapse of Oyo Empire was also replaced by Commonwealth of Yoruba nations.

Due to awesome power of Oranmiyan the Yorubas of that epock (and of today) continue to refer to every Alaafin as "Death almighty; the companion of the gods and the King who enthrones lesser kings (Iku Baba yeye; Alase ekeji Orisa, Oba tii fi Oba je)" (Awoweso, 2009). However, in the rearranged sovereignty, post traditional authorities took orders from and clear issues with the British Resident. This marked the lost of sovereignty by the traditional rulers; but it also marked the beginning of modernizing traditional institutions in conformity with modern political systems.

At independence, colonial powers transferred these sovereignties to the nation-states into which the empires, kingdoms and caliphates had been forced. The nation-states' sovereignties (Westphalia model of 1648) that colonial powers created is radically different in contents exercise from the ones traditional authorities exercised in the pre-colonial days. While executive, legislative and judicial functions were embodied and exercised by traditional rulers in their various kingdoms, separation of powers – executive, legislature and judiciary – which modern sovereignty emphasized locate them in coordi-nate but distinct institutions. After the departure of colonial authorities however, the Africans political leaders who succeeded them appropriated the contents, embo-died them in themselves and exercised them as such; such that, before the advent of unipolar world, the three arms of governments in African states existed in theory and not in practice.

The Westphalia concept of sovereignty developed from "a theory to justify the king as master in his new modern kingdom, absolutely internally". But by 1763 and 1775 the notion of final and absolute authority in the political community became challenged by constitutionalism. Constitutionalism aims at constraining the ruler by modifying the

traditional concept of sovereignty. Between eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the concept of sovereignty became separated into two – internal and external (Keohane, 2000). Internal sovereignty with its modifications along the lines was what traditional notion of sovereignty stood for. Externally, sovereignty became defined as "the supreme legal authority of the nation to give and enforce the law within a certain territory and in consequence, independent from the authority of any other nation and equality with it under the law". This external meaning of sovereignty, as Keohane argued, became the core principle of international society. "The exchange of recognition of sovereignty had become a basic rule of co-existence within the state system" he submitted.

What is important to note here is that this old brand of sovereignty (Westphalia system) that placed internal absolute ruler ship on one person in modern kingdom was adopted by the colonial authorities of that period because it suited the political environment then. More importantly was the fact that the colonial authorities were determined to transit pre-colonial system of government to modern type and superior power was needed to force reluctant traditional African leaders to see the need for this transition. Over and above these reasons were the emergences of the first and second world wars and finally, the cold war. African service men were needed to assist in these wars and only African dictators could make wish realizable. They (African dictators) were also needed during the cold war era to carry out the wishes of the rival ideological camps. But what they referred to as "World Wars" including the cold war, were complete misnomers for European wars which they made the African dictators believe it was a global one.

As de-colonization began in Africa, this old concept of sovereignty changed and was replaced by a new one that see the power of the state to make laws and enforce them with any coercive power at its command. This new legal right of the state is what protects smaller states from being over powered by the bigger states. It is also the power the new sovereign has to decide its own external and internal matters. Throughout the epoch of bi-polar world, this was the notion of sovereignty upheld by dictators in both civil, apartheid and military regimes in Africa. But this was, again, supplanted by another new sovereign known as popular sovereign. The notion of this one says that absolute power belongs to the people but it was not allowed to see the light of the day during bi-polar era as African dictators, supported by leaders of bi-polar world, hijacked it. The leaders of bi-polar world needed the subversion of the peoples' sovereignty to prevent African countries from crossing one ideological camp to the other during cold war era and hence personalized of political power often presented as an excuse for national stability and the protective treaties entered into with them(African dictators) by the bi-polar world (Editorial, 2003).

Although democratization was encouraged by the

colonial masters at the twilight of colonialism and flourished briefly after independence, some democratically elected Presidents had begun to put on the garment of dictatorship: muzzling the press and brutalizing the citizens particularly the critical civil societies. When it became imperative for such civilian dictators to be changed by the leaders of bi-polar world, coup de' tat rather than democratic model became the means for regime change. The military was therefore often instigated by either USSR or US to bring about their desired change of government against the civilian dictators or military rulers (as by Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi since 1969; Egypt's Hosni Mubarak since 1978; Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe 1980 and others like Kamuzu Banda who ruled Malawi with iron fist for 30 years, Idi Amin Dada Uganda; Emperor Bokassa of Central African Republic; Mengistus of Ethiopia; Somalia, Eyadema of Togo and Jerry Rawlings of Ghana 1981 - 2001.

As dictatorship is becoming abominable to African leaders they resorted to recycling themselves. In Benin, Mathew Kerekou seized power in 1972 as a young military officer, lost it in 1991 and regained it as civilian head of state in 1996. Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo Republic also seized power in 1979 as a young military officer. He lost it in 1992 and regained it back as civilian President in 1997. In Sierra Leone, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was elected president of his country in 1996. He lost it in 1997 but regained it back in 1998. In, Nigeria, retired General Olusegun Obasanjo came to power through military coup in 1975, voluntarily handed it over in 1979 but came to collect it back in 1999 from those he handed it over to in 1979. Not satisfied with two terms as civilian president of the country, he wanted to elongate his term by tinkering with the constitution. His deputy, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, supported by civil society groups mobilized the entire country against him. Similar effort to stage comeback by retired General Buhari, also a former Nigerian head of state between 1983 and 1985, failed recently. He sought to come back in 2003 and 2007. General Babangida, another former Nigerian head of state between 1985 - 1993 is warming up to come back to power but the civil society groups are not giving him breathing space at all (Obinor, 2003). One notable trait in former military head states wanting to become back as civilian president is that, even though they come back to power through dubious electoral process, they find it difficult to adjust to democratic rulership. Their habit of "command and obey" used to in the military era still trails. Though the civil society groups are not comfortable with this 'half civilian-half military' rulership, there is nothing they could do. They make noise quite all right to the hearing of the unipolar world that appreciates the genuiness of their concern, they (unipolar world), believe half-bread is better than none.

While the military ignored democratic process of attaining power, the civilian dictators manipulate the constitutions to extend their stay in power. But the new fad of

recycle leadership, since military regime is no longer fashionable in Africa, is to stage comebacks directly or indirectly, through dubious electoral process, to collect what they forgot in office in their first comings. Where they themselves are resisted by the electorate, their sons, relations or political protégé are sponsored to replace them. Cases of this include Joseph Kabila who replaced his assassinated father and Jomo Keyanta who ensured that Daniel Arap Moi succeeded him. In prepa-ration to leave office after being there from 1978 - 2002, Daniel Arap Moi wanted to pay back political debt he owed Jomo Keyanta by dragging Keyanta's reluctant son into politics. The son failed in the election but not so in Togo where President Eyadema succeeded in having his son succeeded him after his death.

The collapse of bi-polar world led to redefinition of the concept of sovereignty. The need for dictators by the leaders of bi-polar world is no longer there because one of the rival ideological camps is not only "down and out" but has also submitted to the victory of the other who is now the champion of unipolar world. In the days of bi-polar world, dictators were darlings of rival camps (Capi-talism and Communism). They (leaders of bi-polar world), in fact, encouraged it for, true democratic governments would not be easily amenable to their wishes. But the collapse of one Communism also meant the collapse of what it stood for. Since only one ideology – capitalism – remains standing and the fallen rival one has come to accept its superiority, it became necessary to revert back to system of government – democracy – that is supportive and promotive of that ideology.

Compared therefore, sovereignty under unipolar world is diffused internally and externally. Internally, diffusion of sovereignty means separation of power among the exe-cutive, legislature and judiciary. The check and balances inherent in this arrangement prevents the executive, particularly the head of state or government, from being dictatorial. Externally, the conducts of the three arms of government must conform to international standards. Thus, as against its (sovereignty) embodiment in the dic-tators alone under bi-polar world, the leaders of unipolar world and other challengers of authoritarian rule in Africa: civil societies and women's rights groups, insist on dispersal of sovereignty among executives, legislatures and the judiciaries. Above all, they insist the electorates who periodically elect the governments should be the ultimate sovereignties internally. Externally, the leaders of unipolar world, assisted by the forces of globalization, have flung open enclosed doors of African sovereignties. Governments' activities, be it open or secret can no longer be concealed as information technology has signi-ficantly improved to the extent that whatever is happening in any country could be viewed life everywhere and anywhere in the world. Other forms of communication have improved to the point that one could travel to a travel to a country like US and come back the same day. All these tended to make the world a "global village".

Uniformity in standards all over the world: e.g. good governance, free press, electoral process etc. are some of the elements of globalization that unipolar world wants every nation to conform with. Nelson Mandela, in his last attendance of OAU summit meeting of Heads of State in Burkina Faso, sounded this wakeup call. According to him, "there is need for state to intervene in the internal affairs of member states in certain circumstances" (Asante-Darko, 1999). Corroborating Mandela, Kofi Annan also stated that: "state sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined –not least by the forces of globalization and international co-operation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their people and not vice versa" (Annan, 1999).

In this regard, the international communities operate through certain institutional frameworks that can be identified in political, economic and military angles. Politically, we have United Nation Organization (UNO), European Union (EU), Commonwealth and African Union (AU). AU is further decentralized into regional bodies e.g. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), dominated by Nigeria and Ghana; South African Development Community (SADC), dominated by South Africa. North African countries as a regional bloc is dominated by the trio of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia; East African Community, by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and Central African Community dominated by Cameroon and Gabon (Siddiqi, 2004).

Economically each of these regional bodies has econo-mic grouping such as West African Economic and Mone-tary Union (led by Cote d' Ivoire and Senegal), Central African Economic and Monetary Community (dominated by Cameroon and Gabon) and South African Custom Union (dominated by South Africa) etc.

These regional organizations also have security arms and provisions for member states' troops to mount security operations. Good examples here are the roles of ECOMOG in sending peacekeeping troops to Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. The long-term plan of AU with these peacekeeping forces is eventual integration, streamlining and expansion of the defense and security network of these regional groups across the continent into a standby force. According to AU, "What we are looking for is a standby force that will be trained for peace-keeping purposes and can be dispatched when the need arises" (Ansah, 2004).

AU and these regional bodies have made good gover-nance and democracy the pivot of their new partnership. Hence, the centers of these regional bodies are the ones that the international communities usually select for the location, training and deployment of their troops. But this idea has begun to develop it own problem – conflict over sub-regional leadership. South Africa and Nigeria best illustrate this.

In Southern Africa, the emergence of South Africa as an undisputable regional hegemony and a custodian of democracy and human rights are being challenged by

Zimbabwe and other members of SADC (Margaret, 2000). Although the challenge is on economic front rather than political, it could soon extend to political arena, since in modern politics economy and politics are unidirectional.

Nigeria's role in peacekeeping efforts in West Africa, particularly the recent restoration of democratically elected governments in Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe is touted as evidence of her regional hegemony. But this is debunked by the argument that the coup in Sao Tome in particular, came from a country that is small and weak politically and militarily. Although it is stated that the coup posed political challenge to AU, ECOWAS and Nigeria, her close door neighbour, it did not pose a military challenge. If it had posed a kind of challenge that important and critical countries like Zimbabwe, Sudan and Cote d' Ivoire, that have military capability, could pose, Nigeria, AU and ECOWAS might not have been able to handle it. This appears to be a sound argument given Nigeria's deep ethnic and religious divisions and lack of sound democratic credentials. The two general elections that brought President Obasanjo to power in 1999 and 2003 were fraught with irregularities that seriously marred the credibility of electoral system and the President himself. Since President Obasanjo came into office a number of ethno-religious wars has ravaged and destabilised the country.

Thus, while South Africa's leadership of SADC faces external threat from the other members of the group, Nigeria's hegemony in West Africa, on the other hand, faces internal threat from the ethnic militias, sectarian conflicts and civil society's activities. And if she cannot stabilize her own polity, what evidence has it to maintain peace elsewhere?

International communities withdraw immediately after monitoring electoral process and successful conduction of general elections believed to be the only ways of ensuring the two pillars of AU and ECOWAS agendas: good governance and democracy, leaving the civil society to continue monitoring governments' adherence to the New World Order. The only time the international community returns to a country concerned is when another general elections are about to be held since their major concern is peaceful transfer of power.

It does not end with ensuring peaceful transfer of power or restoration of deposed democratically elected governments. When Tejan Kabah of Sierra Leone was driven out of power by military boys without completing his tenure, the international community ensured his restoration. So were also the cases of Cote de 'Ivoire and Liberia. International judicial institution for trying dictators and war criminals takes over from here, although this has not taken proper footing in Africa. In Europe and America where it has taken root, only one dictator each from the two continents have appeared either before the World court or International Tribunal in Hague .While regime change in Yugoslavia saw the head of the old regime, Milosevic, arrested and taken to the world court for prosecution against human rights violation in his country, the

leader of New World Order, (US), literally invaded Panama, arrested its president, Manuel Noriega, for drug trafficking and later returned him there (Panama) for trial (Krasner, 2000). Saddam Hussein, whose government was overthrown and himself, subsequently arrested by US, was handed over to the interim government in Baghdad for trial in June 2004. He was executed, having been found guilty of human rights violation. Africa joined the league first with the international community supervising the deaths of both General Sani Abacha and Chief MKO Abiola. While General Abacha died in a very curious and suspicious circumstances, Chief MKO Abiola died in the presence of two African leaders of two important international bodies: Kofi Anan for United Nations and Emeka Anyaoku for the Commonwealth of Nations.

In Africa however, in spite of the abundance of deposed dictators, only Charles Taylor has yet appeared before the United Nations-backed international war crime court. He was initially billed to be tried in an international war crime court based in Sierra Leone but the porous security situation of the region that Taylor is familiar with forced the case to be transferred to Hague (Ochai, 2009). The court, some years ago, issued Ghanaian authorities an international warrant for the arrest of Charles Taylor, believed to be behind the political instability in West Africa, when the dictator was attending an ECOWAS-brokered peace meeting in Accra. But the Ghanaian authority ignored the order. Rather, African leaders paved way for him to go on political asylum in Nigeria. Since arrival in Nigeria, the civil right communities were relentless in calling on the Federal government to hand-over the asylum dictator for trial and finally succeeded in having their wish complied with.

Given Africa's growing influence in the international communities, the expectation is high that these regional bodies would aide democratization and accountability by ensuring that African dictators are brought to book after their overthrown. In the last one and a half decades, the numbers of African world leaders who have a say in the regional bodies have been steadily increasing. It started with Nelson Mandela, who regained his freedom and instantly became world state man. Following Mandela was the election of Kofi Annan as the first black African Secretary General of the United Nations. Anyaoku followed Kofi Annan with his emergence as Commonwealth Secretary General. Later, another African, Bola Ajibola, was appointed as World Bank Tribunal President (Fadeyi, 2004). With this increasing strength in world politics, Africa is now making a bold request for a permanent seat in the United Nation's Security Council.

Notwithstanding the shortcoming with regards to few members of African leaders in world bodies, the admixtures of local and foreign institutional frameworks have largely been responsible for democratic regime change in these African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria (West Africa), Rwanda (in the Great Lake region) and Burundi (in the central Africa) in the last one

and half decades.

What is evident in the analysis so far is the coup de grace, which globalization delivered on Westphalia model of sovereignty in Africa (Scholte, 1997). And its replacement with what Asante-Darko termed as "confederate sovereignty". His notion of this is that, in his own words, "a regional collectivity of several ethnic groups is more likely to forestall ethnic domination than the present tiny sovereignties (Asante-Darko, 1999). Krasner also expressed similar view when he talked of "a system in which authority structures over different issues areas are not geographically coterminous" (Krasner, 2000). He sighted European Union as example. Regional groupings in Africa and the recently formed African Union fall in here.

Against this background, the wishes of the electorates are beginning to be held inviolable. Globalization's vigorous push of unipolarity has led to increasing call for democratization. Not just that, civil societies, women's right groups and other groups now strongly emphasis due process in all governmental activities, especially during election periods. These activities have been empowering African peoples and the African states politically. For instance, through democratization, not less than 20 African countries have taken steps towards democratization since 1990. In some cases, incumbents were voted out (Mazrui, 1994). South Africa demonstrated this by successfully transferring power three times – from Mandela to Mbeki, from Mbeki to an interim government and from interim president to Zuma, the present President of South Africa. The emergence of Zuma as president is an interesting one. As former vice-president to Mbeki he lost out in power struggle with him and had to resign to become leading opposition figure within the same party. From opposition stand point he, first, defeated the incumbent president, Mbeki, for the leadership of their party before defeating him in the presidential election. But the model in Ghana is a spectacular one. Ghana demonstrated this twice when Kuffor from opposition party defeated incumbent President Rawlings under who once served as cabinet member. President Kuffor was in turn sent packing by Arthur Mill. In the Republic of Benin, Soglo was also voted out of power. Due to this improving peaceful succession processes some African states have been gaining international Leverage. For instance Ghana's feat earned her the honour of being the first African country to host the first African and black president of United States of America and the leader of unipolar world. In South Africa "exceptionalism" has been bestowed on South Africa by western governments and international financial institutions (Margaret, 2000). Again, South Africa has being giving the honour of the first African country to host World Cup tournament in 2010. Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) made the announcement recently. All these are aimed at rewarding the country's third successful democratic transitions since a decade ago. In as well, the series of sanctions imposed by the international communities during the dictatorial regime of General Abacha have all been lifted.

As military coup is no longer fashionable as means of regime change, some military dictators attempted to corrupt democratic process by wanting to transmute from military head of state to civilian head of state without first resigning from office and compete with other presidential aspirants.

Countries where military rulers attempted transmutations into civilian Presidents included: Nigeria, under Babangida, Abacha and Obasanjo, in Ghana under Rawlings, Niger and in Gambia (Olasupo, 1996; Richard, 1999). Generally, in an attempt to do this, the rule of law was trampled upon while press freedom was abysmally low. Protestations of civil societies to these unconstitutional acts attracted the leader of unipolar world and its Western allies who through bodies such as UNO, EU and Common Wealth; continental bodies e.g. AU; sub- regional bodies e.g. ECOWAS began to apply series of political, economic, social and military sanctions to force the dictators to step down first and re-contest if they so desired to return to office.

Political sanctions, after the failure of the application of diplomatic moves, include expulsion from international organization such as Commonwealth. Zimbabwe is currently under this king of political sanction. Nigeria was under it towards the end of Babangida and Abacha's regime. Economic sanctions take the form of withdrawal of foreign aids, investments, trade, commerce and oil embargo etc. Social sanctions take the form of barring erring country from the international sporting activities such as Olympics games, World Cup tournament, boxing and wrestling. Lastly, military sanction involves stoppage of exchange of military experts, military training exercise and sales of arms. The combination of economic and social sanctions forced Apartheid South Africa to change from minority to majority rule in 1990. When Zimbabwe and Angola were found guilty of fueling the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the EU and the US instigated the IMF and World Bank to delay financial aid to the two countries. Also, during the Liberian crisis, the entire West African sub-region contributed troops to quell the crisis. In Nigeria, following the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election and the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa, United States of America raised security alarm that led to the closure of all embassies, especially those of EU in Lagos. And recently, though outside Africa but nonetheless within the territory of Non-aligned nations is a shining example of internationalization of protest against Iranian authorities. Groups including Human Right Watch and Amnesty International are backing a global day of action, with protests planned in more than 80 world cities. They protest for "release of what they say are hundreds, or even thousands, of people detained during protests that followed the presidential election last month that returned Mamoud Ahmadinejad to power. "Police said

about protesters joined a "noisy but peaceful" demonstration, outside the Iranian embassy in London, one of a series of events in cities across Europe. In Brussels, Belgium, protesters held placard carrying images of the detained or dead, including Neda Agha Soltan, the 27 year old female student whose death, beamed around the world on the Internet – became a rallying cry for opponents of the regime (Osuntokun, 2009).

Because of the collapse of the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states, the head of the New World Order (USA) and her Western allies, have assumed the role of international policemen (Owoeye and Amusan, 2000). This is particularly so of US whose aspects of pronouncements and policies have shown her as either attempting to bend the United Nations Organization to her own will or, in Adekanye's words, playing the bully of weak nations (Adekanye, 2003). What is however curious about the interventions of US in some troubled African countries are her doubled standard approach. While she intervened in Liberia and Democratic Republic of Congo for instances, she failed to do so in Darfur and Rwanda. Reason for this perhaps, was unwillingness to, according to Owoeye and Amusan; expand her resources, especially on the crisis in the two countries that are landlocked. If she had important
interest in these two countries as does in Liberia and Congo, perhaps, she would have intervened (Owoeye and Amusan, 2000: 183).

The pertinent question here is, how could African dictators be compelled to conform to unipolar world regarding the new notions of sovereignty? And by what means possible? The two main issues that pose challenge to African dictators in the unipolar world are their penchant for eternal life in office and the desecration of due process in governmental activities, especially in electoral processes. Among others are exclusion of civil societies and women in particular, from participatory governance. Whereas in the Cold-War era, military and strategic concerns were the primary means of holding down African leaders by either of the rival super powers, in the unipolar world, these have been replaced by economic and human security (Akokpari, 1999). Against African tyrants, since the beginning of unipolar world, withdrawal of support and legitimacy for such tyrants by the unipolar leaders is the first step (Mazrui, 1994). As the law and order begin to breakdown due to civil societies activities, UN backed peacekeeping forces are sent down.

The failure of diplomacy as a strategy to persuade African dictators to abandon their old notion of sovereignty is, followed by real confrontation. This starts by the civil societies and other human rights groups protesting the tenacity of the dictators to the old notion of sovereignty. Most African dictators, after the collapse of the bi-polar world, continue to disdain the sanctity of peoples' wishes. Presidential elections, as in the cases of Nigeria (1993) Algeria (1992) were annulled. Iranians, particularly those outside Iran, are stridently calling for annulment of 2009 presidential election. Sovereignties of the parliaments,

where civil rules exist, are also subverted. Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe are good examples here. The President of Sao Tome and Principe, Menezes, not only single-handedly dissolved the parliament but also dismissed about four or five Prime ministers (Agoawike, 2003). In Senegal, Abdulaye Wade had just appointed his fourth Prime Minister. Her Nigerian Counterpart, President Obasanjo, on the other hand, unilaterally tampered with National Assembly Act on Electoral Bill, unconstitutionally declared a state of emergency in Plateau and Ekiti states and unlawfully denied some state governments' their local government Federal allocations.

For these, Obasanjo was nearly impeached by the National Assembly. In Sao Tome and Principe, Menezes was overthrown by the military although he had since been restored by the international community that considered coup d' tat too severe a punishment. If the overthrow of the Menezes had been through peoples' revolt, that could have, perhaps, been tolerated by the international community rather than the military that had lost credibility. Abdulaye Wade's rapid changes of his Prime Ministers was seen as trying to prevent any other individual within government from gaining too much political clout thereby threatening his position. This is however, a gradual step towards dictatorship (Africa, 2004).

But forcing the dictators (Abacha and Babangida in Nigeria, Charles Taylor in Liberia, Mengistus Hail Mariam of Ethiopia and Idi Amin Dada of Uganda) to step down was not the only focus of attention of civil societies and women's right groups, restoration of deposed democratically elected rulers and democracy in general also catche their attention. In their efforts to do this, international community also lend support. In restoring some deposed democratically elected African leaders, regional hegemons played decisive roles in line with the New World Order. In West Africa for instance, Nigeria and Ghana played prominent role in bringing back to power Presidents Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone (1997) and Menezes of Sao Tome and Pricipe (2003). Similarly in Southern Africa, South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe were the key players in restoring deposed democratically elected government in Lesotho (Olukoshi, 1999).

However, restoration of democracy from authoritarian rule to pluralist democracy is much more complex and tedious. This involves first, the creation of government of transition often referred to as "interim-government". It is this that ensures smooth transition from dictatorial to democratic rule (, 1999:3). Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia and, recently in South Africa, experienced this type of transition. This is more recurrent in Liberia than any other African country. Amos Sawyer, Mrs. Ruth Perry and the current President of Liberia function as interim Presidents of Liberia. In Nigeria Earnest Shonekan func-tioned as interim government for three months. In fact the present civilian administration of Yar 'Adua, is seen in some quarters as interim because of its lack of legitimacy arising from the badly flawed election that brought him to office.

It is necessary to consider here the procedure by which decision- making and taking against removal of dictators in Africa, is made. This will show how parties concerned in the unipolar world interact to bring about and implement such decisions. According to the former US ambassador to Nigeria, Howard Jeter:

President Obasanjo acted with our full knowledge and concurrence. He called me and the British High Commissioner to his office, to inform our respective governments that he has completed his consultation and planned to offer asylum to Mr. Taylor.

It is clear from the above that very important decision-making and taking in the unipolar world is first preceded by consultation among certain actors in the international system. In taking the decision of removing Charles Taylor from office therefore, the actors involved included Nigeria (as hegemon in West Africa and represented by President Obasanjo), Ghana (as the current Chairman of ECOWAS, represented by President Kuffuor), South Africa (Not only the Chairman of African Union but also the hegemon in SADC. She was represented by President Thambo Mbeki). Unipolar world was represented by its leaders (US, represented by President George W. Bush and her ally, UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair) (Akande and Oloja, 2004). This idea of consulting with the leaders of unipolar world is capable of varied interpretation. There are those who may see it as a sort of neo-colonialism. Some other may see it as a form of normative or political colonialism. Whatever the case is, African sovereigns have the right to take or ignore any suggestion or input the unipolar world makes. The most important thing however is that they are no longer totally on their own. Ignore them (leaders of unipolar world) and loose some of the foreign aids you receive from them.

To date, African sovereigns that have been forced out of power or compelled to conform to New World Order regarding international norm of governance and regime change include Liberia (between Charles Taylor and Samuel Doe on one hand and between the Charles Taylor, who was on asylum in Nigeria and later handed over to an International war tribunal, on the other hand); Republic of Benin (between Nicephore Soglo and Mathieu Kerekou); Niger Republic (between General Ibrahim Mainassara Bare and the overthrown constitutional democracy in January 1996), Sierra Leone (between the then military junta and restoration of deposed President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah) and Nigeria (between the military authorities of Abacha/Abdulsalami and the democratic civilian regime of General Obasanjo). From Southern Africa comes the case of South Africa in which leaders of unipolar world compelled racial and minority regime to change to multi racial and majority regime in conformity with the New World Order.

UNIPOLAR WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RULERS

The question of traditional state in Africa is also an albatross on most Africa sovereigns, civil societies and women's rights groups in particular. Using Yoruba nation as an example, traditional states refer to the various kingdoms prevalent in Yoruba land before the advent of colonialism; e.g. Oyo Empire and its various satellite kingdoms such as Ife, Benin, Sabe, Ketu, Egba, Ijebu, Ijesha, Ondo, Ekiti, Ibadan Igbomina etc (Afolayan, 1989: 15; Atanda, 1985: 92; Olowu, 1995: 201). The satellite kingdoms acquired the status of states after the collapse of Oyo Empire. The new kingdoms acquired statehood when they began to acquire their separate state institutions such as military (Eso in Yoruba), police (Olopa or Akoda as known in the colonial days); weapon (earlier, cavalry force, later Eso tradition of semi- professional group of warriors and finally the evolvement of new military strategies that took firearm) and other vital state institutions etc (Ade-Ajayi, 2000; Attanda, 1985) . Post traditional states in Nigeria, according to the 1987 Political Bureau Report, are Emirate or Traditional Councils, confined to the Local Government areas within their communities but loosing legislative, executive and judicial functions that they possessed in the pre-colonial to the new local government system (Mamser, 1987).

Westphalia model of sovereignty that colonial powers imposed on African states at independence is said to be premised on the theory "to justify the king being master in his new modern kingdom, absolute internally" (Keohane, 2000). Across African continent therefore, there have always being conflicts between these post traditional and Westphalia African sovereigns, forcing most Westphalia African sovereigns to re-examine the relevance of post traditional states in modern state. There are those governments that have resolved not only to constitutionally deny participation of traditional rulers in modern states but to "abolish" them completely. Here, we find countries such as Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. But this attempt backfired in Uganda forcing the government of Yoweri Museveni to restore the "cultural" aspects of monarchical systems of governance (Nabudere, 2000). There are those that have democratized the institution to conform to modern system of governance. The leading country in this respect is the Republic of Benin. Here, according to Ayo, there exist constitutional abolition of traditional institutions but instead is the adoption of 'democratic' procedures in "selecting candidates to the respective positions hitherto occupied by candidates selected according to the approved customs and traditions of the people" (Ayoade, 1989). The third categories are those that permit some roles for traditional rulers particularly at the Local level. Some of those African countries that have adopted this approach include: Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Nigeria (Adejumo, 1996).

In countries where post traditional states are allowed, their roles in modern governance, especially at the local level, are limited to social and cultural roles. For instance, the reforms that separated post traditional state from the modern one in Nigeria created a separate council known as Emirate or Traditional council for traditional rulers.

This was later extended to the state level with the creation of the States' Council of Chiefs. In fact, National Council of Traditional Rulers has been in the formation since 1995. It is the same thing in South Africa where 1996 Constitution compelled the parliament to provide a local government role for chiefs, as well as to establish provincial houses and a National Council of Traditional Leaders for them (Jacobs, 2000). However, the roles of these traditional leaders in modern governance, in the two countries sighted above, exclude executive, legislative and judicial functions.

But lack of executive, legislative and judicial roles for traditional leaders has in turn pitched the traditional rulers against modern ones. The traditional rulers claim that before and during the colonial days they exercised these powers and should therefore not be disallowed from further exercise of such powers especially at the local level where they are most relevant. Traditional rulers in modern states thus grumble at the way they are sometimes treated by their principal partners in governance – dictators. But they have no choice because it is under dictators they could be of relevance, if any, in modern governance. In any case, civil societies and women rights groups are not comfortable with them (traditional rulers) not only for constituting the most important source of challenge to the authority and legitimacy of Local Governments, which according to Alex, they engaged in competition for the loyalty and resources of the localities but also for their patriarchal and dictatorial nature that abhors matriachalism in traditional leadership (Gboyega, 1996: 3). This situation is no less different in South Africa where according to Jacobs; the traditional rulers "maintain their unofficial powers in resource allocation in many communities by acting as the de facto local authorities" (Jacobs, 2000: 14). Modern sovereign authorities and their archaic counterparts (traditional rulers) are the targets of bombardments by unipolar world, civil society and women's right groups for their abhorrence of democracy.

CIVIL SOCIETIES

At this point it is pertinent to examine the nature, the content and the issues around which the civil societies collide with sovereignties when they are bending towards dictatorship. How they (civil societies) go about this collision is another area of interest here. The concept has a long history of existence behind it. As a matter of fact it has been in existence several decades before its rediscovery and usage in Western political thought in the nineteenth century by the international political sociology (Ekeh, 1992). It has tended to surface or appear in political arenas or circumstances that offer new opportunities for the freedom of the individual, which contradicts the previous or existing totalitarian regimes that limit individual liberty. In the civil society, individual liberty is the central concern. Echoing the view of Ekeh, Amadu

Sessay, says that the theories on civil society emphasis the role which independent organization such as trade unions, human rights movements, market women's associations, professional bodies such as the bar and bench etc. could play in taming the power of the state and its leaders. Civil society, according to Alex, could therefore be defined as "the arena where civil organizations and social movements have the opportunity or freedom to organize and pursue their interests (Sesay, 1999). In Africa, civil society is characterized by ethnic associations, professional associations, community development associations, trade unions, civil rights and pro-democracy organizations, co-operative unions, youth associations and women groups that carry out important political functions outside the surveillance of the state agencies (Gboyega, 1997).

From the above, the organization of civil societies in Africa can be grouped into five: Human right groups, Pro-Democracy organizations, Cultural/ethnic associations, Professional groups and Labour groups. Among the Human Right groups are Civil liberties organization (CLO), the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), the Gani Fawehinmi Solidarity Association (GFSA) and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADL). Pro-Democracy organizations (in Nigeria especially) include the Council for Unity and Understanding (CUU), Eastern Mandate Union (EMU), People's Consultative Forum (PCF), the Campaign for Democracy (CD) and Movement for National Reformation (MNR). All these political Associations were later forced to come together under one umbrella of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) by the dictatorship of General Abacha. Cultural/ethnic association, in the case of Nigeria include: Afenifere, Ndi-Igbo, Ohaneze, Northern Elders Forum, Ijaw youth movement etc. Professional groups include, Bar Associations, Medical associations, Unions of journalists, Academic Staff Union of Universities, Non Academic Staff Union of Universities, Unions of Teachers, Students associations etc. Labour groups include: Labour congresses, Trade unions, Farmers Unions, Co-operative unions, Community development associations. These civil society organizations have specific interest which they protect against sovereigns' encroachments. But generally they all act to curb the excesses of the sovereigns. Where the sovereigns remain unyielding, they (civil society groups) connect their international colleagues especially in the US and Western Europe who help to drum these outcries to the hearings of their various governments.

Globalization of international systems reinforced by the unipolar world has brought revolutionary change to liberal democracy in the world affairs. The observation of Robert Fatton for Africa is therefore apt and in no other countries more applicable than Nigeria, Rwanda, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. According to him, "aware of civil society's revolutionary potential, Africans are discovering or rediscovering ways of keeping private what they wish out of the

predatory reach of the state. They are creating a reinvigorated civil society, space that seeks to resist the intrusion of the state". More than one and a half decades ago, Rwanda, Nigeria and Liberia regimes witnessed declining legitimacy, decreasing compliance with state directives, increasing criticisms of state officials and practices due to the activities of these civil societies.

Politically, the most devastating demand from the sovereigns in Africa is ethnic demands. They sometimes ask for dismemberment of the affected countries. African countries most affected by this include in Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic republic of Congo, Nigeria and Burundi. To bring the carnage in Burundi under control, peacekeepers from South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and the African Union were drafted to Bujumbura to present what was called the "Made in Africa Peace plan". Before these African leaders and other world leaders, the then new President of the country, Domitien Ndayizeye, affirmed that, "I swear to fight against genocide. I swear before Burundi and the international community that I will never violate the unity charter; that I will respect the Burundi Constitution and the other main laws. With this declaration, Mandela and indeed, the African Union were able to balance the scale of power in Bujumbura.

Some of the issues that these organizational or associational life (civil societies) concern themselves with are human right abuse, election and due process monitoring to ensure compliance with laid down rules and regulations. The major weapon of bringing these to the attention of the sovereign, the general public and indeed, the international community is protest. The protest against the dictators is not confined to home countries of dictators alone but everywhere the dictators go. When for instance African Leaders started arriving Paris for Franco-African summit on February 19, 2003, they all faced protest from human rights campaigners opposed to the presence of Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe. Similarly, when African Union (AU) discovered that transfer of power in Madagascar was unconstitutional, it suspended the country. Again, granting of asylum to deposed Liberian dictator by Nigerian government provoked bitter reactions from the civil society in the country (Africa, 2003). Increasing criticisms of state officials and their bad practices and the growing formal and informal protest from the growing civil society members ultimately lead to the call for Sovereign national conference, in the model of that of Benin and Congo in these countries. For instance, inadequate political reforms of the political system led to the launching of war in October 1990 and the series of political attacks in January 1991, June 1992 and February 1993, in Rwanda. In Nigeria on the other hand, the inconsistency in military handover date to the civilian, led to the temporary excise of some part of the country by some young military officers in 1990 and the June 12 presidential election annulment exploded the civil society activities in the country. So strong are they that their activities permeated

every level of government, particularly in Nigeria. However, while Rwanda had carried out her own conference that has produced a constitution, affirmed by referendum and described as "a step towards democracy" Nigeria is still grappling with what form of constitutional approach: Sovereign, constitutional, national conference or dialogue. At the height of growing dictatorship of President Obasanjo, he categorically declared that there could be no other sovereign with the existing sovereign.

Election monitoring is another important area of focus by civil societies and the international observers of general elections that the Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, sees as "a part of political commodity of the world". Along with the civil societies and the women's rights groups, leaders of unipolar world have operated in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Togo, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Russia. Ironically, the United States of America, the head of the New World Order, refused to allow these international observers to monitor the presidential election between Bush and Gore in 2000. That election turned out to be seriously flawed and made international mockery of American political leadership of New World order (Soyinka, 2003).

In some African countries: Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo where local and international observers monitored their general elections, their (observers) reports indicated that the general elections in these countries were farce. That of Nigeria was monitored by international observers such as Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) headed by it President Kenneth Wallace, European Union Election Observation Mission in Nigeria (EU EOM) lead by Dr. Max Van Den Berg and the Commonwealth mission led by Salim Ahmed Salim. In the case of Togo, Economic Community of West African States parliamentary union, France, the colonial power that still has close link with the country, the United States of America and less than two hundred other international observers monitored similar general election in Togo in 2003. However, the European Union, which froze aid to Togo ten years ago over her lack of democracy and poor human rights record and the United Nations, did not send their observers to monitor Togo's election. While in Nigeria the election was condemned as fraught with irregularities that "include stuffing of ballot boxes, forgery of results, falsification of result sheets, ballot snatching and a variety of other means of rigging" that contradicted the earlier position of the Federal government and the ruling party that the elections were free and fair, former US president, Jimmy Carter, who also monitored the election, said the irregularities were not strong enough to cause annulment of the elections (EU Report on 2003). Meanwhile, European Parliament had called for probe into the cases of "massive electoral fraud" observed during Nigerian's elections in April, especially those of presidential and parliamentary seen as key test of Nigerian democracy. It also recommended that those responsible should be brought to justice. Togo's

foreign observers were yet to make their findings known but opposition parties had started alleging massive electoral fraud that had resulted in outbreak of political violence in the country. In Zimbabwe, her March 2002 presidential election monitored by Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) was equally adjudged fraught with irregularities contrary to the claim of Zimbabwe president, Robert Mugabe, that the election was free and fair. But while election observers in Nigeria encouraged all "stakeholders to actively contribute to a peaceful environment and urged aggrieved parties to resort only to legal remedies through judiciary", in Zimbabwe, the government asked the opposition, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, to withdraw its suit challenging the outcome of 2002 election that returned him into office.

Commonwealth of Nations and most European countries threatened to apply "stronger measures" on Zimbabwe if President Robert Mugabe failed to accommodate the opposition (Africa, 2003; World News, 2003). The main opposition leader in Nigeria too, retired General Buhari, who had been threatening civil disobedience over massive rigging of general elections at last resorted to judicial process asking the court and the international community not to recognize the election purported to have returned the incumbent President. The election in Rwanda on the other hand was a plebiscite towards approving the new constitution for the country. Even then, observers from European and the United States monitored the referendum that was made possible by financial assistance provided by US, Germany and Canada. For a long time therefore, according to an editorial comment, Africa has been the laughing stock of the rest of the world. Elections have ended up either disputed or claimed many lives (Editorial, 2004).

The trample upon the due process by dictators especially the military ones also caught the attention of civil societies who made clarion call to the international community to note dubious metamorphosis of the military head of states in West Africa. In the 1990s, there was a trend in West Africa, termed "ECOWAS PROJECT". The project was about military rulers in the sub-region succeeding themselves as civilian Presidents in what a commentator tagged "suspect elections". Nigeria was said to be the brain behind this "ECOWAS PROJECT" and a former military President, General Babangida, was heading towards succeeding himself when he slipped out of power. His military successor, General Sani Abacha, nursed similar ambition and nearly succeeded before he died in office. Civilian regime of president Obasanjo also attempted self succession but civil society groups did not give him breathing space to actualize this ambition. The dictator however ensured that his stooge became the successor in a roundly flawed general election. Ironically, Nigeria that encouraged and aided Ghana, Niger and Gambia to succeed in this dubious metamorphosis, could not herself 'domesticate' democracy as in the countries she aided and abetted.

Interestingly too is the preventive political measure sometimes taken by the international community against possible political violence in conflict prone countries in Africa. In Nigeria for instance, at the death of General Abacha, the heads of two world bodies, Kofi Annan for UNO and Emeka Anyaoku for Commonwealth, came to negotiate for the release of Chief MKO Abiola, the detained winner of the annulled June 12 1993 presidential election who eventually died before he could be released (Special Editon, 1998). Again, the United Nations Secretary General had, had course to visit Nigeria when after two months since the death of General Abacha, his succes- sor, General Abdul Salami, had problem in forming a new cabinet as a result of which he had to rely on the support of traditional rulers whom Kofi Annan had to discuss with during this difficult period of General Abudusalami Abubakar's regime (Cover, 1998).

LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETIES

The activities of civil societies groups and unipolar world are not limited to the national and provincial levels alone. Their radiant permeated local level as well. The military regimes, particularly those of Generals Babangida and Abacha and their First ladies believed that vitalizing civil society at the local level, political reconstruction would germinate at that level (Joseph, 1999). They thus contributed immensely to the growth and development of local civil societies at that level. They created strong awareness on the rural populace, particularly among rural women. The process led to upspring of very active civil society at that level (Gboyega, 2003). Under Generals Babangida and Abacha's regimes, community participation in governance and development were encouraged by first, restructuring the polling stations to cater for not more then 5000 voters. Besides, the introduction of "Option A4" reinforces effective elections monitoring, to check abuses and to make it easier for the local populace to make informed choices based on their knowledge of candidates (Gboyega, 1996).

Babangida's regime mandated that contestants for June 12 gubernatorial and presidential election must be contested through "Option A4". This aimed at testing the vibrancy of local civil society and also to encourage the elites who had alienated themselves from their roots to re-establish contact with their people. "Option A4" mandated presidential and gubernatorial aspirants to not only identify with their Local Governments but their wards as well. Through this device, the local people made their wish clearly known, that they were aversed to retired generals, who were previously military head of state, recycling themselves. While General Gowon failed the test in 1993, retired General Obasanjo also failed it in 1999 but the military regime of Abdul Salami Abubakar overlooked this and allowed him to contest the presidential election of that year which he won without the support of

his ward (Owu), Local government (Abeokuta South), State government (Ogun) and geographical zone (Western part of the country) (Oma and Ossai, 1993).

It is curious to find some traditional rulers, natural allies of the military and dictatorial regimes in Nigeria also embarking on civil society role. The traditional rulers across the country were divided over the annulment debacle. Most of them supported it (annulment) but there were few who objected as well. Among these few but powerful and influential were Alaafin of Oyo and Awujale of Ijebuland. While the Sultan of Sokoto favored the annulment, Ooni of Ife objected it and threatened that "June 12 was fundamental to the peaceful corporate existence of Nigeria and that nobody concerned with justice, fairness and honesty could ask Abiola to forgo his electoral victory". But Ooni was to capsize and capitulate later after he and some other traditional rulers met with Babangida. His reason for capitulating was that Babangida convinced them 'beyond reasonable' doubt. He later became active participant in the administration of General Abacha, which kept up the momentum of sustaining the annulment. But Alaafin of Oyo and Awujale of Ijebuland, kept the royal opposition afloat although they paid for it dearly. Under General Abacha, Alaafin of Oyo was denied foreign travels several times and when he was eventually allowed one, he was enmeshed in drug scandal at Heathrow Airport in London (Abimbola, 1998). Awujale of Ijebuland on the other hand imposed self-confinement of himself to his palace throughout the duration of Abacha's regime.

In short, the military regimes of Babangida and Abacha had intended to encourage community participation in governance and development as an alternative replacement to the middle class whose support they had lost, but it turned out to be counterproductive.

The workers in the Peoples and Community banks, teachers in the rural primary and secondary schools and the civil servants at the rural Local Government councils, formed themselves into local civil society groups that began to torment these military regimes especially after the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election. Implied in the annulment, which they fought against, was the decision of the military to intervene in the political process that had the consequence of widening the political space of the civil society. A lot of militant civil organizations emanated during this period to challenge the annulment and called for the de-annulment. Local civil society groups were not left out. Long after leaving office, General Babangida confessed in an interview that the resistance, which the civil society put up was weak and that was why he was able to go away with the annulment and most of the other political and economic crimes (Gboyega, 1997).

WOMEN'S RIGHT GROUPS

Political and religious rights are some of the important issues confronting women in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. As usual, sovereign authorities at the national, provincial and local levels (in other words modern and traditional rulers) are responsible for the persistent suppression and repression of women's rights. However, these and other women affairs in the last three decades engaged the attention of United Nations. This is particularly so in the last two decades, especially since 1990. The forces of globalization in the unipolar world immensely contributed to the series of upliftments of women status politically, economically and socially. The first United Nations Conference on Women was held in Mexico to mark the beginning of International Women's year, 1975. The conference delegates in Mexico adopted a Plan of Action which aimed to improve the status of women. 1976 - 1985 was duly designated as the United Nations Decades for the Advancement of women. In 1976, according to Steans, INSTRAW and the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women (UNIFEM) were set up (Steans, 2000). Midway point in the UN Decade for Women, 1976, the Second United Nations Conference held in Copenhagen in 1980.

The third UN Conference on Women was held in Nairobi in 1985, at the end of UN Decade for Women. The Conference produced an important document called Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 (FLSAW). The strategies outlined in the document, a wake up call for African continent, aimed to protect women's interests in health, employment, family life, political life and also promote women's human rights. It is stated that since the UN Decade for Women in 1976, UN development agencies have included sections that are specifically charged to advance the interests of women. The sections have not only pushed for a greater degree of gender sensitivity in government policies but have also increased the awareness of the problems of women's double burden, for equal access to and control over land and property, and for equal access to credit (Steans, 2000).

The Fourth UN Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. And it was described as the largest UN conference to date. The conference took place after the Commission on the Status of Women had met in 1990 to review the progress of the FLSAW since 1985. The commission decided that not enough progress had been made. The Draft Platform for Action which was negotiated at Beijing echoed many of the key themes and objectives of the FLSAW. It identified eleven specific areas of concern: poverty, access to education, inequality in health- care provision, violence against women, the needs of women refugees, access to participation in economic decision-making structure, greater participation in public life and the political process, improvement in monitoring mechanisms, improvements in the awareness on the part of women of the commitments made by member states, the representation of women in the media and finally, women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment. The

conference 'Platform of Action' made explicit linkages between the empowerment of women, access to reproductive health care, equality and women's human rights (Steans, 2000).

These form the basis for the upsurge of women's rights groups in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The advent of unipolar world, pushed vigorously by globalization, also brought sovereigns (traditional rulers and Westphalia model) in Africa, under intense focus of these women's rights groups. These sovereigns are seen as patriarchal dominated. Starting with the Westphalia African sovereigns, no African country, until recently in Liberia, had produced a democratically elected woman head of state despite the series of global agenda on women. But in the last two decades however, women in Africa have made significant improvement challenging both patriarchal traditional rulers and the Westphalia sovereigns in Africa. Before Liberia had her first democratically elected woman head of state in Africa, she had emerged the first African country to have a woman head of state. Assisted by the international community, Liberia in 1996, appointed Mrs. Ruth Perry as interim president of the county for the 1996 - 1997 term (Features, 2003). Spectacular improvement however came from Gambia and Uganda that, through democratic process, provided the first two female vice-presidents.

This is significant considering the pace of women political advancement in the centers of unipolar world: USA and Europe. While the leaders of unipolar world recorded their first woman Prime Minister in Britain in the 1980s, Africa, through Liberia, recorded her own in the 1990s. Equally significant is the fact that while women in Britain won the right to vote in 1920s and produced her female head of government 80 years later, Africa that began to emerge form colonization in 1950s had her own female head of government 46 years after (Editorial, 2004). Again, as a Third World continent, Africa is proud that a fellow Third World continent, Asia, is ahead of the world in the production of women sovereigns. India, unarguable the world's largest democracy, produced the first world woman head of government after Israel. This is in respect of distinguished and astute personality of the late Indira Gandhi. India repeated the feat recently when it elected Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. Surprisingly, Sonia turned down the offer of a Prime Minister perhaps to avoid what Salman Rushdie referred to as "Italian Prime Minister in India". Anyway, she emerged as the speaker of the Congress, the first woman to do so in the political history of the country and the world only to be followed recently in USA with the election of Pelosi as the first female speaker in the country. Nigeria joined in this in 2007 when Madam Patricia Etteh became the first woman speaker of the House of Representatives. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are also in this league of countries that have produced women head of state. America nearly attained the feat in Mrs. Clinton but failed. She however made up for that by electing the first African and Black

President in America. It is rather ironic however, that US and her western allies that are pace setters in human rights struggle are the one being set paced for by the third world countries on the issue women head of state.

Apart from Liberia, Gambia and Uganda that have produced President and Vice-Presidents respectively Nigeria appears to be the next in terms of women participation in party politics. The first woman attempt at governance through elective post was the election of Mrs. Remi Aiyedun, a member of the Action Group (AG) party, who was elected into the Western Region legislature in 1953 and doubled as the first woman parliamentarian in the whole of West Africa. However, there was another woman member of the region's legislature at that time but she, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, unlike her counterpart, was nominated. In a nutshell, throughout the First Republic, there was totality of five women parliamentarians. In addition to the earlier mentioned two, others were Wuraola Esan, Bernice Kerry and Janet Mokelu – from the other parts of the country (Uzoanya, 2002).

The Second Republic saw the upward movement of women from Regional level to the Federal level both in elective and nominative posts – as national legislators and ministers. Towards third republic, of the 567 members of the Constituent Assembly, 14 were women and out of this number five were elected while the remaining nine were appointed. The similitude of this at the States' level was, out of the total number of 1172 members of the States' Houses of Assembly, 27 were women and of the three hundred (300) gubernatorial aspirants, eight were women but none of them got elected. While none of them won the primaries of their parties and did not therefore contest the election proper, there were some who got elected as deputy governor. The first woman presidential aspirant in the country is Mrs. Sarah Jubril who effectively competed with her male counterparts in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to vie for the presidential ticket. Though she lost the ticket to her male counterpart, she nonetheless impacted on the primaries by becoming fourth in the primaries held in Jos. Undaunted by the loss she teamed up with the winner of the primaries and the presidential flag bearer of her party, Chief M.K.O Abiola. In recognition of her strong political attribute, she was integrated into the Hope '93 campaign team of the winner of SDP primaries, to work assiduously for the victory of the party's flag bearer. Though the success of the party was annulled, she formed part of those who made the success possible.

Fourth Republic is not only the most impressive but colorful as well, in women ascendancy and political turnover in national politics. The beauty of this republic was not just election of women into elective posts but more importantly the emergence of four of them as Speakers of their various Houses of Assembly.

At the local level where two parallel governing institutions exists: traditional rulers and democratic local governments (most often composed of local tyrants),

women's right groups had a lot to contend with here. First and the most important are the traditional rulers who are the custodian of culture and tradition that inhibit women's talents and rights. Here, women's rights groups at the national and provincial levels attempt and successfully in most cases, in uplifting rural women politically, economically and socially.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Political empowerments of women, particularly the rural ones, are of two categories: appointive and elective. For the elective one, appointment such as National Defense Adviser, Defense and Finance Ministers etc African women have made significant stride. But this is due to global trend of reserving certain percent of appointive posts in governance for women. In South Africa for instance, African National Congress (ANC) has come to recognize, introduce and adopt proportional representation of a 30% women quota for its party list. In other words, South Africa now gives women 30% participation in administration just as the recently approved constitution for Rwanda also reserved a minimum of 30% of parliamentary seat for women (Cover, 2003).

Of course, gender quota system is becoming a global fad as women in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Netherlands and Iceland occupy at least a third of their Houses of legislature. In India espe-cially, the 1993 constitutional amendment reserved 33% of seats for women in local councils through which about one million women of the country enter into its politics.

It was against this background that President Olusegun Obasanjo, during his 1998 presidential campaign promised to reserve 30% of participation in his administration for women. Prior to this time, the 1976 Local Government reform merely stipulated that while elected members in councils be not more than bution but on the good will of her father, the late Premier of Western Region, Chief S.L Akintola, was Dr. (Miss) Bimbo Akintola, NPN, Oyo State (Uzoanya, 2002).

Under President Obasanjo's government, virtually all the women ministerial nominees were appointed not on their personal merit in terms of their personal political contribution but due to the good will legacy of either their parents or political godfathers. The contribution of Chief Abraham Adesonya, the leader of the Yorubas, to democracy struggle, was responsible for the appointment of his daughter (Mrs. Adelaja) as Minister of State (defense) and later, as solid mineral minister but now a Director-General of Small and Medium Scale enterprises. The daughter of the late Premier of Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. (Mrs.) Awolowo Dosumu, was made ambassador to the Netherlands. Other ministerial nominees whose appointments anchored on godfathers were Dr. (Mrs.) Amina Ndalolo from Kwara State, Minister of state in the ministry of health, Mrs. Paullen Tallen from

Plateau State (Minister of state in science and technology ministry), Mrs. Bekky Kelebu Igwe from Bayelsa State (Minister of state), Dr. (Mrs.) Kema Chikwe from Imo State (Minister of Transport), Hajia Aishat Ismail, (Minister of Women Affairs and Development) Ms. Boma Bromillow Jack, (Culture and Tourism minister)

Interestingly, the leaders of unipolar world USA and her European allies also acted as godfather to one of the ministers under Obasanjo's regime. The then Finance Minister, Mrs. Ngozi Iwela, is an employee of the World Bank, interested in restructuring Nigeria's economy. She is believed to have been recommended for appointment as minister, by the unipolar world, to over see their interests. But what baffled most Nigerians was the payment of her salary in dollars as against her counterpart ministers who received their salaries in local currency. Though Mrs Ngozi Iwela is a Nigerian by birth, she has become adopted citizen of the centers of unipolar world: US and her western allies.

Politically "Option A4" and the office of First ladies – at the national, state and local levels – became an opportunity for women's right groups to advance the cause of rural women. While "Option A4" empowered women politically since they constitute the majority of rural voters, First ladies office not only complements the efforts of their husbands in rural program delivery, but also establishes their own independent outfits for series of mobilizations at the local level. The goal of these series of mobilization efforts of First Ladies according to Alex, are:

(a) To raise women's consciousness of their social and political rights.
(b) Organize them into associations to attract Government's support.
(c) Enable them to better pursue their collective interests (Gboyega, 1996; Ibrahim, 2003). Women right groups manipulated these to advance the cause of rural women.

This has since been bearing fruits. Out of the 774 Local Government Councils in the country, in 1987, three women for the first time became elected as Local Government Chairmen in Ogun, Katsina and Kaduna States respectively (Adekunbi, 2003). This increased to nine in December 5, 1998 Local Government election, scattered among the following states: Lagos, Katsina, Kaduna, Benue, Delta states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Cover, 2002). Since then however, there has been women explosion in local politics especially in Kano State where rich Islamic and cultural traditions combine to repress women participation in politics. In the Local Government elections that came up in June 21, 2003, over more than one hundred (100) women sought elective posts either as Councilors or Local Government Chairpersons in Kano State alone (Ujo, 2002).

The emergence of three women as Local Government Chairmen in 1987 and nine in 1998, for the first time, in

the history of elective post in Nigeria, is spectacular in three important respects.

First of all, women have made their debut in elective post at the local level where the holds of traditions and customs are strongest. Secondly, they contested that election on the experimentation of zero party basis and therefore won the election on their personal recognition rather than through party affiliate. Thirdly, as a result of zero party bases, religion became the platforms under which the candidates contested that election. Fourthly, it instituted religious politics, on a massive scale at the local or rural level where major decision and in deed most decisions are sentimentally determined. However, it was in the Northern part of the country this drama was spectacularly displayed. In most parts of the North, religious sentiments e.g. Christianity versus Islam or intra-religious bias e.g. Izala versus brotherhood, is common. Thus, the 1987 zero party Local Government election was underpinned by religious campaign (Kukah, 1993).

Despite the National Electoral Commission's threat of disqualifying candidates found guilty of religious senti-ments, "Mosques and Churches become the convenient soap boxes for the announcement of the names of those candidates that had been picked to represent the interests of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) or Jamaatu Nasil Islam (JNI)" (Babalola, 2001). Mrs Cecilia Checet, a Chris-tian and a female Muslim candidate, contested for that election. Prior to the election, a Muslim scholar, Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, the leader of Izala Muslim organisation and an international award winner, had contemptuously remarked that he did not hope to see a woman leader emerge in his life (Kukah, 1993). This position of Gumi is supported by the Islamic religion that forbids its followers to vote for any leader unless the person is a Muslim and a male, not female (Cover, (2002). When the result of the election came, Mrs. Cecilia Checet who incidentally came from the ward of Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, the leader of Izala Muslim organisation, and her tormentor in chief, won the election (Kukah, 1993).

Thus, so daring have local women civil society groups become that they have become active players not only in local politics but national ones as well. Operating under the ambit of the National Representative of Women in Nigeria (WIN) rural market women equally threatened that "unless General Babangida relinquished power to the winner of the June 12 election unfailingly on August 27, permanent damage will be done to the political and territorial integrity of the nation" (Gboyega, 1997). Thus, while Babangida was creating and developing community based organizations or institutions, he little knew that not only was he sowing the seed of civil society at the local level, he was in fact wetting and tendering it towards increasing community participation not only in good governance but also in resistance to bad governance.

Another important political area which women's right groups have focused their attention on is the traditional rulership institution. They have encouraged women from royal homes to form associations to advance their cause in traditional rulership. In Nigeria today, you can find association of Princesses, regents and traditional rulers (Olasupo, Forthcoming) . Recently, national association of female traditional rulers was formed at the Department of local government studies, faculty of administration, Obafemi Awolowo University (Ogunmodede, 2009: 4; Adetunji, 2009: 29, 61). The National Association of Female Traditional Rulers in Nigeria have become so active that when a male monarch, Owa-Ajero of Ijero, Oba Adetayo Adewole, debunked existence of female traditional rulers, the female monarchs rushed to the press to counter him. According to the Royal mothers; "the Ajero's position was out of malice and a demonstration of gender insensitivity in the country, with pervasive belief that women should be relegated to the background" (Ogunmodede, 2009: 4). A newly discovered woman traditional ruler from the Niger state (Hajia Hadiza Mohammed, the Magajia of Kumbada) also reacted thus when she was contacted for reaction to the male ruler's outburst "I am the first officially turbaned ruler of the throne recognized by the local and state governments. Before then, the whole thing was done at the village level, with small district heads in attendance. But I was turbaned in the palace of the Emire of Minna and I am the only woman that rules her people, in accordance with their tradition in this part of the world. During my turban-ing, the emir's palace was filled with people from different parts of the country" (Olasupo, 2007; Ojebisi, 2003).

Citing Nigeria as example, a study conducted shows that in all the 774 Local Governments in Nigeria, there are 774 Emirate/traditional councils contained in them (774 Local Governments). These councils are not just patriarchal dominated but also matriarchal excluded. Similarly, in all the 36 States' Councils of Chiefs in the 36 states of the Federation there is no female member, much less dominating it. The story is the same at the National Traditional Rulers Forum (Olasupo, 2005; Arifayan, 2000) Olasupo, 2007). At the National Councils of States' meetings, representatives of traditional rulers are also present. And here, they are said to be directly immersed in politics and consequently gather more influence (Ikara, 1985). These modernized traditional institutions have been found to be empowering male traditional rulers politically, economically and socially to the exclusion of female traditional rulers. For instance, Women in Nigeria and South Africa have missed a lot of advantages driva-ble from membership in the traditional leadership. Aside their relegation from the system in the pre-colonial system, colonial era also maintained this in the days of Native Authority system when the traditional rulers were presidents of local governments down to independence period. When in 1946, particularly in Nigeria, Governor Richard began to construct National legislative council, Native Authorities, according to Akpan (1967) formed themselves into electoral colleges for the election of the representatives to the central legislature and those chiefs

elected to the national legislature were men all since women have little or no recognition in traditional leadership (Akpan, 1967). Again, in 1976, when it became necessary to separate democratic local government from traditional institutions because of the competition the latter engaged the former in the loyalty and resources of the localities, no consideration was given to women at all.

This explains why the reaction of women monarchs is gradually getting militant. While women regents are rebelling by refusing to vacate regent positions that some of them occupy, female traditional rulers who were being disturbed from demanding for their rights have gone to obtain the services of a lawyer who now consult for them. In Ondo and Ekiti states, it took women regents to rebel against the tradition and the Western state government, under which the two states were in the past, before the government agreed to legislate to accommodate women regents in these two areas. Although no timetable is traditionally ordained within which regents must quit the stool according to the tradition of the people, the tenure is expected to be brief, at most three months. But some regents, in modern times, are reluctant to vacate the throne. Instead of a maximum period of three months regency there are those regents that have rebelled and spent between 5 and 17 years on the throne (Olasupo, 2007; Olasupo, 2005). Some of them who have tasted and, are still tasting the office could not see any thing special and exclusive for men alone in it. The last regent of Akure, Princess Adeyinka Adesida, who left the throne a year or two ago, said the regent is: "the custodian of the custom and tradition of Akure. The regent is not elected or selected but appointed by nature. Therefore, the regent is to sit on the throne until a new Deji is appointed by the government and crowned by the Akure community. According to the tradition of Akure, when Deji is crowned, his first and eldest daughter was crowned with him on the same day and the daughter becomes the regent immediately after the demise of the Deji" (Olasupo, 2007, 2005).

The matter of regency in these sections of Yoruba community is as old as the institution itself, but it began to carry the stamp of state authority since 1981 when, due to women regents' rebellion, Morgan Commission was set up to look into the matter. Its report, which reviewed the chiefs Laws Cap 19, Laws of Western Nigeria as applicable to Ekiti state, recommended that whenever a chieftaincy stool becomes vacant "a Regency Council should be appointed to perform all the duties of such an Oba during the interregnum". The recommendation was wholly accepted with a caveat that the regent must be a celibate and also the daughter of a deceased Oba or the next high-ranking chief to the deceased Oba. The implication of a male child delivered of a woman while on the throne and the possibility of the consequent threat of a parallel ruling lineage is one problem the protagonists of the institution decided to insert this provision (Olasupo, 2007, 2005). But the regents have begun to break this

tie. Not less three women regent have, contrary to the tradition, bore baby on the throne: Regent (Mrs.) C. A Falade of Ido- Ani in Ose Local government of Ondo state who spent 15 years on the throne; Regent Jolade of Ero in Ifedore Local government of Ondo state, now on her 9th year on the throne and Regent Adeola Adeosun of Erin-Ijesha in Ori-Ade Local government of Osun-state, now on her 10th year on the throne.

Attempt by a woman kingmaker, Erelu Abiola Dosum, in Lagos state, to draw Lagos state traditional council into regency tradition when Oba Oyekan died recently, failed. She, Erelu Abiola Dosumu, had expected the kingmakers to appoint her as regent following the death of the previous occupant of the throne. However, according to the traditional Prime Minister to the Oba of Lagos, Chief Tajudeen, Gbadesere Eletu, "Unlike in other parts of the country where regents are appointed to rule when an Oba departs, ours is different in Lagos here because our own tradition is unique"(Aladelokun, 2003). Not only was she, Erelu Kuti of Lagos, denied of her ambition to be named the regent she was also excluded in the selection process of the new Oba to which she was supposed to be part because of her office as Erelu Kuti of Lagos. She contested this. According to her: "the only institution in existence in Lagos is the Oba- in-council, comprising five white cap chiefs and the Erelu" (Olasupo, 2007, 2005). In the appointment of a new Oba without her involvement as one of the kingmakers she resisted these injustice and discrimination by calling for protest, this was her comment: "We have not got a king. We are still waiting for the one God will choose. Those people who invaded our shrine today are just visitors…The massive protest witnessed here today indicate that the person appointed does not enjoy the acceptability of the people" (Olasupo, 2007).

Interestingly, as male king-makers in Lagos were making life difficult for the only female king-maker among them regarding regency and selection of the new Oba of Lagos, the regent in Akure, Ondo state, was equally making things tough for male aspirants to the throne of Deji of Akure. The new Deji elect, Prince Adegbola Adelabu, thus accused the regent, Princess Adeyinka Adesida, of blocking his way to the throne. But the regent responded thus: "as the current custodian of Akure tradition and custom, my duty is to see that selection of a new Deji is done in a proper way. It should be made clear that the regent of Akure is not after anybody" (Adesanmi, 2004, Olasupo, 2007).

Though Princesses are the most directly affected by the male bias as traditional rulers, women commoners also felt this moral repugnance about the discriminatory policies of some of these patriarchal and dictatorial chiefs. These have, in some places, resulted in open confrontation with the monarchs. A pertinent example here is the recent confrontation between Itsekiri women leaders and their traditional ruler, Olu of Warri, for not just only excluding them from traditional rule but more importantly

for appointing their leaders for them both in Nigeria and diaspora. Besides the imposition of unwanted leader on them, other accusations leveled against the monarch by this women group in Warri, Delta state, were: "Since your enthronement, there have been unrest and disunity in our lands" most of these according to them, led to killing and banishment of children of Ugborodo. Besides, the monarch was further accused of barring "Itsekiri groups and individuals from expressing personal opinions through paid adverts and other means on the administration of the kingdom" (Olasupo, 2006; Adekunbi, 2003).

Given the emerging struggle between Princes and Princesses for the position of traditional ruler in some communities that have for long been held by males the question is how could the modernization and democratization of traditional ruler ship be effected to take care of women dilemma in this increasingly modernizing primordial rulership? This is a dilemma that faces the modern sovereigns in Africa today. As discussed earlier in this paper Nigeria and South African governments have taken steps in this direction. Separate councils have been created for traditional rulers at all the levels of governments. As a matter of fact, some scholars have begun to refer to these traditional councils at all the levels of government as "fourth level of government" or "fourth estate of the realm", "grass-root" government or community government, "village government" "local development agencies" village development organs etc. They (traditional councils) are seen as "alternative non state structures that can respond to the economic and social needs" of the people. Conceptually, "it focuses on the totality of structures within the local community that comprises both state and society organizations (Aidelokhai and Ehizuelen, 1997: 117; Aborisade and Mundt, 1995: 2; Olowu, 1999: 288)

The attributes of these types of government as distinct from conventional Local Government system are: non-state organs rooted in the indigenous traditions of social order, voluntary and most important, "active and often successful in the provision of services required by their clientele". In recent time, according to Olowu, some of them have become active in the political arena as well (Olowu, 1999: 289).

The differences between these "traditional government" and Local Government are in the areas of legislative role (making of bye-laws) and democratization. Whereas modern Nigerian Local Government system is democratic, representative, legislative and executive, "traditional government" of Babangida's vision lacked all these attributes and thus merely assists the other levels of government in service delivery, dissemination of information and explanation of government policy to the rural populace (Mead, 1995: 198).

Rural government or government by traditional rulers is not new in the country. As British agents, Sir Frederick Lugard used them to govern their domains especially in the rural areas where they "served as important link be-

tween government and the populace; "small claims administrators of justice, mobilizers of support for government policies and as mechanisms for social change".

However, despite the separation of the traditional rulers from modern rule (Local Government), there are still areas of intercourse between the two. First, under the military, a place was designed "for the traditional institutions in the form of a Consultative Council of Chiefs in each local government area which is expected to meet bimonthly and consult with the Chairman and the Supervisory Councilors of the local government" (Aidelokhai and Ehizuelen, 1999: 216). Secondly, Local Governments are also expected to make available to the office of the Traditional Councils, their draft estimates well in advance for advisory comments of the traditional rulers (Aidelokhai and Ehizuelen, 1999: 216). As public office holders of the various Local Government councils they became governmental instrument in the hands of the super and supra governments. Although some steps such as payment of their salaries, just like those of judges and diplomats/ambassadors from the consolida-ted fund, were taken to effect their insulation from politics, they were to no avail (Aidelokhai and Ehizuelen, 1999: 216).

The main issue here which women rights groups are hammering on is insufficient democratization especially of traditional institutions to accommodate more women traditional rulers on one hand and local government chairpersons on the other. These form the most important problematic area they are tackling at the local level. Their tormentors at this level are traditional rulers and local government chairmen seen and known as local tyrants. To cross these hurdles, women right groups are suggesting "proportional electoral system, quota and anti-discriminatory measures, cultural and socio-economic factors that allowed the compatibility of work and family life. The importance of the legislative recruitment process and of electoral systems to women's participation in governance was also identified by IDEA (2002) in the analysis of the processes that allow for the participation of women in parliaments". "The establishment of a democratic culture" they went on, "is one of the imperatives for the attainment of gender equity and equality. As explained by Ahern et al (2000), a democratic culture stimulates the development of women's political consciousness and action. In such a context, there are new actors, new alliances and social and political relations that allow marginalized groups to share power. However, their incorporation into the power structure depends on the nature of the political groups, their place in them and the system of attaining power" (Afoja and Olasupo, Forthcoming).

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

With the partial attainment of political empowerment for the rural women, the focus of women's rights groups

shifted to economic empowerment. And the process, according to them, is establishments of local economic institutions to assist the rural people. Two of such institutions are Peoples' and Community banks. Peoples' banks are to provide credit for disadvantage people (women in particular) who could not meet the usual conditions of the normal commercial banks. Community banks on the other hand, are also to provide banking services to needy communities. The unique aspect of the community banks system, according to Alex, is that it is conceived to be "a self-sustaining financial institution owned and managed by a community or groups of communities, for the purpose of providing credit, deposit, banking services to its members, largely on the basis of self-recognition and creditworthiness" (Gboyega, 1996).

Women's right groups are not alone in economic empowerment of rural women. The Nigerian Labour congress is also an interested party. Often, the bones of contention between them and the sovereigns are increase in fuel prices, salary increase and payment of arrears. Most of often, excruciating economic policies of sovereigns often lead to bloody protests. But the interesting dimension to this in the recent times is the involvement of law enforcement agents of the sovereigns against the sovereigns. In Nigeria and Senegal in particular, the police have protested harsh economic policies by dawning tools. They (police) claim that poor services delivery by them is attributable to inadequate manpower, insufficient operational equipments that expose them to attack by criminals and rioters during civil disobedience and above all, poor salary structure and motivation from the government and even the general public. Police protest has become a rampant exercise in Senegal. Since 1983 it had taken place three other times: 1987, 1995 and 1996 in Senegal and February 1, 2002 in Nigeria (Gueye, 1987).

Although the rebel of state's agent against the state is a common phenomenon in Africa (e.g. coup d' etat) never had police involved in this until about two and a half decades ago, starting with Senegal and later Nigeria. Although they may not be the first ones in the world and in deed, third world countries, they remain the only two African countries, to date, to lay these unprecedented examples of state's agent siding with the civil societies in confronting the sovereignties. Other known countries that the police had rebelled against the states were Philippines and Argentina. Though they are not African countries, they are third world countries like their African counterparts'.

The contributions of Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) in assisting the civil societies to tame dictatorial African sovereignties also need mentioning. Non-governmental organizations are concerned primarily with assisting Nigerian communities socially and economically. Generally, many of them have disdain for government policy or for its bureaucratic procedures (Uwujaren, 1997). At any rate, many of these organizations (NGO)

source for funds nationally and internationally except from the military or dictatorial civilian government. Although attempt was made by General Babangida's administration in Nigeria to compromise them, it did not succeed. Non Governmental Organizations are mostly concerned with their independence of the government. But dictatorial governments are never comfortable with this and hence often try to curtail them.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Socially and unexpectedly, women's rights under civilian regime of Obasanjo suffered serious damage due to application of Sharia criminal code in some northern states of the country. But it also led to upsurge of formation of new women's rights groups. Some of these include Women Law Development Centre, headed by Prof. Jadesola Akande, Women Consortium headed by Mrs. Olateru Olagbegi, Women Leadership Group, by Mrs. Nkechi Nwanko, Gender and Development Action headed by Mrs Nkoyo Toyo and many others (Cover, 2001, 2002). While Sokoto and Katsina sentenced Sefinat and Aminat to death by stoning for committing adultery, Zamfara state amputated the right hand – the most useful of the two hands – of Mallam Jengade found guilty of stealing a cow. The manner in which the death sentences passed on Sefinat and Aminat were to be carried out – stoning – and the fact that both of them were nursing mothers, were repugnant to the national and international communities. Similar to this, during the anti-apartheid days there was the case of not less 200 women that included the wives of Desmond Tutu, Leah, Rev. Allan Boesak, Dorothy and Mrs. Dorothy Zihlagu, the 67 year-old chair of the Federation of South African women, who were arrested and detained for exercising their rights in engaging in a series of religious-politico rallies aimed at enforcing their rights. The apartheid government of the era had banned political rallies that made Church services became political rallies (South Africa, 1539). The pressure from the international community later forced the courts trying these women to drop the cases. One of these victims, Aminat, was later invited by the Vatican for award, for her struggle against oppressive government while the leader of unipolar world seriously indicted Nigeria's sovereign.

Doing so through her Secretary of State, Colin Powel, while presenting Nigeria's report on Human Rights practices for year 2000 to the US congress, said "The Nigerian police, army and security forces continue to commit extra judicial killings and use excessive force to quell civil unrest and ethnic violence, although they did so less frequently than they did under previous military government" (Longman, 1999). The report further stated that Nigeria's army, police and security forces regularly beat protesters, criminal suspects, detainees and convicted prisoners".

However, the charge of dictatorship is gradually being

leveled against the leader of unipolar world, US, as well. After successful interventions in the internal affairs of perceived weaker countries, it has been observed that she has always attempted to assume absolute control of the affairs of such countries concerned, ignoring democratic process in decision-making, even within its allies, as were the cases in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti. In the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, United States of America no longer consulted the United Nations and its allies in European Union (EU), much less of the Afghans and Iraqis, in the internal management of their conquered countries. In Haiti on the other hand, the President of that country was asked to step down from power by US that installed him in the first instance. But in looking for asylum for him, African continent was the target. He was temporarily in Nigeria before he was permanently settled in South Africa. Charles Taylor, former Liberian warlord and elected president, was, under US supervision, eased out of power and dumped in Nigeria. He was transferred to Hague in Netherlands for criminal proceedings under persistent pressure on Nigerian sovereign to hand him over to international police.

Nevertheless, the leaders of unipolar world need our commendation for setting out to implement the agenda of the New World Order – global agenda of democratization, liberalization, competition, peace and self-determination by confronting both civil and military dictators especially in Africa (Woods, 2000; Akokpari, 2002). Sovereignties that had denied civil societies and women's right groups, space in governance, came under intense focus of these leaders of unipolar world who have successfully wrestled them (Victor and Olusola, 2000).

Conclusion

In examining the challenge that the unipolar world poses to Africa only an aspect but very important fraction of African problems, political problem, is here considered. On one hand is the grumbling from the sovereigns in post traditional states over dominance of power by Westphalia sovereigns in Africa. On the other hand, are the unipolar world, civil societies and women's rights groups challenging both post traditional and modern sovereigns for their dictatorial habits and exclusiveness in governance?

In the Middle East for example, after centuries of conflict between the Arabs, represented lately by the Palestinians and the Jew, represented by Israel, on April 30th 2003, a road map for peace by the US, UN, EU and Russia was given to Israel and Palestinians, calling for Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza stripe by 2005. In the Gulf region, those believed to be sponsoring terrorism across the world –Afghanistan and Iraq have been routed out of power.

Again, third world countries such as Iran and North Korea believed to be in possession of weapons of mass destruction or about building one, or harboring terrorists, have been warned to disarm, discontinue or face the

consequence that Afghanistan and Iraq faced recently.

In Africa, dictatorial African sovereigns are now the focus of the leaders of unipolar world, civil societies and women's rights groups. From the unipolar world, African dictators face external challenge over the need to drop old notion of Westphalia model of sovereignty. Internally, on the other hand, civil societies and women's rights groups challenge the dictators to make governance all embracing instead of one man show that has led most of African states to "Failed states".

"A United States based think-thank and an independent research organization, the Fund for Peace and Foreign Police magazine have since 2005 been publishing the Yearly Failed State Index. After conducting a survey on 177 countries, the organization, on 15 July 2009, released their data for this year. In the report Nigeria was ranked 15th on a chart of the world's failed nations. For Nigeria, the situation has, under Yar' Adua, been going from bad to worse. In 2008, Nigeria occupied the 18th position. In 2007, it placed 17th. For the second time, Somalia, according to the organizations, emerged as the most failed state. On the other side of the divide is Norway (177th), which emerged the "best or most sustainable state". It is followed by Finland, 176th; Sweden, 175th, Switzerland, 174th; Ireland 173rd; UK 161st and the USA, 159th (Adegbamigbe, 2009).

Ghana, at 124th is Africa's placed nation. Following Somalia in the booby prize, however are Zimbabwe, 2nd; Sudan, 3rd; Chad 4th; Democratic Republic of Congo, 5th; Central African Republic, 8th; Guinea, 9th; Ivory Coast, 11th; Kenya 15th and Nigeria, 15th. In short, among 15 most failed states surveyed by the organization, Africa produced 10 and Nigeria, under Yar'Adua, is in their bad company!" (Adegbamigbe, 2009).

"There are 12 criteria used by the research bodies for arriving at their conclusion: four social, two economic and six political. The Fund for Peace characterizes a state as failed when it has shown loss of physical control of its territory or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force therein (as the Niger Delta crisis has shown in Nigeria); erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions (the President's election lacks legitimacy because, in the view of majority of Nigerians, it was massively rigged; an inability to provide reasonable public services(bad roads, lack of power supply that is fundamental to the sustenance of the real sector of the economy) and an inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community (Nigeria has become a pariah now, given a wide berth by powerful nations and their leaders as demonstrated by President Barack Obama of the United States who snubbed Nigeria and visited Ghana" (Adegbamigbe, 2009).

Mishandling of issues such as ethnic and religious matters have equally led to instability and struggle for power in Africa. These have led to civil wars in Democratic Republic Congo, Sudan, Burundi, Liberia and Cote d' Ivoire, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Nigeria, that kill mostly civilians and create humanitarian disasters. The need to curb

these calls for internal and external moderation of African sovereignties by the leaders of unipolar world, civil society organizations and women's rights groups. The African sovereigns have no choice than to submit to this New World Order: to promote democracy, accountability in governance and stem the tide of disintegration or be dragged along (Editorial, 2003).

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