POLITICAL ELITES IN NIGERIA AND THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN LIEU OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF POLITICS: IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Democratization is seen as the process of institutionalization of the major democratic doctrine as part of everyday culture in a given society. Its basic principles find expression in the channeling of a given society's behavioral pattern towards democratic ideals; it penetrates all strands of community relations from economy through religion, family life to politics. This study seeks to ascertain the degree to which the Nigeria democracy has affected their national development, using empirical indicators such as poverty rate, unemployment rate, GDP growth rate, civil liberty, political right or freedom. It however, revealed that Nigeria strand of democracy is antithetical to national development arguing that the motive forces of their political elites are in sharp contrast with the end democratic principles seek to accomplish. This study empirically demonstrates how these trends have negatively affected the national development in terms of growth rate in Nigeria, and concludes that the breakdown of the present political structure is looming, since they have ceased to attract the allegiance of the common citizens.

Key word: Illegal democracy, ethnic politics, national development, civil liberty, political freedom and social convergence.

INTRODUCTION

De Tocqueville (1969) said, in a democracy the people should always get the type of leadership they want. But regrettably the reverse is the case in the Nigeria strand of democracy. Consequently most political science scholars have branded the Nigeria strand of political process *democracy*, to some, its bogus democracy, while others have opted for illegal democracy. Although the fact is that, a closer examination of the contemporary Nigeria political process would reveal that the post-independent Nigeria political firmament inherited a political environment that is profoundly hostile to any form of democratization in its very logic. Nigerian citizens asked for a formal political democracy as an alternative political system after a prolonged military dictatorship that culminated to a serious political pandemonium. But, they were forced by their political elites to accept a quasi-democracy as good in itself without regard to the distrust, envy and hostility among the political elites. Including the complex economic relationship in which that quasi-democracy is involved. The truth is that, the struggle for power in the post-independent Nigeria is so intense, so absorbing that every other responsibilities of the government was abandoned or marginalized including the democratic procedure or project. Those politicians who found themselves outside the corridor of power continually worry about their exposure to all categories of assault by a state that is hardly subject to any institutional control. It is no surprised that in this type of politics the calculus of force would be the only option among the political elites. *Ipso facto* the political elites who find themselves out of power after a pugnacious political contest constantly strove to put together a reliable force to challenge those in power, or at least to limit their own vulnerability to any form of political embarrassment. This include mobilizing and, or organizing their religion, tribal or ethnic groups against the government of the day without regard to the long term consequences of such political actions as long as it provide them with immediate result. This may probably be because in a political environment such as Nigeria, those *out-of-power* elites do not even have the option to turn their ambitions to business enterprises that would engender economic prosperity because that is also a matter of state patronage in Nigeria. In Nigeria political power is everything. Even to become wealthy without the patronage of the state will be most likely to attract the unpleasant attention of those who control the state power (Ake, 2003). Because with the Nigeria strand of political power, those who control it can raise or abase whatever business entrepreneur the out of power elites choose to engage in, just by mare declaration of intentions. Where then are the democratic principles and promises in a situation of this kind that have engulfed Nigeria political climate? Since Donopoulos (2004) has argued that democracy promises to protect the citizen's civil rights, which include the right to possess and promote private property. Or is Nigeria practicing a differed strand of democracy?

This contradiction cannot be ignored, since it implies that the motive forces of the political elite in Nigeria are in sharp contrast with the end democratic principles seek to accomplish. In a democratic society the citizens seek to maximize the material wellbeing at their disposal by the use of their political power (inform the electoral process) to control the authority of the state. But regrettably such political privileges are absent in the Nigeria context, prompting the questions as to whether the political process in contemporary Nigeria has in fact, experienced democratization or whether it's just the politics of democratization after several years of independence (Onyishi, 2018). He maintained that, the political process in Nigeria is still far from

democratization in the real sense of the word, because those in power are so engrossed with the struggle for survival that they could not address the problem of democratization. Though they cannot abandon it for one good reason, democratization is an alternative ideology by which the political elites hope to survive and reproduce themselves and their domination over the entire nation with little or no trouble. Hence, they continue to propagate democratization paradigm to the citizens as the only option that can lead to national development they do not intend to pursue, their main reason is because, democratization paradigm appears to be the only ideology or political philosophy that have the potentials to forge a sense of common course for them and for bringing some kind of social coherence to the already fragmented political environment in the country. In reality they cannot permit democratic principles in practice because its *modus operandi* is in direct contrast to the end they seek to serve and or accomplish.

From the above perspective, the problems that confront the Nigeria democratic process in our own time are relatively a complex one. Since there is no effective evidence to suggest or let alone contend that as a method of government it is any less efficient than the military government of the previous era as we shall demonstrate shortly. What has happened in the Nigeria political firmament is that the entrance of capitalism into the contemporary phase of political contraction in Nigeria has brought into vivid perspectives the contradiction between the ends of the political elite on one side and those of political democracy on another. The Nigerian political class see or perceive the democratic principles or practice as a threat to their own security and would do anything to thwart the process. In the meantime they have resorted to the politics of democratization instead of democratizing the political process in Nigeria. Empirical facts shall be presented to buttress the impact of the above postulates but before that we shall discern the concept of democratization to really comprehend completely what it is and what it is not from different perspectives so as to understand when a process is democratic or just politics of democratization.

Democratization: a conceptual exposition: Democratization as a concept becomes a subject of academic discourse in recent times, not just in Nigeria but a global concern. Many countries have been affected by this democratization process over the last few decades, between 1980 and 1990, known as the era of the famous "third wave of democratization"Huntington (1984). Democratization blew or swept through the Asian continent and brings about the democratic transformation in nine countries which include; Bangladesh (1990), Indonesia (1998), Philippines (1986), South Korea (1987), Taiwan (1987) and Thailand (1992). In consonance with the accelerating global development, scholars of different ideological orientation and policy makers have begun to re-assess the process of democratization and discussing how it develops (Hiep, 2004), although that is not the point in focus here, at least for the time being. However, democratization

suggests or indicates the process of installing a democratic system of administration. This involves an enhancement of the socio-political and economic condition that is necessary for the facilitation of a democratic process, characterized by vigorous atmosphere which ultimately bring socio-economic and socio-cultural development of the entire society (Majekodunmi, 2012). Under this situation, the government of the day derives its legitimacy and authority from the people who, in essence choose those in government through a periodic election, again regrettably, what is obtainable in the Nigeria context is periodic selection in lieu of periodic election. The major characteristic of this democratic system of government is the supremacy of the national interest, which must in the final analysis supersede personal interest (Ibagere and Omoera, 2010).

Gunther *et al.* (1995) is also of the view that democratization process has three interrelated phases, namely; the fall of the authoritarian regime, the institutionalization of democracy and consolidation of democracy. Apparently, the above argument and many others of the same orientation do not always specify a time frame for the actualization of the three identified phases. It therefore, implies that the inherent attributes in each system would play a great role in the process of actualization. In Nigeria, scholars such as Majekodunmi (2012) has contended thus; " The slow pace of the process raise doubt in the mind of the generality of the people who, for instance are confounded as to why such basic aspects of democracy as elections and legislative duties still lack significant purposiveness, twelve years after the fourth Republic commenced (Majekodunmi, 2012) ".As already emphasized, democratization is a process and not an end to itself; it involves a movement from authoritarianism to a stable democratic system. It is the process of establishing, extending and/or strengthening the principles, institutes and other mechanisms that define a democratic regime (Osaghae, 1999). In substantiation of the above definitions of democratization, Osaghae argued that two points could be reached, namely; one is that democratization is relative, phased and progressive, two, that democratization is kaleidoscopic in nature, and on that note he warned scholars not to analyze it as a closed process. The same author also likened democratization with a transition to formal democracy in his previous article "*ethnicity in Africa or Africa in ethnicity* (1995). He views it as a political process since it has to do with the transformation of state and the political organization. Golden (2010)on the other hand perceive the concept of democratization as a process of incorporating the exploitation and alienating mechanisms that are often demonstrated by the capitalist against the less privileged. But he contends that democracy with its inherent attributes could also imply a socio-economic and political formation that grants the less-privileged their inalienable right and the instrument of participating, determining and effectively influencing the day to day governance of their country in other words, the essential transformative restructuring

power of the state are vested in the hands of the people through periodic election which grants them the power to accept and reject any political aspirant.

The third wave of democratization as envisaged by Huntington (1984), began after the collapse of the communist bloc and the disintegration of the union of the soviet socialist republic in the 1989s which ushered in a new world order with the end of cold war, resultantly, democratization is then seen as the transition to a more democratic political regime, as already highlighted in Prezeworski, thus: The transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. Different patterns of democratization are often used to explain other political phenomenon, such as whether a country goes to war or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors including economic development history and civil society.

This democratization process is a harbinger to the eventual triumph of capitalism globally, since the communism has become moribund and the western powers are bent on justifying the supremacy of capitalism as synonymous with development. Also in Yahaya (2007), he defined the concept, democratization as both a systematic and institutional method of liberalizing a previously authoritarian political environment, that is, it implies the opening up of all the previously political and economic system and at the same time increasing and deepening of all those values that are seen as essential for the development and sustenance of democracy. In other words it points to the establishment of a system that encourages the people to participate in that decision making processes that affect them. Still on the transition or transformation process, Potter (2000) also sees democratization as a transitory variable, that is, something that is in progress and not constant, it is a process and not an end point. He contends that the concept democratization is a political process that begins from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive elections to fuller and fairer predictable civil and political rights, from weak (or non-existent) autonomous association in civil society. In Nwabueza (1993) democratization is seen as not just associated with the type of government that is known as democratic system, or even being concerned with multi-party system, but as a process of experimentation during which some ideological principles has to be established.

Accordingly, democratization is seen as the process of institutionalization of the major democratic doctrine as part of everyday culture in a given society. Its basic principles find expression in the channeling of a given society's behavioral pattern towards democratic ideals; it penetrates all strands of community relations from economy through religion, family life to politics. These democratic institutions already discussed legitimize the activities and behavior of those that exercise the state power, in the absence of these democratic institutions militarism might be mistaken for democratization (Ifeanacho and Nwagwu, 2009). There are several models and theories of democratization but definitions usually starts with classical modernization theory which posits that democracy is most likely to arise in a sustainable fashion as countries increase and accumulate capital. Specifically modernization is naturally seen as process through which a society achieve a greater level of economic growth, education, industrialization and urbanization (Lipset, 1959). Among other things, a process such as this can change the social structure of a given country, nurturing and breeding modern social groups, like the industrial bourgeoisies and the working class who tends to favor democracy and also the middle class within the society, while marginalizing those that tends to reject the democratic values, such as traditional land owners (Huntington, 1984; Berger, 1986; Sorensen, 2007), the more well-to-do a nation, the greater chances that it will sustain democracy" (Lipset, 1959). Haven highlighted different perception of the concept of democracy above, we can now understand fairly that its substance character are in direct contrast with the principles or character of what is viewed as political democracy in Nigeria. So much on the issue of democratization, we shall now look at the Nigeria background to democratization after which we shall review some development indicators to check if there is any positive growth since it is argued that democracy is development.

Political elites and the politics of democratization in Nigeria: The politics of democratization instead of democratization of politics in Nigeria by the political elites usually begin with an internal division within the ruling class, in which one faction always becomes dominant and pretends to initiate changes in the existing electoral and other non-electoral regulations, more often than not by liberalizing public policies such as tolerating greater press freedom, increasing number of political parties that will contest election in the transition period and, or reducing random political imprisonment and detention in the country, as well as introduction of some democratic procedures in the electoral process that is aimed at misleading the masses into believing that real democratization of politics is underway, for instance, they will encourage the formation of civil society organizations as well as allowing both national and international election monitoring teams or organization to participate in the electoral process. The sole objective is usually to create a political environment that has numerous surface manifestations of a real democratic procedure and principles, but not the political treachery to citizens that lies at the core of such political maneuver. One of the points being highlighted is that, these political elites will always employ all the principles and procedures consistent with a genuine democratic process during the election but will try any possible means not to allow the power of the vote to determine the outcome of the election, an act they refers to as politics (Onyishi, 2018). Politics itself is a very complicated concept in the political science literature as we have highlighted earlier, its concise definition is fraught with ambiguity, but there are some salient features that must

appear in its definition no-matter how narrow or bogus it may be. These features specifically concern those human actions or activities that are related to the process of attaining, maintaining and making use of the state power in a given society. Or alternatively, it can be referred to any plan, act or action that is directly or indirectly related to the seizure of public power, the consolidation of this public power as well as the exercise of such public power (Nnoli, 1981). The exercise of this public power maybe in a legitimate or illegitimate manner and either in a national or international capacity. In order words, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance in any political society. That is, an institutionalized control over a political community and, or society, order-wise known and popularly refers to as the modern state. The concept of politics has a set of moderately definite connotation that can be explanatory and nonjudgmental, for instance 'the discipline of government' and 'political philosophy' these are academic concept that focuses on just politics which is more direct than political science as a whole, but we shall not be oblivion of the fact that politics can and often does carry a negative connotation closely associated to those political activities characterized by devious and often dishonest practices as is evidence in the contemporary Nigeria political topography where a president can leave his office and unofficially travel abroad for whatever reason and stay as long as he wants, leaving the affairs of the state to the second in command without any legal repercussion even though it contradicts the existing constitution of the federation.

The point being made is that political democracy, which is typically the most celebrated political system in the business of institutionalization of the basic procedures for political competition and transparency in any society, has been high-jacked by the political elites in Nigeria, these political class has no legal limitation of any kind, they almost do whatever they want knowing that they will get away with it. The basic principles of democracy are now in topsy-turvy and so is the validity of democratic hypothesis in Nigeria political firmament (Onyishi, 2017). The political elites in Nigeria have politicized the process of democratization instead of democratizing the politics -political process- as stipulated in the democratic theory, doctrine and principles and which was the promise of the founding fathers to the people of Nigeria in the post-independent political era. It is evident that most historical attempts at democratization in the post-independent Nigeria irrespective of the method of transition to civilian democratic governance have been disastrous and often resulted in a political pandemonium and public outcry as to the degree of electoral gerrymandering frequently committed by the political elites for selfish reasons. This elites political behavior cannot be ignored, since it implies that the socio-economic and political objectives of the political class in Nigeria are in sharp contrast with the end democratic principles seek to accomplish (Onyishi, 2018). In every democratic society the citizens seek to maximize the material wellbeing at their disposal by the use of their political power (inform of electoral process) to control the authority of the state, in other words, the government of the day. But regrettably such political privileges are missing in the Nigeria context, given that through advanced electoral rigging and other political atrocities the political class have repeatedly refused to accept the public choice and opinion of the masses through the electoral process. An action that has proliferated political apathy and total distrust on the political process among the citizens of the country. These political elites who indulge in this devious and dishonest political practices and consent to them during the periodic political transition apparently discover that they are congenial to protecting their tenure in power without regard to its consequences on the political behavior of the people as well as the latent democracy. These elite-dominated and controlled electoral process in Nigeria always have impending vicious effects and dangerous moment in the transition process, the Ekiti and Osun State gubernatorial election are among the few transition crises that comes to mind, where a sitting Governor was assaulted by federal security agents and the ruling political elites after toying with the electoral result announces the candidate of their choice as the winner of the exercise against the wish of the people and independent of the real electoral result, an attitude that contradict their promises during their campaign where they can't stop talking about how free and fair the exercise will be. Exactly the reason it's here argued that the political elites have politicized the democratic process without really democratizing the politics involved.

They always employ any means to win elections in every transition or election year and later attempts to, or convert this means into a permanent feature of the resulting government. We are of the opinion that such institutionalized political oligarchy not only runs a dangerous risk of mismanagement of public funds and corruption due to the absence of free and fair electoral process as well as a reliable instrument of accountability, but would in addition be less capable of responding to internal transformations and/or to external shocks at the appropriate time. In as much as the electoral process in Nigeria is intended to protect and replicate the status quo and the power of the machinery of a particular political class by selectively installing non-democratically elected candidates and reservoir of power in one part of the federating regions democratization of the political process will remain a wishful thinking in Nigeria, because the success and failure of democratization in any society is ultimately dependent on the perception of legitimacy of the resulting political class within the government by its electorate (Onyishi, 2017). The government of genuinely democratically elected candidates is less likely to be challenged on grounds of legitimacy, given that compromise among the political elites under such political situation is almost as legitimate as majority rule in

many conceptions of democratic practice (Schmitter and Karl, 1991). But the problem of leadership in Nigeria has always stemmed from the fact that these political elites tends to make political leadership their private property and are more than willing to protect that status at all cost. To ensure their hold on political power one person can buy the Gubernatorial, Senatorial and sometimes House of Assembly form from the same political party with the hope that if the delegates did not select them for one office they will select them for the order.

There is no political ideology, philosophy or official manifesto of the contending political parties in the elite controlled politics of democratization in Nigeria, which makes it very easy for the political class to cross-carpet to other political parties at will, since they do not have to adjust to new party principles or values (Onyishi, 2018). The political process in Nigeria has been turned to a business venture for the political elites since most has no other formal source of income except from party politics and the loots from the national or state treasury. Most even refer to politics as their profession, a factor that has further complicated the process of democratization in Nigeria since independence. The trend towards the professionalization of politics and the nature of representation and, consequently, the status of politicians in Nigeria and her political parties indeed complicates the arbitrary relationship between electorates and their leaders and further exacerbated political apathy in the country, it is originally a general assumption in liberal democratic theory that the tenure of any politicians is limited in time and commitment, either by the outcome of electoral competition between political parties in a given society or by personal choice when the winners or elected and non-elected candidates in office of authority on their own decided to return to their private life as the German Chancellor Angela Markel has proposed to do in 2021 and Nelson Mandela did in South Africa (2018). In fact, politicians are supposed to live for politics and not from politics as is evidence in Nigeria. Finally it is just clear that because they live for politics they perceive the liberal democratic principles as a threat to their own security and would do anything to thwart the process. In the meantime they have resorted to politics of democratization instead of democratizing the political process. However it is our hope that at some point in time, the elite imposed democracies in Nigeria political firmament will have to reform them to conform to more general expectations concerning the democratic hypothesis

Politics of democratization and the development conundrum in Nigeria: A review of the freedom house development index, between 1977 and 2015 reveals that Nigeria experienced the status of full freedom from 1977 to 1981. It is arguable that this improvement has no relationship with the 1979 brief democratic experience in Nigeria. Table 2 and 3, presents the detail analysis of Nigeria status on the freedom house index between 1975 and 2014 which this study considered expedient as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the freedom status of the country before the return to democracy in 1999 and the period of acclaimed democratic exercise in the country. The data depict that the late 70s and early 80s are the best epoch for Nigeria citizens in terms of political freedom and civil liberty. Although the trend arrows appeared to be heading to that direction during the era of acclaimed democratization in Nigeria many factors including the politics of democratization did not permit it. In fact Nigeria received a downward trend arrow as a result of rampant corruption, the suppression of civil society especially in 2013 during fuel subsidy protests as well as the restriction of its activities in the northern Nigeria and the limitation on freedom of movement as a result of violent activities associated with Boko Haram sect. The human right situation in Nigeria became very bad in the northern part in 2012, as the violent Islamic extremist Boko Haram (BKH) increased their strategic attack on the civilians and the security forces were getting accusation from different quarters for committing one or the other uncivil acts against people in the course of their counter terrorist efforts (World, 2015). In addition, in January of the same year, the Nigeria security forces (police) reportedly used excessive force in their response to general strikes and mass protest over a proposed fuel-price-increase (Table 1).

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI Per Capita (2013, PPP$)	HDI value
1980	45.6	6.7		4.259	
1985	46.4	8.6		3.202	
1990	46.1	6.7		2.668	
1995	46.1	7.2		2.594	
2000	46.6	8.0		2.711	
2005	48.7	9.0	5.0	3.380	0.466
2010	51.3	9.0	5.2	4.716	0.492
2011	51.7	9.0	5.2	4949	0.496
2012	52.1	9.0	5.2	5176	0.500
2013	52.5	9.0	5.2	5353	0.504
2014	53.62	9.2	5.3	5.580	0.508

Table 1: Nigeria Human Development Index 1980-2014. (Source: (UNDP, 2014). CIA World Factbook June 30 2015).

The above entry titled table 1, measured the level of human development in Nigeria between 1980 and 2014. The human development index as already highlighted is a composite statistic of education, per capita income and life expectancy indicator. Which are employed when ranking the degree or level at which a country's development has attained. This technique is also used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A particular country is said to have scored high in the human development index when such country's life expectancy at birth and their education period is very long or relatively longer than other concerned countries. As well as their gross national income per capita (that is, a higher income per capita). Unchecked political elites and government corruption during the past administration culminated into the loss of Billions of dollars from public

revenue over the last decade, (Onyishi, 2018). A closer look at the unemployment and poverty trend (see figure 1 and 3) will also show us the degree to which the politics of democratization in Nigeria has negatively affected the production and distribution of goods and services in a country that is endowed by Mother Nature. Since it has been contended fervently that democracy would definitely lead to development. It is on this ground that (Tolu *et al.*, 2012) on their famous essay "democracy and development in Nigeria" argued thus: democracy is development induced The more democratic ethics in a society,

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
PR	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	7	7	7
CL	5	4	2	2	2	2	2	4	5	5	5
S	Nf	Nf	F	F	F	f	f	pf	Nf	Nf	Nf

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
PR	7	6	5	6	5	5	4	7	7	7	7
CL	6	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	9	6
S	Nf	Pf	Pf	pf	Pf	pf	Pf	Nf	Nf	Nf	Nf

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
PR	7	6	4		4	5	4	4	4	4	
CL	6	4	5		4	4	5	4	4	4	
S	Nf	Pf	Pf	Pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf	pf

Table 2: The freedom status of Nigeria 1975 to 2007

The ranking in Table 2a and 2b are from freedom house in the world from 1975 – 2015 respectively. Each pair of political rights and civil liberty rating is averaged to determine an overall status of "free" (1.0 – 2.5), "partially free" (2.5 – 5.5) or not free" (5.5 – 7.0). PR = Political right, CL = Civil liberty, S = Freedom status, PF = Partial freedom and NF = No Freedom.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PR	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
CL	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
S	Pf	Pf	Pf	Pf	Pf	Pf	Pf	Pf

Table 3: The freedom status of Nigeria 2008 to 2015

Source: Extracted from freedom house: country rating by region 1975 – 2015 (Sub-Sahara Africa).

the higher the dividends of democracy the better the level of sustainable development. Development can hardly be felt or achieved when democratic ethics are not imbibed and adhered to by the leaders and administrators. This is because the accommodation of the ethics of democracy enhances performance and facilitates development (Tolu *et al.*, 2012).

In addition, they contend that democracy and national development are intertwined and inseparable, since the major components of development such as; honesty, transparency, commitment, accountability, discipline, peaceful co-existence, integrity, etc. are reinforced in democratic environment but are not, in a milieu characterized by politics of democratization. The point being made here is that the success of democracy would definitely lead to national development and the politicization of the political process instead of democratizing the system will inevitably arrest any form of development in the society concerned. Real democratization and national development has some unique characteristics; e.g. capacity expansion, popular participation as well as freedom (Mazoui, 2012), Democratization has the position of independent variable, and on that bases determine the degree and level of development in any nation or society. The implication of the above postulates is not that hard to comprehend, I don't think that it requires any further clarification, but in synopsis it implies that the problem of development in Nigeria maybe the inabilities and or, refusal of their political elites to embrace democratic ethos in the political process.
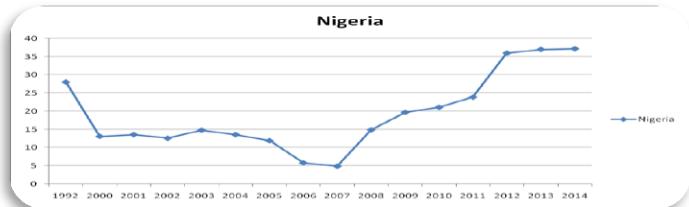
Figure 1: Nigeria unemployment rate (%) (1992 – 2014). Source: IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO), April 2015. CIA World Factbook 30th June 2015 and International Labor Organization (ILO).

The figure 1 is revealed that the civil and social fabrics of the Nigeria nation has been historically stretched by the obnoxious characteristics of unemployment, and that unemployment has consistently remained one of the country's most challenging socio-economic encumbrance to autarchy. It also revealed that instead of fairing relatively better during the acclaimed democratic era the above development indicator did relatively well under military dictatorship. The poverty situation in Nigeria (Table 3) is underpinned by the

high unemployment rate, calculated at 23.9% in 2011 as compared to 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7 in 2009 (I.M.F, 2015). It therefore appears that if Nigeria can at least actualize a 50% reduction of unemployment in the country, it will have to create 24 million jobs, expanding the job market by 50% or thereabout. Apparently if the unemployment problem is to be reduced to about 7.0% by 2030, the job market has to almost double in size, generating about 50 million jobs in the process. However, the government of Nigeria appears committed to addressing the unemployment discomfort through the present economic transformation programs of Mr. president, which focus particularly on anti-corruption, electricity, agriculture, and infrastructural development, which if achieved will definitely stimulate private sector investment that will, in turn, make use of the ever expanding labor force. And also, the diverse public sector-youth empowerment programs will at the same time, or expected to play a very big part in absorbing the labor force, *ceteris paribus*.

Figure 2: Figure 2: Nigeria Real GDP growth Rate (%) 1999-2014. SOURCE; IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO), April 2015. CIA wold Factbook 30th June 2015.

Notwithstanding, the fact that the Nigerian economy appears to be inconsistently moving upward, under the democratic political dispensation (Figure 2), and also in the human development index of Nigeria between 1980 and 2014 as calculated by the (UNDP, 2014) (Table 1), fact is that, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty has continue to escalate every year. The percentage of Nigerians living below the poverty line amplified drastically from 1999 to 2015 (Figure 3). In distributing the data into: country poverty incidence, estimated population and the population living in poverty, we observed that the proportion of poverty incidence increased from 27.2% in the 1980s to 65.6% in 1996 and then came down to 54.4% in 2004. But it rise again to 69.0% and 78.3% in 2010 and 2015 respectively. From the data depicting the population living under poverty in Nigeria, the picture was somewhat different as the trend or proportion remains in the ascending position between 1980 and 2015, irrespective of the promises of democratization, from 17.7 million to 142.7 million respectively. It never relented throughout the period under study. And so is the demographic composition of the country, from 65 million in the 1980s to 182.2 million in 2015. In other words, the proportion of people living under poverty is quiet higher in

the country between 1999 and 2015 (after democratization) compared to 1980 and 1999 which coincided with the period of authoritarian political system in the country. In addition to the above, the harmonized Nigeria living standard survey 2010.
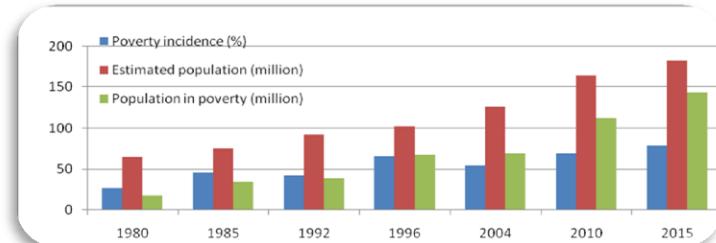

FIGURE 3: Nigeria Relative Poverty Head-count (selected years). Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), HNLSS 2015.

It is the most recent national representative survey as at the time of this study revealed a 62.60% poverty prevalence rate in Nigeria, which implies that over hundred million Nigeria are living in absolute poverty (NMDGR, 2016). The above situation in Nigeria evidently is not in tandem with the country's progress in other macroeconomic indicators already discussed in this section. On that note the situation demand immediate policy change, preferably to the one that can translate and or transfer macroeconomic growth into measurable improvement in the people's welfare and living standard independent of the prevailing political system. The people's priority is to be able to secure the basic necessities of life such as food shelter, and peaceful coexistence with others irrespective of tribe or religion and not a bogus political democracy that guarantee nothing related to true democratic ideals, in other words, the standard of life of the people.

The key element in the calculation of Relative Poverty dimension in this study is the family spending. The expenditures as perceived here referred to all the goods and services used in the household. It comprises all the financial connections or transactions, such as donations, daily contribution, savings, Esusu contribution and the likes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have so far presented an empirical exposition of the nature and substance of democracy in Nigeria and have proven that Nigeria is not really democratizing but is seriously involve in the politics of democratization. With the aid of data collected from the freedom house country rating by region, including that of the IMF and ILO respectively to buttress our arguments. That the political process in Nigeria does not possess the requisite features to be referred to as democratic, if democracy is anywhere related to national development as scholars have argued above, because in the Nigeria context all the development indicators in this study dove-tailed during the democratic era, supporting the argument that Nigeria strand is *democracy* or bogus democracy. Owing to the contradictions between the end of the political elites and that of the political democracy, this is

of course to state as plainly as we can a political situation that is far more complex, especially in its psychological aspects than we have attempted to set forth. But its conspicuous outline is, we believe the essential key to the problem of Nigeria democracy in the contemporary time. In modern Nigeria political topography, political power is hunted by all means and consolidated at all cost. Even at the risk of injuring the popular but latent democratic process. Some of the political elites who were fortunate enough to outmaneuvered their opponents and secure the state power, constantly tend to manipulate their ethnic and communal loyalties as a means to de-radicalize their followers and contain class division of the political elites that have the capability to isolate and destroy them. To reduce or curtail social schism among themselves emphases were also placed on vertical solidarity across ethnic lines: specifically, they attempt to establish mutual identity and common cause by appealing to their nationals, communal, ethnic and even religious loyalties for political support. Regrettably In doing that they weaken the national solidarity of the people and any hope of popular demand for real democratic procedure in the political process, especially during their periodic selection in lieu of periodic elections. I say all this without prejudice and contend that not a little of the present confusion in the political firmament of Nigeria is the outcome of a failure to state the problems to which this political attitude in the mental climate of our time shall give rise to. The problems have been foreseen and highlighted by the founding fathers but the greed and politics of democratization powered by ethnicity in the country has overwhelmed the warnings.

Finally, I think it's pertinent to emphases at this point that the breakdown of the present political environment in Nigeria is looming, since they have ceased to attract the allegiance of the common citizens. Many have opted not to participate in the electoral process, especially during the sham general election because they find no happiness in it. Their inability to control the electoral outcome through their voting power compels them to conclude that the process of Nigeria brand of democracy is a thing in which they have no legitimate part to play. In addition, they are of the view that the national wealth is unjustly distributed between the political elites and their cronies. The Nigeria public also resent what they regard as the inefficient with which the management of the oil wealth is conducted by the political elites and their associates. None of the widely publicized national poverty alleviation plan has anything but an infinitesimal effect and or impact on the life of the common citizens. The system has ceased to act as a source of moral possibility. An average Nigeria is outraged by the inhumanity and the hypocrisy of the existing political order.

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