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ASSIGNMENT

What is the importance of democratic consolidation?

Democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, in a way that it becomes unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an external shock, and is regarded as the only available system of government within a country. This is the case when; no significant political group seriously attempts to overthrow the democratic regime, the democratic system is regarded as the most appropriate way to govern by the vast majority of the public, and all political actors are accustomed to the fact that conflicts are resolved through established political and constitutional rules. The notion of democratic consolidation is contested because it is not clear that there is anything substantive that happens to new democracies that secures their continuation, beyond those factors that simply make it 'more likely' that they continue as democracies. Many scholars have attempted to explain the factors that are responsible for democracies consolidating, which has led to the emergence of different ‘consolidation theories’ in the academic literature. Unconsolidated democracies often suffer from formalized but intermittent elections and clientelism.

A democracy is widely considered consolidated when several or all of the following conditions are met. Firstly, there must be a durability or permanence of democracy over time, including (but by no means limited to) adherence to democratic principles such as rule of law, independent judiciary, competitive and fair elections, and a developed civil society. Some theorists believe that this secondary process of instilling democracy into the institutions of government is how consolidation occurs. The democracy must also be accepted by its citizens as the ruling form of government, thus ensuring stability and, again, minimizing the risk of reverting to an enforcement or advocacy of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom regime.

However, there are roadblocks to a strong democracy in Nigeria at all levels of government. Conflict—triggered by political competition and communal, ethnic, religious or resource allocation rivalries—poses a major threat to democracy. Corruption pervades the daily lives of nigerians.

RELIGION: many scholars have argued that religion has the effect of challenging democratic values and socialisation. Much of this literature has contrasted religion and democracy as systems of belief and has focused on the challenge religious extremism and loyalties pose for democratic institutions, showing that religiosity is associated with political intolerance and other non-democratic norms. Additionally, democratic values are argued to stress universality, striving for global implementation of civil rights for every person, whereas the religious public typically considers itself as superior to other groups, and usually entitled to more rights than others. From the secular point of view, religion is a hindrance to democracy as it enforces a set of legal and societal principles. Separation of religion and state is required to protect freedom and ensure equality.

CORRUPTION: It has been observed by scholars and commentators that corruption is a major challenge to social, political, and economic development in any country. The consequences of corruption are unfavorable for the progress of any society. Against this backdrop, this article examines the effects of corruption on the economic development of Nigeria. It discusses the sociocultural, political, and economic factors responsible for the endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria and concludes that the “top-to-bottom” corruption in Nigeria has negatively affected the country’s economic development. To change this situation, the leadership must genuinely commit to fighting corruption from the top down; corruption control mechanisms need to be strengthened, the offenders need to be punished, and the citizenry needs to be mobilized to demand transparency and accountability.

ETHNICITY: Nigeria is a multi-lingual society having 374 ethnic nationalities that speak 348 languages.10 It is a part of the Nigerian culture for children to show respect to their parents and the elderly ones in society, but the way and manner this respect is demonstrated among Nigerians differ from one tribe to the other. Nevertheless, the ancestral beliefs of many communities in Nigeria are gradually being eroded and replaced with modern values consequent upon the assumption that most African traditional religions are shrouded in mysteries. In the view of Manderson11 “Local cultures often adopt traditional forms (folks music, oral histories, pagan rites and festivals) to preserve ancient customs against new theories, which were making important changes in the structure of legal subjectivity,” justifying why religion forms the basis of human idiosyncrasies in many African and the Asian world.

For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is one of the leading Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. The headquarters of the Church is located in Ogun State, and the General Overseer of the Church, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, is a Nigerian of a Yoruba origin. Yet, the Church has worship centres across the country. Similarly, the head of the Sokoto Caliphate, Alhaji Sa’adu Abubakar, is the head of the Islamic religion in Nigeria. Islam has worship centres in all the states of the federation. The intercultural communication among Nigerians who are members of the same religion seems to be very harmonious notwithstanding their tribal differences, whereas most religious conflicts in Nigeria emanate from the intercultural communication between persons of different religious backgrounds. This is why it may be necessary for the Nigerian government to imbibe the concept of the ‘Third Cultures’. According to McEwan et al.12 “Third cultures, a concept developed by Casmir (1978, 1997), are formed when individuals from two or more cultures create a new hybrid culture, containing the components of each individual culture while developing unique cultural characteristics.” This concept when fully internalized by the citizens may enhance the social integration among the people and create the basis for the effective social mobilization of the citizens toward achieving laudable objectives in the interest of the peace and development of society. “Culture and communication, according to,13 are intimately linked. Signs and symbols are communicated through language and through cultural artefacts. Each culture also has its own worldview or expectations about its cultural artefacts, human conduct and identity.” It is the variations in the expectations of the people of different culture and religion that often creates the basis for the frictions that we witness intermittently in society.

Nevertheless, it is often the way and manner the media report on the initial disagreements arising from the intercultural communications between people of different culture and religion that normally accentuates the tempo of conflict in society. As Kaylor14 “The Media depictions of Jesus are important cultural images to consider due to the symbolic power of shaping Jesus to look and talk a certain way or address specific issues. Thus, Jesus often is remade to fit the cultural beliefs and norms of those crafting his image.” Unfortunately, some journalists have a very narrow view knowing that Nigeria is a pluralistic society, which accounts for the crises that occur each time the media fail to take into account those imperceptible socio-cultural variables peculiar to each cultural nationality in Nigeria while reporting on issues cutting across cultures and religion.

The pluralistic theorists believe that society comprises many interacting groups having individual interests to accomplish. This is based on the assumption that the various groups in society have more or less equal access to public resources and influence. It is upon this premise that some people sometimes wonder at the complaints of the seemingly very poor members of the society on the erroneous assumption that everyone has equal opportunity and access to succeed in life. So the media being a creation of the society function mainly to represent the different segments of the society, depending on the editorial mission of the particular media concern. Most media practitioners do not make any conscious effort to evaluate the likely implications of their reports on the peace and development of society; so long they are convinced that their reports reflect the true account of an event or issue under review. For example, a polemic publication of Moslem ethics and values will lead to crisis anywhere in the world, whereas, making a disparaging comment about any other religion, could at best lead to a heated argument or debate. Therefore, media understanding the dynamics of intercultural communications, to some extent, could reduce the tempo of conflicts in society. “Several reasons exist to support face-to-face intercultural contact, compared to mediated contact, as more effective in the reduction of prejudice among people in advantaged groups.15 For individuals who perceive stereotypical beliefs as exaggerated generalizations, not based on factual information, exposure to counter-stereotypical exemplars can influence shifting attitudes.”