WestAfrica
INSIGHT

SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT

Centre for Democracy and Development

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Editorial

The rise of Separatism in West Africa

From the late 1960s to early 1990s, many countries in West Africa experienced a growing demand for autonomy, right to self-determination and secession, which threatened the territorial integrity of some nation-states. Currently, the region is witnessing a resurgence of these separatist movements; from the Biafra agitation in Nigeria, separatist movements in Northern Niger and Mali and the Cassamance in Senegal and Gambia. These have received divergent responses from host governments in these countries but little has been done to lessen the tension. These separatist movements are mainly caused by inequalities, failure of state development policies, ethnic chauvinism, problems with leadership, and a lack of respect for resolutions of peace accords. This is further exacerbated by the growth of a criminal economy that affects these countries.

Secessionism in Mali and Niger

Agitations for secession in northern Mali and Niger have undergone different evolutions of rebel movements, as well as various political interventions in attempts to mitigate the crises. Conflict between the Malian government and Toureg rebels has passed through four phases, beginning with the 1963 crisis under the regime of Modibo Keita, then a resurgence between 1990-1996 during President Mussa Traore's reign and the more recent 2006 rebellion of Iyad Ag Ghali under the current President Amadou Tomani Toure. Since October 2011, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) has been agitating for the secession of Northern Mali; a region made up predominantly of people from the Toureg ethnic group. The NMLA and Ansar Dine have had a significant foothold on territories in Northern Mali since April 2012. The conflict between the Malian government, UN Peacekeepers and the separatist groups of the region, has resulted in the death of hundreds of soldiers, including UN Peacekeepers. As it stands, Mali faces continuous crises with the emergence of the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin with a Jihadist agenda.

In Niger, a similar story is unfolding in the northern region of the country. A separatist group known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara is agitating for the secession of Agadez. The Nigerien Government have barred journalists from the region to further alienate the world from the conflict. The future of peace in Niger, however, is dependent on how President Issoufou can ensure political integration during the second term of his government.

Biafra question in Nigeria

Nigeria is peculiar in terms of its ethnic and religious diversity which has led to many internal conflicts, including the resurfacing of the separatist movement for the sovereign state of Biafra. While causes of the re-emergence of a call for Biafra are divergent and controversial, it may be attributed to continuous neglect and marginalisation of Igbos in Nigeria, unsettled group grievances, and weak democratic structures. The government's militarist approach to preventing the agitation, in the guise of protecting continuous existence of the Nigerian State, has further aggravated the tension. Amid the quest for national unity, it is important that the government adopts practical strategies to address

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the problem. Power sharing, healing of memories and development of the South East could be among several options the government may consider in bringing about lasting peace in the Southeast.

Separatism in Casamance, Senegal

Separatism in Casamance goes back as far as most other separationist agitations in West Africa. The agitations within the region have led to conflicts with the Government of Senegal resulting in the death of over 5,000 people and the displacement of over 60,000 people from their communities. Agitators of the separatist movement assign the causes of the conflict to inequality drawn on ethnic lines that marginalise minority ethnic groups in favour of the major ethnic and religious groups of Islam and Wolof. Despite a cease fire in 1991 and 1993 as well as a general peace accord signed in Gambia in 1999, the Casamance separatist movement is still very much present. The absence of a consensual peace process, discord within the rebellion and the absence of credible mediators are challenges to the restoration of political stability in the region.

Notwithstanding threats that separatist movements pose to sovereignty, engendering national unity is not a lost hope. Prospects for peace may seem dim but bringing about peace and unity is possible through mutual respect; dialogue with critical stakeholders; and policies with the capacity to address grievances, inequalities, and improve livelihoods for people. Governments of different countries and the Economic Community for West African Countries (ECOWAS) should strengthen their interventions to bring lasting peace to the region.

We hope that this edition will provide a wider understanding of the state and challenges of separatist movements across West Africa.

Happy reading.

Idayat Hassan

Director, CDD

Biafran Separatist Agitations in Nigeria:
Causes, trajectories, scenarios and the way forward

Prof. Jideofor Adibe

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Introduction

The current agitation for Biafra has its roots in the Republic of Biafra – a secessionist state in the former Eastern Nigeria, which existed from 30 May 1967 to January 1970. The former Eastern region was dominated by the Igbos, who led the secession.

The cause of the civil war would depend on where one stands in the divide: for those on the federal side, the civil war was caused by the attempt by the mainly Igbo-dominated Eastern Nigeria to secede, meaning for such people the civil war was fought to keep Nigeria one. In fact the mantra during the civil war on the federal side was "to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done". For those on the side of the short-lived Republic of Biafra, the civil war was precipitated by the pogrom in the North following the counter coup of July 1966. For such people, the civil war was a war of self-preservation[1].

While it is normal that people on opposite sides of a conflict will have different narratives of the same event, what is clear is that many factors contributed to the civil war: the 1962/63 census controversy, the Western regional election crisis of 1965 and the federal election controversy of 1964[2]. These crises created the condition for the unnecessarily bloody coup of 1966 coup, which was initially well received[3]. As it turned out however the coup created more problems than it solved. It turned out that most of the coup

1Adibe, Jideofor (2016), 'Nigeria: January 15, 1966 and After - We Remember Differently', *Daily Trust*, January 20, (back page).
2For a discussion of these, see for instance Diamond, Larry (1988), *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press).
3Ejiogu, E. C. (2011), *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria: Political Evolution and Development in the Niger Basin* (Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate Publishing).

plotters were Igbos and most of those killed were non-Igbos while the Igbo political leaders somehow survived[4]. The anger triggered in the North by this led to the counter coup of July 1966 in which the Igbo Head of State Aguiyi Ironsi and several Igbo army officers were killed. It also led to a pogrom against the Igbo in the North, in which an estimated 30,000 Igbos and others of Eastern Nigerian origin were killed[5].

The pogrom in the North against the Igbo after the July 1966 revenge coup, and the refusal of Col. Emeka Ojukwu, who was military Governor of Eastern Nigeria to recognize Col Gowon, a Christian from the Middle Belt, as the new Head of State, generated a series of events that eventually led to Ojukwu's declaration of the Republic of Biafra and the subsequent 30-month civil war.

In the two-and-a-half years of war, there were an estimated 100,000 overall military casualties, while between 500,000 and two million Biafran civilians died from starvation[6]. When the Biafran forces surrendered, the federal government under General Gowon declared that there was '"No Victor, No Vanquished" and began the arduous process of trying to re-integrate the Igbos back into the Nigerian society.

Neo Biafrans and the movement for re-seceding

Like all people who fought and lost a war, Biafra evokes something in an average Igbo, making it possible for it to be tapped as a shared victimhood narrative for mobilization. The first attempt to

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4 Daily Trust (2017), The 1966 Coup, January 8, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/feature/the-1966-military-coup/179593.html
5 Kalu, Kalu N (2008), State Power, Autarchy and Political Conquest in Nigerian Federalism (Boulder and New York, Lexington Books), p.93
6 Information Nigeria (2017), 'An open letter to Nnamdi Kanu .... Biafra a resurgence or anther self centredcall?, June 24, http://www.informationng.com/2017/06/nigerian-writes-open-letter-nnamdi-kanu-read.html

100,000
military casualties

2Million
Biafran civilians died from starvation

Notwithstanding, the strategy adopted was seen as being aggressive, though peaceful, which led to his arrest on several occasions during the reign of President Olusegun Obasanjo. For example, in 2005, Uwazuruike was arrested and charged with treason but the case never reached the trial stage as the first two years were spent hearing his bail application. He was granted bail in 2007 to enable him attend to the burial of his mother who died while he was in detention.[8]

As MASSOB members battled the federal government and the police many of the State Governors in Igboland also saw them as irritants. In 2006 for instance Governor Obi of Anambra State ordered a shoot-at-sight order against the Biafran activists who were often fingered in disturbances in the commercial town of Onitsha.[9]

In the early years of the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan (who was adopted by many Igbos as 'one of their own' - coming from the neighbouring Niger Delta region of Bayelsa State and who additionally adopted the Igbo name of 'Azikiwe) Biafran agitations continued – though more muted than they were under both the administrations of Olusegu Obasanjo (1999-2007) and Umaru Shehu Yaradua (2007-2010). For instance, in 2011 Jonathan gave a presidential directive that all MASSOB members detained across the country – estimated to be over 1000 at that time - should be released immediately, including Uwazuruike.[10]

As with most secessionist movements, MASSOB attracted a 'mixed multitude' –people of different

organize a movement for Biafran re-secession was in 1999, when Ralph Uwazurike, an Indian trained lawyer, formed the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).At the early stage of MASSOB, he claimed it was a peaceful group and advertised what it called a 25-stage plan to achieve its goal peacefully.[7]

7 Felix, Nnamdi (2014), 'Biafra: Undying passion for secession', The News June 23, http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2014/06/biafra-undying-passion-for-secession/

8Masterweb news (2008), 'Court grants Biafra leader bail' May 16, http://www.africamasterweb.com/AdSense/MassobCourtGrantsBiafraLeaderBail.html

9 Sahara Reporters (2006), 'The Case Against Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State', October 16, http://saharareporters.com/2006/10/16/case-against-governor-peter-obi-anambra-state

10The Nigerian Voice (2011), 'Jonathan Orders Release of Uwazuruike, MASSOB Members from Detention', August 30, https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/59371/jonathan-orders-release-of-uwazuruike-massob-members-from-d.html

tendencies and conflicting ambitions. Therefore, fractionalisation within the movement was only a matter of time. One of the early factions, the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) led by a United Kingdom-based Nnamdi Kanu, started in 2013[11] "when it was clear that the Ralph Uwazuruike-led Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) had been compromised by the Nigerian government and politicians after his incarceration."

It also claimed that IPOB had to revive the "defunct" Radio Biafra as a "platform to educate and sensitise Biafrans who have been biased and made dormant by the propaganda fed to them by the Yoruba dominated media in Nigeria."[12] This will seem to support Uwazuruike's claim that he founded Radio Biafra[13] – though the press usually mentions Nnamdi Kanu as its founder.

While Nnamdi Kanu's pirate Radio Biafra had been operating under the Jonathan government, it was the Buhari government that inadvertently 'popularized' him and his innocuous Radio Biafra when the Nigerian Broadcasting Service started drawing the public's attention to his controversial broadcasts but proved rather ineffective in blocking the station from broadcasting in the country – despite claiming several times it had done so.[14]

The government was also to inadvertently further boost him when it detained him for nearly two years on several charges that included treason and operating the pirate Radio Biafra. He was refused bail despite several court rulings granting him bail. His prolonged incarceration turned him into a cult figure among his followers and stoked the ethnic

11 Some source put the date of the formation of IPOB as either 2012 or 2014. See for instance Refworld (2016), 'Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), including objectives, structure, activities, relations with other Biafran independence groups, and treatment by authorities (2014-October 2016)', http://www.refworld.org/docid/5844003b4.html
12 Princeemeka12 (2014) United States of Biafra , January 12, https://www.facebook.com/Princemeka12/posts/657700930940385
13 The Cable (2017), Uwazuruike: 'I handed over Radio Biafra to Kanu but he allowed politicians to hijack it', June 12, https://www.thecable.ng/uwazuruike-handed-radio-biafra-kanu-allowed-politicians-hijack
14 Daily Trust (2015), ' FG: We have jammed Radio Biafra signals', July 15, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/fg-we-have-jammed-radio-biafra-signals/81786.html
15 Uwerunonye, Nicholas (2017), 'How IPOB Leader, Nnamdi Kanu, became Buhari's Big Headache', Independent, April 29, http://independent.ng/nnamdi-kanu-ipob-leader-became-buharis-next-big-headache/

solidarity of his Igbo kinsmen.[15]

While in detention he converted to Judaism and began to make even more controversial statements, with his supporters organizing marches and rallies across several cities in Nigeria, Europe and North America. By the time he was granted bail on April 28, 2017, he had become a cult figure among his supporters who would literally shut down cities he visited in Igboland as people trooped to get a glimpse of him.[16]

In addition to MASSOB (which renamed itself Biafra Independent Movement or BIM) and IPOB, there are other Biafra separatist groups such as the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), which is led by Benjamin Onwuka. The group – which is also sometimes called Biafra Zionist Federation-, came to public notice on November 5 2012, when it declared a new state of independence at an event in which at least 100 peaceful protesters were arrested.[17]

On March 8 2014, BZM attacked Enugu State Government House in a bid to hoist the Biafran flag there. It struck again on June 7, 2014 when its members attempted to seize the radio and television stations of the Enugu State Broadcasting Service to announce the secession of Biafra.[18] He was charged with treason and detained. He was released after nearly three years in detention in February 2017. Perhaps sensing that Nnamdi Kanu has dominated the Biafra secessionist space while he was in detention, Onwuka audaciously announced the secession of Biafra effective from August 1 2017. He also announced the formation of an 'interim cabinet' for Biafra, with himself as the 'interim President'. He equally appointed Ministers and top government officials for the said nation (including some from the North Central States of Nasarawa and NigerStates) – apparently without

Causes of Biafran separatist agitations

consulting those so appointed.[19]

Separatist desires are not abnormal in ethnically and culturally diverse countries

It is not abnormal that some groups in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation-states will nurse desires for independence. This is perhaps why Scottish separatism persists in the United Kingdom despite being part of the UK for over 300 years.[20]The same is true in Canada where Quebec separatism has been part of Canadian life since the 1890s.[21]In the United States, some people, especially from the Southern part of the country still fly the confederate flag even though the American civil war was won and lost 150 years ago Narrativizing the civil war

The memory of the civil war is very strong among the Igbos – just as the memory of the Igbo-led January 15, 1966 coup which killed several leaders of the North – is also very strong in the North. It is possible that Igbos' bitter memory of the war and their attempt to aggressively contest the narratives about the war creates residual anger among those who fought on the federal side or animates among many in the North the bitter memories of their lost leaders during the January 15, 1966 coup. The anger and suspicion around the agitations for Biafra maybe subtle but they help to feed into Igbos' feeling of being unwanted, which in turn fuels separatist sentiments.

Market dominant minorities' thesis

In her highly regarded book, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (2003),Yale Law Professor AmyChua explored the ethnic conflict

16 The Sun (2017), 'Kanu shuts down Ebonyi', July 25, http://sunnewsonline.com/kanu-shuts-down-ebonyi/
17 Lacinno, Ludovicca (2014), International Business Times, June 17, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/nigerian-separatist-movement-who-are-biafra-zionists-1453085
18 Vanguard (2014), 'Pro-Biafra group's to seize Enugu radio, TV stations foiled', June 6, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/pro-biafra-groups-bid-seize-enugu-radio-tv-stations-foiled/
19 The Punch (2017), 'Biafran group declares secession, names Soludo, Utomi, Gana, others in 'cabinet'', August 1, http://punchng.com/biafran-group-declares-secession-names-utomi-soludo-gana-others-in-cabinet/
20 Curtis, Chris (2017), 'Why hasn't Scotland changed its mind on independence?' The Guardian, January 27, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/27/shift-scottish-independence-yougov-nicola-sturgeon-balancing-act
21 Huffingtonpost (2016), 'Quebec Separatists See New Hope After Brexit Vote', June 24, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/06/24/quebec-brexit_n_10665168.html

caused in many societies by disproportionate economic or political influence wielded by "market dominant minorities". According to her, "market dominant minorities" are ethnic groups which tend to control a disproportionate share of the local economy whenever they are – often in such a manner that it triggers the envy and bitterness of the majority against them. For Chua, tension and conflicts are inherent in the relationship between 'the economic dominant minority' and the poor majority in the context of liberal democracy. She argued that when free market democracy is pursued in the presence of a market-dominant minority, the almost invariable result is backlash because

> ...overnight democracy will empower the poor, indigenous majority. What happens is that under those circumstances, democracy doesn't do what we expect it to do - that is, reinforce markets. ... [Instead,] democracy leads to the emergence of manipulative politicians and demagogues who find that the best way to get votes is by scapegoating the minorities.[22]

Chua listed the Igbos among the 'market dominant minority'. In virtually every part of Nigeria, the Igbos would be the largest ethnic group – after the indigenes. Chua's thesis of market dominant minorities – coupled with the belief that humility and diplomacy do not seem to come naturally to many of the Igbo traders[23]- create a generalized feeling of a group not liked by the rest of the country. For many supporters of Biafra agitators, it is this sense of 'not being wanted' in Nigeria that justifies the quest for Biafra.

Inability to conclusively resolve group grievances

Nigeria seems to struggle with the skill to conclusively resolve grievances by several groups in the country. One of the consequences of this is that many groups appear to have institutionalized memories of hurt or perceived sense of injustice, which they popularly express as "marginalization." This inability to conclusively resolve group grievances has contributed to the rise of the notion that only groups with the capacity to hold the state to ransom will have their grievances addressed.

The ethnic factor

Ethnicity is often used as a veneer by the elites to mask their intra-elite and intra-class struggles over power and resources. Over time, however, in Nigeria ethnicity has acquired a more objective character, tending towards more or less an ideology and a prism through which most government measures are filtered. It is also a potent instrument of mobilization. For instance, the fact that Nnamdi Kanu was detained for a long period of time and denied bail despite court rulings for him to be so released, stoked ethnic solidarity even from people averse to his brand of harsh rhetoric. The more his ethnic brethren use the refusal to grant bail as another instance of injustice against the Igbo or more evidence of Buhari's alleged hatred of the Igbo, the more Buhari's' kith and kin' from the North feel compelled to defend one of their own. The dominant ethnic groups routinely use threats of secession as bargaining tools when things are not going their way. The pervasive hate speeches and ethnic profiling in the media may have given some ethnic groups the belief that they are better off being on their own.

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22 Chua, Amy (2003), World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability (New York, Doubleday).
23 Omokri, Reno (2017), 'Hegemony: What the Igbo can learn from Yoruba and Fulani about Power', Vanguard, June 3, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/hegemony-igbo-can-learn-yoruba-fulani-power-reno/

Crisis in Nigeria's nation-building processes

Nigeria's nation-building processes seem to be mired in deep crisis, which feed into the crisis of underdevelopment in the country to create an existential crisis for many Nigerians. For many young people, a way of resolving the consequent sense of alienation is to retreat from the Nigeria project into idealized primordial identities - often with the Nigerian state as the enemy. For most of the Biafra agitators, Biafra represents that utopia which will shield them from all the challenges of underdevelopment and state failure experienced in Nigeria.

Additionally, there is a heavy burden of institutionalized sectional memories of hurt, injustice, distrust and even a disguised longing for vengeance. One of the consequences is that no individual or political authority enjoys universal legitimacy across the main fault lines.[24] In this sense, neo Biafra movements and agitations are symptomatic of the crisis in Nigeria's nation-building processes, with the Biafra agitators contesting the legitimacy of the Nigerian state - the manner in which the state is constituted and the mode of leadership recruitment into its structures.

Trajectories and Scenarios

Nigeria's separatist movements attract a "mixed multitude:" some are in it for personal gain; some use it as a bargaining chip while others may be in it for full regional autonomy or secession. At the same time, there are many internal contradictions within each separatist area that it is not at all clear

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24Adibe, Jideofor (2012), Nigeria without Nigerians? Boko Haram and the Crisis in Nigeria's Nation-building Project, (London, Adonis & Abbey Publishers).

that if honest conversations and referendums are allowed that the forces of separatism will carry the day. For instance, IPOB unilaterally drew a map of Biafra lumping many ethnic groups – such as parts of Rivers, Delta States and Benue into it. Many of such groups have disclaimed being part of IPOB's Biafra.[25] Even among the Igbos, it is not certain that States like Ebonyi will want to be part of Biafra[26] or that several Igbos would want to be part of Biafra – other than to use it as a bargaining chip. In addition, there are many contradictions within the Biafra separatist movements, which have led to fractionalisations. Largely because of the above, there is a feeling that the various separatist agitations, if not unnecessarily inflamed, are likely to wither on their own as the country's democracy matures, the economy improves, and Nigerians move on to other challenges.

On the other hand, if the Biafran separatist agitations succeed, it is likely to lead to several other separatist movements being energized, and also demanding for their own independence. In such a scenario, Nigeria is likely to break-up into smaller units. If such happens, the internal contradictions within the newly independent states will flare up as some newly created minorities will begin agitations for more autonomy or outright independence.

Another scenario worth speculating upon is the likely impact of the quit notice given to the Igbos by the Arewa Youths to leave Northern Nigeria by October 2017. Though the quite notice has now been "suspended"[27], it may likely dampen the enthusiasm of many Nigerians, (especially the Igbos) to invest heavily outside their region. The quit notice and all hate speech that went with it could also lead to Igbos being subtly less welcome in other parts of the country, especially in the North as subdued distrust and bitterness against them deepen across the country, especially in the North.

What is to be done?

The typical response of Nigerian governments over the years to separatist agitations is to brand the agitators "troublemakers," and send law enforcement agencies to use force to quell their agitations. This often results in casualties, stoking ethnic tensions in the process, which further fuels or hardens separatist agitations. For instance, Amnesty International accused the Nigerian security forces, led by the military, of embarking "on a chilling campaign of extrajudicial executions and violence resulting in the deaths of at least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra protesters."[28] The report by Amnesty International was exploited by IPOB supporters who saw it as a legitimation of its argument that its protests were peaceful and that the Buhari government used it as an excuse to kill the Igbos. Nigerian authorities denied the claim by Amnesty International, saying it was only aimed to tarnish the reputation of the country's security forces.[29]

Although in recent times the government appears to be showing more willingness to use dialogue to solve some of the country's separatist challenges (such as the remark by Acting President Yemi Osinbajo that citizens have right to discuss their continued existence in Nigeria[30]), much more needs to be done. Below are recommendations to address these separatist challenges:

25 See for instance Vanguard (2017), 'S/South not part of Biafra, N/Delta youths insist', June 6, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/ssouth-not-part-biafra-ndelta-youths-insist/ and Daily Post (2017), 'We are not part of Biafra territory – Benue State warns Nnamdi Kanu', August 10, http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/10/not-part-biafra-territory-benue-state-warns-nnamdi-kanu/

26 Daily Post (2017), 'Why Ebonyi is against Biafra, restructuring – Governor Umahi', June 29, http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/29/ebonyi-biafra-restructuring-governor-umahi/

27 Vanguard (2017), 'Arewa Youths Suspend Notice of Quit, Accuse IPOB of Amassing Weapons', August 24, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/arewa-youths-suspend-notice-quit-accuse-ipob-amassing-weapons/

28 Amnesty International (2016), 'Nigeria: At least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra activists killed in chilling crackdown', November 24, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/11/peaceful-pro-biafra-activists-killed-in-chilling-crackdown/

29 The Guardian (2016), 'Nigeria army denies killing 150 at Biafra demonstrations', November 24, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/24/nigeria-army-denies-killing-150-at-biafra-demonstrations

30 Daily Post (2017), 'Biafra at 50: Citizens have right to discuss their continued existence in Nigeria – Osinbajo', May 25, http://dailypost.ng/2017/05/25/biafra-50-citizens-right-discuss-continued-existence-nigeria-osinbajo/

Power sharing

At the root of the various separatist agitations is the issue of power sharing among the various regional and ethnic factions of the elite as well as access to infrastructure and privileges at the federal level. Following from this, it will be helpful to institutionalize or codify the existing conventional system of power sharing and rotating the presidency between the north and the south as an interim measure - until the country's democracy matures and trust among Nigerians has improved. Strengthening the Federal Character Commission(FCC) - an agency created in 1996 to ensure fairness in the distribution of jobs and socioeconomic amenities among different parts of the country - will help to build trust among groups. Making it a mandatory requirement that certain federal appointments and distribution of infrastructure must have the imprimatur of the FCC will reduce the suspicion that the ethnic group in power will privilege its in-group and disadvantage others. This move will, in turn, help to reduce inter-ethnic suspicion and attenuate the anarchic character of the country's politics.

Exploring the 'apology' option

The Igbos have a very bitter memory of the civil war and the pogroms against their people in the North following the revenge coup of July 29, 1966 – just as the Northerners have bitter memories of the Igbo-led January 15 1966 coup that killed several of their leaders. For this it may be worth exploring whether an apology by the Igbos to the North for the January 15, 1966 coup (through the council of Igbo traditional rulers and the pan umbrella Igbo organization Ohaneze) could help mollify the North for the pains caused by the January 15 1966 coup. At the same it is worth exploring if an apology to the Igbos by the North for the pogrom that followed the revenge coup of July 1966 and by the rest of the country to the Igbos for some of the excesses of the Civil War such as using starvation as an instrument of war could mollify Igbo separatists.

Tolerance of uncomfortable views

One of the arguments for free speech is that through a robust competition of ideas in the political marketplace, the truth will be discovered. Unfortunately, some of the ideas that are brought into such markets are necessarily those that "shock and awe" and annoy and aggravate people. Banning them, though, will make them more dangerous by driving them underground and glamourizing the leaders of those who espouse such ideas. Indeed, when Nnamdi Kanu, who was hardly known in Nigeria, was detained in 2015, his popularity soared to eclipse those of other Biafran separatists, turning him into a cult hero among his followers and making it easier for his group to recruit and raise funds. Criminalizing separatist demands romanticizes the hush-hush agitations for independence Handling uncomfortable viewpoints in such a way that they do not put stress on the system is the acme of statecraft. It is probably for this reason that purveyors of offensive views such as the KKK in the United States and right-wing groups in Europe are not banned. The preference is to draw these groups' ideas out and then out-compete them. While some argue that "proportionate force"[31] should be used to deal with separatist groups, the carrot approach should always be the first line of engagement.

31Fletcher, George P (2006), 'Gauging proportionate force', August 17, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2006/08/17/commentary/world-commentary/gauging-proportionate-force/#.WXPAFEkzrIV

Referendum

Referendum is another time-tested instrument for blunting separatist tendencies in the mature democracies. It is also a way of testing whether the leaders of the separatist movements really reflect the wishes of those they claim they represent and want to "liberate." Following from this, perhaps Nigeria should consider a constitutional provision allowing for a referendum among nationalities that want to secede from the union, say, once every 30 years. This will allow earnest conversations between supporters and opponents of each separatist movement. Though opponents of referendum in Africa argue that it may actually encourage secession, the counterargument by its supporters is that it could force states in Africa to be fair to all its component parts, which will convince them beyond doubt that the benefits of remaining part of the country clearly outweigh the benefits of becoming an independent state.

Will conceding the presidency to the Igbos quell agitations for Biafra?

Some have argued that agitations for Biafra are due primarily because the Igbos are frustrated that as a major ethnic group in the country, they have never produced a Nigerian president of Igbo extraction. For such people conceding the presidency of the country to the Igbos will be the antidote to agitations for Biafra.[32] While the optics of having a president of Igbo extraction will have some 'hurrah effect' among the Igbos, it will be simplistic to assume that such on its own will be sufficient to quell the agitations for Biafra.

For instance, while the Yoruba have produced Obasanjo who served both as a Military Head of State and a two-term civilian president and have also produced the current Acting President Yemi Osinbajo, these have been unable to quell the episodic demand for Oduduwa Republic or the Yoruba demand for 'restructuring'. In the same vein while the Niger Delta produced President Jonathan - that has also not resolved the problem of militancy in the region or threats to declare a Niger Delta Republic. Therefore, a president of Igbo extraction, on its own, is not likely to be effective in quelling the agitation for Biafra.

Prioritizing nation-building processes

Ultimately, the greatest weapon against separatist agitation is for each constituent party to feel treated fairly and be convinced that the gains of being part of the Nigerian federation far outweigh the benefits of existing as an independent country. This means the country must prioritize its nation-building processes, which currently seem to be engulfed in crisis. In addition to the tools mentioned above, the government should also consider creating a separate Ministry of National Integration to drive and coordinate efforts at the country's nation-building processes.

Nigerian government should realize that while the Biafra separatist threat is receiving the most attention at the moment, many other groups hold similar goals. Consequently, the government should not wait for other separatist agitators in hibernation to get re-energized before acting.

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Separatism in Casamance:
an asymmetric conflict stemming from horizontal disparities.

Mohamed Lamine Manga

The Casamance is a geographic entity of Senegal which is confined between the Gambia to the north, and Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry to the south, and has been experiencing an armed conflict since 1982. The region has an atypical landlocked status which brings it closer to neighbouring countries than the capital city of Senegal, and is the theatre of the oldest on-going conflict in West Africa.[1] Stemming from peasants' objections to State decentralization policy, the conflict is the result of horizontal inequalities which opposed a power conveying a patronage and centralized pattern based on Islam and Wolof, and some ethnic minorities governing themselves equally. The conflict also shows ethnic prejudices intensified by stories and facts which opposed the country's political and administrative centre and a multi-ethnic border that became, over the years and as the result of the government's isolationist approach, the only diola ethnic group.[2] From the people's protests of 26 December 1982 against State symbols to the present day, different successive political regimes have developed various strategies without being able to blur the identity of Casamance effectively.

Through this work, we will review the historical context of the thirty-five-year-old conflict, its impact on the nation-building process in Senegal, its social and economic effects, the peace process and sub-regional repercussions of the conflict as well as future scenarios to be considered. Finally we will make a few recommendations for opening up a way out of the crisis, and for an efficient implementation of development programmes that could reduce social disparities and address Casamance's particularism within Senegal.

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1 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, « Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Crises et conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest, quelles politiques sécuritaires face aux menaces », Dakar, octobre 2014, p. 32. ["Crises and conflicts in West Africa: which security policy against threats?" Dakar, October 2014, p. 32.]

2 Manga M. L., *La Casamance dans l'histoire contemporaine du Sénégal*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2012 p. 243. Voir aussi « Terreur en Casamance : le spectre de l'ethnicité », compte-rendu d'un « polar » sénégalais, *Le Monde diplomatique,* octobre 1995. [Manga M. L., *Casamance in the contemporary history of Senegal*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2012 p. 243. Also: "Terror in Casamance: the spectrum of ethnicity", an account by a Senegalese ''polar'', *Le Monde diplomatique,* octobre 1995].

I- Historical background of an asymmetric conflict.

Separatism in Casamance officially started on 26 December 1982, after a protest march organised by peasants and which was repressed by the police and gendarmerie of Senegal. The protesters started their movement from the outskirts of the city of Ziguinchor with no clearly articulation of their demands or claims; they went after the governance of Ziguinchor, the major symbol of State authority in the region. They replaced the national flag by what they considered as the flag of Casamance and executed one of the policemen on duty. In response to this mistrust which the territorial administration and the government did not really get to grips with, the police and gendarmerie, which had been taken aback, reacted vigorously.[3]

To understand the complaints of the December 26th protesters against the government of Senegal and the local administration, we need to go back to the 1970 decade when the early warning signs of the revolt were already beneath under the form of horizontal inequalities exacerbated by the failure of the State policies within the region. Although Casamance has effective natural assets[4], it was at a disadvantage due to its geographical location which drives its populations to cultural isolationism, and it was one of the regions in Senegal where horizontal inequalities from the rest of the country were greater. By horizontal inequalities, we mean disparities from social, economic and political standpoints between an ethnic and religious majority and minorities of the same kind within a nation as opposed to vertical inequalities which occur within a more or less homogeneous group.

Infrastructural discrepancies: In the 1970s many discrepancies could be noted between Casamance and some regions of Senegal such as Thiès, Saint Louis, Kaolack and, of course, Dakar. The greatest discrepancies could be noted from

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3 Cf. Fagaru, number 9, december 1983, p. 5.
4 Cf. FAO, « La démarche de qualité à l'origine du miel de Casamance, Sénégal », Janvier 2012, p. 9. [See FAO "The quality approach behind Casamance honey, Senegal", January 2012, p.9.]

the infrastructural standpoint. There was only one boat with a very limited freight capacity that provided shipping services between Dakar and Ziguinchor, the main town in Casamance. The national road from Dakar down to Ziguinchor was defective and it deteriorated further in some places during raining season. Industrial activity was still at a very weak level, since the only factory where jobs could be offered was SONACOS, the national company for oilseeds marketing in Senegal. In the health sector, the *Hôpital Silence* and the regional hospital were the only available structures and had a hard time meeting people's healthcare needs to the extent that only the patients whose families have sufficient resources were sent to Dakar for treatment.

Peasants' discomfort: In farming, the traders coming from the northern part of the county used to speculate and did not allow Casamance farmers to make their activities cost-effective. The severe drought prevailing at the same period of time exacerbated what was already perceived as peasants' discomfort following a low rainfall and a decrease in production.[5] Furthermore, management structures which increasingly support administrative staff financially swallowed up funds and went bankrupt after the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had imposed on them their structural adjustment policies6. These policies reduced the latitude of decision-making by the national authorities and led to crises with some consequences such as all-out privatization, budget cuts, and deregulation in several sectors including education.

School crisis: The first challenges that the region administrative authority had to face stemmed from the educational system. In fact, for a matter relating to dubious management of the funds allocated to Djignabo secondary school, the

students went on strike in late 19797. The movement was violently repressed and some students took refuge into the woods of Diabir. The same year the region's first team, Casa Sports, lost the final match of the cup of Senegal in some litigious conditions, which led to clashes between supporters. The peaceful march organised by the *Usanas*[8], diola women secret societies, to ease the already pernicious climate, was not successful.

Land issue: To the facts cited above, one should add the land expropriation led by the municipality of Ziguinchor under the authority of an allochthonous mayor who was affiliated to the ruling power. The land expropriations programme occurred in the framework of the land reforms of 1964, and was being carried out to the detriment of natives while the land reallocations were benefiting individuals who, according to some persons, had never stayed in Casamance. Let us remember that the 1964 land reform did not take into account any local land tenure systems at all; it ignored the customary management modes handed over by the older orders and entrusted their management to local authorities after the administrative reform of 1972. Those are facts included in narrative development with, firstly, regionalist and, then, secessionist ideas of an average local elite who had not been able to make their way within Senegalese bureaucracy.

The nexus of the lumpen, Casamance elite: This elite, part of which was settled in Europe, made a group around Abbot Augustin Diamacoune Senghor[9] and sought to deconstruct the nation-state of Senegal with a view to come up with the idea of a Casamance nation. Two lines of thinking were in opposition: one was held by Casamance pro-independence group and the other by the government of Senegal. Both "are in a relationship of semantic objections; the development of one

5 Hesseling Gerti, Histoire politique du Sénégal, institutions, droit et société, Paris, Karthala, 1985, p. 262. [Hesseling Gerti, The political history of Senegal, institutions, law and society Paris, Karthala, 1985, p. 262].

6 Diop et Diouf, "Réformes économiques et recompositions sociales", La construction de l'État au Sénégal, Paris, Karthala, 2002, p. 65. [Diop and Diouf, "Economic reforms and social recompositions", The reconstruction of Senegal, Paris, Karthala, 2002, p. 65]

7 Foucher V., "Les évolués, la migration et l'école", dir. Diop M-C, Le Sénégal contemporain, Paris, Karthala, 2002, pp. 410-412. ["The evolved humans, migration and school", dir. Diop M-C, Modern Senegal, Paris, Karthala, 2002, pp. 410-412.]

8 Idem, p. 411.

9 He was the main leader of the separatist movement. He died in Paris in 2007 due to illness

substantiates and justifies the de-legitimization of the other"[10] These were the early stages of the armed struggle, and it started not in 1982 but in 1983 after the rebels had executed three constables in the woods of Diabir. To put an end to the conflict, the State has adopted various strategies.

II- The strategies of the State of Senegal against MFDC

To resolve the Casamance conflict, the Government of Senegal has put in place different strategies since 1982 and this depends on the contexts and regimes.

Under Abdou Diouf's Administration: At the beginning of Casamance Separatism, Abdou Diouf inherited power from his mentor, President Senghor[11]. It was the first major internal crisis of his magisterium. He has for long, hesitated between negotiations and firmness. After the deadly attack of Seleti customs post by some armed individuals of MFDC (Movement for the Democratic Forces of Casamance) in 1990, the military option was fully put in place. It was brutal and targeted more the Diola ethnic group who seemed to take on the armed conflict more than the other ethnic groups of the region. Indeed, the fact was denounced in two reports from Amnesty International. The military repression had equally caused several losses in the ranks of the Senegalese Army, especially between 1995 and 1997 at Badonda and Mandina Mancagne[12], then, in 1998 in the course of Gabu operation which was held within Bissau-Guinea territory[13]. Abdou Diouf has also sponsored investments in education, tourism and maritime transport. He similarly resorted to the "divide and rule" policy, by firstly, splitting Casamance into two administrative regions right from 1984[14], and secondly, by fostering division within the MFDC

into two rival fronts[15] in 1998.

Another strategy was the co-option of Casamance political voices within the Government, all for the sake of proving his good faith to the populace and to delegitimize the armed conflict. Negotiations also took place simultaneously along with these strategies and resulted in two cease-fire agreements in 1991 and 1993[16], and a general peace accord concluded in 1999 in the Gambia without truly shifting MFDC's ambition to keep on the independence struggle.

Under Wade Administration: When President Abdoulaye Wade came to power in 2000, he

10 Otayek R., "L'Afrique au prisme de l'ethnicité : perception française et actualité du débat", CNRS, Paris, 2001, p. 3. [Otayek R., Africa in the light of ethnicity: French perception and debate topicality" CNRS, Paris, 2001, p. 3.]

11 Diouf A., *Mémoires*, éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2014, pp. 203-229.

12 Colson M-L., "La Casamance de guerre lasse. Les combats entre rebelles et armée sénégalaise déchirent à nouveau la région", *Libération*, Paris, 23 septembre 1997. ["Disheartened Casamance. Region is newly undermined by fighting between rebels and Senegal military" , *Libération*, Paris, 23 September 1997

13 Marut J-C., "Ligne dure face à la Casamance", *Le Monde diplomatique*, Paris, 1998, P. 4. [Marut J-C., "Hard line ahead Casamance" *Le Monde diplomatique*, Paris, 1998, P. 4.]

14 *Cf.* loi 84-22 du 24 mars 1984, *Journal officiel du Sénégal.* [Law 84-22 dating 24 march 1984, *Senegal official Journal*]

15 These fronts are from the north and south and respectively led by Sidy Badji and Salif Sadio

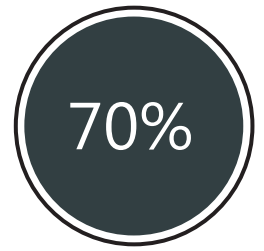| 33	3,000 5,000	748	80%	70%
YEARS OF CONFLICT	**KILLED**	**LANDMINE CASUALTIES**	**OF FARMLAND** rendered unusable by landmine	**DROP IN TOURISM** Between 2002 and 2012

promised to resolve the Casamance conflict within one hundred days. He considered his immediate surroundings and some of MFDC's leaders whom he associated with while in prison in 1993, the objective being to cause them to give up fast and easily MFDC's plan for the independence of Casamance. But this was done irrespective of the internal realities of MFDC.

While some rebel groups consented to the roundtable talks with the new regime, the inflexible ones with Salif Sadio decided to continue the armed conflict. Wade was truly willing to reach a final peace in Casamance. He increased declarations of intent and refused to internationalize the problem of Casamance. In 2004, he founded the National Agency for the Relaunch of Economic and Social Activities in Casamance (ANRAC). Abdoulaye Wade equally opted for the conscience-purchase or briefcases policy. Some rebel leaders enjoyed taking huge amounts of money delivered to them by Government's emissaries while others, who were suffering from some illnesses were treated in hospitals at the expenses of Government. With money becoming the bone of contention within the rebellion, factionalism increased to the extent that from 2008 four different factions were created, most of them being influenced by the money Wade doled out to them[17].

Some negotiations also took place between some factions of MFDC and a plethora of Government's less experienced envoys who conducted the mediation between the Government and the rebels. Abdoulaye Wade had also resorted to military repression between 2006 and 2010, and this proved inefficient due to the defeats caused by Salif Sadio's faction to the army with the war arsenal they had succeeded in gathering right away from Gambia where they got weapons made available from Iran[18]. It's worth noting that, from 2010, Salif Sadio's faction also practiced hostage-taking on the Senegalese military[19]. This subsequently exposed the limitations of the military option. Some negotiations were held under the auspices of Sant'Egidio, a catholic community, without reaching a final resolution of the conflict.

Under Macky Sall Administration: At his accession to the Senegalese presidency, Macky Sall opted for prudent but pro-active measures that however, excluded the preceding practices of conscience-purchase within the rebellion. He showed that he is available for dialogue and appealed, in that regard, to all the factions of MFDC and agreed to the mediation of Sant'Egedio community. He sent for a certain Robert Sagna, a former minister under Abdou Diouf and former Mayor of Ziguinchor city, for the sake of making easier negotiations with all

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16 Marut J-C., "Guerre et paix en Casamance, repères pour un conflit, 1990-1993", *Comprendre la Casamance, chronique d'une intégration contrastée*, dir. Barbier-Wiesser, Paris, karthala, 1994, p. 219. [War and peace in Casamance, benchmarks for a conflict, 1990-1993*Understand Casamance, chronicle for a contrasted integration*, dir. Barbier-Wiesser, Paris, karthala, 1994, p. 219]

17 Manga M L., "La Casamance sous Abdoulaye Wade : l'échec d'une paix annoncée", dir. Diop M-C., *Le Sénégal sous Abdoulaye Wade: le Sopi à l'épreuve du pouvoir*, Paris, CRES et Karthala, 2013. [Manga M L., "Casamance under Abdoulaye Wade : failure to achieve a declared peace" dir. Diop M-C., *Senegal under Abdoulaye Wade : the Sopi to the test of power*. Paris, CRES et Karthala, 2013.]

18 *Cf*. Diagne B., Le Sénégal rompt ses relations diplomatiques avec l'Iran, www.rfi.fr, 10 octobre 2013. [Diagne B., Senegal severed its diplomatic relations with Iran, www.rfi.fr, 10 October 2013

19 www.Jeuneafrique.com, "Sénégal : l'armée confirme la prise en otages de cinq soldats par les indépendantistes de Casamance", 29 décembre 2011. [www.Jeuneafrique.com, "Senegal : Military confirms hostage-taking of five soldiers by Casamance independentists", 29 December 2011.]

> *The greatest hindrances to Casamance's efforts of integration into Senegal are the historical, geographical and cultural bonds existing between the region and the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.*

components of the rebellion. In this regard, about thirty Casamance's elites, most of whom were former ministers, met within the Think-tank Group for Peace in Casamance (GRPC) in September 2012. President Sall's strategy was favorable, because all rebel factions, including the most inflexible one led by Salif Sadio, expressed their commitment to negotiate with the Senegalese Government. The eight soldiers taken in hostage by Salif Sadio's men were also liberated on December 10, 2012. All augured for a nearest end of the armed conflict in Casamance.

President Sall also promised for some investments in the region, as he has understood that poverty and idleness of the youths in the region are real incentives to join the ranks of rebellions. Agricultural fields were put in place in some areas formerly considered as risky, and subsidies were allotted to various projects, particularly in horticulture sector, in the framework of the cooperation with Germany and Canada and the USAID ... Within MFDC, people's minds seem to be affected by weariness to the extent that some of them demobilized. Today, negotiations are faltering and the last interventions of the rebels' chief, Salif Sadio seem to give indication that annoyance is at the increase in the rebellion. This new development is actually understood through the strategy of rottenness of negotiations that President Macky Sall has put in place while expecting to see many rebels get more tired and demobilized. However that approach bears some risks for the peace process.

III. The impact of an asymmetric conflict on the nation-building process.

We talk of asymmetric conflict because the belligerents do not develop the same war strategies or the same armament. They do not have the same number of combatants either. The guerilla hardly comprises five thousand (5,000) men who use to fight a State whose army is made up of at least ten thousand (10,000) soldiers. The Casamance Separatism has got a real impact on the nation-building process in Senegal. As a matter of fact, it has brought about distrust between some populations of Casamance and the territorial administration, and beyond that, disinterest for the Government. The wounds resulting from the military repression have engendered a hinderance to the national homogenization process developed under president Senghor and make Casamance a region whereby the sense of identity remains very strong.

The greatest hindrances to Casamance's efforts of integration into Senegal are the historical, geographical and cultural bonds existing between the region and the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

The three entities had made up the Gabu Empire till the 19th century; and families had spread out around the borders in transnational areas which also serve as safe havens to the rebels. That is the reason for the presence of rebels' strongholds along the two borders; and that also made easier acquaintances with President Yaya Jammeh, the Gambia's former ruler and a fringe of Guinea-Bissau military. Moreover, the position of the Gambia does not help to facilitate this national integration process.

Nevertheless, Barrow the Gambian President's collaboration, backed up by Senegal and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in his assumption of presidency -- after former dictator Yaya Jammeh had attempted to confiscate power-- might lead to a new development of Casamance issue. Let's also remind that, after the fall of Yaya Jammeh, MFDC

lost its main support in the region and sees its freedom of action weakened and some rebel leaders even called for resumption of negotiations.

IV. Acquaintances between MFDC and the Gambia

The Gambian former President, Yaya Jammeh, having ascended to power after a military putsch in 1994[20], has for long, maintained vague relations with the MFDC. Till the departure of his counterpart Abdou Diouf from Presidency in 2000, Yaya Jammeh has been a facilitator of talks between the separatist group and the Government of Senegal. In 1999, the Gambia even hosted the negotiations that led to the general peace agreements in Casamance[21]. Nonetheless, after Diouf's departure in 2000, Jammeh and the new Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade have embarked into influence peddling. Let us remember that Wade had permitted at least two attempts of *coup d'état* against Jammeh from the territory of Senegal[22]. In order to revenge of his Senegalese neighbor and to save his power, Jammeh collaborated with the rebels chief Salif Sadio and with whom relationships weakened little by little owing to Jammeh's intention to instrumentalize the Casamance rebellion.

Today, those who are loyal to Jammeh are likely to denounce an ethnic cleansing conducted by the new regime of Adama Barrow within the Gambian military hierarchy. The former head of State is not insensitive to that situation and follows it up right from Equatorial Guinea where he has resided since he left power. There are some who do not exclude Jammeh's return and involvement in the Casamance guerilla. This scenario is less probable, given the deterioration of his relationships with the radical leader of MFDC, Salif Sadio. There is however reason to fear for a political instability in Gambia, given the "Ethnicisation" prevailing in the choice of Army leaders by the current Government[23]. Now Diola[24] officers are being put aside, and this might lead to solidarity relationships with some of the rebel factions of MFDC and an ethnic conflict in Gambia.

V. Criminality as a result of MFDC fragmentation

Criminality in Casamance is more a result of MFDC fragmentation than a direct consequence of horizontal inequalities, though the latter strengthened it. The dream for independence seems to increasingly fade away from the Diola youths who had abandoned their studies to join the rebellion and expected a better future once they got the independence. They entertain fear over their future. Their social reinsertion is hypothetic and some have no alternative than to embrace banditry when failing to establish in Dakar or venture in agriculture. This criminality is perpetrated through attacks against passenger vehicles coming from Dakar, the Gambia or ziguinchor, or again, through growing marihuana, especially in the *Karone* Islands and in villages bordering on the Gambia. It is worth noting that the growing of marihuana is in correlation with arms trafficking in the sub-region.

VI. Possible future scenarios

With the underlying peace situation, different scenarios are possible and this depends on the schedules of the stakeholders involved. The possible solutions would be: either demobilization as negotiations are no more in progress, or a

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20 Maru J-C., "Après avoir perdu l'Est, la Guinée-Bissau perd-elle aussi le Nord?", Lusotopie, 1996, p. 90. [Maru J-C., "After losing the East, is Guinea-Bissau also losing the north, Lusotopie, 1996, p. 90?]
21 Lilja J. and Manga M. L., "Going it alone. The Casamance conflict and the challenges of the internal peacemaking", in Mediation and liberal peacebuilding. Peace from the ashes of war?, dir. Erikson M. and Kostic R., London and new York, Routledge, 2013, p. 159.
22 Mbengue C. T., "Sénégal : relations sénégalo-gambiennes- Frictions entre un régime démocratique et une dictature", Sud Quotidien, 1 septembre 2012. [Mbengue C. T., "Relation between Senegal and the Gambia: frictions between a democratic regime and a dictatorship", Sud Quotidien, 1 September 2012.
23 Most of the new leaders of the Gambian army are from ethnic groups such as Mandingue, Wolof or Peulh. This is a response to Jammeh's stigmatization of the Manding ethnic group during his reign.
24 This ethnic group is that of President Jammeh and most MFDC combatants.

reunification of MFDC's factions with a renewed tension, or again, a final peace agreement.

Combatant's demobilization might occur as a consequence of the tiredness from thirty five years of war and the affliction strategy that the current government seems to enforce.

The second significant scenario is a possible reunification of all the fighting forces of MFDC following the protracted negotiations and the failure of social insertion programmes for the demobilized ones. The scenario would lead to a renewed tension and have considerable repercussions on the peace process and stability in the sub-region.

Finally, the last scenario would be a final peace agreement between MFDC and Senegalese Government. But this is not possible in a near future, given the absence of a consensual datebook for the peace process, the discords within the rebellion and the absence of a credible negotiations facilitator.

VI. Recommendations

Many recommendations can be submitted to relevant stakeholders involved in the conflict resolution and for the materialization of development projects.

1 For a viable peace process, it is necessary to commit a credible facilitator like the UNO, or again, the African Union.

2 Mine-clearance activities must continue for a return of the displaced populations and the development of the primary sector.

3 Suggest a consensual roadmap for the negotiations between both parties and for all the process to be transparently guided and followed up.

4 Development partners should lay emphasis on community projects, especially secondary amenities for rice fields and in horticulture sector where supply greatly exceeds demand.

5 For the purpose of avoiding plethora of interlocutors within MFDC, the different factions should unite and appoint a consensual delegation.

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> *Niger continues to fare better than Mali, but some of the political arrangements in Niger are increasingly tenuous.*

SECESSIONISM IN NORTHERN MALI AND NORTHERN NIGER

Prof. Alexandar Thurston

From approximately 1990 to 2009, rebellions in Mali and Niger, led by members of the Tuareg ethnic group, moved roughly in parallel. Based in northern, Saharan regions, the Tuareg rebels denounced southern-based governments for past grievances and present inequalities. In the 1990s, rebels called for autonomy and sometimes for outright separatism. In the late 2000s, rebels demanded more thorough implementation of past peace accords, as well as greater political representation for the Tuareg and greater development efforts in northern regions.

After 2009, the paths of Tuareg rebels in the two countries diverged. In 2012, Mali became a crisis hotspot, wracked by separatism, jihadism, and instability. In Niger, the Tuareg did not rebel. Although still fragile, Niger came to be seen as an "oasis of stability" in the Sahel. What explains the difference, and what is the state of secessionist movements in each country today?

To answer these questions, this article focuses on politics – the trajectories of the Malian and Nigerien governments, and internal politics among rebels. Compared with Mali, Niger's politics since 2009 have been more conducive to deal-making between the Niamey government and northern communities. Niger continues to fare better than Mali, but some of the political arrangements in Niger are increasingly tenuous. This article also notes religious and economic changes, including the rise of jihadism in northern Mali and the changing patterns of livelihoods for the Tuareg in both countries.

Charting Different Paths: Mali and Niger Since 2009

In 2009, both Mali and Niger had democratically elected heads of state who were midway through their second terms. Both presidents were, unknowingly, at the beginning of downward slopes that would lead to military coups.

The descent came faster in Niger. President Mamadou Tandja spent 2009 fighting his two-term limit. He rammed through a referendum that allowed him to head a three-year interim government and rewrite the constitution. With the country in crisis, military officers overthrew Tandja in February 2010. The military handed power to civilians after two-round elections in January/March 2011.

In Mali, President Amadou Toumani Touré (popularly referred to as ATT) did not attempt to outstay his two-term limit, but by 2010 he faced severe problems. For one thing, jihadists were making northern Mali infamous as the epicentre of Saharan kidnapping. Rumours swirled that members of the government and the military were colluding with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The Tuareg, meanwhile, were increasingly discontented.

Touré's style of rule was ill-suited to managing and preventing rebellions in the north. He behaved autocratically toward critics while seeking to placate the powerful through compromises and consensus-building. This style "was just too delicate not to implode in the long term." When it came to the north, Touré was caught between Tuareg rebels and southern politicians. In the rebels' eyes, Touré had failed to properly implement the 1992 National Pact and the 2006 Algiers Accords, which offered the north tremendous autonomy (including a kind of demilitarisation) along with promises that ex-rebels would be integrated into the military and other public sector employments. These integration exercises sometimes went unrealised, and sometimes became part of the conflict itself. Some rebel commanders repeatedly joined the military only to desert from it, fight for a time on the rebel side, and then rejoin. Divisive questions arose among the rebels over whether and how to join the military, and over power issues within the military. Meanwhile, in the eyes of many southern Malian elites, the terms of these accords were too generous to the Tuareg.

Late in his term, Touré attempted to both placate the rebels and reassert military control through the Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development in Northern Mali, but this effort further alienated the rebels without improving the security situation. When the Tuareg-led National Movement for the Liberation o(French acronym MNLA) rose up in January 2012, the state's weakness allowed the rebels to seize several northern towns. Humiliated, junior officers overthrew Touré two months later.

In Niger, the turbulence of the 2009-2011 period helped prepare state authorities to respond more constructively to Tuareg demands afterwards. Compared with Mali's Touré, a widely mistrusted incumbent, Niger's interim military authorities and their civilian successors had a cleaner slate on which to work. The new civilian administration heeded advice that the Tandja administration had not fully implemented: in the words of one northern mayor, "appointing more northerners to positions of responsibility in the north would...address northern grievances." Nigerien authorities had periodically used this strategy before, from the early 1960s to the late 1990s, and to a significant extent it worked after 2011.

Amid the civilian transition in 2011, four prominent leaders from the former rebel group Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ) – Rhissa Ag Boula, Rhissa Feltou, Aklou Sidi Sidi, and Aghali Alambo – took positions in local and national politics. Rebels from the 1990s were also elevated. Tuareg representation was not confined to the north, nor just to former rebels: after Niger's new president

Mahamadou Issoufou took office in April 2011, Brigi Raffini – mayor of Iféraoune, a town in the heartland of the rebellion – was appointed prime minister.

In 2011, former rebels waxed optimistic. Ag Boula commented, "For me, it's a proud moment because in 1995, when we signed the peace accords, the first chapter of the peace accords was decentralisation. And so today, it is the actual manifestation [of that], even if it took time." Unlike Mali's rebels, Niger's rebels felt that past accords were finally making a difference.

Changing Contours of Rebel Movements

During the 2009-2012 period, another difference between Mali and Niger concerned internal politics and changes within rebel movements. While Nigerien rebels largely agreed that entering politics was the right course of action, Malian rebels waged fierce power struggles. When the hardline rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga died in a car accident in northern Mali in August 2011, many observers suspected that he had been assassinated by rivals. In the absence of Ag Bahanga, a unifying figure among former rebels, Mali's Tuareg rebels soon became divided: secessionists rallied to the MNLA, while others – out of a mixture of ideological, pragmatic, and personal motivations – gravitated toward Ansar al-Din (Arabic for "Defenders of the Faith"), an ally of AQIM.

The religious landscape of northern Mali was changing in ways that gave jihadism a greater foothold there, both in comparison with northern Niger and compared with northern Mali's own recent past. During the 1990s rebellion and its sequel in the mid-2000s, Islamic identification was a marginal theme for most Tuareg rebels, who instead emphasised ethnic identity and demands for "liberation" and "justice." But starting in the late 1990s, some Malian Tuareg elites were influenced by the proselytising activities of Tabligh Jamaat, a global Muslim missionary organisation often locally known simply as *da'wa* (proselytisation) in Mauritania and Mali. Although Tabligh is a largely non-extremist movement, the group's preaching set some Tuareg on a path toward embracing jihadism. Then, starting in the early 2000s,

the hardline Algerian jihadists in AQIM began to forge strong local ties in northern Mali (in comparison, AQIM used Niger primarily as a transit corridor and kidnapping site). In northern Mali, AQIM's foremost local partner was the Tuareg leader Iyad Ag Ghali, whose career took him from separatist rebel in the 1990s, through a stint with Tabligh, all the way to AQIM-linked jihadist by the 2010s (and possibly even earlier). Northern Niger had no equivalent figure to Ag Ghali, and no equivalent movement to Ansar al-Din.

The impact of religious changes came to the fore during the 2012 rebellion in Mali. After the MNLA antagonised civilians, overreached militarily, and mismanaged northern politics in early 2012, Ansar al-Din and AQIM were well positioned to step in and control the north's major cities. For Mali's jihadists, the 2012 war became an opportunity not to create a Tuareg ethno-state, but to impose a stark jihadist religious vision on northern Mali, involving the application of a jihadist version of shari'a and the systematic destruction of shrines, tombs, and documents that the jihadists considered anathema. In the context of the Sahara's post-independence rebellions, these priorities were new.

A final difference between Malian and Nigerien rebels and their motivations concerns their livelihoods. In both countries, the Tuareg have long faced strain due

to droughts and the growing effects of climate change – problems that, it should be said, affect other Malian and Nigerien ethnic groups as well. Droughts have often immediately preceded or contributed to Tuareg rebellions. The advent of colonialism, and especially the creation of independent states after approximately 1960, also disrupted established livelihoods in pastoralism and trans-Saharan trade. In recent decades, some Tuareg have become involved in trade and smuggling of illicit goods, including contraband food and tobacco, cannabis and cocaine, or weapons. Some Tuareg developed linkages with organised crime, including the kidnapping economy driven by AQIM.

For all these similarities, however, the economic positions of Malian and Nigerien Tuareg are somewhat different. Northern Mali, despite rumours that lucrative resources are yet to be found there, remains a resource-poor land. Northern Niger, in contrast, is the fourth-largest uranium-producing region in the world. Niger's Tuareg rebels had an economic incentive to remain part of the Nigerien national project, an incentive that their Malian counterparts lacked; the idea of managing uranium revenues through an independent Tuareg state would have been farfetched. In 2009, rebels, former rebels, and potential rebels in Niger may have been swayed by the promise that a third major

uranium mine – the Imouraren project – would soon come online.

In Mali, meanwhile, some Tuareg nationalists felt that the time had come to create a Saharan, Tuareg-dominated state called Azawad. Such a state would have been economically fragile and politically isolated, but its Malian proponents saw little economic advantage to remaining part of Mali. That dream has not completely died, even after jihadists commandeered the rebellion and even after France intervened to restore Mali's territorial integrity.

Secessionism in Mali Since Operation Serval

In January 2013, France launched a military intervention, Operation Serval, that broke the jihadists' control over northern Mali. In a strictly formal sense, Serval restored Mali's territorial integrity. But the state's actual reach remains limited in the north.

Amid Serval, the MNLA positioned itself as anti-jihadist and as a partner of sorts for France. By late January 2013, the MNLA partially controlled Kidal, where the MNLA had significant support. The MNLA resisted the Malian government's efforts to assert its rule in the city. In November 2013, then-Prime Minister Oumar Ly cancelled a visit to Kidal due to security concerns. In May 2014, his successor Moussa Mara ignored

warnings and proceeded with a visit, triggering a firefight between the Malian military and various rebels. At the time of writing, Kidal remains partly outside the government's control, although "interim authorities" are there, as they are elsewhere in the north.

Politically, the MNLA has shifted from secessionism to advocating "power sharing" in the north. In 2014, the MNLA and like-minded rebel movements formed an umbrella organisation, the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA). The CMA became the Malian government's main negotiating partner in the peace process, which generated the 2015 Algiers Accord. The accord states that signatories "respect [Mali's] territorial integrity" and are "convinced of the necessity of reconstructing national unity."

The CMA has strongly criticised what it sees as the Malian government's slowness and insincerity in implementing the accord, but the CMA remains formally committed – for now – to the accord's implementation. A July 2016 CMA statement gives some insight into its political posture: the CMA vigorously denied reports that its members were going to enter the cabinet, and added that it had no intention to work with the government "outside of the mechanisms for consultation, management, and power-sharing laid out by the accord." In 2017, the CMA and the

government – as well as pro-Bamako northern militias, another key actor – have haltingly advanced some provisions of the accord, notably joint patrols and interim authorities in northern cities. The CMA draws some benefits from the status quo, however, especially in Kidal. True peace remains elusive, and the Algiers Accord risks going the way of past, poorly implemented deals.

Northern armed groups are proliferating, but "their demands often seem to be based on community or individual interests." Many groups insist on the need for communal self-defence and represent segments of the Tuareg, Arab, Songhai, and Fulani communities in northern and central Mali. These armed groups sometimes act as spoilers, hoping to obtain greater representation in the peace process and the new political dispensation. For example, the Congress for Justice in Azawad, an MNLA splinter group, temporarily blocked the installation of interim authorities in Timbuktu in March/April 2017, protesting its own lack of inclusion in the authorities' structure. The Congress ultimately reached an agreement with other factions in Timbuktu. In the north, there is an intensifying competition over political resources, but little open talk of secessionism.

Even Mali's jihadists have partly changed their strategies. Rather than declaring a formal Islamic

emirate, as they did in 2012, they are working on three tracks: wearing down the resistance of foreign and local security forces; building informal governance structures; and seeking popular support. Some jihadists envision the creation of religious states, hearkening back to nineteenth-century empires in the region; others seem content to bide their time. Iyad Ag Ghali, now head of a jihadist umbrella group called Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin (The Society for Supporting Islam and Muslims, formally a part of AQIM), gave an interview in April 2017. He emphasised that jihadists are pursuing a long-term, military-cum-political strategy. This strategy hinges on "seeking to exhaust the enemy by targeting him in every place in which he is present, and inciting the people in that [effort] and mobilising them for it." At their most ambitious, AQIM and its allies now envision that they may one day rule all of Mali, rather than just a piece of it.

Niger's Fragility
In Niger, despite apparent stability, painful questions are coming to the fore. What benefits has elite representation brought to ordinary Nigerien Tuareg? How does making Niger a hub in the U.S.-French securitisation of the Sahel affect northerners? What ramifications will a growing authoritarianism on the government's part have for northern communities? And how will crackdowns on migration and smuggling affect northerners?

In 2017, important former rebels continue to participate in mainstream politics. Brigi Raffini remains prime minister in Issoufou's second administration. But Tuareg politicians' influence has not transformed life in the north. As early as 2013, some Nigerien Tuareg were questioning Issoufou's commitment to peace. In an open letter to the president that year, one Tuareg commentator noted that although the Tuareg had greater representation in politics, some 4,000 demobilised fighters still awaited "reintegration." Promises of "decentralisation" had gone unrealised.

On the security front, initiatives by Issoufou's government risk either being under-implemented or misunderstood. His administration's $2.5 billion "Strategy for Development and Security in the Sahelo-Saharan Zones of Niger," launched in 2012, became something of a "fundraising initiative" for the government, but it has had no high-profile successes. In 2013, major terrorist attacks in the main northern cities Arlit and Agadez embarrassed the government. In recent months, cross-border attacks from Mali have targeted refugees and soldiers. Meanwhile, the "SDS" program is little discussed today.

Issoufou has cultivated security partnerships with the United States and France, both of which maintain drone bases in Niger. Yet these countries' actions may alienate communities in the north. In a 2015 interview, one former Tuareg rebel-turned-politician commented on France's Operation Barkhane, the Sahel-wide counterterrorism programme that replaced Operation Serval in 2014:

When you send helicopters and planes into the desert, without having created an information mechanism, you should expect that the populations will see a new form of colonialism in it...The inhabitants don't understand that Barkhane only takes action against certain armed groups. There are gangs, coming from Chad or Sudan for example, that practice looting...But Barkhane, because that is not its mission, does not take an interest in them...The risk is that the population will create militias to defend itself.

In other words, by narrowing what counts as "security," the Nigerien government and its partners neglect the main security problems that ordinary Nigeriens in the north face. Meanwhile, Barkhane could fuel suspicion and non-cooperation among northerners.

Issoufou's own authoritarian tendencies could also increase tensions in the north. Since 2013, Issoufou has neutralised rivals, most prominently former Speaker of the National Assembly Hama Amadou. Charged – likely spuriously – with complicity in trafficking children from neighbouring Nigeria, Amadou has spent the period since 2014 either self-exiled in France or detained in Niger. Meanwhile, amid the Boko Haram insurgency that affects southeastern Niger, the Issoufou administration has detained and harassed journalists and civil society activists. If the government's willingness to tolerate criticism in the south is shrinking, what message will northern dissidents take?

Finally, there is the question of livelihoods in the north. Promises that the Imouraren mine will generate new employment are proving empty, as the site's potential seems to be much less than originally hoped. Other economic activities are also under stress. In recent years, Agadez, long a major node in circuits of smuggling and migration in the Sahara, became even more important to trans-Saharan economic flows: Agadez became the key transit point for West African migrants heading to Europe. But in September 2016, under pressure from the European Union, the Nigerien government began to crack down on smugglers and their networks. Soon, the region's rebels-turned-politicians were warning that without some new sources of income, the region's young men might embrace renewed violence and rebellion.

Tubu Secessionism in Niger: Faint Rumblings of Discontent

Niger has also witnessed secessionist violence by sections of the Tubu, an ethnic group concentrated in Saharan regions of Niger, Chad, and Libya. During the 1990s rebellion, and overlapping with the MNJ's rebellion in the late 2000s, a Tubu-led group called the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (French acronym FARS) fought in the name of greater northern autonomy.

The trajectories of the FARS and the MNJ diverged after the Libyan revolution of 2011. Libya's longtime ruler Muammar al-Qadhafi was a patron of Tuareg rebel movements. When he fell, veteran Malian and Nigerien Tuareg fighters returned home from Libya – some hoping to bid for power in Mali, but others simply to escape persecution and violence in Libya, where the Tuareg were stereotyped as pro-Qadhafi counterrevolutionaries.

The Tubu had a more antagonistic relationship with Qadhafi in his final years, and they became partial beneficiaries of the revolution. A major FARS commander, Barka Wardougou, joined Libya's revolution in 2011. Afterwards, he lived as a prominent "strong man" in southwest Libya until his death in July 2016.

Following Wardougou's death, the torch of Tubu rebel leadership passed to Adam Tcheke Koudigan, an ex-FARS fighter who leads the Movement for Justice and Rehabilitation in Niger (MJRN). Founded in 2008, the MJRN took up arms in September 2016. Its stated grievances are against the Nigerien government and the China National Petroleum Corporation, whose activities in northeastern Niger have led to widespread sicknesses among the local population. Rather than Tubu secession, the MJRN wants direct negotiations with the government in Niamey, which does not yet view the group as a threat. The government, however, could ill afford to face a new security problem in addition to the challenges of Boko Haram in the southeast and the spillover of Mali's violence in northwest.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, prospects for peace in northern Mali seem dim – jihadist groups are so disruptive, and other armed groups so contentious, that it is hard to see a quick path for the state and its partners to assert greater control. In Mali, the formation of Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin in March 2017 formalised a destabilising trend: a confident, aggressive jihadist movement able to keep peacekeepers off balance in the north and to periodically project violence even into the capital itself. Jihadism also continues to spill over from Mali into Niger and Burkina Faso, making the tri-border zone increasingly dangerous.

In Niger, the second term of President Issoufou (2016-2021) will be a test for old strategies: will northern populations grow impatient with their straitened economic circumstances, and if so will the government be able to prevent renewed outbreaks of armed rebellion? In both countries, pressing questions continue regarding decentralisation, political representation, and guaranteeing livelihoods. In both countries, the ghosts of past rebellions will not be easily banished.

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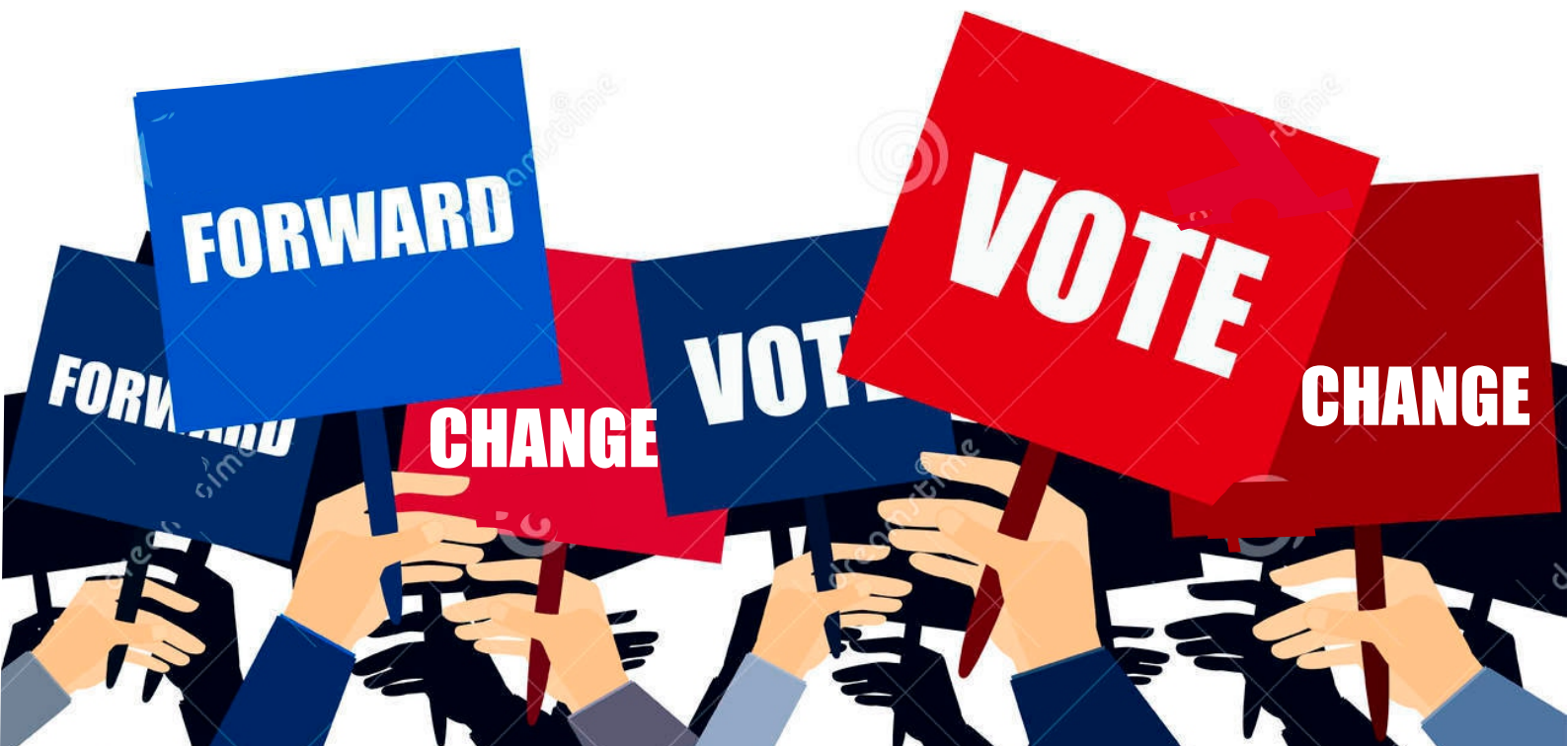
THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION PROMISE TRACKING IN WEST AFRICA   31

Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu

I. Introduction

Should we really be speaking of good governance rather than democratic government? Is good governance the same as democratic government? The answer is simple: good governance and democratic government are not the same. In fact, good governance does not necessarily entail democratic government. To understand this, we need to return to the history of the concept of good governance, particularly in the 1980s.

This was a period during which many parts of Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America were living under various authoritarian governments, including military regimes and civilian authoritarian governments.

At the time, the idea of good governance became very popular amongst international donor and financial communities. It was promoted during a period when the West had many friends in authoritarian regimes and sought to reconcile the continuing support for their political authoritarianism with economic reforms. The relationship between economic reform and political liberalization became a major concern in these relationships, and good governance became a way of reconciling and resolving the obvious contradictions which political authoritarianism represented to the Western way of life.

II. Dimensions of Good Governance

Good governance as it was promoted during the 1980s had two dimensions:

a) Good governance meant the existence of certain desirable regimes. By regime I mean a system of rules, systems and controls. It represented the institutional framework on which politics was conducted. Governance was regarded as good if it met these principles and regimes.

Among the most popular of these was the promotion of market forces, particularly through the liberalization of trade, adoption of

macroeconomic policies consistent with strengthening the market, monetary policies that allowed local currencies to float and the overall contraction of the public sector and influence of the state. These were a precondition for continued credits to these countries, as these conditions were regarded as "good" for them.

b) At the same time, good governance did not incorporate a definition of government as a unified political process involving the arms of government and serviced by a bureaucracy. Instead, government became a series of spaces to be governed. Each space was subject to specific desirable regimes and political governance is only one of the governed spaces. Thus we have economic governance, natural resource governance, etc.

Conceived in these ways, it is clear that the tenets of good governance could be achieved under both democratic and authoritarian governments. For instance, donors and Western governments celebrated several authoritarian regimes in Asia for their commitment to good governance, as expressed in economic reforms, which supposedly led to the rapid economic development of their countries. Indeed, authoritarian governments largely propelled the so-called Asian Tigers and Asian miracles. On the other hand, some democratic governments were castigated for neglecting good governance through problematic economic policies and corruption, which crippled their countries.

III. Critique of Good Governance

Good governance is ideological: it is borne out of a desire by Western countries to universalize the Western model of society. While it is good in their view, what it portends is not necessarily good for African countries. Good governance is not necessarily democratic. It has been associated with the policies of very authoritarian regimes across the world. The measure of "good" is predetermined and entails the domination of capital and Western way of life. The idea of governed spaces is a ruse meant to disperse responsibility for the poor policy choices imposed by the West on underdeveloped countries.

Government is a unified process, not a dispersed one. Political elites must take full responsibility for their actions and not deflect it to the rest of the population. Governance is not only about control.

It is also about responding to the needs of citizens. Good governance assumes that what it predetermines as good is necessarily what citizens define as good. For example, citizens have roundly rejected privatization and removal of subsidies, which are promoted by proponents of good governance as desirable, across Africa and indeed the world. That these policies are forcefully imposed against the wishes of citizens is a clear indication that good governance and the policies associated with it are not necessarily democratic.

IV   Africa's Third Democracy Movement

For the foregoing reasons, I would rather speak of accountability as a principle of democratic government than as a principle of good governance. But first, a few remarks on Africa's recent democratic experience. The notion of good governance blossomed at the same time that Africa was undergoing rapid democratic transformation in what may be called the continent's Third Democratic Movement.

At the beginning of the 1990s when this third movement (not to be confused with Huntington's *Third Wave*) was gathering pace, a major question raised was the type of democracy on offer. The first of Africa's democratic movements - the struggle against colonialism - ended largely in the enthronement of orthodox, liberal and multiparty electoral democracy. In the decades of the 1960s, it became clear that this type of democracy was far from meeting the democratic aspirations of Africa's people, leading to repeated calls for a second independence.[1]

Again, the democratic aspirations embodied by the second independence movement were never actualised as a rash of military coups and authoritarian regimes stifled that second phase of Africa's democratic struggles. In this third phase, therefore, it was not unexpected that a central

part of the struggle would be waged for the type of democracy that would finally meet the aspirations of Africa's people. Calls for a return to the second independence movement were rife, particularly in the National Conference models that appeared to be taking roots.

However, this struggle for the essence of the third democratization movement in Africa was by no means unanimous because the terrain was replete with several supporters and pseudo-supporters of democracy, each with its own agenda. Ake rightly captures this medley of interests:

The movement has many components: out of power politicians for whom democratization is less a commitment than a strategy for power; ethnic, national and communal groups who are obliged to wage struggles for democratic incorporation because a manipulative leadership has seized state power in the name of an ethnic or national group; ordinary people who are calling for a second independence having concluded that the politics of the present leadership, far from offering any prospect of relief from underdo, has deepened it immensely; international human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

1 Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1987.

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which are only just beginning to perceive the relation between human rights and democracy; international financial institutions, especially International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for whom democracy provides the political requirements for the operation of market forces; and Western governments who support democracy in Africa as the process through which the universalizing of the Western model of society can take place.[2]

Indeed, these interests variously informed the academic debates on Africa's transition to democracy at the time. Some of these interests, and the several academic positions they fostered, helped to either elucidate the meaning of democracy or to demean it. It was in fact the powerful forces that dominated the terrain and their demeaning of democracy that shepherded Africa's democracy movement into the path of orthodox liberal, electoral democracy.

For several Western scholars, democracy represented a diffusion of democratic institutions from the West to other parts of the world, including Africa. For this diffusionist perspective, the world at the time was experiencing a "third wave of democracy"[3] or the third democratic transformation,[4] representing a "process by which democracy spreads across the world".[5] Democratization emerged as the modernization of the 1990s, a process in which non-Western societies that were not familiar with democracy were sucked into its "irresistible and universal" vortex.[6] Consequently, Modelski argues that democratization is:

> *...a technology, that is, a means to an end, a technique of collective choice or a form of macrodecision making, [then] its dissemination may be subject to patterns observed in the diffusion of*

technological and other innovations. For societies unfamiliar with such practices, democracy is indeed a bundle of innovations.[7]

It is not difficult to see that in this reincarnation of modernization,[8] "developing areas" are "unfamiliar" with democratic practices, which will inevitably reach them through association. This is the connection between democracy and globalization. It is partly true that global events such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communism in the former Soviet bloc and end of the sphere-of-influence syndrome among the superpowers had an effect on democratization in Africa. However, they only served as a stimulus to popular discontent arising from economic stagnation, social decay and political repression, which in many cases were sustained by the policies of Western governments in specific African countries.

To be sure, democratization in Africa has its own internal logic quite apart from the thaw in East-West relations. But sadly, the limits of Africa's Third Democratic Movement were prematurely fixed by prevalent orthodoxy as liberal, multiparty democracy. Thus, orthodox liberal democracy guillotined the mass-based ferment and political struggles in which Africa's current democratization was initially being shaped.

Liberal democratic theory, as Schumpeter forcefully argued, was foisted on Africa's Third Democratic Movement. The essence of this theory, as Schumpeter stated nearly seventy years ago, is to make the power of "the people" in deciding political issues secondary to the "election of men who are to do the deciding". For him, "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in

2 Claude Ake 'Unique case of African democracy', *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April, 1993) p. 239.
3 S. P. Huntington *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
4 Robert Dahl *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
5 G. Modelski 'Democratization', in M. Hawkesworth and M. Kogan (eds) *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, Vol. 2, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 1353.
6 Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Meyer, NY: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1969 (First published in 1835).
7 Modelski, *op. cit.*, p. 1361.
8 N. Lechner 'The search for lost community: challenges to democracy in Latin America', *International Social Science Journal*, 129, August, 1991, p. 542.

which individuals acquire power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote".[9] To be sure, this perspective goes further back than Schumpeter. In fact, if we excavate a little we find the Federalist papers.

And if we dig even further, David Ricardo, who wanted suffrage only for those who would not abolish private property, and Hegel whose "universal class" is fitted by property and training to rule, are sure to appear.

The democratic content of these formulations should not be taken for granted. As Ake has perceptively noted, "liberal democracy has significant affinities to democracy but it is markedly different". Instead of the collective, liberal democracy focuses on the individual and substitutes government by the people with government by the consent of the people. In place of sovereignty of the people it offers sovereignty of the law. Above all, liberal democracy completely repudiates the notion of popular power.[10]

Surely, after the disappointments of the first and second democracy movements, the mass of Africa's peoples were certainly expecting more than quadrennial rituals of selecting men who do the deciding on their behalf. Indeed, they were not just looking for elections. They were also looking for improved economic conditions, welfare and dignity that is not blighted by poverty or power. Incidentally, again powerful global forces and their intellectuals also joined issues with these unique demands of African democracy and demeaned them. Essentially, these issues were posed as the link between economic reform and political liberalization.[11]

In other words, this was posed as the relationship between market-oriented structural adjustments and political liberalization. International financial institutions and Western governments used the issue as the so-called political conditionality for aid and credits that they demanded from Africa's authoritarian regimes from the end of the Cold War.

Thus, between 1990 and 1992, the United States suspended military and/or other aid to some of its abiding dictator-friends in Africa like Mobutu, Moi and Doe, over the question of political liberalization.

The truth however is that Africa's democratic struggles have always had this as a cardinal component. In fact, during the anti-colonial struggles and in the immediate post-colonial period, ordinary people in Africa were clear on the relationship between democracy and better economic conditions. Popular demands on the colonial and post-colonial governments in African were not only about votes and political voice, but also even more emphatically about better economic conditions.

Such demands were at the core of the first independence struggles against the colonial state, and the "second independence" struggles against the post-colonial state in parts of Africa.[12] In both cases, the people's demands and object of struggle were clear: that there is an organic unity between economic well-being and democracy. The struggle for one is the struggle for the other. And this is where their position diverged from that of the petty bourgeoisie - their allies in the first independence struggle.

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9 Joseph Schumpeter *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, London: Unwin, 1987 (First published in 1943), p. 269.

10 Claude Ake 'Dangerous liaisons: the interface of globalisation and democracy', in A. Hadenius (ed) *Democracy's victory and Crisis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 283.

11 See J. Malloy 'The politics of transition in Latin America' in J. Malloy and M. Seligson (eds) *Authoritarians and Democrats: regime transition in Latin America*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987; Kola Olufemi 'The problematic of economic reform and transition to democracy: lessons for Africa', in S. Tyoden (ed) *Transition to Civil Rule: The Journey So Far*, Lagos: Nigerian Political Science Association, 1992; A. Przeworski *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reform in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991; Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Meyer, NY: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1969 (First published in 1835); and N. Lechner *op. cit*.

12 Op. cit.

The latter had admonished the need to seek first the kingdom of political independence. But when this did not materialize, the people declared the first independence struggle a failure. Writing on Zaire, Nzongola-Ntalaja aptly observes:

> For the people, independence was meaningless without a better standard of living, greater civil liberties, and the promise of a better life for their children. Instead of making these promised benefits available to the masses, the politicians who inherited state power from the Belgians lived in much greater luxury than most of their European predecessors and used violence and arbitrary force against the people. For the latter, the first or nominal independence had failed. Their discontent with the neo-colonial state served as a basis for an aspiration towards a new and genuine independence, one that the 1964 insurrections were to incarnate.[13]

During the early days of Africa's Third Democratic Movement, these issues were posed in a number of distinct ways. For authoritarian regimes, political liberalization and economic development are separate and should be pursued consecutively, with the former only coming after economic development. The position adopted by some African scholars in reaction to this position is also that they are separate and consecutive, but in a reversed order. Thus, Anyang' Nyong'o argues that "political liberties and the accountability of the state to the people (in particular the popular classes) is a precondition for material progress".[14]

For the IMF, the World Bank, Western governments and many liberal social scientists, economic reforms epitomized by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and political liberalization are also separate, but should be pursued concurrently. But evidence clearly indicates that there was a strong link between SAP and political repression in many countries.

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13 *Ibid*, p. 113.
14 Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, P. (ed) (1988) *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa*, London: Zed, 1987, p. 20.

In response, it has been argued that SAP is not necessarily antagonistic to democratization. It may give rise to social and political tension, but that does not mean that it must result in political repression or undermine the democratic transition process. The farthest those that argued this position went was to acknowledge later that economic reform is a burden on democratization.

The democratic position of Africa's masses, which they stated in their struggles against the economic exploitation and political repression of the colonial state and maintained in their struggles against the post-colonial state, is clear and consistent: that material well-being and political freedom express an organic unity. They cannot be separated either in a consecutive or a concurrent sense. As has since become clear, the issue is not whether SAP coheres with political opening – it may. Instead the issue is whether SAP is the path to popular economic well-being – it is not! Therefore, the peoples' struggle for democracy was also a struggle against SAP.

In short, Africa's Third Democratic Movement lost the second independence and was left with the next best alternative – multiparty electoral democracy. Professor Ake perceptively notes that in the face of the powerful international and local forces it had to confront, it was unlikely that Africa's third democracy movement would avoid settling for "the line of least resistance, that is, for orthodox liberal democracy".[15] Indeed, he concludes: "any deviation from orthodox liberal democracy, any distrust of the market, will invoke retribution".[16]

It is in the context of this electoral democracy that I pose the question of accountability.

V. Meaning and Forms of Accountability

As a principle of democratic government, accountability entails three related things, namely, responsiveness, responsibility and openness or transparency. In other words, a democratic government is accountable to the extent that it is responsive, responsible and open.

a) Responsiveness: This means that an accountable government must respond to the needs of the vast majority of citizens, not the vested interests of an elite few. Responsiveness also means that government must be alive to its campaign promises. It is this principle of responsiveness that justifies the tracking of campaign promises. Accountability means that citizens devise a means of tracking these promises and holding government accountable for them. In fact, in the final analysis democracy is about responsiveness of government to the wishes of the people.

b) Responsibility: This means that on the one hand, government must act responsibly; that is to say, it must act by the rules. A government that routinely undermines rules, including laws that it has itself passed, is not accountable. On the other hand, responsibility also means that government, collectively and individually, must take responsibility for its actions. A government that is accountable should be ready to step down if it loses public confidence.

c) Openness: This means that government must be conducted in a transparent and open manner. It requires that government should at all times be honest to citizens.

We can identify three types of accountability: statutory accountability, auto-accountability and citizen accountability. Statutory accountability refers to accountability requirements contained in the extant legal framework, particularly the constitution, existing legislations and other subsidiary legislations. The most common formulation of statutory accountability can be found in the principles of checks and balances. The oversight functions of parliament, as the incarnation of the collective will of the people-nation, constitute a major site for statutory accountability.

Auto-accountability refers to accountability systems to which government or its agency subjects itself. Auto-accountability mechanisms

are meant to go beyond what is statutorily required of government. Many opposition political parties and candidates usually develop auto-accountability mechanisms for themselves to demonstrate their readiness to surpass the existing government if elected. There are a number of factors that make auto-accountability robust. Among these are the strength of the internal rules of the party and the robustness of the whip. These are necessary to ensure that agents of a political party, including candidates when elected, conform to accountability mechanisms designed by the party.

The second is the history of the formation of the given political party and candidate, especially their ideological positions. Candidates and parties that have a history of standing with the people are more likely to give to themselves strong auto-accountability mechanisms. Such parties are also more likely to show higher levels of internal party disciple and stronger leadership.

Citizen accountability refers to accountability mechanisms driven by citizens and that draw from both statutory and auto-accountability mechanisms. Citizens' accountability usually arises from the failure of statutory and auto-accountability.

Election promise tracking projects such as Buharimeter are examples of citizens' accountability mechanism. The general principles for the success of such mechanisms include, but are by no means limited to, the following:
(I) They must fully understand the statutory and auto-accountability mechanisms and use them effectively in designing the tracking system.

(ii) They must be well-designed. They have to be clear, simple and citizen-driven.
(iii) They must target advocacy. Usability for advocacy is a central plank on which citizen's accountability is built.

(iv) Citizen's advocacy mechanisms must aim at public consensus.

(v) They should aim to provide remedies, including policy alternatives to be pursued by government, rather than become mere tools for criticizing government. This is what some would call "constructive criticism".

(vi) Finally, they should be neither apolitical nor partisan. Instead, they should be political. By being political and not partisan I mean that:
a) They should be critical, progressive and honest. They are progressive to the extent that their driving motive is to improve the lives of the vast majority of citizens, rather than the elite - however defined.

b) They should be conscious of important political issues, how they affect the majority of citizens and engage them vigorously.

c) In the process, they must avoid canvassing any specific political party lines. Their positions may coincide with the positions of a political party, but they must be arrived at dispassionately. Citizen's accountability mechanisms must not regularly canvass any partisan position. This does not mean political neutrality, but rather balanced interaction with all political interests.

VI. Election Promise Tracking: Prospects and Challenges

As a citizen accountability mechanism, election promise tracking holds both strong prospects for West Africa and many challenges. In recent times, there has been a growing interest in using election promise tracking for citizen accountability. As a result, we have seen Mackymeter in Senegal, Rochmeter and later Presimeter in Burkina Faso and Buharimeter in Nigeria. They are designed to track the electoral promises of presidential candidates and their political parties and to use them as accountability tools after they win

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15 Ake, Unique case of African democracy, op cit, p. 240.
16 Ibid, p. 242

elections. There is no doubt that this could be a very powerful citizen-driven mechanism for holding governments accountable.

Although each "meter" has been tailored to specific national contexts, some common characteristics and best practice are already emerging, which may be summarised as follows:

1) Focus is at the national level, specifically on the promises of the President/Head of State and/or ruling party. However, the designs also have possibilities for tracking other levels of government and candidates.

2) Electoral promises are the main interest of the meters. These are mostly sourced from candidate/party manifestos and other programmes and declarations. These are usually identified during the campaign period before the President is elected into office.

3) In the design of most of the meters, there are usually pre-election activities. Particularly, there are party manifesto analyses and involvement of political parties and candidates in programmes to showcase their promises during campaigns.

4) Baseline assessments are conducted where possible to record the situation before the President gets into office.

5) They are largely electronic and available online. However, they also include additional approaches for gathering information and presenting results.

6) The meters are principally citizen-driven. The general public is able to participate in providing information and have access to the meters. Crowd sourcing, surveys, etc. are commonly used.

7) There are periodic analytic reports from the meters based on sectorial analysis. The reports are usually widely disseminated using popular media like radio, television, social media, etc.

8) The meters create opportunities for government to respond to their findings. There are also opportunities for opposition parties to respond.

9) The meters are usually designed to provide feedback mechanisms for the public.

10) The is a lot of emphasis on building national, sub-regional and international partnerships in developing and implementing the meters.

Several challenges are nevertheless discernible. There are a number of contradictions that the election tracking meters are faced with, including:
a) How to be independent of political interests and yet remain engaged with critical political issues of the times. An issue here is how to be political and yet avoid becoming partisan.

b) How to be ICT-driven and yet be accessible to ordinary citizens.

c) How to employ methodologies that allow for crowd sourcing and still apply strict statistical analytics.

d) At the sub-regional level, how to balance the need for commonalties and yet retain the uniqueness of each country.

Another important challenge is financing. Although some development partners are currently supporting election promise tracking in the sub-region, particularly the Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA), adequate finances to scale-up each meter and expand coverage to all countries of the sub-region will remain a challenge. Furthermore, there is a challenge of capacity. Different countries have different capacity challenges and there are differences in the level of local expertise to drive the meters. Also, there is the challenge of precision in the metric system itself, including finding measurable indicators for the promises, as well as the denial by politicians of the promises they made. Finally, election promise tracking is like walking a political high wire. Politicians will always try to pressure organizations working on the meters, and, where possible, try to discredit its outcome.