

Disciplining democracy: do poverty reduction strategy papers allow for less or more exclusionary democracy in Africa? By Farida KABORE

In Disciplining Democracy, structural adjustments programs are seen to produce unstable and exclusionary democracies because African countries do not have any other choice than the liberal economy. However with the poverty reduction strategy papers, the Bretton woods organizations don't decide anymore on how the funds should be spent. Instead the countries get to organize forums where civil society is invited to give their opinion on how the funds should be put to better use.

For the World Bank and the IMF, civil society's participation is a means to an end, achieving better policies, greater ownership and better implementation. It is worth noting that many NGOs took part in the consultation process especially in terms of mobilization, capacity building, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The private sector also organizing itself in ways that it will influence the process. Alongside the adoption of the poverty reduction strategy papers, countries had to adopt new policies. Some public companies were privatized in order to make them more productive. In other countries like Burkina Faso, the people feel that not much has changed and this has caused widespread protests.

In my opinion, the PRSPs have allowed for a less exclusionary democracy in Africa but it is still not enough. People need real change and for that to happen economic and social rights must be part of the definition of democracy.

Main sources: Pamzuka news, the chronicle, the daily news, Africa confidential, disciplining democracy, lefaso.net, BBC Africa.

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The project relies primarily on qualitative methodologies and draws on a broadly poststructuralist approach to power in international relations. I used relevant documentary evidence in international databases, international organizations, African newspapers and scholarly journals.



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