

Name: OSIMEN ZOLANI

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Department: IRD

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ABSTRACT:

The new democratic dispensation in Nigeria was launched with the emergence of the fourth republic. It would seem that democracy has a culture of impunity in some people while political differences are some of the challenges that have erupted. Democracy was expected to deliver good dividends and social justice. However, not far into the fourth republic, the body polity became overburdened with, namely: election malpractices, military coups, bad governance, minority rights, political party indiscipline, abuse of power, etc. These challenges are strongly affecting democratic stability. Adaptation of the liberal democratic system to suit the country's peculiarities should lay the basis for people centered development and empower them

to be active participants in policy making and implementation. A system characterized by the rule of law and constitutionalism. Unless these are taken, the country may experience another democratic crisis and doom for the nation-state. The analysis of the above challenges is the focus of this paper.

INTRODUCTION:

Democracy has been described as the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, with the supreme, rulers and subjects' alike being subject to it. Democracy, as understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles for the running of government, whatever its form, must be run. Such principles include equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and transparency. Indeed, effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency. In this regard, democracy is not just about political power should be acquired but also what to do with it and how it should be exercised. Therefore, democracy specifies who constitute the state and wields the authority inherent in the state (the elected representatives) and how they acquire authority (free and fair elections), how they should exercise it (in broad harmony with public good). This makes democracy a moral and ethical justifications or judgements. Hence, good governance is a philosophical foundation upon which democracy and democratic development is built. Democracy has thus been recognized as the only

accordance with the will of the people through a wide range of mechanisms. Thus, the core ideas and ingredients defining democracy are: accountability and transparency; that the people determine those who govern give account of their stewardship through the most important mechanisms for the realization of the vision. It is also important to note that, elections are not only means to affirm the legitimacy of the governors through a regular cycle, but also fertile ground for democracy to thrive. This paper will therefore explore the state of democracy in Nigeria with key emphases in the ongoing conceptual clarification.

Brief explanation on the keywords in this chapter, Democracy, democratic consolidation, Good governance, Fourth republic, 1 Democracy

Apart from being a subject of global concern, the concept of democracy, in its understanding, is the government of the people by the people, particularly sensitive to the current socioeconomic and political challenges, striving for international identity and development posture through good governance. As an over-flogged concept, the idea as employed by the Greeks means "demos Cratos" which is literally translated as "rule of the people". That goes to show that democracy has its root in Greek where the people have an opportunity of taken part in decision-making. This concept is seen as a universal principle of governance that upholds high regard for the citizenry the right to participate in decision-making that accords with their needs and interest. The concept can therefore be regarded as a form of governance that involves the widest spectrum participation, either through direct or indirect administration of the accepted policies. It is a government based on the rule of law which is against arbitrariness, highhandedness and autocracy, the antithesis to military regime. Moreover, if we go by St. Augustine's definition of a government that Nigeria ever had could qualify as "Mafua". "Mafua" within the paper's context means government inflexible, unresponsive, seeking, ideology- barren, orientation less operatives; usually a government of course scarcely ever elected by the people. Even in the past, those to rule are clearly predetermined and chosen even without the consent of Democracy in Nigeria is flawed and in terms of its conceptualization, it falls short of the expectations of the people. Furthermore, Nigeria's development (as described) has tended to promote inequality rather than equality. The most serene city, Yobe State now synonymous with senseless violence, is occasioned by misgivings and primordial sentiments and tribalism. Predictably, the mixtures of ethnicity and faith have taken

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centres in Yobe State on Fridays and Sundays to safeguard citizens boast of belonging to either Christianity or Islam, faiths, that indeed is a sad commentary.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts "Liberal theory of democracy" in examining democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The liberal theory is common among capitalist and peripheral capitalist nations. It emerged when capitalism became the dominant mode of production. North America supported philosophical writing of John Locke, Montesquieu, Euripides, and other Liberal writers whose emphasis on liberty, social justice, natural rights, majority rule and private property as a premise, the central idea of the liberal bourgeois theory of a democratic political system which encourages individual participation and the development of citizens. Liberal democracies usually have all adult citizens the right to vote regardless of race, gender, or religion. Liberal democracy may take various constitutional forms: as the United States, Brazil, India and Germany, or a constitutional monarchy like the United Kingdom, Japan and Spain. It may also be a presidential system. This theory is justified due to the fact that, it can help address the challenges of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic as a framework structure through which a democratic political system can be built. The theory of democracy is an interesting theory in this work. It exposes and explains the expectation of any political system and the conduct of credible elections which is one of the factors for consolidating democracy.

3. Critique

"Liberal Democracy" does not respect the absolute majority rule (by representatives). The liberty of majority rule is restricted by the constitution decided by previous generations. Also, the real power is held by a small representative. The argument goes thus, "Liberal Democracy is a decoration over an oligarchy. Some Marxists socialists and others argue that, liberal democracy is an integral part of the capitalist system, which is class-based and not democratic or participatory. The cost of liberal representatives democracies favours the rich (Morton,

2004). Modern Democracy has also been criticized by non-Marxists as an honest force used to keep the masses from realizing that the political process. Liberal Democracy notwithstanding the

consolidation better than the liberal theory in this study.

4. Democratic Consolidation

Diamond (1999) sees democratic consolidation as the process of deep legitimation such that all significant political actors believe that democracy is the best option for their society than any other realistic alternative. This means that the act of reducing the probability of the breakdown of democracy where democracy can be said that it will persist. Some scholars focus on the maintenance and about regarding the key political institutions within the framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic process. Democratic consolidation manifest under enhance economic growth, democratic culture, stable party system, suffice to assert that Nigeria until stability is attained. This therefore shows that the current regime, Nigeria is striving for consolidation. The problem with democracy does not evolve, as it was in the west, with the African so that there is a serious need to “domesticate” Western liberal democracy to enhance its benefits in Africa. Therefore, Nigeria and the world should be argued, “find indigenous ways and means of hammering the democratic element as well as elements inherited from alien sources to create a democratic form in the setting of the modern world.

5. Good Governance

Odock (2006:3 – 5) sees good governance as “a system of leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, the accountability of leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the management of public resources. Transparency, Odock opined that it has to do with the leadership of government business in an open, easy to understand and accessible manner. Rules made by government, the policies implemented by the government and the rules of government activities are easy to verify by the ordinary

citizens. Accountability as a component of good governance requires that those who occupy positions of leadership in the government should be subject themselves to the will and desire of the society and not to their own. Unfortunately, this is lacking in the public domain in Nigeria. Corruption is one of the main challenges or obstacles to democracy and good governance. Political independence political leadership has been everything but accountable and distributive rather than productive in orientation, wasteful and inefficient economic management. The problem with Nigeria has been the quality of leadership (Achebe, 1984). Corruption is a pernicious phenomenon that pervades all sectors of public and private life in Africa. Under the Fourth Republic, it continued unabated. Governance typically emphasizes leadership by the way political leaders meaning the apparatus of the state

principles such as rule of law, accountability, participation and rights. These governance qualities have the capacity to process of a country. In the Nigerian context, good governance, rule and a true federal system. These are the basic pillars of development rests on. Therefore, resources of the state must be used in a manner as to achieve the desired level of socio-economic development of the political community.

Challenges of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Nigeria's democracy landed on a good platform with the establishment of institutions, plural society, vibrant civil society organizations among others. These ingredients have the structure and content to strive in Nigeria. But it is germane to note that, Nigeria's democracy is grossly unstable since the return to this popular form of government. The political terrain has been home with lots of challenges preventing the realization of the system. In fact the impediments to the realization of true democracy seem to assume a more perilous proportion. The challenges are:

1 Military Coups

The first major challenge to the survival of democracy in Nigeria is military coups, as they always prevented democracy from becoming a toddler since 1966. Democracy needs to be nurtured by constant vigilance not by truncating them through coups and counter coups. If there often are, Nigeria will do better to use all constitutional provisions to prevent abuse of democratic processes, procedures and institutions. A necessary messianic option.

2 Election Malpractices

The next major challenge is the inability to conduct free and fair elections. The 2007 general elections, witnessed a lot of irregularities and malpractices as reported by the European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) led by J. van den Berg (Netherlands). Member of the European Parliament, J. van den Berg, reveals the extent of this major challenge when he reported his observation of 33 of the 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory. The states and federal elections fell far short of basic international standards for democratic elections. They were marred by poor organization, lack of transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, substantial voter intimidation, widespread voter disenfranchisement at all different stages and a general malaise once and for all.

3 Bad Governance

Bad Governance is a major challenge to the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

kills the spirit of patriotism.

4 Majoritarian Tyranny over Minority Rights

The issue of majority rule and minority rights is still a challenge in the oil producing areas of the south-south geopolitical zone. Citizens have consistently cried out against overt and prolonged neglect of these areas by the ruling government over the years. Some disgruntled elements have resorted to militancy as a way to ventilate their grievances thereby threatening the stability of democracy in Nigeria. Democracy requires a stable political environment to thrive.

5 Political Party Indiscipline

The activities of political parties are a far cry from the prescriptions of the constitution and pose a major challenge. Political parties and their members still breach constitutional provisions that no association should retain, organize, train or employ a group of persons to be employed for the use or display of arms or for promoting any political objective in a manner to arouse anger or hatred and even political assassination are still a prominent feature. For example, the EU EOM notes thus “violence was a major problem as the incidents increased as the election drew nearer. Credible reports indicate that 200 people including candidates and policemen were killed during the election process. This is unacceptable not only with respect to the right to life but also the electoral process”

6 Abuse of Power

The unrestrained use of power by government against citizens is a major challenge. The invasions of Odi and Zaki Biam by the Government forces have caused a loss of lives detract from the concept of democracy. The forced displacement from the federal capital, Abuja and the consequential homelessness of many citizens without alternative accommodation in many cases could be seen as a major challenge which reinforces undemocratic norms.

7 Constitutional Breaches

The threat to the fundamental rights of citizens during political elections is a monumental challenge. The right to life of many citizens has been truncated for political reasons. The country is replete with reports of political assassination that thwart full expression of people’s democratic rights. This detracts from the fundamental rights of speech, movement, assembly, human person and fair hearing as usually and after election. This is a major challenge to democracy.

Prospects

The future of democracy in Nigeria remains bright. Nigeria is a young nation with a vibrant population and a rich natural resource base. The country has a long history of democratic governance and a strong tradition of civil liberties. The people of Nigeria are determined to build a more democratic and prosperous nation. The government has a responsibility to ensure that the principles of democracy are fully realized and that the rights of all citizens are protected. The future of democracy in Nigeria is bright and the people are determined to build a more democratic and prosperous nation.

they are the true representatives of the people who should speak for them. At this moment, it should be regarded as a passing phase from a military dictatorship to liberal democracy, remains the best option for Nigeria and should be appreciated.

For example, a number of elected persons who were disqualified by the election tribunals. These are lessons from the past that are able to reach their grievances. This was not possible in the past. The judiciary has been overturning some major Government decisions and legislations by their landmark decisions to accord with the principles of constitutional government which is a basic ethos of democracy. The balances and separation of powers that characterize democracy are now in the land. Citizens are able to exercise their freedoms of speech, movement, assembly, and their rights to fair hearing, personal liberty, etc. that happened under military regimes. All these are pointers to the very bright prospects in Nigeria. The anticorruption war with the military is ongoing. The articulation of grievances through the media and the National Assembly give room for robust debates. In the past, decrees are issued out without debates as in the military. The author concluded that Nigeria is on the true path to democracy, taking a long and winding road. Like a toddler, Nigeria will outgrow the infancy period and take root and mature to an advanced stage.