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Democratic Consolidation

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Abstract:

The rule of law is merely noticeable, elections and electoral processes are undermined, and most political parties thrive on electoral malpractices, political thuggery and corruption. Public institutions are not left out of the crises as they continue to be manipulated in favor of the ruling party. As such, fifteen years on after the commencement of democracy in Nigeria, the political landscape is yet to show a clear road map for the consolidation of democracy.

This research critically examines the challenges of democracy in Nigeria through the chapter structure. It also examines the nexus among issues that have remained a challenge for fourth republic democracy in Nigeria. The research notes that the present state of democracy in Nigeria gives cause for concern, as it tends towards the direction of disempowerment, military intervention in politics, or even a revolution.

Given this scenario, the research suggests that democracy is a pragmatic and veritable system of government. Also, although, Nigeria can be said to be facing a life-threatening period in her quest to sustain democracy, yet Nigeria cannot be seen to have failed completely in democracy because considering the long years of despotic military rule experienced, one can safely argue that Nigeria's democracy is working to some extent.

Keywords: Democracy, politics, colonialism, ethnicity, voting

1. Introduction

"It is as if the principal task of governance has been the frustration of public institutions in this republic. The effect has been the flowering of the politics of personality; too many so-called leaders wielding the powers of life and death and sounding like the oracle on subjects in which they lack knowledge and competence. How can our democracy be consolidated? This fourth republic looks like dead-end. We hunger for overseas direct investment, but our highways are bad, there is no steady power supply, so what is governance to them? (Abati, 2007)

According to Schmitte and Karl (1991), modern political democracy is an ideal system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for the actions in the public by the citizens, acting through their elected representatives. As such, democracy is considered an ideal system of governance across the world; from nation states in the Far East to Europe, Africa and Asia, the ideals of democracy are appreciated and adopted by States because democracy provides compensation for disgruntled citizens to challenge bad leadership. Therefore, Nigeria is left with no other choice than to move with the global trend among nations.

Notwithstanding the fact that Nigeria has adopted democracy as a system of government, so far, the challenges of democracy in Nigeria have thwarted the foundation upon which democracy is built and made the practice of democracy to appear weak and faulty. Challenges such as electoral malpractices, electoral violence, interference in governance by the ruling party, corruption, and the erosion of the ideals of democracy in public institutions and structures have left a situation where theoretical democracy is prevalent; the rulers are the gladiators in their conduct; and the electorates appear powerless as they live at the mercy of the political stalwarts (Ojire, 2006).

So far, Nigeria has not been fortunate to experience democracy in the real sense. Rather, in the last fifteen years that Nigeria has practiced democracy it has by no means gotten it right. Democracy in Nigeria is bedeviled by issues such as absence of a free and fair election, abuse of the rule of law, lack of freedom of voice as well as freedom of political participation, the refusal to accept defeat in elections by political gladiators; corruption as well as the mindset of most political office holders which seek to corner the wealth of the nation. (Adekola, 2010:1).

Colonialism, ethnicity and religious bigotry have also been identified as factors that have inhibited the growth of democratization in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1995). Other constraining factors identified by Ihonvbere (1997) include the failure of a workable federal system and the struggle over resource control.

Against the backdrop of the factors that militate against democracy in Nigeria, this work argues that a crucial source of the dilemma which Nigeria's democracy faces lies in the failure to appreciate the fact that consolidation of democracy in

Nigeria is an indispensable key to the sustainable socio-political and economic development which the state craves for. Of course, there is certainly every chance that the Nigerian state will fumble and wobble through the ship of democracy and might return safely to harbour; however, there is certainly an even greater possibility that the ship of democracy may capsize (Oyadare, 2008), and if democracy in Nigeria is allowed to breakdown, the chances of the continued existence of Nigeria as a state are slim.

One of the main attribute of democracy is that political office holders do not have automatic security of tenure but can be challenged and even displaced in accordance with the will of the people through a wide range of institutional mechanisms. This is due to the fact that the core ideals and ingredients that define democracy are participation and accountability, and as such, in a democratic system, the people determine who govern them, and those who govern them must give account of their stewardship through periodic elections (Nnoli, 2010).

Nigeria's democracy cannot be consolidated if it remains bedeviled by the current challenges it faces. As Aluko rightly mentioned in his work, Nigeria is a nation presently in a deep infectious and outrageous crisis that cries loudly and painfully for attention; like an illness whose malignant path has been clinically dissected and politically wounded, Nigeria's nascent democracy is in a deep sea (Aluko, 2009). Democracy in Nigeria can only be better with the advent of genuine political leadership and responsible citizenship which shuns corruption, promotes credible opposition, and supports accountability and transparency.

Overall, this research critically examines the challenges that inhibit the consolidation of democracy and the dimensions of the impediments confronting Nigeria's democracy presently. The research notes that the present state of democracy in Nigeria gives cause for concern as it tends towards the direction of disempowerment.

1.1. A Brief History of Nigeria's Democracy in the Fourth Republic

Nigeria is in its fourth republic and has observed four general elections; 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. According to Olatunde, the emergence of democratic Nigeria in the fourth republic began in May, 1999. It ended 16 years of consecutive military rule with the advent of the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, making him the steward of a country bedeviled by economic stagnation, a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructures and massive deterioration of most of its public institutions. So, at his assumption of office after the general elections in 1999, it was clear Nigerians needed a Nelson Mandela of Nigeria to make democracy work and provide the people with the requisite dividends peculiar to a democratic state, (Olatunde, 2000).

However, the Obasanjo led administration and subsequent political administrations in Nigeria have not succeeded in the adequate delivery of democratic dividends to the citizens as expected because the condition of political leadership in Nigeria is such that the political system gives the political rulers unfettered access to state resources which is subsequently appropriated for personal and parochial use. Also, elections and electoral processes are intended to usher in and guarantee the citizens' right to choose their representatives but the electoral process in Nigeria has remained fraught with contrived irregularities and fraudulent practices. The entire electoral process is manipulated through a plethora of ingenious and less than subtle devices such as rigging, pre-election ballot padding, ballot box disappearance and re-emergence or opponent replacement on Election Day, terrorization of voters, bribery of electoral officials, and the use of terror tactics and ferocity against opponents. (Tukumbi, 2005). So far, all the elections held since 1999 have been plagued by different controversies (Yagboyaju, 2011).

Furthermore, the Nigerian state has experienced the absence of appropriate structural formation for effective governance required to enhance the middling standard of living and the development of the Nation as a whole.

The net effect is that the typical citizen appears to have slowly lost hope in the democratic system that replaced military rule, while the rulers and supposed representatives of the people who dwell in opulence that does not conform to the present economic realities of the Nation seem much less worried (Olasebikan, 2008).

1.2. Conceptual Clarification

1.2.1. Democracy

Democracy as a concept emerged from the ancient Greek word "Demos Cratos" which means people power or rule (Sarabjit, 2003). According to Schumpeter (1947), democracy means that the people have the opportunity of choosing or refusing the men who are to govern them.

Democracy depends on the presence of people who occupy specialized authorized roles and can give legitimate commands to others (Schmitte and Karl, 1991). Democracy is perceived as a universal principle of governance which uphold high moral imperatives; accord the citizenry the right to participate in the decision-making process and adheres to the collective will and interest of the people. What differentiates democracy from other regimes are the electoral norms that determine how the political rulers gain political power and the practices that hold such rulers accountable for the political power they exercise while in office (Schmitte and Karl (1991).

In the light of the above definition, the concept of democracy can be seen as a system that involves the widest spectrum of participation, whether through elections or through the administration of the accepted policies. In other words, any government against the will of the citizen is likely to not enjoy acceptability and popular support from the people.

1.3. Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is one concept that has continued to attract the interest of political scholars since the advent of democracy. Consolidation of democracy entails securing and sustaining the practice of democratic ideals and principles so as to extend the life expectancy of democracy beyond the short term and make the democratic regime immune against the threat of authoritarian regression (Schedler, 1998).

Consolidation of democracy minimizes the likelihood of the system to fail because it is a means of regime maintenance that recognizes the political institutions of the state as the only legitimate structure for political competition. Ibrahim, in his book on Democracy in Africa postulated that democratic consolidation is the process of achieving wide and heavy legitimization to the extent that most significant political performers believe that popular rule is much better for the society than any other practical option they could picture (Ibrahim, 2007).

Nonetheless, although consolidation of democracy ensures that the practice of democracy in the state will stand the test of time, consolidation can only be achieved if those values that made democracy worthwhile are fully established in the state and majority of the citizens appreciate it. Also, democracy is consolidated when there is a credible opposition capable of replacing an incumbent government by offering an alternative outline of policies and strategies that appeal to the electorate (Kaur, 2007).

Democratic consolidation begins where the transition to democracy ends but it is a long and complex process which must be preserved (Beetham 1994; Abdullahi & Crawford 2010). In other words, the creation of democratic electoral arrangements is one thing, ensuring its sustenance over time without reversal is quite another. Not all who make the transition will be able to sustain it (Beetham 1994:160), and longevity may not necessarily mean consolidation.

Consolidation of democracy expresses itself through a fast-growing economy, a developed democratic culture, stable party processes, and the practice of the rule of law (Diamond, 2003). Democracy is consolidating when all the thespians in the polity becomes familiarized to the fact that political struggle will be resolved according to the established custom that is free and fair. Through consolidation, democracy becomes a standard deeply rooted in the people, as well as in institutional, and even psychosomatic life style of the people, as well as in cunning for attaining victory (Linz & Stephan 1996).

So far, Nigeria has recorded some progress towards consolidation of democracy in the sense that no group has made serious attempt to break up the country or to secede. However, the threat of a break up and secession on the basis of dissatisfaction of the citizens towards the political rulers in one that has cast a shadow over the nation since the eastern part of the country attempted secession in 1967 (Mercy Ete, 2011).

However, executive excesses, especially human right abuses, electoral violence, undue suppression of the opposition, bribery and corruption are all factors that weaken the legality and reliability of the political head and causes the inhabitants to retort to democracy with languor, skepticism, and occasionally, absolute insignificance (Ogunine, 2005).

1.4. The Place of This Research

Presently, Nigeria is in frantic need of steps to consolidate the democratic regime as it faces a grave political and economic catastrophe in the light of the factors that militate against democracy in Nigerian state has continued to face a rise in actions that challenge the legitimacy of political power and the sovereignty of the state. Considering the challenges of democracy in Nigeria, it is easy to link the rise in ethnic, communal and religious conflicts in Nigeria within the fifteen years to the failure of democracy to yield the benefits peculiar to an ideal democratic state.

This research seeks to consider the current challenges of democracy in Nigeria which has kept Nigeria democracy from reaching the height it ought to have reached since the return to democratic rule in 1999 till date. The work will make suggestion on factors that need to be incorporated into the Nigeria political system for the consideration of democracy in Nigeria.

This research will also argue that although Nigeria's democracy is nascent, it still has room for future growth through consolidation of democracy. It will consider contemporary issues in the development of democracy in Nigeria through the chapters of the research which is structured around the major themes of political participation, the need for credible opposition in Nigeria's democracy, separation of the government from the ruling party, accountability and transparency.

Ultimately, the objective of the research is to consider Nigeria's democracy in the fourth republic and the challenges against it in the light of political participation, the need for credible opposition in Nigeria's democracy, separation of the government from the ruling party, accountability and transparency and proffer suggestion to consolidate as the way forward.

2. Political Participation

For democracy to survive in any state, the citizens must be vigorously elaborated in the political route for the selection and appointment of their political leaders. The participation of the citizens must be perceived as active because democracy is measured through public participation; the degree of degree of public participation in a state provides a means of drawing an inference as to the nature of democracy in such state.

In this chapter, public participation in the politics of a state will be considered as a crucial factor required for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. The various by which Nigerian citizens have participated in the election of political leaders within the last fifteen years of practicing participation such as voting, public campaign by political parties, direct action, political violence, and collective action will also be dissected.

2.1. Defining Political Participation

The phrase 'political participation' describes the voluntary routine by which members of a modern society select their rulers or leader's; directly or indirectly for the creation of public policy (Koujoulas, 1982). Participation is a word that is almost certainly more utilized among scholars of politics as well as practitioners than member of the public. It is a wide term that requires dissection; and through dissection, it is observed to comprise a large number of routines which includes voting, writing to a member of the parliament, getting through to a neighborhood authority workplace, canvassing assistance for a political party, turning up at a public meeting to protest certain issues, signing a petition or joining a pressure group (Parry and Moyser, 1983).

Accordingly, based on the routines that make up political participation, this work observes that political participation is composed a various political activity that differs tremendously in the effort and time required. Also, the expertise and information needed to perform them and the conflict that generate there from differ in characteristics and nature. Public political participation in Nigeria has been considered as an infinitely one-dimensional activity on one-hand as well as a multi-dimensional activity on the other. Milbrath suggest that participants can be classified into the indifferent (this is regarded as one- third of the Nigerian population), and the listeners (around 60%); leaving a meager amount of the population who are considered as the 'gladiators' that carry out a wide range of political measures (Milbrath 2008:16-22)

On the other hand, the extreme range of participatory political activities suggest an additional hypothesis that is just as plausible. In other words, it could possibly be the case that various types of political actions attract different kinds of individuals. Some are prepared to participate in political routines that are conflicting whilst other people are psychological unwilling to participate. Therefore, it is typical in political parties to find supporters that refuse to canvass support for the party by the doorway but are very much happy to support the party by involvement in behind the scene political activities such as privately donating funds to the party, engaging in research on relevant strategies for political campaigns, and preparing envelopes to be sent out for party publicity purposes.

Based on the above analysis, political participation can be perceived in the light of having a multi-dimensional appearance. Sidney, (2009) in her book on political culture, demonstrated that classifying political activities as participatory needed a structure which was typical to different societies and cultures. Consequently, several modes of participation such as voting, campaigning for parties, communal exercise (which consisted of supportive activity together with citizens contacting on sociable problems) are classified as distinct from each other.

Oke (2008) opined that political participation can also be an informal political status quo that is found in a group that may not necessarily be a political party per-se. This means that the activities of members of political organization may qualify as political participation. Nonetheless, considering Oke's train of thought, the Nigeria political terrain is inundated with various political organizations with divergent political affiliations and interest which ultimately creates a lack of unity.

Democracy in Nigeria according to Oke (2010) implies that the people have an opportunity to take in the part in the political decision making and other political processes that bring political leaders to power. The ideal democracy repudiates unpredictability and totalitarianism, reverse the consent of the governed and protects the individuality and value of every human being (Ake, 1991). Democracy, encompasses equal opportunity for almost all people, fundamental popularity of the sovereign, representativeness, majority rule, recognition of consensus on basic issues, along with periodic elections (Oke, 2005). For democracy to evolve sound governance, it has been free and participatory.

Notwithstanding the centrality of elections to democracy in a state, public participation in the political decision-making process goes beyond election. In this sense, political participation by the public in a democracy goes beyond the election process in terms of voting; it entails fairness in political struggle personified in the idea of a simple and unspoilt antagonism. In a copious democracy, the electoral dome is available, and the playing field is practically open. Consequently, the public freely engages in various political actions such as voting, seeking information on candidates and the electoral process, engaging in political conversations, attending political conferences, raising financial donations to political parties, staging strikes and demonstrations, and negotiating with the political leaders. Political participation also involves proper enrolment in a special event, canvassing for and submitting your votes, speech writing and speech pattern making employed in campaigns and contending for public and party offices (McClosky, 1968).

2.2. Types of Political Participation

2.2.1. Voting

Voting is one of the most important aspects of political participation in almost any democracy. Voting and voting pattern in a state is vital for the assessment of political participation because it is through voting that vital statistics on the level of the public's participation can be measured. An examination of the number of voters and the voting pattern provides one with an understanding as to the degree of public participation in democracy (Gwyn, 2009).

Public participation through voting enhances the policy making process in the state because legitimacy is conferred on the candidate that gains political power through voting. Also, the citizens feel a sense of belonging and can identify with the policies of the political leaders. Government strategies and plans for development are also likely to be sustainable once the leaders are chosen by the people through the voting process. Similarly, where a voting pattern is established and becomes popular government policies and plans are likely to become subject of referendum and the ideas and viewpoint of the minorities will be considered in the decisions, plans and policies of the government in power. Overall, unfavourable policies and plans of the political leadership in a democratic setting is contested and protested against through voting (Egwu, 2007).

The diagram below provides an overview of voting and the voting pattern in Nigeria over the last fifteen years of Nigeria's return to democracy.

Year	Voters Turn Out	Total Vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age Population	Population	Invalid Votes
2011	28.66%	21,074,621	73,528,040	25.80%	81,691,751	155,215,573	
2007	19.55%	15,056,678	61,567,056	50.67%	71,004,867	131,856,567	
2003	49.32%	29,967,171	60,856,033	46.60%	64,319,246	129,956,966	3.20%
1999	84.81%	49,136,283	57,968,986	93.07%	52,789,786	108,532,356	2.40%

Table 1: Parliamentary Elections

Year	Voters Turn Out	Total Vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age Population	Population	Invalid Votes
2011	58.68%	39,465,565	73,527,060	48.32%	81,691,751	155,215,575	3.19%
2007	57.49%	35,397,484	61,567,046	49.85%	71,004,867	131,857,731	
2003	69.08%	42,019,786	60,833,044	65.33%	64,319,241	129,934,911	6%
1999	52.26%	30,280,052	57,985,945	57.36%	52,792,781	108,253,899	1.40%

Table 2: Presidential Elections

2.2.1.1. Figure 1 Table 1 (Idea: 2012) Voters Turnout Data for Nigeria

This table represents the voter's turnout in elections held over the last four political dispensation beginning from 1999. Considering the data of parliamentary and presidential elections in Nigeria, it is very clear that the turnout rate fluctuates, and there has been a growing rate of low turnout at the different elections held so far. For instance, consider the turnout rate at the first election that ushered in the fourth republic in 1999, and also elections from 1999 up to the last one held in 2011; in the case of the parliamentary elections, there was an increase in the voters registration but the number of those that voted for the election was low which means that the turnout for registration of voters was high but the actual number of people that voted was low. Therefore, based on the data on parliamentary elections, it can be said that in terms of participation during election, public participation has been low. As regards the presidential elections, an observation of the data reveals that there is a clear difference in the voting pattern at parliamentary and presidential election because registration of voters and voter's turnout was quite high at the presidential elections compared to that of parliamentary elections.

Overall, in the light of voter's turnout and voting at election, it can be said that voting as an aspect of political participation is yet to be fully embraced in Nigeria. According to Bola.

"Nigeria's election in terms of turnout is not good, the recent low turnout of voters in election exercises in Nigeria should give us a cause of concern if our democracy is to be consolidated" (Bola, 2011).

As such, for Nigeria's democracy to be consolidated, the people need to participate more in the voting process.

2.2.2. Campaign

Party campaign is very important in electoral participation. Mazi defined it as an organized effort which seeks to influence the decision-making process within a specific group during election period (Mazi, 2006). In democracies, political campaign often refers to electoral campaign which involves four particular activities:

- Fund raising
- Canvassing
- Clerical work
- Political rally

Fund raising, canvassing, clerical work and political rallies are very important in an electoral system and so far, the process has featured prominently in the 4th Republic of Nigeria's democracy.

However, political campaigns in Nigeria have been inundated with issues of bribery, violence and political strife in most cases. For instance, during the 2007 elections in Nigeria, prior to the commencement of the campaign period, seasoned observers correctly predicted that since "various strong figures calculated their best requirements and move their factional alignments, enormous quantities of largesse will change hands and some of the players will most likely turn to force" (Sklar et al. 2006, 108).

In reality, during the 2007 election period, the position of Sklar, et al was observed in the nasty feud which broke out between the then President, Olusegun Obasano and the Vice President Atiku Abubakar, an aspirant successor. The feud dominated most of the election campaign period. There were a number of malicious lawsuits, disturbing alliances between opportunistic individuals, and last minute political affiliations. Also, political factions in parties were created, leading to a state of chaotic ambiance of uncertainty.

Based on the malfeasance observed in previous political campaign periods prior to elections held in Nigeria from 1999 till date, it is doubtful whether Nigeria would achieve a period of excellent campaign in 2015.

2.2.3. Direct Action

Direct action refers to activities undertaken by individuals, or groups to achieve political, economic, or social goals outside of normal socio-political channels (Julie, 1997). Direct action can include non-violent and violent activities which target persons, groups, government policies or plans deemed offensive to the direct-action participant.

Examples of non-violent direct action often called nonaggressive confrontation or civil resistance include slowdowns, office occupation, sit-ins, sabotage, graffiti, and activism. Violent direct actions comprise assets demolition, mugging and assassination. An example of a direct action in recent times is the project; occupy Nigeria which began on the second of January, 2012 (Solara, 2012) because of the Nigeria government's attempt at the removal of fuel subsidy. Solara explained that the fuel subsidy made the people bring out their aggressive nature of activism and champion their cause to stop the removal of fuel subsidy (Solara, 2012).

Direct action is a type of action that the individuals involved does of their own accord either by themselves or with others. They can perform the action violently or peacefully and they can choose to perform the action against persons or property. The main thing to keep in mind however is that the permission of the authority is usually not sought.

The attitude and behavior people put up during an election can be considered as direct actions, and it could be positive actions such as circulating petitions and attending a meeting, convention participation and participating in protest. Other direct actions which could be perceived as negative include barricading traffic, joining political strikes, engaging in a boycott as well as political violence in other to win an election for a political seat. These negative actions may be perceived as an unlawful action in some societies, but in reality, it is a distinct form of direct action in the Nigerian political context.

Therefore, democracy in Nigeria is said to be slowly but surely inching closer to an early grave because of the negative direct actions undertaken by the citizens. The general notion appears to be that Nigeria is close to the precipice because of the growing presence of a tradition that promotes the active participation of citizens in negative direct actions during election period.

2.2.4. Political Violence

The phrase political violence has been used generically in two strands of research. In the first instance, political violence is seen like a sub-set of exercise in a bigger political conflict. Based on this background, electoral violence continues to be studied in the trajectory of ethnic or community hostility in divided cultures such as Kenya, Sri-Lanka and India. In the second instance, political violence is seen as peculiar to election period based on the idea that aggression has a tendency to be aroused during election period (Hoglund, 2006). Also, because the result of an election determines such issues as distribution of power, and in a place like Nigeria where political offices are quite attractive in terms of financial gains, people are likely to be agitated and overly anxious during election period.

Going by the ideals of democracy, political violence ought not to occur in a democratic state. Yet, recently, violence has been linked to elections particularly in the supposed "emerging democracies". This development continues to draw the attention of political scholars simply because political violence in a democracy appears amazing as well as scandalous in a structure that is by description non-violent (Reif, 2005:1).

Political violence must be considered because the use of physical force is common and cannot be waived off in the discourse on political participation in Nigeria. In fact, political violence in Nigeria is so peculiar that the linkage between political violence and democracy in Nigeria can only be fully understood within the background, history, as well as character of the Nigerian state. Political violence is a common occurrence in the Nigerian political landscape and the outcome have been disastrous to nationwide development. It has led to death of innocent individuals along with a terrific loss of properties. Political violence has been a disruptive tool in Nigeria and has been used as a way of contesting for political power.

Okolie (2005) opines that social science literature is replete with several strands of ideas and answers on the deepening occurrence of electoral fraud in Nigeria's politics. However, these types of motives are a misconception that melt in the boiling container of the personage and parasitic nature of the Nigerian state" (Okolie, 2005).

Historically, the nature of political power in Nigeria is such that when attained by a particular individual or group, it is largely utilized as a device for reaching personal, sectional, class or primordial goal. Ake (1996) notes that the immensity of state

power and its proneness to acting with impunity in the past, ruled out the politics of moderation and created a politics of lawlessness and battle for appropriation. Similarly, Ibrahim, (notes that the Nigerian state has a patrimonial character in which the distinction between the community and private domain is blurred when mixed together with political power which has turned out to be a major supplier of wealth (Jega, 2011).

Political violence in Nigeria also includes political assassinations. The assassination of certain political figures like Chief Bola Ige, Marshall Harry, and Adeteru Olagbaju (Tell, 2004) in Nigeria has remained a puzzle to this date. One of the effects of political violence on democracy is that it scares qualified citizens from political participation because of politically motivated killings.

It is equally vital to recognize that political violence may be a social disorder which automatically reacts to a particular political problem because since the commencement of the fourth republic, all the election help up till 2011 have been flawed by issues of electoral fraud and rigging and none of these elections conducted up till 2011 have been violence in Nigeria is not a consequence of electoral fraud.

2.2.5. Collection Action

Collection action is a brand of political action performed during a political process. It is a term often used to bridge the gap or divided between convention and unconventional spheres of political action. That is, collective action is the action that bridges the gap between individual direct actions such as voting, and campaign activities on the one side and direct actions that involve protest on the other hand. The product is a brand of political action that can perhaps best be described as collection action. It consists principally of working through organised or through informal group or actions to raise an issue, such as pressure group or political movement (Moran 1985:141-211). In collective actions, single issue group whose purpose is to challenge the traditional assumption of policy maker on democratic principles mobilizes public opinion through dramatic gestures of political protest duly recorded and broadcast by the media (Dalton 1999:61).

For instance, the tradition to democracy in 1999 witnessed heightened ethnic tension, sectarian violence and ethno-nationalist agitations for devolution of power from the centre to the regions and a renewed call for renegotiation of the basis for statehood. There were four selected movement chosen to show basis of statehood. There were four selected movements chosen to show regional variety in the ethno-nationalist movement in Nigeria. Whereas, MOSOP (Ogoni), Afenifere (Yoruba) and the Ohanaze Ndigbo (Ibgo) reflected ethnic interest and affiliation, the Arewa consultative forum (ACF) reflected a regional movement that embrace all Northerners, irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation. Most of the selected movement started as socio-cultured groups but later became involved in political mobilization to redress perceive injustice against their own people.

2.3. The Importance of Political Participation and How It Has Affected Nigeria's Democracy in the Fourth Republic

As with most third world countries, there have been no systematic studies of Nigerian political participation even though most observers are convinced that it is one of the most important causes of the fluid, unstable politics (Ake,2003). Therefore, all one can do through this work is outline the broad processes that make up political participation in Nigeria.

Considering that political participation is the process of getting people to participate in the political process of governance in their state, it is readily seen why it should be of significant important for any developing democracy. For any democracy to work political participation must be open to the public and remain an open playing field for all. Since 1999, the Nigerian population has participated I four general elections and from the table displayed above, the people cannot be said to have scored too low in terms of voting as a form of participation. However, there is need for serious commitment on the side of the people to participate in politics irrespective of the challenges posed by negative political actions such as electoral malpractices and political violence (Godwin, 2012:22)

Also, considering that political leaders are often responsible for placing issues on the agenda through policy formulations, they must be made recipients of pressure from the people through mass action such as strikes, protest march and if necessary, riots against issues as unemployment, arbitral hike in price of petroleum products as well as discriminatory practices. Although one may argue as to whether participants in mass actions actually get their demands from the political leaders, especially in Nigeria, where such actions result in innocent protesters getting tear-gassed, short, and sometimes, killed by the police without care for the people they should be protecting (Arowolo and Aluko, 2011); nevertheless, the citizens must find the will to participate in the affairs of the State because in a democracy, the State belongs to everyone and not a selected few.

Also, it can be argued that democracy in Nigeria can only thrive if there are ample guarantees and opportunities for people to express themselves politically either as individuals or as part of groups. Nonetheless, Nigeria has a mixed record on opportunities for people to express themselves politically as civil liberties of all sorts have frequently been honored n the breach despite the effort of politicians at bullying their opponents and denying them the effective right to vote or express their opinions (Hoagland, 2006).

Also, despite the challenges of political violence, participation in Nigeria's democracy should not be confused with that of some extremely ruthless democracy the world has seen in this century such as the regime in Syria, Iran or Zimbabwe. So far, during elections in Nigeria, the press has remained reasonably free and has frequently criticized governments and their policies. Many interest groups have remained in existence, although, as with the press, those critical of the elections itself were

often suppressed. Secondly, there are sharp differences between political participation in rural and urban Nigeria. If the anthropologists are to be believed, there is little ongoing political life in the countryside other than during election campaign (Olamusa, 2010). There are times, however, when major protests break out in the countryside. For instance, the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic group have been engaged in months of near-civil-war over ethnic differences and access to the oil wealth of the Niger Delta region (Duruji, 2012).

2.4. Conclusion

Political participation has been around ever since the inception of democracy. According to Koujoulas, (1982) participation is the voluntary routines action which members of a given State use in selecting and electing their political leaders. It has been argued that political participation is very important in every democracy and it plays a major role in consolidating democracy. Nonetheless, the negative factors that influence political participation in Nigeria has limited the Nation's effort at the use of democracy as a key to her development.

Nonetheless, since Nigeria's democracy is still a work in progress, positive political activities that promote participation such as party campaigning, fund raising, canvassing for election vote and active involvement in political rally which has become quite common since the 2007 general elections in Nigeria should be encouraged and promoted. Also, direct actions should not be left out in terms of participation. Direct action such as walk-out at political forum petition writing, staging walk-out creates a distinction between conventional participation and protest participation and should be encouraged.

3. The Need for Credible Opposition in Nigeria's Democracy

"Sincerely speaking, the only gain we have got in the past fifteen years of democracy in Nigeria is simply that we have had a civilian regime, that is it" (Akuta, 2010)

Dolo (2006) defines opposition parties as "partisan political institutions that are intentionally designed to temper the ruling party's excesses while pursuing both legislative and presidential offices". An opposition party according to Egbewole and Muhtar (2010) is expected to engage in constant criticisms of governmental policies which are against the majority. It is also expected to scrutinize carefully the manner in which policies are administered and keep the possibility of alternative legislative policies and administrative practices constantly in the view of the electorate.

Nigeria's democracy is a multi-party system so it needs a credible opposition so that if the electorate is unhappy with government policies or perhaps, seeks an improvement in the quality of leadership, there is an alternative political party which can take political power from the ruling party (Alex, 2003). Alternatively, political participation in the form of direct and collective action can be used to remove in unpopular political leader and the people can vote credible candidates from the opposition party into power.

However, so far, the precise impact and importance of opposition parties in a democracy is yet to be established in the context of Nigeria's democracy. For instance, in Nigeria, one party has been in power since 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule, and that party has remained in power till date. Although Nigeria operates a multi-party system, the People's Democratic Party's (PDP) has remained in dominance of the presidency and has held on to majority of the political offices at Federal, State and Local Government level. If the PDP wins the presidential seat in the next two years when the country goes for another round of elections, the PDP will have held the presidency for 15 years! Not even in the advanced democracies where good ascendancy is the norm will a party have stayed in power for that long (Arowolo, 2012).

Scholars of Nigeria politics maintain that never in the history of Nigeria's democracy, not even in its "52 years of independence, has the opposition defeated to ruling party in any presidential election" (Ikelegba, 2012). The fact can be equally observed in elections for parliamentary seats because if Nigeria's democracy has a credible opposition, why would the ruling party win seventy-two seats in the Senate out of one hundred and sixty seats in the House of Representatives, leaving all the opposition parties with a mere one hundred and fifteen seats to scramble for? The PDP has won most of the political offices open for elections than any other political party in Nigeria making the public t wonder if perhaps there is no resistance (Nnanna, 2011).

Ordinarily, in a democratic setting, a unified and vibrant opposition would ensure that a questionable party like the PDP finds it difficult to return to power after its first term in office regardless of the power of incumbency available at such ruling party; yet the PDP has ruled for the entire thirteen years since the return of democracy to Nigeria.

According to Lawal, this is because democracy in the Nigerian State is such that the opposition is weak and most of the citizenry remain docile, thus creating an unbroken run of disputed electoral victories for the PDP since 1999 (Lawal, 2011).

This chapter considers significant factors that militate against the advancement of opposition in Nigeria's democracy. Issues such as the absence of an independent electoral umpire, a sound spending review during electioneering, the absence of internal democracy in Nigerian political parties and the absence of an independence and reliable judiciary system in Nigeria will be examined as factors that stand against a credible opposition in Nigeria's democracy.

3.1. An Independent Electoral Umpire

In order to achieve credible opposition in Nigeria, the electoral body must be truly independent. In Nigerian, the electoral body in place for the conduct of election into political offices in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which is charged with the sole responsibility of running elections in Nigeria.

However, the electoral body has failed to live up to its name as an independent body (Okolie, 2005). Some of the fundamental issues that have been raised against INEC as an independent electoral umpire is that presently, INEC is not democratized. All the key appointments into INEC are made by the President; it is the president that appoints the chairman, the members of the board, and the Resident Electoral Commissioners. The executive Arms of government, also led by the president, approve the funds that are made available to the commission for the performance of its functions. Therefore, considering the level of influence wielded by the executive arm of government in respect to the activities of INEC, it is expressly clear that INE is not an independent umpire; it will always dance to the dictates of the president and his political party because, he who pays the piper dictates the tune (Godwin, 2008).

Onuoha in his book on Issues of Nigeria Election 1999 to present, identified some reasons why the electoral commission is incompetent, he argued that the chairman and the twelve commissioners' and thirty-seven resident electoral commissioners are appointed by the Federal Government, so this makes them easily susceptible to manipulation by the president and the ruling party. Similarly, Anifowose posits that the positions in INEC is rendered important by the fact that the president's political party which is the PDP has a large majority in the parliament and can secure his wishes (Onuoha, 2011).

Also, another reason why the electoral body is weak and incompetent is traceable to the tenure of the INEC chairman and commissioners. Job security is generally attached to the outcome of the election as they are likely to lose their office if they mess up the process. Unlike the electoral body in Ghana where the chair of the electoral commission and his two deputies have security of tenure just like that of the justices of the court of appeal and cannot be removed arbitrarily until retirement age of seventy, the office of the chairman and electoral commissioners in Nigeria last for just five years and they can be removed by the president on flimsy grounds (Agyeman, Shola, 2010).

Drawing from the above assertion, INEC can be seen as a partial arbiter that cannot create a level playing ground for all comers in the electoral process. So far, there have been instances where INEC decided to disqualify candidates on the eve of the elections, contrary to court orders (Paul, 2007). This was the case with opposition gubernatorial candidates in Adamawa, Anambra and Kogi State, where the opposition candidates (ANPP and AC) were excluded from the electoral process at a short notice by INEC. Also, substitution of candidates who won party primaries was another major issue in the 2007 election (Adebayo, Omotola, 2007).

Dirk Van Den and Daniel Omoweh both international observers in the 2011 election submitted in their respective reports that the election was marred by enormous loopholes because the results of the elections were bitterly dubious and dissented in an extraordinary routine (Dirk, 2011). Their position appears to have been confirmed by the volume of electoral appeal which arose from the 2011 election. The presidential election had eight appeals, the gubernatorial; one hundred and five, the senatorial elections witnessed one hundred and fifty appeals. While the house of representative elections entertained three hundred and thirty-one appeals, six hundred and fifty-six appeals inundated the elections into state house of assembly (Aiyede, 2011).

3.2. The Need for a Sound Spending Review during Electioneering

For Nigeria's democracy to improve, there has to be a review of how political parties spend money during campaign for election, the past election has shown that much money is spend in the cause of canvassing for votes. During the 2011 general election, the PDP was reported to have spent N2.241, 693, 156 billion, an amount that is almost equal to a state allocation by the Federal Government (Punch Newspaper, 2011). This leaves the opposition financially weak in terms of fund to compete against the ruling party during election and ultimately, a playing ground that is neither free nor fair is created.

In any democracy, the movement of cash into politics ought to be monitored because unfettered political spending increases the chances of political thuggery, stealing and corruption, and it fails to guarantee that candidates and political parties compete on equal terms (Wale, 2007). Similarly, Ewing observes that political competition under unregulated political financing would be like 'inviting two people to participate in a race with one participant turning up with a bicycle, and the other with a sports car (Ewing: 1988).

The figure below illustrates the use and sources of funds for House of Assembly and Senate Elections between 1999 – 2011.

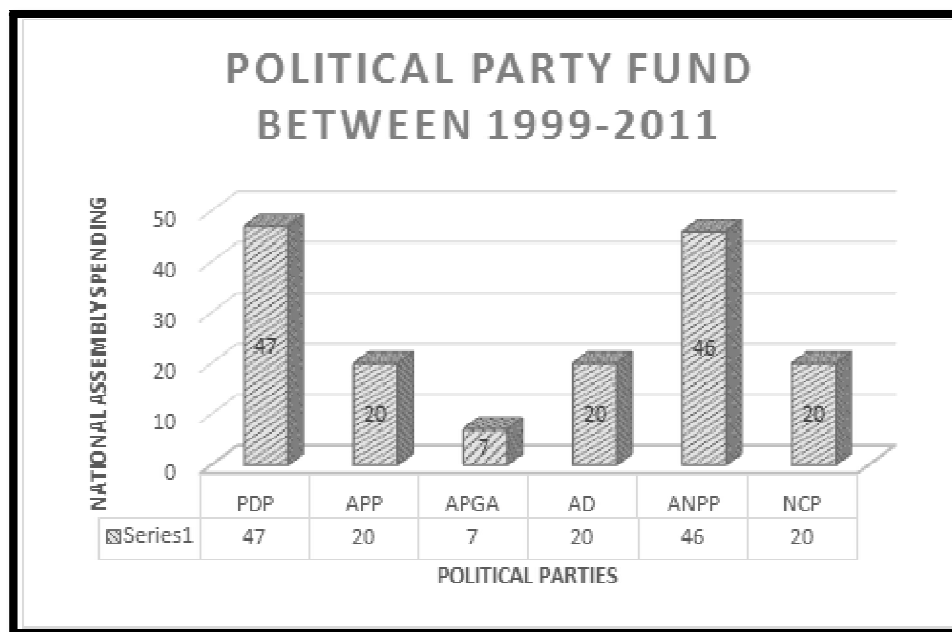


Figure 1: A Graphic Chat on Election Income and Party Fund (Alamosa, 2009)

Based on the figure above, 47% of respondents indicate that money leads to help win elections, while 20% of respondents indicate that money leads to bribery and corruption as votes are sold and bought, and the other 7% of respondents point out that money helps to boost the popularity of the candidates.

Furthermore, 46% of the Senators opined that funding of political campaigns should be the responsibility of political parties, while 20% held that funding for campaigns should be sourced from other means apart from government fund. (Bola, 2010). Restrictions on how much parties spend on their activity, such as election campaign are based on the perception that the non-regulation of funds results in the inability to guarantee a level playing field in the competition for power.

3.3. Internal Democracy in Political Parties

For Nigeria's democracy to be consolidated, democracy has to be practiced internally by political parties because lack of internal democracy within the political parties is a threat to the consolidation of Nigeria's nascent democracy. Party primaries held prior to the last election clearly show that Nigeria political parties do not apply the norms of democracy in their internal affairs. For instance, prior to the last elections, most political parties failed to open up political positions to all party members who were eligible and wished to run for offices. Particular candidates were selected and imposed on party members without following due process, and in some cases, certain candidates allegedly won via so called consensus option. Also, allegations of corruption, favoritism and nepotism seem to be an issue in almost all the political parties.

For there to be credible opposition in Nigeria's democracy, parties should allow members practice democracy in all ramifications. Internal democracy in the party implies that the best candidate with popular support is allowed to represent the political party at any general election if they really wish to create a solid opposition.

3.4. An Independent and Reliable Judicial System in Nigeria

For Nigeria's democracy to be truly consolidated it has to have an independent judiciary because to promote credible opposition in Nigeria's democracy, the judiciary has to administer its duties without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. Although the judiciary is the watchman in Nigeria's democracy, its effective interpretation of the law appears to be threatened by corruption in the judiciary. In considering the role of the judiciary in general elections conducted in Nigeria between 1999 and 2011, one must examine the nature of the influx of aggrieved candidates into the courts for the resolution of electoral disputes and the manner in which such cases have been resolved by the judiciary.

One of such case is the electoral petition of Dingyadi against Wamakko of Sokoto State. This case is considered as one of the longest election petition ever entertained by the judiciary in the Northern Part of Nigeria because it lasted for three years and eight months. The dramatis personae were INEC; Alhaji Aliyu Wamakko, the Governor of Sokoto State; Alhaji Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi, candidate for the Democratic People's Party (DPP) and the Sokoto State Governorship and Legislative Houses Election Tribunal (ThisDay Newspaper, 2010). Alhaji Wamakko contested for the governorship election of Sokoto State under two platforms of the PDP and All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), he had secured the nomination of the ANPP with Senator Bello Gada as his running mate, but shortly after, without relinquishing his candidature of ANPP he flew the PDP flag as its governorship candidate. Election was held and INEC declared Alhaji Wamakko the winner of the election in spite of allegations of electoral rigging made against him. The court of Appeal, showing a deep appreciation of fact as

presented by Dingyadi held that Wamakko was 'guilty of non-compliance with the provisions of the Election Act and the Constitution and no Court of Law or reasonable tribunal will close its eye to such flagrant abuse of privileges as arrogant exhibited by the Respondents in this case' (ThisDay Newspaper, 2010). It therefore nullified the election but did not make an order consequentially disqualifying both Alhaji Wamakko and the PDP from participating in the fresh election. This prompted Alhaji Dingyadi to seek for court order to prevent Alhaji Wamakko and the PDP from participating in the fresh election. However, before the supreme court could adjudicate on the matter, a fresh election was conducted consequent upon the order of the Court of Appeal and Alhaji Wamakko was declared the winner, and after much time has been wasted, at the end of the day, Alhaji Wamakko was still declared winner of the election by the Supreme Court.

Another case in questions is that of Dr. Chris Ngige and Chief Peter Obi in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Peter Obi, the then governorship candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) filed his case on the 16th day of May, 2003 challenging the declaration of Dr. Chris Ngige as the winner of the gubernatorial election held in Anambra State. The Election tribunal took more than two years to deliver judgment, but the judgment was not favourable to Chief Peter Obi and he appealed against it. The case came up for hearing on the 23rd day of January, 2006 and judgment was delivered on the 15th day of March 2006. By this time, Peter Obi has waited for 35 months to receive justice for his stolen mandate (Obinna, 2006).

The Western part of Nigeria has also had its share delayed resolution of electoral disputes as seen in the case of Fayemi and Oni and the case of Aregbesola and Oyinlola. In both cases, the judiciary did not fail to a large extent as at the end, judgment was given in Favour of Fayemi and Aregbesola on the ground that they won the election but the ruling party rigged the election to favour its party's candidate.

Nonetheless, drawing from the above cases, it is clear that the judiciary has failed to some extent to act as watchman for Nigeria's nascent democracy.

3.5. Conclusion

So far, this chapter has argued that for Nigerian's democracy to be consolidated there must be a resilient opposition, and that some factors must be considered in order to achieve a strong and credible democracy. Such factors include an independent electoral umpire, a sound spending review during electioneering, the practice of internal democracy by political parties and an independent and reliable judiciary system. Also, notwithstanding the fact that Nigeria's democratic system is a multi-party democracy, the same party which is the PDP has won all the presidential elections, so that means that it is either there has been no opposition or the opposition lack the credibility and will to challenge the ruling party.

This chapter therefore posits that for there to be an independent electoral umpire, the executive arm of government has to back out of funding INEC and the appointment of the chairman and other members of the board so that they are not made answerable to the president and his party during election.

Another factor highlighted in this chapter is the review of spending during election, Nigerian political parties and politicians in the last 15 years have spent far too much money just to win elections. For instance, in 2011, the ruling party (PDP) spent over N2.2 Billion naira just for the presidential election which is just like the GDP of a small country like the Republic of Chad, therefore leaving the opposition with life fund to spend during election times. Therefore, it is suggested that there should be a review with respect to the funding available for political parties during election periods.

Overall, this chapter suggest that the following factors should be considered as a means of promoting a credible opposition. Firstly, the selection of the chairman of INEC, the Resident Commissioner and other members of the board should be solely undertaken in the same way judges are appointed, and allocation of funds for INEC should be made independent of the executives. Nonetheless, this question raises a salient point which is based on the fact that the NJC is not totally independent of the executive arms of government, it depends on allocation and funding from the executive and although it nominates judges for appointment, the executive through the presidency has to accept the nomination and forward such nomination to the legislature for onward ratification. So, at the end of the day, the NJC is not completely free from the exercise of power by the executive.

Also, registration of voters should be an on-going exercise that runs throughout the year until at least, a month before each election. Any person who registers multiple times should be prosecuted when caught, and where a voter fraudulently registers more than once, there should be a mechanism put in place to prevent that voter from voting more than once during the election.

When all these factors are put in place, the chances are that the oppression of the opposition by the ruling party is currently prevalent will disappear over time, and elected office holders will become more responsive to the electorate as a result of the strong opposition they face.

4. Separation of Government from the Ruling Party

"Africa's Democracy still lacks the capability to remove itself from the Federal Government along with the ruling party" (Wall, 2009)

4.1. Introduction

Political Parties are meant to be the "makers of democracy and by all standards, one of the most excellent and distinguishing aspects of a democratic government. Indeed, democracy is almost impossible without the presence of political

parties as political parties produces order for political practice by regularizing the procedure for leadership succession and for assimilation of brand new organizations into the political process (Huntington, 1968). Perhaps, the nature of political parties as a precursor to democracy prompted Katz to state that:

“Modern Democracy is party democracy; the political institutions and practices that are the essence of democratic government in the Western perspective were the creations of political parties as well as would be unthinkable without them” (Katz, 1980)

Therefore, considering the nature of political parties as a necessary element in a democratic government, this chapter will consider whether there should be a distinction between the Nigeria Government and the affairs and operations of the ruling political party in order for democracy to be consolidated. From this chapter, it will be deduced that the foundation of any government in a democratic setting anchors on the growth of an effective party process but the government must maintain its individuality as a structure independent of the ruling party. In other words, although the political party performs some specific roles in democracy, such as creating styles for the exercise of authority which could also serve as example to the opposition but is by no means implies that the party should control the exercise of government authorities because of its status as the ruling party (Adebayo, 2008).

This chapter argues that for democracy to be consolidated in Nigeria there is the need for a whole new political civilization in Nigeria's democracy wherein there is an obvious distinction between state institutions and those of the ruling party. Notwithstanding the fact that that Nigeria has ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) which promote the distinction of the State from the ruling party (Chapter 2, Article 2 of the African Charter, 2007), the situation where the ruling party uses government's resource to campaign and run its political activities still plays out. A recent case, for instance is the 2011 elections, where the ruling party obtained donations from members of its party in government. State Governors that were members of the ruling party and qualified for re-election, but also donated public funds to the party. With access to the treasury, the ruling party took optimal benefit of its incumbency position in the 2011 elections and the Government allotted about N122.9 billion for the conduct of the elections by INEC. Of course, the fund was used to conduct the elections, but exactly how was the elections observed by the international body after spending that amount of cash? It was termed as unscrupulous, and not free nor fair. As identified by the Human Right Watch (2011), “the April elections were heralded as among the fairest in Nigeria history, but they are also being among the bloodiest”. After the election, just as people prepared to celebrate the good results of the election, unforeseen violence gripped most states in the Northern part of the country on account of distraught politicians and cohorts that were unhappy with the election results.

This chapter is divided into sub topics which dwell on factors that will promote the creation of a distinction between the government and the ruling political party. The factors include the promotion of electoral reforms, promotion of the formation of a unity government, enhancing the dissemination of information and communication process in government owned media and training the security forces on attitude toward the electorate and members of the political parties that are outside the ruling party.

4.2. The Promotion of Electoral Reforms

Chapter 4, Article 4 of the ACDEG enjoins State Parties to commit themselves to the promotion of democracy, the principle of the rule of law and human rights. Nigeria is a signatory to that Charter and the government is aware of the significance of electoral reforms as a means of consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

Accordingly, since election relates to the involvement of the people in the act of electing their leaders, and it is a means of direct participation in governance, electoral reforms must permit through all the activities before, during, and after elections. It must also cover the legal and constitutional framework of elections, the registration of political parties, party promotions as well as funding, the activities of the electoral agencies, the media, security agencies, and the government in power.

The need for electoral reforms cannot be over emphasized against the backdrop of election rigging by politicians because where election dispute arises, it is the people's business and welfare that suffer and remain neglected until the air of uncertainty clears away.

The desire for election reform in the country is a necessity for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria because as Adele, a writer with the Guardian Newspaper, Nigeria, rightly pointed out, ‘our electoral laws appear to be outdated as well as ill-equipped to effectively deal with electoral concerns, which means that the very basis of our democracy is really threatened’ (Adele, 2009). Uloma also rightly pointed out that democracy ought to be about governance and service to the people, not the fulfillment of desperate aspirations of politicians that are centred on the attainment of victory at the polls by all means, consequently leaving our democracy variable to the military again (Uloma, 2010).

To achieve electoral reform, Nigeria has to put in place a democratic method that maintains a precise list of eligible voters and a method that encourages every qualified voter to participate effectively in the election process. There must also be a non-partisan supervision of the elections by unbiased observers to attest to fairness or its absence during the election. There is a need to develop a voting system which enhances ballot security and educate the voters effectively, as well as installs clear rules that regulate the recognition of voters at all polling places (Olawale, 2011). Most significantly, the political class must respect the rule of law and Nigerians must refuse the persistent tradition of corruption in our body polity and be ready to keep elected officers accountable for their behavior (Festus, 2004).

Shortly after the 2007 election in Nigeria, the late President Umaru Ya'adua had to establish an Electoral Reform Panel (ERP) which was headed by the retired Justice Muhammad Uwais. Then, because the election which brought President Umaru

Yar'adua to power was absolutely undemocratic, the President honestly told the world that elections conducted throughout the country were corrupt and lacked the ideals of freedom and fairness.

The panel recommended that although the First Past the Post which Nigeria has operated since Independence and it has the notable advantages of simplicity, fostering stable governments, and establishing strong links between members of parliament and their constituents, it had the disadvantage of heightening post-election tension by excluding minority parties and marginalized groups from fair representation. Therefore, the panel proposed that to address the electoral weaknesses of marginalization in Nigeria's nascent democracy, a simple form of closed list of proportional representation as practiced in Australia, the United Kingdom and other advanced states should be made to operate. According to the panel, this system would promote greater inclusiveness and reduce post-election tension by enhancing the representation of women, minority parties and marginalized groups.

4.2.1. Funding of Political Party

One other factor which must be considered is the question of funding for political parties. They have to be checked and audited during and after elections in order to promote transparency and accountability. A full disclosure of all sources of funds including donations should be requested and submitted to the sources of funds including donations should be requested and submitted to the electoral body INEC (Uwais, 2008), and the disclosure must be scrutinized and subject to independent audition by an accounting firms outside the control of the government and all the political parties. When this is done, it will checkmate how parties are funded and prevent the use of government fund by the ruling political party. (Uwais, 2008).

4.2.2. Distinguishing the Government from the Ruling Political Party

Ordinarily, political parties are anticipated to take part in the political socialization of the electorate so as to contribute to the amassing of political power, and because it is crucial to democracy. Also, political parties are expected to perform essential functions that are practical, and these functions includes creating a nicely institutionalized structure, promoting democracy internally, practicing logical party discipline together with promoting autonomy. However, in the case of Nigeria, the political parties, especially the ruling party, have been unable to restrict themselves to the promotion of sustainable democracy. Rather, it has crossed almost all the lines between a political party and ruling government (Ania, 2002).

Nonetheless, the position of the political party in government should be made clear so that the ruling party does not misuse its opportunity to oppress the opposition in times of election, with the use of fund and other government structures such as security and the media. When all these important reforms are made, the chances are that democracy in Nigeria will be consolidated.

4.3. The Need for a Unity Government

Certainly, there is every need for government in Nigeria to consider a unity government for the consolidation its democracy. A unity government implies that all political parties are involved in the formation and exercise of power by the government rather than just the ruling party.

Historically, the idea of a Federal Government of National Unity (GNU) in Nigeria has been applied as far back as 1959 when the winning party; Northern People's Congress (NPC) failed to produce an obvious constitutionally sanctioned majority to enable it form a government. As such, it had to reach out to the political party with an equally large amount of parliamentary seat; the National Council for Nigerian and the Cameroons (NCNC) for the purpose of forming a unity government.

However, since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, the concept of GNU has not been fully utilized as a tool for promoting democracy. Rather what we have witnessed is an attempt to breakdown the opposition party through the political offices offered as a carrot and a stick by the ruling party, therefore making the idea of the GNU not to yield much positive outcome. According to Alex, a political scholar on Nigeria's democracy "the GNU in Nigeria is much more like having tea without bread" (Alex, 2011). Alex had argued that the GNU carries the opposition along in the government to the extent of making the political members from opposition party politically irrelevant in terms of government policy and selection, he also argued that the GNU is more like a strategy through with the ruling party PDP absorb and destroy competitors in the Nigerian electoral system (Alex, 2011). This practice of making opposition party members in GNU subservient and irrelevant can be equally held as the reason why most political officers selected from the rival parties ultimately decamp to the ruling party. Hence, space is created for the ruling party to penetrate the opposition and diminish its capability to challenge the ruling part in the next general election (Obi, 2011).

Therefore, for democracy to be consolidated in Nigeria there is need for an equal distribution of power among all the political parties in such a way that no group is relegated. This will promote the separation of the government from the ruling party (Ocheroma, 2011). If the government in power should show regard to at least all political parties and consider them as a constituency rather than just the ruling party, and if it ensures that the dividends of democracy are distributed evenly and also justly, the government will probably be running the Government of National Unity that Nigeria really needs to consolidate her democracy (Ocheroma, 2011).

4.4. *Enhancing the Communication Process of Government Owned Media and Training the State Security Forces on Attitude toward the Electorate*

The media and the security forces are vital structures that need to be closely monitored as a vital aspect of democracy in the country. These structures have to be monitored due to its tendency toward becoming an object of abuse and a machinery of the state and the ruling party to abuse and oppress the opposition. Speaking on the excesses of the security forces recently, Bola Tinubu a member of the opposition and former governor of Lagos State stated that the ruling party abused power through the security forces. According to him, the ruling party abused power by using government media along with the law enforcement force to trigger problem in the state (Bola, 2013).

Furthermore, Nnoli a political analyst argued that the ruling party, PDP appears to have added public brawling to its directory of achievements. According to him, the self-proclaimed largest party in Africa has turned into a fight group that applies the police as ushers for its matches (Omotola, 2012).

Other sources that officials of a ruling government conveniently make use of are the state-owned media as just about all state-owned newspapers, radio and television give a pro-government perspective in the course of reporting. An example of such is the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). In the course of the election crisis after the 2011 elections in Nigeria, the NTA failed to notify Nigerians of the election crisis in other states until private media station began to report on the violence and crises that had erupted.

In the same vein, opposition parties find it hard to get their views and policies expressed through government owned media.

4.5. *Conclusion*

In this chapter we have considered how the ruling party has basically been entwined in the affairs of the Nigeria government because of its access to political power. Nonetheless, this work maintains that for every Multi-party democracy like that of Nigeria to be effective, there should be a structure in place for a neutral state whose organizations supply a level playing ground for political parties to contest.

Although by winning an election, a party gains the prerogative to rule, nevertheless, the ruling political party should not use its party members in government to strictly foster its ideals to the detriment of the state, or use the power and resources of the state to particularly strengthen the placement of their political party (Duru, 2002) because for every democracy to grow, the government has to be autonomous from the ruling political party to some extent.

However, as West argued, at present, the ruling political party in Nigeria has crossed all lines distinguishing the political party from the government in power. Therefore, this chapter argues that for democracy to thrive there must be a distinction between the government and the ruling party. It is suggested that some factors should be established in order to foster the demarcation between the government and the ruling party. This chapter has also called for electoral reforms that would include the formation of laws that draw the line between the government and the ruling party. The chapter equally considered the formation of a unity government for the consolidation of democracy. It suggests that there is need to bring the opposition parties into the government notwithstanding the fact that so far, the GNU has been used to get the opposition party and leaving them without strong opposition. The chapter also considered the need to checkmate government owned media and the security forces on their mode of disseminating information and communicating with the public and suggest that for any democracy to be consolidated there is need to check the excesses of those machineries which has caused more crises and undermined democracy.

5. Accountability and Transparency: The Pragmatic Means to Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria

"Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent... those that make the country look big for nothing before international circle; those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds" (Ajibulu, 2009).

This chapter will dwell on all the factors that have been discussed on the issue of consolidating democracy in Nigeria. In the light of the challenges against the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, this chapter will argue that the key factor missing in Nigeria's democracy since 1999 is accountability and transparency.

Transparency and accountability as used in this context refers to a sense of openness in the authority's routine with the supreme outcome being the promotion of judicial reforms, institutional as well as societal reforms. It means to repair attitudes and mobilize political affiliations that will certainly work for sustained anti-corruption interventions in which the leaders are subject to the guidelines of the law are also receptive to following due process in administration (Foster, Gregory: 2003).

Corruption is perceived in the misuse of public office for private purpose, the abuse of political office by political office holders, election malpractice, political violence, embezzlement of democracy in Nigeria.

Suffice it to state that all the factors that limit the growth of democracy in Nigeria are intentional perversion of the pure exercise of representative democracy in principle and practice (Goldsmith, Arthur: 1999).

Nonetheless, this chapter proposes that the principles of accountability and transparency are practical means that can checkmate the root factors militating against the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. The chapter will therefore suggest that the success of democracy hinges on the successful practice of accountability and transparency by both the electorate and the elected in Nigeria.

It will consider key issues such as the strengthening of anti-corruption agencies, the ratification and implementation of international treaties on anti-corruption, and the use of civil societies, Non-governmental organizations and members of the public as a means of promoting a culture of accountability and transparency which would ultimately result in the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

5.1. Strengthening Anti-Corruption Agencies

To consolidate democracy in Nigeria, it is vital to strengthen anti-corruption institutions. According to Paul in his book on Corruption and the Fight in West Africa, anti-corruption organizations were described as agencies established in a country to fight and end corruption in public offices. It also involves the empowerment of a long list of anti-corruption organizations and establishments.

At the moment in Nigeria there are various structures that have been set up for the purpose of sustaining the ideals of anti-corruption. They include the Technical Unit on Governance & anti-corruption reforms, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), The Bureau of Public Procurement; the Independence Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau, the Public Complaints Commission and the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Regardless of the existence of these multiple structures established to pursue the fight against corruption in Nigeria, corruption remains a canker worm that is eating deep into the entire fabric of the Nigeria society. According to Michael Ola, "Notwithstanding the lengthy list of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, one is yet to see an of the agencies as having perform really well in the struggle to abort corruption in Nigeria" (Michael, 2009). Also, Morris contended that the

"Nigerian government has played a minimal role in supporting the work of anti-corruption agencies and that the leadership provides lip support to these organizations". (Morris 2009).

These opinions appear to have been corroborated by the recent survey conducted by Transparency International which showed that despite the claims by the Nigeria government that the Jonathan administration is waging a committed fight against corruption, majority of Nigerians argue that the government is merely paying lip service to the effort out corruption. (The Guardian Nigeria, 2013).

1999	2001	2003	2009	2013
	25%	25%	25%	25%
		10%	25%	30%
			10%	15%
				15%

Table 3: Showing the Increase of Corruption from 1999 to 2013 (Transparency international survey, 2013)

The survey also revealed that most Nigerians believe that political parties and the police were the most corrupt institutions in the country. Transparency international, in its survey tagged Global Corruption Barometer 2013, also ranked Nigeria among 88 countries where anti-corruption efforts are considered to be "ineffective" (The Guardian Nigeria, 2013).

Presently, Nigeria is faced with a situation where the Acts establishing the Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAS) remain weak and ineffective. The agencies are in most cases, poorly funded and there is evidence of lack of political will to enforce the rules on anti-corruption on the part of the leadership. Considering the situation on ground, one can say that the fight has been one sided, vindictive, selective, biased, and fictitious (Ademola 2011).

Also, another non-governmental organization, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in their report state that "almost every responsible organization in Nigeria is corrupt as well and has failed to adorn fully the obligations upon it to take action against corruption. This really is to the level that politicians, federal government officials, the police and the civil society in Nigeria, have almost all failed to make an effort to improve the detrimental image of the country to the extent that the phenomenon of corruption is concerned. Consequently, the effects of corruption on the state and the modern society in general are so disastrous to the point that the nation's political architectural structures have substantially lost their capacity to perform their constitutional functions" (ThisDay 2004:6).

According, Uzomachukwu suggest that the state should embark on the promulgation and enforcement of laws that closes the loopholes in the Nigerian law on corruption and bridge the gaps in the implementation of its anti-corruption and due process crusade in other to conserve the future of these anti-corruption organizations (Uzomachukwu, 2010).

Also, another school of thought suggest that there should be a strategy that flows down to the sub national levels. The focus of this strategy is to ensure that corruption is not tolerated in any part of Nigeria society or institution. It proposes that for institutional change to be achieved there should be three overlapping phases which are reinforcing:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Phase 1										
Phase 2										
Phase 3										

Table 4: Nigeria's Strategy to Combat Corruption (ICPC and EFCC, 2011)

Phase 1: Indicates that strengthening the legal structures and also the institutions will combat corruption. According to ICPC and EFCC, for every effective investigation a lot more resources and expertise is needed to get a good task completed. Hence, more funds ought to be pumped into these organizations for effective performance (ICPC, EFCC: 2011).

Phase 2: This indicates the mainstreaming of anti-corruption principles into governance and service delivery at national level. In other words, for the Nigerian government and system to be accountable and transparent, there is need to integrate the EFCC and ICPC into the affairs in public offices. Nonetheless, these anti-corruption structures should be completely unbiased and independent from the public office's authority in such a way that officials of the anti-corruption agencies are not subject to a witch hunt or used to suppress the opposition. (Unachukwu 2011)

Phase 3: Is the final phase and it applies to the public, in phase 3, the people have to be informed about the need to win the war against anti-corruption. Also, the private sector has to be made aware on the ideal practices that prevent corruption.

Nonetheless, in order to promote the activities of anti-corruption organizations, these agencies have to be logistically funded and its chairman ought to be independently appointed. In this light, it is worthy to note that the anti-corruption structures work primarily on allegations, petition or reports on suspected acts of corruption, therefore it must function with the judiciary in order to be effective (Nigeria corruption index, 2007).

In addition, for these organizations to operate affectively there should be an effective enforcement of the investigation and successful prosecution of financial misappropriation cases outside the country.

5.2. The Need to Ratify Implement International Treaties on Anti-Corruption

To consolidate democracy in Nigeria, there is need to consider the ratification and implementation of international treaties as a means of fighting corruption. This is because to fight against corruption, anti-corruption agencies need to be able to get to corrupt politicians who expropriate public funds using foreign banks and financial institutions abroad. In this survey conducted by Okeshola and Garba (2008)

"it was revealed that most of the money obtained by corrupt politicians through corrupt practices such as money laundering, fraud, misappropriation of funds, bribery, contract inflation, forgery, and embezzlement of public funds are not invested in the State but spent abroad.

So far, Nigeria has signed the African Union Convention on preventing and combating corruption (AUCPCC 2003). It has equally signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCC 2004). Yet, none of these Conventions are operative in Nigeria because the Nigerian constitution requires that Treaties can only become law in Nigeria when the legislature enacts a law that formally domesticates such Treaties and Conventions into Nigerian law.

However, the legislative arm of government in Nigeria appears to be slow in the process of domesticating that conventions into the Nigerian legal system. Nonetheless, Adele suggests that where these Conventions are domesticated into the Nigerian legal system, they will promote development as well as accountability in the federal government's battle against corruption

However, with regards to the use of conventions in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The Nigerian government merely look for the guidance of the foreign countries whenever the need to recuperate funds stolen from Nigeria in foreign countries arises. In most cases, the foreign countries are cooperative and some of the stolen funds have been recovered (Ekeanyanwu 2006).

5.3 Encouraging Civil Society Organisation

So far, civil society organizations have continued to receive massive attention among scholars and development practitioners alike. This is not surprising given their increasing growth and reach to a wider number of the Nigerian population in terms of engagement with the state, service provision, and representation and building capacity.

Civil society is defined as the combination of non-governmental organization and associations that manifest same interest for the society or group of citizen campaigning for a better government (Odekunle, 2008). It is also seen as the jurisdiction of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the government and bound largely by order, set of rules and regulations to guide it (Diamond, 1999).

For any democracy to be seen as stable and consolidated, civil societies have to be encouraged and given the necessary facilities required to work effectively in any State. According to Diamond, civil groups are different from the society in general

in that it involves citizen performing cooperatively in the public sphere to express their same interest, ideas and passion (Diamond, 2003).

The Presence of civil society not only strengthens democracy but also ensures its sustenance. However, the role of civil society in the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria has been questioned so far because although credit must be given to them for their effort at enshrining successful democratic transitions, they lack what it takes to ensure the consolidation of democracy (Boadi, 2008). According to Boadi, the factors responsible for this include the lack of funds, as civil societies depend on government and political polarization is pointed out as another factor that has contributed to the weakness of civil societies because inter and intra party struggle also affect the actions of other organizations in the polity including civil societies. (Chukwuma 2007). Therefore, it has been noted that civil societies suffer internal contradictions within the membership owing to the fact that members come from different background and also have divergent views on issues relating to skills and method of advocacy (Olukoshi, 2001) Nonetheless, the need for a vibrant civil society cannot be overestimated in a democratic setting as the continued entrenchment of democratic ethos, values and attitudes owes much to a strong and well organized civil association. Nonetheless, it is heart-warming to know that there is a recognition of the various constraints of members of the civil society and spirited effort continues to be made by both the international community as well as concerned Nigerians to address the constraints (Jega, 2006).

5.4. Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that Nigeria democracy lacks accountability and transparency since 1999 and for any democracy to stand the test of time, there must be accountability and transparency. Corruption was pointed out as the major factor militating against accountability and transparency.

Therefore, anti-corruption and the need to strengthen anti-corruption laws and agencies were considered. In view of this, the chapter argued that the nation has to embark on the promulgation and enforcement of legislative laws to strengthen and bridge the gap in the implementation of anti-corruption law.

It has also been proposed in this chapter that the judiciary should work hand in hand with the anti-corruption agencies to successfully administer justice in corruption cases, and it was also suggested that the appointment of people to the anti-corruption bodies should be transparent and unbiased in order to secure a credible and transparent performance by the bodies.

The chapter also argued that there is need to ratify and implement Treaties on corruption in order to checkmate corrupt practices such as money laundering between countries. Another factor which was highlighted was the need for further cooperation between financial institutions and the anti-corruption agencies so that investigation of corrupt practices is faster and quicker to prosecute in courts.

Finally, it was also argued that the activities of civil societies need to be supported and promoted because any democratic system where the civil organization is not free or encouraged portends a challenge to the consolidation of democracy.

6. Research Recommendation

So far, this research has considered the concept of democracy in Nigeria. Also, factors that prevent the consolidation of democracy and measures that could promote democracy have been mentioned in previous sections of this work.

However, notwithstanding the fact that measures that consolidate democracy have been highlighted, it is crucial to still point out some particular recommendations for emphasis purposes.

6.1. Chapter by Chapter Recommendation

Chapter one introduced the research starting with what and what to be done, with a brief history of the work and also explaining concept that would be common in the work and charter structure.

In Chapter two, increased political participation was highlighted as a veritable instrument for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. This work suggests that for democracy to be consolidated, the people have to be fully politically active in all ramifications. In terms of voting. The Nigerian government must properly educate the public on voting patterns, their rights to vote and be voted for as well as electioneering and campaign procedures so that the people can be fully informed on electoral affairs. In view of the fact that information is power, where sufficient political awareness has been given to the people, there are higher chances of a better and higher participation of the people at both pre and post – election periods.

Also, when it comes to party campaigning, fund raising and canvassing, it is very crucial to integrate the ideals of fairness, integrity and justice into the activities of political parties because the internal practices and structure of a political party usually determine the nature of political leadership that the country eventually gets when elections are over and political offices are held by the member of the political party.

Furthermore, this work suggests that with regards to direct action in democracy, the actors, members and structures in the political party should be used as a positive tool for democratic consolidation and not for the promotion of election crisis or political conflict. Therefore, the use of political party members for the promotion of political violence during elections should be prohibited through the creation and enforcement of punitive laws that penalizes defaulters and their parties with sanctions such as fines, disqualification from running in elections, and in extreme cases where individuals are involved, jail terms could be imposed in order to serve as a deterrence to others during election period.

With respect to chapter three, in the light of the argument for a resilient opposition, this work argues that democracy in Nigeria with thrive if there are ample guarantees and opportunities for people to express themselves politically either as individuals or as part of groups. These groups or individuals would form both the ruling and opposition party and as such, it is suggested that a truly independent body be created for electoral issues. For there to be a strong opposition, there must be an independent electoral umpire, and such electoral body's chairman should be nominated and appointed in the same way judges are appointed, also, allocation of funds should be made independent of the executive. Secondly, funds should be made available to the judiciary and the electoral body because lack of fund for this organization is one of the reasons why the judiciary and the electoral body are susceptible to corruption and bribery.

This work also suggests that there should be a review of the funds available for spending during election. So far, political parties in Nigeria, especially the ruling party has spent excess money for the past 15years of democracy in the fourth republic, and this has practically rendered the opposition party weak in terms of money power during elections. This work therefore suggests that there should be a limit of money a party must spend during election periods. Chapter four dwelt on the need to separate the government from the ruling party. It argued that creating a clear distinction between the ruling political party and the government in power appears very difficult to achieve in Nigeria, but the chapter went on to suggest that for democracy to be consolidated, there must be a clear distinction between both actors. Government agencies and structures should not be treated as private property or as the ruling party's personal structure. So far, for the most of the fourth republic, Nigerians have seen how the political party in power have used government agencies to run down the opposition. This should not be the case. Therefore, this work suggest that a law should be promulgated to restrict the use of government agencies and structure by the ruling party and where the party violate the law, it should be charged to court for misuse of government office.

This research suggests that there is a paramount need for an electoral reform that will bridge the gap in the relationship between the ruling political party and the state. Therefore, the formation of a government of national unity should be promoted to enhance the relationship of the ruling party and opposition parties, and ultimately breed a culture of peace as well.

The fifth chapter dwelt on the need for transparency and accountability and argued that the key factor missing in Nigeria's democracy since 1999 is accountability and transparency. This work therefore suggests the following.

- Anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria must be strengthened to fight corruption to the teeth. There should be an effective enforcement of the regulations put in place against corruption, and the anti-corruption agencies should have an established partnership with other nations for the investigation and successful prosecution of financial misappropriation cases outside the country.
- To consolidate democracy in Nigeria, there is need to consider the ratification and implementation of international treaties as a means of fighting corruption, for its fight against corruption it must signed up for international treaties on anti-corruption.
- Treaties that have been ratified by Nigeria should be domesticated and transformed into working laws in other to sustain the fight against corruption and foster Nigeria's accountability rating in the international community with respect to the practice of democracy.

7. Conclusion

Although, Nigeria can be said to be facing a life-threatening period in her quest to sustain democracy, yet Nigeria cannot be seen to have failed completely in democracy because considering the long years of military rule experienced, one can safely argue that Nigeria's democracy is working to some extent.

Nonetheless, there is room for improvement because so far democracy in Nigeria is yet to gain the momentum witnessed in other nations of the world, and members of the electorate are yet to enjoy the dividends of democracy in Nigeria. Accordingly, this work asserts that for Nigeria's democracy to be consolidated there must be a resilient opposition, an independent electoral umpire, a sound spending review during electioneering, the practice of internal democracy by political parties and an independent and reliable judiciary system.

It must be stated however that some of the recommendations proffered in this work are contextual and can only work where there is a genuine political will on both the side of the electorate and the political leadership. For instance, with regards to the issue of political participation, it makes little sense to convene elections in an environment of political insecurity where armed securities stand ready to intimidate opponents and voters. The rights and obligations of the state and the citizen must first be understood and adopted by all.

Other recommendations are institutional based but suffice it to state that there are no substitutes for an independent electoral body, a neutral police force and an honest political leadership that can guarantee a free and fair election for the purpose of sustaining democracy. Also, for democracy to stand the test of time in Nigeria, the principles of accountability and transparency must be strengthened in all facets of political life because accountability and transparency are twin factors on which the foundations for consolidating democracy can truly be built.

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