

Democratization Hurdles in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: An Institutional Point of View Approach

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Abstract: This study assesses the Nigeria's democracy under the fourth republic, examine its major hurdles and generate policy measures that would help address the problems. The paper further examined the challenges facing Nigeria's democracy, making an analysis of these challenges from the various Institutions. The study did not forget to highlight the various institutional responses. The paper relied on descriptive and interpretive methods of data analysis, while data collection is based on review of published literature and other media sources. The recommendations and suggestion of this study are capable of addressing the hurdles and challenges of democracy in Nigeria.

Keywords: democracy; hurdles; Republic; Nigeria; government

Introduction

Democracy can be alluded to as a political framework in which the general population and the administration are associated in terms of information and output of government, that is, the general population are self-administering regarding input (individuals have flexibility to place thoughts into government and to shape government through decisions, reaching authorities, campaigning and so on) and output (laws and policies) which show that government is in the hand of self-representing individuals (Grigsby, 2009). As a form of government, democracy has received and still receiving the highest rate of criticism by the gods of political science and their off springs alike. Despite this, it keeps reigning rather than fizzling. Plato launched the campaign against democracy when he claimed that the kind of freedom democracy creates "licence" - getting what you want - is harmful because the value of freedom is in choosing what is good and that, democracy to

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him is rule by ignorance. Taking the baton from him, Aristotle did not hesitate to condemn democracy as the worst form of government in his six-fold typology of government. Tocqueville's fear of the tyranny of the majority inherent in democracy prepared a space for him in the tent of these aforementioned scholars (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2007).

All these notwithstanding, as a government by persons freely chosen by the governed, today, it is the dominating form of government in the world, its rival have either disappeared, turned into unusual survival or retreated from the field to kneel down in their last strongholds (Omotola, 2006; Fukuyama, 1992; Dahl, 1998, Fabian, 2007) because of its aura of legitimacy and respectability on political life (Ake, 1996). It has always gained attention both in the heart of a common man whose aim is not only to participate in government, but also to determine his lot in politics and the scripts of a scholar whose calling is to find solution to political problem. It has always been on and off in the political history of mankind, but never for once disappeared totally. As a concept that has survived many ages, changing from direct participation of Athenian ages to practice of representation in the modern times, its re-occurrence mostly was brought to stage by violence or threat of violence, citing examples from the English glorious revolution of 1689, American Revolution of 1775, the two world wars and cold war respectively, all of which have their salient ways of reinvigorating democratic principles in the political terrain. (Moore, 1996; Huntington, 1991).

In the contemporary world, it has been established in the extant literature that the formation of new states coupled with the victory of the West over the East in the Cold War spurs another wave of democracy (Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1991). Similarly, to the optimists, the swift transformations following the collapse of communism ushered in a generation of relative political stability (Zakaria, 2009), and signalled the universalization of Western liberal democracies as the final form of government (Fukuyama, 1992). However these reasons are not enough for its upsurge in the view of Ake (1996) who opined that democracy owes its current popularity to the absence of certain values which it represent. More so, it is no longer threatening to the power elites who now enjoy democratic legitimacy without paying its cost adopting the "principle of minimum input for maximum gain".

Having established this fact, it is therefore no puzzling to identify in one hand, the role of the west in transplanting the seed of democracy to foreign soil, on the other

hand, the desire of these countries to embrace it. These make it the only game in town and the most striking feature of modern politics; as such, any country that is desirous of recognition must be democratically compliant (Omotola, 2006). It also triggered a lot of transition of many authoritarian regimes to democracy. Transitions as projects of democratization loom large on the African political horizon. This project now occupies an important place on the agenda of many African countries everywhere on the African continent, one party regimes, one man rule, military rule and authoritarian rule are generally under siege, increasingly forced by popular demonstrations, intra elite accommodation, externally induced pressures or a combination of these and other social forces, to liberalize and give competitive politics a chance in the polity (Olagunju, Jinadu & Oyovbaire, 1993). Other attributes and values that have made democracy appealing to peoples and cultures include political rights, accountability, equality of opportunity and responsiveness, among others (Baviskar & Malone, 2004).

However, viewing from Bamidele Ojo's binocular, the mere adoption of democratic ideas or institutions does not in itself provide a nutritious ground for democracy to grow. This explains the status of democracy in most African countries with its seed despite being irrigated with innocent blood and civilian sweat, is still struggling to germinate let alone producing fruits similar to that of the parent seed. This is because civil rule has become tantamount to democracy (Ojo, 2012). In Nigeria for example, democracy is something that has been extensively talked about, but not yet attained (Jega, 2000 cited in Ojo, 2006) but the reason for this may not be far-fetched as scholars have over time raised the question as to whether a dictatorship can deliberately nurse a transition to genuine democratic rule (Fasoro, Haastrup & Otubanjo, 1992), indicating that the pregnancy of Nigeria's democracy was not delivered by a mother that support the existence of its kind. Little wonder the structural operation of our democracy is militarized in such a way that grassroots democracy seems almost impossible, thereby giving the military-turned-politicians the opportunity to swiftly form the "godfathers" in the newly born democracy in order to keep frustrating its growth because they are not still deeply convinced that the "ballot is stronger than the bullet".

Method of the Study

This work employs descriptive and interpretive methods of analysing data while data collection is based on review of published literature and other media sources. Data obtained were analysed properly which leads to the recommendations and

conclusion of the paper. The segment of this paper is as follows; Abstract, Introduction, Method of the Study, Conceptual Clarification, Theoretical Framework and a final section which discusses the recommendations and conclusion of the paper.

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of democracy is explained in this section.

The Concept of Democracy

Democracy just like every other concept in the field of Political Science lacks a generally accepted definition; in fact there is no straight forward way of depicting democracy because it is a concept that is not amenable to easy representation/interpretation. Hence it is contestable and subject to manipulations. This explains why it cannot produce the same positive outcomes, for there are countries who take democracy serious as a source of deep public value and others who use it as an ordinary means of power seizure. As a matter of fact, all of the people in the world who claim to be democratic can in principle subscribe to a wide range of interpretations of what democracy really is (Feldman, 2003). The intellectual excursion into the meaning of democracy can be traced to the Greek City States where it was said to have originated, with its meaning derived from their two words “Demos” which means people and “Krato” which refers to rule. In order words, it is a political system in which the people are the king, thus, it was practiced in its direct form owing to their small population and high rate of political participation. This was captured well in no other script, than Pericles’ funeral oration rendered by Thucydides.

Here each individual is interested not only in his own Affairs but the affairs of the state as well; even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well informed on general politics. This is the peculiarity of ours, we do not say that a man who takes no Interest in politics is a man who minds his own business we say that he has no business here at all (Thucydides, 1995).

It therefore, signified a kind of rule or a type of political system and not the basis for legitimate political authority or for the protection of political values such as individual and human rights (Dunn, 2005). In the contemporary, scholars’ definition of this concept is a function of the binocular from which they are viewing it. For instance Thorson (1962) in Ikotun 2010 views democracy

essentially as an instrument for limiting the powers of governmental officials because of the fear of tyranny. A similar approach was taken by Feldman in his Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) talk show when he defined democracy as a technology for the control and deployment of power with the effect of diffusing the power to the larger part of the people (Feldman, 2003). Sartori (1987) took a descriptive parameter by stating democracy exists only when the relation between the governed and the government abides by the principle that the state is at the service of the citizen and not the citizens at the service of the state since the government exist for the people not vice versa. In the meantime, as against the popular belief, MacIver (2006) in Ikotun (2010), opposed that democracy cannot mean the rule of the masses, as viewing democracy from this parlance will only impinge on the rights of the minority. Nevertheless, some scholars like Dahl and Popper, are of the opinion that it consists of basic elections, whereas some attach great importance to free speech, human rights, accountability and the likes.

In the corridor of philosophers, democracy also gained attention, although, not a positive one especially from the tripartite anti-democrats (Socrates, Plato & Aristotle), who were essentially aristocratic conservatives. Plato holds the view that democracy did not tolerate highly gifted persons; as such, he likened it to moral corruption and degradation. More so, he condemned democracy on the ground that the politicians were incompetent and ignorant culminating into factionalism, extreme violence and partisan politics which were the causes of political instability (Ramaswamy & Mukherjee, 2007). In tandem with the above postulation, Aristotle posits as if he agrees in totality with Plato when he defined democracy as government by the mob and the worst form of government in his classification of government (Sabine & Thorson, 1973). To Jean Jacques Rousseau, true democracy is impossible unless all citizens gather to make decisions and supervise the government; insisting that the decision of the government should embody the general will and “will” cannot be represented (Haworth, 2005; Ramswany & Mukherjee, 2007). These scholars have portrayed some inherent evil of democracy, especially if one would look at the various political violence that owed their cause to democracy and exceptional geniuses the same has crucified in Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo, Bola Ige Segun Williams (the assassinated gubernatorial aspirant of Lagos state in 2007), among others.

In another way round, one may doubt the validity of their assertion that democracy did not tolerate highly gifted persons if the examples of exceptional leaders like Barrack Obama and Babatunde Fashola come to mind. However in the view of

modern scholars, they might have been victim of event as the version of democracy practiced during their time which formed the bases of their postulations was adjudged less democratic, given their limited franchise which denied even Aristotle the right to vote, for he was not of Athenian pedigree (Haworth, 2005). Whereas the Athenian democracy restricted the concept of demos, modern democracy claims that they have made the concept inclusive and therefore the rule is actually by the people (Arua, 2010).

The aforementioned views notwithstanding, scholars are yet to reach a consensus on the major features that constitute democracy, in addressing this issue of what should constitute a democracy, two major schools have emerged. The first of which is the procedural school, which holds the belief that democracy is a form of government, as such it emphasizes the procedure that enable the government to govern: meeting to discuss issues, voting in election, running for public office (Janda, Berry & Goldman, 2005). Scholars like Dahl (1997), who also belongs to this school, opined that democracy was all about political equality and giving everyone equal voice in saying how a state can be governed. He then specified what procedures or institutions were required to deliver democratic political equality that if any of it is missing, the society is non-democratic. These procedures include:

- Free and fair elections;
- Universal suffrage;
- The policies a government passes depends on the election result;
- Citizens has the right to stand as candidates;
- Freedom of expression and information;
- Freedom of association.

In the same context, Karl Popper also placed emphasis on the procedure required to underpin democracy. For Popper, the only thing needed for a state to be democratic is the citizen's ability to remove a government in power (Popper, 1963). Dahl and Popper gave procedural definitions that classify system of governments according to whether or not certain procedures are in place. In contrast, some scholars believe that the procedural element of democracy is not sufficient, rather definitions of democracy also need to take into account the substance of what democracy is about and what it aims to achieve. Under procedural definition, it is possible to find states

that have all these features in place but without actually being a democracy. An example of which is Singapore; which was not considered democratic until 2015, because it does not have competitive elections (Hix & Whiting, 2012).

The second school sees democracy in the substance of government policies, in freedom of religion and the provision for human needs. Suffice to say that while procedural school focuses on how decisions are made (method), the substantive approach is concerned with what government does (result) (Janda, Berry & Goldman, 2005). A deeper exploration of the substantive school will then reveal the deficiency, that it does not provide the criteria that allow us to determine whether a government is democratic or even which government policies are truly democratic. More so, to this school, the principle of responsiveness is absolute, meaning the government should do what the majority wants regardless of what that is. Rationally, this does not betray logic in any form, but a situation whereby the vast majority of the population are Christians who supports a constitutional amendments to require bible reading in public schools, although this will be democratic from the procedural point of view but it will threaten the freedom of religion which is a core fruit the tree of democracy must bear. (Janda, Berry & Goldman, 2005)

Providing more explanations under this school, Schumpeter (2003) considers the importance of political elites competing among each other to win the vote of citizens. He defines democracy as a system in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples vote. To him democracy is characterized by competing groups of elites contending to govern and the people choosing between these contenders. Przeworski et al (2000), on their own, cautioned that election alone is not enough for a country to be tagged democratic, there must be at least two parties competing in the elections and there must be a turnover of power. This, to them, is crucial to ensure that the substance of democracy is present. The distinctions between procedural and substantive definitions can be seen in the political story of Nigeria.

Sufficiently, Grisby (2009), in his wisdom, sees democratic government as one in which the people and the government are connected in terms of both output and input dimensions of government. To him democratic government presupposes that:

- people are free to participate in the governing process(participatory democracy);

- all the people are free to participate in the governing process(pluralist democracy);;
- people are aware of what they are doing when they participate in the governing process so that their participation is a process of achieving self - government (developmental democracy);
- government is not tyrannical or oppressive towards the people (protective democracy).

Some scholars like Berry and Goldman (2005) have even tagged modern democracy as the globalization of American government neglecting the view of both Claud Ake and Julius Nyerere, who had earlier admonished that democracy should not be seen as Pepsi that one sees everywhere; its cultural context must not be ignored (Saliu, 2010). Another way of distinguishing democracy from all other form of government is in the level of people's participation especially in discharging their civic responsibilities such as the following: political campaigns, voting in an election and holding leaders accountable among others. Without people's participation there would be no democracy (Saliu, 2010).

Democratic History of the Nigerian State: A Review

Nigeria's march to constitutional democracy has been a chequered one marked by anti-colonial struggles, crisis, coups and a thirty-month agonizing civil war (Ojo, 1998). In its process of democratization, it has passed through many stages viz: (a) era of colonial autocracy and absolutism, that is, colonialism era till independence,(b) emergence of constitutional democracy (1960-1966), (c) the return of military autocracy and absolutism (1966-1979), (d) restoration of constitutional democracy (1979-1983), (e) the second coming of military autocracy and absolutism (1983-1989) (Nwabueze, 1993). Despite this, the opportunity presented at each stage since independence to redress the contradictions in Nigeria's democracy was always wasted by the new elites who took over. The reason for this may not be unconnected with Ekeh's assertion that the collective efforts of the nationalists that fought for independence could not be sustained as they all withdrew to sectional politics shortly after independence (Ekeh, 1997). This marked the genesis of tribal politics which featured prominently in the first republic and also played a contributory role in its demise.

The democratic journey started with its political freedom from Britain in 1960, adopting the British Westminster model at the federal and regional level with the prime minister chosen by the majority party or coalition. With their greater population, Northerners came to dominate the federal government, hence, the ruling coalition for the first two years quickly turned into a northern-only grouping when the NPC achieved an outright majority in the legislature, having benefited less from the economic, educational and infrastructural benefits of colonialism; they sought to redistribute resources to their benefit. This mission birthed the NPC policy of “northernisation” which brought them into direct conflict with their southern counterparts, the Yoruba-based Action Group and the Igbo dominated NCNC. The pregnancy of this conflict delivered many descendants, widespread violence, tribalism, nepotism, mismanagement of public funds, reluctance of the politician to relinquish power to mention a few. All these later triggered the “nationalist spirit” of the military and their distrust for democracy, hence, they sought power from the barrel of the gun and fought their way to power leaving the barrack for the state house which marked the end of the first republic, events after this only reveal a power tussle between ruling councils.

The Nigerian Second Republic

With the successful transition program supervised by General Olusegun Obasanjo, a new door was opened for the country to experiment democracy. This experiment produced five registered political parties which played up the ethnic divisions in the country. The NPN (Hausa-Fulani), UPN (Yoruba), the NPP (Igbo), and then two minority parties PRP and the GNPP (Olamosu, 2008). However, the return to republic disappointly did not help to address the deepening crisis of Nigeria state. The state became privatized for the interest of the ruling elite and their clients against the collective good. The election held during this period was the first of its kind in the history of the country whereby the country becomes a constituency for presidential candidates through a direct election because during this period (1979-1983), Nigeria adopted the American presidential model Under which the President, Shehu Shagari and his ruling national party of Nigeria (NPN), drawn largely from the First Republic’s northern-dominated NPC, did little to reduce the mistrust between the various parts of the federation or to bridle corrupt practices which made the military struck again, seizing power on December 1983 to complete another process of transition from democracy.

The Nigerian Third Republic

Nigeria's third attempt at democratization presented two major political parties, with Ibrahim Tofa as the flag bearer of NRC vying against M.K.O Abiola of SDP. However, to Ifidon (2002), it was a still born as opportunity offered was again aborted with the annulment of the June 12 1993 election, despite the fact that the electoral politics of the third republic was widely acclaimed to be of good standard, the freest and fairest election in Nigeria which was reputed to have been conducted by Babangida. All these efforts shows that Nigeria's journey to democracy has not been easy and that the military while not the only challenge has always been a major obstacle to democracy in Nigeria (Rotimi & Ihonvbere, 1994).

Internal Factors that Propelled Nigeria's Return to Democracy

There are three prominent sets of theories given by Hix and Steve (2012) for why countries become democratic. These theories are useful in explaining the internal factors that propelled Nigeria's return to democracy. The first emphasizes the importance of social economic and social modernization, the second emphasizes cultural factors while the third highlights the centrality of strategic bargains between political elites and their citizens.

Social and Economic Modernisation

It is well established that there is a correlation between levels of wealth in a country and democracy, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) present fact showing that as a country's wealth increases, it is more likely to be a democracy. However this correlation is still not clear what way round is the causal relation as to whether countries are more likely to be a democracy because they are wealthy or countries are likely to be wealthy because they are democratic (Hix & Steve, 2012). Any of the two variables can explain Nigeria's transition, firstly, Nigeria and many other African countries in their quest to develop and catch up with the developed countries transplanted their political and economic systems, this has been pronounced in our attachment with the west since independence in 1960. In the same vein, the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by Babangida regime aimed at liberalizing the economy was development oriented, thereby practicing capitalism the economic wing of democracy despite being a dictator indicating that the quest for development may force a country to liberalize.

The second variable was validated by Lipset (1959) who argued that democracy emerged as a society modernized, because modernization create changes in economic and social structure of a society which will inevitably challenge authoritarian rule and lead to demands for democracy. On the contrary, he argued that traditional societies were characterized by large agricultural sectors and small industrial and service sectors coupled with lower levels of education and a smaller middle class. This social structure, he explain, allows authoritarian system to thrive because these societies does not possess the large group of people who had the education, money or incentives to mobilize and demand political equality. However with modernization, the economic and social structure transformed in such a way that the agriculture sector shrank and the industrial sector grew and growth in urbanizations, increase in the level of mass education, expansion of the middle class and the emergence of the new liberal professionals such as doctors lawyers. According to him, this increasing complexity of society will demand greater equality from democracy and once it is established, a wealthy society would not want to change because of the political equality they have enjoyed. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the gradual developments experienced in the country overtime has increased the activation of civil societies and the press in such a way that they are always instrumental in the anti-democratic struggles any time democracy is under threat via the formation of various civil movements like the campaign for democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) and media tools like “Radio Kudirat”, TELL magazine etc. These group fought the military to standstill via the mobilization of students and workers for civil disobedient to rebuild the people’s palace (democracy), (Ojo, 2012). The arguments of these scholars reveal the fact the presence of the civil organisation who were themselves a product of modernization has caused democratic transitions and made transition to dictatorship becomes less likely which explains why democracy is more common in rich countries than in poor countries (Lipset, 1959; Przeworski & Limongi, 1997).

Although Moore holds a contrary view to this, stating that democracy is just one of those paths to development, just as others follow communism or fascism. However, he still linked social and economic changes to democracy by stating “no bourgeoisies, no democracy” (Moore, 1966). Logical as their arguments may sound, Both Moore and Lipset failed to consider the role of cultural factors and the importance of actor’s choices.

Culture and Democracy

In the clash of civilizations, Huntington (1993) identifies many different civilizations in the world, western Christian, Confucian, Islam, Latin America, Africa etc. some of which he argued, differ fundamentally from democratic norms like constitutionalism, free market, rule of law, separation of power. This shows culture can either support or hinder democracy. On this ground, Lipset (1959) adjudged Islam and Catholicism incompatible with democracy. In the case of Nigeria however, Montesquieu and Mill in 18th and 19th century respectively have both argued that a state may adjust to alien institutions over time, especially if the type of policies promoted was one which aligned well with the internal culture. To approve this, Saliu (2010) stated that though alien in its modern form, democracy is not new to Nigeria, citing its practice in the Oyo pre-colonial organisation with all institution needed for its sustenance present, some of which includes separation of power, checks and balances etc. This is to show that the country possess a culture that is in conformity with democratic norms and this has always made democracy a political system supported by all in its presence, demanded by all in its absence in Nigeria.

In summary, both economic and culture theories assumed that an increase in modernization will inevitably lead to democracy, yet neither theory specifies exactly how this will occur, or how exactly a society goes from being authoritarian to democracy. The main reason for weakness of the causal explanations lies in the fact that neither approach refers to the role of actor's behavior: the decision of the citizenry and the political elites are not mentioned in these modernization approaches: an effort to address this shortcoming and to specify a clear causal chain led to the development of theories of democratization in terms of strategic bargaining.

Strategic Bargains and Democracy

This theory emphasizes how, if the conditions are correct, tyrant leaders are compelled to set up democratic institutions with a specific end goal to conciliate a mass gathering of citizens, who are requesting law based government and political and economic equity, in a non-democratic setting, the elites principally need to ensure their current places of benefit and forestall unrest, while the mass of citizen want to redistribute wealth and influence since they are by and large poorer than the elites. In these circumstances, as indicated by this theory, the elites are confronted with two decisions of government.

1. A tyranny, where the elites rule in their own advantage but they need to quell the mass of citizen.
2. A vote based system where the majority represent the masses.

Under these conditions, as a nation moves from a tyranny to a majority rule government, there will be a redistribution of riches through mass medicinal services, mass education, public pensions and so forth. From the foregoing, it can be derived that majority rules system in Nigeria has dependably been a result of negotiation between the elites and the masses particularly the pressure from the different gatherings and people. This educates Okoro's attestation that the democratic events in Nigeria under "President" Badamosi Babangida and Late General Sanni Abacha among numerous others uncovered that the democratic battles and democratization in Africa have been educated by various and some of the time clashing interests and strategies between the elites and the masses. (Okoro, 2007)

According to strategic bargaining theories, agreeing to establish a democratic institutions such as democratic competitive elections, offers a credible method for elites to meet the masses demand for increased political power while preventing all out revolution making a "credible commitment" is a vital part of this process, on the case of Nigeria, the federal status as argued by Bermeo (2012) provides more arena for political bargaining because it allows the regional elites to have a stake in bargaining process making it inclusive. On this note, it is crystal clear that, with the aid of federalism, Nigeria's return to democracy was a function of bargain. All these arguments to democracy are just internal there is a need to examine the external effect on Nigeria's return to democracy.

External Factors that Propelled Nigeria's Return to Democracy

Apart from the internal factors that propelled Nigeria's return to democracy, there are some other external factors identified by scholars to have made our transition to democracy possible. These factors are examined below:

Internal Organisations and their Membership

Nigeria by reason of her sovereign status, signed membership to most international organisation most of which advocate democratization, reduced corruption and the spread of respect for human rights which is domicile in the authoritarian regime. As Hans Peter Schmitz argues, these international organizations "diffuse democratic principles, support domestic allies, and exert pressure on authoritarian

regimes”. Apart from the use of standards for membership in IGO’s known as conditionality. Receiving and maintaining relationship is conditional on a country meeting the existing standards of the organization. Not only that, Nnoli (2003) acknowledged that globalization aided the resurgence of democracy, in that, the victory of democracy in the cold war saddled globalization with the task of universalizing it, with the US led global community championing its cause and using the control of media and economic resources to promote it. Political conditionalities were added to economic conditionalities. This made Jega (2007) to conclude that the resurrection of democracy in Nigeria was more of external causal factor than internal factor as the system to him was IMF inspired.

Demonstration Effects

This involves state providing models of democratization for other similar states. Thomson recorded that by 1999, most African states had constitutions in place that encouraged democracy, and more than 140 multiparty elections were held in the last decade of the twenty-first century. Although some of these elections were flawed, besides election alone is not the sole pre-requisite for democracy, yet they set the pace for other African countries to follow suit, Nigeria as a late democratizer was majorly influenced by these African countries. As recorded by New York Times, 42 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa conducted multiparty elections between 1990 and 2002. This, democratization scholars, typically refers to as demonstration effects or “contagion”.

Many nondemocratic governments successfully resist pressure to liberalize and democratize, often by resisting to their population and chaotic nature of such transformations and proposing the idea that the country is not yet ready for democracy. This becomes much more difficult when neighboring or otherwise similar states democratize. As a result, it is most difficult to be the first country of a particular region or group of similar states to democratize. Once the threshold is crossed by that first country, pressure increases on the others to follow the lead. In such cases, nondemocratic systems collapse can “snowball”- with each successive collapse taking less time than the previous one- as happened in Eastern Europe in 1989. The countries need not be neighbors. Spain and Portugal’s democratization in the 1970’s was important for subsequent democratization in Latin American because it challenged the idea that democracy is difficult to establish in predominantly Catholic countries. By and large, the ultimate argument here is that democratization in one country plays a role in fostering democratization in another.

Theoretical Framework: Structural Functionalism

In the social sciences, it is vital to investigate or break down a subject unequivocally within a worldview or hypothesis, rather than disconnectedly. In an exploratory theoretical base, it is vital to include a sound hypothesis, which is fit for illuminating the savvy thoughts in the study. The centrality of hypothesis in a study is in like manner categorized in the way that social science examination is hypothesis based and its operations are guided by noteworthy gauges of human behavior (Goode & Hatt, 1952). The structural functionalist perspective also called functionalism, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. It has its origin in the works of sociologists like Emile Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, who were interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable. Functionalism interprets each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. The society is more than the sum of its parts, hence each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions of the society, each of which is organised to fill different needs which have particular consequences for the form and shape of society. The parts all depend on one another. Essentially, it is anchored on two basic concepts: structures and functions. While structures are arrangement within the system which performs the functions which could either be diffused or diffracted, functions are the objective consequences emanating from what the system does (Omodia, 2007 in Omodia, 2010). However, when related to the field of political science, it was postulated by Gabriel Almond. In this context, structural functionalism was described as means of explaining basic functions of the political structures in the political system. It also explains the relationship between the structures on one hand and between the structures and the political system on the other whereby the relationship is explained interms of the function of each. Almond's model of analysis categorised the functions expected of these structures to perform into input and output functions.

The input functions include the following:

- (a) Political Socialisation and recruitment: this refers to the induction of individuals, groups, bodies into different roles in the political system;
- (b) Interest articulation: this is the process through which demands are injected into the system;

(c) Interest Aggregation: this involve a the formulation of general policies in which group interests are combined ,accommodated and committed to a particular pattern of public policy;

(d) Political Communication: this is the channel through which information is transmitted among the different groups and government.

The output functions include:

(a) Rule Making: this has to do with law making which is essentially the function of the legislature in a democratic setting;

(b) Rule Application: this function entails implementation of governmental decisions and policies. This falls under the executive arm of government;

(c) Rule Adjudication: this function lies within the province of the judiciary in the sense that the institution performs the basic function of interpreting laws that guide persons and institutions of the state.

Almond explained a stable political system as one in which “the flow of inputs and outputs is such that inputs are converted as a way that does not result in any strains, being imposed on the system’s capacity to respond to them, for such strains may have led the structure of the system itself to suffer basic changes: the output of the system then correspond to the original demands. Those who have made demands then react to the output in expected and legitimate ways .the political system is said to be in a state of equilibrium”(Almond in Olaniyi, 2001).

Democratization Hurdles in Nigeria: Institutional Point of View

To ensure a stable political system in the country and consolidate democracy, these aforementioned institutions are put in place to safeguard the system. However, there is an agreement among scholars that democratization hurdles in Nigeria are purely a product of system dysfunction. Of all of them, none has made it so explicit than Danfulani, when he stated that Nigeria owes its democratic failures to no one but a deep-seated problem of structure, institutional weakness and performance that are jeopardizing the democratic experience. (Danfulani in Ngarka & Wuam, 2010) These structures erected in Nigeria to uphold democratic norms and ensure its sustainability are not performing up to the expectation of democracy. Whereas the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria is solely dependent on the structures like judiciary, executive, legislature, the press etc. put in place to safeguard the system. This is to say that the dysfunction of these structures is simultaneously a challenge

to democratic consolidation. It is against this backdrop that we examine the challenges facing democracy via these institutions.

Weak Link between State and Civil Society

In a democratic setting, people's participation in government, societal level, economic development, industrialization, and urbanization have always been a requirement to creating and strengthening interest groups and voluntary associations (Diamond, 1994). These groups are imperative for the consolidation of democracy (Ikelegbe, 2007) in that they are considered as the building blocks of democracy as they serve as alternative sources of information and communications. They act as a powerful independent counter – force to prevent the state from monopolizing the political process as well as regulating the demands coming into the political system. (Thomson, 2010) Hence, they challenge the government and ensure the public interest is always paramount by allowing the people to effect the change they desire in government.

Nevertheless, this cannot be achieved without a political communication which Almond (1963) likens to the circulation of body fluid. According to him, “it is not the body fluid but what it contains that nourishes the system”. The body fluid is the neutral intermediate carrying claims, complaints and demands from the heart; and from the heart through the arteries flow the output of rules, regulations and adjudications in response to the claims and demands. Logically sound as his claim may be, it is not applicable in Nigeria.

The practice of democracy in Nigeria has showed clearly overtime, that the control of the government is not in the hands of the masses but the privileged few. Therefore, It becomes worrisome to note that the democratic space is not expanding or deepening as rapidly as expected (Yagboyaju, 2011), due to the total domination of the “state” by elites which leaves no space for political and civil society. This is why there success in ensuring credible elections, influencing public policy, responding to social interests/empowering citizens etc, is as small as a drop of water in an ocean. (Odeh, 2012).

Consequently, rules and regulations are not always –as it should be– a response to claims and demands from the masses, only on few occasions when the desire of the regime coincides the demands of the civil society. The communication link between the rulers and the ruled is almost not present. Whereas the stimulus for democratisation, and particularly the pressure to complete the process of consolidation, has typically come from the “resurrection of civil society” (Diamond

1994). On the contrary, contemporary civil societies seems apathetic and impotent. In the meantime, Pederson, (2005) have explained the need to transcend the structural legacy of repression and build a vibrant civil society, if democracy is to take root and be meaningful to local communities. It is unfortunate that such autocratic structure of repression is still present in our practice of democracy. The criminal character of the state has enabled it maintain hostile relationship with all democratic forces like labour movements and masses (Aremu & Omotola, 2007). Protests are always greeted with harsh response by the state. The National Confab organized by the Jonathan administration which would have been the greatest achievement of the civil society in this fourth republic, did not see the light of the day, on another account was the Proposed Tuface led protest which was stopped by the police on the discredited ground that he lacked the charisma needed to control the crowd, whereas such was not done to the pro-Buhari protest in Abuja.

The Overbearing Disposition of the Ruling Party

For democracy to be consolidated, there is a need for a neutral state whose institution provide a level playing field on which political parties can compete fairly (Thomson, 2010), but for reason specified by Omotola (2010), such is not possible, as the presidency wields overbearing influence on INEC, making it impossible for it to exercise independence. By winning an election, a party has the right to rule through the institutions of the state, in the national interest, however, this is not the case in Nigeria, our leaders overtime use the power and the resources of the state to specifically reinforce the position of themselves and their own party.

There has been series of state-sponsored electoral fraud in which official registers are declared incomplete in areas of the country that are under the grip of opposition party. This was the strategy used by Jonathan administration in preparation for the 2015 general elections where most states under the opposition party could not get voters card, an example of this include Lagos, Rivers, Kano, Edo Ogun and Imo states. Indirectly disenfranchising them. If all these methods fail, the electoral management board (INEC) could always declare a fictitious result or declare such election result inconclusive. In order to enable the ruling party control the most states in the country and many seats in the legislature in any given election.

The victory of the People's Democratic Party at the center in the 1999 general election fetched them control of twenty one states out of the thirty-six in the country. In fact, the time table of the election was structured in a way that favored the ruling party to influence the result of the gubernatorial elections in various

states, since the presidential election came first. The 2003 general elections also brought the same fortune to the party with the grip of 27 states out of 36, same was the story in 2007. 2011 elections did not differ, as they comfortably secure 18 states out of twenty six states. Upon ascension into power, APC has continued with the same feat, winning 19 states out of the 29 states where gubernatorial elections are held in 2015. All these “center winner takes it all” victory could not have been the product of their popular support in these states. Expectedly, all did not always augur well with the declaration of electoral results of such elections. For instance, a total of seven hundred and thirty One (731) elections petitions were filed at the various Election Petition Tribunals across the Federation, including the FCT after the 2011 general elections. (INEC Report, 2011) but as expected the “leviathan” state will also use another state institution (the judiciary) to cement their personally acclaimed victory through tribunals. In rejection to this, the Ahmed Markafi led faction of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) cautioned that, there should be a check on the way and manner politicians shop for injunctions and court orders, warning that, if the trend continue, a time will come when people who did not contest election will be made governor by the court (Nigeria Today, 2016). In the same line, the governor of Ekiti state, Mr. Peter Ayodele Fayose alleged that INEC is threatening Nigeria’s democracy with inconclusive elections.

Weak and Dependent Judiciary

In a true democratic society, it is the rule of law that prevail and not the rule by law. (Fukuyama). While the former simply means the supremacy of the law over everyone both the ruler and the ruled, the latter is used as a command by the executive to rule the people. Whereas, rule of law is mostly important to democracy so as to regulate the dominance of the majority towards violating the rights of the minority. (Dahl, 1971) but it can only be achieved if laws are interpreted without fear or favour, which makes independent of the judiciary non-negotiable. In as much as they need to be independent to perform their duty to democracy, it will amount to a daydream if the appointment of judges is carried out by political office holder especially in our society where the culture of reward system holds sway. Everybody wants a reward for every official works done. Most judges are corrupt because they do not want to bite a finger that feed them. In Nigeria, the judiciary is very weak, the constitution has been structured in a way that keep them open to executive’s assault and battery. (Nwolise in Fasoro et al., 1992). The appointment of judges is in the hand of executive making them completely powerless and useless to the people in the struggle for democratisation.

Just as the saying goes “he who pays the piper dictates the tune”, the judiciary in the fourth republic has made itself an instrument in the hand of the executive in the words of Otoghagua, the judiciary has failed to defend democracy as judges are withdrawing from criminal cases being prosecuted in law courts where they preside (Otoghagua, 1999). No case brought before any court especially the criminal cases that took place within the political setting ever arrive at conclusion. In fact, there are cases where the judges who are expected to be neutral in deciding political cases, portray themselves as party sympathizers. The case of Justice Ayo Salami is still fresh in memory, where he was confirmed to have made several phone calls to the party leader of ACN (Bola Ahmed Tinubu) informing him of the facts their opposition has against them in the court during the tribunal case between Olagunsoye Oyinlola the then governor of Osun state and Aregbesola the current governor. All these point to the fact that the judiciary remains susceptible to executive and legislative pressure and is weakened by political influence, poor funding and corruption. As a result, the effectiveness and reach of rule of law is limited.

Institutional Responses to Nigeria’s Democratic Hurdles

These listed challenges have triggered various institutional responses, they are still not sufficient enough to arrest the situation.

In tackling the civil-military relations, the administration of Obasanjo came up with reforms that involves the following principle:

- (a) The elected civilian President as Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, and the supremacy of elected officials of state over appointed officers at all levels;
- (b) Civilian headship of the Ministry of Defence and other strategic establishments;
- (c) That decisions regarding the goals and conduct of military operations must serve the political and strategic goals established by the civil authority;
- (d) The application of civil principles to all military investigations and trials;
- (e) The right of civil (Supreme Court) authority to review any actions or decisions taken by military judicial officers.

Apart from these, two other instruments was put in place to achieve supremacy of civil authority include constitutional clauses and legislative oversight functions.

To lead by example, The Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission headed by Justice Chukwuodifu Oputa was instituted to investigate all allegations of human rights violations during military eras as part of the effort to consolidate democracy.

More so, the regime of Obasanjo marked the counter corruption charge law. He set up the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to address the issue of corruption. Be that as it may, corruption has kept on becoming unabated.

With the knowledge that the crafting of good institutions and effective electoral systems are crucial for attaining both democratic elections and a stable political environment, Muhammadu Lawal Uwais Electoral Reforms Committee was set up. This committee came up with the following recommendations:

- Appointment INEC chairman: the committee recommended the advertisement of interested candidates and the short-listing of three after the adequate screening by the National Judicial Council (NJC). NJC then passes the shortlist to the president who picks one and sends his name to the Senate for confirmation;
- Independent funding: it recommended the funding for INEC be charged into Consolidated Fund. By this, the body will not have any financial link with the executive;
- Time-limit in Electoral Adjudication: it recommended that every electoral petition be dispensed with before the swearing –in;
- Electoral Offences Commission;
- Internal Democracy in Parties.

These committee's report brought about significant improvements, particularly in respect of election timeline, the financial autonomy of INEC, the administrative independence of INEC from the executive, the introduction of the pre –requisite for INEC's chairman and National Commissioners not to be members of a political party (Section 156(10(a) of the 1999 Constitution as amended).With all these institutional responses however, democracy in Nigeria is still facing many challenges.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study provided a detailed analysis of fourth republic (1999-2017) democratisation process in Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to examine the democratisation hurdles in this fourth republic from the institutional perspective. This examination reveals that the current democratic era could not deliver as expected owing to the thorns from the dysfunction of the system choking its stability. In view of the severe consequences of system dysfunction and its overall implications to the sustenance of democracy and democratic consolidation, this paper recommends the following:

- The National Orientation Agency ought to direct a reorientation for government officials and electorates to empower them know their various roles at consolidating democracy. Letting them civil societies know how to aggregate their interest as too many demands may cause a system breakdown and too little will bring tyranny;
- The military should be totally cleansed from the politics not only in person but every form of their appearance, in order to ensure a civilian democratic regime;
- The law makers should enact a law to restrict the executive use of state institutions for party gains or selfish ambitions. Offenders should be barred from political activities in Nigeria;
- A restructuring of the political stage for the acknowledgment of a healthy relations among the institutions of government, while checks and balances because in separating powers among them, totally distinct power was not assigned to each; rather it was done in a manner to be interdependent;
- The way in which political power is looked for without restriction and practiced without limitation must be discouraged. Practicing politicians must play the game of politics according to set down rules and regulations.
- The Nigerian state ought to emphatically maintain a rule that would guarantee that any infringement of the constitution within the political class should not be permitted to go unpunished in light of the fact that is a potential peril to the survival of democratic system in the nation.

This paper concludes by saying it is obvious that Nigeria's democracy is still in the process of consolidation. But this process if faced with many threats emanating from the institutions put in place to ensure the stability of the system will not reach

its goal. Democracy practiced elsewhere blossom in an environment of peace and serenity, popular participation, fundamental human rights, the rule of law and free, fair and open elections. But such are still absent in our democracy. Be that as it may, there is no doubt our transition retained strong elements of authoritarianism. These elements are visible in prebendalism, high handedness of the executive, centrality of command etc. Aside these, other institutional hurdles to democracy include, executive poverty, overbearing disposition of the ruling party, weak link between state and civil society, malfeasance of electoral management board, It is against this backdrop that this study judiciously establish the fact that democracy can be consolidated in Nigeria, if only the aforementioned institutional factors inhibiting democracy are cuddled out of the system.

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