

# A Critical Analysis of Democratic Elections as a Dimension of Peace and Legitimacy: A Case Study of the Liberian Electoral System (2005 - 2014)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the research was to do an in-depth analysis of elections with a focus on providing a clear understanding of democratic elections as a dimension of peace and legitimacy. The emphasis of the research was on the electoral system of Liberia and the measure of its contribution to the promotion of peace and legitimacy in the country from 2005 to 2014. The researcher used the qualitative research method, descriptive design, and questionnaires as data collection tools. The population of the research was five hundred fifty-five (555) representing the population of the workforce of the National Elections Commission of Liberia and the leaders of registered political parties. The sample size of the research was fifty-five (55) based on Purposive Sampling Techniques (Patton, 1990). The research showed that in spite of frequent elections conducted from 2005 to 2014, not many Liberians understand elections within the framework of the concept of democracy. Many are yet to understand or come to the full realization that there are roles, rights, and responsibilities of the individual citizen in democracy beyond ballot casting. The research further showed that 34.5% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said the extent to which Liberians understand democracy as a model of governance is very little. This finding has implications for the attainment of genuine peace and legitimacy in Liberia. The researcher concluded that there is an urgent need for government to establish a national mechanism for a rolling public or civic education program that will deepen the understanding of the people on elections and democracy-related issues on a regular basis. In his conclusion, the researcher furthered that this gap is responsible for the reported limited understanding of the citizenry and if the principle of participation must be realized, then efforts have to be made to educate the citizenry on democratic values and principles.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis constitutes the contextual reality and basis for conducting the study titled: A Critical Analysis of Democratic Elections as a Dimension of Peace and Legitimacy: A case study of the Liberian Electoral System (2005 - 2014). It covers as sub-topics the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and the purpose objectives of the study. Also included in this chapter as sub-topics are the research questions, and the scope, which incorporates limitations and delimitations of the study, follows definitions of terms, and ends with the organization of the entire chapter.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Democracy refers to a rule by the people through free and fair elections as well as various forms of participation (Collins,

2000). This definition of democracy brings into perspective the subject of focus “democratic elections;” a process involving the selection by vote of a person or persons from among candidates for an elective office. Based on practice from time to time, it has been realized that to elect means to choose or make a decision. This is in addition to other forms of balloting such as referenda which are also considered a form of election (Liberia, 2011 Elections Lessons Learned Report, 2011).

Collins (2000) states that democratic elections entail free, fair, and frequent elections. This is predicated upon the fact that “free elections” mean that all adult citizens (i.e., defined by country’s situation can vote in elections and stand for office; “fair elections” mean elections that are fundamentally honest where no eligible voter will be stopped from voting and the votes cast counted accurately. However, both terms are synonymous in meaning as expressed in this definition “the act or process of electing someone to fill an office or position”. “Frequent elections” mean that elections must be held often enough to enable the people exercise control of the government. This cogent explanation of these three important rudiments of democratic elections further beeps deeper into the scope of the subject (Collins, 2015).

These definitions further imply that democratic elections are meant to foster popular sovereignty with the objective of ensuring political equality and civic participation where the people are considered the ultimate authority. Thus, elections are always at the heart of the practical means for the people to assert their control and authority. This certainly confirms the opinion that if the people are to rule, then there must be a practical means of determining who will exercise power on their behalf.

Despite this unique understanding of elections which presents the latter as an aspect of peace and legitimacy, there are many academicians and professionals who argue that it is the basis for conflict and violence. Hence, this paper clearly takes a critical look at these emerging issues with a focus on important benchmarks and practices of democratic elections that contribute to the attainment of peace and legitimacy. The paper further seeks to identify elements or conditions that affect the delivery of democratic elections.

That is exactly why the paper profoundly digs into the processes characterizing election delivery such as the

correlation between election and democracy, the role of an Electoral Management Body (EMB) in the enhancement of democratic elections, and democracy as a model of governance and peace and legitimacy.

On the other hand, serious consideration will be given to a combination of factors that undermine or affect effective elections delivery such as limited financial or human resources external influence based on financial or technical assistance mechanisms, the lack of political will as well as limited access to the process by voters, candidates and other interest groups.

The emergence of the label “elections” in the small West African nation of Liberia goes as far back as 1848 when the country conducted its first constitutional elections after ratifying the 1847 constitution. That is more than a century and a half ago. Despite this long experience of elections, the process remains a largely misunderstood phenomenon across the country (Liberia E. C., 2011 Elections Report, 2011). Citizens’ understanding of the process is limited to simply going to the ballot box and casting their votes to elect public officials and nothing more. Following up with elected officials on their actions and inactions in terms of performances consistent with their mandates does not matter until another round of elections.

This situation has a root in the long history of the lack of an open and inclusive governance process, coupled with persistently high rates of illiteracy that accounts for the limited understanding of citizens when it comes to elections and understanding the governance processes of the country. Another dimension of this limitation is their *laissez-fair* attitude on the part of citizens toward the governance process thus culminating in their failure to hold government accountable for its actions and inactions. This is evidenced by the fact that despite the years of democratic practices, elections have done little to deepen the understanding of the citizenry on the whole concept of democracy.

This research therefore will focus on Liberia as a case study particularly from 2005-2014 as a post-conflict nation which ascribed to the universally accepted system of governance called ‘democracy’. The emphasis is on the period 2005-2014 because it is considered an era of a major democratic transition with two presidential, three legislative and intermittent by-elections conducted, following years of insurrection and unrest in Liberia (Liberia E. C., 2011). It is considerably noted that this democratic transition laid the basis for the establishment of democratic tenets in the country. Hence, it is only befitting that an in-depth analysis is done to ascertain the extent of peace and legitimacy in the country as a result of this democratic transition.

Additionally, the review of the literature takes a look at democracy as a model of governance; the principles of democracy and its correlation to elections; the EMB and how it enhances democratic elections taking into account regional and international acceptable benchmarks, the extent to which democratic elections have promoted peace and legitimacy in Liberia, as well as democracy as a dimension of development.

Considering the relevance of these themes to the research, they will be substantively reviewed based on experiences gathered from previous works done in relation to the research topic. The review will also seek to reveal some of the veracities of electoral processes, especially “democratic elections” reflective of universally acceptable benchmarks and best practices which are fundamentally required for conducting credible elections and promoting peace and legitimacy.

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

The problem the study seeks to address is that although elections seem to be the basis for establishing and promoting democratic governance in many post-conflict countries, but peace and legitimacy still remain doubtful leaving a negative impression about the impact of elections and democracy on people and societies in general.

In Liberia for example, the three major elections conducted between 2005, 2011 and 2014 alone have largely proven to be the game changer in the country’s post-war recovery and democratization processes. In spite of these developments, there are still mounting concerns about the extent to which elections have impacted peace and legitimacy in Liberia.

With the limited understanding or misconception of citizens about elections and democracy, especially in Liberia, it is imperative to conduct this research to provide a clear understanding of the measure or impact of democratic elections with respect to the promotion of peace and legitimacy.

### *1.3 Significance of the Study*

Since the emergence of democracy over 2000 years ago, it is no longer considered as a western idea. This is due largely to its expansion by practice as the most popular governance model throughout more than half of the countries of the world. Its hallmark emphasizes on guaranteeing the principles of the protection of the rights of people, the promotion of peace, the pursuit of happiness and the inherent authority of the people to govern their own nation has attracted this style of governance globally to which Liberia ascribed many years ago.

With the conduct of three major elections with intermittent by-elections in Liberia during the last decades, it is widely reported that the current democratic transition taking place in Liberia is a direct result of these frequently held elections. To what extent these elections have impacted peace and legitimacy in the country, is one in-depth study that has to be done which this study seeks to address.

### *1.4 Purpose / Objectives of the Study*

The purpose of this research is to do an in-depth analysis of elections with emphasis on providing a clear understanding of democratic elections as a dimension of peace and legitimacy. The focus will be on the Liberia electoral system and the measure of its contribution to the promotion of peace and legitimacy in the country from 2005-2014. Hence, the following objectives were considered:

1. Determine the basis for democracy as a model of governance
2. Identify the correlation between democracy and elections
3. Determine the impact of Electoral Management Bodies on the enhancement of democratic elections
4. Determine how democratic elections promote peace and legitimacy

### 1.5 Research Questions

In an effort to achieve the purpose / objectives of this study, the researcher has adopted a series of questions derived from the objectives above. These key questions derived by the researcher consistent with the research topic include to:

1. How is democracy a model of governance?
2. What is the correlation between democracy and election?
3. How do Electoral Management Bodies contribute to the enhancement of democratic elections?
4. How do democratic elections promote peace and legitimacy?

### 1.6 Scope (Limitation) and Delimitation

Generally, not much interest is given to academic work in Liberia due the high rates of illiteracy and poor readership in the country. Besides, the whole idea of elections is still widely considered a misunderstood concept. In fact, there are not many people who really understand the systems and procedures of electioneering processes.

So, not many resourceful people one can find with the appropriate knowledge and experience in the areas of democracy and electioneering processes except for the very few who work for the National Elections Commission (NEC) and those within governance and democracy related organizations. In essence, there are not many options to explore as a result of limited sources or resource materials due to the emerging nature of a vibrant political culture in the country.

Thus, the Researcher will limit the study to relevant individuals in the employ of the NEC, members of selected registered political parties and range of pundits with long standing history of understanding the Liberian political and governance system. The Researcher will also consult a number of reference materials including publications on governance, democracy and elections.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

Terms usually vary in meaning based on context. Thus, in the framework of this study and opinion of the researcher, the following definitions are necessary to provide readers clarity.

Capitalist – is referred to individual who engages in the practices of capitalism; or, supporter of capitalism which refers to a system in which factories and land are privately owned and economic development is directed by the automatic working of supply and demand in the market (Deutsch, 1981).

Constitutionalism – is the use of constitutions to limit government by law. Ensures the protection of the fundamental rights, interests and welfare of the people

Democracy – rule by the people through free and fair elections (New Webster Dictionary, 2003).

Democratic Elections – free, fair and frequent elections (Bittiger, 2005)

Electoral System – The structural arrangements through electoral services are provided (IDEA, 2002)

Electoral Management Body – An institution with the mandate to oversee or manage elections (Resource Center, National Elections Commission of Liberia, 2016)

Elections – right or ability to make a choice (Marriam Webster Dictionary, 2008)

Fair Elections – fundamentally honest. Voters must not be stopped from voting and votes must be counted accurately (Platner, 2006).

Free Elections – all adult citizens can vote in election and stand for office (Collins English Dictionary, 2000).

Frequent Elections – must be held frequent enough to enable the people exercise control of the government (Elections Report, 2011).

Fundamentalism – Religious movement or point of view characterized by return to fundamental principles and by rigid adherence (Cline, 2016).

Government – The control apparatus through which a governing unit exercises authority (IDEA, 2002)

Legitimacy– a compliant with law; or that which is in accordance with established patterns and standards (Cambridge University, 2016).

Liberalism – freedom, equality and dignity of the individual (Ball, 2016)

Majoritarian System – Simple numerical majority (Cambridge University, 2016)

Multiparty – Relating to or involving more than two political parties (Cambridge University, 2016)

Multiparty Elections – elections involving more than two political parties (New Webster Dictionary, 2003)

Peace – Serenity, harmonious relations, public security and order (Marriam Webster Dictionary, 2008)

Polity – The form of government of a nation, state or organization (New Webster Dictionary, 2003)

Proportional Representation – Representation of all political parties in the legislature in proportion to their popular vote (IDEA, 2002).

Secularism – Religious skepticism or indifference (Marriam Webster Dictionary, 2008).

Theocracy – Government that is subject to religious authority (Rushdoony, 2010-2016).

### *1.8 Organization of the Study*

This qualitative research is arranged into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objective of the study, research questions, limitations and delimitations of the study, definition and organization of the study. Chapter two is the review of the literature. It encapsulates the orderly and logical arrangements of previous studies done on the topic with the aim of assisting the Researcher in discussing the research subject.

Chapter three covers the methodology of the study, which includes the research methods for gathering information and design used to conduct the study. It further discussed the different procedures and analysis. Chapter four discusses the results and findings of the research. It basically presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### *Introduction*

Chapter two reviewed related literature with the singular objective of giving direction and assistance to the Researcher to discuss the research topic to its rational conclusion. The review covered important topics to include democracy as a model of governance, democracy and its correlation to elections; how EMBs enhance democratic elections; democracy as a dimension of development; the extent to which democratic elections have promoted peace and legitimacy in Liberia.

These related literatures are expected to provide clarity to the Researcher's work by unraveling existing realities relative to democratic elections, identifying gaps and delving deeper into previous findings from Researchers who have worked on similar topic. In order to succeed along this line, the Researcher has gathered diverse materials with relevant information to support the research.

### *2.1 How is Democracy a Model of Governance?*

Anders Hanberger (2004) asserts that governance issues can be discussed in relation to different political systems. Anderson avers that governance and democracy affect one another in different ways. Governance according to him is intertwined with democracy, and democracy and governance can be maintained or strengthened by periodic evaluation. Hanberger opinionates that because different models of governance and democracy presuppose one another, evaluating governance models, or program processes and outcomes where a specific governance model sets up the context, have implications for the model under scrutiny and subsequently for democracy. Thus he maintains that the implications of democratic evaluations need to be discussed in various ways. For analytical purpose democracy and governance are sometimes kept apart (Hanberger, 2004).

Hanberger argues further this paper conveys the notion that a given governance model affects democracy through a process that reinforces a certain democratic orientation emphasizing that the interrelation between governance and democracy can be observed in many ways, i.e., a clear democratic orientation can in the first place influence the choice of governance model. Understood this way according to him, a governance model is based on, or presupposes, a certain democratic orientation (Hanberger, 2004).

Larry Diamond (2005) asserts that since the great wave of global democratic expansion began in 1974, the task of promoting democracy faces a deepening set of challenges and contradictions. These revolve around two inter-related facts according to him. First, as the number of democracies has increased from about 40 in 1974 to around 120 today (slightly over 60 percent of all independent states), the task of promoting democratic transitions and consolidation has become more difficult, because the countries with the economic, social, historical and geographic conditions most conducive to democracy have already installed (and in many cases, largely consolidated) democracy. Second, and related to this, Diamond underscores intimates that many of the tough cases that remain are so not simply because they lack the classic facilitating conditions for democracy—more developed levels of per capita income, civil society, independent mass media, political parties, mass democratic attitudes and values, and so on but because they lack as well the more basic conditions of a viable political order (Diamond, 2005).

Diamond (2005) emphasizes that before a country can have a democratic state, it must first have a set of political institutions that exercise authority over a territory, make and execute policies, extract and distribute revenue, produce public goods, and maintain order by wielding an effective monopoly over the means of violence. Diamond (2005) asserted and underlines that the daunting reality of the contemporary world is that many of the remaining autocracies and semi-authoritarian states of the world lack this most basic foundation for building democracy. In these countries, the state has either collapsed in civil or international war, or it is weak, fragile, and at risk of collapse (Diamond, 2005).

The overall concept of democracy as propounded in “the Concepts and Fundamental Principles of Democracy,” accentuates that the label “democracy” as originally conceived by the Greek is consistent with their inclination to the values that each individual is free to participate in the governance of their own state. Thus, in a democracy, the main purpose for the establishment of a democratic government is to guarantee the protection and promotion of the rights, interests and welfare of the people.

According to the Political Scientist, Larry Diamond, democracy is a form of government in which the people of a state are involved in making decisions about its affairs. He further defined democracy as a rule by the people, rule of the majority where the ultimate power is vested in the people either

through a direct or indirect system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections (Diamond, 2005).

In his views about democracy, Larry expounds that democratic governance consist of four key elements; a political system choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections, the active participation of the people as citizens in politics and civic life, protection of the rights of all citizens and a rule of law in which law and procedures apply equally to all citizens (Diamond, 2005).

Contrary to Larry's views about democracy, Max Weber (2013), a theorist discusses democracy from a different perspective referring to it as "competitive elitism". In his 20<sup>th</sup> century concept of democracy, Weber simply defined democracy as a method which enables voters occasionally to choose between possible leaders. Although he alludes that this definition is deficient, he however underscores that in such model of democracy politicians are autonomous in their work. They are independent of voters and are not accountable to voters they are those who have knowledge and skills to lead the government. This in his opinion was the first big model of democracy developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Weber, 2013).

Further expanding his theory of competitive elitism, Weber equates liberal democracy to plebiscitary leadership democracy. Plebiscitary according to him because elections were also a vote of confidence in governments, leadership because the political elites and party leaders were those who had the power to mobilize the voters adding that democracy serves to ensue good and effective political leadership (Weber, 2013).

Joseph Schumpeter (2008) is another 20<sup>th</sup> century theorist complementarily developed the "competitive elitism" theory with Max Weber. Just as Weber declared that this theory is one of the problematic models of democracy, Schumpeter also concords strongly. Slightly contrary to Weber, Schumpeter defined democracy as a method for making decisions. He asserts that the role of democracy and elections is to legitimize political decisions (Schumpeter, 2008).

Schumpeter specifically maintained that the main roles in political systems are always left for only few people (i.e. political elites of political parties). Democracy, in Schumpeter's opinion doesn't mean that the people really governs, it is not a government for the people and by the people. Instead, it is just a method that enables the people to choose those who are going to govern. For Schumpeter, that is democracy stressing that only political elites can be active in politics (Schumpeter, 2008).

Adam Cooper (2013) in his assessment of democratic governance in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Benin indicated that Liberia has demonstrated strong respect for civil and political rights since the 2005 elections evidenced by the upward trend democratic governance has taken in the country. Adam made reference to the World Bank's indicators which revealed that the country has shown improvement in good governance over the past decade (2003-2013) as reflected in its

open attitude towards reform which has paved the way for wider program opportunities to be considered than in many other African countries (Cooper, 2013).

However, a balance in Adam's views about the state of democratic governance in Liberia was vividly established when he underscored that institutions that are to uphold or ensure the sustenance of democratic governance are generally weak which accounts for the limited control of corruption, poor regulatory quality, ineffectiveness of the rule of law and overall governance process. Uniquely, Adam recommends the strengthening of three key areas in order to create the conditions necessary for democratic governance in the four countries. Foremost among three key area are, the public administration and anti-corruption; second, the justice and the rule of law; and, third, women's representation. (Cooper, 2013).

As much as Liberia and Africa's first female President, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2013) reaffirms her commitment to upholding the tenets of democratic governance, the Liberian President unequivocally announced to the world during an interview with Reuters News in Brussels that "peace and security" in Liberia was still an issue because of the high rates of unemployment among young people. She bemoaned that until the issue of unemployment can be addressed, there will always be a chance that there may be a resumption of conflict which according to her poses threat to the country's emerging democracy. According to the UN, young people in general account for about 65% of Liberia's population and youth unemployment is estimated as high as 85% (Dumore, 2013).

Similarly, the National Youth Policy of Liberia (2012) which seeks to promote youth participation in national decision making processes, particularly highlights illiteracy and unemployment as factors affecting young people ((FLY), 2012). This has been described by many pundits including Liberia' President as indicated in this research as a treat to the country's democratic excursion. The irony is that government has signed agriculture and mining concession agreements worth more than 16 billion dollars but most of these youths are not qualified to work in these industries. As a large voting population, the low level of literacy and the lack of employment opportunities confronting this critical group have rendered them a threat to the consolidation of democracy in Liberia. Given the crucial role of youths in the democratization process, the problems confronting them have to be acknowledged and addressed appropriately.

In the context of the beginning of challenges and the way forward for fostering democratic governance in Liberia, the country has a long history and experience of elections dating as far back as 1848. Conversely, competitive election is still viewed by many as an arena for confrontation even though competitive election is accepted as the most suitable medium in these contemporary times to address the question of leadership. Furthermore, in a country where 94.84% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day (World Bank Country Report 2011), more needs to be done to improve the standard of living of the people,

an issue directly linked to the protection of human rights and the consolidation of democracy.

### 2.2 *What is the Correlation between Democracy and Elections?*

The history of elections can be traced to ancient Greece dating as far back as 2,400 years ago when the concept of democracy emerged. To effectively discuss democratic elections as it relates to peace and a developmental dimension, a quick scan of democracy in terms of its correlation to elections is vitally required. "Democracy" means "rule by the people" (Dictionary). The concept embodies the core values or principles of classlessness, equality, fairness, egalitarianism, equality, consensus and social equality. While it is true that the people of democracy govern their own nation, it is the practice however of this governance model varies from country to country.

Max Weber Since most countries which lack an enduring traditional political democracy lie in the underdeveloped sections of the world, modern democracy in its clearest form can only occur under capitalist industrialization" (Weber, 2013).

Since the conception of democracy many epochs ago, it has been adapted and practiced by many countries. It was largely considered a western system of governance until in 1989 in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Empire that democracy has been fostered and normalized in more than 118 countries of the world (Zakaria, 1997). That means regular elections contested by political parties have been concluded in 118 countries signifying significant improvement and expansion of democracy. Although with a considerable degree of modifications in its form and practice, democracy remains the single most widely practiced form of governance.

Between 1991 and 2000 alone, more than 43 out of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries conducted multiparty Legislative and Presidential elections (Van de Walle 2000, p.6). Yet there is little credible evidence that democracy as an institution precedes the attainment of development. As a direct result, there are questions emerging in many circles relative to legitimacy and the developmental dimension of democratic elections.

Mirroring the Islamic world for example, from the Palestine authority through Iran and then to Pakistan, democratization has led to an increasing role for theocratic or fundamentalist politics. This is evidenced by the fact that democracy has eroded longstanding traditions of secularism and tolerance.

In the case of Liberia, all forms of traditional leadership that existed prior to the coming of the settlers (Americo-Liberians) were all dismantled upon their arrival (Wreh, 1976). This action on the part of the settlers created the platform for a new beginning. The first "multiparty elections" were conducted in Liberia in 1848 with the conviction that competitive elections were panacea for underdevelopment. One can safely say that such project seems to be fast becoming a reality given the degree of acceptability of governments which are the direct

outcomes of democratic elections. The 2005 and 2011 elections are classic examples since they have considerably set the stage for national recovery and development.

Similarly, the National Center for Civic Education asserts that there had been a considerable level of research done on the enabling conditions for the success of democratic elections. As such, there are challenges in attempting to apply democratic elections in places where the conditions necessary do not exist. Comparatively, the Center also underscore that it is clear that limited research has been done on the existence of the conditions necessary for democratic elections, specifically as it relates to Liberia. The unavailability of such vital information has also incentivized the reported misconception and general lack of interest.

This brings us to the significance of understanding the basic elements of democracy as unambiguously underscored by the National Center for Civic Education. Undoubtedly, dealing with the issue of misconstruction of the concept of democracy is critical to understanding democratic elections. The National Center for Civic Education in its publication "Elements of Democracy" clearly articulate that the people are the ultimate source of the authority of their government (National Center for Civic Education, 2007). This is firmly expatiated further in its presentation of popular sovereignty, political equality, the common good, majority rule or majority rights, human rights and representation as key elements that do not only guarantee the dignity of the individual citizen but create the conditions necessary for democratic elections.

Another cogent dimension of significance of the correlation of the two concepts-democracy and elections is emphasized by the United Nations (UN) Electoral Assistance Office. In its position on global issues, the UN described the two concepts as complementary indicating that "election sits at the heart of democracy". In the context of democratic elections, the world governing body maintains that "the main goal of its electoral assistance is to support member states in holding periodic, inclusive and transparent elections that are credible and popularly perceived as such and establishing national and sustainable electoral processes". By this the UN avers that elections drive democracy.

However, the UN through its Electoral Assistance office clearly divulges that elections within themselves are not just unique to all countries. Systems and applications vary from country to country. For example, one country may have a majoritarian system and another proportional representation system resonating that elections are unique and reflect individual country's historical and political characteristics. Nonetheless, such systems must ascribe to the principles of democratic elections.

### 2.3 *How do Electoral Management Bodies contribute to the enhancement of Democratic Elections?*

Larry and Marc in their discussion of Electoral Systems and Democracy aver that the number of democracies has increased around the world. Thus, there is a heated debate among experts

as to which system best supports the consolidation of democracy (Platner, 2006).

Andrew Ellis (2009) strongly affirms that in designing and establishing electoral administration, a structure that enables its fearless independence is essential. Such independence means that the electoral administration does not bend to government, political or other partisan interests; though it is worth emphasizing that the threat can come not just from overt political restriction or pressure, but from financial mechanisms which prevent the administration from accessing money and other resources when needed (Ellis, 2009).

Andrew furthered that as democratic institutions have been established across the global south, many countries have followed India in establishing an independent electoral authority. While not all have matched the unchallenged respect with which the Election Commission of India is held or the success of other independent electoral commissions (such as that of South Africa), the model is now used by over half the world's countries and territories

Grier Stephenson in his democracy paper, *The Principles of Democratic Elections* (Stephenson) Grier highlights the importance of electoral structures or systems by underscoring that electoral rules or practices that may contribute to or detract from a sense that elections are free and fair, considering voting impediments, vote counting and campaign finance regulations. According to him, the aim of every political institution is first to obtain for rules, men who possess most wisdom to discern and most virtue to pursue the common goal of the society” (Stephenson).

The International Peace Institute (IPI) at its seminar on *Election and Stability in West Africa* (Institute, International Peace, 2011) maintained that elections that are administered in a transparent, consistent and fair manner are more likely to be successful. Therefore, building the capacity of EMBs to support effective elections and set up appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms, establishing confidence in the electoral management process among the public and stakeholders, and encouraging a broad national consensus.

Krishna Kumar (1998) maintained that a combination of factors affect the administration of electoral processes. In particular, post-war countries in many cases lack the institutional and technical capacities as well as the needed financial resources which create the necessary conditions and enabling environment for the conduct of competitive elections. According to Krishna, elections organization is a cumbersome process, which consists of corollary activities to include boundary delimitation, voter registration, voter information, voter education, and registration and financing of political parties, dispute resolution, providing access to physically challenge and minorities (Kumar, 1998).

Kumar maintains that already, there appears to be difficulties in consolidated democracies with experience in organizing competitive elections, least to mention post-conflict countries. As such, EMBs of developing countries, especially post-

conflict countries often lack the requisite experience to conduct competitive multiparty elections. Eventually, problems will always exist as a result of weak infrastructure and limited number of or unqualified personnel.

Electoral system design and EMB are also two critical aspects that matter in the consolidation of the legitimacy of the electoral process and democratization in general. Taagepera (1998) reasons that inadequate electoral rules have rarely led to the breakdown of democracy, but at the same time, he argues that they have contributed to crises (Taagepera, 1998). Although “a good electoral system cannot salvage a polity where many other institutions, attitudes and policies breakdown ... a poor electoral system can contribute to crisis in case of shaky polities” (Taagepera, 1998).

Although electoral system designs matters, especially in ethnically, religiously or ideologically are divided societies. “There is no consensus on whether any single electoral system is always the “best” in terms of contribution to conflict mitigation” (Sisk, 2008). Besides, there is no assurance that an electoral system that works in one country will be effective in another country or environment. This is because electoral systems do not only depend on electoral laws or rules but also the overall surrounding political culture. Thus, the model of a country's electoral system could be proportional representation, majoritarian or mixture of both. A system can only be considered “good” or “bad” based on the electoral laws or rules of the country in which it is used (Sisk, 2008).

Reilly established that academics have considerably agreed that power-sharing government which is a phenomenon in divided societies is instituted through Proportional Representation (PR) system (Reilly, 2002). If not all but transitional elections organized under the auspices of the UN used PR system. PR systems are preferred because they are “fair” transparent and provide a clear correlation between votes cast in the election and seats won in the parliament/legislature. They bring Minorities into the electoral process and represent all significant parties in a fair way. However, Reilly underscored that no matter the widely used PR system particularly in post-conflict situations, it has its own disadvantages. The system has been criticized for failing to provide “geographical accountability” (Reilly, 2002). The PR system does not promote accountability as it does not link voters to their representatives.

Tobias Von Gienanth (2008) in his compilation of experiences drawn from elections in post-war the countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kosovo asserts that EMBs should be much more focused on gaining the trust and confidence of the public than attaching importance to details of their organizational specifications in their respective abilities as electoral commissions (Gienanth, 2008).

To achieve this according to him, the EMB must pass three tests. First, they must be independent. That is free from oversight or undue influence by other government agencies. Second, their action during their entire lifespan from the nomination of members, through voter registration and election

campaign, until the complaint and appeal phase, must be transparent. The legal framework, therefore, must allow a high degree of participation or outside scrutiny by political parties, civil society organizations, the media and international actors. Third, EMBs must discharge their duties in a competent manner and to high professional standards. However, according to Tobias, this only possible if they have sufficient personnel and financial resources at their disposal (Gienanth, 2008).

Drawing on his experience as Chairman of Liberia's post-conflict National Elections Commission of Liberia, James M. Fromayan (2008) enumerated facts about electoral commissions, funding and international assistance particularly in post-conflict situations. He avowed that while it is true that international electoral assistance must be appreciated, it should never be considered a substitute for national efforts. According to him, experience has clearly shown that international donor institutions on many occasions dictate the course of action for national institutions (Fromayan, 2008). For example, donor agencies in Liberia selected which budget line items they could support instead of allowing the NEC to make decision for the 2005 elections in Liberia.

Mr. Fromayan (2008) emphasized that African Governments should therefore rise to the occasion by allocating more resources to various electoral commissions thereby easing the indispensable nature of international assistance for the conduct of African elections. He furthered stated that to effectively conduct an election, it requires a trained human resource, and effective legal framework that is impartial and just, and an EMB dedicated to national interest. Moreover, such EMB must have ready access to funding to enhance its independence (Fromayan, 2008).

According to Mr. Fromayan, for countries emerging from conflicts like Liberia, the value added by international technical assistance cannot be overemphasized. In Liberia, there exists a massive brain drain as a result of the protracted civil conflict. Consequently, technical assistance became an indispensable asset for the conduct of the 2005 elections. The virtual absence of legal, delimitation and IT specialists crucial to the conduct of elections was filled by international technical assistance. Notwithstanding, Fromayan (2008) highlighted that international technical assistance entails a tremendous financial burden for struggling economies of post-war nations. He concludes that the best technical assistance therefore, is one that seeks to build the sustainable technical capacity of local staff to enable the EMB to be less dependent on international technical assistance (Fromayan, 2008)

International IDEA states that the funding of elections is a factor affects the independence of the EMB and the credibility of the overall electoral process. It underlines that funding elections may be costly and has to compete with vital national services such as defense, health and education which may yield greater immediate political returns. International IDEA avows that Inadequate or untimely funding of electoral processes may occur because governments are not able to appropriate

sufficient funds to ensure the timely disbursement of approved funds.

International IDEA intimates that EMB funding needs are dependent upon the electoral cycle and will vary hugely between election and non-election years. Other significant factors as underscored by International IDEA the model of electoral management used, the electoral procedures in place, and frequency of elections. EMBs have been regularly accused of procuring expensive goods and services such as high-technology equipment which is not often put to effective use. According to International IDEA, some EMBs have also been accused of printing more ballot materials and recruiting more election staff than necessary. The independence of some models of EMBs from the executive branch of government may lead to perceptions that they are not subject to the controls on spending applied by the government agencies.

International IDEA asserts that many EMBs such as those in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq and Liberia have relied on international donors for substantial amount of budgetary support as well as technical assistance. Apart from sustainability issues, conflicting conditions which different donor impose on the EMBs, added to the requirements from their own governments may make it difficult for EMBs to account properly and within a reasonable time for the totality of the funding they receive.

International IDEA avers that EMBs have had a deal with the question whether and how to fund new technologies, particularly for voter registration, voting and vote counting, such as electronic voting. Increased emphasis on access issues such as the provision mobile polling stations, facilities for absentee voting in-country or in other countries, facilities for voters with disabilities, and electoral information that is effective in increasingly multilingual societies has also had financing implications. In many established democracies, government policy of slimming down public sectors have led to less certainty of funding for EMBs, particularly for staff costs (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2006).

#### *2.4 How do Democratic Elections promote Peace and Legitimacy?*

According to Theodora Zafiu (2012), from the perspective of positive opinion, the true intent of democratic elections is to engender and foster development. This is so because democracy seeks to guarantee the protection of the rights and liberty of citizens as well as their well-being. However, this is not achievable in the absence of "peace" which is often driven by the legitimacy of the government (Zafiu, 2012).

Taking cue from similar arguments on this subject, Krishna Kumar three objectives which give legitimacy to the holding of elections, especially post-war elections. First, elections are means of transferring power to a regime that is supported by the citizens and the international community having the capacity to rebuild the country. Second, elections are viewed in the public discourse as the first step towards developing



democratic institutions and consolidating the democratization process. Third, election provides a space for reconciliation of all parties to the conflict, giving everyone the opportunity to present their agendas to citizens, debate their opponents and mobilize public opinion to capture political power.

Dr. Amos C. Sawyer (2005) in his reflection on governance posed a thought-provoking question emphasizing the significance of peace and legitimacy: Can a stable political order be established in Liberia in the aftermath of the collapse of governance and a horrendous period of pillage and carnage? Dr. Amos C. Sawyer (2005) argues that the task can be accomplished in the context in new constitutional and governing institutions that differ remarkably from those of the past. Dr. Sawyer was alluding to the fact that peace and legitimacy precede development as he draws deeply on his experience as head of state exploring new ways of establishing constitutional foundation for democratic governance (Sawyer, 2005).

Fadeke E. Owolabi (2013) though concurs with the opinion that democracy engenders peace and legitimacy which fosters development, but he looks at it from a different dimension. He argues that the popular consensus that democracy fosters development takes for granted the fact that democracy can only foster development if a democratic practice is predicated on the ability of a society to imbibe a culture of constitutionalism (Owolabi, 2013).

Owolabi (2013) furthered that while the developed societies recognize this fact and as early as 1215 limitation had been placed on the king of England, the 21<sup>st</sup> century of African's political class especially Nigeria, has continued to practice an unbridled exercise of political power. Thus, he emphasizes that the failure to institutionalize the mechanism of power control for the protection of the interest and liberties of the general public including those of the minority jeopardizes the attainment of development. According to him, until the Nigerian constitution entrenched the principle of constitutionalism that secure democratic process on the people, development will remain a misunderstood concept (Owolabi, 2013).

Drawing examples from other countries, Owolabi (2013) concludes that genuine development that is sustainable, can only be realized in Africa and most importantly in Nigeria if all ethnic groups, cultures and cleavages both individuals and groups are accorded the rights of participating in the formulation of the constitution that guide their relationship with the state and among each other and the government's adherence to the dictate of the peoples' constitution. This in turn, according to him, helps to checkmate the excesses of the government, then the peoples' rights, interests and preferences can be guaranteed and sustainable development ensured (Owolabi, 2013).

As elaborately propounded by Owolabi and others, the National Center for Civic Education asserted that constitutionalism and liberalism (Pluralistic participation) which engender legitimacy and peaceful co-existence, are not only key elements of

democracy but fundamental prerequisites for genuine development. In its publication "The Concepts and Fundamental Principles of Democracy", the Center underscores that these two elements must exist in any political system in order for it to be considered genuine democracy. According to the Center, this is essentially important because the realization of these elements guarantees the rights, freedom and welfare of the people (National Center for Civic Education, 2007).

Constitutionalism enables the people or governed to limit their government by law. By this means, the power of the government is reduced and check-mated to prevent oppression or abuse of any sort. It ensures the protection of the rights, interests and welfare of the people. In essence, constitutionalism in its framework (Laws) limits the power of the government, and as such, no one is above the law. Liberalism recognizes the freedom, equality and dignity of the individual citizen. It emphasizes the moral superiority of the individual and further accentuates that all persons have certain fundamental rights. The center furthered that liberalism guarantees freedom of religion or conscience, political freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of individual expression and the right to privacy. In the opinion of the Center, these principles must exist as conditions necessary for genuine development to take place.

In their profound analysis of the impact of elections "Electing for Peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone" as being critical to consolidating peace and building democracy, Frances Fortune and Oscar Bloh (2012) clearly underscored that neither Sierra Leone nor Liberia yet has a genuine participatory democracy. According to them, this is largely due to the control of the state by political elites, adding that while some gains have been made the politics of exclusion that has contributed to numerous past rebellions still endures. Young people, women and minorities are especially vulnerable they claimed (Fortune, 2012).

Expounding further, the two individuals elaborated that Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) statistics show that young people make up more than half the registered voters: 18-22year olds constitutes 22%, 23-27year olds 18%, and 28-32year olds 15%. Frances and Oscar intimates that even though young people's votes are fought over during elections, their needs and interests are not necessarily protected afterwards. The political exclusion of young former combatants is particularly acute, exacerbated through failed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration exercises (Commission, 2011).

In essence, concerted reform is needed to break down institutionalized exclusion in both countries and ensure that marginalized groups achieve better representation in parties and in government beyond the traditional women's wing and youth wing scenarios. They specifically highlighted that the creation of pressure groups such as All Political Party Youth Association and All Political Party Women's Association in these countries are positive moves, thus setting into motion

ambitious goals and means for inclusion. These might include exploring different electoral models such as proportional representation. Civil society, especially the media also has a key role to play in promoting broad societal participation in politics and, ultimately, shifting the focus from identity to issues.

On the subject of electoral management, Frances and Oscar claimed that ultimately electoral institutions are needed to counter mistrust in the process. They indicated that building public trust and confidence in electoral institutions is a way of preventing post-election violence and strengthening the legitimacy of the results and thus the ability to govern. Making appointments to electoral commissions more democratic, such as through the public nomination process or establishing a public committee to vet nominations would help build confidence.

In both countries, neither legal frameworks nor electoral management mechanisms have adequately addressed how political parties operate in elections in both countries. Most political parties lack internal democratic practices and are usually driven by personalities and patron-client networks. In both countries, a small group of men determine the candidates for parliamentary or legislative nomination thus averring that political parties systematically use fear and violence for political gain they both avowed. This according to them, increases arms flow and militarization and youths who are usually left with nothing afterwards. The only young people to benefit from the political process are those who remain within the patron-client political alignment for a longer term.

In Liberia, the legitimacy of the NEC and the Judiciary in managing grievances or disputes arising from elections poses another challenge to electoral credibility. Almost all election-related grievances in Liberia are handled either by NEC or the Supreme Court. The NEC has made an effort to build up its internal legal team but its poor relationship with opposition parties suggest that most grievances are referred to the Supreme Court. Frances and Oscar asserted that Liberia's Supreme Court is overburdened and opposition groups in particular are skeptical over its independence.

Another dimension accentuated by the two individuals has to do with delays in the collection and tallying of election results which according to them has consequences on the process including rumors of misconduct and fraud. Since 2004 according to them, Liberia and Sierra Leone have taken steps to boost electoral transparency, including the introduction of clear plastic ballot boxes and public counting in polling stations. Political parties and civil society have also conducted exit polls with the media broadcasting the figures in near real-time.

Frances and Oscar (2012) emphasized that building peace and democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone are lessons learnt from elections conducted in the two countries. They unequivocally underlined that in spite of the gains made, peace and democracy can only be enhanced through the reinforcement of three priority areas: Political inclusion for marginalized groups,

transformation of institutions and the promotion of people-focused security (Fortune, 2012). Although they affirmed that free, fair and transparent elections are critical to consolidating peace and democracy in countries emerging from conflict, they however brought into perspective that they can also contribute to increased tensions, divisions and outbreaks of violence, as experienced in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea in 2011 have shown. Incumbent state leaders may be wary of losing control and claim premature victory as happened in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as in Kenya and Zimbabwe (Fortune, 2012).

Nuna Ndulo and Sarah Lulo (2010) in their publication "Free and Fair Elections, Violence and Conflict" published by the Harvard International Law Journal, maintained that elections are a defining characteristic of democracy, and thus form an integral part of the democratization process. They underscored that elections provide the means for jump-starting a new post-conflict political order; for stimulating the development of democratic politics; for forming governments; and for conferring legitimacy upon the new political order (Ndulo, 2010).

Nuna and Sarah specifically averred that although it is true that post-conflict elections have resulted in violence in some countries, it is important to keep in mind that this scenario is not the whole story or indeed the only story. They clearly divulged in their analysis the experiences of Namibia (1989), Cambodia (1993), South Africa (1994), Mozambique (1994), El Salvador (1994), East Timor (2001, 2002) and, in many respects Sierra Leone (2002) and Liberia (2005) are notable examples of successful elections held in so-called "fragile" countries (Ndulo, 2010). This in their opinion constitutes elections as precondition to democratization and durable peace. According to them, although elections alone cannot be equated with democracy, elections are indeed an intrinsic component of the dispensation of democracy.

In the publication *The Role of Elections in Peace Processes*, Almami I. Cyllah (2011) asserts that experiences in dealing with warlords, armed groups and terrorists opting to be legitimate actors must be shared in order to help mediators either during negotiation processes or before they are allowed to participate in elections. He emphasized that tough issues about legitimacy must be addressed at the outset of the negotiation process or the new government must take them up as its first order of business. According to him, in Liberia attention and resources must be given to strengthen the rule of law in the democracy development process, so that real democracy can take root in the country (Cyllah, 2011).

Almami further stated that regional organizations such as ECOWAS must adopt and implement policies that will bar warlords from participating in elections. He added that the African Union must begin to implement policies to discourage potential warlords from taking up arms against the people for whom they claimed to fight. Liberia must create the special crimes court and give it the independence, tools and other resources needed in order to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity he underscored. Almami stressed that the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report and its recommendation must be debated and, if possible, legislation passed to address the actions of those responsible for inflicting such harm on the Liberian people (Cyllah, 2011).

The International Peace Institute (IPI) publication of 2012 asserts that regional organizations play an important role in developing the normative and legal framework for free, fair, and regular elections, and for promoting good governance. The Institute emphasizes that many of the concepts laid out in the Praia Declaration are embodied in the existing normative frameworks for the conduct of free, fair, and peaceful elections in West Africa. For instance, the Institute maintains that the ECOWAS *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, adopted in December 2001, is an important agreement among West African states to ensure credible and regular elections in the region. The protocol is a regional commitment to address the growing challenge of election-related violence in West Africa which many emerging democracies including Liberia are benefitting.

In addition, the Institute expresses that the adoption of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in 2008 offers a regional conflict-prevention and peace building strategy, which elaborates on the conduct of elections while also providing guidelines and entry points for relevant actors to engage in prevention initiatives. However, the Institute articulates that the inability of the ECOWAS protocol to effectively sanction non compliant members is considered a serious limitation issue.

The Institute furthers that respect for and adherence to human rights norms during the electoral process, including freedom of speech, assembly, association, and equality, provides the basis for free and fair elections. It stresses that the inclusion of women in the political process, both as voters and candidates, plays an important role in ensuring that elections are democratic, inclusive, and even peaceful noting that women in West Africa have proven to be a powerful force in demanding democracy and accountability while advocating nonviolence. Thus, it calls for empowering women in the conduct of elections and taking appropriate measures to enhance women's participation in elections emphasizing the protection of all voters and candidates, especially women (Institute, International Peace, 2012).

Consistent with its established norms and standards for democratic elections, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in its publication "Benchmarks for Credible Elections in the SADC Region" (2005), underscores that while elections are an essential part of democratic process, on their own they are not sufficient to ensure a democracy. Election monitoring through trust in the democratic processes and ensuring fair elections, form a major part of the process of promoting democracy.

SADC underlined that the presence of independent and nonpartisan election observers reassures voters that they can safely and secretly cast their ballots and that votes cast will be credibly tabulated without any tempering. Thus, election

monitoring deters fraud in the voting process. According to SADC, the basis for elections observation is to ensure that pre-conditions for elections to include transparency in the electoral process, independent media coverage of campaigns, freedom of speech and protection of human rights are met.

SADC asserts that election preparedness and credibility of the polls is determined by a number of structures and mechanisms put in place to ensure the mandate of the populace is well represented. Apart from the normative instruments which serve as benchmarks to assess the management and conduct of elections in the region, member states must endeavor to undertake electoral reform and review constitutions to ensure they conform with recognized international standards similar to the liberal constitutions in South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique. SADC stresses that elections are conducted under certain acceptable rules, procedures and regulations embodied in each individual country's constitution. This according to SADC, it signifies that the constitution forms a firm foundation for elections as a fair and legitimate method of selecting and replacing governments democratically whereby the population of a society can exert political and social power over the government (Ogunsanya, 2005).

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in its electoral standards of 2002 elaborates that it is important to assess to what degree the country's legal framework for elections complies with international electoral standards. This according to International IDEA will provide a set of constructive suggestions for corrections, improvements and possible best practices to strengthen the legislation. At the same time, another country's particular system or practice of legislation should not be considered to be ideal or directly transferrable.

In its electoral standards, International IDEA avers that international standards are relevant to each component of the electoral process and necessary for the legal framework of individual countries to be able to ensure democratic elections. The electoral standard contributes to uniformity, reliability, consistency, accuracy and overall professionalism in elections. These standards according to International IDEA should be used to ensure non-discrimination and equality of access for all citizens. The legal framework must therefore ensure that no identifiable social group is excluded to include women, ethnic minorities, and citizens with disabilities, language, internally displaced persons and refugees.

International IDEA avows that the primary sources for international electoral standards are various international, regional and United Nations declarations and conventions on human rights and other relevant legal documents. International IDEA furthers that these include: 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1996 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1950 European Convention (together with its protocols) for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE),

1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, 1969 American Convention on Human Rights and 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights. International IDEA however, underscores that the application of such standards by a particular country will depend upon its international undertakings in relations to such documents (IDEA, International, 2002).

The report of the Colloquium on African Elections: Best Practices and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration (2009) asserted that competitive elections have become the norm in many African countries. In nations such as Ghana, Mauritius and South Africa, successful elections have helped consolidate nascent democratic institutions and enhance prospects for greater economic and political development. The report also says that in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone, credible elections have paved the way for national reconciliation and a return to democratic rule after decades of armed conflicts and civil wars. On the other hand, flawed elections in other countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe have led to violence, loss of life, destruction of properties, and have further polarized political discourse.

The report emphasizes the importance of regional and international electoral standards as benchmarks for the establishment and sustenance of democracy. The report highlights the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election observers. The African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are signatories to this declaration. Another essential regional benchmark mentioned by the report is the AU Charter on Democracy, elections and governance, a document that underscores the importance of credible democratic elections on the continent. The report however divulged that the charter is yet to be ratified by the required number of member states.

The report speaks to the dimension of relations between electoral commissions and political parties as being crucial to confidence and trust building. The report cites the Interparty Consultative Committee in Liberia and the Interparty Advisory Committee of Ghana which were created to address election related matters through an informal agreement between the elections commissions and political parties of the two countries. This consultative process though informal but has instituted a number of major reforms including the decision to use transparent ballot boxes, accessibility of candidates to voters, declaration of election results at polling stations. The report underscored that regular meetings among political parties, the election commission and civil society representatives can build trust and confidence among various stakeholders (Institute, 2009).

The African Union Election Observation Manual encapsulates electoral standards that enhance election observation and monitoring in Africa to improve the quality of elections. The Manual emphasizes norms to guide the 54-member pan African organization intended to promote political participation

improve electoral standards and facilitate the consolidation of democracy in member states. The Manual strongly encourages member states to ensure that their legal frameworks are consistent with the African Union's Constitutive Act of 2002, the AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic elections in Africa 2002, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance 2007, and the Guidelines for AU Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions provide the benchmarks for the promotion of democratic elections.

The Manual avows that the AU Manual is based on the principle that democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any government. Thus, democratic elections should be conducted "freely and fairly" and "by impartial, all-inclusive competent accountable electoral institutions" in a manner that meets international standards. Election observation by the AU, other international actors, and domestic civil society organizations contribute to safeguarding electoral standards and thereby prevents post-election violence that may emanate from electoral disputes.

The Manual furthers that electoral observation monitoring has become an integral part of the democratic and electoral processes in Africa. Internal, regional and national observers have come to play important roles in enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and democratic governance in Africa and the acceptance of election results throughout the continent. Electoral observation and monitoring can also play key roles in diminishing conflicts before, during and after elections (African Union Commission, 2013).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2005) in its standards for election management has equally established benchmarks necessary for the holding of credible elections. The regional body like the AU, SADC and other international bodies emphasizes the need to for electoral management bodies to ensure that they manage electoral processes in a transparent and open manner acceptable to all stakeholders. ECOWAS has underlined those elections observation by domestic and independent international observers is a key element that contributes to the consolidation of democratic governance in member states. In states that are undergoing democratic transitions, election observers can build citizens' confidence in the electoral process; while in states holding elections following a conflict, observers can help conflicting parties trust the election will be conducted fairly even if they do not yet trust each other. The regional asserts that it has moved election observation to the core of its mandate in order to better enhance democracy, good governance and conflict prevention in member states. The regional body enunciates that these standards are formally promulgated in what it refers to as the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance which is consistent with internationally accepted democratic principles.

On the other hand, Tim Bittiger looks at the down side of regional African interventions standards as benchmarks for credible elections. He maintains that ECOWAS and other regional African bodies have to consider long term election

observation such as two to three months in order to follow the process at the pre-election, election and post-election periods which will enable them to produce reports that will be profound and based on realities of the electoral process. He argues that African Missions are usually deployed on a short term basis, and in most cases they conclude such missions hastily thus casting doubts about the credibility of their reports or declarations. He furthered the need for the African Union and ECOWAS in particular to forge a common approach to election observation. According to him, various observer groups have different standards and approaches to which they refer to as standards for ensuring democratic elections which is in actuality not the case (Bittiger, 2005).

Tim however applauds recent increase in election observation by African organizations as a positive development. He indicates that ECOWAS and the AU should continue to take a clear approach which must be comprehensive integrating elections into a wider conflict prevention strategy, with due care to avoid conflict of interest for themselves. He says assuming a role in elections gives African institutions the chance to take democracy building on the continent into their own hands, and with time, prove that they can do this in a responsible and coordinated manner. Tim unambiguously declares that African organizations understand the continent's traditions, cultures and politics in a way that outsiders never will. He therefore, states that African observer organizations must receive all the support and encouragement they need to assume an increasingly central role in the observation of African elections (Bittiger, 2005).

International IDEA in its standard for EMBs, "Electoral Management Design" systematically outlined the three electoral management models as independent, government and mixed. International IDEA clearly underscores that no matter which model is used, every EMB should be certain that it can ensure the legitimacy and credibility of the process for which it is responsible. This can be done if electoral management is founded on fundamental guiding principles of independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service-mindedness.

International IDEA furthers that each of the three broad electoral models may encompass one or more EMBs with varying functions. The organization however avows that each model has some basic attributes, but also many variations. There are ways in which EMBs work depends not merely on the model used, but on other electoral framework, social, culture and political factors. In the same way, International IDEA expresses that there are many electoral management bodies within the three broad models. EMBs may be permanent or temporary and may be centralized or decentralized to varying degrees.

However, International IDEA explains that each structure has its advantages and disadvantages that need to be carefully assessed according to the particular country's condition. International IDEA maintains that no matter what model is used; all EMBs need to follow some guiding principles which

are in most cases achieved under the independent model than by the other two models (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2006).

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### *Introduction*

Chapter three covers the procedural component of this study. It incorporates the clusters that explain the entire process of the research method adopted. Hence, the entire methodology included the research method, research design, and research population. Others are sample size and sampling techniques, instruments used to collect data in the field, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

#### *3.1 Research Method*

The researcher used the qualitative research method to collect data necessary for the conduct of this research. This method enabled the researcher to design a standard questionnaire, conduct specialized interviews, take notes and read relevant literature. It took into account the research design to collect data from the field; population selection of the research considered a target population; a data collection procedure, which allowed the researcher to go into the field after he receive an introductory letter from the institute's Director. It further required the researcher to undergo data compilation and analysis. These elements constitute the steps and procedures followed in the conduct of the research.

#### *3.2 Research Design*

The researcher considered a descriptive design and used a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. Notwithstanding, the researcher also considered an integrated approach that consisted of theories and concepts from a broader field of democracy, governance as well as electoral management processes. This method was necessary as it provided the researcher an opportunity to explore the veracities of democratic elections as a dimension of peace and legitimacy particularly in Liberia, a post-war country.

#### *3.3 Population of the Study*

The population of the study was 550 which covers the workforce of the NEC and officials of registered political parties (Liberia, 2015). These two categories of the population were selected for the study based on the fact that they are quite knowledgeable of the subject and possess the requisite information and experience to share with the Researcher.

#### *3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques*

The sample size of the study was fifty-five (55) respondents (35 from the NEC workforce and 20 from leaderships of registered political parties). This sampling mechanism is based on the theory of Purposive Sampling (Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling captures major variations rather than simply identifying a common core. This method is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of

information-rich cases for the effective use of limited resources.

### 3.5 Research Instrument

The researcher collected data by using questionnaires as the instruments for data collection. Sobrepena (2011) underscores that questionnaire is the most commonly used and effective tool for obtaining data beyond the physical reach of the researcher. That means, the questionnaire can be sent to people who are thousands of miles away (Sobrepena, 2011).

### 3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The data for the research was collected by the researcher through the administration of self-developed questionnaires to respondents. The respondents were individuals deemed to have experiences and knowledge of the research topic. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher introduced himself and discussed the purpose of the research and the participants' rights regarding the need for their consent. The participants were also assured by the researcher that they were free to participate or not to take part in the interview. They were informed that they could withdraw from the interview process at any point in time. The questionnaires contained open-ended that enabled respondents to provide comprehensive insights about key themes of the research. The purpose of the interview was clearly explained to the interviewees. With their consent, interviews were conducted. Additionally, literature relating to democracy as a model of governance; democracy and its correlation to elections; the EMB and how it enhances democratic elections; democratic elections as a promoter of peace and legitimacy in Liberia were reviewed.

### 3.7 Data Compilation and Analysis

Nyanjul (2013) asserts that the analysis of data involves the application of raw data into various categories through coding and tabulation. Consistent with this concept, data that were collected from this research were recorded and grouped into tables. Responses were collated based on the data collected from respondents disaggregated by category. The already analyzed data was interpreted, presented, and discussed in chapter four following the approval of the research. The analysis informed the conclusions and recommendations in chapter five of the research.

## IV. PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Introduction

Chapter four focused on analytical interpretation of the data presented by the research participants. The results of data collected and analyzed from the study were discussed in this chapter in a logical manner using procedures designed to collect data, categorize, analyze and interpret the data as well as discuss the findings.

### 4.1 Presentation of Biographical Data

This section contains the biographical information of the participants. These personal information of each participant

were used to correlate the relationship between the responses obtained and the biographical information obtained about each participant. The data collected were categorized into four key themes from which four tables were designed appropriately as shown below.

Table 1: Respondents Categorized by Gender

	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Male	35	63.6
	Female	20	36.3

Source: Researcher's Data from the Study, 2016

Table 1 showed that of the total 55 respondents of the study, 35 respondents were males. The number of male respondents constituted 63.6%. Table 1 showed that of the total 55 respondents of the study, 20 were females. Female respondents represented 36.6%. Although the researcher was concerned about the gender parity aspect of the study, many females couldn't be reached and interviewed due to the nature of the Liberian society where men are mostly in charge as heads. Therefore, there were more men respondents than their women counterparts.

Table 2: Respondents Categorized by Age Range

	Age range	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Below 18	0	0
	18 to 35	20	36.3
	36 to 65	30	54.5
	Above 65	5	9.0

Source: Researcher's Data from the Study, 2016

Table 2 showed that no respondent was below the age of 18 which is the legal age of consent in Liberia. Table 2 showed that 21 or 42% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 35 years. Respondents between the ages of 35 and 65 were the highest with 30 respondents or 54.5% of the total number interviewed. Table 2 further showed that respondents between the ages of 18 and 65 have a combined number of 50 respondents or 90.8% of the total respondents. Five respondents or 9.0% were above the age of 65 or in retirement and expected to be senior citizens.

Table 3: Respondents Categorized by Educational Level

	Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	High School	15	27.7
	Undergraduate	25	45.4
	Graduate	10	18.1
	Post Graduate	5	9.0

Source: Researcher's Data from the Study, 2016

Table 3 showed that 15 or 27.7% of respondents of the total sample size of 55 had earned high school education. Table 3 showed that 25 or 45.5% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents had obtained undergraduate degrees. Respondents who had obtained undergraduate education were the largest category of respondents by educational level with 25 respondents or 45.4% of the total respondents interviewed.

Table 3 further showed that of the total of 55 respondents interviewed during the study, 10 or 18.1% had graduate education whilst 5 or 9.0% had postgraduate education.

Table 4: Respondents Categorized by Marital Status

	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Single	12	21.8
	Married	38	69.0
	Divorced	5	9.0
	Widow/Widower	2	3.6

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 4 showed that 12 respondents or 21.8% of the total respondents were single people at the time of the study. The largest compositions of the respondents were married people accounting for 38 or 69.0% of the total respondents. Table 4 showed that 5 or 9.0% were divorced people whilst 2 or 3.6% of the respondents were widows or widowers.

4.2 Presentation of Data Collected from Research Participants

This section presents the data collected by the researcher from the research participants. It is based on the responses of the respondents to the research questions. The responses are grouped into fifteen (15) tables.

Table 5: Responses to the question “How is democracy a model of governance?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	YES	54	98.2	98.2	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 1 showed 54 respondents of the total respondents agreed that democracy is a model of governance. The respondents that agreed to democracy as model of governance constituted 98.2%. Table 1 showed that 1 respondent or 1.8% disagreed that democracy is a model of governance.

Table 6: Responses to the question “To what extent is democracy practiced in Liberia?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very little	14	25.5	25.5	25.5
	Average	21	38.2	38.2	63.6
	very much	19	34.5	34.5	98.2
	extremely	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 6 showed that 21 or 38.2% of respondents of the total of respondents said democracy is practiced in Liberia on the average. Table 6 showed that 19 or 34.5% of respondents of the total respondents said democracy is practiced in Liberia very much. Table 6 showed that 14 or 25.5% of respondents of the total respondents said very little democracy is practiced in Liberia. Table 6 showed that 1 or 1.8% of respondents of the

total respondents said democracy is extremely practiced in Liberia.

Table 7: Responses to the question “To what extent do Liberians understand the concept of democracy as a governance model?”

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very little	19	34.5	34.5	34.5
average	16	29.1	29.1	63.6
very much	18	32.7	32.7	96.4
extremely	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 7 showed that 19 or 34.5% of respondents said the extent to which Liberians understand democracy as a model of governance is very little. Table 7 showed that 18 or 32.7% of respondents said that the extent to which Liberians understand the concept of democracy as governance model is very much. Table 7 showed that 16 or 29.1% of respondents said that the extent to which Liberians understand the concept of democracy as a governance model is on the average.

Table 8: Responses to the question “To what extent has democracy promoted good governance in Liberia?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	very little	22	40.0	40.0	41.8
	average	20	36.4	36.4	78.2
	very much	12	21.8	21.8	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 8 showed that 22 or 40% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said the extent to which democracy promotes good governance in Liberia is very little. Table 8 showed that 20 or 36.4% of respondents of the total respondents said on the average democracy promotes good governance in Liberia. Table 8 showed that 12 or 21.8% of respondents of the total respondents said democracy promotes good governance in Liberia very much. Table 8 showed that 1 or 1.8% of respondents of the total respondents said democracy does not promote governance.

Table 9: Responses to the question “To what extent has democracy improved governance in Liberia?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very little	32	58.2	58.2	58.2
	average	7	12.7	12.7	70.9
	very much	13	23.6	23.6	94.5
	extremely	3	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 9 showed that 32 or 58.2% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said the extent to which governance democracy has improved governance is very little. Table 9 showed that 13 respondents of the total respondents said democracy has improved governance very much. Table 9 showed that 7 or 12.7% of respondents of the total respondents said that on the average democracy has improved governance. Table 9 showed that 3 of respondents of the total respondents said democracy has extremely improved governance.

Table 10: Responses to the question “Is election linked to democracy?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	YES	54	98.2	98.2	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 10 showed that 54 or 98.2% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said election is linked to democracy. Table 10 showed that 1 or 1.8% of respondents of the total respondents said election is not linked to democracy.

Table 11: Responses to the question “Is democracy attainable without credible elections?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	52	94.5	94.5	94.5
	YES	3	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 11 showed that 52 or 94.5% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said democracy is not attainable without credible elections. Table 11 showed that 3 or 5.5% of respondents of the total respondents said democracy is attainable without credible elections.

Table 12: Responses to the question “From 2005-2014, have elections contributed to democratic governance in Liberia?”

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
not at all	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
very little	13	23.6	23.6	25.5
average	17	30.9	30.9	56.4
very much	19	34.5	34.5	90.9
extremely	5	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 12 showed that 19 or 34.5% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said elections have contributed to democratic governance in Liberia is very much. Table 12 showed that 17 or 30.9% of respondents of the total of respondents said on the average elections have contributed to democratic governance in Liberia. Table 12 showed 13 or 23.6% of respondents of the

total of respondents said elections have contributed very little to democratic governance in Liberia. Table 12 showed that 5 or 9.1% of respondents of the total of respondents said elections have extremely contributed to democratic governance in Liberia.

Table 13.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very little	6	10.9	10.9	10.9
	average	25	45.5	45.5	56.4
	very much	17	30.9	30.9	87.3
	extremely	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

Table 13 showed that 25 or 45% of respondents of the total respondents of 55 said on the average democratic elections have promoted peace and legitimacy in Liberia. Table 13 showed that 17 or 30.5% of respondents of the total respondents said that democratic elections have promoted peace and legitimacy in Liberia very much. Table 13 showed that 7 or 12.7% of respondents of the total respondents said democratic elections have extremely promoted peace and legitimacy. Table 12 showed that 6 or 10.9% of respondents of the total respondents said democratic elections promotion of peace and legitimacy is very little.

Table 14: Responses to the question “To what extent would you say Is the credibility of elections depends on the role of Electoral Management Body (EMB)?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very little	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
	average	9	16.4	16.4	23.6
	very much	28	50.9	50.9	74.5
	extremely	14	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016

7.3% of respondents of the total of respondents said the extent to which the credibility of elections depends on the EMB is very little.

Table 15: Responses to the question “From 2005-2014, to what extent have elections engendered peace and legitimacy in Liberia?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	9	16.4	16.4	16.4
	very little	2	3.6	3.6	20.0
	average	17	30.9	30.9	50.9
	very much	24	43.6	43.6	94.5
	extremely	3	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Data from the Study, 2016



Table 15 showed that 24 or 43.6% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents said elections have engendered peace and legitimacy very much. Table 15 show that 17 or 30.9% of respondents of the total of respondents said on the average elections has engendered peace and legitimacy. Table 15 showed that 9 or 16.4% of respondents of the total of respondents said elections have not at all engendered peace and legitimacy. Table 15 showed that 3 or 5.5% of respondents of the total of respondents said elections have extremely engendered peace and legitimacy in Liberia.

#### 4.3 Discussion of Results/Findings

The research conducted revealed remarkable findings based on responses gathered from a sample size of 55 respondents from the workforce of the National Elections Commission of Liberia and leaders of registered political parties. These key findings are directly taken from various tables used during the data analysis reflective of the responses of respondents with the highest frequencies and percentages.

According to Table 1, male respondents accounted for 63.6% whilst females accounted for 36.3% of the total respondents of 55. This scenario is apparent because of the nature or structure of the Liberian society where males are predominantly in charge as heads of families.

Table 2 showed that respondents between the ages of 35 and 65 were the highest with 30 respondents or 54.5% of the total respondents of 55 while respondents between 18 and 35 accounted for 20 or 36.3% of the total respondents. This could be due to the fact that many people between the ages of 35-65 are possess the experience and knowledgeable of the research topic.

According to table 3, 25 or 45.4% of respondents had obtained undergraduate education while 15 or 27.7% account for respondents who had high school education. This could be due to the enthusiasm of energetic University graduates who are anxious of experimenting and exploring research opportunities, particularly field trips or adventures.

According to Table 4, 38 or 69.0% of respondents of the total of 55 respondents were married. This group of respondents account for the highest number of respondents in the category of marital status. Table 4 also showed that 12 or 21.8% of respondents represented single people. This development is good given that many Liberian families are large or extensive thus cutting across all spectrums of the Liberian society. Although broader in scope as it may be but many of them also have considerable degree of experience and knowledge of the research.

Table 5 revealed that 98.2% of respondents agreed that democracy is a model of governance. The respondents who agreed that democracy is a model of governance constituted the highest number of respondents in this category. This could be due to the progress that has been made in the strengthening of the country's democracy from 2005 to 2014 evidenced by the conduct of three successive elections.

According to Table 6, 21 or 38.2% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said on the average democracy is practiced in Liberia while 19 or 34.5% of respondents said that democracy is much practiced in Liberia. These findings are key to the researcher because the understanding of the citizenry of the extent to which democracy is practiced in Liberia is paramount to upholding its principles and values. Thus, the high number of respondents (38%) who agreed that democracy is practiced on the average in Liberia signifies that much is yet to be done to deepen the understanding of the citizenry.

According to Table 7, 19 or 34.5% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said that the understanding of Liberians of the concept of democracy as a governance model is very little while 18 or 32.7% of respondents said that on an average basis Liberians understand democracy as a model of governance. These findings are interesting because they signify that democracy is yet to be understood by Liberians as the means through which they are being governed.

According to Table 8, 22 or 40.0% of respondents of the total respondents of this category said that democracy has done very little to promote democracy in Liberia while 20 or 36.4% said the promotion of good governance through democracy is on the average. These two findings are extremely important to the researcher because they could be directly bordered on the reality of the mode of governance and the quality of life of the citizens in terms of health care, security, education, employment and environmental conditions. According to Cooper (2013) these form part of the basic necessities of life and are also essential to the strengthening of democracy (Cooper, 2012).

According to Table 9, 58.2% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said that democracy has done very little to improve governance in Liberia while 23.6% said democracy has improved governance much. These findings or results are key to the research because 58.2% of respondents represent more than half of the total respondents of the research who said that democracy has done very little to improve governance in Liberia. This finding raises more questions than answers about the practices of the government and the types and quality of services that are being provided to the people.

According to Table 10, 98.2% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said election is linked to democracy while 1.8% said no, election is not linked to democracy. These findings revealed that most Liberians have gotten accustomed to periodic or frequent elections evidenced by the conduct of the three successive elections and several by-elections from 2005-2014 (Elections Report, 2011). According to Kenig (2008), Free, fair and frequent elections are key features of democracy (Kenig, 2008).

According to Table 11, 94.5% of respondents of the total of respondents in this category said democracy is not attainable without credible elections while 5.5% said democracy is attainable without credible elections. These are essential findings because they clearly provide a strong basis for the

correlation between elections and democracy. According to Zakaria (1997), democracy was largely considered a western system until 1989 in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Empire that democracy has been fostered and normalized in more than 118 countries of the world through the holding of frequent elections. Zakaria furthered that regular elections contested by political parties have been concluded in 118 countries signifying improvement and expansion of democracy (Zakaria, 1997).

According to Table 12, 34.5% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said elections have much improved governance in Liberia while 30.9% of respondents said on an average basis, elections have improved governance in Liberia. These are also key findings that drew the attention of the researcher because the respondents could be making reference to the number and types of elections which have been held from 2005 to 2014. They may be implying that by the conduct of these elections and the steady improvements therefrom are indicative the positive role of elections.

According to Table 13, 45.5% of respondents of the total of respondents in this category said that on the average, democratic elections have promoted peace and legitimacy while 30.9% said democratic election have very much promoted peace and legitimacy. These are critical findings of the research because peace and legitimacy are two vital elements that guarantee stability. Thus, the highest response (45.5%) of the respondents signifies that the full attainment of peace and legitimacy is contingent upon the establishment of a democratic society in Liberia.

According to Table 14, 50.9% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said that the credibility of elections depend very much on the EMB while 25.5% of respondents said that the credibility of elections extremely depends on the EMB. These two findings are very much crucial to the research given the vital role the EMB has to play in the delivery of electoral services. When combine, the two findings clearly speak to the need for the EMB as the manager of electoral processes to be credible in the application of the electoral rules and engagements of all actors involved.

According to Table 15, 43.6% of respondents of the total respondents in this category said elections have engendered peace and legitimacy very much in Liberia while 30.9% said on the average, elections have engendered peace and legitimacy in Liberia. These findings are equally vital to the research since they draw a relationship between elections and the peaceful and legitimate (Stable) society. Apparently, the respondents' responses are informed by the fact that elections have not done much to establish durable peace. Fortune and Bloh (2012) clearly stated that neither Sierra Leone nor Liberia yet has genuine participatory democracy. According to them, this is largely due to the control of the state by political elites, adding that while some gains have been made the politics of exclusion that has contributed to past numerous rebellions still exist (Fortune and Bloh, 2012).

## V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Introduction*

The final chapter of the research presented the summary of the research. The chapter presented the conclusions of the research made by the researcher based on the research findings. Finally, the chapter presented several recommendations drawn from the findings of the research.

### *5.1 Summary*

The purpose of the research was to do an in-depth analysis of elections with emphasis on providing a clear understanding of democratic elections as a dimension of peace and legitimacy. The emphasis was on the electoral system of Liberia and the measure of its contribution to the promotion of peace and legitimacy in the country from 2005 to 2014. The significance of the research was to establish the extent to which democratic elections have impacted peace and legitimacy in Liberia.

The findings of the research will provide a comprehensive insight, particularly a set of recommendations to inform key policies that will improve the quality of elections for the attainment of peace and legitimacy. The researcher used qualitative research method and a descriptive design. The researcher used a research questionnaire as the principal tool for the collection of data.

The population of the research was five hundred fifty five (550) which was the population of the workforce of the National Elections Commission of Liberia and the key leaders of political parties. The sample size of the research was fifty five (55) (i. e. 35 from the National Elections Commission of Liberia and 20 from the leadership of political parties). This sampling mechanism is based on the theory of Purposive Sampling (Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling captures major variations rather than simply identifying a common core

### *5.2 Conclusions*

On the basis of the foregoing information as analyzed from the field data, the researcher concluded that in spite of frequent elections conducted from 2005 to 2014, not many Liberians understand elections within the context of the concept of democracy. Many are yet to believe or come to the full realization that there are more responsibilities of the individual citizen in a democracy beyond ballot casting.

Another major understanding from the research that requires urgent attention has to do with the structure of the electoral system and management of electoral processes. The country is still heavily reliant on international or donor support for the delivery of key electoral services. The 2005 elections were exclusively covered in terms of cost and technical expertise by the international community while the 2011 elections were covered through a cost-sharing mechanism by the government which provided 12 million for recurrent expenditure and the international community which provided 26 million for operational expenditure (Elections Report, 2011).

The researcher further realized from the data analyzed that there is no national mechanism put into place for a rolling national civic education mechanism that will deepen the understanding of the people on election and democracy related issues on a regular basis. This gap is responsible for the many reported low turnouts at the different polls. If the principle of participation must be realized, then efforts have to be made to educate and move the citizenry especially voters to partake in elections. This is important because when more people partake in elections and vote for candidates with huge numbers, such numbers strengthen the mandate of those elected and bring the elected and electorate much more closer in terms of collaboration of development and problem-solving. Critical to understand from responses analyzed, poverty and entrenched high illiteracy rates have their own unique roles they have played in contributing to the different reports of voter apathy.

Finally, the researcher would like to underscore the significant role played by the fifty five (55) respondents who were excited about the research, particularly their participation. They were very resourceful and supportive. Their cooperation, knowledge and experiences gave the research the quality it deserves.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the research, the following recommendations are advanced for relevant policy makers to take the appropriate actions to improve the quality of elections management and the strengthening of democracy which will eventually lead to the attainment of a society in Liberia with the tenets of peace and legitimacy:

1. A national mechanism has to be established by national government in the form of a civic education commission or bureau to address the information gap on various aspects of electoral processes and the whole concept of democracy. It will further deepen the understanding of citizens on their roles, rights and responsibilities. The Civic and Voter Education Toolkit (2015) provides that roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens especially voters foster participation and set the framework to hold government accountable (Liberia E. C., 2015). This action can be taken in the framework of Article 10 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia which provides for the publishing and dissemination of the Constitution and teaching its principles in institutions throughout the Republic.
2. Undertake an all-inclusive electoral law reform to ensure that the legal framework governing elections is consistent with current reality and fully applicable in today's dispensation. This will eventually increase autonomy to the National Elections Commission, in particular financial autonomy with the aim of making the Commission more effective, efficient and independent in the execution of its mandate. Ellis (2009) stated that in designing and establishing electoral administration, a structure that enables its fearless independence is essential. He said such

independence means that the electoral administration does not bend to government, political or other partisan interests; though it is worth emphasizing that threat can come not just from overt political restriction or pressure, but financial mechanisms which prevent the administration from accessing money and other resources when needed (Ellis, 2009).

3. The appointment rules for the chairperson, co-chairperson, commissioners and executive director of the National Elections Commission should be reviewed to ensure real and full independence of the executive branch. The chairperson, co-chairperson and one commissioner should be appointed for lifetime to maintain full independence and institution memory. The other four commissioners can be appointed with tenure.
4. Government must finance elections fully in keeping with its statutory responsibility. Donor support should be channeled through the government with priorities for such support identified by the NEC. This will further enhance the capacity and independence of the Commission and eventually reduce or prevent external interferences in the management and delivery of electoral services.
5. There should be robust and consistent media engagement efforts on the part of the National Elections Commission, civil society organizations and relevant government institutions for the effective delivery of electoral and other democracy related information to the public. According to the Civic and Voter Education Toolkit (2015), one of the most effective means of reaching out to the public is through the media. Regular media engagement serves as an avenue for the flow of information between the Commission and the public (Liberia E. C., 2015).
6. There is an urgent need for the government to appropriately deal with national security issues by addressing the critical human security needs of the people such as health, education, environment, economy and employment. These human security needs are critical to dealing with the age old issues of poverty, illiteracy and disease which are said to be factors that undermine democracy.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

1. What is your gender? Male ( ) Female ( )
2. What is your age? a. Below 18 ( ) b. 18 to 35 ( ) c. 36 to 65 ( ) d. Above 65 ( )
3. What is your educational level? A. Up to high school b. Undergraduate c. Graduate d. Postgraduate
4. What is your marital status? a. Single ( ) b. Married c. Divorced d. Widow/Widower
5. Is democracy a model of governance? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )
6. To what extent is democracy practiced in Liberia? a. Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) d. Very much ( ) e) Extremely ( ) f. Not at all ( )
7. How well do Liberians understand the concept of democracy as a governance model? a. Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) d. Very much ( ) e. Extremely ( ) f. Not at all ( )
8. How has democracy promoted good governance in Liberia? a. Very little ( ) c. Average ( ) d. Very much ( ) e. extremely ( ) f. Not at all ( )
9. How has democracy improved governance in Liberia? a. Very little ( ) b. Average c. Very much ( ) e. Extremely ( ) f. Not at all ( )
10. Is election linked to democracy? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )
11. Is democracy attainable without credible elections? a. Yes ( ) No ( )
12. How have elections contributed to democratic governance in Liberia from 2005 to 2014? A Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) c. Very much ( ) e. Extremely ( ) f. Not at all ( )
13. How have democratic elections promoted peace and legitimacy in Liberia from 2005-2014? a. Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) c. Very much ( ) d. Extremely ( )
14. To what extent does the credibility of elections depend upon the role of the EMB? a. Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) c. Very much ( ) d. Extremely ( ) e. Not at all ( )
15. How have elections engendered peace and legitimacy in Liberia? a. Very little ( ) b. Average ( ) c. Very much ( ) d. Extremely ( ) d. Not at all ( )

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction



**KOFI ANNAN INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION (KAICT)  
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA**

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*Motto: Convening Knowledge for Liberia's Reconstruction"*

July 17, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation, a Graduate Program of the University of Liberia builds Human resource capacity, trains men and women in the areas of Conflict Transformation, Conflict Management, Peace building and other relevant courses. It offers a Master Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Student Josiah Joekai is writing a thesis on the research topic

**"A Critical Analysis of Democratic Elections as a Dimension of Peace and Legitimacy: A Case Study of the Liberian Electoral System (2005-20014).**

We therefore ask that you kindly accord Mr. Joekai every support that will facilitate the smooth implementation of this research. Findings may be shared with you or your institution if you are interested.

Kind Regards

Sincerely Yours

Prof. T. Debey-Sayndee  
Director

Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation/University of Liberia