

**NOT YET DEMOCRACY**



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*West Africa's Slow Farewell  
to Authoritarianism*

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## DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all Africans anywhere  
who died fighting  
who went to prison  
who keep on fighting

for the advent of genuine democracy and respect for Human Rights  
and dignity



# CONTENTS

Preface	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
Introduction	3
The Democratization Nexus	6
The Cases	10
Indeed “Not Yet Democracy”	16
Chapter I Côte d’Ivoire: The Miracle that Wasn’t, Flawed Civil-Military Relations, and Missed Opportunity	19
Introduction	19
Brief Historical Background	22
France and West Africa: A Background	25
Coup Prevention Strategies: The Seeds of Military Intervention	26
The French Military Presence	27
Co-optation, Manipulation, and Politicization of the Military	29
Effects of the Coup Prevention Strategies	31
The Coup and Its Aftermath	37
The Military Interlude and Beyond	40
The Aftermath	45
High Hopes and Missed Opportunity	46

<b>Chapter II The Military and “Democratization” in The Gambia: 1994–2002</b>	51
The Jawara Years: 1965–94	53
The Military and “Democratization”: 1994–96	56
Civil and Political Rights under the AFPRC: 1994–96	59
Social and Economic Rights	64
Human Rights under the APRC: 1997–2002	67
Policy Recommendations	70
Conclusion	76
<b>Chapter III The October 2001 Presidential Elections in The Gambia</b>	79
Background	79
Lifting Ban on Decree 89	81
Campaign and Issues	84
The Election Results	89
Post-Election Violence, Intimidation and Job Dismissals	92
Analysis	94
Recommendations	102
Conclusion	104
<b>Chapter IV Mauritania 1991–2001: Regime Rearrangement and “Consolidation” of Instability?</b>	107
Introduction	107
Historical Background	108
External Pressure and Its Outcome	110
Ould Taya’s Personal Evolution	113
Human Rights Abuses	115
The Economy: A Tribal Monopoly	117
The “Programmed Electoral Putsch”	119
The “Consolidation” of Instability	122



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Plus Ça Change...	126
Opposition Radicalization and Uncertain Future	134
<b>Chapter V Friend or Foe? The Military and Democratic Transition in Benin and Togo</b>	<b>139</b>
Introduction	139
The Military and Politics in Benin	141
The First Military Coup of 1963	142
The Military Coups of 1965	144
The 1967 Military Coup	146
The 1969 Military Coup	148
The 1972 Military Coup	150
The Military and the National Conference in Benin	152
The Second “October Revolution”	152
The National Conference	156
The Military and Politics in Togo	162
The Military Coup of 1963	164
The 1967 Military Coup	167
The Military and National Conference in Togo	168
Conclusion	176
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>215</b>



## PREFACE

*Not Yet Democracy: West Africa's Slow Farewell to Authoritarianism* is the product of the collaborative work of three eyewitnesses to and stakeholders in West Africa's checkered democratization experiments. It crystallizes the authors' shared, deep commitment to a symbiosis between, on the one hand, the inquisitive and evaluative look of scholars and, on the other, the earnestness of believers in genuine democracy in seeing the total eradication of authoritarian practices in Africa. That others before us have attempted to provide similar interim assessments of the democratization process does not make the task of writing this book any easier. It still entails risks and is bound, as such studies usually are, to raise criticisms. On the one hand, it is often argued that, in light of the situation in the sub-region even in the most touted cases, the term 'democratization process' is a singularly generous characterization of the developments of the last decade or so. On the other hand, some charge that many analysts easily succumb to a resurgent Afro-pessimism. In doing so, they miss the immense progress recorded in this area in a short period compared to the three decades that preceded Africa's rendition of Samuel Huntington's so-called "third wave." In addition to these ready no-win criticisms, the most significant challenge, from where we stand, has been the dizzying pace of developments in West Africa. The most inspired analysis seems to be constantly trying to catch up to these events. Even our sober findings and predictions about the evolution seem to be overtaken by the rapidity with which change (for better or worse) is occurring.

These common criticisms and frustrating odds notwithstanding, it is crucial that a progress report be done, particularly about small

(and mostly *Francophone*) states that tend to be left out of most analyses, which often focus on more prominent countries such as Nigeria or Ghana. The experiences of smaller African countries hold a wealth of lessons for others in the sub-region and Africa more generally. Moreover, the central role of the military in charting this historic phase of the evolution of West Africa's political systems deserves special attention. It highlights the critical balancing of the civil-military relations equation that West Africans must consider as they think through and contrive new political dispensations. The ambition of *Not Yet Democracy* is to do all the above.

We have tapped our collective, intimate understanding of the general political dynamics, particularly the civil-military relations of the states studied, to present an accurate, theoretically and empirically insightful accounts of the fits and starts of democratization, the hopes it aroused, its challenges, slow progress, and disconcerting setbacks. When feasible, we have made predictions or proffered recommendations to speed up this historic process of turning the page on a debilitating and onerous era of West African history. Even before the publication of the book, some of our predictions, such as the likely retrogression of Togo toward a "presidential monarchy" of sorts and the ineluctability of an attempt by Arab Nationalist groups within the Mauritanian military to overthrow Ould Taya's regime, came to pass. Many other notable developments have occurred in West Africa since the manuscript's completion. An epilogue was added to the conclusion to update West Africa's *Slow Farewell to Authoritarianism* generally, and in the states studied more specifically.

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