

# THE CONTEXT AND PROVENANCE OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN GHANA, 1990-1992

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**Resumen:** In the last decade and half of the twentieth century, a consensus emerged that the difficulties that have slowed down Africa's development are more political than economic. Political scientists and Africa's development partners, consequently, suggested democratization and good governance as means of bringing Africa out of underdevelopment. Accordingly, since 1990, a wave of democratization has engulfed most of Africa. This paper examines the context and origins of the democratization process in Ghana. The politics of Ghana underwent a most rapid process of transformation between 1990 and 1992. The period witnessed the obliteration of a decade of military dictatorship. There was a reinstatement of pluralist politics and constitutional rule. At the same time, a dramatic growth of civil society became discernible. The paper identifies two developments, elite and mass struggles for political and economic incorporation respectively, and external pressures, as having played the dominant role in this process. It highlights the political forces and actors that shaped the restoration of constitutional/democratic rule in Ghana. The paper addresses the concern that the movement toward democracy in Ghana in the 1990s arose as a demand by politically and economically marginalized elements for incorporation. The political and economic marginalization occurred in conditions of political monolithism, coercive authoritarianism, and economic slump or, in the words of Claude Ake (2000), "persistent underdevelopment". The demand for incorporation occurred on two levels - on the level of elites as demand for political assimilation and on the level of the masses as demand for economic assimilation. Thus, political monolithism and persistent underdevelopment gave birth to a democracy movement the aim of which was economic and

political integration. Seen this way, the Ghanaian democratization wave was intended to counteract exclusivity and facilitate inclusivity.

**Palabras Clave:** context, democratization, Ghana, provenance.

Huntington (1991), in *The Third Wave of Democratization in the Twentieth Century*, argues that between 1826 and 1974 there have been three waves of democratization in the world, each followed by a 'reverse wave', namely, the long wave of democratization - 1826-1828, first reverse wave - 1928 - 1942; second wave of democratization - 1942-1962, second reverse wave - 1958-1975; and the third democratization wave - 1974. The third wave has been encircling, overwhelming the entire world including Africa.

According to van de Walle and Bratton (1997), 29 African countries held 54 national elections between 1990 and 1994. More than half of these elections were deemed free and fair by Western observers. In these elections, 11 sitting presidents were voted out of office, and three presidents gave up their right to stand for re-election on their own initiative. In May 2002, the citizens of Sierra Leone voted, putting an end to the civil war that had confounded the country in the 1990s. In the same month, the people of Lesotho, under military power since a coup in 1998, elected a new parliament in a nonviolent election.

Leaders who had been in power for long periods in Mozambique, Namibia, Angola and Mali all declared that they would not stand for re-election, thus initiating the democratic process in these countries.

Given Africa's pitiable record of competitive elections, in the post independence period, this recent spate of elections clearly signals that some form of political change had come to Africa. Certain Africanist scholars contend that Africa's 'democratic age' has, in the end, dawned.

This paper examines the context and provenance of Ghana's democratic wave between 1990 and 1992. It highlights the political forces and actors that shaped the restoration of constitutional/democratic rule in Ghana. Ghana's democracy movement arose in a determinate historical state and a particular configuration of social forces (Ake, 2000).

The paper addresses the concern that the movement toward democracy arose as a demand by politically and economically marginalized elements for incorporation. The political and economic marginalization occurred in conditions of political monolithism, coercive authoritarianism, and economic slump or, in the words of Claude Ake (2000), "persistent underdevelopment". The demand for incorporation occurred on two levels - on the level of elites as demand for political incorporation and on the level of the masses as demand for economic incorporation. Thus, political monolithism and persistent underdevelopment gave birth to a democracy movement the aim of which was economic and political incorporation. Claude Ake (2000) argues that the demand for political and economic incorporation interface and constitute a rudimentary democracy movement. Seen this way, the Ghanaian democratization wave was intended to counteract exclusivity and facilitate inclusivity.

Ghana's post-colonial history is stuffed with totalitarian tendencies. And these proclivities often engendered crises of legitimacy. Naomi Chazan (1982) draws attention to the authoritarian proclivities of post-colonial Ghana and discusses the methodical decline in the legitimacy of successive governments. This decline in legitimacy has been an outgrowth of a systematic blockage of access to the state decision-making apparatus. This has meant the reduction of possibilities for political participation, which in turn, according to Chazan (1982), has led to a decline in solidarity commitments as well. Chazan (1982) notes that the closure of avenues of access, and hence of means of influencing political events at the state

rung, progressed in five stages. She writes: "The notion of direct participation in political activities through leaders who reflected sociologically diverse segments of the population was barred even before independence. The leaders of the vying factions for political office during decolonization, according to consisted of a small coterie of western-educated, upwardly mobile people who drew their status and influence from their proximity to the colonial state. These aspiring politicians hardly constituted a socio-structural group reflective of most Ghanaians". Chazan's central argument here is that post-colonial leaders, even though legal representatives of Ghanaians have not, socio-structurally, reflected the diverse segments of the Ghanaian population. This is the first stage of the closure of avenues of access.

At the second stage, according to Chazan (1982), political participation through mediated institutional representation was severely circumscribed. It is argued that the guiding concept of participation through representation was that a congruence of ideas and interests existed between leaders and followers, even though socio-structural compatibility was absent. Chazan (1982) states: "The elaboration of notions of participation via representative channels in this vein depended, of necessity, on the existence of strong participatory structures. These, however, had already exhibited weaknesses during the Nkrumah period".

One immediate problem was that Osagyefo Nkrumah, and elected leaders after him, defined representation in extremely narrow terms. Certain groups were excluded from representative networks. "Mass mobilization was only partially effectuated from the start" (Chazan, 1982: 342). According to Chazan (1982), political participation through representation was accommodated if it did not imply opposition. And during the Second Republic representative structures floundered much in the same manner as they did during the Nkrumah phase. Chazan (1982) observes that little stress was placed on permitting widespread popular participation in decision-making processes, and opposition was methodically harassed. This process continued, and in 1972 the Acheampong regime systematically attacked the remnants of representative structures not only of the party type, but also of major horizontal and vertical groupings (Chazan, 1982: 342).

In the third stage, according to Chazan (1982), during the Supreme Military Council phase and through the Union government experiment, attempts were made to substitute incorporation for representation as the modal form of political participation. Chazan (1982) writes: “By undermining direct ties between individuals or solidarity groups through a strategy of linking administrative structures together under the umbrella of the state, Acheampong in effect negated ideas of direct participation and replaced them with more autonomous, extremely indirect forms. The institutional avenues that existed, however malformed, were thereby eliminated, forcing a personalization of access routes to the state”.

The fourth stage in the obstruction of access trajectories to the state appeared when voluntary associations resumed their position as the foci of non-formal participation (Chazan, 1982: 342). This re-introduction of non-formal participation diverted attention away from the state as the mechanism of communal regulation. Chazan (1982) notes that the non-formal participatory networks acted as extremely circuitous channels of access to the state, but also assumed the significant role of providing non-state substitutes for political participation.

According to Chazan (1982), the fifth and final stage in the process of the deterioration of the state’s legitimacy was exhibited in the waning years of the 1970’s, when politicization could no longer be equated with a demand for access to the state apparatus. Again Chazan (1982) writes: “As non-formal participation proliferated and political awareness was sharpened, many Ghanaians underwent a rapid process of politicization. At this point, however, even when opportunities were granted for formal political expression, as in the 1979 elections, they were rarely seized. The systematic blockage of access to the state over a period of time had yielded to a situation in which other centers of political activity had taken over the state’s conflict-regulation functions to the extent that they superseded the state’s capabilities in this regard. A veritable redrawing of frameworks for participation was taking place that only tangentially related to the state sphere”. According to Chazan (1982) people had become disinclined to value access to the state level, and expressed this hesitation through reconstruction of their own communal boundaries.

Chazan’s superb analysis of political participation in Ghana, then concludes that participation in the state environment moved from direct to indirect to haphazard, from unmediated to mediated to non-mediated, from mobilized to autonomous to disaggregated. Political participation, over the years, then became less, rather than more, institutionalized; spontaneous rather than routinized; and crosscutting rather than direct.

In fine, the political arena of the state underwent contraction and shrunk. This frustrated active political participation. This low political participation and lack of access evoked a challenge, then repressive reactions, and ultimately a fragmentation and reordering of the terms of political exchange (Chazan, 1982: 343). Naomi Chazan’s work provides useful insights into the dynamics and processes of political participation in postcolonial Ghana.

In order to appreciate the dialectics of pressures and responses in processes of democratization, Ake (2000) typologizes observed strategies of democratization in contemporary Africa. He observes that a cursory look at how the rulers of Africa have reacted to pressures for democratization suggests two types of strategies. The first is the preventive strategy, in which those in power remain steadfast in their opposition to democratization despite pressures. The second is the accommodationist strategy in which the leaders are willing to accommodate democratic re-arrangements without losing power. In the case of the Ghanaian democratization, the Rawlings government responded by employing both strategies – preventive and accommodationist - in tandem. At first, the Rawlings’ military government, the Provisional National Defence Council, resorted to a preventive strategy and then, latter, under intense domestic and international pressures it became accommodationist.

## **1. ELITE DEMANDS FOR POLITICAL INCORPORATION**

How did the elite demand for incorporation arise? During the period under investigation, Rawlings and the Provisional National Defence Council were everything. They controlled the economy, polity and society to the total exclusion of everyone else. There was an effective foreclosure of political space. And their power was enormous, unchecked by constitutional constraints or civil society. Those

who did not have access to state power were at the mercy of those who did. It was under such conditions that the first ever-serious elite demand for political incorporation was made – the announcement of the formation of a broad based national movement – the Movement for freedom and Justice (MFJ) – on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1990. The new movement stated its objectives and aims to be:

1. To work for the restoration of multi-party democracy and civilian rule in Ghana.
2. To fight for the recognition and realization of the fundamental human and democratic rights of the people of Ghana to decide how they shall be governed and to choose their own leaders through free and fair elections at both national and local levels.
3. To uphold the sovereignty of the people of Ghana.
4. To uphold and defend the democratic and human rights of the people, including the freedom of expression, especially of the press, freedom of association, freedom of worship, universal adult suffrage and the rule of law.
5. To fight against all forms of dictatorship and domination.
6. To serve as a vehicle for the mobilization of the people to carry out activities designed to lead to the establishment of democratic rule in Ghana.
7. To contribute to the development of a culture of democracy in Ghana.
8. To support people in other African countries fighting for democratic government.
9. To organize such other activities that will contribute to the realization of the objectives stated.

In pursuit of the ideals of the movement, the following slogans were adopted:  
 TRUE DEMOCRACY - NOW!  
 FREEDOM - JUSTICE  
 MFJ- TOWARDS THE FOURTH REPUBLIC.

The year 1990, then, could be justifiably considered as the defining moment in the transition politics. According Kwame Ninsin (1993), 1990 marked the historic moment when social forces engaged in the pro-democracy movement gained that critical mass which alone could propel the transition on to an irreversible path. The demand of the Movement for Freedom and Justice for the reinstatement of pluralist democracy did run counter to the neopatrimonial logic. But neopatrimonialism was deep-rooted

and Rawlings and the PNDC did not yield its control over the institutional arrangements, or timing of the transition (Sandbrook; Oelbaum, 1999). Yet, the democracy movement was also unyielding in its demand for incorporation. A political deadlock developed.

In September 1990, about a month after the formation of the Movement for Freedom and Justice, the National Union of Ghana Students issued a statement on the political future of Ghana. The statement, *inter alia*, called on the PNDC to repeal what it termed “oppressive and totalitarian laws, namely PNDC laws 491, 211, and 224. It also called for the establishment of free expression, association, movement and the unconditional release of all political prisoners from preventive custody. Finally, the National Union of Ghana students called for a general amnesty for all political refugees to enable them to return to participate in the politics of the country. Soon after the NUGS statement, *i.e.* in 1991, the Ghana Bar Association, another pro-democracy organization, made a political resolution at its annual conference.

The resolution, among other things, called for the return to a constitutional civilian democratic order. The resolution also called for the removal of all constraints on the freedom of expression. It asked for the cessation of all licensing, censorship and the government’s rigid monopoly of the mass media. Furthermore, the resolution called for the setting up of a constituent assembly and an independent electoral commission to put in place the instrument for future elections.

Then on December 17, 1990 the Christian Council of Ghana issued a memorandum to the government of the Provisional National Defence Council on “Ghana’s search for a new democratic system of government”. The Christian Council urged that after staying in power for almost ten years now, the government of the Provisional National Defence Council should take immediate steps to return the country to civilian rule under an administration fully mandated by, and accountable to the people of Ghana, not latter December 1992.

Second, the Christian Council called on the PNDC government to lift the ban on party political activity by the end of January 1991 (*i.e.* within a month of the issuing of this memorandum.) as an essential and assuring step towards the attainment of the constitutional

democratic administration. To that end, the Christian Council recommended that the appropriate legislation be immediately promulgated setting the scene, and the right atmosphere, for the formation of political parties of the people's own choice.

The internal pressures on the Ghanaian government kept mounting and on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1991, another pro-democracy body, Catholic Bishops Conference of Ghana issued a statement on "the Catholic Church and Ghana's Search for a New Democratic System". The Catholic Bishops in that statement called for an open society and a timetable for a return to constitutional rule. Concluding, the Catholic Bishops wrote:

"In association with those other groups that have made a public call for a return to a genuinely representative constitutional democratic rule, we must emphasize that we are only articulating and claiming what is properly due us, namely our right as citizens of an independent state whose motto is "Freedom and Justice" to have and to enjoy a meaningful participation in the manner in which we are governed".

Thus, as Kwame Ninsin (1998), has rightly noted, by the close of 1990 the military regime was under substantial pressure from a variety of pro-democracy groups to open up political space and allow democratic participation in the pursuit and exercise of power, in the choice of who governs the country, and respect for human rights. Claude Ake (2000) has shown that Africa is in constant turmoil from struggles between people who must secure power by exclusion and those who must access it by incorporation. Ghana, between 1990 and 1992, was a typical instance of elite struggles for exclusion and incorporation. Ake (2000) notes that the struggle for exclusion and incorporation intensified after independence in response to the poor governance and human rights record of most African governments as Ghana under the PNDC clearly shows.

In spite of the demand for incorporation, there was a strong tendency to exclusion. Kwame Ninsin (1998) has noted that in spite of the weight of the internal and external pressures to open up politics, the Rawlings government remained unruffled and adamant. But why did the Rawlings regime remain unruffled and adamant in the face of such resolute struggle to open up political space? And what were its

consequences? It has been noted that in Africa, there is an essentially Hobbesian situation where the premium on power is so high that the appetite for power is insatiable (Ake, 2000). Such situation frames a competition for power in which workable power-sharing arrangements do not hold (Ake, 2000). And the outcome? The exclusionary tendencies extend the struggles among elites to engulf the rest of society. It elicits by way of response, a struggle for incorporation, which also reaches beyond the elite to the rest of society. Eventually, Ake (2000) concludes, it leads to a clash of identities, especially ethnic identities. Rwanda under Baryamwira and Sudan under Hassan were typical examples where exclusionary tendencies and struggles for incorporation lead to clashes of ethnic identities. Ghana under Rawlings did not experience a clash of ethnic identities, fortunately. It is beyond the purview of this thesis to explain why a clash of ethnic identities failed to occur in Ghana under Rawlings. It must be stressed, however, that the absence of ethnic clash was not because of, but in spite of the Rawlings government's intransigence and unresponsiveness to the pro-democracy demands for political incorporation. It was however clear that it would not be long before the military regime capitulates because the correlation of forces, both international and domestic, had changed by 1992.

On Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1991, the chairman of the PNDC, Flight-Lieutenant Rawlings broadcast to the nation (see document 8). As was expected, this broadcast contained the first indications of capitulation by the military regime. The PNDC chairman in that broadcast, indicated inter-alia that,

- i. The provisional National Defence Council was in the final phase of its existence
- ii. The PNDC had instructed the National Commission for Democracy, NCD, to submit its report on the deliberations of the recently concluded NDC sponsored fora by the end of March 1991.
- iii. Consequent upon the receipt of the NCD report, "a broad-based national consultative committee" will be established to consider the NCD report, the post-independence constitutions of Ghana, and any other constitution in order to draft by the end of 1991 a new, appropriate constitution for the country.

- iv. A group of constitutional experts will be formed to assist in this process of drafting a new constitution.
- v. The Law Reform Commission will undertake a review of the existing laws of the country with a view of harmonizing these laws with the dictates of fundamental human rights which will be embodied in the future constitution.

The program contained in the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1991 broadcast was vague, though. That notwithstanding, Rawlings, who had been a bitter opponent of pluralist politics all along, suddenly in this nationwide broadcast, announced a return to democratic rule. This surprise move, however, was a tactical ruse. The strategy was to manipulate the transition to give it the appearance of democratization while ensuring the perpetuation of president Rawlings in power (Ayee, 1999; Ake, 2000).

Furthermore, Rawlings and his close associates kept the details of the programme to themselves, put out occasional details and used the control of this information to advance their plan while keeping the opposition guessing and off balance. And most important of all, the 1<sup>st</sup> January broadcast was silent on the all-important issues such as government monopoly of the press, amnesty for victims of the regime's repression and the freedom to form and operate political parties. All of these left the opposition Movement for Freedom and Justice confused and angry. Considerable skepticism emerged about the seriousness of the January 1<sup>st</sup> transition programme.

In a statement by the Ghana Bar Association made at an emergency meeting on 23 February 1991 on the programme for a return to constitutional rule (see document 9.), it called upon the PNDC government "to give flesh to its intentions as expressed in the New Year statement by defining for the country a clear time-table for the return to constitutional government which culminates in the holding of free and fair national elections". In a similar statement by the Movement for Freedom and Justice on the New Year broadcast on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1991, the MFJ expressed regret that the Rawlings speech on New Year's day did not make any direct comment on the demand by the major independent political, mass and professional organizations in the country for multi-party democracy based on fundamental human rights. The Movement for Freedom and

Justice's statement then called on all Ghanaians to step up the pressure on the PNDC to accede to the democratic demands of the population. It repeated the demand for the immediate repeal of all repressive decrees, the revocation of which democratic forces have been demanding incessantly: PNDCL 4, PNDCL 91, PNDCL 211, PNDC 221 and sections of PNDCL 78 dealing with executions for political offences and finally called for an independent constitutional committee, made up of all the major political and other public organizations, as well as of government representation, to draft a constitution for the 4<sup>th</sup> republic.

On 25 March 1991, the National Commission for Democracy presented its report on "Evolving True Democracy" to the Ghana government. The report contained many interesting proposals. It was written in such a way as to allow the Provisional National Defence Council to direct the transition to the advantage of Rawlings prospective presidency. In what follows, we devote time to analyzing specific aspects of the report's proposals especially the aspects regarding the PNDC, partisan and non-partisan politics, and national structures. This will shed some useful insights into how the Provisional National Council intended to respond to the intensifying demand for political incorporation and expansion of political space.

The following facts about the debates that formed the basis of the NCD report must be noted. First, the regional formal debates over national political arrangements were a series of government-orchestrated seminars (Oelbaum; Sandbrook, 1999). Only a handful of individuals opposed to the PNDC were ever given an opportunity to present papers, and the majority of participants, like during the Union Government campaign of 1978, supported a no-party option. Joseph Ayee (1999) has observed that the regional fora and consultations, far from debating the form of political system that the country needed, became, rather, a carefully orchestrated plan to foist a no-party system of government on the country under the tutelage of Flt. Lt Rawlings. Yet, in spite of all the attempts to impose a no-party system, popular support for a return to multipartism was transparent (Sandbrook; Oelbaum, 1999).

As indicated above, the proposals of the report were interesting and sought to perpetuate the PNDC in power. First, it was proposed that the Provisional National Defence Council should be

redesignated the National Defence Council to exercise executive powers with one of the members as president. The second proposal was for the PNDC to remain as an executive body but with an enlarged membership. The third proposal was that the chairman of the PNDC should be the first executive president. Fourth, it was proposed that the PNDC continues to be in power to supervise the new democratic process as a transitional measure. Finally, the following suggestions as to the time frame when the PNDC should fold up were offered.

- a. September 1991
- b. September 1992
- c. The end of two terms after the inception of the National Assembly.

These proposals conformed to the prevailing practice in most of post-colonial Africa: democratization as a strategy of holding on to power. In the Ghanaian experience, we witness a determined effort by the Rawlings' regime at exclusion in reaction to an equally determined struggle by the elite for incorporation.

The proposal on partisan and non-partisan politics was the most interesting as it generated the most heat and showed a clear divide in the opinion of participants at the regional seminars. One group, made up predominantly of representatives from District Assemblies and supporters of the Provisional National Defence Council, stated categorically that pluralist politics had had its chance and failed, and therefore should not be allowed to return into the political fibre of the country. The main arguments used to support this stand were that; party politics had the tendency of dividing the populace into opposing groups leading to strife and bloodshed; led to the reinforcement of tribalism; bred corruption; undermined allegiance to the state because of foreign sources of funding political parties and finally, was alien to the ethos of Ghanaian society. The second view was that there was nothing wrong with party politics per se and therefore it should be reintroduced.

The proponents of this view stated among others that:

- a. One-party and military regimes have not allowed for opposition, thus leading to the rule of the few.
- b. The argument that party politics has failed the country is false and that in all the 33 years of independence Ghanaians

have had less than ten years of multi-party rule. The rest of the period had been for one-party or military regimes. Therefore, party politics cannot be responsible for the woes of Ghana.

- c. The military had not allowed the parties in power to find their feet before they intervened, whilst the military and one-party regimes have stayed longer because of their ability to intimidate the people.
- d. The one-party system and the military regimes have not fared any better than the multi-party system.

In a statement on the National Commission on Democracy Report on 10 May 1991, the Ghana government accepted the various views expressed as the embodiment of the aspirations of Ghanaians on the future constitutional order. It decided that the report be submitted to a Consultative Assembly as one of the major source documents for its deliberation.

In addition, the government was also to formulate its own constitutional proposals to be placed before the Consultative Assembly. Accordingly, the government set up a committee of constitutional experts under the chairmanship of Dr. S.K.B Asante, a former solicitor-General and Director of the United Nations Centre for Transnational Corporations, to formulate these proposals.

On May 17, 1991, the Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ) issued a statement on the PNDC's statement on the "NCD Report and Constitutional Proposals". After a careful consideration of the PNDC statement on the NCD report, and comparing it with the main demands of the people and their mood, the M.F.J came to the conclusion that the statement and the constitutional proposals contained in it fell short of the basic demands of Ghanaians and their expectations. The MFJ then rejected the statement in toto as a fraud on the people. It saw the real aim of the government statement and the apparent concessions contained in it to be to side-step and contain the basic demands of the people and to disarm the nation-wide movement for democracy from exerting greater pressures for the attainment of all its democratic demands. The M.F.J then called on all Ghanaians and democratic forces to reject the government statement, and warned that if the PNDC did not heed the demands of the people for multi-party democracy, "the people will have no alternative

but vote for multi-party democracy with their feet in the streets". The Movement for Freedom and Justice was not the only pro-democracy organization to reject the PNDC government statement. On the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1991 at an emergency general meeting on the NCD report and the PNDC's statement on it, the Ghana Bar Association resolved among other things that bearing in mind the fact that the people of Ghana had overwhelmingly opted for a multi-party system, all national, regional, district and local elections ought to be conducted under party political basis. It then called upon the PNDC to hand over the administration of government by 1 July 1991 to a neutral interim administration whose duty would be to usher in the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic by July 1992.

Then, the heads of the member churches of the Christian Council of Ghana and the Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a memorandum on the release of the report on the evolving democratic process. The memorandum called for the repeal of certain laws in the country, especially PNDCL 4, PNDCL 91, PNDCL 221 and the relevant sections of PNDCL 78 which deals with political prisoners and detainees; release of all political prisoners and an unconditional amnesty for all political exiles. Finally, it called on the PNDC to lift the ban on political parties to enable the people to organize themselves openly for elections.

We, thus, see that by the close of 1991 the military regime had come under considerable pressure to open up political space from various pro-democracy groups. Ghana had not escaped the "third wave of democratization in the twentieth century" (Huntington, 1991) that floundered the entire world.

However, in spite of the weight of the internal pressures the PNDC government remained unruffled and adamant. Indeed it was under pressure but not demoralized (Ninsin, 1992). But why was there such a strong tendency to exclusion? Incorporation should not normally be a problem even in authoritarian one-party states or military regimes (Ake, 1999). According to Ake (1999), within political monolithism, incorporation could be operationalized in a consensual arrangement. Indeed authoritarian political structures are often justified on basis of avoiding exclusion, opposition and unnecessary conflict, and facilitating inclusivity and solidarity. In fact, the single-party ideologies of Sekou Toure and Jomo Kenyatta were defended

on the basis that they were more akin to the African tradition of consensus building. The question is why was there such a strong tendency to exclusion in the Ghanaian case if authoritarianism in Africa may be justified on the grounds of facilitating inclusivity and solidarity? In Ghana, as in most of Africa the premium on power is so high that the appetite for power is insatiable, as we have already noted. Those in power are inclined to share it only with a very small coterie of collaborators. Persistent elite struggles for exclusion and incorporation is, thus, the prevailing practice in postcolonial Ghana. In spite of the considerable internal and external pressure for political liberalization, Rawlings and the PNDC never yielded. (Ninsin, 1993).

The enduring elite pressures coalesced with external pressures dominated by the Bretton Woods institutions and Ghana's development partners to force the Rawlings administration to relent. Thus, in May 1991, however Rawlings confirmed that the country would return to a multi-party system. A constitution was approved by referendum in April 1992 and the ban on party political activity lifted in May the same year. But, what explains this apparent movement from "democratic processes to democratic outcomes?" Jay Oelbaum and Richard Sandbrook (1999) have noted that two surveys undertaken by the PNDC government between the middle of 1990 and August 1991 indicated that Rawlings would probably win a contested election. That, in part, explains why the political transition commenced. The democratization was just a strategy of power, then.

## **2. MASSES DEMAND FOR ECONOMIC INCORPORATION.**

So far, we have been looking at the elite demand for incorporation, how it arose and how it engendered the democracy movement in Ghana. But that is one side of the story. The other source of the democracy movement in Ghana was the demand of the masses for economic incorporation. Claude Ake has, in a work published in 2000, "The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa", thrown light on the genesis and dynamics of the masses demand for economic incorporation.

By 1991, as the democracy movement spread throughout Africa the growing popular dissatisfaction with regime performance in the

economic realm was joined with demands for greater political freedom, multi-partyism and full civil rights. In the Ghanaian case, it was evident that the people who had an objective interest in democratization were the ordinary people (masses) who stand to benefit from a more equitable redistribution of power. This demand, as indicated earlier on, goes back to the nationalist movement. Between 1960 and 1992 Ghana's economy had been experiencing a steady decline. Counter-productive policies and practices bear responsibility for this economic decline. (Gyimah, 1998; Marsh, 1979; Ndule, 1994; Sklar, 1983; Jaycox, 1985).

The economic collapse over the years had been devastating. As stated earlier, by 1982 one-half of urban and two-thirds of the rural population were below the poverty line. And daily survival become even more of a challenge from 1983 as the economy faced two shocks; a prolonged drought with attendant crop-damaging fires, and the return of a million Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria (Oelbaum; Sandbrook: 1999). The Ghanaian economic crisis has been persistent and intractable. The persistence and intractability of the crisis and the conventional response to it, namely, structural adjustment programmes, has been an asset to democratization. How? Claude Ake (2000) has observed that the African varieties of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) are so draconian that they tend to intensify poverty in the short-run and to exacerbate social and political tensions. Ake (2000) writes, "The covariance of economic crisis and the agitation for democratization has held for practically every country in Africa. The demand for economic incorporation took the form of a popular political struggle against the elite in power and relates to the elite demand for political incorporation". So the demand for democratic participation rises with the deepening of the economic crisis. With the shrinking economic surplus, the struggle for it intensifies so the hegemonic elite becomes more exclusionary, that is more inclined to limit the access of others to power. This produces an intensification of the struggle for democratic participation. 1990-1992 was a period of unusually deep economic downturn in Ghana. This engendered a demand for economic incorporation, which interfaced with the elite demand for political incorporation to constitute a "rudimentary democracy movement" in Ghana. The internal situation has been decisive in engendering democratization. And one of the reasons is the vanishing

legitimacy of the African political class. The statistics of collapsing infrastructure, rising debt burdens, declining investment and exacerbated balance of payment problems, growing malnutrition, falling real wages and negative growth rates underlined the failure of the Ghanaian political class. But these were not leadership and management failures in any ordinary sense. They were failures that brought with them untold suffering, deep despair, malnutrition and in some cases, premature death. All these brought into clear relief the problems of the legitimacy of those in power. And as Ake (2000) points out, for most of the countries in Africa the question was no longer how the performance of the political class might improve, but how to do away with them or disconnect from them in some sort of exit option.

Thus by 1992 there was no doubt that a watershed in the re-democratization had been reached. And the democratization operationalizes the masses' demand for incorporation. It remains to consider the dialectics of pressures and responses in processes of democratization. A consideration of this dialectics is reserved for the chapter on prognosis and conclusion. It may be stressed, however, that a consideration of the dialectics of pressures and responses in processes of democratization will shed useful insights on the politics of democratization, processes of democratization and their contradictions and costs to Africa's development.

### 3. INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES

It is significant to stress that Ghana's political liberalization resulted from internal as well as external pressures. An example of external pressures was in 1992 when in its country strategy paper, the World Bank advocated broader participation in political life.

The third source that shaped the democracy movement in Ghana, then, was the international environment. Following the end of the cold war or international bipolarity, the international environment became more positive for democratization in Africa in the following sense: issues of democratization became increasingly dominant in the world's interest in Africa, breaking a legacy of indifference to the prospects of democracy in Africa (Ake, 2000). The West, seeing in the revolution in Eastern Europe the possibility of universalizing the

values of liberal democracy included the promotion of democracy as a condition for economic corporation and assistance to African countries, and this was of some help to the democratic forces struggling in Ghana. In the 1990's political conditionalities, including the establishment of pluralist democracy, were attached to economic aid. Both Ninsin (1993) and Ake (2000) have noted the immense external pressures on African countries to install pluralist democracy between 1990 and 1992.

It is, however, argued that the prospects of democratization in Ghana were less dependent on the international environment than on internal conditions (Claude Ake: 2000).

In fine, the democracy movement resulted from a complex interplay of domestic and international factors. Between 1990 and 1992 there were sharp struggles between elites and masses' incorporation and exclusion (by the incumbent), which coalesced with external pressures to provoked a democracy movement, which eventually led to the spread out of political space and the establishment of a constitutional and democratic government in the Republic of Ghana in 1992.

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