

ELECTORAL CONFLICTS IN THE GAMBIA

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Abstract

Electoral violence is an essential point to research since it has various gloomy effects. Not entirely does the use of power amongst electoral procedures demoralize the vote based aspects of those elections, yet electoral viciousness can likewise seriously affect the safety of those it influences such as candidates, activists, electoral staff or voters, and it can outgrow furthermore into undesirable clashes as it happened in some countries leading to numerous deaths and others displaced. This paper seeks to examine the causes conflicts of elections and solutions in West Africa and the world as a whole. A case study is drawn from the Gambia to explore the main causes of electoral conflicts, strategies used to consolidate democracy and reduce electoral conflicts and the possible solutions to those electoral conflicts. The Gambia being among the most recent countries in West Africa that had presidential elections in 2016, parliamentary and local government elections in 2017 and 2018 respectively and encountered one of the worst electoral conflicts in her history.

There are consequently both scholarly and substantive motivations to be keen on, concentrate how conflict influences electoral procedures around the globe. Nevertheless the direct effects it has on the welfare of the residents of the states, electoral violence can likewise be relied upon to skew the fundamental procedures in different courses, by oppressing campaigning and turnout, and by giving electoral preferred opinion to the individuals who attempt it. Finally, this paper draws recommendations to overcome the increasingly electoral conflicts in the Gambia.

Key words: Electoral Conflict, The Gambia, West Africa, African Union, Election Management Bodies, Economic Community of West African States, European Union.

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Dedication

This piece of work is dedicated to my late beloved mother, father and sister. May their souls rest in peace. Amen

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Table of contents

Abstract	1
Dedication	2
Acknowledgment	3
Chapter One	
Introduction	5
Chapter Two	
Literature Review	
Definition of Electoral Conflict	9
Factors that cause conflicts of elections in the world and in West Africa	11
Pre-electoral conflict	11
Post-electoral conflict	12
Factors to reduce electoral conflict in West Africa and in the world	13
International Collaborations on Elections	14
International Elections Monitoring	16
Civil Society Activities	17
The function of the Economic Community of West African States in averting electoral conflict in the sub-region	18
Democracy and electoral conflict in West Africa	20
West Africa - from tyrants' club to supporter of democracy	22
Chapter Three	
(Summary of every preliminary research on) Electoral conflicts in the Gambia	
Case study: Electoral Conflicts in the Gambia	25
Consolidating democracy and electoral conflicts in the Gambia (History and Trend)	25
The main causes of electoral conflicts in the Gambia	34
Solutions to tackle electoral conflicts in the Gambia	34
Chapter Four	
Recommendations	38
Conclusion	39
Reference	41

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

While most nations around the globe presently use elections as a method for exchanging leadership and giving authenticity to remain in power, conflict keeps on happening in numerous electoral contests (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017). Electoral conflict can have impressive ramifications for both safety and democracy; it can even result in prompting change of administration, as the case in Tunisia and Egypt between 2011 and 2012, and as in Ukraine in 2004 (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017). According to the European Union External Action (2018), West Africa is the leading sub-region in Africa in terms of democracy yet it continues to suffer from electoral violence. The Gambia is among the latest countries in West Africa that had presidential elections in 2016, parliamentary and local government elections in 2017 and 2018 respectively and suffered from one of the worst electoral conflicts in her history (Sanyang & Camara, 2017). In fact, according to 2017 Global Peace Index, the Gambia has fallen eighteen position since 2016 and is among the main five nations to have encountered the biggest decay in a continuous conflict (Goals & Connolly, 2017). This research will, therefore, attempts to answer these questions: What are the main causes of electoral conflicts in the Gambia? What strategies can be used to consolidate democracy and reduce electoral conflicts in the Gambia? What are the possible solutions to the electoral conflicts in the Gambia?

Electoral violence is an essential point to research since it has various malicious impacts. Not exclusively does the utilization of power amongst electoral procedures undermine the vote based character of those elections, yet constituent viciousness can likewise severely affect the welfare of those it influences such as candidates, activists, electoral staff or voters, and it can spur additionally strife, as in the case of the 1993 races in the Republic of Congo which led that nation into civil war, or when the challenging race in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010 prompted a struggle that led to the death of about 3,000 individuals and dislocated almost a million in late 2010 and mid 2011 (Bekoe, 2012). Notwithstanding the immediate effects it has on the welfare of the residents of the states, electoral violence can likewise be relied upon to skew the fundamental procedures in different courses, by oppressing campaigning and turnout, by disheartening nominations, and by giving electoral preferred standpoint to the individuals who attempt it. The utilization of coercive power to threaten people in elections has likewise been appeared to lessen voter turnout (Bratton 2008; Burchard, 2015). Elections happening after significant scenes of contention, like civil wars, can likewise reactivate dormant social cleavages, prompting restored violence (Flores, and Nooruddin 2012; 2016). These impacts can serve to undermine democratic rules system and to drive down trust in contests as a method for democratic advancement. There are consequently both scholarly and substantive motivations to be keen on, concentrate how conflict influences electoral procedures around the globe.

It has been argued by numerous researchers that the main causes of conflict in West Africa include corruption, social, politics, religious, economic, climate, and environment issues (Nwankwo 1995; Burton 1979 & 1997; Wentling, 2002; Egbo 2002, (Cilliers & Schuenemann 2013; Mekonnen Mengistu 2015; Brown & Stewart 2015). Particularly Brown & Stewart (2015),

who claimed that the policies made by the international monetary institutions increase the economic inequalities between the developed and the developing countries; thus many people remain poor which subsequently leads to conflict. The new security condition has expanded the worldwide idea of contentions and supported governments' ability to suppress uprisings; thus, it has not tended to the hidden financial, social, or political causes; however, this paper asserts that electoral conflict is also one of the most devastating conflicts in the Gambia which can escalate to civil conflicts.

This research will make use of existing databases such as articles, journals, and other work so as to establish the pattern, causes, trend and possible solutions of electoral conflict in the Gambia, West Africa and the world at large. It adopts a qualitative method for analyzing and interpreting data collected. In answering the questions of this work, the remaining part of the paper will be as follows. First, I will go through the literature on the factors responsible for conflicts of elections in West Africa and in the world and also possible ways to reduce those factors responsible for conflicts of elections in West Africa and in the world at large. The third part will look at consolidating democracy and electoral conflicts in the Gambia, history and trend, possible causes and solutions. The fourth section part draws some conclusions and policy implications from the case study before drawing some recommendations.

This paper will contribute the following to the existing literature. First, the previous substantial bulk of literature has focused on other forms of conflict in West Africa such as armed, civil, land, and religious¹; however, this study aims to expand on the literature by looking at electoral

¹ (Nwankwo 1995; Burton 1979 & 1997; Wentling, 2002; Egbo 2002, (Cilliers & Schuenemann 2013; Mekonnen Mengistu 2015; Brown & Stewart 2015).

conflict as other possible fundamental causes of West African conflict. Second, hence, in the heat of the ongoing debate on West African electoral conflicts, we attempt to provide policy-makers with the much-needed guidance on the electoral conflict in the Gambia in order to better understand the phenomena of the conflict to avoid future recurrences. This paper may have significant implications for African Union, Africa Development Bank, Economic Community of West African States, and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, policy-makers in various West African countries, academicians and other development agencies. The next section will look at the definition and concept of electoral conflict as used in this paper, and literature review.

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CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition of Electoral Conflict

At the outset, it is imperative to clarify what we mean when we talk about electoral conflict in the Gambia and West Africa. It is not easy to define electoral conflict in precise terms. Electoral conflict is viewed by different people through different dimensional lens. Electoral violence is a subset of political conflict (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017); it is likewise another type of misrepresentation of elections. At a less concrete level, the electoral conflict could be comprehended to be any scene where force is used at the electoral process that affects the outcomes of the elections. The UNDP characterizes electoral conflict to be acts or dangers of terrorization, or bodily mischief done to impact an electoral procedure or that happen as a result of electoral rivalry. (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017). According to them, the electoral conflict could be physical violence or coercive intimidations directly connected to approaching election contests or announce election results. Fisher (2002) described electoral conflict to be any arbitrary or sorted out act or hazard to threaten, bodily damage, blackmail, or mishandle a political partner in looking to decide, adjourn, or to generally impact electoral procedures (p.3). According to him, conflict of elections covers a wide range of underlying factors that undermine the electoral processes or results.

Sisk (2008) gives one of the most working definitions for conflict of elections as actions or intimidations of power, threatening, or bodily intimidations executed to impact election methods or that develops with respect to the electoral contention. At the point when executed to influence an election procedure, violence might be utilized to impact the procedure of races like activities to delay, confuse, or crash an election and to affect the outcomes: the choosing those who win in focused elections for political office or to stay unsatisfied or disappointment with the results.

Moreover, conflicts of election are ordinarily comprehended as violence that happens within the cycle of elections, these include before elections, during elections and after elections (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017). The causal association, which most of the time irrefutable, limits electoral fierceness to what is some way or another related with the election technique, rather than brutality that occurs in the midst of the electoral strategy; however, has no direct connection on the election. Nevertheless, most total savagery in overall society is likely to be related somehow with the voting strategy, specified the fundamental political, community, and budgetary consequences of the results of election, and it has been stated that most brutality occurs in the midst of race campaigns and on race day has political thought processes (Birch & Muchlinski, 2017).

For the purpose of this paper, the electoral conflict could be viewed as a violent articulation of differences and frustration regularly emerging from direct physical attacks or other forms of intimidations in electoral processes leading to numerous social cost (Flores, Nooruddin 2012;

2016). As shown before, while the electoral conflict is not entirely vicious, the ones that have affected the Gambia have been characterized by violence and severity (Sanyang & Camara, 2017). Meanwhile, there are some civil uprising or student demonstrations to raise concerns on electoral corruptions and malpractices or showing their interest to change unfavorable electoral laws or systems. These activities might be considered by certain dictators or corrupt leaders as conflicts of elections, electoral conflicts in my research do not include those social movements, thus; electoral conflicts in my paper have a very negative connotation with bad and vicious intentions. Having discussed the concept of conflict, let us now turn to a discussion on the factors that cause conflicts of elections in West Africa and in the world.

2.2 Factors that cause conflicts of elections in the world and in West Africa

Among the distinct characteristics of democracy is that they hold constant elections that are competitive; however, it is clear that mere conducting elections are not the sole thing to make a country democratic. In fact, there have been numerous countries without basic democratic principles like freedom of expression or association that hold constant elections (Fjelde & Höglund, 2016). The reasons for pre-electoral and post-electoral conflicts will give us detail information about why actors still keep contesting in elections.

2.2.1 Pre-electoral conflict

According to Fjelde & Höglund (2016), scholars divide the pre-electoral conflict into two groups. The first centers around the motivators and thought processes of political actors who utilize

viciousness deliberately keeping in mind the end goal to control the election procedure to support them while the later focuses around structural or enabling factors that make a few nations more vulnerable to electoral conflict than others. They regard pre-electoral conflict as a type of electoral manipulation that can be replaced with ideological urging. They claim that, in an election between two parties, the potential for pre-electoral conflict will diminish as the part of undecided voters increase. In other words, in elections where there is a close competition between the incumbent and the opposition, do not look good for peaceful and stable election processes. They further argue that incumbents will probably turn to fierce control of the electoral race by the virtue of the available state resources they possess.

Beaulieu (2014) argues that oppositions sort out for boycotting elections can happen for a number of reasons. Among certain oppositions, they tend to boycott elections to escape embarrassment when they feel that they may not win the elections. In most cases, boycotts are an exorbitant flag for disapproving the electoral procedure, attracting international attention regarding fault plays of an election, or flagging opposition to a savage or disqualify the administration.

Meanwhile, Hafner-Burton, Hyde, & Jablonski (2018) in their formal models, claim that electoral conflict can be substituted with both vote-purchasing and ballot misrepresentation as strategies to expand vote shares. They argue that electoral conflict is undoubtedly when less popular incumbents fear to lose their office as the consequence of races. Essentially, electoral conflict is probably going to be the prevailing methodology of frail challengers that need to

expand their vote share. On the other hand, strong incumbents confronting confined rivalry will probably fall back on the peaceful control systems of vote-purchasing and ballot extortion.

2.2.2 Post-electoral conflict

In their argument, Daxecker and Schneider (2014) demonstrate that global election monitors' existence to monitor and legitimize the elections improves the probability of violence after the election if the races being referred to were fake. They argue that false races checked by global bodies will be more vulnerable to consequent brutality in light of the fact that a free outsider can uncover extortion more dependably than local establishments. Hence, international election observers' screens can fill in as a trigger for vicious competition of race brings about the outcome of false elections.

Similar to Daxecker and Schneider's debate, Borzyskowski (2013) keeps up that appropriate international voting monitors' existence and their feedback of false races improve the probability of post-election savagery. She utilizes information on constituent viciousness in Africa assembled by Straus and Taylor (2009) to gauge the event and force of post-race viciousness. Fjelde & Höglund (2016) further argue that the inability to observe international measures of electoral integrity is a standout amongst the most essential factors adding to post-election dissents. They likewise argue that the likelihood that manipulation of the election will trigger post-election challenges is especially high in post-dictator administrations that have little involvement with electoral competition in democracy.

2.3 Factors to reduce electoral conflict in West Africa and in the world

Due to the political realities on the ground, elections are frequently held under unstable and high-risk political and social settings. Thus, empowering a serene situation where the privilege to vote or to remain for elections are practiced without brutality is a noteworthy test confronted routinely by electoral administration bodies and different performing stakeholders associated with elections, for example, political parties and aspirants, security, media, civil society associations, religious and local leaders and legal authorities. These elements regularly utilize various apparatuses available to them to move in the direction of serene elections.

2.3.1 International Collaborations on Elections

According to Ahu & Vasu 2015, the adequacy of the instruments utilized in reducing or alleviating and maintaining a strategic distance from electoral savagery relies upon the political setting and additionally the execution of appointive performance. At times, the essential security suppliers (i.e., the country's official security powers) may turn into the instigators of savagery. State savagery may be as the security specialists looking to change the socioeconomics of supporters, as the in the 2011 general elections in Congo, or as terrorizing by agents of the State to impact voting choices.

Birch & Muchlinski, (2018) reveal that international electoral assistance can be instrumental in reducing electoral conflicts; both electoral conflict aversion mediation procedures in view of capacity building and those in light of state of mind change are related with lessened levels of

electoral brutality, notwithstanding controlling for determination impacts and a large group of different variables known to be related with fierce races. As indicated by them the attitudinal changing intercessions are related with a decrease in viciousness by state actors, while capacity building seems to diminish savagery by non-state actors. Training and other capacity building exercises assume a noteworthy part in numerous discretionary help programs, training is by a wide margin the most well-known mediation in the UNDP archives utilized in this investigation, Birch & Muchlinski, (2018) reveals.

Similar to Birch & Muchlinski, (2018), Bolaji (2015) states that collaboration advances electoral respectability and diminishes election-related clashes. In his contention, through the advancement joint effort of the ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union help has been essential to the achievement of exercises of ECOWAS and to overhaul of the idea of races in member countries. ECOWAS and AU shared requests for making sure that sustained harmony and safety in Africa is achieved and continue to be engaged in joint precautionary procedures, Early Warning System, the execution of Africa Harmony and Security Architecture, and in arranging practices in the election perception (Bolaji, 2015).

Meanwhile, the Political Affairs segment of the AU is consistently moving from approach advancement to technique execution and checking of usage levels strengthens the criticalness of all the more convincing collaboration among the Regional Monetary bodies (Bolaji, 2015). Recently, the association between the African Union (AU) and various Regional Monetary bodies has always been consolidated into the 2009 assertion between the AU and UNDP on participatory and self-ruled governance which provides assistance to the AU and individual Regional Monetary bodies to sustain impartial strategies and establishments. Through this

coordinated effort outline, planning programs have been driven in 2011 for race monitors from ECOWAS locale and various economic communities in Africa remembering the ultimate objective to sustain their capacity to grasp reasonable electoral help and race observing. In excess of 500 election monitors have evidently been set up under this arrangement in all areas within Africa Bolaji, (2015) clarifies.

West Africa receives the largest financial supports form the European Union, this accounts for about 64% of aggregate provincial finance submitted, the European Commission (EC) gives 57% while 7.9 percent comes from EU. The remaining 33% is received from multilateral contributors, particularly the World Bank and the UN. Improvement interest between the EU and ECOWAS depends on European Union Africa association, in perspective of a common political idea, a joint Africa European Union procedure, and a direction for upcoming coordinated effort. Inside this wide structure, funding for voting-related events by the EU reinforce comes through the efforts on difficulty violence remedial action and promotion of coexistence, which in this manner provides negotiation and help, the Conflict Prevention Outline of ECOWAS explanation and allotment, and decline in the use and trafficking of weapons (Bolaji, 2015).

2.3.2 International Elections Monitoring

On electoral help, Bolaji, (2015) states that EU gives specialists on facts discovery missions and race monitors to guarantee elections uprightness in nations, the arrangement of tools for eyewitnesses and getting of other required materials for the election monitoring mission. The EU is in this light one of the groups that give supplementary support to ECOWAS through overall

undertakings for periodic elections, from which many West African countries benefited and include voter preparing and biometric voter enlistment (Bolaji, 2015). The EU has been correspondingly connected with other reputable organizations which has viably traded aptitude on voting assistance, and from which countries in West Africa have benefited. These are assistance and benefits with the light of sudden declaration requests, essentially for races monitoring missions, Bolaji (2015) asserts.

In sum, the key target of organizations in electoral assistance has been to improve provincial ability to viably go with countries of ECOWAS in guaranteeing the lead of valid elections. Having spanned the limit holes in the territory of preparing election monitoring, distribution of best practices and standardization of the election monitoring system of ECOWAS, the European Union and ECOWAS work closely to improve the authenticity of the electoral procedures and regulation of election management bodies in the sub-region (Bolaji, 2015). Henceforth, its arranged advancement participation with multilateral bodies is geared towards strengthening the institutional collaboration among the electoral management bodies in the sub-region to ensure sustained and credible elections.

2.3.3 Civil Society Activities

Drumond (2015) reveals that the advancement of social incorporation is a standout amongst the best instruments to create trust in the procedures of election and to mitigate scenes that can lead to brutality. Key exercises incorporate voter training, peace promotion, media freedom, the formation of dialogue platforms among partners, and direct interaction with the less privileged in

the society. Drumond (2015) further says that preventive techniques could be more influential if combined with the modern advanced technologies. Civic society activities, for example, as in the case of Senegal, have been especially imaginative in making innovation a key partner against election brutality (Drumond, 2015). For instance, they depend on package sourcing in the observation of election, raising citizen interest in election surveillance. By reports sending through social media, or particular sites, ordinary natives can effectively take part and report election brutality and other terrible electoral misconducts, such as misrepresentation and vote purchasing. Mobile technology can encourage correspondence amongst performing stakeholders and the conveyance of constant reports starting from the earliest stages. By accelerating the stream of data through social media or other useful sites, with the use of ICT, reactions to brutality or malpractices can be facilitated, hence adding to a tranquil and reasonable election process Drumond (2015) explains.

The specific highlights of election-related viciousness in this manner point to the pertinence and capability of activities that consolidate social consideration, swarm sourced election observing, and preparation of the youths and women. Therefore, there are valid justifications to trust that the civic engagement is among the best procedures to give prior cautioning and guarantee tranquility and soundness amid elections without compromising the social attachments. As indicated by Drumond (2015), the Women Situation Room (WSRs) activities have utilized incident reports gathered by means of SMS to give a quick reaction to casualties. The utilization of ICT in the WSRs engages ladies to go about as propaganda of peace. By preparation, intervention, and multi-faceted coordination, the Women Situation Room projects strengthen the key civic duties done by ladies in numerous nations.

2.3.1 The function of the Economic Community of West African States in averting electoral conflict in the sub-region.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) founded in 1975, the aims and objectives of the regional body are to improve collaboration and integration, prompting the foundation of West African economic union with the specific goal of raising the conditions of lives of its people, to sustain and advance financial dependability, build relations with other member countries while working toward African unity (Okere and Ph, 2015). They argue that ECOWAS as an inter-Governmental Organization was economically motivated. At that material time, just a giving a thought was determined to the nexus amongst safety and economic improvement since the connection between different nations was sensibly great and did not require marking a safeguard actuality or barrier assertion. Internal issues were effectively contained within those individual nations; be that as it may, in 1989, 1996 and 1998 muddled inner clashes broke out in Guinea Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone respectively. Okere and Ph (2015) further claim that the gigantic compassionate emergencies caused by these internal clashes made genuine security and displaced persons challenges in the sub-region as the contentions created an atmosphere of precariousness, supported arms trafficking and expansion of little arms and perilously traded off economic improvement motivation.

Without reaction from the global bodies to huge infringement of human rights in these nations, ECOWAS subsequently assumed a key part in the strenuous determination of extended and abolishing civil wars in 1990 to 97 and 2003 to 2007 in Liberia and in 1991 to 2002 in Sierra Leone which later run overflowed into Guinea and undermined to cause turmoil in the whole

West African nations (Okere and Ph, 2015). ECOWAS intercedes on the strategic front through its mediation body including Presidents of the various government of member countries, and militarily by sending a great many soldiers of the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group called ECOMIG which is drawn from different West African states Okere and Ph (2015) discover.

At first, formed to advance economic participation and coordination in West Africa, ECOWAS in the early 1990s became more politically focused as results of the influx of government changes and the emerging number of extended internal clashes in the area. The change in 1993 ECOWAS arrangement and particularly the 1999 Procedure on the Apparatus for Violence Prevention and the 2001 Decorum for Rule of Law and Good Governance officially revered the dedication of the association to advance democratic government and great administration and to receive the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Hartmann, 2017). Electoral monitoring continues to be a piece of the ECOWAS order since the 1993 agreement reviewed, yet obligations are additionally clarified in the 2001 convention. In 2005, the Commission of ECOWAS formed the Electoral Support Unit, and that was generally the moment when ECOWAS commenced to systematically follow every single election in West African nations (Hartmann 2017).

The convention likewise expressly enabled ECOWAS to execute authorizes in the occasion that democratic rules system is unexpectedly stopped by using any means (Art. 45); these sanctions run from deprivation of basic leadership privileges within member states to some other intervention esteemed suitable by the Negotiation and Security Board and the Authority of Presidents of Governments. The convention of 2001 went into practice in 2008 when it was

ratified by 9 of the 15 West African states. It has the ability to utilize its military power to stifle the unlawful individuals from control as it happened as of late in the Gambia (Hartmann 2017).

2.4 Democracy and electoral conflict in West Africa

West Africa has made critical gains on the way to democratic rule government and, in principle, latest elections in West Africa have made power open to all. Nonetheless, an appraisal of late elections in the sub-region and their suggestions for emergency corrective action steadiness still uncovers blended outcomes generally speaking.

Maendeleo Policy (2016) reveals that in some countries, the voting booth has not just turned into the favored instrument for choosing leaders, elections are likewise perceived as the main satisfactory approach to get to power. In the likes of Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, and Nigeria, elections have delivered empowering results. Some electoral procedures have helped social orders adjust to vote based system as a reality and facilitated political strains. Moreover, the advance has been recorded at all three decision organizes crosswise over West Africa. At the pre-race arrange, the presentation of biometric voting cards secured the vote in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, for instance, and furthermore helped in the last elections in Ghana, the Gambia, and Sierra Leone respectively. Amid the elections organize, the advance was made in guaranteeing a tranquil election process and in the election observation, especially in Guinea, Niger, and Nigeria. In the post-election stage, a worthy level of lawfulness in a few nations additionally added to reinforcing the electoral procedure in general (Maendeleo Policy, 2016).

Shockingly, the effect of electoral brutality is additionally noticeable in West Africa. Democratic system and soundness have experienced a culture of stealing votes, and elections remain challenged by a period of leaders who refuse to see themselves out of office. Material and institutional requirements continue influencing electoral processes in the region. This fuse the inconveniences aspirants look in formalizing their offer, issues with voter selection, and the troubles standing up to election management bodies. For free, reasonable, and tranquil election in the sub-region to move from the special case to the rule, their democratic esteem should be reinstated and fortified (Maendeleo Policy, 2016).

2.4.1 West Africa - from tyrants' club to supporter of democracy

West Africa is considered to be the champion of democracy in Africa. In her recent speech at a meeting of the Presidents of the sub-region during a summit in Liberia, Federica Mogherini, the European Union (EU) Commission Vice President stated that “this part of the world is a source of hope for Africa and for the world at large. As democracy continues to spread here in West Africa, free elections have become a common feature, peaceful transitions of power are not an exception anymore. Democracy has taken root in West Africa among the people of West Africa” (European Union External Action, 2018).

In Ivory Coast, Laurent Gbagbo, a perpetual political figure, moved toward becoming president in 2000 after losing to his opponent, Alassane Ouattara. After his capture in 2011, Laurent

Gbagbo, currently is facing the International Criminal Court in the wake of endeavoring to hold power after losing in late 2010. (BBC Focus on Africa, 2017).

The greatest triumph came over in Nigeria the BBC Focus on Africa reveals. The incredible occurred in 2015 at a point when President Goodluck Jonathan, the opposition that had been ruling from the transfer to democratic rule in 1999, was defeated by rival aspirant Muhammadu Buhari. It is unusual for sitting presidents to just lose elections in Nigeria to relinquish power to the opposition. However, President Jonathan thoughtfully yielded and led a smooth transfer of power.

In Ghana, transfer of power had turned out to be more typical, with the ruling parties defeat in both 2000 and 2008, and in addition 2016. As a matter of fact, on 9 December 2016, shortly before Ex-president Jammeh of the Gambia was turning around his initial decision to concede defeat in the December 1st Presidential elections, John Mahama, the president and incumbent were calling Nano Akufo-Addo congratulating him for leading in the wake of losing the two past elections. So the concept of accepting defeat has turned out to be acknowledged and the same practice is expected in other countries. Presidents in Ghana and Nigeria have been removed after one tenure in office and everything remains normal (BBC Focus on Africa, 2017).

Prior to his exile to Equatorial Guinea, Ex-president Jammeh had progressed toward becoming a significant shame to other presidents in West Africa. Regardless of his long tenure in office as president, he could not hold any senior position in ECOWAS. After trying to become the

Chairperson of the region three times, all his efforts went futile without getting a single one. There were a couple of leaders who might transparently reinforce him in his cases to have the ability to treat Aids or boosted to run the Gambia forever (BBC Focus on Africa, 2017).

Meanwhile, having surrendered, and afterward unaccepted defeat, Mr. Jammeh turned him to a laughing stock. Mediators from ECOWAS landed in Banjul, among them included President Buhari, who ruled for a one five year tenure and surrendered, President Mahama, another, who also quit recently after accepting defeat. Their motive was not to sympathize with Jemmeh but to negotiate his relinquishing of power to the president-elect, Adama Barrow. Besides, recently, with such a large number of presidents of West African being previous opposition leaders that should have been enough to open Jammeh's eyes on his decisions. (BBC Focus on Africa, 2017).

Moreover, the latest advancement occurred in Sierra Leone where the electoral commission said on 27 March 2018 that the opposition competitor Julius Maada Bio emerged victorious in the second round of presidential race, Bio was a past military ruler and led the race by 51.81 percent and his opponent Samura Kamara got 48.19 percent. Bio contested for the presidency twice and lost to President Bai Koroma in the 2012 race. The president-elect with his Vice President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh was sworn in by the Chief Justice Abdulai Charm not long from the affirmation of results. Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) leader, Bio guaranteed to be a leader that represents the entire country. All Peoples' Congress (APC)'s candidate, Kamara, who has been leading the party for a long time, promised to challenge the result (Al Zajeera, 2018).

In a broadcast address, the opposition candidate, Kamara expressed that the outcomes of the elections do not mirror their numerous worries about gigantic polling booth issues, excessive votes, and different irregularities. Kamara needs to pursue his case to the Supreme Court of West African States. This was the fourth elections after the civil wars in Sierra Leone. President Ernest Bai Koroma did not participate in the last elections as he was constitutionally denied from running after running for two terms (Al Jazeera, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE

(Summary of every preliminary research on) Electoral conflicts in the Gambia

3. Case study: Electoral Conflicts in the Gambia

Since turning into a republic and obtaining a constitution in 1970, the Gambia has been heading off to the polls on a five-year tenure to pick its President and individuals for parliament. At first, the ministry of local government was responsible for elections, however this changed in 1996, when, out of the blue, the new constitution made arrangement for elections to be led by a free electoral body that stretched out the voting rights to every single Gambian national of eighteen and more, both within and outside the country. Meanwhile, when Jammeh came into power, Gambians dwelling outside the country did not have the privilege to vote. To his knowledge that most of the diaspora were against him, Jammeh figured that this arrangement would anchor him a simple triumph at the elections (Sanyang & Camara, 2017).

3.1 Consolidating democracy and electoral conflicts in the Gambia (History and Trend)

The Peoples Progressive Party (PPP), under Jawara², came back to office five sequential occasions in national elections; the last in 1992. These elections, however not without constituent imperfections, were, regardless, viewed free and just by international monitors and commonwealth. However, mostly in view of Jawara's 30-year presidency, he and the PPP were criticized for financial misappropriation, which brought about the unpopular disintegration of trust in both him and his administration (Saine, 2015).

According to Saine (2015), Yayha Jammeh, a previously armed force officer who took power in the 1994 coup, guaranteed to organize accountability, truthfulness, and integrity in government to stem uncontrolled degradation and political rot. He welcomed Gambians and the media, specifically, to fill in as guard dogs over his revolution. Nonetheless, Jammeh and his framed military movement before long changed to serious severe measures to contain difficulties to his run. Facing local and international pressure to reestablish democratic standards and end military control, Jammeh relented. In 1995, the AFPRC consented to a two-year tenure to change back to regular civilian government. A hurriedly drafted constitution was embraced in August 1996 to substitute the 1970 constitution.

² First President of the Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara

Meanwhile, the new constitution, however, displayed a few key defects. These incorporated the omission of presidential term-limits, in spite of mainstream support for term confinements, and inability to expand the presidential age prerequisite from 30 to 40 years. The new constitution held declarations from the time of military rule, and in addition laws that restricted press freedom and reclamation of capital punishment. Jammeh³ additionally forced new criteria on potential presidential aspirants, including a deposit of \$1,000 and signature of 5,000 people to be qualified to run for the presidency. These were unaffordable to most political party leaders which gave him the sole opportunity for a soft run (Saine 2015).

In his arguments, Saine (2015) further claims that although electoral laws exist on paper to ensure widespread suffrage free and just races regulated by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of the Gambia and checked by local and international observers but they are only for formalities. Indeed, following the 2001 presidential race in which Jammeh won a second five-year term, he altered the constitution to a simple majority framework in place of the required 51 percent of victory required to get into office. In spite of that fact that, Jammeh continued to utilize the new law as far as possible to limit possibilities for political change, or review of mainstream and resistance from political party complaints.

The non-existence of fund for campaign laws likewise dissatisfies Gambians, denying them of their voice and right particularly those in the diaspora to pick their leaders were used as tools by him to remain in power. The then leading party with its leader, Yahya Jammeh utilized state and

³ Yahya AJJ Jammeh, Leader of the APRC and Second President of The Gambia

individual monetary resources to wage solid political activities. Besides, Jammeh's campaign accounts are supported by foreign governments, residential business commitments and cash from drugs deals and seizures, for example, the cocaine store found in Bonto outside the capital, Banjul (Burden, 2017).

There were numerous visible crackdowns on oppositions before and after elections and the Electoral Management Body called Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was also a tool President Jammeh used to manipulate the election results. Burden (2017) indicates that the election results were not satisfactory to all political parties. This uncovers there are still some displeased individuals from the electorates in the nation. In spite of the fact that the autonomy of the Independent Electoral Commission is ensured by the Constitution, The Commonwealth Expert Team to the 2011 presidential races of the Gambia revealed that somewhere in the range of 1996 and 2011, three chairpersons from the Commission were sacked without due processes. This defenselessness is likewise in view of the dependence of the commission for the greater part of its financing from the legislature. Beyond this, the group likewise saw that the president broke the Electoral Act in 2011 by utilizing the state resources for his political campaign.

In 2016, both the African Union and ECOWAS eagerly denounced the pre-election crackdown on the opposition after a Gambian High Court had charged individuals from the opposition with an unlawful parade and unlawful gathering in the development to the elections. Beyond this, the ECOWAS pre-decision facts discovering mission distinguished the dissent of equivalent access to state media, the absence of press freedom, terrorizing, unlawful capture and confinement of

opposition individuals and rejection of campaign licenses as contests that could deter the 2016 electoral procedure (Sanyang & Camara, 2017). Human Rights observe additionally detailed that the legislature of Alh. Yahya Jammeh was credited with the capture and executing of Solo Sandeng, a UDP activist, by the state intelligence agency for leading an open protest calling for electoral reform. Saine (2015) claims that an expansion in the registration charges of a candidate for the presidential, legislative and local government elections were focused on individuals from the opposition.

From 1994 to 2001, the Jammeh administration was not perceived as credible by the US government, because of its poor democratic records. The United States and Gambia's primary opposition parties, and in addition the international observers did not accredit the 1996 races as free and fair. In 2001, nonetheless, the greatest opposition party (UDP) surrendered and conceded defeat to Jammeh in a phone call from the leader of the party, making room for the US to perceive the races credible as mirroring the will of the general population (Burden, 2017).

Burden (2017) argues that despite the fact that requests for electoral reforms have been overlooked by Jammeh all through the electoral cycles since 2001, the opposition parties have kept on challenging every single one of them, including 2011 and 2016. Clashed by the procedure paving the way to the 2011 elections, which as indicated by an ECOWAS official statement was regarded not to have been helpful for free, just and transparent elections, the international community decided not to observe the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. In this regard, the ECOWAS Commission informed President Jammeh about their decision not to

deploy an ECOWAS monitoring team to the presidential race that occurred in the nation on November 24, 2011.

Jammeh and the APRC weakened the Gambian political issues through terrorizing, suppression and politicized security forces that were persecuting the opposition party militants. Despite the fact that in mid-2015, Jammeh freed in excess of 300 prisoners (security, political, and common criminals), some key political rivals remained imprisoned, including the UDP's national treasurer and two other UDP individuals. The three were sentenced for rebellion in 2013 and have supposedly been tormented in care. In June 2016, political activists, human rights groups, and civil society groups from Senegal and The Gambia met with political leaders in Dakar to talk about President Jammeh's administrative issues, and also his refusal to execute electoral changes and the constant clampdown on opposition demonstrations. The result was a further call for electoral reforms and the suspension of restrictions (Burden, 2017).

Furthermore, the end of the 22 years dictatorship of President Jammeh did not bring an end to the electoral conflicts in the Gambia. In fact, the incidence of electoral violence became more frequent than ever before⁴.

All Africa, 2017 states that the Police have captured 2 supporters of the United Democratic Party and 24 militants of the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction party at Sibanor

⁴ West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-The Gambia

town, in the Foni Bintang District of the West Coast Region⁵ in an after election viciousness. The incident happened on Friday seventh April 2017, when APRC supporters at Sibanor and the nearby towns merged at the compound of Momodou Camara, the Foni Bintang APRC aspirant elect to applaud their ongoing triumph in the April sixth parliamentary decisions.

Confirming the story, All Africa reveals that the PRO of the Gambia Police Force, Conta added that amid the APRC festivity at Sibanor: It is the jubilant APRC militants in their numbers assaulted the rivalry UDP supporters by causing harm and using obscene language on them. This circumstance, he stated, incited viciousness and efforts were made by the police commander of the Gambia Police Force, Landing Bojang and the Sibanor cops to stop the brutality, however, all efforts went futile. This circumstance incited the police charge in the area to send in more personnel of the Police Intervention Unit. Two UDP supporters sustained wounds because of stoning. They were escorted to the health center by the police, treated and released, he said. Modou Camara, the recently chosen National Assembly member for Foni Bintang when reached by the Daily Observer, blamed the UDP supporters for obstructing the way in which his supporters were utilizing with flags and UDP banners. He additionally proceeded to state that he informed the issue to the Sibanor Police Station where the Officer Commanding gave them the green light to proceed with their festival (AllAfrica, 2017).

⁵ One of the 6 administrative regions in the Gambia

On March 22nd, 2017, smbc News reports that United Democratic Party (UDP) leader Ousainou Darboe⁶'s supporters and Gambia's ousted President Yahya Jammeh's APRC militants conflicted on Tuesday night, March 21st, 2017 ahead of the parliamentary elections. The supporters of the previous ruling party accused the UDP supporters for calling individuals from the minority Jola ethnic group witches. A bunch of UDP supporters have been captured by the police and being kept at the Tallinding Police Station in the Kanifing Municipality. Police officers at the station have been reinforced as individuals from the two parties amass outside the station. The UDP, which was the Gambia's biggest political party is one of the eight parties that formed a coalition that unified to give Jammeh an unforgettable defeat in the December 2016 races. Tallinding is home of Fabakary Tombong Jatta, the then National Assembly Majority Leader.

Similarly, on Thursday, January fourth, 2018, Fabakary Tombong Jatta, the Interim Leader of Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction and some party militants, set out on a countrywide tour to prepare as the Local Government elections move closer. Nearly toward the finish of the arranged visit, the APRC asserted that inhabitants of Mankamang Kunda⁷, Upper River Region, assaulted their escort and three people sustained wounds and were taken to Brikama Health Center (WANEP, 2018). The APRC party authority denied impelling violence and said that their supporters practiced limitations to abstain from raising tension. As indicated by WANEP, 2018, similar occurrences were accounted for Wednesday, January 10th, 2018, in Brikama and Busumbala in the West Coast Region between supporters of the APRC party and those of the United Democratic Party (UDP) clashed. In Brikama, a lady in her 40s was harmed and an 80-year-old man was likewise beaten in his premises supposedly by supporters of the

⁶ Current Gambian Vice President

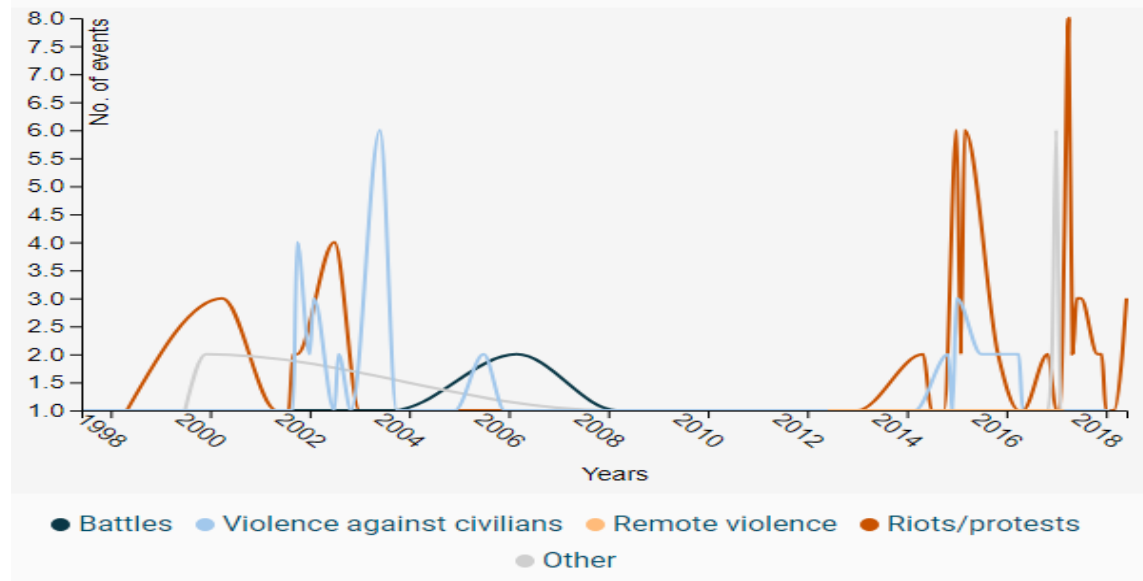
⁷ Mankamang Kaunda – the village of current President Adama Barrow.

APRC and four vehicle windscreens were damaged. Media reports likewise reported that different party supporters were heard utilizing foul words, threatening statements and mounted barriers looking for political rivals. In Yundum, a town by Busumbala, angry youths were seen shaking sticks, rocks, mallets, cutlasses and other weapons on the roadside (WANEP, 2018).

Finally, due to the numerous clashes between party militants, on January 11th, the Gambia Police Force stopped giving permits for meetings and other partisan activities ahead of the local government races in April 2018 (news24, 2018). The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction opposition militants affirmed being ambushed on January 8 at President Barrow's town, and in two relative events in subsequent days. Adama Barrow, the President of the Republic's administration attested that a couple of people were hurt in the principle experiences, while militants of the United Democratic Party claimed that the ambush on APRC supporters was carried out by the people of the town.

Nevertheless, on Monday 29th January 2018, the Gambia police lifted sanction on all partisan activities which impelled horrible clashes purportedly between the militants of former leader Yahya Jammeh and those of current president. The sanction, as discharged in the police statement on Monday stated that political parties that desire to hold political activities utilizing public address systems are welcomed to send in their request. It emphasized the pledge to guarantee that political events are done in peace and secure manners, following the conflicts toward the beginning of January (news24, 2018).

Figure 1



The trend of conflict in the Gambia over year

(Source: Armed Conflict & Data Project (ACLED))

3.2 The main causes of electoral conflicts in the Gambia

The main causes of electoral conflicts in the Gambia according to the literature reviewed (WANEP, 2018, Burden, 2017, Sanyang & Camara, 2017, Saine 2015), can be attributed to two main factors. First, the twenty years of President Jammeh's over two decades rule was characterized by continuous intimidations and brutality against anyone who eyes the presidency. He used all the state apparatus including the media, security forces, funds, and the election management body to rig votes during voter registration by registering underage and foreigners and the use of stringent electoral laws. Secondly, the post-Jammeh electoral violence is caused by tribal politics. Jammeh's 22 years rule showed a huge hatred towards the Mandinkas⁸ who were key targets of torturing and killings. Tribal sentiments in the Gambia is causing profound

⁸ The major ethnic group in the Gambia

cracks between supporters of the distinctive political groups at home and in the diaspora. Numerous people condemned the act through social media but still persists to prevail.

3.3 Solutions to tackle electoral conflicts in the Gambia

According to Burden (2017), the coalition Presidential candidate, Adama Barrow promised during the election campaign to initiate a national reconciliation program, constitutional reforms and putting a conclusion to nepotism that described the Jammeh government. The coalition guaranteed to elevate national reconciliation to foster the strong bond of citizenship. Changes in the individuals from the police, the armed force, and other security apparatus ought to get prepared to empower an expansive number of them to leave the military, to be instructed to acquire better livelihoods and to live prosperous lives as regular people, faithful to the new government.

Sanyang and Camara (2017) claim that a key segment of the progress program and its smooth usage is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, comparable in degree and terms of reference to the one constituted in post-Apartheid South Africa. To relieve the scars of ethnic splits by Jammeh in the previous two decades, the Gambian populace must be orientated to see, sensibly approve, and pardon the brutalities of the 22 long periods of Jammeh's autocracy. These cannot be appropriately seen, thus, except if the effect of the outrageous stirring of minority predominance and its impact on the social texture of Gambian social settings has first been valued. There were methodical distributions of authoritative positions and openings for one

ethnic group against the rest. The setting of interests to superimpose the social inclinations of one ethnic group over another was solely motivated to make divisions that are intended to maintain the fascism against the opposition to suppress his power on control. The cruel ideas of Jammeh's control damaged the populace to a degree that can scarcely be envisioned in the sociocultural setting of the Gambia. We have no option yet to see Jammeh's offenses as deliberate conspiracies and to summon pardoning and sensible sanctions where vital (Sanyang and Camara, 2017).

Cyllah (2014) further argues that election security and race-related brutality are not one dimensional. In any case, arrangements including a large group of in-depth investigations with stakeholders speaking to a scope of interests at various levels could likewise end up counterproductive electoral processes. Individuals are just overpowered by the multifaceted nature of brutalities and either pick not to vote or give deficient help to election security commitment. Subsequently, adjustments must be accomplished between focusing on the election security challenges and dealing with an awkward and comprehensive security plan.

It is basically essential that Election Management Bodies (EMBs) utilize the electoral cycle and comprehensive clash cycleway to deal with anticipate and relieve electoral brutality and upgrade electoral security. The EMB is unmistakably the one essential foundation in the web of institutions and organizations having its influence in this procedure. While different national security organizations additionally assume an imperative part, efforts have demonstrated that the primary mix-up is to concede the lead in battling electoral brutality to the security apparatus. A trustworthy election body is the most productive supporter to an adequate electoral process.

Accomplishing this goal is neither simple nor modest, yet it is one of the best devices to keep electoral savagery from appearing in any case. The initial step will be to reaffirm the EMB's urgent part and follow up on this acknowledgment (Cyllah, 2014).

Figure 2.

Electoral Conflicts, Causes, and Solutions in the Gambia

Electoral Conflicts	Causes	Solutions
Pre-electoral	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration of under-aged and foreigners by the election management body. 2. Vote purchasing by state actors. 3. State security intimidation on politicians. 4. Tribal sentimental clashes during campaigns. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electoral law reforms. 2. Building the human and infrastructural ecosystem of the election management body. 3. Capacity building of the state security. 4. Promotion of civic education on nationalism concepts and practices and the introduction of political campaign schedules.
Post-electoral	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. False/misinterpretation of election results by election management body. 2. Rejection of election results by International organization election monitors. 3. Tribal sentimental clashes during victory celebrations. 4. Political party leaders' rejection of election results. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building and improvement of the infrastructural ecosystem of the election management body. 2. Electoral law reforms and improvement of election processes. 3. Promotion of civic education on nationalism concepts and practices. 4. Improvement of electoral integrity and transparency.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4. Recommendations and Conclusion

Upon going through detailed causes of electoral conflicts and consolidation of democracy in the Gambia, history, and trend, my research, therefore, draws the following policy recommendations:

1. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) ought to engage the Inter-Party Committee (IPAC) to productively cooperate to advance political discourse, resilience and peaceful correspondence in the lead to the various electoral conflicts. The IPAC should involve the leaders of political parties to focus on their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a specific end goal to advance political resistance and peacefulness and exert sanctions on any party that abuses the arrangements of the MOU.

2. The police should to speed up investigations concerning the ongoing political fracas and bring the offenders under the full power of the law. The Police ought to likewise give sufficient security to political parties visits/activities and comparable occasions in future. The Police ought to be more proactive and fast to react, to guarantee savagery is contained and the size of heightening is restricted. The arrangement of Police faculty to the contention scenes should likewise comparable with the size of the contention. The media (print, broadcast, and social media) should report precisely with struggle delicate focal point on realities and not suspicions. They ought to likewise cease from exciting news coverage which additionally uplifts progressing strains.
3. The Barrow government should promptly initiate the change of civil service. The change must build up the limit of the civil service to enhance the polished skill, proficiency, and viability of the administration. In a similar vein, the organization should deliberately address the issue of representativeness to avoid conflict.
4. There is a need to create capacity building programs for individuals from various political groups. This would incorporate refinement and training on best democratic practices for guaranteeing the administration is claimed and kept running by the general population, who can consider political office holders responsible. There is a need to distinguish powerful customary methods of administration and create models which would incorporate them into democratic administration in the nation.

5. Finally, constitute a wide ranged and autonomous electoral reform board to review the electoral laws. Concentration specifically ought to be on guaranteeing a level playing field for all candidates, omitting age limit arrangements, diminishing the cost of running for elections, bringing in term limits and revoking the prerequisites for licenses for open congregations as accommodated in Public Order and so on.

Conclusion

The Gambia has suffered drastically from electoral conflicts during the last twenty-three years. Post-2016 presidential elections marked the period of witnessing the most frequent occurrences (Sanyang & Camara, 2017). This led to the Global Peace Index ranking the Gambia eighteenth positions since 2016 and further stated that it is among the main five nations to have encountered the biggest decay in a continuous conflict (Goals & Connolly, 2017).

This research has described the main causes of electoral conflicts in the Gambia, West Africa and the world at large. It has revealed been revealed in this research that incumbents use state resources and institutions to manipulate election results in order to remain in power. Some opposition members also boycott elections due to either fear of losing or bad electoral laws that push them out of the races. It further focused on instruments and institutions that could be useful in reducing or averting electoral conflicts which include capacity building, upgrading of institutional infrastructure, election monitoring, reforms in electoral laws and press freedom. This work as well revealed the effective roles of the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS) in averting electoral conflicts and promotion of democracy through zero tolerance to anyone who comes to power through coup.

One conceivable ramification are that electoral conflicts may really and inadvertently advance political progression in some instances over a long period of time. It is not necessarily the case that suppression can't control these developments. This work claims to provide detailed information on electoral conflicts in the Gambia specifically during the twenty-two years rule of President Jammeh. The challenges of the new government to consolidate democracy or causes of future possible electoral conflicts would not be addressed in this study. Instead, they could be the subject of future valuable research.

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