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Using Political Theory's Perspective to Describe Democratic Project in Nigeria: Issues and Explanations

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Abstract:
This paper examined the interface between political theory and democratic project in Nigeria. The paper argues that, political theorists have roles to play in guiding politicians on the ideals and values in practicing democracy. While there are divergent views about Nigeria's democratic project, the paper argues for and against the journey so far from the Marxist political theory perspective. Thus, the impact of democracy in Nigeria is examined within a dialectical framework of economic and social justice distribution to Nigerian citizens. That democratic project in Nigeria is focused on its primacy, the economic dynamic of democracy. The paper argues that the character of the Nigerian state precipitates for the failure of democratization success in Nigeria, thereby resulting to corruption, electoral malpractices, and security problems. The paper suggested that there is need for substantive rule of law and social justice to mediate between the state and economy. The paper submits, as a proposition to be subjected to empirical scrutiny that, the present situation in Nigeria necessitated for deliberative democracy not representative democracy.

Keywords: Political theory, Nigerian state, corruption, democracy substantive and procedural democracy

1. Introduction

Political theory is the study of the concepts and principles that scholars use to describe, explain, and evaluate political events and institutions in the political community. In other words, political theory analyses, and interprets the foundation of political life, and evaluates its principles, concepts and institutions. In addition, political theory seeks to understand, explain and analyze the political phenomena and prescribe ways and means to rectify the shortcomings. It is systematic reflection on politics, the nature and purpose of government and institutions, involving both to understand them and if necessary, how to change them (Saidai, 2013).

Political theory is concerned with the study of the phenomena of the state both in philosophical as well as empirical terms. It does not only involve explanation, description and prescription regarding the state and political institutions, but also evaluate the moral philosophical purpose. To be clear about this, Weinstein (2011) sees political theory as an activity which involves posing questions, developing responses to those questions and creating imaginative perspectives on the public life of human beings. It has been probing into questions like; nature and purpose of the state; why one should prefer a kind of state to the other? What the political organisation aims at? By what criteria its end, its methods and its achievements should be judged? Political theorists have been engaged in these fundamental questions from Plato onward because it is concerned with the fate of man, which depends upon his ability to create a kind of political community in which rulers and ruled are united in the pursuit of the common good. It is not necessary that political theory could provide answers to all questions, but at least show how one should go about solution. However, it was at these prescriptions and theorizing by political philosophers that ideal of democratic theory came into being in order to address fundamental issues of imperfect society.

According to Hyland (1995), political theory of democracy consists of both critical and supportive investigation of possible democratic ideologies. At the first level, it focuses on the analytical democratic theory; the task here is to establish what, with respect to political and social arrangements and principles, particularly the distribution of power in a community, in what a democratic ideology is committed to. This is often refers to as saying what democracy is or defining the meaning of democracy. The second task of political theory of democracy is the critical appraisal of the possible normative frameworks for a democratic ideology. In simple terms: is democracy a worthwhile political goal? How do we justify democratic arrangements in comparison with possible alternatives? What principles and values might be brought forward to justify a democratic commitment? How are they related to each and how defensible are they? The final task of any political theory of democracy must be an appraisal of these challenges and attempt to answer the question of whether democracy could be provided with an adequate theoretical grounding. Therefore, political theory of democracy is concerned with what democracy implies in practice, whether and how democratic practices could be provided with a

theoretical grounding, in adequate and valid theories of human nature and society (Hyland, 1995). However, it is the aim of this paper to identify the critical and supportive democratic values in Nigeria through the understanding of political theory perspective. The paper adopts the Marxist political theory to argue for procedural and substantiveness of Nigeria's democratic project.

Methodologically, the paper used secondary source such as textbooks, journals, published Newspapers and Magazines, media reports. In analysing data, the paper adopts qualitative and descriptive analysis to explain issues affecting democratic project in Nigeria.

Conceptually, democratic ideal has been deemed an "essentially contested concept", one which is sufficiently complex and open textured to sustain multiple reasonable interpretations (Gallie, 1956). In its minimal definition, Morlino cited in Kura (2008) viewed that democracy is a Polity that has at least the following features; universal suffrage, recurring free, fair and competitive periodic elections with more than one political party and sources of information. Morlino (2004), further buttresses that, a Polity that is democratic must satisfy these procedural criteria to freedom and political equality (foundation of social justice). Democracy is a political system whose leaders are elected in competitive multi-party and multi-candidate processes. In his famous, book Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Joseph Schumpeter asserted that "… the democratic method for arriving at political decisions in which individual acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples votes" (Schumpeter, 1994,). This definition implies a precise criterion for deciding when a state is being governed democratically, if the governmental office is allocated on the basis of competitive popular elections then we have unproblematically, a democracy. It is these features that all democracies have in common than non-democratic forms of government.

To some scholars like Huntington, democracy means liberty, egalitarian, fraternity, effective citizen control over policy, responsible government, honesty and openness in politics, informed and rational deliberation, equal participation and power, and various other civic virtues which are necessary or inescapable sine qua non of democracy (Huntington, 1991). Huntington further elucidated on the dependent variables of democracy, at first, political democracy is closely associated with freedom of individual. That democracy could and have abused individual rights and liberties, and a well-regulated authoritarian state may provide a high degree of security and order for its citizens. Overall, however, the correlation between the existences of individual liberty is extremely high. Thus, if one is concerned with liberty as an ultimate social value, one should also be concerned with fate of democracy. Second, political stability and democracy are interrelated. That democracy is often unruly but they are not often politically violent. In modern democracies, Huntington argued that democratic system tends to be less subjected to civil violence than non-democratic system. Democratic governments use far less violence against their citizens than authoritarian ones. That democracy also provides accepted channels for the expression of dissent and opposition within the system. Democracy also contributes to stability by providing regular opportunities for changing public policies. Third, the spread of democracy has implication for International Relations. Historically, democracies have fought wars as often authoritarian countries. From the early 19th century down to 1990s, however, democracies did not with any trivial or formal exceptions fight other democracies. Thus, the spread of democracy in the world means expansion of a zone of peace in the world (Huntington, 1991). The foregoing assertions are significance of democracy to any political system that adopts it. The concept of democracy works like a magnet, drawing political scientists, philosophers, and historians alike to discuss a wide range of values associated with it. Philosophically, theorists usually view democracy as an epistemological enterprise that coordinate the realization of human autonomy, good society and the production of exogenous goods, such as social stability, peacefulness and welfare (Guess, cited in Hyland, 1994). In essence, democracy is the most legitimate government since after the tacit consent was sealed that is after men abandoned the "state of nature". More to that, an examination of Abraham Lincoln's notion- (democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people) reveals that it is people centered. It has the backing and express approval of the citizen of the state. Being a government of the people, it means those at the helm of affairs are a collection of those whose interest are at state either directly or indirectly (Edogiawerie, 2013).

Another line of argument is that, democracy has fascinated political theorists since the rise of Greek city-state and writing of Plato and Aristotle more than 24000 years ago where the defining features of democracy is a form of government in which the greats mass of citizens could participate in political decision-making (Heywood, 1992).

At this juncture, one can discern that, a major normative principle of western political theory is that "democracy is the best form of government". This school of thought came up with what constitute kinds of democracy as follows:

  (a) Procedural democracy: This is otherwise known as formal democracy. Ideally, procedural democracy is the one which citizens of the state have less influence than in traditional liberal democracies. It is the type of democracy that is characterized by votes choosing the elect representatives in free elections. Procedural democracy assumes that electoral process is at the core of the authority placed in elected officials and ensures that all procedures of election are duly compiled with. This could also be described as a Republic (people voting for representatives) wherein only the basic structures and institutions are in place (Hyland, 1994). Hyland further viewed that, procedural democracy prescribes a set of normative principles for democratic decision-making. This encompasses universal participation, political equality and majority rule. That in an indirect democracy, citizens choose officials to make decision for them which also known as "Representative Government" given the fact that representative government is in all modern states. However, Nigeria is not exception of these principles of procedural democracy but reverse is the case as the paper discusses in detail in the subsequent section. For example, in Nigeria, the successive elected representatives at all levels used the principles of procedural democracy with the ruling party to maintain their power against the common wish of the citizens thereby thwarting efforts of democratic project and the establishment of full-fledged democracy in the country.

  (b) Substantive democracy: This is otherwise known as "social democracy". It is a form of democracy in which the outcome of elections of representatives of the people. In other words, substantive democracy is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed. Political theorists usually evaluates this form of democracy on the basis of substance of government policies, that democratic government ought to guarantee civil right and liberties, social and economic rights. Substantive democracy prefigures the

idea of a process that has to be continually reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in such a way as to maximize the opportunities for individual to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debate about the key decisions that affect society (Kaldor and Velvoda in Mohammad, 2013). Garba Mohammad further buttresses that, substantive democracy put emphasis on procedures and substance of democratic order. That substantive democracy gives centrality to an active civil society and widespread public participation in and scrutiny of political life. More specifically, substantive democracy puts emphasis on both procedures and concrete benefits that accrue to people and ensure freedom and well-being (Jega, 2000). The importance of substantive democracy is to enhance the capacity of the state to respond to welfare need of its citizens with a view to making the electorates as a whole as well-off as possible (Mohammad, 2013). The significance of substantive democracy also lies in its capacity to make for a variety of concrete benefits that accrue to the people and justify the expense, the energy and frustration associated with participation in democratic politics. These benefits are also known as fundamental values of democracy, which shows themselves in terms of security, liberty and efficiency which are very central to guide and inform the public policy of democracy and criteria for determining its democratic character and content. However, a cursory glance of Nigeria's democratic governance, the substantive principles are very inimical as the character of Nigerian state does not really promote such benefits to citizens. For example, the recent 2011 general elections in Nigeria was more of frustration as a result of ethnic differences, where eligible voters were not given opportunity to participate fully in the elections.

By and large, substantive democracy which this paper subscribes to also promote nation building, economic development, self-determination and political stability are growing values necessitated for democratic government in Nigeria and above all the quality of democracy is measured with the degree of freedom, equality and social justice. The later variable is very central to this discourse, because for a polity to realize ideal freedom, social justice is germane. Social justice here equals to freedom and political, economic and social equality to all citizens in the state.

 John Rawls (1971) in his book "A Theory of Justice"- social justice is described as the fairness (…and) the principle subject of justice is the basic structure of society …the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation (Rawls, 1971). Social justice theory is designed to apply basic structure that is political and economic institution of society. To Rawls, a just society is one that protects citizen's basic liberties and arranges socio-economic equalities so that they are the greatest benefit to least advantage and attached to offices and position open to all under condition of fair equality of opportunity (Murkherjee and Ramawamy, 2012). To this effect, Rawls conception of social justice is very important in understanding not only how social justice could be achieved but also the structure of society and social institutions that are the essential mechanisms of distributing freedom, ensuring political equality and bringing about the division of advantages (Kura, 2008). This means that there is a clear theoretical connection between social justice and political justice. Political justice refers to as freedom and equality that is ensures by the judiciary as the sine qua non to democratic governance. That is in a democratic system, political equality and freedom is inescapable. To achieve this in a polity, social justice and democracy should correlate with sound economic programmes to ensure equitable distribution to address poverty, unemployment, and other social inequalities which halt harmony and development. It was at the premised of social justice and economic development, Muller (2001) cited in Kura (2008) asserts that;

> A political community in which citizens are treated in an equal across the broad way, in which public policy is geared
> towards meeting the intrinsic needs of every number and in which the economy is framed and construct in such a
> way that the income and other worked–related benefits received correspond to their respective deserts (pp.250).

The foregoing assertion means that social justice should be distributive to the advantage and disadvantage citizens of a given political community, that is both the poor and rich should be equally treated in resource distribution base on the principle of distributive justice. Thus, social and political justices are the defining essentialities of substantive democracy. Although, it is often argued that, even in genuine democracies social justice distribution is not totally equals among citizens due to their social status in the society but it is very important not to undermine it because it is the major defining values of democracy. Consequently, the above principles of social and political justice have been undermined and threaten in democratic project. For example, political elites in Nigerian state frustrate attempt of ensuring social justice to its citizens due to their selfish interest and greed.

Nation-States like Nigeria face a number of problems such as poverty, overpopulation, corruption, ethnic tensions religious bigotry, environmental pollution, conflict among individuals and groups necessitated for democracy to address these challenges. The task of Nigerian political theorists is to study and analyze more profoundly than others, the immediate and potential problems of political life of the society and supply the practical politicians with an alternative course of action, the consequences of which have been fully thought of. More to the point, political theorists have a role to play in given directives to politicians to understand not only the nuances of democracy but the major ontological and epistemological contexts to which ideal substantive democracy should be practice in the political community. Thus, the task of political theorists is seriously demanding because in the absence of systematic and critical investigation, there is a danger that politics will be left to the ignorant and self-seeking people who only want to pursue it as naked power. In essence, the Marxist political theorists provide systematic and critical thinking on dialectics of nature and forms of democracy practice in the political community.

2. Brief Background to Democratization Project in Nigeria
Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and became a Republic in 1963, Westminster kind of liberal democracy but it was not long before democracy collapsed in 1967. The military coup in 1967 against the civilian government was assumed to be associated with "ethnonationalism"- politics of regions based on ethnicity (Tignor, 1993). Colonial administrators created three regional governments dominated by three dominant ethnic groups, Hausa-Fulani in the North, Igbo in South-East and Yoruba in the South-West. Nigeria

consists of 250 ethnic groups and the country has over 140 languages. Democratization provides the opportunity for every group within the three regions to define their positions in the nascent democracy to avoid marginalization. Conflict and interest degenerated into hatred, accusation of corruption and mismanagement are the bane of democratization in Nigeria today (Tignor, 1993).

 Nigerian military took the advantage to overthrow democracy but counter coup followed. Eventually, combination of many things led to civil wars that ended in 1970 with reconciliation but that left military in power for 29 years. During the period, coup and counter coups were taking place and most cases military versus military with one exception, democracy lasted for four year from 1979 to 1983 and overthrown again (Kraxberger, 2004). The third attempt was terminated at birth, the final result of the presidential elections held in 12 June 1993 was annulled and other elections already completed cancelled. The transition was delayed for nine years until 1999 when the country embarked upon fourth transition under the watchful eyes of another military Head of State, General Abudsallam Abubakar (Kraxberger, 2004).

Fourth transition was successful in the sense that, the military Generals stepped down and military in uniform returned to their barracks but since then, ex-military men, former politicians and wealthy Nigerians have been engaging in partisan politics. Since 1999, the club of bourgeois politicians effectively colonized political scene, operating like a club that caters for the interest of their members and not a political party in the interest of the whole country. Indeed, all the emerging political parties has been rooted less in a commitment to ideological than in a commitment to incorporating diverse regional and parochial interest. Since 1999, elections at all levels (federal, states and local governments) are battle reserved for the multimillionaires to fill public in Nigeria quasi-federated units which consist of 36 states plus the federal capital territory (FCT), Abuja (Kraxberger, 2004). The additional states that were created out of the three former regional governments existed during colonization by subsequent military regimes to bring government closer to the people. Six zones, North-West, North-East, North-Central, South-West, and South-East and South-South were further created to build a solid political landscape meant to integrate the states according to their culture and traditions. But it now serves as an avenue for efficient distribution of political spoils to the elites of the ruling party on a rotational basis to the offices of the president, senators and the House of Representatives. In order to avoid marginalization or neglect of elites that exist in any ethnic group, political parties are efficient in the distribution of party spoils to states and local governments which have really served as a challenge to any genuine democratization in Nigeria till date (Kedhammer, 2010). Again, the minority and majority configuration in each of the region in Nigeria also influences political development in the country since its independence. From the foregoing, it is logical to discern that from the beginning of democratic governance in Nigeria, every successive regime plays role in truncating democratization process and one could not understand the failure or otherwise of democratic project in Nigeria.

3. Justification for the Journey so far

Since the Nigerian state returned to democratic governance in 1999, during the era of what Huntington (1991) called the "the third wave of democratization", the nature of democratic project in Nigeria has been the subject of an intense debate in various circles. Some appraised it very essence, while others are challenging the practice. Looking at the years of democratic rule, economic growth continues to be stunted; distribution of wealth remains uneven, and politically elusive. To be sure of this, the desire for democracy is of global interest especially to countries struggling to be out of dictatorial regimes. In Nigeria, the reverse is the case as the country runs in semblance of autocratic regimes where the ideals of democracy usually negate the nexus between politics and economy. The consequence of this not only retards development prospect but also truncates any attempt for democratization success as argued by the Marxist political theorists like Ake (1996). In fact, the crisis of democratic project in Nigeria will be better understood within the context of the nature of the political economy of Nigerian state. The Nigerian state plays a dominant role in the national economy in the face of underdevelopment of private capitalist enterprise. This shows that the state is a primary instrument of accumulation. As a facilitator of capitalist mode of production, the Nigerian state is a major owner of the means of production. The state dominates all aspects of the national political economy (Jega, 2000).

The Nigerian state centralizes struggle for resources for personal advancement and group security. Under this circumstance, access to the state becomes a platform for primitive accumulation and the power appearance boundless (Ake, 1996).This makes the capture of power important and under this arrangement, the Nigerian state become a "rentier state" that undermines any democratic project and fundamental implication for growth and development of substantive democracy (Mohammad, 2013).

Ideally, democracy is a vital instrument that propels political proficiency, economic development and social stability of any nation. However, democracy was welcomed in Nigeria with high expectations and enthusiasm since it has the capacity of ensuring political stability and socio-economic development. Paradoxically, today democracy in Nigeria has been a mere political desideratum hanging on a limping utopia. A true democracy is a sine qua non for development of all sectors of any country that practices it but in Nigeria the state is the major contributor of democratization failures. Regrettably, the practice of so- called democracy in the 21st century Nigeria is intrinsically characterized with political instability, social unrest, cultural balderdash and economic quagmire, resulting in unemployment of all forms, leading to abject poverty. The attendant implications of these misnomers are practical existence of all manner of crimes such as kidnapping, terrorism, electioneering bickering and hooliganism (Nwanlu and Ojukwu, 2012).

Similarly, a careful review of Nigerian post-colonial history shows that palpable political, social and economic crises manifest themselves in various forms such as the collapse of physical and social infrastructure, the high incidence of vandalization of public properties, the sporadic bout of ethno religious bloodletting, pandemic fatal and menacing combats over resource control which deprives the citizens of social justice, high level of armed robbery, political assassinations, youth restiveness, collapse of formal and informal education at all levels, high rate of corruption, debasement of the judiciary, the glorification of fraud such as elections rigging, manipulation of electoral processes and rapid quest for power and the accompanying venality have added in concert through indifferent circumstances to diminish the nation's corporate existence (see, Simon and Monday, 2013). the implication of the foregoing myriad

features of post-colonial Nigerian state not only affect political stability of the state but also resist any positive attempt of democratizing the country.
Above all, the following could be sum up as the major challenges of Nigeria's democratic project, these are:

- Corruption.
- Security challenges.
- Political parties.
- Electoral system.
- Poverty.

3.1. Corruption and Democracy
Corruption in it multifaceted ways have seriously affected democratization in Nigeria since 1999. According to Ogundiya (2010), events in Nigeria since 1999 have shown that the tidal waves of reversal have been contending with Nigeria's democratic project. That democracy remains grossly unstable and the future seems to be very bleak because of rampant bureaucratic and political corruption. Corruption has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria's development and a way of life of doing things (Obadan, 2001). According to Aleyomi (2013) corruption has been of the main cogs wheels of sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Corruption helps the wrong persons to get elected and distract societies from facing development projects in order to deliver dividends of democracy to the people. Thus, result to legitimacy crisis, which is inimical to the consolidation of democracy. In 2009, Nigeria was ranked 130 out 180 countries; 2010 Nigeria was ranked 134 out of 178 countries; 2011 Nigeria was ranked 143 out of 182 countries; 2012 Nigeria was ranked 139 out 176 and in 2013 Nigeria was ranked 144 out of 178 countries (The Transparency International corruption index 2009, 2010, 2011,2012 and 2013). In Nigeria, huge sum of money from crude oil sales, over the years, has corruptly been managed. Nigeria is a rich nation floating on oil wealth, but almost none of it flows to the people. Due to the effect of corruption, Nigeria has turned to be an oil giant that runs grease of politics (San Francisco Chronicle, 2007). However, tackling corruption is a global responsibility, in Nigeria every successive administration have adopts various measures to curb the menace. For instance, during the regime of former President Olusegun Obasanjo used Neo-liberal economic and political policies to tackle corruption through anti-corruption campaign like Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). In his inaugural speech, Obasanjo asserts that;

It would no more be business as usual, corruption will be tackled head-on. No society can achieve with full
potential if it allows corruption to become the full-blow cancer it has in Nigeria, there will be no sacred cows
in my process to stamp out corruption in the society (Inaugural speech, May 29, 1999).

After the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to curb corruption, the regime recorded various cases like the case of Inspector General of Police Tafa Balegun who was convicted on charges of corruption in 2005; former Delta State Governor, James Ibori was slammed with 129- court charges by EFCC of money laundering over N9.1 billion and also former Governor of Abia state Orji Uzor Kalu was charged with N3.1 billion to fund SLOK airline and two banks in Gambia and Sierra Leone mention but few (Pogoson, 2009). However, in spite of the anti-corruption reforms, implementation of the anti-corruption programme was directed at witch hunting opponent. Closely related to that, the present administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's control mechanism of corruption was ineffective and prospects of detection and prosecution are weak. When he was re-elected in 2011, Jonathan then promised to fight corruption that keeps an elite fabulously wealthy while the majority of Africa's most populous nation of about 170 million people struggle to survive on less than $1 a day according to United Nations statistics (2011). But Jonathan's administration is seen as shielding the corrupt politicians, most notably is the state pardoning granted to his home state ex-Governor of Bayelsa Diepreye Alamieyeseigha after being convicted of money laundering in 2005. On February 2014, Nigerian president Jonathan fired the central Bank Governor Mr. Sanusi Lamido, who was investigating the disappearance of $20 billion in oil revenue over 18-months period, up till now since the president order for National Assembly investigation, no relevant outcome have been seen about this siphoning of public fund (Vanguard News, 22nd July, 2014). The US state department 2014 reports corrupt practices in Nigeria that, the wide-scale of kleptocracy of the Nigerian government, which is accused of pilfering billion dollars of oil revenues and having spawned a massively corrupt civil service, may have played a role in giving birth to Boko Haram, corruption permeates throughout the Nigerian bureaucracy, massive widespread, and pervasive corruption affected all levels of government and security forces and corruption has security implication in Nigeria, thereby threatening the very prospects for successful democratic project. However, one may be wondering why the government of Jonathan has achieved little in the monumental fight against corruption in Nigeria, the answer is very simple. To Jonathan, there is actually no corruption in Nigeria, Nigerian politicians are thieves, but they are not corrupt. The president with his cronies like the chairman of ICPC, Ekpoyong Ita believed that "what many Nigerians refer to as corruption is actually stealing. Stealing is not the same thing as corruption". To President Jonathan, People's Democratic Party (PDP) governors are thieves but All Progressive Congress (APC) governors are corrupt. For example, Murtala Nyako was not impeached as governor of Adamawa state during the years he was in PDP. He was only impeached after he decamped to the APC. Rabiu Kwankwaso was a very good and upright public- servant as PDP governor of Kano. But after he switched to the APC, he became negatively transformed. Most recent one is the speaker of House of Representative decamped to APC, the president order for immediate withdrawal of his security. The questions one may ask is are all these activities of the present administration promoting democratic values or demoralizing its very essence? Of course it not only promoting corruption but also served as a threat to democratic survival in Nigeria. Corruption has taught Nigerians wrong lessons that it does not pay to be honest, hardworking and law abiding because the culture has legalized illegality in the society. The struggle for survival in the society has become a race for everyone. There is no place for morality in the society (Smith, 2008; Aleyomi, 2013). Government has also

worsened the situation since the level of inequality in the distribution of wealth has been hiked by the kleptocrats. Indeed, corruption has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associated democracy with it. The consequences of corruption in this context are potently manifest; cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problems and unemployment, and above all general democratic volatility (Kwansau, 2013). Thus, corruption as a devastator has greatly eroded the fundamental values of democracy and its essential principles.

3.2. Poverty and Democracy

The very essence of democracy in political community is to address the issue of poverty. In Nigeria, continued poverty, reinforced by mass unemployment is a barrier to Nigeria's quest for consolidating its democracy. This is manifested in the area of social unrest, stealing mandate to illegitimate politicians due to hunger and lack of access to basic social amenities etc., a society of beggars, parasite and bandits could developed. It could not know peace or stability and cannot experience ideal democratic values (Ake, 1996). This shows that any individual deprived of basic wherewithal could not participate effectively in democratic process. More to that, a poor person (deprived of materialistic condition) is not full-fledged social individual, as he or she lacks the basic freedom to engage in the life he or she enjoys. The National Bureau of Statistics in its 2013/2014 ranking reported that, out of 173 million Nigerians, 112 millions are living below poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Despite the efforts to diversify the economy and attract investors by the Jonathan administration, Nigeria is still ranked as one of the poorest in the globe. Nigeria dropped five places from last year's 115th position to 120th among 148 countries profiled (Global Competitive Index GCI, 2013-2014). This index shows that instead of decreasing the rate of poverty, the percentage keep on increasing. Every successive Nigerian government has embarked on various measures and reforms in order to eradicate and improve standard of living. It was the realization of this that led the former president Obasanjo to make promises of alleviating poverty through measures like; National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS) and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDS) among others, where billions of naira have been invested in the programmes yet poverty rate still increased drastically. In spite of the wide media coverage during the administration, the programmes have not address socio-economic problems of Nigeria. In most cases, reforms in Nigeria are reflection of a conspiracy between the local petty-bourgeoisie and their metropolitan counterpart against the masses (Odum, 2008). More evidently, there is need to interrogate the past administration of Jonathan about large chunk resources and money budgeted for alleviating poverty and creating employment opportunities, there is actually under-employment. Take for example, the glamorized SURE-P and other youths employment schemes embarked on by the administration where $2 billion have been invested. In some states graduates of tertiary institutions are recruited as street sweepers and traffic managers only to be paid N10, 000 a month. When comparing with high cost of living in the country, is this measure really alleviate poverty? Again, the administration in the annual budget approved the sum of ₦65 billion for Amnesty programme in the Niger Delta, yet, the region still experience poverty and other vices that can threat democratic project (Budgets figure in Nigeria, 2014). Recently, the administration of Jonathan inaugurated National council on Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) chaired by vice president Sambo where about ₦220 billion to help small scale businesses but so far the implementation of this programme shows that only rich businessmen and women have access to the loan. Thus, the philosophy or poverty reduction and employment opportunities have been dash out. The failure of the numerous measures to engender socio-economic development and improve the living standard of people has led to increase in poverty level in the land. One could safely argue that poverty is a hindrance to democratic consolidation in Nigeria, since economic chaos can topple democratic institutions. Poverty and ignorance could lead to the demobilization of democratic spirit and the rising socio-economic problems can jeopardize the cultivation of democratic cultures. For example, a hungry and unemployed youth in Nigeria may find it difficult to resist the temptation of taking up job as political thug; just as hungry electorate may not see anything wrong in selling votes during elections which serve as a bane democratic success in a given polity (Odum, 2008). Statistically, poverty index in Nigeria is very high in spite of her abundant natural resources. Then, how could such percentage of citizens really understand the import of social justice when they are swimming in the river of abject poverty? Consequently, the problem of poverty and injustice are good part of Nigerian state and citizens do not seem to understand what prevent them from achieving a just and prosperous dignified life and true democracy.

3.3. Electoral System and Democracy

Electoral competition is a necessary part of healthy democracy. It remained within confines of the commonly accepted rule of democratic game. Electoral competition means allowing or given political space for the political parties to compete and ensure democratic success in a given democratic polity. Ironically, in the context of Nigeria, elections have been witnessing violence, irregularities, malpractices to mention but very few, to the extent that, Nigeria may be termed as failed state due to her underdeveloped democratic institutions and values. Since 1999 when civil politics was restored to Nigeria, discourse on the appropriate electoral system for the country has been put firmly on the national democratic project. The sustained interest in the choice of electoral regime is better appreciated when juxtaposed with the fact that no election in Nigeria since 1959 has gone undisputed. Several reforms such as 2006 and 2010 electoral reforms have been put in place but due to insincerity of government, the country still experienced electoral irregularities and the implication of the electoral problems could lead to legitimacy crisis (Animashaun, 2010).

In Nigeria, electoral malpractices have become dominant features of electoral politics, ranging from illegal printing of voter's cards, illegal possession of ballot boxes and stuffing of ballot boxes, falsification of election results, illegal thumb- printing, illegal printing of forms used for collection and declaration of results and deliberate refusal to supply elections materials to certain areas etc. the implication of these malpractices affect electoral prospect of a particular candidate or party to defeat rivals at polls and frustrate the rights of Nigerians to elect the legitimate and accountable leaders. More to that, electoral malpractice not only undermines all attempt

to institutionalize citizens' input over who governs them and ensure the accountability of political decision-makers to the people but also enables a minority to have disproportionate weight in a political system meant to reflect the general will of the people (Mohammad, 2013).The general thrust of the implication of electoral malpractice in Nigeria in this context affects growth and development of democracy and it very substantiveness.

More evidently, in Nigeria electoral malpractices has assumed the status of a weapon of choice frequently used by a class that seeks to protect its economic and financial hegemony with political power in order to further enhance class dominance. Such a parasite ruling class views public offices as a lucrative avenue for private accumulation of wealth rather than of services to the nation (ASSU, 2002 cited in Mohammad, 2013). Hence, the function of electoral malpractice is not only that of rendering the democratic rights of Nigerians to choose their leaders useless thereby thwarting their wishes but also of providing ample space for the governing class to articulate it hegemonic project. Under such circumstances, democracy is conceived in terms of a struggle over the distribution of wealth and private accumulation rather than addressing citizen's need and building productive economy and just society (Jega, 2000; Moahammad, 2013).

In another development, Omodia (2009) pointed out that, lack of free and fair elections often tends to threaten the democratic process as a result of legitimacy question of government. More to that point, Garba Mohammad concluded that, lack of free and fair elections had not only perverted the functions of government and undermined representation but also contributed greatly to underperformance and erosion of democratic legitimacy and efficacy. Thus, any attempt to embark on a positive democratic project would fail since the citizens no longer have legitimacy for the government.

3.4. Security Challenges and Democracy

Nigeria is a pluralistic society in terms of its multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature. The country has more than 250 ethnic groups, of all federal democracies in the world only India could match Nigeria's cultural complexity. If well managed, this unity in diversity would be a major success, thereby promotes democratic values in Nigeria (Animashaun, 2010). From 1960 till date, Nigeria has been of ethno religious crises, sectarian mayhem, electoral violence mention, which really questioning and shaking the survival of democracy. Notable among them are, the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani crises, Shagamu Lagos state (1999-2000), the Urobho/Ife Modakeke crisis (2000-2001), the Jukun/ Tiv conflict (2000) and post-election violence in the Northern part of Nigeria (2011).

More evidently, terrorist tendencies in the country as witnessed in many part of Nigeria through Niger Delta militias, Boko Haram insurgencies in the North, Kidnapping in the South-East have really pose a lot of challenges to democratization project in Nigeria. Terrorist tendencies have affected the political economy of Nigeria to the extent the business activities have been put a hurled. For example, traders from the South-East of Nigeria find it difficult to travel to far North-East to buy goods due to the rate of killing. In addition, the scourge of Boko Haram lead to food scarcity in Nigeria, prices of food items and vegetables skyrocket in the south. This is as a result of inability of traders from the north to transport commodities due to general insecurity in the north. However, could one for instance say that democracy really functions in Nigeria, in which the freedom of movement has been truncated by the insurgent activities? In fact, the spate of bombing and killing of innocent souls with reckless abandon and without recourse to the protection of human life which motivate some scholars like (Edogiawerie, 2013) to term Nigeria as "state of nature" which was foremost reason for the "social contract" of Thomas Hobbes. It could be right to say here that, despite successive attempts by Nigerian government to address the problem of security through public policy alternatives such as regional and state mechanism, federal character principle, inter alia, the security problem still remains unabated. The failure could be attributed to the "character of Nigerian state" because the state does not carry the Nigerians project first rather go for primitive accumulation and state capture syndrome.

Borrowing from Ake (1986), he identified four characters of Nigerian state that have disabled it from effective response to the security issues. These are: the coercive nature of the state because it has been an exploitative state. Secondly, the Nigerian state is quite different to social welfare. That is the state; does not actually take into consideration about social welfare of its citizens. Thirdly, the state has an image of a hostile coercive force, as a result of its colonial origin as exacerbated by its post-colonial abuses. Fourthly, it lacks autonomy (Ake cited in Nkweke, 2013). Consequently, the state is not seen as protection of public interest and loyalty. Today, some citizens could take laws into their hand by challenging the very sovereignty of Nigeria without much recourse to punishment from the state. Thus, without viable alternative options for checking the activities of those that violate laws in the state, it is likely that democracy could not thrive well in Nigeria. Indeed, the current posture of insecurity in Nigeria has become a serious threat to democratic values thereby hinder peace and development.

3.5. Political Parties and Democracy

Unarguably, political party is a fundamental political institution in the actualization of democratic regime. There is a nexus between success of democratization and the activities of political parties. Conceptually, political parties are formally recognized organizations whose members share certain common values, ideals and aspirations about how society should be politically, socio-culturally and economically organized for the common good. They also aspire to translate these ideals and values through the control of government by placing their representatives in competitive free, fair and honestly conducted elections, without harassment, intimidation and threat of violence (Kura, 2005). This definition has already captured the very essence and functions of political party as it relate to democracy. However, the roles of political parties in Nigeria have raised more questions than answers among scholars. In this context, one could rightly pose these questions: do political parties in Nigeria of any relevance in the preservation of democratization norms and its principles? Does a political party mediate well with other opposition parties? Do Nigerian political parties institutionalized? These and more related questions agitating our minds as to the future of our democracy without effective and responsive political parties. Participation in electoral competition is another aspect where the process of democratization has also been eroded in Nigeria,

while political parties should be the foundation and building block of the process of democratization, the nature and character of the dominant political parties in Nigeria threaten the whole process. Political parties have been hijacked by a few cabals who control national resources and government at the expense of the freedom of participation (Alumona, 2010; Omodia, 2009).

In Nigeria, one could easily discern that multi-party system is in theory while the one- party system is in practice. The ruling party usually town downs the country to be a "rentier state"- political entrepreneurs (ruling party) and their cronies always deliberately overestimate the intentions of the opposition with the aim of intimidating them while enhancing their own scope of maneuvering in negotiations. The oppositions, on the other hand, always seem to define their interest too narrowly, thereby reducing their power and influence. In fact, the activities of political parties in Nigeria do not manifest the actual element of multiparty system. Imagine presently in Nigeria, the ruling party using dictum of "endorsement and consensus candidates" comes 2015 elections which do not encourage electoral competitions among aspirants and the electorates. This does not only affect democratic project in Nigeria but also create avenue for imposing leaders to the citizens. Hence, the mode of politics in Nigeria is either procedural or substantive democracy because it does not put any emphasis on them at all. Common good could no longer serve as the driving force of politics in Nigeria while political process ceases to be ruled by the quest of good (Mohammad, 2013).

To this end, it would be misleading in this context to argue that democracy has totally failed in Nigeria because it never really gets underway in the first place. In Nigeria, the state, which ought to be central to the development and democratization project, remains as repressive undemocratic and oriented to zero-sum politics as ever. The states do not really have development plans on their agenda and as such liberal democratic project failed (Ake, 2001). In Nigeria, political power does not only represent the license to wealth, but also the means to security and guarantor of general well-being. It is within this context of the dominant role of the state in political economy that one could explain the desperation of Nigeria's governing elites for state power as evident in the brazen manipulation of electoral process which serves as hindrance to any positive democratic project in Nigeria. Although, it is often argued that, the attainment of ideal democratic values is very rare globally.

4. Concluding Remarks

Today, about 140 of the nearly 200 nation-states hold multi-party elections (Wikipedia, 2014). Yet, glance at what is happening in various regions of the world shows that there is no reason to think that democracy is established as a global norm. Even in countries where democratic traditions are firmly in place many citizens feel powerless to affect national policies, and in some countries, basic human rights are in jeopardy. More to point, even secular liberal democracy that Fukuyama put in his book "End of History" could not be the end of history, because we are not at the end of human intelligence. Every human society has the right to construct its own conceptions of democracy in response to its religious, economic and social needs, to which this paper subscribes; it is simple that liberal democracy could not be 100 % successful in Nigeria but to show the extent and degree of it deepening. This is because the civic culture of western liberal democracy focuses on "individualism" while in Nigeria's setting is "communal" in nature. The point the paper is making here is that, democratization process could not get complete success and such attempt should take into cognizance of the historical context of Nigeria. Therefore, what is needed in Nigeria today is to advocate for ideal democracy that would contained the nature and characters of Nigerians. Besides, renewed commitment to promote human rights and social justice vibrant economy that would ensure growth and development of all sectors are needed. In addition, there should be existence of the conditions for development of free and lively civil society organizations where self-organizing groups, movement and individual who are relatively autonomous, articulate views and create association and there must be rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for the citizens.

Unfortunately, the paper has therefore found that while there have been some complete democratic transitions, there has never been any democratic consolidation and the prospect of one in the future is getting very distant. This is because the conditions for such consolidation could not take effective root with regard to the brand of politics that Nigeria had practiced since independence. This is because of the politics of intimidation, maladministration, corruption and manipulation. This paper therefore argues that democratic project could be examined from economic dynamic of democracy through understanding the character of Nigerian state and its political economy. The paper acknowledges that the failure of democratic project in Nigeria is due to weak democratic structures and underdeveloped political institutions. That social justice that ought to have ensured democratic order is undermined. This continues to affect the quality of democratization, and create serious dilemma and uncertainties in Nigeria. To address these problems, the paper suggests that there is the need for the rule of law to ensure legal guarantees and institutionalize economic society in the form of sets of socio-political craft norms that mediates between the state and the market. The paper further argues that, the Nigerian democratic experiment has moved to the fifth Republic, which started in 1999. Nothing however seems to have changed from the politics of the past. In the past, each time general elections were held violence resulted, therefore the military had always capitalized on that to return to power, and yet the politician do not have decorum to allow for peaceful elections. Indeed, in the words of this paper present that, democracy seems to be doomed for self-destruction. The paper hopes that it does not self-destruct, but the signs as pointed out above are ominous. Finally, the paper submits that, as a proposition to be subjected to empirical scrutiny that Nigeria is due for "deliberative democracy" not representative democracy again and the task is for political theorists to guide and inform practical politicians on its ideals.

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