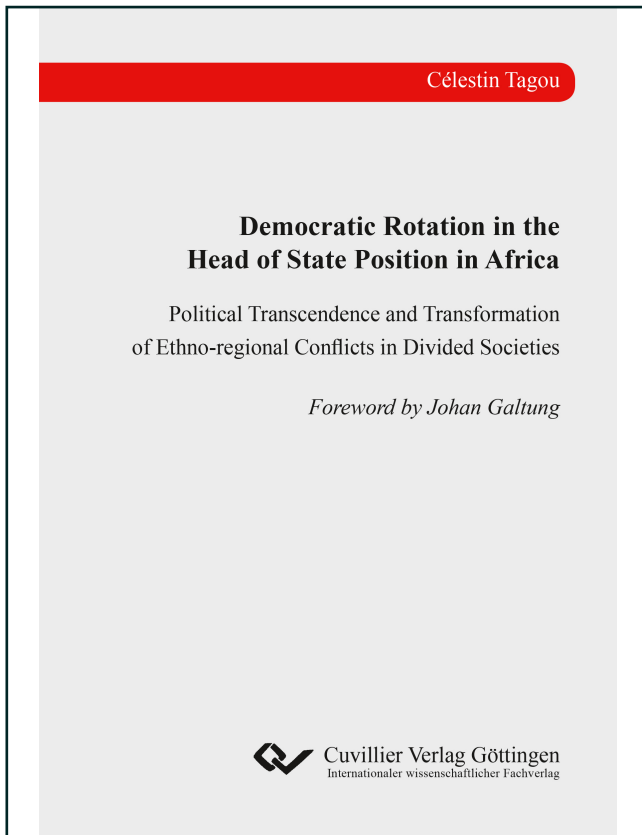




Célestin Tagou (Autor)

Democratic Rotation in the Head of State Position in Africa

Political Transcendence and Transformation of Ethno-regional Conflicts in Divided Societies



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Some French and German quotations have been translated into English by the translator **Prof. David Tiomajou**. They are italicized, but not put in inverted commas. Book references are kept in their original language. I do apologize for any inconvenience that this might pose to those who do not feel at home in German and French. The three languages (French, English and German) are the backbone of my academic and scientific adventure. To Almighty be the Glory!

Yaoundé, August 2018

Célestin Tagou



FOREWORD

“Democratic Rotation in the Head of State Position in Africa” is the title of this important book. It could just as well have ended with “in Europe”, focused on the past, and much less like this book focused on the present and the future. The job has been done.

What were they up against in Europe, and now in Africa?

The monarch, of course, the chief of course; deeply entrenched as unquestionable heads; in the state system as the heads of state. Transition to “democratic rotation” – of prime ministers, presidents – took time, and blood, sweat and tears, to put it mildly.

In Europe it was also a step into the unexplored and uncertain; Africa has at least Europe to look at, Europe had nothing.

When we talk about “good kings, bad kings” and “good chiefs, bad chiefs” there are three messages: there are criteria for good and bad, there are kings and chiefs of both kinds, and there is change from one kind to the other but not necessarily every second time. There could be series of one kind only, hoping for long, good series to prevail.

Enters democracy, letting people decide whom they want, directly, – or indirectly via parties and parliaments for instance – as heads. Have a look at the table of contents of this book and see how deeply Tagou takes us into democratic theory and social theory in general.

Africans, like most European countries, are divided ethnically. From a mono-arch or mono-chief to democratic election with a divided electorate deciding is a far step. How did Europe manage?

By pretending that ethnicity has been overridden by citizenship: the new nation-state ethnicity; or by federalism; or by the Swiss formula: a cabinet of 7 divided 3-2-1-1 between German-French-Italian-Ladino speaking, and 2-3-2 by left-middle-right wing. Worth noting!



By reading this book, you are in for an important theoretical and pragmatic solution oriented sociopolitical journey with Tagou as your guide.

Alfaz Del Pi, July 2018

JOHAN GALTUNG



INTRODUCTION

In his academic discourse about good governance, Guy Mhone defines it as the need for the government to fulfill its duty in efficiently and effectively managing governmental institutions, human resources and the financial apparatus in order to meet the objectives of a centered-state or the objectives of a centered-society, or both.¹ And what may hamper or impede this good governance in African countries is, according to Mhone, not only an attitude problem but also the way responsibility, consultation and participation mechanisms are institutionalized within the relationship between those in power and the people. At this level, the main challenge is about the extent to which organizational and institutional structures are there to facilitate good and democratic governance in terms of relationship between the society and the State.² Mhone thinks that in order to overcome this challenge the public sector in African states must be re-invented. The necessary condition for re-inventing the public sector in Africa with the aim of implementing good governance in the management of public affairs would be a realistic improvement of political life on this continent where several countries since the 1990s, still fall prey to not only recurrent disputes over different electoral consultations, but even more torn apart by vicious conflicts and ethnic violence whose main stake is the access to the supreme power in order to have the political, economic, natural and other resources under control.

Good governance alone could not in a long term contribute to sustainable development in Africa; that is to positive³ and perpetual⁴

¹ Mhone, Guy C.Z.: Les défis de la gouvernance, de la réforme du secteur public et de l'administration publique en Afrique, University of Witwatersrand Février, 2003. P.11

² Ibid., p.6

³ The concept of peace has a double connotation in the international cooperation world for development and conflict management: Johan Galtung talks of Negative Peace and Positive Peace. Negative Peace refers to the absence of physical and armed conflict. Here, peace is equal to a state of no war. Conversely, the concept of Positive Peace presupposes a multidimensional implementation of social justice, equality, political and individual



peace, if participatory mechanisms in democratic elections do not become institutional, social and political normality that warrants peaceful political rotation. In other words, democratic participation and rotation of power with a real separation of the three powers remain the best political means to ensure good governance and efficient functioning of the public sector in most African countries, where ethnic crush feeds the monopolization of power and at the same time nurtures political patronage and large scale corruption. As Barack Obama once put it, “Africa does not need strong men. It needs strong institutions.”⁵ And the rotation principle could contribute to the consolidation of the political institutions on the continent. To Professor Mhone’s questions: Where is Africa heading to? What are its projects... and what are the necessary means to get us there?⁶ It is hard not to believe that Africa has not been able to equip itself with positive peace which is sine qua non for sustainable development. But how do we go about this? This would undoubtedly be through democracy, provided that the contemporary generation of researchers invent or re-invent a model of democracy specific to Africa, one which is fine-tuned with African history, culture, customs and ancestral knowledge. The import, the implementation or better still the copy and paste or the einz zu eins of the Jacobin type of constitutional democracy has been a political and societal mistake in young African States, where the notion of state is not rooted in the existence of a nation with a national consciousness, fully developed and where different democratization processes are very recent. This mistake must be acknowledged and corrected. As once stated by Pondi on RFI “Fifty years after independence, Africans must break up from the copy and paste model and draw from Africa’s millenni-

freedom of human potentials in line with social and ecological entirety. In a nutshell, Positive Peace is the complete absence of structural and individual violence in a given society and between states at the international level.

- ⁴ The concept “Perpetual Peace” comes from Father Charles Irénée Castel de Saint Pierre, Reference: « Extrait du projet de la paix perpétuelle de l’Abbé de Saint Pierre». In 1795, Kant will talk of « Zum ewigen Frieden »
- ⁵ In his speech addressed to the Ghana’s parliament during his first state visit to sub-Saharan Africa, July 11, 2009
- ⁶ Mhone, Guy C.Z. in: op.cit. p.10



um ancestral knowledge in order to take over the past, the present and the future of the continent”.⁷ Contrary to what Alain Didier Olinga thinks, it is certainly not about re-inventing something different from western type of institutional democracy. We agree that the choice has already been made to the benefit of institutional democracy of liberal constitutionalism. But it is important to move beyond the universal values and principles... of such a political option, where each western institutional democracy, according to its context, has developed a model of socio-political control⁸ to articulate and implement these universal values and principles within a given particular realpolitik. This is what has to be captured from this model of democracy which is neither a political regime nor a political system. Here the political system refers to the form of governance which may be despotic, monarchic, dictatorial or democratic etc.... According to Winston Churchill “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others”.⁹ And there are certainly basic principles and values that distinguish the democratic system from other political systems but there is no universal model. This is why each old western democracy, indeed, has developed a model of democracy that allows it to better manage and control the issue of access or withdrawal of the people-drawn legitimacy in the political option of constitutional democracy.

Joseph Owona has proposed that we model the political systems of the geographic space of postcolonial Cameroon to invent the future solution to our institutions. According to him, a chiefdom with alternating dynasties such as Bali-Kumbat in the North-West region of Cameroun could be a model of regional alternation... that consists in a supreme power rotation between the regions of the country: the North, the South, the Far North, the West and the East, thus breaking out from the well-known back and forth game between the North and

⁷ Pondi Jean Emmanuel: On RFI in a program with Alain Foka on February 27th, 2011.

⁸ Olinga, Alain Didier: « L’Afrique en quête d’une technique d’enracinement de la démocratie constitutionnelle », in: Kamto, Maurice (sd.) *L’Afrique dans un monde en mutation. Dynamiques internes, marginalisation internationale?* Paris, Afrédit, 2010 ; P.170,171,176,178

⁹ Winston Churchill: in a “House of common Speech of November 11th, 1947.”



the South.¹⁰ But it must be pointed out that questions of the *Res publica* within the modern State and those of the democratic legitimacy of such an alternation in political power as well as partisan stakes are not accounted for in the approaches to our old sociopolitical organizations, because constitutional democracy is not African. Owona does not tell us how the choice of the owner of the supreme power will be made in the case of Cameroon with political parties while maintaining the parliamentary aspect in the legitimacy. In such a process one would simply put aside the Republic and democracy, which is almost impossible nowadays.

With regard to democracy and popular legitimacy, the 2010–2017 period has particularly been an all risk period for Africa. More than thirty elections (presidential, parliamentary, referendum) have taken place within the continent. With these elections, it was expected that the voice of the majority of different people called to vote would be respected and that losers would accept the verdict of the ballot-box. Results obtained here and there show that beyond the great democratic lesson from Senegal, Benin, and Ghana...; the positive outcome from the Gambia and Rwanda, the Ivorian, Gabonese, Congolese and Kenyan political landscape portrayed something else and is still a major challenge to all African intellectuals and Africanists. This challenge is about re-inventing an approach to ethnic-political conflicts management and a democratic model on the African continent. Beyond actors' games and interests in the various post electoral conflicts, there is a real unfinished substantive debate that must be resolved. This debate is about the type or model of democracy that Africa needs with the understanding that there is no universal model of democracy. Due to the political context in which young African states emerged in the 1960s and taking into account the ethnic structure of their different people, this question must be urgently addressed. More than twenty-five years after the collapse of the Berlin wall, the general consensus is that the Jacobin democratic model has its limitations in Africa. This form of government certainly has prin-

¹⁰ Owona, Joseph: *Les Systèmes politiques pré coloniaux*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2015, p.95–96



ciples that can become universal (respect of different liberties, universal suffrage, and separation of powers...), but given the historical and universal trajectories of various democracies, in the history of its formulation and even more so of its implementation, since its start in the ancient Greece and more recently in the 1789 French Revolution, it has several models that take into account the historical and cultural circumstances and context in which it is introduced as a regulatory method of political game in a given state. It has been almost unanimously thought that liberal democracy, and even more importantly with its principle of individual freedom of candidacy to people sovereignty, is a guarantee of good governance and accountable leadership at the helm of states. Through the democratic ballot-box, the people would henceforth have the possibility to hold leaders to account when they care less about meeting their basic needs as echoed by Robert McNamara¹¹, Thomas Sankara¹², Galtung¹³. To this, Amartya Sen has added the concept of liberty.¹⁴

The second finding is that the first fifteen years of the 21st century went down memory lane of the African continent not only as another wasted opportunity for development with regard to the mixed-feeling results of the MDGs¹⁵, but also as a crucial period of military political history of the continent with new patterns of war commonly known as asymmetric and cyber warfare, with side effects which

¹¹ In the 1973 World Bank conference in Nairobi, McNamara established Health, Nutrition and Education as Human being's basic needs, which must be met to ensure the survival and the dignity of a human being.

¹² Pondi, Jean-Emmanuel: *Thomas Sankara et l'Emergence de l'Afrique au 21^e siècle*, AfricEveil, Yaoundé 2015. Here, the author shows with specific details that the 8 MDGs were designed and implemented by the pan-Africanist, Thomas Sankara between 1983 and 1987 in the land of People of Integrity, long before they were adopted in September 2000 by the United Nations.

¹³ Galtung, Johan: *Transcendance et Transformation des Conflits: une introduction au métier de médiateur*, PUPA, 2010, Yaoundé. p.61–88

¹⁴ Sen, Amartya: *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999

¹⁵ MDGs: The 8 Millennium Development Goals were adopted by the UN on September 8th, 2000 at the 55th General Assembly. They constitute a road map that the international community uses in order to resolve issues of poverty, misery, under-development in a well-specified timing. On September 25th, 2015, the MDGs were substituted by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN 70th General Assembly in 2015.



include, among others, non-African military interventions on the continent. As a matter of fact, since the year 2000, Africa has been the hot bed to several events whose impact and scope on the future of the continent in the coming years and centuries are still to be grasped and understood. From disputed elections (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, DRC, Gabon, Guinea Conakry, Gambia....) to the resurgence of armed force and street driven regimes and military coups at the same time, including the independence of Southern Sudan, armed rebellions and powerful uprising of Wahhabi¹⁶ type of Islamic radicalism (Guinea Conakry, Libya, Mali, CAR, Egypt, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger...), we are witnessing the invalidity of the international law principles once the sacrosanct of non-interference in the States' internal affairs and their inviolable borders enshrined in the Charter of the former OAU in 1963. In so doing, the African continent has become the ideal testing ground of two concepts adopted by the international community: the United Nation Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Power Sharing in time of violence. With the blank check that the international community provided France a reason for its recent military interventions in the continent (Ivory Coast with Licorne Operation, Libya with the French-British intervention, Mali with Serval Operation and the CAR with Sangaris Operation, the Sahel G5...)¹⁷, some observers stated that Franceafrique that some people believed dead has never been healthier and boasting that through the past thirty years or so: Hollande

¹⁶ Bette, Zachée: *Le Phénomène Boko Haram au-delà du radicalisme*. L'Harmattan 2016 pp.21–30. Bette presents the three variants of the Muslim Salafism and demonstrates how the third trend born from Mohammed Ibn Abdel Wahhab (1720–1792) serves as a religious inspiration basis to Boko Haram, the Muslim sect.

¹⁷ Besides, these recent interventions, it should be recalled that from 1960 to 2016, the well-known military cooperation agreement signed between France and its former African colonies allowed the French army to intervene more than fifty times on the African continent with varying objectives from assistance to French citizens to loyal regime protection/re-establishment including the overthrow of non-submissive regimes to the metropolis. The Sahel G5 is the sub-regional institutional and strategic coordination framework between 5 countries aiming at fighting against terrorism. It was set up in Nouakchott on February 16th, 2014 and members are: Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.