



THE GRACE UZOMA OKONKWO FOUNDATION
IN COLLABORATION WITH
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY,
IGBARIAM, ANAMBRA STATE.



INVITES SCHOLARS AND THE PUBLIC TO ITS

4th International *Hybrid Conference*

THEME:

DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN 21ST CENTURY AFRICA:

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY REFLECTION

Date: 2nd – 5th May 2023



Democracy, even as its etymology implies, prides itself in privileging the people or concentrating power in the people. It has been argued for instance that liberal democracy "provides a mechanism for some form of rule by proportionate representation, with citizens empowered to bring about change through participation and persuade the powerful to act for the greater good" (The Chatham House, 2021). However, the realities of the democratic experiments across Africa raise questions about not only the adequacy of the term democracy in describing governance in some African countries with elected leaders but also about the assumption that the majority would make the right choice. For instance, regarding the first concern, Fareed Zakaria has documented the rise of illiberal democracies in the world, Africa inclusive, where democratically elected regimes routinely ignore constitutional limits on their powers and deprive citizens of their rights (1997). Thus, there is the need to examine the liberal or illiberal trajectories of African "democracies" in the twenty-first century and pose multidisciplinary questions that would enable us to understand why many countries in Africa continue to experience "the erosion of democracy" (Emerson, 1960) or military interventions in the twenty-first century. As regards the second concern, one may for instance ask: Is the majority always right? In countries with significant uneducated population, what is the guarantee that the numerically powerful uneducated population would make good choices for the rest of the population? As "a game of numbers," does democracy breed a certain tyranny of the majority that stimulates ethnic and religious tensions and consequently weaken national cohesion in Africa? Is "the cure for the ills of democracy," as John Dewey has argued, "more democracy"?

We share the view that true democracy is "liberal democracy – a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property" (Zakaria, 1997). That is why we have elected to reflect on democracy together with the rule of law, "[a] principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards" (UN, 2004, para. 2). A multidisciplinary approach to the conference theme allows us to pose some of these questions: What is the role of the education discipline in formulating pedagogical paradigms for transmitting the values and goals of democracy and the rule of law across educational levels in Africa? How do representational discourses (film, literature and other arts) reflect on the African experience of democracy and the rule of law, particularly in the twenty-first century? What is the role of digital technologies in deepening democracy and promoting the rule of law in Africa? Within political science discourse, what is the viability of an African-sensed democracy or a homegrown theory

of democracy, drawn perhaps from "the democratic tendencies that infused precolonial African societies" (Bates, 2010)? How may democracy and the rule of law be framed as the pillars of development in twenty-first century Africa? How do traditional/digital/social media pressures/activities bear on the strength and perception of democracy and the rule of law in Africa? etc.

Subthemes:

- Teaching democracy: Voter education and other pedagogies of democracy in Africa
- Democracy/rule of law on the Stage and Screen: theatre and film meditations
- African democracy and resilience discourse in the twenty-first century
- Language and power in democracy discourse in twenty-first century Africa
- Translating democracy and the rule of law: the role of African languages
- Democracy, the rule of law and development in Africa
- Historicizing twenty-first century African democracies
- Human rights and intimate justice in African democracies
- Decolonizing democracy: towards an African-sensed democracy
- Africa democracy, the West and the politics/economics of foreign aid
- Singing democracy: the role of African music in Africa's democratization process
- The Judiciary, democracy and the rule of law in twenty-first century Africa
- Digital democracy (E-democracy) and digital dictatorship in twenty-first century Africa
- Global tourism perception, democracy and the rule of law in twenty-first century Africa
- Young population, old leaders": gerontocracy in twenty-first century Africa
- Literature and the representations of democracy and the rule of law in Africa
- Elections, democracy and the rule of law in twenty-first century Africa
- Democracy and the incidence of military interventions in twenty-first century Africa
- Mass Communicating democracy: democracy, the media and the rule of law
- Gendering democracy and the rule of law in twenty-first century Africa
- Religion, democracy and the rule of law in twenty-first century Africa
- Representations of democracy and the rule of law in Fine and Applied Arts
- Inclusion, accessibility studies and democracy/rule of law in Africa

Lead Paper Presenters

Prof. Gaji Fatima Dantata,
 Faculty of Education, Bayero University, Kano
 Paper Title: "Inclusion of the Special Needs Populace:
 A Panacea for Good Democratic Governance in the African Continent"

Prof. Steve Egbo,
 Executive Director, Administration & Training, NTA
 Paper Title: 'Impunity as an Antithesis to the Effective Operation
 of the Rule Of Law'

Bar. Mrs. Nwanneka C. Okolo,
 Founder/Executive Director, Lift Saxum Ltd/Gte
 Paper Title: 'The Unmined Resource in Emerging Democracy in Africa'

The Special Guest of Honour
Emeritus Professor El Anatsui,
 Globally Distinguished Artist

The Chairman of the Event
Chief Nnia Nwodo (Ijele Ndigbo)
 Two-Time Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
 & 9th President-General of Ohaneze Ndigbo Worldwide

Royal Fathers of the Day
HRH, Igwe G. F. O. Asadu,
 Igwe Okpeudo I of Nsukka Asadu

HRH, Igwe Bar. R. S. N. Eze
 Igwe Ochendo I of Obige-Obukpa

Chief Host
Professor Greg Nwakoby
 Vice Chancellor, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
 University, Igbariam, Anambra State

Conveners & Hosts
Prof. Mrs. Florence O. Orabueze
 Founder & Board Chairman, The Grace Uzoma Okonkwo Foundation

Prof. Stella Okoye-Ugwu
 H. O. D., Department of English & Literary Studies,
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Dr. F. A. Okeke
 H. O. D., Department of English, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu
 Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State

PARTICIPATION

To participate, send an abstract of not more than 250 words, with at least four keywords, in Microsoft Word format, to graceuzomaokonkwofoundation@unn.edu.ng & florence.orabueze@unn.edu.ng. The submission should include your full name, institutional affiliation, e-mail and telephone contacts, and should be sent as an e-mail attachment, not later than the absolute deadline, 10 April 2022. For those who opt to present their papers virtually, a zoom link will be shared near the time.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Early Bird: (until 21 April 2023) N12,000.
Late Bird: (after 21 April 2023/during conference) N 15, 000.
Foreign Participants: \$50
Students (with valid ID cards): N7,000 (early bird), 10,000 (late bird)

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Keynote Speaker
Professor Aloysius -Michaels N. Okolie
 Vice Chancellor, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu

Arrival of conference participants: Tuesday, 2nd May 2023
Opening Ceremony & Presentation of Papers: Wednesday, 3rd May 2023; Time: 10am
Presentations of papers: Thursday, 4th May 2023
Closing Ceremony & Departure: Friday, 5th May 2023

TIME: 10AM
VENUE: JERRY MARRIOTT HOTEL, NSUKKA

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